

# 2020 Annual Report

## COBB COUNTY GOVERNMENT



# From the Chairman



In a feature story published by Georgia Trend in 2019, the magazine called Cobb “an economic behemoth in Georgia.” From our business diversity and economic development, to top-notch schools, entertainment and leisure activities, we’re excited that others recognize what we’ve always known — “Cobb seems to truly have it all.”

Residents and business owners want to know leaders are committed to making their community a better place to live. There are many reasons why Cobb County offers true value, including the lowest taxes in metro Atlanta. Another great reason is stability and one of my top priorities is maintaining our current General Fund millage rate for the 2021 budget. This is possible because of continued tax digest growth, which indicates a strong economy and a well-run county. All these factors entice businesses and quality job growth to our county. In 2019, Cobb welcomed 18 new companies or expansions, representing \$325 million in investment.

Because of strong leadership and a clear vision, we covered our general fund shortfall, appropriated \$14 million toward needed capital replacement and maintenance and lowered our TANS borrowing cost by \$30 million in 2019. All three bond rating agencies confirmed the fiscal responsibility and stability of Cobb County Government by reaffirming our AAA bond rating for both the county and the water system. The rating agencies also removed the negative outlook from our rating last summer, confirming both our forward-thinking actions and Cobb’s economic future.

An important part of maintaining economic stability is long-range planning to foresee and address issues that inevitably arise from growth. One example was our ability to absorb the development associated with the opening of Truist Park and the Battery, including effectively addressing traffic control issues. Another example of long-range planning was the seamless coordination among county government, organizations and business associations in preparation for hosting Super Bowl events in February 2019. Not only did we effectively manage the large influx of visitors, our Cobb County International Airport also set records during Super Bowl weekend. Cobb residents continued to realize the value of voter-approved Special Purpose Local Option Sales Tax





projects in 2019, as North Cobb Regional Library opened to enthusiastic crowds. Many renovations of parks and facilities were also completed or started in 2019 using SPLOST funds. Additionally, the Board of Commissioners approved funding for a new medical examiner facility, the purchase of a new police department headquarters and construction of a new training facility.

The willingness to listen and value input from our community are qualities that set Cobb apart. For example, CobbLinc will celebrate its 30th anniversary in 2020. The transit system carries more than 2.5 million riders annually and is growing. We heard the public's call for additional Saturday and Sunday operating hours to help service workers and we added those hours in 2019. We will continue to use innovation to provide more connectivity, including alternative services like partnerships with rideshare companies. During my time as a Marine, I learned the first principle of leadership is taking care of your people. The primary reason Cobb is considered an excellent place to live, work and play is because of the outstanding customer service provided by county leaders and employees. Our employees continually find

ways to work more effectively and efficiently. This is evidenced by the fact that although the Cobb's population has increased by more than 17,000 since 2015, we have less county employees now than we did then. Working with our Board of Commissioners, we implemented a much-deserved raise for county employees and a higher raise for our sworn public safety officers in 2019. Recognizing the importance of recruiting and retaining quality staff in our public safety departments, we recently passed and funded a step and grade system for public safety. We've also been working with local banks who are partnered with the Federal Home Loan Bank to provide grants that help county employees become homeowners.

Cobb County Government reflects the compassion of its people and we are making strides to help the homeless population in our county. We are creating a framework for organizations and individuals to collaborate, develop and share best practices to address the challenges facing our homeless.

As we look toward 2020, we must decide what we want Cobb County to look like at the end of the decade and how we will best get there. This will include anticipating needs and addressing the increasing pressing problems of traffic in the county. Many transportation projects and improvements will be included in the 2022 SPLOST that voters will weigh in on during the upcoming year's referendum. Cobb will also remain actively-involved in regional efforts to improve transportation.

We are entering a new decade and the state of our county has never been better. I look forward to continuing our work together toward making Cobb a place that truly has it all.

# Keli Gambrell, *Commissioner, District 1*



I swore under oath of office that my main goals would be responsible budgeting, development and leadership. During my first year, we worked toward these goals by taking an in depth look at how various departments function and work together to make Cobb County great. By asking tough questions and challenging budget and spending procedures, I am ensuring the most judicious use of tax payer dollars.

It has been a pleasure to work with my constituents to address infrastructure challenges – from pot holes to traffic signal timing to flashing red lights not working properly. My slogan of “None of us is smarter than all of us” is a daily reminder that we should all work together to best address concerns in District One.

Public service calls for commissioners to work on behalf of their communities. This responsibility draws leaders who are willing to dedicate their time and talents to make a difference in the lives of others and to accept the challenges of their local communities by serving their constituents. This year, I implemented a structure that provides for professional management. Whether it’s increasing economic development, preserving local culture, addressing critical infrastructure or improving the efficiency of local government, we should have a clear understanding of our vision and be able to articulate and implement it. Being innovative and really examining a problem help develop multiple creative solutions.

Because I take pride in being very approachable, I have an open-door policy and thrive off getting to know my constituents. This helps ensure our community stays informed about important projects and issues in the district and Cobb as a whole. In the coming year, you will have the opportunity to attend town halls that will give you a better understanding of how the county functions – and the passion county employees have in serving you.

I fully embraced the challenges that stood before me as I began my first term and I look forward to continuing to work together with county staff and our wonderful residents to leave a lasting legacy for the next generation.



# Bob Ott, *Commissioner, District 2*



This past year has been an exciting year for District Two. First pitch for the Braves third season in Cobb County was March 28, 2019, and the season ending was the Braves 54th season in Atlanta, 149th overall, and clinching the playoff spot for the second consecutive National League East Championship. Marketplace at Terrell Mill broke ground this year and it's beginning to look like the vision that was put into place in the Powers Ferry Road Master Plan. Coming soon will be small shops and restaurants, storage facility, MarketPlace Vista apartments and a Kroger.

Restaurant Row, that has been sitting vacant for many years, is now under development for two apartment complexes and the return of the Rose and Crown Tavern.

Another notable and very important event was the Vining's Fountain was returned to the Pace House. Vinings Village Civic Club celebrated its 100th anniversary in December with a fountain dedication.

I would like to give a great deal of thanks and gratitude to our District Two road crew. They have done an outstanding job keeping our medians and right of ways cleared. They were also extremely instrumental in assisting us with removing a clogged pipe on Columns Drive which was causing extreme flooding in the area.

JOSH Johnson Ferry/Shallowford Road Small Study area has been completed and will soon be ready to disseminate to the public. Thank you to everyone in the community who work tirelessly in getting this study right.

Smyrna gave Mayor Max Bacon a wonderful retirement celebration. I have enjoyed working closely with him on many issues and always appreciated his candor. I look forward to working with the newly-elected mayor, Derek Norton.

It has been a very good year for Cobb County and I look forward to continuing into 2020 serving you. It takes you the community of District Two working together with us to build our strong foundation. I look forward to hosting more town hall meetings and working with all of you on your vision of District Two.



# JoAnn Birrell, *Commissioner, District 3*



Thank you for the honor of serving you as your District Three Commissioner. It has truly been exciting as we look back on our accomplishments of the previous year. Veterans and public safety are close to my heart.

In the past, we had the privilege of partnering with the Georgia Department of Veterans Service to honor our Vietnam War veterans. This year, we partnered with them again to honor more than 200 Korean War veterans. Each veteran received a certificate, lapel pin and medal specially commissioned by the Korean Consulate. To serve these veterans and many more, a new VA clinic opened on Roswell Road. I'm proud that as a board, we approved the Veterans Memorial project. Once completed, the Veterans Memorial monument will stand as a reminder of our commitment to those who have served. I'm overwhelmingly grateful to our active and veteran servicemen and women who sacrifice to ensure our freedoms.

Our Public Safety team and other county employees are deserving of our appreciation as well. In the 2020 budget, we approved a 7 percent increase for public safety and a 4 percent increase for other employees. Their teamwork provided the opportunity for me to meet wonderful District Three residents at the Faith Forums, Coffees with Your Cop and our very own Fish with Your Commish! Thank you to the businesses and constituents that support these monthly and quarterly gatherings.

At the Fish with Your Commish, families, neighbors and I enjoyed District Three's newest passive park at Ebenezer and Canton Road. The park was a success with our community and thanks to you and our PARKS team, we have a master plan for the park. We opened the long-awaited Mabry Park which has proven to be another gem in our community. While we added new greenspace, we updated others. Aviation Park is a place where kids can play, laugh and learn because of the visionaries at the Town Center Alliance, Town Center CID and PARKS. Park amenities were added for more play and learn opportunities as well as a new inviting sign for residents and visitors. Sweat Mountain Dog Park was refreshed as well. Our forever friends have expanded play areas and water fountains while their parents have new benches and areas to walk their fur kids.



Superior Pets for Patriotic Vets received another donation to pair our veterans with companion animals. Superior Plumbing and Cobb County Animal Services has been integral to finding forever homes for the pets in the shelter. In 2019, more than 50 veterans were paired with their forever friends. Since the program started in 2017, we have paired more than 125 veterans and their forever friends at no charge. We look forward to many more adoptions!

Cobb is the best place to live, play and work. None of these opportunities would be possible without economic development efforts. Cobb's International Airport hosted Super Bowl LIII travelers. During the travel period, there were 900 arrivals and departures and 145 aircraft parked. I applaud the teamwork between the airport, the Cobb Chamber and Cobb Travel and Tourism.

District Three saw the opening of the Georgia Tech Research Institute's Cobb Campus which will provide leading edge research and job opportunities. A sundry assortment of new businesses opened around the district from retail operations to manufacturers. We had numerous entrepreneurs who sought to make an impact.

This year's How to do Business with Cobb seminar set a record; we had 100 current and future business owners in attendance. Cobb's Purchasing Department team, other county employees and Cobb Schools are invaluable to this effort. While we offer training on how to become a vendor with Cobb, Kennesaw State University elevated its profile to become one of the premiere colleges in the state. With this, comes the need for more student housing.

With this growth and expansion, it was time to revisit the County Code. Stakeholders including neighborhoods around the university, KSU leadership, Public Safety, Community Development and I collaborated to adopt the Purpose-Built Student Housing code. It was great to work together to create a viable solution.

This activity must have the infrastructure to support it. Our DOT team completed the Sandy Plains/Kinjac Road medians project, began construction of the Post Oak Tritt and Hembree Road roundabout and began and completed several sidewalk projects. In 2019, Cobb County Water was recognized by J.D. Power as the top-rated water department in the nation for its commitment to customer service, price and conservation. As the liaison commissioner for the Water Department, I had the privilege to work with phenomenal Cobb employees.

