



## **CITY OF DUNWOODY**

41 Perimeter Center East, Suite 250  
Dunwoody, GA 30346  
Phone: 678.382.6700 • Fax: 678.382.6701  
www.dunwoodyga.gov

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# **MEMORANDUM**

**To:** Mayor and City Council  
**From:** Warren Hutmacher, City Manager  
**Date:** July 12, 2010  
**Subject:** Emergency Notification Sirens

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## **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.

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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.



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## **MEMORANDUM**

**To:** Mayor and City Council

**From:** Warren Hutmacher, City Manager

**Date:** August 9, 2010

**Subject:** **Emergency Notification Sirens Update**

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### **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.



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## **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.



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## **MEMORANDUM**

**To:** Mayor and City Council  
**From:** Kimberly Greer, Assistant to the City Manager  
**Date:** December 12, 2011  
**Subject:** **Update - Emergency Notification Sirens**

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### **BACKGROUND**

Per Councilman Shortal's request, in 2010 staff researched emergency notification sirens and how they could be used in 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.

### **DISCUSSION - GRANTS**

In April 2011, the Council adopted the DeKalb County Multi-Jurisdictional Hazard Mitigation Plan, which makes Dunwoody eligible to apply for grants through the Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (HMGP). HMGP funding is only available when authorized under a major disaster declaration, such as the one declared in Georgia on April 29, 2011. HMGP funds are competitive statewide and applications for projects were due in October. The maximum FEMA share for HMGP projects is 75% with a 25% match requirement.

In October 2011, staff submitted our proposal to install outdoor weather warning sirens across the City. In November 2011, the Georgia Emergency Management Agency (GEMA) indicated that they will be unable to recommend our proposal "due to limited funding available for warning initiative projects and the State's priority to fund projects in the Federally declared counties."

Staff will continue to work with GEMA to identify other possible grant funding alternatives and GEMA has indicated they will keep our application on file if funding under other mitigation grant programs becomes available.

GEORGIA EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT AGENCY  
GEORGIA OFFICE OF HOMELAND SECURITY

#L3.

NATHAN DEAL  
GOVERNOR



CHARLEY ENGLISH  
DIRECTOR

November 21, 2011

Mr. Warren Hutmacher  
City Manager  
City of Dunwoody  
41 Perimeter Center East  
Suite 250  
Dunwoody, Georgia 30046

Dear Mr. Hutmacher:

I would like to thank you for submitting a pre-application for an outdoor warning siren to the Georgia Emergency Management Agency (GEMA) for the Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (HMGP). During the pre-application process we received many strong and commendable projects which were reviewed.

Unfortunately, GEMA cannot recommend that you develop a full HMGP application due to the limited funding available for warning initiative projects and the State's priority to fund projects in the Federally declared counties. I will keep your information on file for other possible grant funding alternatives. Please continue to keep detailed records of future disaster-related events, as this information will prove helpful if funding under other mitigation grant programs become available.

Thank you for your interest and please do not let this keep you from pursuing other opportunities that the Hazard Mitigation Division has to offer. Should you have any questions, please contact Shana Slay, Hazard Mitigation Risk Reduction Specialist, at (404) 635-7245.

Sincerely,

Terry K. Lunn  
Hazard Mitigation Division Director

tkl/sas

cc: Kimberly Greer, Assistant to the City Manager  
City of Dunwoody  
William Z. Miller, Director  
DeKalb County Emergency Management Agency  
Sheri Russo, Area Coordinator  
Georgia Emergency Management Agency

