



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: August 9, 2010
Subject: **Fire and Emergency Services Provision**

ITEM DESCRIPTION

In response to the Mayor and Council's request at the Special Called Meeting on May 17, the City Manager formed a Fire and Emergency Services working group to conduct due diligence and investigate alternatives for the provision of fire and emergency services. Due to the far-reaching effects and aggressive timeline to return information to the Mayor and Council, the working group consists of the City Manager, Police Chief, IT Director, Human Resources Manager, Finance Director, Chief Building Inspector, Executive Assistant to the City Manager, Special Projects Manager, and Assistant to the City Manager.

BACKGROUND

Dunwoody currently has an intergovernmental agreement in place with DeKalb County for Fire Rescue services. The agreement has a six month termination notice requirement and the County collects all the fire prevention tax, presently 2.54 mills, as well as ambulance transport fees from residents in the City of Dunwoody as payment for these services.

Fire and emergency medical calls are dispatched as part of the emergency services dispatching that occurs in the DeKalb 911 center. DeKalb County does not have any dedicated dispatchers or call-takers for Dunwoody fire or rescue calls.

One common metric to measure the quality of fire protection services is the Insurance Services Office (ISO) Public Protection Classification (PPC) number, ranging from 1 to 10. Class 1 represents an exemplary fire suppression program. DeKalb County was last rated as a Class 3. In comparison, Smyrna and Marietta are both Class 2, Peachtree City is Class 3, and Johns Creek and Sandy Springs are both Class 4. Both Johns Creek and Sandy Springs inherited their rating from Fulton County upon their creation.

The three main components of the ISO score are the fire department, accounting for 50% of the score, and the water supply system, accounting for 40% of the score, and fire alarm and communications system accounting for 10% of the score. As part of their review of the fire department, ISO reviews items including the coverage area from each station and the proportion of the City that is within 1 ½ miles driving distance from the station.

The DeKalb fire stations in Dunwoody were not located to optimally serve Dunwoody as a stand-alone provider. However, this may be remedied by negotiating automatic aid or mutual aid agreements with surrounding jurisdictions.

To understand the full role the fire department plays in Dunwoody, the working group has both met with experienced fire chiefs and reviewed national data. Profiles for local fire departments support the National Fire Incident Reporting System (NFIRS) data which shows less than 10% of runs made by fire departments actually involve fire. A majority of all runs are categorized as emergency medical services and rescue.

In terms of emergency medical services, based on O.C.G.A 31-11-1 and Department of Human Resources 290-5-30, the state is divided into Emergency Medical Service Regions. Dunwoody is part of Region III, which includes the counties of DeKalb, Gwinnett, Rockdale, Newton, Clayton, Fulton, Douglas, and Cobb. The state designates an EMS service provider to each zone, with each County serving as the administrator. DeKalb County directly provides emergency medical services, running 24 ambulances for advance life support services, with the help of additional ambulances from American Medical Response for basic life support service.

EVALUATION

The fire and emergency services working group has performed the following tasks in evaluating our service needs and alternatives:

1. Performed a detailed assessment of available Dunwoody Fire and Rescue call volume data.
2. Studied carefully state and federal standards for fire and rescue service provision
3. Discussed with experienced fire chiefs including:
 - David Walls the Executive Director of the Georgia Fire Academy/Public Safety Training Center
 - Ken Burris former Chief Operating Officer for United States Fire Administration and Federal Emergency Management Agency
 - Chief Jackie Gibbs of Marietta
 - Chief Jason Lanyon of Smyrna
 - Chief Ed Eiswerth of Peachtree City
4. Discussed with Emergency Medical Services Region III Director, EJ Dailey.
5. Met with experienced Emergency Medical Services service providers.
6. Developed a conservative revenue estimate based on current fire prevention tax
7. Developed multiple expense model budgets for the operation of a Dunwoody Fire Department.

