

2015 Annual Report



COBB COUNTY GOVERNMENT

Board of Commissioners

Chairman Tim Lee

2015 was an incredibly successful year. The growing tax digest and Cobb County's conservative fiscal management practices have helped keep taxes low while focusing on services that matter most. In 2015 we were able to twice reduce the property tax millage rate.

Cobb's strong leadership and smart budgeting policies are recognized. For the 19th consecutive year, Cobb County earned a Triple AAA bond rating. We are one of only 45 counties in the United States to hold this prestigious rating.

Public safety is paramount in every community. The men and women who risk their lives daily to protect ours make Cobb County the greatest and safest place to be. It is because of this courage and commitment that the Cobb County Board of Commissioners made a \$196 million investment in Public Safety. This will put an additional 40 officers on the street and ensure that Cobb County has the recruitment and retention policies in place to attract and retain the best and brightest in the public safety business.

Cobb's economy is booming. More than 5000 jobs have been created or retained and more than \$300 million of private investment was made in 2015. Our airport opened a customs facility and unveiled a world class air traffic control tower, positioning itself as one of the most corporate friendly facilities in the Southeast.

Cobb County went into 2015 with one professional sports team and ended it with three! We are now home to Major League soccer, lacrosse and baseball teams. Speaking of baseball, the future home of the Atlanta Braves, SunTrust Park, is proving to be a homerun. I am more proud than ever about Cobb County's unprecedented partnership. Construction is on time and on budget with more than \$200 million of contracts awarded to Cobb County companies. The adjacent mixed use development had an epic year announcing partnerships with ComCast, the Omni, the Roxy and others.

We are wrapping up 2015 in a position that is enviable among our peers. I look forward to 2016 as we take best elements from our current successes and apply them to future that is sure to be bright.





Bob Weatherford

District One Commissioner

It's been a busy year for District One and an educational one for me. I have worked to meet my responsibilities as your new commissioner and continue to learn what is required to meet your needs as residents. We appreciate your continued input. The more I know about your concerns, the better I can serve you.

I visited numerous departments throughout Cobb County, including Fleet Management, Property Management, PARKS, Magistrate Court, Superior Court Clerk's Office, Mail Room, Information Services, Cobb County Adult Detention Center and the Cobb-Paulding Board of Health. I spent a day each working with Water and Department of Transportation crews. I visited police and fire personnel at numerous precincts, participated in training with the Cobb Police Motors Unit and served on the Cobb Travel and Tourism Board. These experiences have helped me make educated decisions and understand where our attention is needed on your behalf.

As a result, we helped secure funding for a lease program for police cars and equipment. We worked to establish a Behavioral Health Court in State Court and took part in the new Public Safety Headquarters initiative. Along with the valuable input of you and County staff, we encouraged and supported smart development with Land Use Plan updates. In our district, we've seen the opening of the customs facility and new control tower at Cobb County International Airport. We have two new Department of Driver Services facilities; one is located on County Services Parkway and the other in Acworth.

During my service in the City of Acworth, bonds were issued for the redevelopment of downtown and now the area is a vibrant and active community of successful businesses. Earlier this year we supported the issuance of the South Cobb Redevelopment Bond with a similar goal on a grander scale. The improvement of communities leads to our betterment as a whole. Cobb County continues to look for ways to improve while always striving to keep our overall taxes low. These initiatives are to the benefit of all current and future Cobb County residents.

I believe the coming year will be a banner one for our district and the county. Together we can make it happen. Thank you.

Bob Ott*District Two Commissioner*

2015 has been both an exciting and interesting year around District Two. In all, there is approximately a \$3.5 billion investment in development and infrastructure projects in the district. The state has started the Northwest Corridor Project, commonly referred to as the “managed lanes.”

A number of previously approved projects are now under construction in the Cumberland area. These include five separate projects along Windy Hill Road, the managed lanes, widening of US 41 and the bridge replacement at Atlanta Road and I-285 as well as the Cobb-Marietta Water Authority water line replacement in East Cobb,

Along with all the development and improvements come the daily inconveniences of traffic delays and lane or road closures. Although frustrating at times, when these projects are completed between 2017 and 2018 there will be improved traffic flow along both the I75 corridor and Windy Hill Road.

You will experience a shorter commute around the district and more time to enjoy the many great features that make District Two a great place to live.

**JoAnn Birrell***District Three Commissioner*

Thank you for allowing me to serve this second term as the District Three Commissioner. I am grateful for the opportunity and excited for what 2016 brings as we reflect on 2015. We are fortunate to live in a county where so many choose to live, work and play. Even more residents and businesses chose to make District 3 their home this year than in the past.

The redevelopment list has dwindled from 13 sites to just five as companies become aware of the opportunities along the Canton Road corridor. Kennesaw State University had a successful inaugural football season and continues to grow by leaps and bounds. The Town Center CID rebranded itself to more closely align with the vital work they perform and became the first CID in the state to offer Zagster’s bike share to be enjoyed by those along the Noonday Creek Trail.

In a moving display of patriotism, compassion and gratitude, our community welcomed Purple Heart recipient Lance Corporal Skip Wells to his final resting place and established a scholarship in his name. It was our honor to host the US Army Field Band and Soldiers Chorus on Veterans

Day. The Northeast Cobb Business Association launched its inaugural 5K9 and donated \$15,000 toward the purchase of a new K-9 for our police department. Cobb County's airport welcomed its first international flight and became Cobb County International Airport. The construction of SunTrust Park is on schedule, under budget and quickly becoming a reality as we laid the first bricks of the stadium. We are fortunate to have devoted staff, engaged residents and supportive business community.

None of these successes would have been possible without the tireless service and sacrifice of our police, fire, 911, animal control, sheriff and military service people. Our public safety and armed forces dedication to our community is second to none. It is with deepest gratitude that I thank you for your service and willingness to put yourselves in harm's way to ensure our safety and security. I appreciate your continued support as we remain steadfast in our commitment to work together to make Cobb the best it can be.

Lisa Cupid

District Four Commissioner

I am proud of the steps forward our district has taken this past year.

I am most proud of our civic accomplishments in carrying out the tradition of our frequent townhall meetings, every other month, and having close to 50 unique participants attending weekly zoning meetings to learn about the zoning process and weigh-in on upcoming cases.

You have shown up at Commission meetings, zoning hearings, even alcohol license hearings, and you have made a difference in ensuring that your communities are transforming into areas with more fitting development and improved levels of service.



In March, the Community Relations Council held its annual Creating Community Awards for the first time in our district. Scores of residents attended sessions to discuss the redevelopment of the Riverside Parkway area, rebranding of South Cobb, and long-range comprehensive planning for our District.

In 2015 a Grievance Committee was formed to better respond to citizen complaints and at the end of the year, residents of District Four came together with other stakeholders to present a proposal for a Citizen Review Board aimed at improving citizen confidence in policing.

Flex Bus service launched in 2015, filling significant gaps in transit left in 2011 by providing on-demand, door-to-door transit service at the same \$2.50 rate as fixed-route service. Planning for Route 25 also continued in 2015 and will connect District Four riders directly to the Cumberland area, when the route becomes operational in 2016.

Phase two of the Floyd Road Improvement Project and formation of the Mableton Town Square

continued into 2015 and the intersection of Six Flags Parkway and Lee Industrial was greatly enhanced. Many roadways received much needed repaving inclusive of major corridors like Austell Road and South Cobb Drive. Cobb's Fleet Department also maintained its commitment to environmental sensibility by installing a dual port level two charging station at the South Cobb Government Center.

Economic Development continued in the district in 2015 with more than 650 new businesses licenses issued.

Major employer Wellstar Hospital invested close to \$5 million in renovating its Women's Center and FedEx also obtained an enterprise grant in exchange for increasing employment in the area: 300 full- and part-time employees are expected when doors open in 2016. A new spec site by IDI Gazely was also planned for the Riverside Parkway industrial area. My office also hosted a Subcontractor Information Session with the Purchasing Department to help educate businesses on how to obtain work on larger county contracts.

Tourism and Recreation remained a dominant industry in the district and 2015 did not disappoint with the addition of two new rides at Six Flags Park, the opening of the wildly popular Seven Springs Water Park, and the renovation of a Powder Springs baseball field by the Atlanta Braves. Sweetwater Park in Austell broke ground on a new tennis facility and significant uplifts were made at the South Cobb Recreation Center, Wallace Park, Lions Park and more. New LED lighting was also added around the walking track at Mud Creek Soccer Park.

The district continues to emerge as a desirable place to live with 332 permits issued for single family homes in 2015. New subdivisions broke ground in Mableton, South Marietta and Powder Springs with a new senior community obtaining rezoning off Powder Springs Road in Marietta. A Special Tax District was also formed facilitating both future gateway improvements in the Six Flags area and the South Cobb Redevelopment Authority's purchase of an older, challenged apartment complex for redevelopment. The creation of a School-Oriented Development Plan was introduced to provide a sense of place around District Four schools while improving safety for students walking to and from school.

