TO: HONORABLE CITY COUNCIL

FROM: CITY MANAGER                      DEPARTMENT: UTILITIES

DATE: JULY 7, 2008                                     CMR: 284:08

SUBJECT: AMERICAN PUBLIC GAS ASSOCIATION GAS OVERALL AWARENESS LEVEL CUSTOMER TELEPHONE SURVEY

This is an informational report and no Council action is required.

SUMMARY
This report describes a telephone survey of residents being performed by the American Public Gas Association (AGPA) in order to assist the City of Palo Alto gas utility in meeting federal Department of Transportation (DOT) requirements for natural gas safety.

BACKGROUND
The Department of Transportation (DOT) requires that all natural gas utilities have a program promoting gas safety and perform an annual survey of customers’ understanding of safety issues. The survey is a test of the effectiveness of each utility’s public outreach programs. Natural gas utilities performed baseline surveys to show the level of safety understanding in customers and those living near gas pipelines. After the education process has been implemented, utilities are required to continue to survey their customers each year to show that knowledge of natural gas safety has been enhanced. The City of Palo Alto Utilities completed its first survey in May 2007 and, since that point, has provided information to customers, contractors, neighboring communities and others throughout the year on natural gas safety.

To assist publicly owned natural gas utilities, APGA has arranged for a vendor who meets the DOT requirements to conduct the survey at a reasonable price. The City of Palo Alto first conducted the survey in May 2007 with the vendor, Questfore. Plans are to complete the current year’s survey during July 2008 using the same vendor. Due to the fact that customers had some concerns about the telephone survey last year, the process is outlined below.

The telephone survey includes a statistical sample of 7,674 customers plus an equal number of non-customers for a total of 15,348 calls. The vendor makes three attempts to automatically call each phone number in the group. Calls are made at the time and date designated by the schedule (typical morning passes go from 9:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m., and typical evening passes go from 7:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m.). A call is completed when a live voice is detected, meaning the
system heard a person speak, not that someone picked up the phone and held it. If the system
hears a live person, even if that person then hangs up without completing any more of the
survey, that home will not be called again. A number will be sent back into the pool to get called
again if the vendor receives a busy signal, ring-no answer, congestion on the line, or an
answering machine. A person who picks up the phone and does not answer, or who picks up the
phone with excessive noise in the background, may be detected as an answering machine and
thrown back into the pool to get called again. A person with call waiting, who is talking on the
phone and receives the call, but does not take it, may get called again until the phone is
answered. In this case, the system does not perceive that it is connecting or getting a traditional
busy or ring no answer signal.

**RESOURCE IMPACT**
The survey costs less than $4,500 and meets a federal DOT requirement. Funds are included in
the Utilities Administration Budget for FY 08/09. Some staff time will be required to prepare
staff information sheets and to answer customer questions after the telephone survey is ongoing;
however, due to the requirements of the program, staff may not prepare customer information
bill inserts or other material prior to the survey being completed.

**POLICY IMPLICATIONS**
Completion of the survey will show the effectiveness of the City of Palo Alto’s natural gas safety
education programs. If the survey finds that customers and those in the neighborhood of a gas
line are not more aware of safety issues than they were prior to the development of this program,
the City may be required to enhance its safety program.

**ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW**
This survey does not meet the California Environmental Quality Act’s (CEQA) definition of a
project pursuant to Section 21065 of the Public Resources Code.

**ATTACHMENT**
A: Sample APGA survey

**PREPARED BY:**
JOYCE KINNEAR
Manager, Utility Marketing Services

**REVIEWED BY:**
TOM AUZENNE
Assistant Director, Customer Support Services

**DEPARTMENT APPROVAL:**
VALERIE O. FONG
Director, Utilities

**CITY MANAGER APPROVAL:**
STEVE EMSLIE/KELLY MORARIU
Deputy City Managers