



CITY OF DUNWOODY

41 Perimeter Center East, Suite 250

Dunwoody, GA 30346

Phone: 678.382.6700 • Fax: 678.382.6701

www.dunwoodyga.gov

MEMORANDUM

To: Mayor and City Council

From: Warren Hutmacher, City Manager

Date: July 12, 2010

Subject: Emergency Notification Sirens

BACKGROUND

At the City Council Strategic Planning Retreat in January, the Mayor and City Council asked staff to investigate emergency notification sirens for Dunwoody and report back in July.

Emergency notification sirens can be an effective way to warn the public of severe weather and other emergency situations. Depending on the model, sirens can produce different tone warning, voice messages, 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.

The sirens utilize either radio, cellular or wireless internet based communication mediums and would be operated by our Police Service Representatives. The activation of the sirens can be automated to coincide with National Weather Service warnings or can be activated by our staff utilizing preordained guidelines for activation.

Our research thus far has included meeting with Cobb County, which currently operates a system of emergency notification sirens; discussions with vendors of emergency notifications sirens; and research into grant funding possibilities.

COST & FUNDING

Although an exact cost and number of sirens would require further analysis of our building heights, densities, and topography, the full purchase price is likely to be in the \$250,000 - \$300,000 range to cover the entire city limits effectively. This cost includes the purchase and installation of sirens and the software necessary to utilize the software.

Some grant opportunities do exist through the Georgia Emergency Management Agency and the Federal Emergency Management Agency. However, both agencies have a track record of awarding grants to Emergency Management Agencies (EMA) instead of local governments.

Dunwoody would be at a significant disadvantage for these grant opportunities because Dunwoody is not an Emergency Management Agency itself, but part of the Region 7 EMA which includes the counties of DeKalb, Gwinnett, Rockdale, Clayton, Henry, Fayette, Fulton, Douglas, and Cobb.

Within Region 7, DeKalb County is also a designated EMA. The City would need to coordinate with the DeKalb County EMA for any application or award of GEMA or FEMA grant dollars. We will explore this option if the Council wishes to move forward with an emergency siren program. Alternatively, as a capital investment, the initial purchase could be made using HOST funds.

NEXT STEPS

If Council wishes to move forward, staff will conduct a detailed assessment of our City for siren count and placement, further investigate grant opportunities, and include this in the 2011 budgeting process as a Capital item.