In 2015, the Water System completed a \$33 million upgrade of the South Cobb Water Reclamation Facility helping meet tightening discharge standards consistently. The South Cobb Tunnel project also became operational in 2015 putting the South Cobb area in an excellent position to accommodate future growth.

Residents continued to heavily use libraries within the District with 9,930 children and 1,220 adults attending library programming.

Cobb also invested money in Public Safety hiring additional police officers and purchasing take home vehicles. Entering autos and burglaries also decreased significantly across Cobb and District 4 in the last quarter of the year.

These and too many other examples to list demonstrate our progress.

The work behind these efforts have not all been easy, nor all with glamour. And there still remains much work to be done.

Still, I am convinced that together, we are making a difference for the better. Together, with your continued involvement, we will continue to improve our community for all. Thank you.

County Manager

Cobb County continues to move forward as it adopts new technologies and new methods for improving our services to customers. Geographic Information Services have enabled us to create the cobbcommute.org site, which provides real-time traffic information for computer and smart phone users.

We are still undergoing a class and pay study to ensure our employees are properly compensated and we can attract and retain the best and the brightest. We also started multiple wellness initiatives to improve the health of our employees. This will reduce their health care needs and costs. We continually provide free classes on a variety of topics to train and retrain our employees – ensuring their skills remain the best.



These efforts, in turn, will help attract the most talented candidates to serve Cobb County. And their upward mobility will provide room for new talent and keep experience at the helm. We want to offer residents and visitors the best services and the best value for their money.

As always, Cobb government works to prioritize the needs of the community and budget accordingly. Similarly, we have sought to provide for public needs with the ongoing improvements funded through the Special Purpose Local Option Sales Tax program.

Through fiscal responsibility; the efforts of our outstanding employees; and the support of the public, we will continue to provide for a great future.

Economy



The nation's top three bond rating agencies, Fitch Ratings, Moody's and Standard and Poor's, reaffirmed Cobb County's "Triple A" bond rating for the 19th consecutive year. These are the highest credit ratings available. The ratings are the result of the agencies' extensive review of Cobb's financial operations and creditworthiness – including reviews of its financial management plans, adopted budgets and comprehensive annual financial report.

In November, major league soccer team Atlanta United announced it would locate its headquarters and practice fields in Marietta. The 32-acre site will feature a training complex with six soccer fields and a youth academy. This development will bring more than 80 new jobs, representing a more than \$50 million investment by Atlanta United.

Since 2013 Cobb County has gained three major league sports teams – the Atlanta Braves, the Atlanta Blaze and Atlanta United. Major league lacrosse team the Atlanta Blaze is set to kick off its season in 2016 at Kennesaw State University's Fifth Third Bank Stadium.

Through a partnership with the Development Authority of Cobb County and the City of Marietta, Home Depot established a new technology center located along Franklin Road in the New Market Office Park. Home Depot has leased the four-building campus that will initially house 1,000 information technology associates with plans to add another 500 positions. This center is needed to support the company's growing online retail presence.

Construction has begun on Riverwood 200 an approximately 260,000 square foot, 12-story office building located in the Cumberland/Galleria area. The building valued at approximately \$90 million has attracted companies such as Bennett Thrasher LLP a local account firm and Holder Construction, a well-known commercial construction company. This will be the first new class A office building built in this submarket since 2002 and when fully leased will house approximately 1,000 jobs.

The TPA Group has begun construction of a \$48 million, 154,000 square foot, class A, seven story office building to be known as 1100 Overton and located at the intersection of Akers

Mill Road and Cumberland Boulevard in the Cumberland/Galleria area. A portion of the building will be leased by Synovus and will allow the company to consolidate approximately 300 of its Atlanta based personnel, including Bank of North Georgia senior management team, Bank of North Georgia branch and Synovus specialty bankers and investment professionals.

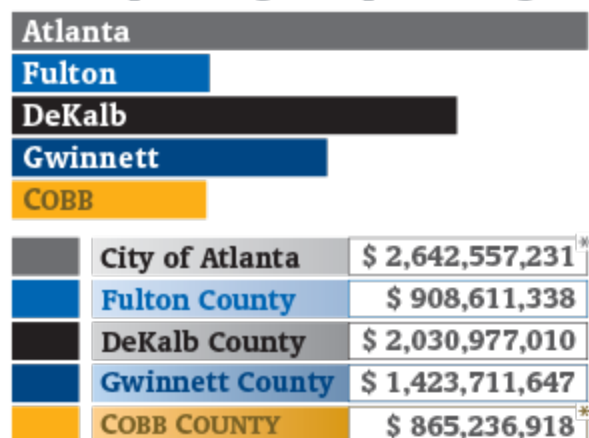
Suncap Atlanta, LLC broke ground on the construction of an approximately \$40.8 million, 303,000 square foot warehouse distribution facility to be leased by FedEx Ground Package System, Inc. located in south Cobb along Factory Shoals Road. This facility was needed to address over-capacity issues at a nearby FedEx Ground facility located in Ellenwood. Upon its completion FedEx Ground will install approximately \$23 million in package handling equipment and will create about 300 jobs in the area.

In October, the Atlanta Braves announced that “The Battery Atlanta” will be the name of its mixed-use development adjacent to SunTrust Park. In addition, the Braves announced the first wave of restaurants that will be featured: Antico Pizza, Cru Food and Wine Bar, Tomahawk Taproom featuring Fox Bros. Bar-B-Q and Superica.

The Atlanta Braves are also teaming up with Live Nation to develop and operate a 53,000 square-foot entertainment venue at the mixed-use community adjacent to SunTrust Park. The venue will have the iconic Atlanta name – The Roxy Theatre. It will have a standing room only capacity of 4,000 and will feature approximately 40 music or comedy shows a year, mostly on non-game days. The space will also be used for private and special events throughout the year. Anchoring the southern end of the plaza will be the Omni Atlanta Hotel at SunTrust Park, which will feature approximately 260 guest rooms and suites, as well as a nine-story office tower, which will house more than 1,000 Comcast employees.

During 2015, the South Cobb Redevelopment Authority closed on the \$3.7 million purchase of Magnolia Crossing Apartments on Six Flags Drive in Austell. The property was purchased using funds from the \$10 million redevelopment bond approved by the Cobb County Board of Commissioners and South Cobb Redevelopment Authority in July 2015. SCRA intends to

Total Operating & Capital Budgets



*Cobb and Atlanta figures = FY 16, other jurisdictions = FY 15

demolish the apartment complex and market the site to master developers to spur economic growth in the corridor.

Accounting firm Bennett Thrasher has called Cobb County home for 30 years and employs more than 90 people. They will soon move into a new 12 story, \$100 million office tower being constructed in the Cumberland area. Riverwood 200 will be one of the first new office towers built in more than 10 years. Bennett Thrasher is a top accounting firm and eighth largest CPA firm in Atlanta.

In 2014, Cobb County had a total valuation of residential permits at \$1,887,687 and commercial permits at \$2,384,901 for a total permit valuation of \$4,272,588. In 2015, the residential permit valuation saw an 11 percent increase to \$2,087,694. The commercial permit valuations saw an increase of 134 percent to \$5,582,095. Total permits valuations increased 80 percent to \$7,669,789.

The budget adopted by the Board of Commission reduced the millage rate to 6.82 from 7.12 percent. It funded enhancements to public safety with the addition of 80 new police officers over two years as well as supporting shift differential and educational pay.

In support of Commissioner JoAnn Birrell's "Keep it in Cobb" program, the Purchasing Department conducted two "How to do Business with Cobb County" seminars to encourage local business participation. The county partnered with the Cobb County School District on both seminars and the seminars were well received by the community. Approximately 50 local vendors attended each seminar.

In a joint effort with Commissioner Lisa Cupid, the county offered its first "Subcontractor Information Session." This session focused on providing information to local construction contractors and provided information on county purchasing processes and ways to enhance business opportunities with the county both as a general contractor and subcontractor.

Each quarter, the Purchasing Department conducts a bid analysis program to provide a comparison of prices obtained through the competitive procurement processes. This process is performed to demonstrate the positive results obtained through competitive purchasing, but also is an indicator of the outstanding teamwork and collaboration that occurs between Purchasing and county departments. In 2015, the county realized more than \$9.5 million in savings as a result of competitive procurement practices.

Through online auctioning of surplus county vehicles and heavy equipment items, the county received proceeds of \$319,005. In 2015, the Purchasing Department reallocated surplus property equipment items with a total estimated value of \$40,355 to other county departments.

Judicial



The Mental Health Court held its first graduation in October. State and county officials, members of the Georgia Court of Appeals, the Cobb judiciary, MHC staff, participants, and guests gathered to honor the 7 participants who had completed all of the requirements and conditions of their mental health court participation. For the seven graduates, their level of need, based on an objective assessment given at entry and at graduation, has decreased an average of 67 percent. Such a decrease demonstrates the effectiveness, societal benefits and power a Mental Health Court can bring to a community.