Sadly, we said goodbye to a former coworker, mentor, and friend, Tim Lee. I am grateful that I had the opportunity to succeed him in District Three and work with him as the chairman. In appreciation of his service to Cobb County and his passion for seniors, we renamed the East Cobb Senior Center to the Tim D. Lee Senior Center.

2019 has had its successes and challenges. At the same time, we have a great deal to be proud of and thankful for. In my third term as your public servant, I am eager to advocate for such projects as a new police precinct, an updated Gritters library (2016 SPLOST) and much more. I ask for your support and eagerly anticipate all the opportunities that 2020 will offer. A huge thank you to all who have made these accomplishments possible.

# Lisa Cupid, *Commissioner, District 4*



I am grateful to serve Cobb County for another year.

My office kicked 2019 by holding our inaugural Resolution Run in January to support Family Life Restoration Center and the fifth anniversary of the Riverside Epicenter. Over the summer, we held a Job Readiness Workshop for veterans with disabilities and hosted Cobb County's inaugural International Festival, which attracted more than 3,500 visitors thanks to Cobb PARKS. Cobb County leadership also continued the Cobb 101 program, envisioned by our office, to better educate residents and stakeholders about county operations.

District Four experienced an unprecedented decrease in crime in 2019 following a push for community policing and increased use of technology.

We applauded the opening of Cobb Police's Community Affairs Office and the debut of Cobb Fire and Emergency Services' indoor physical ability test facility off Austell Road. Cobb Police also began renovations to the old BJ's off East-West Connector for a new training facility that will house space for community meetings and events. Efforts are underway to rebuild Fire Station 7 off Hicks Road and to renovate Fire Stations 22 off Austell Road and Fire Station 23 off New Macland. Emergency Management, 911, Information Services, DOT and PARKS staff teamed up to add emergency markers along our Silver Comet Trail to make this amenity safer for patrons. With respect to transportation, transit riders scored big with the addition of Sunday bus service. Proponents of transit also received affirmation in a study that revealed Cobb residents would support additional funding to expand transit in a countywide referendum. Our neighboring Douglas County launched its transit service working with Cobb to connect riders to employment and economic opportunities in both jurisdictions.

District Four and District One happily welcomed the announcement of the state's overdue expansion of Macland Road, which will tie into District Four's intersection improvement project at Macland Road and New Macland. Other significant road projects include safety and operational improvements along Riverview Road, intersection improvements at Hicks and Concord and intersection improvements at Factory Shoals and Riverside Parkway. District Four was awarded funding to extend a multi-use trail from the Silver Comet Depot down Mableton Parkway to Lee Industrial. We also received notice



that Mableton will be the pilot location for creating a regional greenway along the Chattahoochee River.

One cannot forget that 2019 was the year our Covered Bridge warning system devices kept the bridge from being hit for the longest period since I have entered office. While the vote is still out on its attractiveness, the devices do indeed work!

With passage of the budget last year, additional DOT crews helped better address right-of-way mowing and clean up. They have drastically reduced thousands of outstanding work orders in less than a year's time.

In 2019, District Four led the way with the greatest number of zoning cases among districts. We also permitted close to 3 million square feet in commercial space. Business Walks, in partnership with the Cobb Chamber, kicked off in District Four and the county updated its Tax Allocation District policy to better support development in challenging areas.

Collaborative efforts paid off when Cobb Police, the County Attorney's Office, Cobb Fire, Community Development and Public Health worked together to address challenges at apartments along Riverside Parkway through the county's Public Safety Nuisance Abatement Program. Multiple units in disrepair were addressed while external conditions of the properties were improved. New, responsible owners of multiple apartments and new state legislation to address retaliatory eviction showed signs of promise for tenants in the area.

Public amenities are our strength in south Cobb

and Cobb PARKS staff did an excellent job with the installation of terraced seating at Mable House Barnes Amphitheatre, which increased the venue's capacity, viability and attractiveness. We also added an all-abilities playground to the Windy Hill Community Center that is now open to the public. Milford Park and Nickajack Park saw improvements and engineering and design kicked off for Stout Park, Old Clarkdale Park and the park along Discovery Boulevard. Furthermore, Cobb's regional libraries expanded to include Sunday hours thanks to the passage of the 2019 budget. Commissioners also voted unanimously to end senior fees.

Cobb and Douglas Public Health staff secured funding to help address disparate maternal health outcomes in the district and also began an effort to bring stakeholders together to address the increasing prevalence of AIDS and HIV across the county.

Community groups continue to shine in south Cobb with the efforts of existing civic organizations and new energy in the Horseshoe Bend and Sanders Road areas.

As always, it is the people of District Four who continue to make our county a great place to live. District Four could not advance without the participation of residents, advocacy of community leaders, strength of our businesses and stewardship of our many stakeholders.

While we recognizably have room to grow and improve into the best area we can imagine for Cobb, I am honored to continue working together with you to achieve our goals.

# Economy

The 2019 tax digest was the highest in Cobb County history at \$39 billion in property value. This represented an increase of just more than 6 percent when compared to the 2018 tax digest.

The Cobb County Economic Development Division's Entrepreneurship and Innovation Incentive Program was approved by the Cobb Board of Commissioners in February 2018. This program was created by the State of Georgia to encourage development and is funded by the Development Authority of Cobb County.

The program also promotes the public good and general welfare through trade, commerce, industry and employment opportunities for Cobb. The authority is led by a board of volunteers and is solely funded by service and loan fees related primarily to loan/bond programs administered by DACC.

A program applicant must submit an incentive application, including an extensive business plan,

budget and financial allocation analysis. In June 2019, the Cobb Board of Commissioners approved grants to three county businesses—VNDE Blockchain, Clutch Creations and Brilliant Coworking—funded through the Entrepreneurship and Innovation Incentive Program.

All three recipients have used the funds toward team expansion, marketing and service expansion. The Economic Development team will follow up with grant recipients in 2020 to assess what they have accomplished with the support from Cobb.

The Cobb County Economic Development Division also instituted Business Walks, an innovative business retention and expansion program, in 2019. The program allows economic development groups to visit four-to-six businesses a day per team, covering more ground than traditional retention and expansion programs.

Leveraging one-on-one interviews and facility tours, teams gather feedback from companies on key matters, such as community engagement and services, opportunity for growth, workforce needs and current challenges.

This program increases awareness of services offered by local and county organizations and identifies businesses that may require further assistance. For business owners and operators, meeting with community leadership and development groups allows their voices to be heard and ensures a prosperous business climate.

Cobb's Economic Development team now has access to a powerful fiscal impact analysis tool, LOCI.





Developed by the Georgia Tech Economic Development Institute, LOCI is used “to run up to a 20-year projection of the change in local government revenues and expenditures due to a new or expanding firm locating in the jurisdiction.” Users may also choose to include monetary incentives in the program to gauge what impact economic incentive packages have on the fiscal impact forecast.

LOCI has been used for two projects thus far, including a multi-use development and potential hotel project, both located near the Cumberland-Galleria area.

Moving forward, the Economic Development staff will use this powerful forecasting tool to help gauge the fiscal impact for potential and upcoming developments in Cobb County.

Cobb’s economic development efforts included business recruitment and retention incentives for high-capacity employers and revenue builders in

Cobb. Because of and Cobb’s Targeted Industry Incentive Program, a consumer-centric health management company relocated from Santa Barbara, Calif. to unincorporated Cobb. Bio IQ is a healthcare-based business estimated to provide a \$3.5 million capital investment to the county, bringing up to 500 new jobs to our local economy.

Brasfield & Gorrie, a national construction firm, qualified for the Business Retention Incentive Program. After continuous operation in Cobb County for 16 years and classification as a growth/core cluster, this business applied for the program in hopes to expand their footprint and services within the county.

## Sample Cobb Property Tax Bill

Homestead Exemptions:

\$10,000 County BOC / \$10,000 Schools

Based on residential home with market value of \$300,000

**County Schools (BOE) \$2,079.00**

**Maintenance & Operations \$2,079.00**

**County Government (BOC) \$1,289.40**

**General Fund (M&O) \$930.60**

**Fire District Fund \$343.20**

**Debt Service Fund \$15.60**

**TOTAL \$1,289.40**

**(BOE) 61.72% \$2,079.00**

**(BOC) 38.28% \$1,289.40**

**TOTAL \$3,368.40**

Other exemptions include BOC Floating Homestead Exemption & BOE Exemption for homeowners over 62

# Economy

They estimated 462 new jobs to be created in support of our local economy.

Floor & Décor, a multi-channel American specialty retailer of hard surface flooring and accessories, participated in the Business Retention Incentive Program.

After operating in Cobb County for 18 years, this program assisted its relocation, requiring them to remain in Cobb. An estimated 420 new jobs will be created because of this corporate relocation.

Home Depot USA, Inc, a big-box retailer of construction and home-improvement goods, qualified for the Special Economic Impact Incentive Program. Resulting from a corporate headquarters expansion, 700 new jobs are estimated to support the local workforce. This expansion will provide an estimated \$42 million capital investment to the county.

Edison Chastain Office, LLC qualified for the Special Economic Impact Incentive Program and will construct an office development in the Town Center area. This



project is an estimated \$35 million capital investment and will create more than 150 new jobs.

A dual-branded hotel project qualified for the Targeted Industry Incentive Program. Featuring 260 rooms with meeting space, restaurant and rooftop bar, this development will bring a capital investment of \$70 million and an estimated 70 new jobs.

Business License compliance officials collected more than a half million dollars in revenue in only a few months by focusing their efforts in the field locating and addressing unregistered businesses.

This summer endeavor resulted in an additional \$501,274 in revenue for the general fund.

Business License staff saved an estimated \$10,000 in printing and postage costs by distributing about 4,000 renewal notices via email to online-eligible businesses and streamlining the information mailed to the remaining 20,000 online-eligible renewals.



# Environment

Cobb County Water System continues to provide excellent water and wastewater service to about 185,000 retail accounts within the county. It also acts as a regional wastewater treatment partner for portions of several surrounding counties.

In 2019, Cobb was recognized as the number one water utility in the nation. Based on research conducted by an independent data analytics and consumer intelligence company, Cobb Water System ranked highest in overall satisfaction among customers of 89 water utilities that deliver water to at least 400,000 customers.