BUDGET

Based on the current fire prevention tax of 2.54 mills, staff estimates this produces \$5.842 million for fire prevention in Dunwoody (based on the FY 2010 tax digest). Based on reviewing budgets from Alpharetta, College Park, Decatur, Johns Creek, Marietta, Smyrna, and Peachtree City, the largest budget expense will be staffing costs for personnel and benefits. Based on salary surveys and discussions with experienced fire chiefs, our personnel costs are likely to be between \$4.9 million and \$5.2 million for salary and benefits. The exact staffing and personnel count will depend on further study that will have to be completed by the Fire Chief.

Based on the experiences of surrounding fire departments and industry standards, approximately 15% of the budget will be operating and maintenance. These expenses include the operations and maintenance of the station houses, the significant maintenance costs for fire equipment and vehicles, and a significant investment in medical supplies and life support items.

Although DeKalb County may presently support their Fire and Rescue Department within the fire prevention tax, building the entirety of a Fire Department from the ground up will require extensive capital costs and additional personnel necessary for a standalone fire department.

For capital purchases, we anticipate approximately \$6 million in fire engines and other vehicles. This would likely be financed through a GMA lease over 10 years with an annual cost of approximately \$635,000.

Based on these three components, we estimate the total budget to be between \$6,229,752 and \$6,475,528 million. In order to support this budget, we would likely need to increase the fire prevention millage rate from 2.54 mills to a range from 2.71 to 2.82 mills.

ANALYSIS OF ALTERNATIVES

Due to the different regulations, the fire and emergency services working group has analyzed the options for fire and emergency medical services as separate but related contingencies.

FIRE SERVICES

1. Direct Service Provision of Fire Services

Form a new Dunwoody Fire Department to provide fire and rescue services directly to residents and businesses of Dunwoody.

Benefits:

- Performance standards – ensure national standards for response time and arrival on scene
- Managerial control – highest degree of control

Challenges:

- Potential need to supplement fire prevention tax from the General Fund or reevaluate fire prevention millage rate
- DeKalb fire stations were not located to optimally to serve Dunwoody as a stand-alone provider
- Extensive capital costs to starting a Fire Department
- Managerial strain to balance current duties with standing up a new Fire Department

-
2. Continue to work with DeKalb County Fire and Rescue
Building upon previous meetings with Interim Fire Chief Edie O'Brien, continue to work with DeKalb County to ensure our businesses and residents receive a high level of service.

Benefits:

- Steady cost structure
- No managerial strain to stand up new Fire Department

Challenges:

- Lack of performance standards in current Intergovernmental Agreement
- Lack of managerial control
- Retirement impact on DeKalb Fire and Rescue
- Lack of a permanent Fire Chief and recent service delivery problems
- Limited staffing for fire prevention activities presents challenges for needed fire inspections and plan review needs

EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES

1. Petition DeKalb County for a “carve out” from Region III
Work with an emergency medical service provider to provide services to residents and businesses of Dunwoody.

Benefits:

- Control performance standards through contract with new service provider
- Managerial control – higher degree of control than current arrangement
- Financial risks borne by service provider

Challenges:

- Potential for DeKalb County to resist this change

2. Petition the State to open Emergency Medical Services zoning
Work with an emergency medical service provider to provide services to residents and businesses of Dunwoody.

Benefits:

- Control performance standards through contract with new service provider
- Managerial control – higher degree of control than current arrangement
- Financial risks borne by service provider

Challenges:

- Potential for DeKalb County to resist this change
- Must prove a deficiency of service level exists and the welfare of the public is in danger
- Emergency Medical Services zoning was last “opened” in 2000 following extensive litigation in Fulton County

3. Continue to Work with DeKalb County Fire and Rescue
Building upon previous meetings with Interim Fire Chief Edie O'Brien, continue to work with DeKalb County to ensure our businesses and residents receive a high level of service.

Benefits:

- Opportunity to continue to build upon a strong relationship with Interim Fire Chief
- No need to pursue litigation or prove a deficiency of service

Challenges:

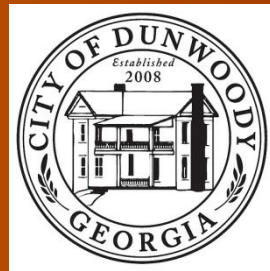
- Lack of performance standards in current Intergovernmental Agreement
- Lack of managerial control
- Current staffing levels at DeKalb may be less than ideal as recent news articles have quoted Public Safety Director William Miller saying DeKalb will need to “add more staff, including 45 more 911 operators and 12 supervisors”

CONCLUSION

This issue before the Council is a policy choice matter. In lieu of the benefits and challenges associated with each alternative, staff awaits discussion and direction from the Council before proceeding on these critical decisions for both fire services and emergency medical services.