In 2015, The Cobb County Adult Drug Treatment Court graduated 41 participants from the program. The DTC also started an alumni group in an effort to assist and support current participants. This alumni group organizes social activities in the community to support a fun, sober lifestyle.

Obtaining a high school diploma or completing the GED is a requirement to graduate from the Adult Drug Treatment Court Program. This year the Drug Treatment Court started a GED program to assist current participants prepare for the GED test. The GED program consists of volunteers and current participants that tutor in the four different subject areas, to help prepare participants to take and pass the GED. In 2015, the DTC had five participants pass the GED test and has 16 participants preparing to take the GED test.

The Veterans Treatment and Accountability Court celebrated its anniversary in June and currently has 24 participants. The VTC recently contracted with a local provider to develop a new treatment plan that offers an expansion of services currently provided to VTC participants through the VA. With four participants in the final phase, the VTC is on course to hold its first graduation in late March. Upon graduation, the VTC fully expects each participant to become a contributing member to his or her community, and become an example for others to follow.

The Cobb County Drug Lab is an independent on-site laboratory, specializing in providing comprehensive and quality drug screening services for the Cobb County judicial complex and support agencies. The drug lab provides time saving, economical and accurate point of collection analysis, while maintaining the highest compliance with nationally recognized professional testing standards. The drug lab opened the summer of 2007, since that time it has steadily increased the amount of testing provided. Since 2008, the lab has more than doubled the number of tests performed from a total of 10,139 tests, to a reported 30,468 tests at the end of 2014. As of October 2015, the lab has performed 25,656 tests, and is expected to continue on the same upward growth pattern. The lab recently added two specialized tests this year for opiates and synthetic THC to address the rising drug trend in our community. As an added convenience to customers, the lab will begin accepting credit cards payments in January 2016.

“From The Court to The Classroom” is an interactive program designed to educate Cobb County students on the court system and its functionality by both hosting mock trials at the courthouse [You Be The Judge], and also by allowing Superior Court judges to visit schools and speak with students [Court 2 You]. During the 2015-2016 school year, the Court 2 You program has recognized a 28 percent increase in school visits from last year; offering more schools the opportunity to take advantage of this convenient and cost free way to learn about the judicial process. Interest in the You Be The Judge program has also increased drastically amongst Cobb schools this year. For the current school year, You Be The Judge has realized an 82 percent increase in participation from last year, and of those participating schools, 17 percent have already begun making efforts to schedule for the 2016/2017 school year to assure availability. Plans for a training video to be used statewide are currently in progress. The training video is expected to be completed in early 2016, and will offer assistance to other jurisdictions who wish to implement a similar program within their court.

The Cobb County Sheriff’s Office purchased an armored rescue vehicle with seized funds. This vehicle is used to remove victims from active crime scenes and reduces the threat to the deputies involved in the rescue. This vehicle is made available to all surrounding agencies inside of Cobb County and surrounding counties.

Due to substantial increase in the number of deaths of young people in Cobb County attributed to heroin, the Sheriff’s Office initiated a task force by increasing number of agents we have devoted to MCS. This task force has been successful not only in investigating heroin related crimes, but most importantly has made arrests of persons suspected of supplying the drug to those who died. Many of the deceased were between the age of 18 and 23 years of age.

This year the Sheriff’s Office successfully implemented a new records management system.

Combined with improved work process, the new system allows for better tracking and retrieval of information needed by the sheriff's office and courts.

Through training and with the purchase of new equipment the Sheriff's Office has enhanced our computer and communications forensics capabilities. In addition, we offer these resources to other Cobb County agencies. The advantage of its in-house forensics resources allowed for criminal cases to be handled quicker and with greater efficiency which reduces the overall cost of criminal prosecutions.



As the first law enforcement agency in Cobb to issue body cameras in 2011, the Sheriff's Office has continued to increase their use. In 2015 the office successfully equipped all its uniformed deputies with this technology.

The Sheriff's Office has increased the number of taser devices assigned to deputies, which provided an additional resource for when responding with violent offenders.

During this past year the Sheriff's Office has made numerous improvements around the county's court complex. Many of the improvements are not readily visible to the public but are an important component of providing a safe court complex for our jurors, judges and those with court business.

Our Sheriff's Office Reserve Unit, comprised of volunteer sheriff's deputies provided more than 2,000 hours of service across the community. Additionally, our civilian VIP volunteers gave another 4,000 hours of administrative and operational support.

The Solicitor General of Cobb County launched a separate Victim Services website linked to the main site. The web site contains portals to numerous local, state, federal, and other agencies that provide resources and/or information to the community at large.

The Solicitor's Office also formed a Behavioral Health Court to address the needs of defendants with mental health issues. The bid was awarded and will start with our first defendants in January 2016.

Cobb County has three volunteer programs that are essential to the juvenile court process. These three programs are CASA, Diversion and Judicial Citizen Panel Review. CASA volunteers are court appointed special advocates that speak for children who have been abused or neglected. In 2015, the CASA program consisted of 49 volunteers. CASA volunteers worked 4,800 hours and

drove approximately 15,000 miles.

CASA volunteers advocated for 226 children. Diversion volunteers determine the consequences for first time offenders of minor offenses. In 2015, the Diversion Program consisted of 48 volunteers. The Diversion volunteers reviewed a total of 71 cases this year. Judicial Citizen Panel Review volunteers make recommendations to the court in regards to children that are in foster care. In 2015, the panel program consisted of 69 volunteers who review cases once a month. The program reviewed an average of 25 cases per month, involving approximately 50 children. All three programs use residents from the community as volunteers, which results in a tremendous cost savings to the taxpayers.

In September 2015 the Juvenile Court also began a new program entitled, Brief Strategic Family Therapy. BSFT is a short-term, problem-oriented intervention designed to improve a youth's behavior problems by improving family interactions. Therapists seek to change maladaptive family interaction patterns by coaching family interactions as they occur in session to create the opportunity for new, more functional interactions to emerge.

In July 2015, Probate Court's only court reporter retired from Cobb County. Instead of hiring a new full-time court reporter, Probate Court used the available funds to purchase and implement a digital recording system for Probate Court hearings. This system has increased continuity of operations by allowing the office to maintain control of all recordings. This system also facilitates direct access to court records.

Additionally, Probate Court was able to leverage the aforementioned salary to restructure office personnel. This included upgrading two existing positions into supervisor positions, changing a Judicial Admin Tech II position to a Judicial Admin Tech III and creating a new full-time clerk position in the License Division. This restructuring enabled Probate Court to optimize their resources, achieve more desirable internal structure and deliver an improved level of service.

In January, 2015, Probate Court replaced its outdated, cumbersome weapons carry license application case management system with Contexte; the case management system utilized by the Estates Division of Probate Court and many other Courts in Cobb County.

Throughout 2015, Probate Court has continued to make forms, applications and records available online as a convenience for customers.

This year has been a very productive year for the Superior Court Clerk's Office. In an effort to serve the residents of Cobb County more efficiently, we have made several upgrades and improvements. First, we have purchased a new High Density Storage Unit capable of holding up to six years of files. Previously, our file room could store only three years with the remaining files being stored in an offsite storage facility costing \$7,000 each year. We have managed to close almost all of our offsite storage units savings thousands of dollars in storage fees as well as man-hours searching for and collecting files. Second, we are in the testing phase of our Real Estate division's new Land Records System, which should be online by January 2016. Lastly, we are currently installing the use of debit and credit card payments for the first time ever with expected completion by January of 2016.

PARKS



During 2015, the PARKS department replaced two outdated playgrounds at Wallace and Noonday parks. Operations also replaced more than 450,000 square feet of sod on various sports fields in the county.

The department performed renovations to 37 baseball and softball infields incorporating 1,968 tons of infield mix, constructed pitchers mounds and homeplate areas using 90 tons of mound mix and broadcasted 1,250 tons of topdressing sand on the turf of 49 fields to improve the playability and safety of all play surfaces.

The PARKS Land Unit assisted with ongoing SPLOST projects by completing construction of the soccer field at Terrell Mill, two baseball fields and one football field at Wallace Park, began constructing two softball fields at Bells Ferry Park and completed sod installation for the entrance and inside the hub at Al Bishop Park. They installed stream bank stabilization flex-mat to eliminate bank erosion on the creek banks at Rhyne and Perry Parham parks and graded the area for the playground at Wallace Park.

PARKS operations staff worked closely with contractors during construction to keep Miller Park operational and made major preparations for the Shrine Circus, the North Georgia State Fair, rodeos, dogs shows and other major events.