Overall satisfaction was measured by examining 33 attributes in six factors including delivery of service, price, conservation, billing and payment, communications and customer service. After ranking third nationally in 2018, Cobb scored highest in the ratings for 2019.

Cobb Water System also earned several honors from the Georgia Association of Water Professionals during 2019. GAWP Wastewater Awards recognize water reclamation facilities that have had no permit violations during the preceding calendar year.

Noonday Creek, RL Sutton and South Cobb water reclamation facilities won the Gold Award for consistent permit compliance. Northwest Water Reclamation Facility won the Platinum Award for 17 consecutive years of complete and consistent permit compliance.

Cobb won the 2019 Wastewater Collection System Excellence Award - Gold Award for excellence in management, maintenance, and operation of its collection systems. Cobb also won the 2019 Water Distribution



System Excellence Award - Gold Award for excellence in management, operation, and maintenance of its water distribution systems.

Because of its superior public education programming in water conservation/water supply, wastewater/sewer and watershed/stormwater, Cobb was honored with the 2019 Comprehensive Education Program of Excellence Award. Cobb Water System is the only utility to achieve this distinction for education programming excellence in all three categories. In October, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency presented Cobb Water System with a 2019 WaterSense Sustained Excellence Award for its demonstrated efforts to reduce water waste. This is the third consecutive year Cobb earned the program's highest recognition.

Cobb Water System maintained its AAA bond rating from all three of the top bond rating agencies. Fitch IBCA, Standard & Poors and Moody's Investor Services each renewed its AAA bond rating in July.



According to Moody's, the AAA rating reflects the water system's large service area with strong income and wealth levels, strong debt service coverage and adequate liquidity and manageable debt burden and future capital needs.

Cobb is the first water/sewer utility in the country to achieve this distinction and uses the status to obtain lower interest rates on borrowed funds. This saves the county and customers millions of dollars in debt service.

To improve countywide water and wastewater services, Cobb Water System assumed ownership of Powder Springs' water and sewer system in June. This added more than 7,000 new customers at a purchase cost of \$5.5 million, which will be paid over 10 years at a rate of \$550,000 per year.

With a focus on being environmentally-friendly, the Solid Waste department was rebranded and new positions were added to Keep Cobb Beautiful.

The department saw a reduction in complaints on the transfer station and absorbed complaints about a

private trash collection company. KCB won many state and national awards, including Affiliate of the Year and honors in recycling, litter prevention, innovation and overall community improvement.

KCB Executive Director Kimberly White was named State Director of the Year, District Four Commissioner Lisa Cupid was honored as Elected Official of the Year and Dr. Jonathan Jenkins was honored as State Public Works Employee of the Year.

### Metro Atlanta Millage Comparisons

| KEY             | 2015  | 2016  | 2017  | 2018  | 2019  |
|-----------------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| <b>Atlanta*</b> | 22.20 | 22.53 | 22.63 | --    | 20.35 |
| <b>DeKalb</b>   | 20.81 | 20.81 | 20.81 | 20.81 | 20.81 |
| <b>Fulton*</b>  | 15.36 | 10.80 | 15.49 | --    | 14.06 |
| <b>Gwinnett</b> | 13.58 | 13.18 | 13.51 | 13.32 | 13.32 |
| <b>COBB</b>     | 10.51 | 9.85  | 9.85  | 11.45 | 11.45 |

\*North Fulton County \*City of Atlanta within Fulton County  
 \*2018 Millage rates for Fulton County unpublished at this time  
 Figures are without school & state taxes



The Cobb County Sheriff's Office and its employees work closely with schools across the county to encourage positive interactions with law enforcement officers.

In 2019, the Sheriff's Office partnered with Bells Ferry Elementary School during the North Georgia State Fair and raised \$5,000. These funds will be used to make security and safety improvements at the school.

As a long-term partner with the Georgia Special Olympics, Sheriff's Office staff hosted several events to raise money for these special athletes, including the 5k Torch Run and Cleaning for a Cause.

Social media has proven to be an excellent way to keep residents informed and show them unique aspects of county government.

## Metro Area Sales Tax Comparison

|                 |                            |
|-----------------|----------------------------|
| <b>Atlanta</b>  | <b>8.9%</b>                |
| <b>DeKalb</b>   | <b>8% (Not Atlanta)</b>    |
| <b>Fulton</b>   | <b>7.75% (Not Atlanta)</b> |
| <b>Gwinnett</b> | <b>6%</b>                  |
| <b>COBB</b>     | <b>6%</b>                  |

The Sheriff's Office expanded its social media presence by creating individual Instagram accounts for three of its canines: Tank, Bandit and Athos. The trio have almost 5,000 followers and are fan favorites.

In January 2019, Cobb Sheriff's Office hosted the Georgia Sheriff Associations Winter Training Conference at the Cobb Galleria Centre.

With more than 140 sheriffs in attendance, Cobb had the opportunity to meet with state leaders and law enforcement peers while learning about new technologies, legislative updates and best practices to deter crime.

Col. Sonya Allen was appointed as chief deputy for the Sheriff's Office in 2019, following the retirement of Milton Beck. Allen has the distinction of being the agency's first African American chief deputy. She has faithfully served with the Sheriff's Office since 1992.

To provide easier access for disabled residents, the Law Library was relocated to the fourth floor of Cobb's Superior Court. Additional office and courtroom space was also built out for senior judges and the District Attorney's office.



The project, completed in June, represents 21,500 square feet of improved space with a total budget of \$1,613,205. Funds from the 2005 and 2016 SPLOST, as well as funding contributed by affected judicial departments, made these needed improvements possible.

In 2019, Magistrate Court offices were relocated to newly-renovated space at 32 Waddell St., Marietta, greatly expanding office and courtroom areas with enhanced public access. The project was finished in July at a cost of \$3,175,173.

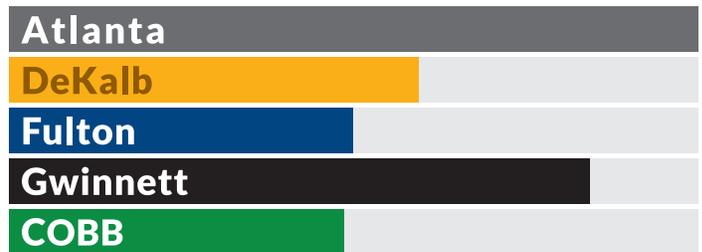
In preparation for the seating of an additional Superior Court judge, the fifth floor of Superior Court will be partially built out for courtroom and office space by July 2020. The budget has been set at \$1.5M for this 4,600-square-foot renovation.

Information Services staff helped our courts expedite procedures by implementing an electronic signature process for e-filed orders for all state court division

one judges. Web-based e-subpoena applications were also implemented.

Former Cobb Judicial Circuit Magistrate Judge Joyette Holmes made history in July when she was sworn-in as Cobb's first African American and first female district attorney. She was appointed by Gov. Brian Kemp to replace Vic Reynolds, who left to become the executive director of the Georgia Bureau of Investigation.

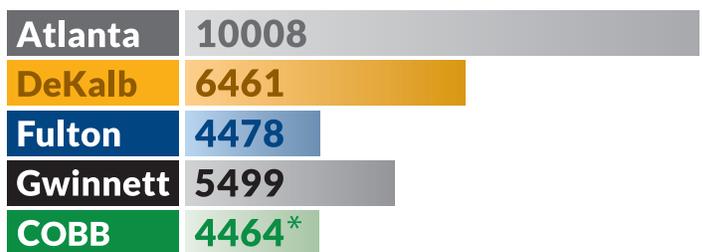
### Total Operating & Capital Budgets



|                  |                  |
|------------------|------------------|
| City of Atlanta  | \$ 2,204,248,554 |
| DeKalb County*   | \$ 1,328,318,898 |
| Fulton County*   | \$ 1,109,772,745 |
| Gwinnett County* | \$ 1,823,737,994 |
| COBB COUNTY      | \$ 1,048,899,269 |

\*FY 19 amounts, FY 20 not yet available

### Full-time Government Employees



\*Cobb figures = FY 20, other jurisdictions = FY 19



Cobb's PARKS department was honored as the 2019 GRPA Agency of the Year for departments serving 150,000 and more residents.

Cobb became the first Georgia county to establish an Emergency Locator Marker Program. This is a collaboration among Cobb PARKS, Cobb Police, Emergency Management Agency, Cobb DOT, Cobb Fire and Cobb GIS. These emergency makers will eventually be placed on more than 90 miles of trails throughout the county, increasing the safety of trail users.

The new state-of-the-art Jim Miller Park Event Center enjoyed its first year in operation. The 44,000-square-foot facility has hosted many events and activities, including the inaugural Cobb County International Festival. This fun event celebrated the richness of different cultures and brought in more than 90 vendors and more than 3,000 patrons.

The event center also hosted advance voting and has also become a favorite location for wedding receptions, Quinceañeras, conferences and banquets.

Cobb purchased and installed high-quality sound



equipment at Mable House Barnes Amphitheatre after renting this equipment each season. Savings will be realized after about four or five years.

Additional seating capacity was also added behind the covered seats at the amphitheatre. A series of terraces built into the hillside feature synthetic turf surfaces allowing patrons to sit on blankets or lawn chairs that they bring. More than 600 people can sit comfortably in this new seating area.

Mable House Barnes Amphitheatre welcomed 50,000 guests to many new programs and hosted 56 events in the operating season that ran from April through November.

The amphitheatre also experienced a second year of tremendous growth with the addition of several concerts from national promoters. The impact of this continued growth accounted for a total increase in revenue of 197 percent from the previous year for a total gross income more than of \$457,400. This increase has allowed the amphitheatre to break even





and show a profit of \$170,955 for the first time in operational history. Total ticket sales for all events in the 2019 operating season exceeded \$2.2 million.

Always looking to provide quality events and activities, the amphitheatre debuted the highly-successful Movies, Bands & Brews series in 2019. These free events offered our patrons a local band that played a musical set prior to the screening of a nostalgic movie that paired with the musical act.

The Theatre Project broke ticket sales records with its spring production of “Mamma Mia!” at the amphitheatre, grossing more than \$19,000 over four performances in three days.

