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MEMORANDUM

To: Mayor and City Council
From: Kimberly Greer, Assistant to the City Manager
Date: July 8, 2013
Subject: **Discussion of Emergency Notification Sirens**

BACKGROUND

Per Councilman Shortal's request, in 2010 staff began researching emergency notification sirens and how they could benefit Dunwoody. To recap, emergency notification sirens can be used 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. Based on quotes from siren vendors, purchase and installation of sirens throughout Dunwoody would likely cost between \$200,000 and \$300,000.

When discussed with Council in 2010, the consensus of Council was to pursue grant funding to offset the cost of purchase and installation. Few grants exist that can be used towards notification sirens. FEMA's Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (HMGP) is the main source of such funding but is only available when authorized under a major disaster declaration. The last such declaration in Georgia was April 29, 2011. Staff applied but was unsuccessful due to limited funding availability. When discussed with Council in late 2011, the consensus was to continue to pursue grant funding if available and look into implementing a telephone-based emergency notification system.

UPDATE

In 2013, the City implemented the telephone-based emergency notification system CodeRED. As it relates to severe weather, the CodeRED Weather Warning alert is an automated system directly tied into the National Weather Service. As an example, if the National Weather Service issues a Tornado Warning, the CodeRED customers with addresses within the expected path of that Tornado will receive an alert.

Based on prior direction from Council, staff continues to pursue potential grant opportunities as it relates to emergency notification sirens. In example, last month staff attended a Department of Community Affairs hazard mitigation workshop and on a quarterly basis, staff participates in Mitigation Advisory Committee meetings with the DeKalb Emergency Management Agency to stay informed of funding opportunities and best practices.

ALTERNATIVES

Should the Council reach consensus to move more quickly towards implementation of emergency notification sirens, staff could include funding in the Fiscal Year 2014 Budget or in a 2013 Budget amendment. Alternatively, staff could continue to search for grant opportunities and apply for any related funding that becomes available.