City of Dunwoody

Fire and Rescue Committee Study Presentation



Evaluation Process

Fire & Rescue Committee Members

- ❖ Warren Hutmacher
- ❖ Chief Billy Grogan
- ❖ Chris Pike
- ❖ Kimberly Greer
- ❖ Michael Nier
- ❖ Michael Lockett
- ❖ Jeff Timler
- ❖ Nicole Stojka
- ❖ Heather Potter

Evaluation Process

- Interviews held with several Fire Chiefs and Fire Consultants; reviewed national data.

References used:

- Insurance Services Office (ISO) Public Protection Classification (PPC) number is a common metric used for fire protection services, with a classification range from 1 to 10. Class 1 represents an exemplary fire suppression program.
- The ISO score is broken into three main components 1. the fire department, which accounts for 50% of the score, 2. the water supply system, which accounts for 40% of the score, and 3. 10% being fire alarm communications. As part of their review of the fire department, ISO reviews items including the coverage area from each station and the proportion of the City that is within 1 ½ miles driving distance from the station.
- NFPA – National Fire Protection Association - world's leading advocate of fire prevention and an authoritative source on public safety.

Current Service Delivery Model

- DeKalb Fire Tax District
- Intergovernmental Agreement
- Services currently provided by DeKalb County:
 - Suppression
 - Prevention
 - Emergency Medical Service (EMS)