In 2019, Mable House Arts Center hosted its inaugural Spring Arts Festival, which featured more than 40 artists, crafters and organizations, live entertainment and food trucks. About 1,000 participants enjoyed the festivities. The center also celebrated its 20th anniversary.

2019 was a transformative year for the Jennie T.

Anderson Theatre. Audience numbers remained consistent for all county sponsored events and every performance in the JTA concert series sold out. Its summer camps remained the largest summer theatre program in the county. Anderson Theatre also made national headlines when it announced the 2020 musicals-in-concert series.

Cobb Civic Center staff scheduled aggressively in 2019, adding 16 new events to the calendar. With this expansion, the center opened its doors to more than 4,500 new patrons. One of the year’s biggest events was the Women’s College Wrestling Association National Championship hosted by Life University. There were 21 universities and colleges in attendance with more than 300 competitors over two days.

Sewell Mill Library and Cultural Center hosted its second annual Minicon in July. This comic and popular culture themed celebration event offered opportunities for enthusiasts to participate in a cosplay contest, attend panel discussions, gaming,



shop vendors and view films. This continued partnership between Cobb County PARKS and libraries capitalizes on the strengths of both to offer unique experiences.

The Special Olympics Georgia Indoor Winter Games were held in Cobb for the 27th consecutive year. More than 2,000 people attended the games, including coaches, volunteers, athletes, sponsors and spectators.

In 2019, the voter-approved Parks Bond Program closed with the purchase of the last tract of park land. In total, Cobb PARKS added 406 acres to our inventory at a cost of \$24.9 million.

Mabry Park opened to enthusiastic crowds in May. This long-awaited park brings passive recreation in a natural setting to the northeast corner of the county. The park includes walking trails with pavilions and benches, a restroom/maintenance building, a destination playground near the parking lot, a community garden and an improved lake for fishing and observ-

ing wildlife. This project was funded by SPLOST. Rehabilitation of the historic Green/Bullard house in the Green Meadows Preserve at the corner of Dallas Highway and Old Hamilton Road has been completed. The structure has been carefully restored to highlight early construction phases dating from the 1830s and the 1890s. PARKS will program the house as a historical museum that will be available for guided tours.

Environmental education impacted more than 6,000 youth in 2019, through more than 50 educational programs including tours, workshops and camps. The programs focused on outdoor education and included workshops by county school system and county PARKS staff.

Cobb facilities and parks hosted many athletic events throughout the year, including soccer tournaments, softball competitions, baseball tournaments, football leagues, lacrosse tournaments and the USA/BMX Dixieland Nationals. The National Pentathlon was also held in October at Larry Bell Park where 50 athletes from 15 different countries competed in five events.

The adult softball program continues to be the largest program in the state. 2019 had 225 teams with 3,825 participants competing in four parks for the league championships. Al Bishop Softball complex also saw more than 12,000 softball players competing in weekend tournaments from March to November.

Cobb built a new all-inclusive playground at Windy Hill Community Center, upgraded many parks and facilities and opened an extension of the Bob Callan Trail. Top dressing sand was added to all the fields at Al Bishop Softball Complex and many other soccer and baseball





fields were also renovated. Construction will begin soon on a small barn and storage area at Hyde Farm. This structure will support the county's longstanding plan for operating this historic property as a working farm, providing educational opportunities for school children and others.

Engineering design has been completed for development of a parking area, small restroom and walking trails on a portion of 103 acres of property along the Chattahoochee River on Discovery Boulevard. Construction of this future park will begin in spring 2020. It will provide interpretive signage and access to this natural setting along the river and the extensive Civil War era earthworks that survive there.

Violet F. Stout Park and the adjacent Wallace Family Farm at Stout Park combine to form 305 acres of forest and rolling pasture land in the southwestern corner of Cobb. The Board of Commissioners approved a park master plan in May and awarded a contract for engineering design for construction of phase one features in this future equestrian facility.

At the request of Cobb Public Safety, 26 automatic license plate readers were installed in 13 different parks located around the county. These units record vehicles entering and leaving park roadways and can aid police in solving and preventing crime in our parks and surrounding areas. The units are solar powered and communicate searchable data to the police department via a cellular connection. Cobb PARKS has no access to this data.

In July, the operations division of the PARKS department implemented Cartegraph Operations Management System, an asset management software that tracks work to efficiently maintain infrastructure and resources. OMS helps staff better manage assets and streamline decision-making with a comprehensive analytics dashboard tracking work and labor costs.

Since implementation, about 36,950 tasks have been completed and more than 59,500 labor hours have been logged. Thirty-four trail miles in the county have also been mapped and more than 5,000 assets have been collected using a combination of overhead imagery and field collection methods.

PARKS' Equipment Management division completed 1,414 repair requests of which 417 were field repairs. Ninety-six percent of these requests were completed on the same day.

CivicRec is the software used to manage registration for PARKS' activities and events. In fiscal year 2019, almost 2,600 classes, leagues and camps were available for online registration and 19,655 participants registered. Our aquatic centers also had more than 106,000 admissions.

# Public Safety

Since the program's inception, Cobb Emergency Management Agency staff has trained more than 3,000 residents for the Community Emergency Response Team. In 2019, the first Cobb Hispanic Community CERT training was conducted in Spanish, adding another component to EMA volunteer programs which encompasses faith-based, hearing-impaired and civic communities.

These community volunteers donated nearly 1,800 hours to various outreach activities throughout the year. This support included American Red Cross shelter training, Cobb Police SWAT and CNT training, annual active shooter trainings and outreach events such as the ELM Festival and Truck-a-Palooza.

EMA staff engaged more than 4,000 community members through preparedness presentations this year with faith-based organizations, homeowners' associations, senior centers and private organizations.

To better support volunteer events and outreach, a cargo van was purchased in 2019 using Emergency Management Performance Grant funding. This vehicle carries



generators, training aids and other necessary equipment to support EMA and county events or trainings. EMA staff updated emergency plans, including the Continuity of Operations Plan in partnership with Information Services and BoldPlanning. In 2019, EMA added the current Local Emergency Operations Plan to the county web portal so employees can easily review and update the plans. This was funded with the Emergency Management Performance Grant.

EMA staff expanded the Emergency Location Marker System in coordination with Geographic Information Services, Public Safety and PARKS. To better educate the community on use of the system, a festival was held at Allatoona Creek Park in August. More than 300 people participated in a bike race, geo-caching and other activities. EMA staff developed educational materials for distribution and ELM signage using Emergency Management Performance Grant funding. These items continue to be distributed at preparedness presentations and community outreach events.

To improve public safety radio communications



coverage capabilities, E-911 Communications staff installed radio equipment at two radio tower sites in bordering counties. The first was installed at mile marker 281 in Bartow County and the second at Austell Gas in Douglas County. Both were part of the 2016 SPLOST Public Safety Countywide Improvements Projects and cost approximately \$4 million. Installation at both sites was completed in September.

E-911 dispatchers must quickly gather vital information when speaking to someone requesting police assistance. To improve quality and consistency, the E-911 Communications Department implemented Emergency Police Dispatch Protocols in April. These protocols are set forth by the International Academy of Emergency Dispatch, a nonprofit standard-setting organization promoting safe and effective emergency dispatch services worldwide. Total costs for this project were about \$244,000.

To enhance communication and ensure synergy between the quality assurance and training divisions, E-911 added a quality assurance/training operations supervisor position in October. The position was funded through reclassification of existing vacancies. This hiring is a component of the department's overall goal of earning training center accreditation through the Accredited Center of Excellence, which is part of the National/International Academies of Emergency Dispatch. The accreditation is slated for May 2020.

In 2019, Cobb Fire and Emergency Services responded to 63,517 calls for service. These calls include fire, medical, hazmat and technical rescue incidents.

Staff continues to see improvement in the number of patients who survive sudden cardiac arrest. In 2019, 500 people were treated for sudden cardiac arrest. While final survival data is not yet available, Cobb County's 2018 survival rates were significantly higher than the national average. Similar results are expected for 2019.

Emergency medical care was enhanced in Cobb by adding 12 paramedics, using response data to realign units and teaching more than 100 CPR and stop the bleed classes in our community. Staff also provided medical coverage for 71 large events.

To meet the needs of our community, the EMS Operations Division expanded Cobb Fire Cares operations to five days a week. A social worker was also added to better address the behavioral health of our residents. In 2019, the team worked with 295 individuals to identify resources and strategies that help reduce demand on the emergency system.

The Hazmat Response Team strengthened its



# Public Safety

relationship with the Cobb Police Department Bomb Squad by sharing equipment, resources and training. This partnership was established to provide increased response services to continually changing threats, while paring down duplication of services. Both units realized significant operational savings while providing more comprehensive services.

In 2019, several projects were started or completed to improve Fire and Emergency Services training facilities. The fire training tower was rehabilitated with improved burn rooms as well as new doors and windows. This project was part of the 2016 SPLOST Public Safety Countywide Improvements Projects and cost \$200,000.

Expansion of the fire training grounds started with Croft Architects and Engineers, who provided suggestions on expansion within available property and easements. These recommendations have been accepted and this project will break ground in 2020. The total cost is \$2.8 million and will also use funding from

the 2016 SPLOST Public Safety Countywide Improvements Projects. Fire and Emergency Services also constructed an indoor physical ability training center to provide a cleaner and safer environment to conduct the new hire test and yearly physical agility test. This project allows the department to move the old test from the fire training ground to a dedicated location, making the department more efficient.

The county's oldest fire station, Station 1 in Mableton, was rebuilt as a new state-of-the-art facility. This project was funded with SPLOST dollars and almost doubled the station's square footage to 11,435. The new Fire Station 17 also broke ground and will be in service by the end of 2020. The 12,345-square-foot building's budget of \$6.5 million was funded by the Fire Fund.

Fire Station 16 received new bathrooms that increased the number of showers. This helps the department to meet a goal of reducing exposure to cancer causing particulates. Construction on Fire Station 7 will begin in 2020 and almost quadruple the station's square footage to 13,025. This almost \$4 million project is funded by the 2016 SPLOST and scheduled for completion in mid-2021.

Replacement of the department's 10-year-old self-contained breathing apparatuses was completed in November. This \$3.5 million project equipped our firefighters with state-of-the-art equipment with enhanced communications ability, comfort and reliability with a service life of 15 years.

