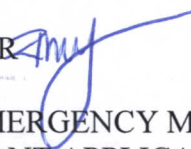


City of Alexandria, Virginia

MEMORANDUM

DATE: MAY 16, 2012

TO: THE HONORABLE MAYOR AND MEMBERS OF CITY COUNCIL

FROM: RASHAD M. YOUNG, CITY MANAGER 

SUBJECT: CONSIDERATION OF A FEDERAL EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT AGENCY HAZARD MITIGATION GRANT APPLICATION FOR EXPANSION OF A FLASH FLOOD WARNING SYSTEM

ISSUE: City Council consideration of making applications for grant funds in the amount of \$25,000 available to the City from the Virginia Department of Emergency Management (VDEM) on behalf of the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA). These funds will provide 75 percent of the funding necessary for the expansion of the City's flash flood warning system.

RECOMMENDATION: That City Council:

- (1) Approve an application to VDEM for a FEMA Hazard Mitigation Grant in the amount of \$25,000 for additional rain gauges and flood warning devices; and
- (2) Authorize the City Manager to execute all the necessary documents that may be required.

BACKGROUND: FEMA provides Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (HMGP) opportunities to eligible States after Presidential declared disaster determinations have occurred. VDEM has received a grant opportunity for the remnants of Tropical Storm Lee that impacted the Commonwealth and Alexandria on September 8 and 9, 2011. Alexandria was a declared community, has an approved Hazard Mitigation Plan, and, hence, is eligible to apply for this opportunity.

DISCUSSION: Alexandria was notified in March 2012 that it was eligible for this grant opportunity. City staff members attended required applicant briefings and have submitted the pre-application for this grant. This grant would provide up to 75 percent of the eligible costs of each project. A 25 percent non-federal cost share match is required. In-kind services or individual contributions can be a part of this match. The Commonwealth may provide some of the match funds for a project.

City Council previously authorized \$100,000 for a rain gauge and flood warning system after Tropical Storm Lee caused road closures and serious flash flooding in several locations of the City. That system included flood and rain gauges and advance flood warning signs in four locations (see Attachment). The gauges and signs are scheduled to be installed no later than July 2012. City Council funding will provide flood and rain gauges at four locations: Eisenhower Avenue at Cameron Run; Van Dorn Street at Backlick Run; Van Dorn Street at Holmes Run; and, Holmes Run at Glen Hill Park, N. Chambliss Street. Also funded by City Council will be advance flood rain gauges and warning signs on Eisenhower Avenue at Mill Road and at Bluestone Road. This grant would provide \$25,000 for the installation of additional rain gauges and flood warning devices in the City to warn the community when flooding is about to occur in those areas. This grant opportunity will allow the City to purchase and install an additional rain gauge station and flash flood warning signs on South Pickett Street near Van Dorn Street and along the Holmes Run Greenway in the tunnels near Interstate 395 and Van Dorn Street.

The grant application is due to VDEM on July 31, 2012 and, if approved by VDEM, will then be submitted to FEMA on November 1, 2012. FEMA will then approve or deny our application.

FISCAL IMPACT: The Fire Department's Office of Emergency Management is requesting grant funding not to exceed \$25,000 in total. If awarded, there is a 25 percent match requirement which will be provided by in-kind staff time and from the Office of Emergency Management operations budget. City staff will administer the grant.

ATTACHMENT:

Attachment: Illustrative map of proposed flood warning signs and rain gauges

STAFF:

Adam K. Thiel, Fire Chief

Richard Baier, P.E., LEED AP, Director, Transportation and Environmental Services

Yon Lambert, AICP, Deputy Director, Transportation and Environmental Services

Mark Penn, Emergency Management Coordinator

Attachment 1: Rain Gauge/Warning Sign Locations

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