TO:   HONORABLE CITY COUNCIL
FROM: CITY MANAGER DEPARTMENT: UTILITIES
DATE: JULY 9, 2007 CMR: 297:07

SUBJECT: RECOMMENDATION FROM STAFF TO PLACE AN ADVISORY
MEASURE ON THE NOVEMBER 6, 2007 BALLOT ASKING VOTERS
WHETHER AN AREA UNDER EL CAMINO PARK SHOULD BE USED
FOR AN UNDERGROUND WATER STORAGE RESERVOIR AND
WELL TO SUPPLY THE CITY OF PALO ALTO WITH WATER
DURING AN EMERGENCY

RECOMMENDATION
Staff recommends that Council approve the attached resolution (Attachment A) authorizing staff
to place an advisory ballot measure on the November 6, 2007 ballot. The measure would ask
voters whether an area under El Camino Park should be used for an underground water storage
reservoir and well to supply the City of Palo Alto with water during an emergency, the existing
pump station replaced and all existing park facilities fully restored upon completion of
construction.

BACKGROUND
On March 5, 2007, Council held a public hearing for the Emergency Water Supply and Storage
Project (the Project) in which Council a) adopted a resolution certifying the adequacy of the EIR;
b) adopted a resolution approving the project and designating the project sites, including El
Camino Park as the preferred site for the new underground reservoir, pump station and well; c)
approved Park Improvement Ordinances for El Camino, Eleanor Pardee, Timothy Hopkins,
Rinconada and Peers Parks; d) directed the City Attorney to return with language for an advisory
measure regarding placement of the reservoir underneath El Camino Park; and e) directed the
City Attorney and City Clerk to take appropriate steps to place an advisory measure on the ballot
for November 6, 2007, regarding placement of the reservoir and well underneath El Camino Park
(CMR: 161:07).
DISCUSSION
The advisory ballot measure gives voters the opportunity to approve or disapprove of the City’s intention to locate a new underground reservoir and well as well as and a replacement pump station at El Camino Park. This is to ensure that water is available during emergencies and playing a vital role in achieving the Department of Health Services’ minimum recommended standards in the event of a disruption in the City’s Hetch-Hetchy water supply. At the March 5 public hearing, Council’s motion required that an advisory vote of the people be used before placement of the underground reservoir and well at El Camino Park. If the advisory measure is approved by the voters and the Council confirms the results of the election, the El Camino Park park improvement ordinance will remain in effect and staff will manage the design and construction of the new reservoir and well beneath El Camino Park and the replacement of the existing Lytton pump station. If the advisory measure is rejected by the voters and the Council decides to rescind the El Camino Park park improvement ordinance, staff would then propose to Council one of the other sites evaluated in the EIR for construction of the reservoir: Stanford Shopping Center North (in front of Macy’s Men’s Store), Stanford Shopping Center South (southeast side of Quarry Road adjacent to the existing Quarry Road Electric Substation), and Town and Country Shopping Center (rear parking lot).

RESOURCE IMPACT
Staff time will be used to prepare and place the advisory ballot measure on the ballot. If, as a result of the vote, Council should rescind the El Camino Park Ordinance, substantial additional staff time will be needed to propose an alternative site, and the cost for constructing the reservoir, pump station and well will probably increase, primarily due to the need to construct longer and more complex underground pipe connecting the new facilities to existing Lytton Pump Station. $40,000 has been budgeted in the FY 07-08 Adopted Budget for the costs associated with the November advisory vote ballot measure.

POLICY IMPLICATIONS
This project will ensure that water is available during emergencies and plays a vital role in developing emergency response plans. Emergency Planning has been identified as one of Council’s top four priorities. This project also supports Comprehensive Plan Goal N-10, Protection of Life and Property from Natural Hazards, Including Earthquake, Landslide, Flooding, and Fire.

ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW
An Environmental Impact Report (EIR) was prepared in accordance with CEQA for the Project. City Council certified the EIR on March 5, 2007 and it is considered complete and adequate and in compliance with CEQA.

ATTACHMENT
Attachment A: Resolution of the City Council of Palo Alto calling a special election for November 6, 2007, for submittal to the qualified electors of the City an Advisory Measure related to the use of El Camino Park for the placement of an underground emergency water storage reservoir and well and the replacement of the existing above-ground pump station.