The department hosted 40 tennis tournaments at the six Cobb tennis centers in 2015. Tournaments are offered for all age groups and levels of play. More than 2,400 participants competed in the tournaments. Cobb's tennis class instructional program introduced tennis to more than 1,900 participants. This is one of the larger programs of this type in the state. A total

of 440 tennis teams and nearly 5,400 participants utilized a Cobb tennis facility for league play in fiscal year 2015. These teams host visiting teams totaling 1,500 teams and more than 15,000 players coming to Cobb and our facilities to compete in league competition. These leagues included ALTA, USTA and other leagues.

The aquatics program's largest addition this year was the opening of the new Seven Springs Water Park. The water park opened Memorial weekend and closed Labor Day. Daily attendance averaged approximately 1,000 participants. All of the other aquatic facilities maintained high demand and provided services to approximately 500,000 participants throughout the year.

Fullers Park's baseball field was revitalized through the generosity of the Atlanta Braves Foundation. Improvements include a re-graded infield, an added infield mix, laser grading for proper drainage and rebuilt pitching mounds. On-deck circles and new netting at the backstop were also purchased and installed.

The gymnastics center had another successful year with all instructional programs filling, the Cobb Challenger's competitive team thriving with more than 130 year round competitors and the gymnastics center serving as the host of the National Special Olympics annual event for the fifth year.

The 17th annual ABA Dixieland National BMX competition was held April 23-26 at Wild Horse Creek Park BMX track. More than 1,300 participants from 37 states and two countries raced for a national championship.

The Legacy Showcase youth fast-pitch softball competition was held July 16-19 at Al Bishop, Kennworth and Sandy Plains parks. A total of 104 teams from California to Massachusetts came to display their skills to more than 320 college coaches. This event generated a 2.5 million dollar local economic impact to the community.

The adult softball program continues to be the largest program in the state. Fiscal year 2014 had 310 teams with 5,333 participants competing in five parks for the league championships. Al Bishop softball complex also saw 5,232 softball players competing in weekend tournaments March-November.

The inaugural Cobb Sports Alliance Cup adult soccer tournament was held Sept. 18-20 at the Hubert Soccer Complex. A total of 18 teams from around the state participated in the men's, women's and coed divisions.

The Atlanta Braves partnered with Cobb PARKS to renovate two baseball fields at Powder Springs and Fullers parks. These renovations were made possible with materials donated through the Chipper Jones 10 for 10 program.

The Cobb PARKS Annual Ultimate Cheerfest 2015 was held at the Mable House Barnes Amphitheatre. A total of 30 recreation league cheerleading teams registered and awards were presented to the first, second and third place winners. Approximately 2,500 spectators were in attendance.

The PARKS Department collaborated with local community groups to sponsor back to school bashes at three recreation centers: Ron Anderson Recreation Center, Fair Oaks Recreation Center and the South Cobb Recreation Center. Sponsors included the Omega Psi Phi Fraternity, Powder Springs Task Force, Austell Task Force, Wal-Mart and Square Work Lodge #596.

Our Therapeutic Recreation Service Unit held the Annual Doris Sims Spring Formal in April. A total of 120 attended. Special attractions included free limo rides, catered dinner, free pictures and dance.

The Cobb County egg hunt event had the highest attendance to date of 2,200 people.

The Cobb Civic Center is closed for major renovations and is scheduled to reopen March 2016.

The PARKS operations staff currently manages 5,490 acres of green space of which 1,800 acres is actively maintained as useable parkland. Included within the division's responsibilities are more than 177 various sports fields, 118 tennis courts, five multi-use/basketball courts, 42 playgrounds, two sand volleyball courts, more than 30 miles of trails and a variety of other recreational opportunities for Cobb County residents.

Public Safety



Wireless customers in Cobb County can now send a text message to 911 operators for emergency help when unable to make a voice call. This service is available to the majority of wireless customers. All major carriers have completed integration with the Cobb County 911 system. Cobb County will receive text to 911 messages from both unincorporated Cobb County and from the cities within Cobb. Information will be relayed to the appropriate city if necessary. Smyrna 911 has deployed its own text to 911. The county will work with Smyrna to provide seamless police, fire and medical services.

With changes in the employment process, more police recruits are being hired. The need was identified to increase the number of academies being offered each year by the Cobb County Department of Public Safety Training Center. Each mandate class is now approximately 20 weeks, allowing for additional training cycles without sacrificing the level of training for which Cobb County is known. Mandate classes are now held four times each year until vacancies have been filled. Previously, classes were only offered twice per year.

Cobb County Fire and Emergency Services created a computer application which promotes awareness, safety and education to the residents of Cobb County. Cobb County is one of the first in the country to design such an application.



The new Department of Public Safety Internal Affairs office, which handles recruiting and background investigations for all DPS employees, was completed in March 2015. This allowed consolidation of staff from four locations and has significantly improved hiring, oversight and operational efficiency.

Shift differential pay was implemented for Police, Sheriff's Office, E-911 and Animal Control employees at the rate of 50 cents per hour for officers working evening shift and \$1 per hour for personnel working midnight shift. These shifts cause personnel to work less desirable, more dangerous hours and often take a tremendous toll on family life. The differential pay will provide additional compensation for those who work nontraditional shifts.

The expansion of the 10-hour shifts continued for the police department in 2015. This results in enhanced officer and public safety. The current eight hour shifts do not allow for additional staffing levels during high-demand periods. The four-day/10-hour shift also offers the officers more time to recuperate (especially ones assigned to non-traditional shifts) and results in reduced overtime. This transition will continue to other precincts throughout 2016.

Forty additional officers were approved for the police department and will be used to continue the implementation of 10-hours shifts.

The police department ranger unit received two 2015 Zero DSP electric motorcycles. These fully electric patrol motorcycles are valuable for patrolling not only the off-road areas of the county but also patrolling the 12.8 mile Cobb County section of the Silver Comet Trail. Cobb

County Fire and Emergency Services took delivery of two Fortuna Rapid Deployment Craft to use for water rescue at a cost of \$9,000. Through a grant from the Urban Area Security Initiative, the police department received 10 Ford Explorers for use in patrol and special operations.

Cobb County Public Fire and Life Safety Division taught nearly 24,000 students during 700 classes at the Safety Village throughout the year. The department distributed 437 smoke detectors and installed 369 child safety seats.

The county hired its first paid Cobb County Fire and Emergency Services medical director. This has improved the quality of care given through changes in protocols and additional quarterly training.

Cobb County Fire and Emergency Services Special Operations Division deployed tourniquets and trauma response kits to all 47 Cobb County Fire and Emergency Services response apparatus. Since deployment in June 2015, this \$16,000 in equipment has significantly reduced the loss of limb or probable death for 16 patients.

Representatives from police, fire and E-911 worked with Kennesaw State University stakeholders towards completion of a football response plan to ensure communication interoperability, security and traffic management for games and other events at the university. Cobb Fire participated in numerous exercises with private partners and neighboring jurisdictions to better plan and train for a variety of disaster situations.

The Internal Affairs management team help lead a Police Athletic League baseball camp at Southwest Baseball Association in Clarkdale. The camp was a partnership between the Cobb County Police Department Police Athletic League, The Atlanta Braves and Better Baseball Inc.

The Public Safety Blitz was held on Six Flags Drive. This annual public event, which combined the efforts of the Police Department, Fire Department, 911 and Animal Control, Austell Community Task Force, Neighborhood Safety Committee and United Way, was once again very well attended and by all measures a huge success.

One hundred twenty seven members of Cobb County Fire and Emergency Services received the CARES Award (given for the successful resuscitation of a cardiac arrest) at the Region III EMS Awards Banquet.

Animal Control received approval and filled a position for animal cruelty investigations. This has been a huge success and has cleared/prosecuted dozens of cases involving animal cruelty. He has been featured in the newspaper for the positive work he is doing to champion animals that fall victim to these crimes. Animal Control officials also attended 32 community outreach events promoting bite prevention and child safety.

State law mandates that all 911 radio transmissions and audio phone calls be recorded and saved for three years. The NICE recording system provides immediate play back of both radio and phone systems to ensure information is accurately received by the dispatcher. The software has been upgraded and a quality assurance program has been added. This will expedite and provide continuity in the Quality Assurance review process. The new system was deployed in February

2015.

Cobb County 911 Emergency Communications Installed automatic call distribution for its phone system. ACD eliminates the need for operators to multi-task. Operators sign onto the phone system to answer calls when they are not on a busy radio. Dispatchers can provide a higher level of officer safety support because they do not have to answer 911 calls. Call takers can provide uninterrupted attention to callers because they do not have to answer radio traffic. Call answer times have improved, especially for administrative calls. The new system went live in January 2015.

911 Emergency Communications employees from other shifts have been assigned to the “Power Shift” to address peak call volume periods. This will be especially advantageous during large scale events such as Braves and KSU games. This shift also allows a third schedule option for operators. The new shift was deployed in January 2015.