Three new custom fire engines were received in August, replacing engines that were more than 15 years



old and assigned to Fire Stations 9, 13 and 18. Two new custom ladder trucks were assigned to Stations 8 & 14. A heavy rescue truck was acquired in the summer and assigned to Station 16. This new equipment greatly enhances the department's ability to respond to technical rescue incidents, such as vehicle entrapments, confined space incidents and high angle incidents, on the north side of the county. To aid these efforts, the Technical Rescue Team also added a second dedicated unit in north Cobb.

Fourteen support vehicles were purchased to replace aging vehicles, 18 years old or older, and four new staff positions were added during the year. To improve staffing and response capabilities, the Fire and Emergency Services Training Division started a full recruit academy that is scheduled for completion in February 2020. This recruit class included 40 personnel who were trained to the level of firefighter II and advanced emergency medical technician.

A fast track class was created in October and completed in late December. This class of seven people with previous experience allowed training to be condensed for quicker placement in the Response Division.

A Recruit Indoctrination Program was created to hire qualified candidates prior to a scheduled recruit class. This program helped prevent the loss of 12 qualified personnel to other departments during the period after their final interview and the start of a recruit academy.

To improve quality and consistency of emergency

scene operations, the Blue Card Incident Command System was delivered to all battalion chiefs and captains within the department. These leaders also received certified incident commander status and will receive continuing education through the program to maintain their certifications. The nationally-recognized system enhances communications, safety and accountability of fire personnel working at incidents that establish an incident command structure.

In April, construction was completed on the interactive school building at the Cobb County Safety Village, providing even more hands-on opportunities to all who visit. This was a collaboration among the Cobb School District, Marietta City Schools and Cobb Public Safety using proceeds from the Stop Arm Crossing program. In partnership with Kennesaw State University, a video game is under development to engage fourth grade students with internet safety topics in a variety of interactive ways.

The Cobb Safety Village also received more than \$30,000 in grants throughout the year. These funds were used



# Public Safety

to purchase safety supplies, including two fire extinguisher training simulators for the Education Division. Cobb Safety Village staff partnered with STEM middle schools throughout the county to provide UL Xplor-labs, encouraging more than 4,900 students to “solve through science.” The Safety Village hosted its first radKIDS summer camp in 2019, educating more than 60 students on the importance of fire and life safety.

To help modernize the Fire Marshal’s Office day-to-day operational needs, Cobb Fire purchased Mobile-Eyes inspection software in late 2018. As a result, new construction inspections, existing building safety inspections and plan review requests have been electronically-harmonized.

In 2019, requested new construction inspections increased 39 percent, existing life safety inspections raised 151 percent and phone call volume increased 55 percent. Much of this increase in existing inspections was due to tracking differences in the new software.

The Fire Marshal’s Office also issued 289 special event permits, which is a 40 percent increase, and collected more than \$744,280 in fines and fees.



Historically, Fire and Emergency Services staff has been tasked with estimating fire losses with little or no training. In February 2019, the Fire Investigations Unit began researching methods to more accurately estimate property loss and shadowing restoration groups in Cobb and other neighboring communities. The Fire Investigations Unit developed a relationship with the executive director of Loss Evaluator LLC, and began discussing a potential collaboration to estimate loss. In January 2020, a landmark agreement was reached and the beta test began for Cobb County to be the prototype for Loss Evaluator LLC.

The Cobb County Police Department continued strengthening its ties with the public in 2019. Community Affairs Unit officers attended more than 1,000 community-related functions throughout the year. The unit also started programs such as Book Bag Palooza, Business Academy, Citizen Safety Academy, Copz, Kidz and Chicken, Giving the Gift of Warmth Coat Drive, Cobb’s National Night Out, Officer Friendly and SWAT Santa.

The police department created a Technology Special Projects Unit in 2019, including crime analysts who



gather, compile and interpret data from crime reports to determine trends. Members of the unit also research new and innovative technologies, manage current technologies and coordinate with surrounding agencies on technology initiatives.

The Selective Traffic Enforcement Program Unit began using analytics similar to the Data Driven Approach to Crime and Traffic Safety model. Work areas for traffic enforcement were adjusted to be more target specific to overlap areas between traffic crashes and crime data.

Two additional Mavic Pro Drones were purchased, further enhancing the department's ability to use aerial imagery through PIX 4D technology for accident reconstruction purposes.

Through a partnership with the Atlanta Braves and Cumberland area businesses, the Motor Unit was chosen to host the 2019 Motor Rodeo portion of the Georgia Police and Fire Games. Our department had several riders place very well in the competition events.

In a partnership with Georgia State Patrol, Cobb County Tactical Flight Officers flew 43 rescue/search/observation missions and received more than 330 hours of training. Cobb TFOs were also chosen as the preferred instructors for Hoist-Rescue and FLIR for the state.

The Cobb County DUI Task Force Unit was recognized as the winner by the Governor's Office of Highway Safety among all Georgia police agencies with less than 700 officers. The department was also awarded a HEAT grant by GOHS which funds three

officers' salaries and purchased three new Chevrolet Tahoes for the DUI Task Force.

In 2019, construction started on a new police academy in a 115,000-square-foot facility on East West Connector. The academy will feature 12 classrooms and a 460-seat auditorium. The training center will also add a tactical village/city streetscape so recruits can be trained onsite in realistic role player-based scenarios. The project is estimated to cost just more than \$25 million and is funded by SPLOST.

Cobb Police Department also acquired the former LGE Credit Union building on Commerce Park Drive in Marietta for its new headquarters. SPLOST funds were used to purchase the \$13 million building.

This location is much larger than the current headquarters on North Marietta Parkway. The building has five floors and will house several units, including Records, Permits, Internal Affairs, Crimes Against Persons and other administrative staff. Renovations are expected to begin in spring 2020.



# Services

In 2019, Elections and Registration staff expanded voting areas to reduce lines. In November, a hand-marked paper ballot pilot was held in preparation for using new voting system equipment.

UGA-Cobb Extension and Cobb County 4-H raised \$26,420 to further programs and activities in our community. Cobb 4-H earned a 2019 Charter 4-H Club award and the Northwest District 4-H Volunteer Development Award.

Members of the UGA-Cobb Extension staff accomplished many milestones in 2019, including being accepted to the UGA Extension Leadership Academy, winning regional and state awards, being published in magazines and making presentations at state and national conferences and events.

Employees at South Cobb Government Service Center handled 46,290 transactions and collected more than \$9.4 million, including water bills, property taxes and motor vehicle tag fees. All employees were

also trained on new state of Georgia software for the processing of tag renewals.

Community Development's GIS team worked diligently to develop the new Demographics Dashboard for the Economic Development Division. Residents, business owners and entrepreneurs can use this free web-mapping tool to locate specific areas in the county and evaluate demographic data specific to the location of choice in 1, 3 and 5-mile radiuses. All data used for this dashboard is sourced from the U.S. Census Bureau.

To help residents and small business owners navigate zoning processes in a more streamlined and time-sensitive manner, the zoning application process timeline was reduced from 90 days to 60 days for rezoning and variance cases.

In 2019, Code Enforcement staff proactively worked with many apartment complexes and mobile home parks throughout the county to gain compliance with homeowners and landlords.

It's now easier than ever for eligible unregulated businesses to renew their Cobb County Occupation Tax Certificates (business licenses) online. The 2020 renewal season was launched 15 days earlier than the previous year and the online renewal process was simplified by no longer requiring a physical renewal form be completed and uploaded. This made the process less tedious and less time consuming for business owners. County staff also developed more efficient online renewal instructions.

The Mableton Parkway and Veterans Memorial Highway Design Guidelines were approved by the BOC in





January 2018 and codified into the Cobb County Code of Ordinances in February 2019. Design guidelines are created and adopted to provide clear direction for property owners and land developers seeking to construct new developments, redevelop existing sites or perform major exterior renovations or additions to existing buildings.

Zoning codes regulating purpose-built student housing were adopted in August 2019. The purpose of this code is to require a special land use permit for PBSH projects requiring special conditions. These conditions protect residents, as well as any surrounding single-family residential areas, from issues resulting from noise, traffic, lighting, parking and security.

2019 brought complex plan reviews and inspections processes for unique construction projects, including ThyssenKrupp, the soon-to-be tallest building in Cobb County. These intricate processes required teamwork from Community Development staff and other county staff in conjunction with local builders

and developers.

Government access channel CobbTV staff produced more than 200 original shows and video segments in 2019. Nearly 100 live meetings were produced, aired and streamed via [cobbcounty.org](http://cobbcounty.org) and the county's Facebook and YouTube accounts.

CobbTV also broadcast the annual Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. celebration, the Marietta Fourth of July parade and the Marietta Kiwanis Veterans Day parade.

Using social media to keep our residents informed, staff added everything produced for CobbTV to our YouTube channel, [youtube.com/cobbcountygovt](http://youtube.com/cobbcountygovt). This enables residents to watch at their convenience. Cobb County's general information switchboard handles more than 54,000 phone calls per year, connecting residents with the resources they need. Cobb County Cable TV Franchise Authority staff logged and resolved more than 300 cable complaints in 2019.

Cobb Fleet continues to use innovative practices and technology while demonstrating environmental stewardship. In 2019, Cobb Fleet was ranked second in the 100 Best Fleets in North America and number 27 in the 100 Best Green Fleets in North America. Director Al Curtis was also honored by Government Fleet with the Legendary Lifetime Achievement Award.

Cobb Fleet hosted its second Odyssey National Alternative Fuel Vehicle Day, a nationwide event dedicated to promoting the use of alternative fuel and advanced technology vehicles.

# Services

In 2019, Cobb Fleet installed 700 hands-free Bluetooth devices and cell phone docks in county vehicles, adding this safety feature to older vehicles that did not come equipped with the connectivity needed to comply with Georgia law.

Cobb Fleet replaced 80 aged and inefficient vehicles. The process of removing these vehicles from the county's fleet will greatly reduce carbon dioxide emissions, while also reducing fuel and repair costs. Some were replaced with fuel-efficient options, such as hybrid sedans, bi-fuel propane trucks and plug-in electric sedans. In 2020, a similar number of vehicles will be replaced and the focus will remain on improving efficiency while considering green options whenever possible.

Construction has started on Cobb Fleet's new car and light duty truck service facility. Projected for completion by the end of 2020, this facility will increase overall productivity and effectiveness of the entire service operation. This almost \$5.3 million project is funded by the 2016 SPLOST.

