



CITY OF DUNWOODY

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MEMORANDUM

To: Mayor and City Council

From: Warren Hutmacher, City Manager

Date: August 9, 2010

Subject: Emergency Notification Sirens Update

BACKGROUND

At the July Work Session, staff prepared an overview of emergency notification sirens and how they could be used in Dunwoody. In overview, emergency notification sirens can be an effective way to warn the public of severe weather and other emergency situations through tone or a combination of tone and voice. The sirens are typically mounted on stand-alone poles, about the height of a telephone pole, and are relatively small in size.

At the July Work Session, based on our meeting with Cobb County and discussion with Cobb's vendor for emergency notification sirens, we presented that the full purchase price is likely to be in the \$250,000 - \$300,000 range to cover the entire city limits effectively. Council asked that we contact additional siren vendors for estimates and research grant funding opportunities.

UPDATE – GRANTS

Staff reached out to the DeKalb Emergency Management Agency (DEMA) and the Georgia Emergency Management Agency (GEMA) regarding grant opportunities. GEMA provided insight into GEMA and FEMA grants including the Hazard Mitigation Grant Program and the Pre-Disaster Mitigation Program. In particular, the Hazard Mitigation Grant Program has a program for "equipment and systems for the purpose of warning citizens of impending hazards." The City of Decatur received this grant for the purchase of their emergency notification siren system in 2004. Staff discussed with Decatur's Assistant City Manager overseeing Emergency Services and has obtained a copy of their application for reference.

However, in order to be eligible for any of the GEMA or FEMA grants, Dunwoody must have in place a Hazard Mitigation Plan. Coincidentally, DeKalb County is in the process of updating its Hazard Mitigation Plan, which includes individual plans for each municipality. Although Dunwoody was not originally included in the update process because old County maps did not show the municipal boundaries, Dunwoody is now on board as a full participant. Staff is working with DEMA and GEMA to review jurisdictional-level hazards and create a plan for Dunwoody.

Once the planning process is complete, the DeKalb County Board of Commissioners will consider the plan. After such time, Dunwoody could also consider adopting the plan in order to coordinate our hazard mitigation activities and make the City eligible for grant opportunities.



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UPDATE - COSTS

Staff reached out to three additional emergency notification siren vendors. Although each company maintained that the exact cost and number of sirens would require further analysis of our building heights, densities, and topography, the cost from the three other companies expanded the full purchase price cost range to \$200,000 - \$300,000 to cover purchase, installation, and software.

This range is based on estimates for both number of sirens and cost of sirens. We received estimates as low as four sirens and as high as 28 sirens to cover Dunwoody. The siren costs ranged from \$12,000 to \$40,000 depending on the features associated. For example, as the lower cost, higher number of sirens spectrum, DFW Communications has a siren that they recommend using in outdoor public areas such as parks because it only broadcasts to approximately 1,200 square feet. At the higher end of the spectrum, McCord Communications offers a multi-tone and voice siren with 360 degree coverage up to 12,000 square feet.

In terms of maintenance costs, we believe the exact maintenance costs would depend somewhat on the features of the sirens themselves.

NEXT STEPS

Staff will continue to participate in the Hazard Mitigation Planning and bring the completed plan to the Mayor and Council for your consideration later this year.

For emergency notification sirens, if Council wishes to move forward with this project, staff would work with the Mayor to include this in the draft 2011 budget to be presented in September. Alternatively, we could wait until the completion of the Hazard Mitigation Planning process, prepare a grant application for the 2011 cycle and include this in the 2012 budget.