When a response to a 911 caller’s location in another jurisdiction was delayed due to lat/long confusion and mapping limitations, Cobb County initiated an examination of its 911 mapping capabilities. It was determined that making available Internet connectivity and mapping on all positions would improve service. We purchased a separate server to ensure CAD security was not compromised. Internet on all positions was installed May 2015.

Cobb 911 currently has a Public Education team, however with the deployment of Text to 911, an aggressive Public Education Program is needed. The team membership has been doubled. Several power points have been created to reflect the individual needs of community members. The team will focus on schools (latch-key children especially), the elderly and domestic violence victims. We will be partnering with advocacy groups such as the YWCA, the District Attorney’s office, middle schools and the Elderly Abuse Task Force.

For years 911 centers across Georgia have struggled keeping manpower to saturated levels. Finding employees who can handle the stress and multi-tasking and remain compassionate and professional is a challenge nationwide. Therefore many people must go through the hiring process to find the few who can complete the assessment. In order to ensure the hiring process in not interrupted, to assist with background checks and to provide hands on perspective during job fairs and the recruitment process, a 911 operator has been assigned to Internal Affairs. Enhancing the recruitment and background check process was initiated in June 2015.

The Cobb County Fire and Emergency Services Special Operations Division purchased numerous pieces of equipment, including new medium/high pressure lifting air bags on Squad 4 for \$23,097, two wireless four-gas detection units for the Hazardous Materials Response Team costing \$14,890 and new pipe leak sealing kits and air bags for drainage pipes for the Hazardous Materials Response Team costing \$16,280. It also purchased 50 Zoll AED Plus Automatic External Defibrillators for the Cobb Public Access Defibrillation Program at a cost of \$52,250.

Fire and Emergency Services spent \$156,000 to purchase 45 SCOTT self contained breathing apparatus to supplement the current inventory.

For fiscal year 2015, the Fire Marshal's Office answered a record 350 fire code complaints (a 24 percent increase since 2011) while closing 80 percent of those complaints within 37 days or less. A record 279 open records requests were also processed, showing a 53 percent increase over the previous year.

In total, the Fire Marshal's Office completed 13,280 fire inspections, plan reviews and code enforcement activities resulting in excess of \$510,000 of revenues. This includes citations written by the Fire Investigations Unit for fire lane violations and unauthorized burning.

Cobb Emergency Management Agency coordinates emergency management services for the county by providing leadership, planning, education and resources to protect lives, property and the environment. In an effort to achieve this, the Emergency Shelter Plan was completed, adding additional shelter locations throughout the community to increase the county's level of preparedness.

Cobb EMA purchased \$8,665 in new technology in 2015 to enhance the Emergency Operations Center using Emergency Management Preparedness Grant funds. This included additional telephones for work stations, a new computer for the outdoor weather siren system, and a camera for teleconferences. A new piece of equipment, a Barco Clickshare, was purchased to enable wireless information sharing in the EOC. These additions allow county personnel and partners of EMA to continue a superior level of service to Cobb residents concerning severe weather, coordination of resources and support during a crisis.

Cobb County has 74 outdoor weather sirens to alert the public of severe weather. This year, two sirens were completely replaced for a total of \$45,420. In addition, 22 sirens received a replacement cabinet that will prolong their lifespan for a total of \$129,497, all of which was paid from the siren maintenance budget. EMA conducts a monthly test the first Wednesday of every month, weather permitting, to ensure each siren is functioning properly. EMA utilized \$11,950.00 in Emergency Management Preparedness Grant funds to purchase spare parts. These parts are readily available to ensure sirens with maintenance needs are repaired quickly to avoid any interruption in coverage during severe weather.

Cobb EMA has trained 1,826 individuals in the Community Emergency Response Team curriculum since its inception and trained 238 residents in 2015. In expanding the CERT program, EMA certified 49 new CERT instructors to teach the curriculum in the county and the municipalities. The City of Smyrna and the City of Kennesaw are actively training their residents. In 2016, EMA plans to continue expanding CERT trainings through the other municipalities and the faith-based community. In addition to these trainings, EMA conducted more than 30 preparedness presentations to various community organizations spreading the message of preparedness and volunteer opportunities in times of disaster.

In July 2015, Cobb EMA held a kickoff meeting to begin the Hazard Mitigation Plan update, which will be submitted to the Federal Emergency Management Agency for renewal in early 2016. The process involves substantial coordination and information gathering with all municipalities within Cobb County. CEMA is also partnering with the Information Services Department to plan for the implementation of a Business Continuity/Continuity of Operations Plan in 2016 that will allow the county to be better prepared to continue operations during

emergency situations. Cobb EMA is also a member of the county's critical infrastructure/key resources team to conduct security assessments of critical infrastructure. Several site visits were conducted during the 2015 calendar year.



Services



Fleet Management received three major recognitions this year ranking 23rd best of the 100 Best Fleet's in North America, 27th Green Fleet in North America and was the first in Georgia to place in Government Fleet Magazine's top 50 leading Fleet in North America. These awards are symbols of the county's efforts to provide cost efficient services using industry best practices.

Cobb Fleet is committed to environmental responsibility and stewardship by implementing innovative green technology such as the use of propane autogas, burning waste oil for heat and purchasing electric and hybrid vehicles. This proactive approach to fleet management has saved the county more than \$300,000 and has displaced more than 175 tons of carbon dioxide.

Fleet Management also installed 23 new level two and one DC fast chargers: This technology implementation of electric vehicle supply equipment will be used to fuel 16 electric vehicles and add much needed infrastructure for public access. Fleet management in its efforts to expand charging station infrastructure, applied for and received grant funds to add a public charging station that will be used by residents to fuel their vehicles.

A total of \$450,000 in capital replacement has been performed to county buildings' infrastructure. This includes work on heating and air conditioning, concrete, roofing and finishes throughout the county. The 2011 SPLOST operations/maintenance work also finished up with more than \$1 million worth of maintenance projects completed this year.

Renovations were completed by Cobb County Property Management in-house designers and staff including the relocation of Internal Affairs, renovated County Attorney's space, conversion of airport control tower base building to conference room and modifications to Fire Headquarters.

Property Management constructed two new facilities were constructed for Georgia Drivers' License Division. A building on Fairground Street was renovated for the Department of Families and Children's Services. A new facility was constructed for the Community Service Board. 2011 SPLOST renovations continue on the Health Department's County Services Parkway facilities.



Hardware, software and applications for the county's Geographic Information System were upgraded in 2015 and GIS began offering additional layers of data to other departments, municipalities and the general public for use in site planning and design. The new data shows urban features including airports, athletic tracks, building footprints, sidewalks, walkways, parking lots, roads and trails and pools. In conjunction with the Department of Transportation, GIS launched the CobbCommute application for the public to check traffic conditions and road closures in the county.

"Taste of Wellness" was an event open to all ages to try some of the activities available at Cobb County's senior centers. More than 300 residents participated in a wide variety of activities including yoga, Zumba, container gardening, musical instruments, line dancing, chair aerobics and theatre. Thanks to the partnership of 15 local businesses and organizations, the event was hailed as a huge success.

The Cobb County Meals on Wheels program delivered more than 52,800 meals to homebound seniors on 21 different routes. To accomplish this, volunteers drove more than 5,200 miles.

More than 460 volunteers provided more than 19,200 hours of help to Senior Services, thus saving taxpayers more than \$451,900. The home services voucher program served more than 140 people and 663 people were served through our transportation voucher program, representing more than 20,650 miles provided. More than 47,600 round-trip rides were provided to senior neighborhood centers, medical facilities and grocery stores.

The Senior Services Information and Referral line is manned by fully trained specialists who answered questions and provided resources for more than 3,300 calls. More than 80 people were served through Share the Care voucher program, providing 3,555 hours of respite services.

Several major software applications were replaced or upgraded in 2015 that provided departments with increased functionality, improved business processes and savings in time or resources. The 20-year old Records Management System serving the Sheriff's Office was replaced which provides improved communication between public safety and judicial agencies.

The integrated tax system serving the offices of the Tax Assessor and Tax Commissioner was

upgraded. The upgraded system provides improved security and allows for more efficient processing of tax data. The enterprise system for Human Resources, Finance and Purchasing was upgraded to take advantage of the latest technology releases and offer more online services for employees and potential vendors.

Scanning, storing and retrieving data electronically using the OnBase Enterprise Content Management System expanded throughout the county in 2015. Document management processes added or enhanced include business license renewals, sign permitting and subdivision acceptance for the Community Development Agency; new documents, process improvements and system integrations for State Court Clerk, Magistrate Court, Probate Court and Sentence Enforcement Unit; benefits enrollment, performance appraisals, and integration for AMS Upgrade for the Human Resources Department; importing tax bills for the Tax Commissioner's Office and invoice processing for the Finance Department.

In 2015, the Community Development Agency and Information Services Department worked together to modify the business process and incorporate technology to increase efficiency and improve service for renewing licenses. Renewal documentation submitted by businesses is scanned and automatically indexed in Onbase for easier retrieval when addressing customer calls and requests. In recognition of these efforts, Cobb County received the Innovation Award at Accela's 2015 annual conference.