Existing DeKalb Fire Stations

Station #18



4588 Barclay Drive

Station #12



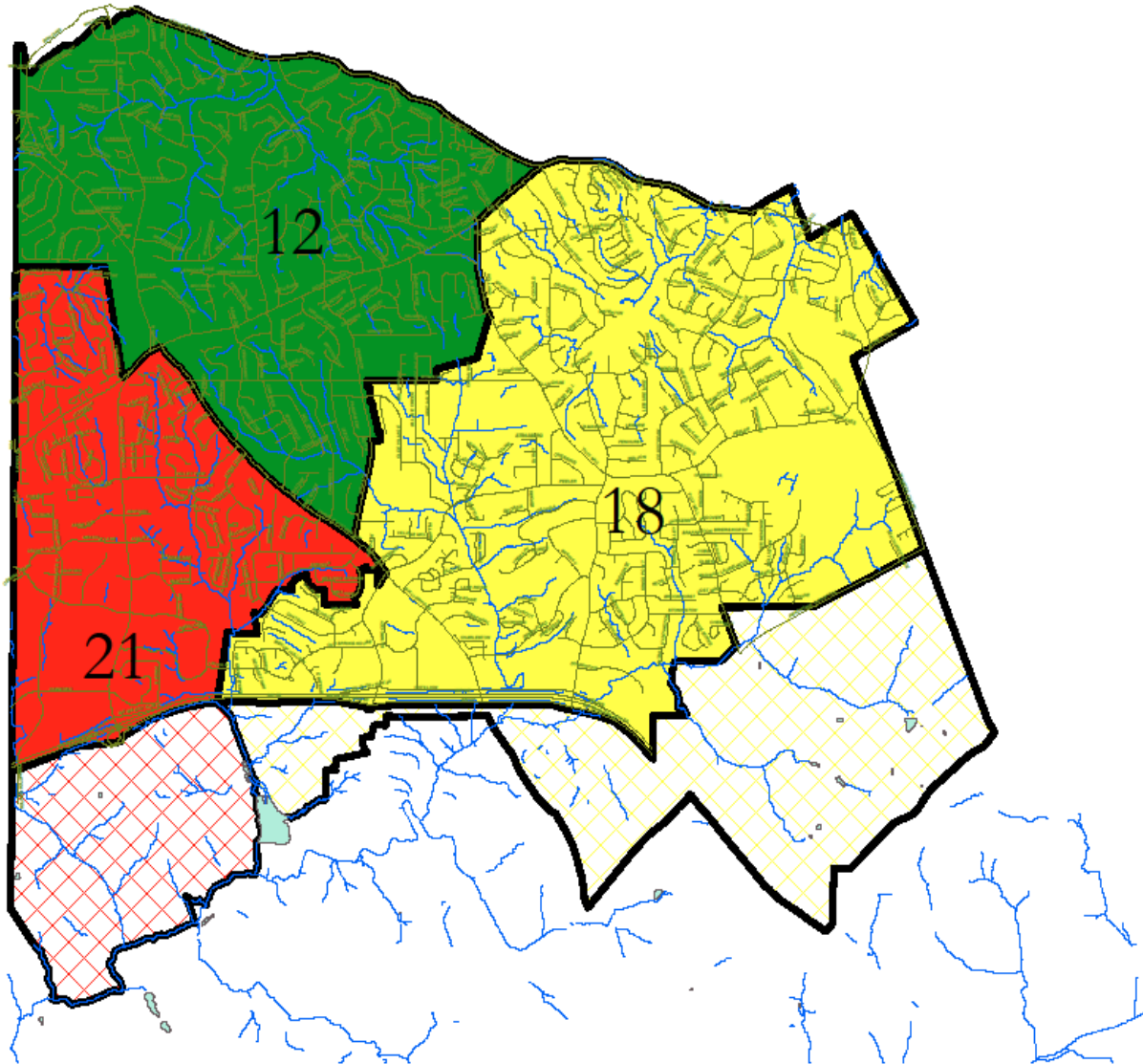
5323 Roberts Drive

Station #21

1290 Crown Pointe Parkway



Fire Station Service Boundaries



CITY OF DUNWOODY
41 Perimeter Center East, Suite 250
Dunwoody, Georgia 30346
678-382-6700
www.dunwoodyga.gov