Cobb continued to be recognized as a leader among local governments in information technology, winning awards such as the Georgia GMIS 2019 Government to Citizen Award in recognition of collaborative teamwork and exemplary service for the Smart County Journey Digital Stops Project. Cobb was submitted by Georgia GMIS and went on to win the 2019 GMIS International Award as well.

In 2019, Information Services staff focused on making data driven decision making capability available to all county departments, providing a more robust and



secure network and digital transformation to improve services and increase government to citizen engagement. This was accomplished through automation of customer and internal processes, network and cyber security upgrades and additional technology advancements for the Department of Public Safety.

Cobb County continued to make progress on providing constituent access to information and services any time, from any location and on any device. The county rolled out the capability for businesses to schedule inspections and view results online and automated the sealed bid process. Trades, such as electrical, plumbing and HVAC, can now pay for permitting online.

The new Tax Assessor website made its debut and updated technology now allows tax assessor appraisers to do electronic assessments in the field. DRIVES, the state's new motor vehicle system, was implemented in 2019. A line queuing system was also installed at all motor vehicle offices so residents know current wait times and can hold their place in line.



Water customers can now submit water leak adjustments forms online and the approval process has also been converted from paper to electronic, saving time and resources.

In addition to enhancing services for the public, Information Systems staff helped improve the efficiency of internal processes and cultivate a culture of data driven decision making.

Paratransit routing automation was developed for 20 buses at Cobb Senior Services.

Dashboards and analytics were rolled out in Public Safety, Community Development, Senior Services, Finance, Fleet and other departments.

Several SharePoint workflow processes were implemented in the Cobb Police Department, including BOLOs, training information memos, Homeland Security memos and Technology Based Crimes Unit requests.

As a recognized leader in digital transformation and

smart community accomplishments, Cobb was selected to present at the 2019 ESRI CIO Conference and ESRI GeoConX Conference. This is an industry-leading event for the electric, gas and telecommunications communities.

Cyber security is of great importance and Cobb took many steps in 2019 to ensure its network is robust and secure. An Enterprise Access Control and Surveillance System was rolled out, moving toward a single card access and surveillance camera technology.

Next generation routers were installed at all 32 county fire stations, resulting in more stable connectivity, greater bandwidth speeds and network device level security.

Two next generation firewalls were installed to better protect Cobb from external cyber threats. Cobb also participated in a Federal Emergency Management Agency cyber security exercise, testing the county's Cyber Incident Response Plan.

Public safety is a top priority in Cobb County, and IS staff helped improve operations by installing devices and technology in more than 150 new police cars.

An incident viewer mobile app was implemented, allowing public safety command staff to view real time active calls for service. A disaster recovery site was also developed for the Sheriff's Office's management system.

In 2019, the Emergency Location Marker program was expanded to additional parks and trails. The

# Services

ELM program shortens emergency responder response times and makes Cobb's trails safer.

During 2019, Property Management maintenance and custodial staff completed 10,240 work orders in more than 100 different county buildings including libraries, courthouses, senior centers and other facilities.

Property Management staff is currently constructing a new medical examiner's office. This \$11 million SPLOST project will replace the current cramped and timeworn 6,600 square foot offices with a modern and fully equipped 18,000 square foot facility. The building is expected to be completed by September 2020.

After much feedback from residents, Cobb Senior Services eliminated membership fees for county residents in October.

Cobb Senior Services added 21 new buses to its

transportation fleet in 2019. This brings the total to 34 buses.

In July, Cobb Senior Services received the Excellence in Assistive Technology Service Delivery Team Award at the Georgia DHS Division of Aging's Healthy Communities Summit. Factors considered include coordination of services, networking and collaboration, innovation in development and implementation and lasting impact of the service provided on people served.

Featuring more than 100 demonstration items, the mission of Cobb assistive technology lab is to increase knowledge, access and utilization of technology among older adults and people with disabilities. With designated areas to showcase items in a demo bathroom, living room and kitchen, tours of this interactive space allow individuals to try out different devices.

While this initiative began as a space to "try before you buy," Senior Services now provides some equipment to individuals in the community at no cost through a partnership with Friends of Disabled Adults and Children.

Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training was implemented in partnership with Georgia State University. This is an evidence-based model in suicide awareness and prevention. Department of Counseling and Psychological Services at GSU provided six training sessions for Senior Services staff and volunteers.

Cobb Senior Services is also implementing First Aid



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Mental Health, an evidence-based and innovative program that teaches staff risk factors, warning signs and strategies for crisis and non-crisis mental health situations.

Senior Santa is an annual holiday party for homebound clients who are often isolated during the holidays. The event draws upon the generosity of individuals, civic organizations, churches and businesses to fulfill the “wish lists” of clients. In 2019, we made the Christmas season brighter for 110 seniors.

Cobb Senior Services received several grants that helped fund programs and services, including a little more than \$2 million from the Atlanta Regional Commission for fiscal year 2020. Unfortunately, this ARC funding will drop to about \$1.8 million in fiscal year 2021, which starts in July 2020.

The Georgia Gerontology Society provided funds in November to advance “dementia friendly” initiatives. Cobb Senior Services staff plans to implement a dementia friendly toolkit with its community partners, with the primary goal of raising awareness of how dementia affects Cobb residents. Funds will also be used to assess what is already being done for those living with dementia and how we can be more receptive to their needs.

Senior Services is creating the Cobb Aging Network to better collaborate with other community services and businesses around improving the life of seniors, their families and caregivers.

In partnership with Life University, Cobb Senior Services is piloting a program to reduce food insecurity



among older adults by offering meal vouchers in non-traditional settings. This program will also help reduce loneliness by fostering intergenerational connections between Life University students and older adults. This is also funded by the Division of Aging Services and Thanks Mom & Dad charity.

In 2020, the “Cool Kitchen Gadgets and Hacks” program will be held at North Cobb Senior Center. It will provide seniors with instructions on how to use assistive technology in the kitchen, increasing their fresh food intake and limiting canned and frozen meal preparation. It will also promote independence. This is funded by Thanks Mom & Dad. CSS also received a donation of 10 Instant Pots and 20 food processors from Amazon to support this program.

With a focus on health, Cobb Senior Services established fitness centers in multipurpose centers and upgraded fitness equipment in the Wellness Center. North Cobb Senior Center was also expanded to accommodate future needs.

In 2019, there were almost 1.8 million patron visits to our libraries and more than 2.8 million library items were checked out. There were also more than 5.5 million visits to our library website, [cobbcat.org](http://cobbcat.org). The library system sponsored 5,355 programs and there were almost 159,000 attendees at those programs.

Cobb County has more than 450,000 registered library cardholders and a library collection of more than a million items. The value of library services in 2019 is estimated to be about \$70 million.

Cobb Library System offers free online continuing education courses through GaleCourses. In 2019, the system provided 947 free 12-week online courses to our community at a savings of \$165,125 in continuing education tuition. Mango Language Learning uses totaled 12,916 sessions and 8,405 Lynda.Com courses were taken.

Construction on North Cobb Regional Library was

completed in August. This state-of-the-art \$8.6 million SPLOST project is 26,000 square feet and located across from North Cobb High School. The library had a record opening day for circulation and hundreds of new library cards were issued during its first several months of operation.

The 60,000-square-foot Switzer Library in downtown Marietta is undergoing a major expansion and renovation project, funded by the 2011 and 2016 SPLOST programs and a state grant.

With funding from the Cobb Library Foundation, an existing van was repurposed into the new Cobb Library Bookmobile. Launched in the summer, it expands outreach capabilities and brings library resources all around our community. Bookmobile bolsters early literacy, health equity, family engagement and learning by providing access to library resources and services in areas where economic, social and transportation barriers exist.

Hundreds of events for all ages were hosted at Cobb libraries during the 2019 Summer Reading Program. Because of the popularity of the program, its kick-off party in May was hosted at the new location of the Cobb Civic Center in Marietta. The 2019 theme of “A Universe of Stories” set the stage for special reading, crafts, music, STEM and other special events throughout summer break. The program was supported across the county by Cobb County and Marietta City schools, Cobb Police, Cobb Fire, Cobb PARKS, Communities in Schools, the National Park Service, Kennesaw State University, Fernbank Science Center, the Cobb Watershed Stewardship



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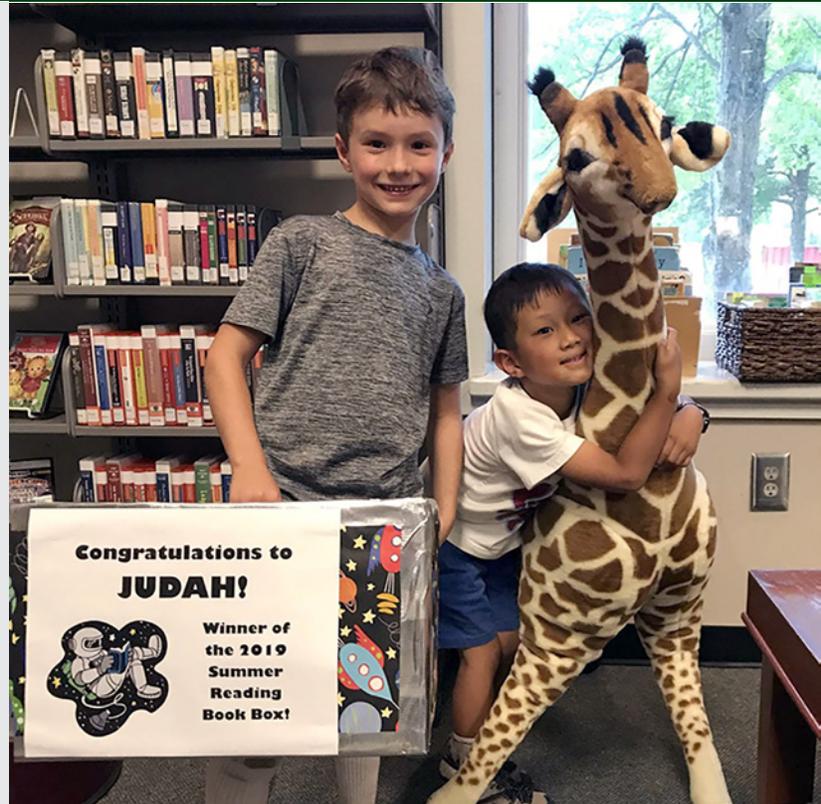
Program, Cobb 4-H and other community partners.