Information Services staff installed laptops and in-car cameras for 123 new police take home cars, replaced mobile equipment in approximately 40 existing vehicles and deployed 10 tablets for the Fire Department for use in patient care reporting in the field. In addition, they implemented a license plate recognition system which assists police officers to identify persons or vehicles connected to a crime.

The 2015 Summer Reading Program saw the Cobb County Public Library System collaborating with the Smyrna Public Library and the Cobb and Marietta school districts to encourage summertime reading. Through a new online platform developed by Scholastic, more than 8,800 students in Cobb County logged in to record reading activities, reflecting the engagement of young readers in the countywide reading and literacy program.

The Community and User Engagement Services department was formed in mid-2015 as part of the Library System's administrative team. The department works to engage library patrons and the Cobb County community, enhancing educational and cultural life, early literacy, lifelong learning and economic vitality. Plans implemented in 2015 for strengthening library system outreach in the community included collaborative programming with organizations having limited or no past involvement with the library system.

In 2015, Cobb County library patrons borrowed 2.2 million books, more than 355,000 videos and CDs and nearly 150,000 audiobooks. Library digital downloads (including eBooks and eAudiobooks) in fiscal year 2015 increased to almost 290,000, up from nearly 230,000 in 2014. Cobb County libraries presented more than 3,500 programs in fiscal year 2015 with about 136,000 people in attendance. The library system's patron count of two million patron visits and three million web page visits is also expected for the calendar year totals.

The introduction of the educator card in the 2014-2015 school year expanded opportunities for teachers to use library resources in the classroom. More than 600 educators from the Cobb County and Marietta school districts, private schools and homeschooling families signed up for the card during its first year. The card allows educators to borrow materials and access electronic resources for the classroom throughout the school year. The educator card's checkout privilege is nine weeks in place of the regular three-week checkout period. The library's Outreach staff visited schools throughout the county to introduce the card and proactively coordinated card registration with school library media specialists and other officials.

Promotion of early literacy opportunities is a major priority for the Library System. A top initiative is the 1,000 Books B4 Kindergarten program launched in the spring of 2015 with support from the Cobb County and Marietta school districts and various community organizations. With about 50,000 children in Cobb County ages 5 or younger, the program is about developing critical kindergarten readiness skills. Officially, enrollment in the program is about 2,000 children, and many parents and guardians said they were already participating without formal registration. Other partners promoting 1,000 B4K include the National Park Service and Kennesaw Mountain National Battlefield Park, Kaiser Permanente and the Cobb Library Foundation.

Significant contributions to collection development for the Library System in 2015 included donations of books, DVDs and other items from the community and support from the Cobb Library Foundation. More than \$95,000 was raised through the Library System's book sales events and in-house sales.

The Library System's summertime program introducing female students, ages 11 to 18, to technology careers expanded in 2015 from one to four library locations. "Cobb GEMS: Girls in Engineering, Math and Science" featured interactive workshops at the Switzer, Mountain View Regional, Kemp Memorial and Vinings libraries. Cobb GEMS included about 60 participants attending workshops on 3-D printing, communications, coding and sessions on career pathways by several professional women in science, engineering, technology and mathematics from leading corporations and universities. Launched in 2014 as a pilot program, Cobb GEMS is funded by a grant from the Cobb Library Foundation.

The Library System hosted nine events at seven locations in September for the Falls Prevention Awareness initiative. This project was designed to engage the Library System with community partners involved in public health and safety, especially for seniors. Georgia Public Health data shows injuries from falls are a costly problem for the county – one Cobb resident visits an emergency room per hour due to serious falls injuries. Centered around the national Falls Prevention Awareness Day, the events included health screenings by WellStar Health System, children's programs by the Kaiser Permanente Educational Theatre and CarFit safety inspections for senior drivers by Cobb Extension staff members and occupational therapy students from Chattahoochee Technical College.

The Library System also collaborated with Cobb Senior Services, Cobb County Fire and Emergency Services, Georgia Department of Public Health, Emory University Center for Health

in Aging, East Cobb Lion's Club, and other organizations for the capstone Falls Prevention Awareness Open House at East Cobb Library.

The Cobb Library Foundation provided \$37,500 in funding, materials and equipment to the library system in 2015. The support included \$5,600 in Summer Reading Program reward books and prizes; \$3,300 for GEMS and Teen Tech Program materials and \$2,000 for video monitors for promoting library services at all locations. Foundation funding also supported parent/child and early literacy programs as well as employee recognition events. Also, the Cobb Library Foundation received \$12,000 in grant funding from Cobb Community Impact and the Delta Community Credit Union for the Teen Center spaces.

Cobb County Master Gardeners have helped to establish several community gardens throughout the county to include Reconnecting our Roots Community Garden, Hope Garden (EXCEL Class project 2015), grounds work at Fountain Gate and school gardens through the Junior Master Gardener Program at several elementary schools throughout Cobb County. There are 45 elementary/middle schools identified to receive mini-grants as a result of the Cobb Impact Grant and the Cobb EMC Grant. These school gardens are established in order to teach the farm to table concept to the students as well as mathematical concepts.

The Cobb County 4-H agent created and implemented a class addressing "The Best You – Tapping Into Your Best You." This interactive session provided tools and resources allowing participants to conduct a self-analysis of who they really are, goal setting, and flourish in a positive environment. The 4-H agent conducted sessions to adults and youth. Empowerment conferences and monthly sessions were conducted focusing on individuals being their best, ultimately, becoming their best to others. As a result, the Cobb County 4-H Agent conducted a dozen sessions reaching 59 youths and 381 adults, totaling 440 people.

Cobb Extension staff provided food demonstration and sampling for three Cobb County Farmer's Market programs from May to September 2015. Extension staff attended the Mableton Farmer's Market weekly and the Cobb2020 Fresh Market twice a week (June-August). A dish containing fresh produce was prepared and offered to the market attendees. A booklet containing the recipe, nutrition information on the highlighted produce, selection and storage information and produce safety was developed by the Family and Consumer Sciences staff and distributed at the markets.

Cobb County 4-H Youth program holds a monthly Horse and Pony Club meeting at Stout Property on Brownsville Road. This club is an educational equestrian program and offers special presentations for children on the care, maintenance and safety of working with a horse. It also allows "showing" opportunities in county, district and state competitions. The Horse and Pony Club educates the children on making public presentations. In 2015 the Horse and Pony Club has reached a membership of 40 (and growing) and is in the process of planning its first Livestock Show hosted by the club.

Improvements were made to the hardware infrastructure supporting the countywide server and communication network. Information Services transitioned an additional 58 physical servers to the virtualized data center environment which improved response times and established a more

stable system. Pilot projects were initiated in two emerging technologies – mobile device management and application virtualization – with plans to roll the new technologies out to more users in 2016. The first phase of a multi-year personal computer replacement cycle was initiated that distributes the latest Microsoft Office applications to county employees.

Information Services made ongoing improvements to the voice and data network that serves all departments. Circuits at 66 sites throughout the county were upgraded to increase speed and improve stability of the communication network. Internet connectivity for the Library System was increased from 100 Mbps to 250 Mbps which provides faster access for computers users.

Other improvements included implementing an interactive voice response system for the Tax Commissioner's Office and an audio court recording system in the Probate Court. More automated call distribution capabilities for incoming calls to the Cobb Community Transit Customer Service were provided and an ACD call center was established for the Medical Examiner's Office. The telephone systems serving CobbWorks and the Elections warehouse were upgraded.

In June, the Elections department implemented an online tool to automate the filing and management of campaign finance reporting. The new process not only ensures compliance to legal requirements, it also reduces the demand on staff time by automating previously manual tasks, allows candidates and elected officials to file reports at any time of day, and provides Cobb residents with easy-to-use access to submitted campaign finance reports. For more information, go to cobbelections.org.



SPLOST



In 2015, Cobb County Department of Transportation initiated, continued and completed work on many of its Special Purpose Local Option Sales Tax-funded projects. For the 2005 SPLOST, engineering/design has started or been completed on each of the 340 identified projects. Construction has started on 328 projects with 322 projects reaching completion.

Major projects underway or completed in 2015 included Windy Hill Road, Atlanta Road at I-285 Interchange, Cedarcrest Road, Powder Springs Road at Cheatham Hill Road/Callaway Road intersection improvement and Cobb Parkway bridge over the Chattahoochee River.

For the 2011 SPLOST, engineering/design has started or been completed on more than 200 identified projects. Construction has started on 170 projects, with more than 140 reaching completion. Projects completed or underway in 2015 include Floyd Road, Windy Hill Road, Skip Spann Connector and Pine Mountain Road.

2015 has been another active and productive year for the PARKS team managing projects under the 2011 PRCA SPLOST program. The entire program is comprised of an \$83.5 million dollar PRCA SPLOST budget with 172 projects in 50 of our parks and facilities. To date, we have completed 70 percent of these projects and have another 22 percent under construction.