Map of

City of Dunwoody
Fire Station Service Boundaries

December, 2009

Legend

— Streets
— Streams

Fire Station Service Area Inside City of Dunwoody

FireStation

12
18
21

Fire Station Service Area Outside City Limits

FireStation

12
18
21

Lakes

City_Limits_2009_10_01



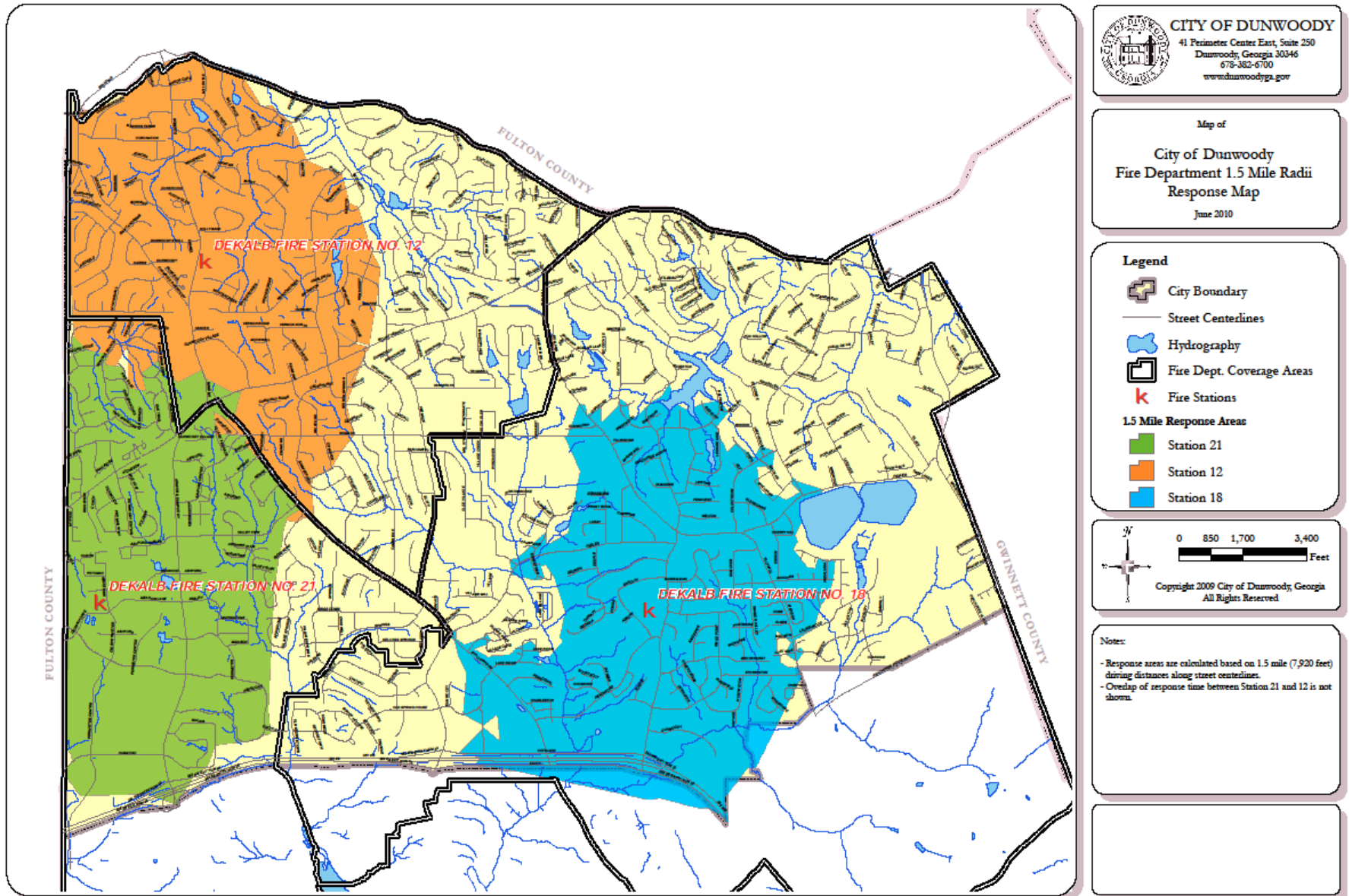
037350 1,500,250,000

Feet

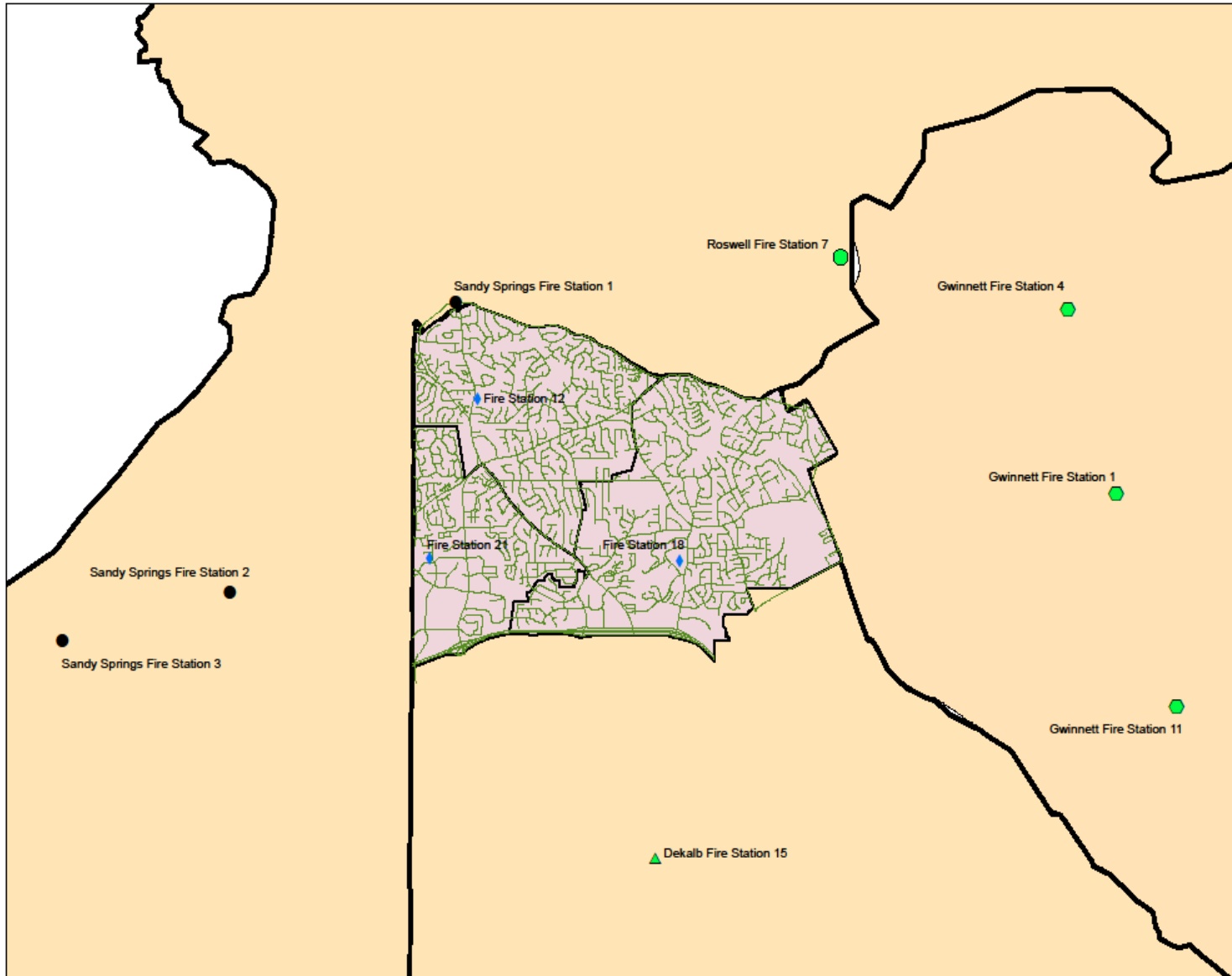
Copyright 2009 City of Dunwoody, Georgia
All Rights Reserved


Notes:

1.5 Mile Radii Response Area

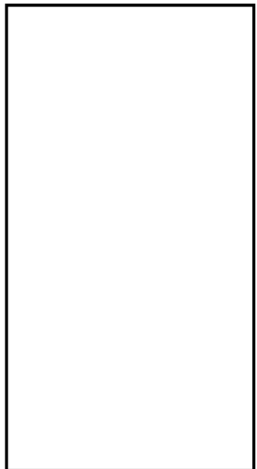



Surrounding Fire Stations



**CITY OF DUNWOODY**
41 Piedmont Center East, Suite 250
Dunwoody, Georgia 30346
678-382-6700
www.dunwoodyga.gov

Map of
**Dunwoody and Adjacent
Fire Stations**
May 2010




Copyright 2010 City of Dunwoody, Georgia
All Rights Reserved

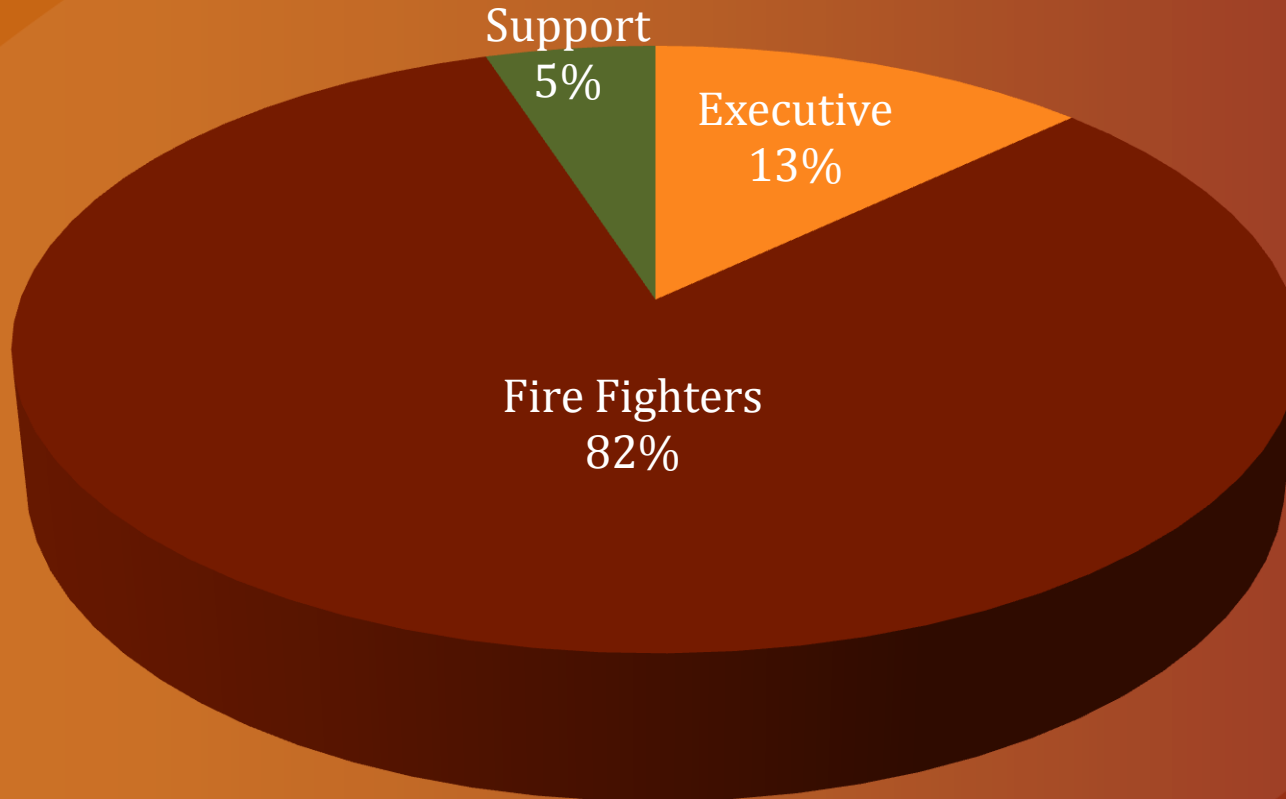
Notes:
1.

**Clark Peterson Lee**
COUNTY ENGINEERS

Expenditures

Resources necessary to provide Fire & Emergency service

Personnel



Personnel Range 66 – 76 people

(Cost Range: \$4,994,751 - \$5,208,470)

Operating Expenses

The industry standard for operating expenses for providing Fire & Emergency services is typically 15% of the total budget

Examples of these expenditures include:

- Maintenance on vehicles and equipment
- Utilities for buildings
- Medical supplies
- Uniforms
- Office supplies

Cost Range runs from \$600,000 to \$632,058

Capital Expenses



\$85,000+ Rescue Pumper



\$249,000+ Quint



\$70,000 + E-One Cabover Pumper



\$344,000+ Ladder Truck



\$80,000+ Tanker



\$200,000+ Aerial Truck



\$145,000+ Mini Rescue Pumper

Capital Expenses

Estimated initial capital costs would run around \$6+ million (depending on the mix of assets purchased)

Financing through GMA on a 10 year lease/purchase would run \$635,000 per year (approximately 3.5% interest on financing)

Options for purchasing equipment:

- New Vs Used
- Custom Vs Stock

Should be noted that Fire Rescue equipment have a significant maintenance cost

Budget

Where does the money go?

