



41 Perimeter Center East, Suite 250  
Dunwoody, Georgia 30346  
P (678) 382-6700 F (678) 382-6701  
dunwoodyga.gov

## **MEMORANDUM**

**To:** Mayor and City Council  
**From:** Kimberly Greer, Assistant to the City Manager  
**Date:** June 13, 2011  
**Subject:** **Update - Emergency Notification Systems**

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### **BACKGROUND**

Per Councilman Shortal's request, at the July and August 2010 Work Sessions, staff presented information regarding emergency notification sirens and how they could be used in Dunwoody. At Council's direction, staff met with Cobb County to discuss their existing emergency notification siren system, contacted siren vendors for cost estimates, and conducted preliminary research into grant funding opportunities.

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.

The full purchase price for emergency notification sirens to cover the entire City effectively will likely be in the \$200,000 - \$300,000 range. As discussed in August 2010, in order to be eligible for existing grant programs through the Georgia Emergency Management Agency (GEMA) and the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) the City must have in place a Hazard Mitigation Plan.

As part of FY2010 Final Budget Amendment Council approved \$45,000 for an emergency alert system that would provide automated delivery of recorded voice messages to both answering devices and live call recipients. To allow time for full analysis of service providers, these funds were then rolled into the FY2011 Budget.

### **DISCUSSION**

In April 2011, the Council adopted the DeKalb County Multi-Jurisdictional Hazard Mitigation Plan, which includes identification of hazards specific to Dunwoody and strategies for mitigation of these hazards. Tornados were identified as one of the critical hazards facing Dunwoody. The primary strategy identified to mitigate the hazards posed by tornados is to establish an emergency alert and warning system.

Based on Council's past discussions and direction, staff is pursuing both grant funding to facilitate the purchase of emergency notification sirens as well as utilization of approved budgeted funding for an emergency alert system that would provide automated delivery of recorded voice messages to both answering devices and live call recipients.

#### **UPDATE – GRANTS**

Staff is pursuing FEMA's Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (HMGP) for emergency notification sirens. The HMGP is designed to ensure that the opportunity to take critical mitigation measures to reduce the risk of loss of life and property from future disasters is not lost during the reconstruction process following a disaster. HMGP funding is available, when authorized under a Presidential major disaster declaration, in the areas of the State requested by the Governor. In April 2011, a disaster was declared in Georgia for "Severe Storms, Tornadoes, Straight-line Winds, and Associated Flooding." HMGP funds are competitive statewide. The maximum FEMA share for HMGP projects is 75% with a 25% match requirement.

#### **UPDATE – ALERT SYSTEM**

Staff is also pursuing the purchase of an emergency alert system that would provide automated delivery of recorded voice messages to both answering devices and live call recipients. Staff has researched different emergency and weather warning systems and received quotes from multiple service providers and expects to move forward with a purchase in the coming months.