To make the available funding stretch as far as possible, PARKS staff is directly involved in many of the construction activities, ranging from building construction, roof replacements and painting to laser grading and athletic field construction. The majority of work continues to be in selecting and managing the efforts of a variety of professional architecture/engineering firms and construction contractors, remaining on budget and on schedule. An added challenge is to perform this work safely in our parks with the least possible disruption to the athletic schedules and activities of our users and volunteers.

Metro Area Sales Tax Comparison

Atlanta	8%
Fulton	7%
DeKalb	7%
Gwinnett	6%
COBB	6%

Some examples of the projects in 2015:

Fair Oaks Park Athletic Field and Building Renovation

The renovation of Fair Oaks Park in Marietta was completed in August with a construction cost of \$1.2 million. The project included the rehabilitation of soccer/football fields and construction of a replacement concession/restroom building and a maintenance/restroom building. Under a separate contract, a new roof was installed on the Fair Oaks Recreation Center.

Al Bishop Park Athletic Field and Building Renovation

The renovation of Al Bishop Softball Complex was completed in February with a construction cost of \$1.3 million. The project included the renovation of the five field softball complex, with a central restroom/concession building, park management offices and a second floor scorekeepers area. Al Bishop is one of the preeminent softball tournament facilities in the southeast.

Cobb County Civic Center Renovation and Expansion

Currently under construction, with a construction cost of \$5.2 million, the Civic Center renovation will be one of the signature projects of the 2011 PARKS SPLOST. The existing building will be upgraded to meet modern codes, will include a new kitchen to support large events, break out meeting rooms, and expanded restroom capacity. A major new addition is underway at the front of the building, which will house a large pre-function area, new offices and ticketing, and a large new meeting room that can be subdivided. Construction is scheduled for completion in March 2016.

Tennis Center Building Replacement – Fair Oaks Park and Sweetwater Park

In November, PARKS completed the final two of the five tennis center buildings scheduled for replacement under the 2011 PARKS SPLOST program. Replacements are complete at Harrison Tennis Center, Kennworth Tennis Center and Terrell Mill Tennis Center. The nearly identical Fair Oaks and Sweetwater centers were constructed simultaneously at a combined cost of \$1.7 million. The new centers are larger, have better ADA access, are more energy efficient and provide more shade and better sight lines to the courts than their predecessors did.

Metro Atlanta Millage Comparisons

KEY	FY 11	FY 12	FY 13	FY 14	FY 15
Atlanta*	21.99	23.71	21.73	23.80	22.20
Fulton*	15.16	15.16	15.09	16.66	15.36
DeKalb	21.21	21.21	21.21	21.21	20.81
Gwinnett	13.02	13.02	13.75	13.75	13.58
COBB	11.11	11.11	10.91	10.71	10.51

Figures are without school & state taxes (based on Fiscal Year)

*North Fulton County *City of Atlanta within Fulton County

Hyde Farm Historic Building Rehabilitation

The rehabilitation of the historic Hyde Farm house, barn and farm outbuildings was completed in June, with a total construction cost of \$1.4 million. Hyde Farm in east Cobb was continuously farmed by only two families from the 1830s to 2004. When the county purchased the property, all of the farm buildings were in various states of deterioration. The goal of the project was to bring the farm buildings to a condition that will support the county's long term plans for the farm. Upcoming projects will concentrate on the farm terraces and buffer areas, resulting in a sustainable working farm.

Fullers Park Building Replacement

The replacement of three concession/restroom buildings was completed at a combined cost of

\$1.2 million. The building serving the football association at the park was finished in April, and the two buildings serving the very active baseball association was completed earlier in the spring. In addition, PARKS staff completed the design and construction of a new maintenance building in the park. Prior to that, a variety of improvements had been completed in the Fullers Recreation Center.

Sandy Plains Park Athletic Field and Building Rehabilitation

The rehabilitation of four softball fields and the replacement of a concession/restroom building was completed in July. At the request of the softball association in the park, an old concession / restroom building was replaced by a new restroom/storage building. Construction costs totalled \$1 million.

Shaw Park Athletic Field and Building Rehabilitation

The rehabilitation of four baseball fields and the replacement of a concession/restroom building was completed in January. Construction costs were \$857,000. The project also included ADA access improvements, paving and upgrades to an additional existing concession/restroom building.

Seven Springs Water Park

The construction of the Seven Springs Water Park in Powder Springs was completed in May, at a construction cost of \$3 million. The new complex has a zero entry pool with splash pad features, lazy river, two large water slides, a bath house with concession and additional parking. The contract also included improvements to the nearby lake and dam at the park.

Hurt Road Park Athletic Field and Building Rehabilitation

The rehabilitation of four softball fields, the conversion of a multi-purpose field into two football fields, the replacement of a concession/restroom building and construction of a new maintenance building were completed in April. Construction costs were \$1.3 million.

Nance Road

This project constructs a new bridge over Butler Creek and provides safety and operational improvements to Nance Road from just west of the Cobblestone Golf Course entrance to Lakeview Way. Improvements to Lakeview Way are also in progress. Construction activities began April 2014 and were completed in March 2015.

Clay Road Sidewalk

This sidewalk project was completed in June 2015. The project included the construction of 1.63 miles of sidewalk between Austell Road and Mable Lake Drive. This \$1.36 million project also included culvert extensions to accommodate sidewalk across Buttermilk Creek Tributary and the Clay Branch Creek Tributary.

Dallas Highway streetscapes

This project was completed in August 2015. The \$2.96 million project included a 12-foot wide enhanced sidewalk along the south side of SR 120 (Dallas Highway) from Casteel Road / Old Hamilton Road to Villa Rica Way.

Powder Springs Road at Cheatham Hill Road/Callaway Road

This is an intersection improvement project that includes new turn lanes, sidewalk, and pedestrian accommodations. This \$2 million project began in March 2014 and was completed in September 2015.

Queen Mill Road

This 1.8-mile project added safety and operational improvements to Queen Mill Road between Mableton Parkway and Veterans Memorial Highway. The project also added curb, gutter, sidewalks, and drainage improvements where needed. The construction cost of the project was \$3.57 million and was completed in August 2015.

Resurfacing

In 2015, the county awarded \$20.3 million for three resurfacing contracts as part of the 2011 SPLOST. Since October 2011, these contracts have resulted in a total resurfacing of 1,518 streets (480 miles) within the county's four commission districts. This represents a cumulative investment of \$96 million in preserving county infrastructure.

Floyd Road Widening

The project consists of improvements to Floyd Road, from Veterans Memorial Highway to Clay Road. These improvements will widen the roadway to accommodate four lanes with a divided median, add an eight-foot to 12-foot wide multi-use trail on the west side, and a five-foot wide sidewalk on the east side. The project will also add dual left turn lanes from Floyd Road onto Veterans Memorial Highway. The project began in January 2015 and is scheduled for completion in July 2016.

John Ward Road at Cheatham Hill Road

The project consists of constructing a single-lane roundabout at the intersection along with sidewalk in the surrounding areas. This \$2.2 million project began in September 2014 and was scheduled for completion by the end of 2015.

Pine Mountain Road

This project consists of horizontal and vertical improvements from Stilesboro Road to just east of Shillings Road. The \$3.9 million project includes sight distance improvements, widening travel lanes, sidewalk and turn lanes and is scheduled for completion July 2016.

Six Flags Drive

This \$1.6 million project includes minor widening and the addition of curb, gutter, and sidewalks along Six Flags Drive from Riverside Parkway to Six Flags Parkway. The project began in February 2014 and is scheduled for completion in January 2016.

Skip Spann Connector

Construction on the \$13 million Skip Spann Connector began in April 2014. The Skip Spann Connector will provide a new bridge over Interstate 75 north of Chastain Road to provide direct access from Kennesaw State University to the Town Center economic activity center. The project is expected to provide 19 percent reduction in daily traffic along Chastain Road at the I-75 interchange. It will also provide congestion relief, improved access from KSU to the

Northwest Corridor Managed Lanes access ramps at Big Shanty and the GRTA/CCT park and ride lots and pedestrian and bicycle access between KSU and the stadium. Construction is scheduled for completion in spring 2016.

Windy Hill Road Corridor

These projects include widening and improvements between Cobb Parkway / U.S. Highway 41 and Powers Ferry Road. The corridor will be reconstructed to a six lane, median divided roadway with upgrades to the major intersections along the corridor. Before the end of 2015, the county will let additional projects on the corridor including a diverging diamond interchange at I-75 and an intersection improvement at Cobb Parkway. The total investment in the corridor is expected to exceed \$30 million. Construction is underway and is scheduled for completion in spring 2017.