Proposed Budgets

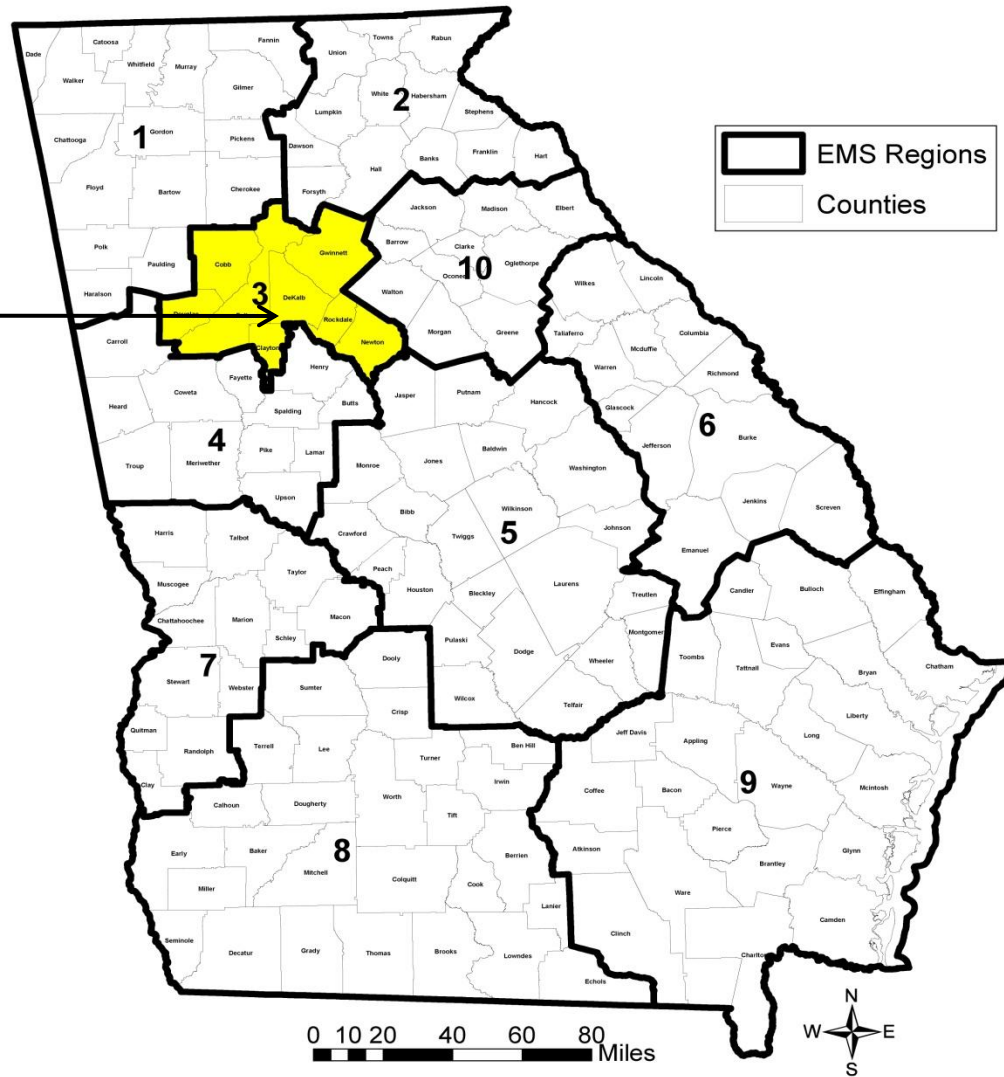
Revenue is generated from the millage which is currently at 2.54 rate for Fiscal Year 2010 which is equal to \$5,842,000

	Range	
Salary	\$4,994,751.58	- \$5,208,469.70
Capital	\$635,000.00	- \$635,000.00
Operating	\$600,000.00	- \$632,058.00
TOTAL	<u>\$6,229,751.58</u>	<u>\$6,475,527.70</u>

Millage rate necessary to support the expenditures above will range from 2.71 to 2.82 for the Fire Tax District Millage Rate

Emergency Medical Service

Emergency Medical Service Regions, 2003



Dunwoody is in
Region 3



Georgia Department of Human Resources
Division of Public Health
Office of Health Information & Policy

Created: March, 2003
Source: EMS Regions, 2003
Projection: UTM 1983, Zone 16

EMS vs. Transport

There are several options for consideration for alternative service:

1. Continue with the service provided by DeKalb County
2. Request the Regional Council to reassign designation of County
3. Have DeKalb assign Dunwoody as an EMS provider

Recommendations

Below are the recommendations for consideration to the City Council by the Fire & Rescue Committee:

1. Remain with DeKalb County

- Steady cost structure
- Status quo in service

2. Start a Dunwoody Fire Department

- Higher service delivery / local control & accountability
- Higher risk and liabilities
- Expensive start up costs