TO: HONORABLE CITY COUNCIL
FROM: CITY MANAGER DEPARTMENT: CITY MANAGER
DATE: AUGUST 5, 2002 CMR: 354:02

SUBJECT: RESOLUTION ADOPTING THE SANTA CLARA COUNTY GREEN BUSINESS PLEDGE

REPORT IN BRIEF
This report requests Council adoption of the Santa Clara County Green Business Pledge and support for the City’s effort to become certified as a Santa Clara County Green Business. This report includes a program description and history, and a copy of the Green Business Pledge. Participation is congruent with the City’s sustainability policy. Adopting the Green Business Pledge and seeking the Green Business certification will:

- model the environmental standards the City asks the public and business community to adopt
- energize and assist the City’s efforts in moving toward its vision of sustainability
- acknowledge the accomplishments of City departments and staff who help Palo Alto serve as an environmental leader
- provide third-party assurance of the City’s green business efforts and accomplishments.
**RECOMMENDATION**

Staff recommends that Council adopt the attached Green Business Pledge and a resolution supporting the City’s participation in the Santa Clara County Green Business Program.

**BACKGROUND**

In 1999, the City adopted the Green Government Pledge (CMR:284:99, Attachment 1) as part of a Bay Area intercounty effort to reduce hazardous waste generation in the region and to encourage businesses to adopt environmentally responsible business practices. In response to business concerns that the extra effort needed to comply with environmental requirements and demonstrate best management practices offered no additional marketing advantage, the Santa Clara County Green Business Program was formed. The Program provides information, resources and assistance for implementing practices that often save money while improving environmental protection. Though the Program is geared towards smaller businesses with direct public interface, other types of businesses can participate and benefit from improved public image and demonstration of environmental proficiency. This voluntary program is intended to:

- set target goals for the reduction of resource consumption and solid and hazardous waste generation
- streamline the delivery and implementation of multiple environmental program objectives and compliance and regulatory requirements
- help companies and non-profits take a comprehensive approach to environmental responsibilities.
- provide third-party certification for a businesses environmental accomplishments and performance
- provide the public with an active role in enhancing environmental quality by supporting Green Businesses in their community.

Though the Program framework and standards have been set at a regional level, implementation is managed at the local level, with great flexibility in how certification is accomplished. The county agency acts as the lead coordinating entity, with local agencies partnering in implementation. The Program is active in Alameda, Napa, Contra Costa and Santa Clara Counties. Regional agencies/organizations which support the Bay Area Green Business Program with funding, resources, or commitments to cooperate in implementation include: California Environmental Protection Agency, the Federal Environmental Protection Agency, the Bay Area Air Quality Management District, Pacific Gas and Electric, and several trade associations.
Palo Alto staff from the Public Works, Utilities and Fire Departments participated with the Cities of San Jose and Gilroy and the county in the development of the Santa Clara County Program to ensure maximum benefit to the community with minimal impact on staff time.

The Green Government Pledge
In support of the Green Business program, the City adopted the Santa Clara County Green Government Pledge in 1999 (CMR:284:99) which states that the City agrees to:

- work cooperatively with the other inspection, pollution prevention, and resource conservation agencies involved in the program; and

- work in a cooperative, educative manner with businesses.

Since the Green Government Pledge was adopted by Palo Alto and other cities, 166 businesses throughout the Bay Area have been certified. In Palo Alto, two respected businesses, Palo Alto Hardware and Rosenthal’s Automotive Repair were certified. In addition, in May 2002, the City of Palo Alto printshop became the first Santa Clara County local government entity and first printshop to achieve certification status.

DISCUSSION

City wide certification and the Green Business Pledge
Staff is working to become the first local government agency to meet the requirements for Green Business certification for all facilities and operations. Meeting these requirements would set a tremendous precedent, hopefully encouraging other cities to follow. County staff are currently reviewing several elements of the certification requirements, already submitted by staff as the City works to meet the remaining requirements which are mostly comprised of demonstrating regulatory and permit compliance.

Cities and agencies seeking certification must adopt the Green Business Pledge, which outlines the vision and intent of the Green Business program. The pledge states that:

We believe a successful business is dependent on a healthy environment. We are actively working to show our environmental responsibility to our community by committing to the following objectives:

- To comply with all applicable regulations and strive to exceed compliance
- To conserve energy, water, materials, and other resources
- To develop and implement practices which proven pollution and waste
- To be an environmentally responsible business within our community.
The pledge will be posted at public facilities to educate the public and other businesses about the City’s efforts.

**RESOURCE IMPACT**
The half-time employee who served under special assignment in the City Manager’s Office in FY 2001-02 is coordinating the Green Business certification project, with the assistance of staff throughout the City responsible for programs relevant to the certification. Seeking certification has the potential to highlight the cost-savings benefits of resource conservation and avoided hazardous and solid waste disposal.

**POLICY IMPLICATIONS**
The recommendation is consistent with Council direction and the City’s sustainability policy.

**ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW**
This is not a project under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA).

**ATTACHMENT**
Green Government Resolution, with Santa Clara County Green Business Pledge

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SANTA CLARA COUNTY GREEN BUSINESS PLEDGE

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