In 2019, library staff built on the success of its partnership with Cobb County and Marietta City school districts – the Library PASS program – which provides all students with free, special library accounts giving 24/7 access to library resources. In the fall, Cobb library patrons gained access to TutorATL, a free, online tutoring and homework resource offered through the Library PASS program.

The American Library Association, a national professional association, selected Cobb to be the feature in its first advocacy video that was shown at the national conference in Seattle. The “Getting Your Library Story in the Local News” video features how Cobb Library System staff leveraged its collaboration with the national nonprofit Vision To Learn, providing free eye exams and free eyeglasses at Cobb libraries to local children. The video also showcases how the library was strategically successful in receiving front-page news coverage by the Marietta Daily Journal and highlights the positive local impact of the program for Marietta City Schools families. Cobb’s success in communicating this impact to public policymakers was highlighted as a model for libraries large and small.

Library staff partnered with Vision to Learn to provide free vision screening and glasses for children in the community. Cobb is the first library system in Georgia to participate in this innovative program.

Cobb County’s biannual book sales were relocated to the Cobb Civic Center, resulting in increased participation and revenue that is used to support our county libraries.



In 2019, innovative programs developed for the Cobb community included special storytimes for kids, interactive and creative tween and teen activities and adult programs like movement and Falls Prevention classes for seniors, cooking club sessions and author events.

Cobb Community Development and Cobb Library System staff are spearheading the county’s Complete Count Committees for the 2020 Census. The library system has hosted Census training for staff and many informative events for the public, including Census Day 2019 at South Cobb Regional Library, U.S. Census Bureau data-informed decision-making presentations and a robust, creative and informative social media campaign.

# Transportation

Cobb County International Airport staff continued work during 2019 on the environmental assessment study to evaluate potential impacts associated with proposed 2017 master plan improvement projects.

The \$178,600 study is primarily funded with \$169,670 of federal and state grant funds. The environmental assessment is anticipated to be completed in spring 2020.

The airport received \$2,365,345 in federal and state grants to construct the North Apron Rehabilitation and Expansion Project Phase 3, expanding and rehabilitating pavement on the north airport apron. The \$2,493,092 project is expected to start in spring 2020 and be completed by summer 2020.

The airport received FAA certification for the Medium Approach Lighting System with Sequenced Flasher operation. The \$780,000 system was partially funded through a \$604,599 state grant.

In spring 2019, the airport completed the \$255,341 Taxiway B and South Apron Crack Seal Project to extend the service life of pavement in these areas. A state grant of \$191,506 provided 75 percent of the funding for this project.

The airport accommodated a flood of air traffic activity associated with Super Bowl LIII, including more than 900 arrivals and departures and 14 international arrivals over six days, with aircraft departing every 2.5 minutes during peak times.

Cobb Forward, the update to the Comprehensive Transportation Plan, kicked off in 2019 with nine



community forums. During 2020, the project will begin developing transit expansion scenarios, a smart communities initiatives roadmap and recommendations to address major congested locations and corridors. Cobb Forward will conclude by summer 2021.

In 2019, GIS staff in the Cobb DOT department continued upgrading the Cobb Commute app, developed and published a new story map on resurfacing and developed a story map of CobbLinc transit system and individual routes for public use.

To improve traffic management, staff worked with Information Services and Public Safety staff to create a new comprehensive geographic information systems dashboard for the Transportation Management Center. Staff also added or replaced 30 CCTV traffic surveillance cameras.

DOT staff partnered with Information Services staff on GIS Big Data Infrastructure, such as downloading and storing BlueTOAD travel speed data for data analytics. The GIS Crash Analysis Tool project was

also completed to improve the crash report import process and expedite safety reviews.

For their stellar efforts, the department won Cartegraph's High Performance Government Award.

To improve safety, DOT staff replaced pavement markings on more than 31 centerline miles of thoroughfare roadway, implemented the Dynamic Speed Display Sign traffic calming program by installing signs on eight roadway segments, added flashing-yellow-arrow left-turn displays at 31 intersections, added uninterrupted power supply systems for traffic signals at 20 intersections and rebuilt 10 traffic signals.

To reduce traffic, Cobb is adding dynamic message signs along five arterial roadway segments approaching I-75. Project completion is anticipated in May 2020.

In 2019, enhanced warning signs and two additional over-height vehicle notification devices were installed at the Concord Road Covered Bridge.

The Adaptive Traffic Signal Control System Expansion Project was awarded and includes 33 additional intersections to reduce traffic delays. Project completion is anticipated in July 2020.

CobbLinc celebrated 30 years providing service to our residents in 2019 by adding new Sunday service, new bus schedules, route alignment modifications, redesigned route brochures and a new Rapid 10 route. CobbLinc also expanded its fleet by 14 new buses.

During Super Bowl events in February 2019,

CobbLinc provided bus service for Cobb residents and support to MARTA operations.

CobbLinc staff partnered with the Transportation Security Administration for ongoing safety and security training, including Baseline Security Assessment, Security Education and Awareness Training and First Observer Plus Training.

To keep residents informed, a series of travel training videos geared toward the general public, seniors and paratransit-eligible county residents were produced in July.

In 2019, CobbLinc kicked off a \$516,111 project to install new regional and local bus stop signage and amenities in the county. This project will be completed in 2020.

CobbLinc staff collaborated with the DOT GIS Division to complete a countywide GIS-based bus



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stop and amenity inventory for the transit system. Staff also installed devices on the local fleet for transit signal priority capability.

In 2019, Cobb DOT staff reviewed, issued and inspected 1,999 utility permits and managed the removal of 375 utility-owned poles from the roadside recovery area.

Staff also developed a small cell installation permitting process, in compliance with state law.

To ensure the public right-of-way is sufficiently preserved during utility construction, Cobb hired an additional full-time inspector. Now, each commission district has an inspector for utility work.

In 2019, Cobb discontinued contractor right-of-way maintenance activities and completed its first year of landscape/right-of-way using Cobb DOT staff.

This resulted in more efficient beautification efforts

throughout the county.

By bringing these activities in-house, Cobb DOT staff drastically reduced the number of complaints received and completed a significant work order backlog accumulated by the contractor. Road maintenance crews closed 6,840 work orders from Jan. 1 to Dec. 26, 2019.

Road maintenance employees started construction on new pole barns to store and extend the life span of capital replacement equipment, started construction on new salt barns at Cobb DOT headquarters, implemented an asphalt reuse and repurposing program and started a concrete recycling program.

Cobb DOT staff continued delivery of its 2016 Special Purpose Local Option Sales Tax program while concurrently completing projects funded from its 2005 and 2011 SPLOST programs.

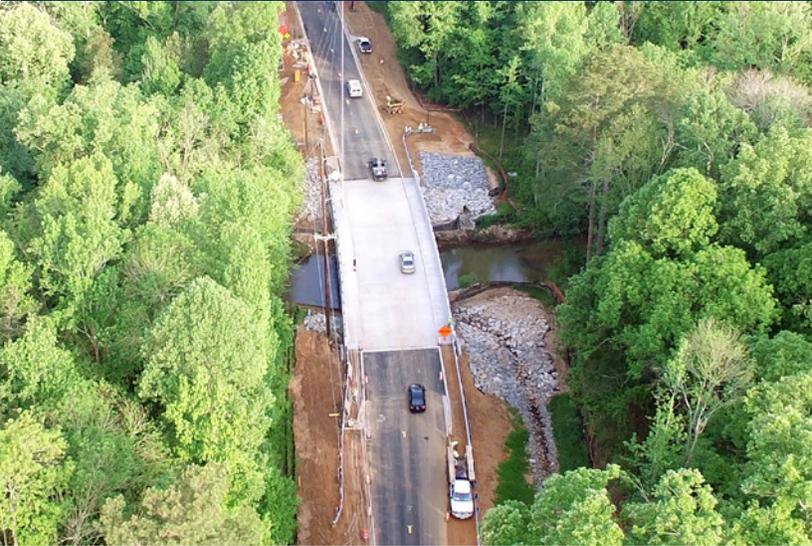
From the 2016 SPLOST program, 211 projects were identified and pre-construction activities are in progress or have been completed on 203 projects. As of December 2019, construction had started on 164 projects with 121 projects reaching completion.

**Major projects completed or underway in 2019 from the 2016 SPLOST program:**

## **Cumberland Boulevard (Complete)**

This project included widening of Cumberland Boulevard from two lanes to three lanes in the westbound direction. Additional left-turn lane improvements were made where Cumberland Boulevard intersects





with Cumberland Parkway, the Cumberland Mall entrance and Akers Mill Road. Cumberland Boulevard was widened to the northern side of the roadway. West of the I-285 bridge, new signage was installed and Cumberland Boulevard was restriped to better delineate the left-turn lanes for Spring Road and the through lanes for the Spring Road and Cumberland Boulevard intersection. This project was completed in summer 2019.

#### **Blackwell Road at Autumn Ridge Parkway (In Progress)**

This project consists of improving sight distance and removing the existing four-way stop at the intersection of Blackwell Road and Autumn Ridge Parkway, creating a two-way stop.

Additional improvements include construction of left-turn lanes in both directions on Blackwell Road to Autumn Ridge Parkway and the addition of curb and gutter with a five-foot wide sidewalk.

This project is scheduled to be completed in summer 2020.

#### **Hicks Road at Concord Road (In Progress)**

This project includes operational intersection improvements on Hicks Road at Concord Road. Improvements will include turn lanes, sidewalks, drainage improvements and a signal upgrade. This project is scheduled to be completed in spring 2021.

#### **Old Highway 41 over CSX RR Bridge Replacement (In Progress)**

This joint project with the City of Marietta includes complete replacement of the existing Old 41 Highway bridge over the CSX railroad near the intersection of Bells Ferry Road. This project is scheduled to be completed in summer 2021.

#### **I-20 Eastbound Ramps at Riverside Parkway (In Progress)**

This project includes constructing an additional right-turn lane from the I-20 eastbound off-ramp onto Riverside Parkway and realigning the South Service Road intersection with Riverside Parkway to tie into the existing Riverside EpiCenter driveway access point.

Improvements within the project limits include installing new traffic signals, raised medians, sidewalks, resurfacing and other pedestrian improvements. In addition, the project will provide directional way-finding signage both overhead and

# Transportation

roadside along both I-20 eastbound and westbound lanes, the I-20 eastbound off-ramp, Riverside Parkway and South Service Road to direct traffic to Six Flags Over Georgia. This project is scheduled to be completed in December 2020.

## **Windy Hill Road – Terrell Mill Road Connector (In Progress)**

This project will construct a new roadway between Windy Hill Road and Terrell Mill Road. Construction will begin at the intersection of Windy Hill Road and Spectrum Circle/Interstate North Parkway and continue north to the intersection of Terrell Mill Road and Bentley Road.

The project will include four 11-foot lanes, a variable (eight-to-20 foot) raised median, a 10-foot multi-use trail on the west shoulder and a five-foot sidewalk on the east shoulder. Bids were received in October 2019 and construction began in January 2020.

## **Main Street/Old 41 Highway (Complete)**

This joint project with the City of Acworth provided intersection operation and capacity improvements on Main Street/Old 41 Highway between Nance Road and Nowlin Road. Associated driveway enhancements at the North Cobb High School driveway, west of Blue Springs Road, also were included to improve safety and traffic flow to and from the school. The project was completed in fall 2019.

## **Post Oak Tritt Road at Hembree Road (In Progress)**

Construction continued for the roundabout at the



intersection of Post Oak Tritt Road and Hembree Road. Additional improvements include enhanced street lighting and sidewalk upgrades. This project began in April 2018 and is scheduled for completion in the spring 2020.

## **Delivery of Previous SPLOST Programs:**

From the 2011 SPLOST, construction has started on 206 of the 210 identified projects, with 202 reaching completion.

From the 2005 SPLOST, construction has started on 344 of the 347 identified projects, with 342 projects reaching completion.

## **Projects completed or underway in 2019 from the 2011 and 2005 SPLOST programs:**

### **Cobb Parkway at Windy Hill Road (2011 SPLOST – Complete)**

Improvements at this intersection included the addi-

tion of dual left-turn lanes and queue jumper lanes on Cobb Parkway as well as dual southbound right-turn lanes on the northern leg of Cobb Parkway.

The project extended the existing dual left-turn lanes, added a right-turn lane on the western leg of Windy Hill Road and added a third northbound lane on Cobb Parkway exiting to Terrell Mill Road. Construction on this project was completed in spring 2019.

### **Sandy Plains Road (2011 Project – Complete)**

This project included the installation of a raised concrete median between Kinjac Drive and Ebenezer Road with appropriate median cuts and access points. Other improvements included new crosswalks and pedestrian signalization, new traffic signalization, signage and resurfacing of Sandy Plains Road. Construction was completed in December 2019.

### **River View Road (2011 Project – In Progress)**

This safety and operational roadway improvement project will realign the intersection of River View Road and Veterans Memorial Highway.

This project also includes drainage improvements, resurfacing and pedestrian improvements between Veterans Memorial Highway and the Smyrna city limits. Construction began in fall 2019 and is scheduled for completion in December 2020.

### **Bob Callan Trail, Phase 2, Segment A (2005 SPLOST – Complete)**

Construction has been completed on the .92-mile,

10-foot-wide multi-use path along the western side of Rottenwood Creek. This project extended from the existing Bob Callan trailhead just north of I-285 and continued along Rottenwood Creek to North Interstate Parkway.

Pedestrian bridges were constructed for portions of the trail along Rottenwood Creek, particularly in areas where the trail is within the existing floodplain. Construction began in spring 2017 and was completed in spring 2019.

### **Big Shanty Road Sidewalk (2005 SPLOST – In Progress)**

This project includes construction of a ten-foot wide sidewalk with curb and gutter on the southern side of Big Shanty Road between Chastain Meadows Parkway and Bells Ferry Road. This project is scheduled for completion in summer 2020.



# Rob Hosack, *County Manager*



Henry Ford once said “Quality means doing it right when no one is looking.” I think this motto exemplifies Cobb County employees’ work ethic and commitment to delivering the best services to our residents.

Working together, we achieved great progress in 2019. We covered our general fund shortfall, appropriated millions to much-needed capital replacement and maintenance, lowered our Tax Anticipation Notes and restored reserve funds. Because of our fiscally-responsible practices and good financial outlook, Cobb County maintained its AAA bond rating for both the county and our water system.

To best serve our residents, we opened several new parks and facilities in 2019 including the North Cobb Regional Library. This 25,000-square-foot facility will be a beacon of learning and growth because all our county libraries provide state-of-the-art programs and activities.

A robust offering of virtual, online and mobile books, courses and activities also ensure we are keeping pace with our residents’ evolving needs.

In May, we cut the ribbon on Mabry Park, which has been more than a decade in the making. Cobb also built a new all-inclusive playground at Windy Hill Community Center, upgraded many parks and facilities and opened an extension of the Bob Callan Trail. Our innovative trail marker program was expanded to ensure trail users are safe.

In 2019, we restored Department of Transportation road crews to each district and Cobb Community Transit celebrated 30 years of service to residents by expanding needed services. We also brought local businesses and the community together to celebrate our diverse cultures during the inaugural Cobb County International Festival.





Even though county employees do it right when no one is looking, the exceptional results still garner attention.

The incredible number of awards received by staff in 2019 is a testimony to their creativity, innovativeness and dedication. Cobb County Water System earned the highest customer satisfaction rating in the South Region and nationally among large utilities in J.D. Power's Water Utility Residential Customer Satisfaction Study.

Cobb Water System was ranked number one in both overall satisfaction and pricing. We are proud our county uses innovative approaches to provide service at a fair price that our customers clearly value.

Cobb was also recognized for outstanding achievements in GIS. Our Information Systems employees have used GIS to modernize our processes across the entire spectrum of Cobb County Government.

This technology provides the public with important information about zoning, provides data to fleet

services staff working on police cars and other vital public safety vehicles and provides a way for help to quickly find trail users through emergency locators.

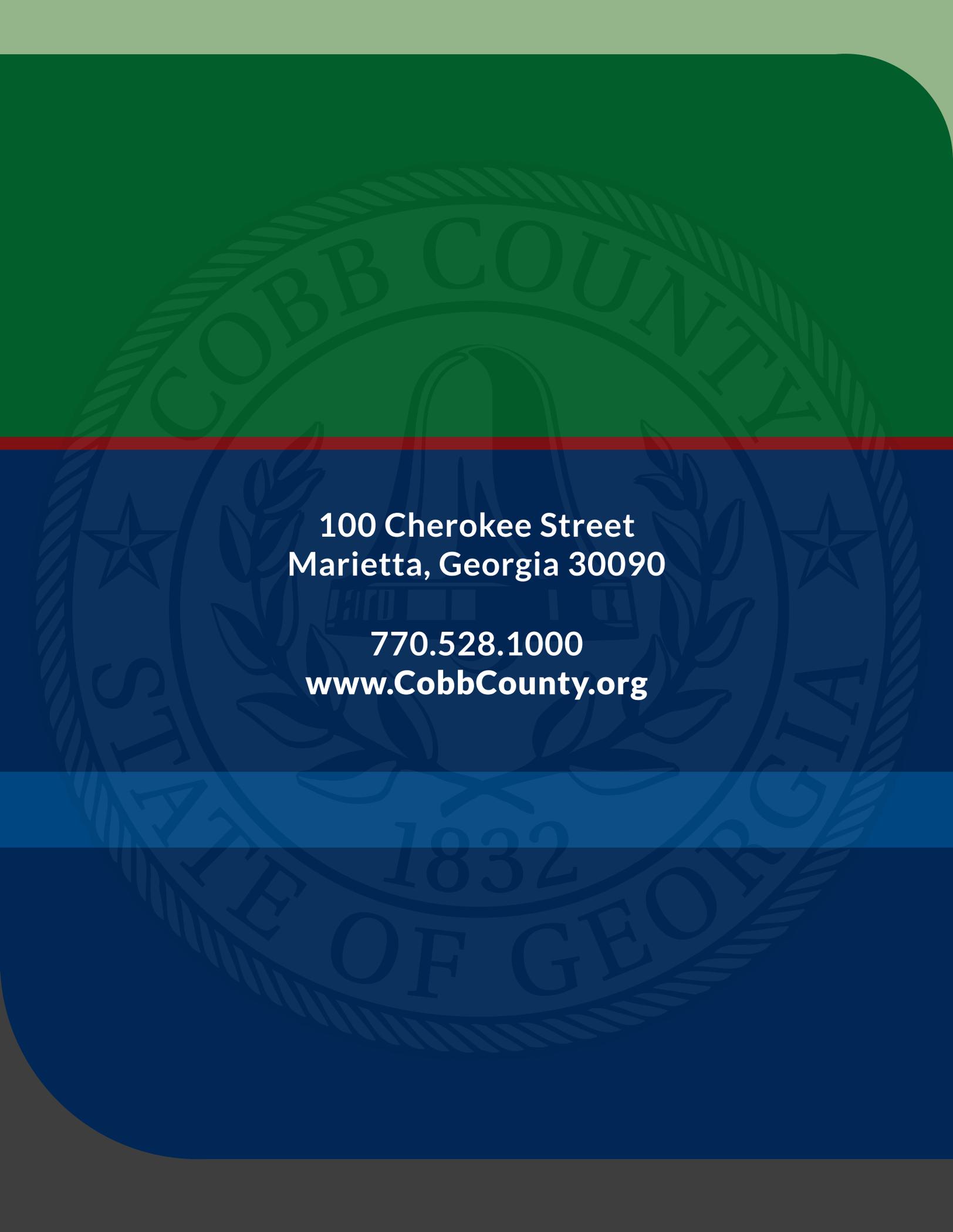
Our PARKS department was honored as the 2019 Parks and Recreation State Agency of the Year and Keep Cobb Beautiful earned many Keep Georgia Beautiful awards.

Our Cobb County International Airport also set records during Super Bowl weekend.

One of the greatest honors I've had in my career is working with the outstanding staff of Cobb County Government. Through good times and bad, prosperous years and lean ones, county employees work tirelessly to ensure Cobb is a place of which we can all be proud.

As I move toward other endeavors in April, I know we have developed a deep bench of exceptionally-talented administrators who will continue working together with staff and the Board of Commissioners to lead Cobb County for future generations.



The background of the image features a large, semi-transparent seal of Cobb County, Georgia. The seal is circular and contains the text "COBB COUNTY" at the top, "STATE OF GEORGIA" at the bottom, and "1832" in the center. The seal also depicts a plow and a sheaf of wheat. The background is divided into horizontal bands of green, red, and blue.

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