Traffic Operations

Safety improvements delivered include expansion of the flashing yellow arrow left turn signal display, completion of development of GIS crash analysis tools and implementation of a new school zone flashing beacon control system. The county first used the flashing yellow arrow left turn signal display in 2013, and with recently completed projects implemented it at 40 intersections. A review indicated a substantial crash reduction of about 35 percent has been achieved. The average cost for a conversion project is approximately \$15,000 per approach and funding for the projects have for the most part been provided by the 2011 SPLOST Transportation Improvement Program.

The county maintains a database of crash reports for purposes to include identifying needed safety improvement projects and countermeasures. One countermeasure implemented in 2014 at two intersections resulted in a reduction of crashes with injury by about 65 percent. Completion of the GIS crash analysis tool project has automated and improved the process of importing and reviewing crash reports, as well as the process of analyzing crash data. Funding for the project was provided by the 2011 SPLOST Transportation Improvement Program at a cost of \$80,000.

School zone flashing beacons are used to reduce speed limits in the vicinity of schools to improve safety for pedestrian and vehicular traffic. Control, monitoring and maintenance of the 218 school zone flashing beacons was greatly improved with the recently completed upgrade project which leverages cellular communications for direct access to the controllers. Funding for the project was provided by the 2011 SPLOST Transportation Improvement Program at a cost of \$300,000.

Mobility improvements delivered include traffic signal retiming, expansion of traffic camera coverage, an upgrade of the traffic congestion map webpage now known as Cobb Commute and design of an improved fiber optic cable Intelligent Transportation System network.

In order to respond to changes in traffic patterns on thoroughfare roads and to provide optimum traffic flow, the county periodically retimes traffic signal systems. The county in partnership with the state Department of Transportation retimed 80 traffic signals in five corridors: East-West Connector, Austell Road, Sandy Plains Road, Shallowford Road and Richard Sailors Pkwy/ Powder Springs Road.

Additionally, the county reviewed and adjusted timing parameters for 50 signals in the Sydney Coordinated Adaptive Traffic System. These improvements included adjustments to accommodate traffic diverted due to incidents on I-75 and for events at the Fifth Third Bank Stadium on the Kennesaw State University campus. Funding for the corridor retiming projects was provided by GDOT. Funding for the SCATS optimization projects was provided by the 2005 SPLOST Transportation Improvement Program at a cost of \$25,000.

Closed-circuit television traffic cameras are an integral component of the county's Advanced Transportation Management System which facilitates signal system management, incident management and event management to improve mobility and minimize traffic delays. Sixty Cobb County traffic cameras were added bringing the total to 150 and greatly improving thoroughfare road coverage. Funding for the project was provided by the 2011 SPLOST Transportation Improvement Program at a cost of \$250,000.

The county installed a Bluetooth travel time monitoring system in 2012 for the purpose of improving mobility by monitoring and optimizing traffic signal operations and communicating available roadway capacity or route options. Communication of traffic speeds from the Bluetooth system, along with construction roadway impacts, events and incidents are displayed on a webpage, which is available on most computer devices from desktop computers to smart phones. A project was recently completed to upgrade the web page, which has been rebranded as CobbCommute. Funding for the project was provided by the 2011 SPLOST Transportation Improvement Program at a cost of \$40,000.

The backbone of the county ATMS is the network which includes 200 miles of fiber optic cable; and the county master plan includes upgrade projects to provide a more fault tolerant network with redundant paths and distributed hubs. Design of the Phase 1A and a portion of Phase 1B upgrade projects has been completed. Funding for the project was provided by the 2011 SPLOST Transportation Improvement Program at a cost of \$345,000.

East Marietta Library

Funding for a replacement facility for the East Marietta Library, one of the Library System's busiest and most crowded locations, was secured in 2015. Situated adjacent to Sewell Park on Lower Roswell Road, the 25,000-square-foot facility is a joint-use project of the Library System and Cobb PARKS. Construction of the \$8.6 million complex to replace the 8,600-square-foot library built in 1967 will take place in 2016. The multi-use facility will include traditional library services like story times for children and reference assistance with new technologies for collaborative creativity, such as 3-D printing, audio/video recording and a black box theater. The combined library and cultural arts center is designed to serve the nearby community as well as be a destination for all of Cobb County. Funding for the facility is from the 2016 SPLOST and a grant from the Georgia Public Library Service.

Public Safety

A new Public Safety Training Center and Police Headquarters was approved by voters in 2015 to be funded by the 2016 SPLOST. We are currently advertising for qualified companies to conduct a needs assessment for both projects. The first phase of the SPLOST funded police vehicles was

purchased and the Assigned Vehicle Program began initial implementation.

Emergency Equipment

Support Services ordered and placed into service a dozen vehicles in 2015. This includes specifying, ordering through Cobb County Purchasing, receiving and inspecting, design and install graphics, purchase and installation of emergency lights, sirens and radios. In May 2015, Fire Engines were in service at Stations 9, 16, 22 and 26 at a cost of \$527,369 each. Other equipment included a Hackney Hazardous Materials Truck for \$292,959 as well as 60 Bullard Thermal Imaging Cameras and associated equipment for a cost of \$464,687.

Transportation



In 2015, Cobb County International Airport completed construction of its new \$2.9 million air traffic control tower, a project partially funded with \$1.3 million of federal and state grants. Construction was also completed on a customs facility, which began international operations in June. The customs facility allows the U.S. Customs and Border Protection Agency to conduct customs inspections on international arrivals into Cobb County. The airport name was updated to Cobb County International Airport – McCollum Field to reflect its new capability for accepting international arrivals.

Engineering for the north apron rehabilitation and expansion project was completed in 2015 and \$4.2 million of federal and state grant funding is available for improvements to the north aircraft parking apron. Four months of construction is expected to begin spring 2016, providing additional aircraft parking spaces while also increasing a safety buffer between aircraft operating

on the apron.

Design began on approach lighting of the airport's runway with the \$55,000 engineering contract being funded by the Town Center Area Community Improvement District. The three month installation of the \$350,000 approach light system is expected to begin in spring 2016 with 75 percent funding from the state.

Cobb Community Transit is setting trends by creating a new system name and logo to provide a fresh look and new perspective for CCT within the community. The rebranding process is expected to be completed by summer 2016.

The purchase of 35 new buses in 2015 follows a strategic and targeted fleet replacement plan. The plan was implemented to forecast bus replacement and prioritizes to save money in both procurement and maintenance costs. A total of 35 buses have already been procured and are expected to be delivered in May 2016. These new buses will lower the average age of the local service fleet from the current 10 years to just below three years.

Efforts are underway develop a new Cumberland area mobility service to address the needs of a diverse, large and dynamic activity center for regularly scheduled connectivity amongst offices, shopping, residential, recreational and tourism users.

CCT is conducting two studies – the CCT Route 10X Implementation Plan and CCT Route 10 On-Time Performance and Capacity Analysis – to identify potential improvements to Route 10, its most heavily used route. The studies are a collaborative effort that will evaluate a premium bus service to reduce overcrowding, improve on-time performance and test the possibility of the premium service for other CCT routes to better serve our riders.



The street light program currently provides more than 44,000 street lights throughout Cobb County. Most lights are located within the county's 3,200 street light districts which collectively serve more than 117,000 customers. More than 1,500 new customers were added in 2015. The annual budget for the program in 2015 was approximately \$5.6 million.

Notable achievements in the street light program in 2015 included several LED lighting projects. Along Barrett Parkway in the Town Center Mall area, existing street light fixtures installed in the 1980s were replaced with brighter, more energy efficient LED fixtures to improve nighttime safety. The program continues, in partnership with Cumberland CID, installing new lighting in the Cumberland area along many corridors, to include updated street lights and smaller-scale pedestrian lights with nearly 350 new luminaires, the newest of which, are also energy efficient LEDs. Upon full implementation, nearly all of the

roadways within the Cumberland area will be illuminated with signature, decorative lighting fixtures to enhance the appearance of the area during the day and improve safety for motorists and pedestrians after dark.

The Connect Cobb Environmental Assessment continued in 2015 with completion of technical work and a final document. The remainder of the project schedule, managed by the Planning Division, consisted of coordination with federal agencies to finalize a decision document. The assessment has taken a closer look at benefits, impacts and potential mitigation measures of the locally preferred alternative identified through the Connect Cobb Alternatives Analysis in 2012.

Connect Cobb is developing a transportation project that will expand mobility for all users along a 25-mile stretch linking northern Cobb County to midtown Atlanta along the U.S. Highway 41/Interstate 75 corridor. This corridor would link the MARTA transit network with key Cobb County destinations, including Cumberland and Town Center Community Improvement Districts and Kennesaw State University (main and Marietta campuses), as well as numerous large shopping centers and Dobbins Air Reserve Base.

After a multi-year planning process, the county and cities finalized the Comprehensive Transportation Plan 2040. In May, CTP 2040 was adopted by the Board of Commissioners. The cities of Acworth, Austell, Kennesaw, Marietta, Powder Springs and Smyrna each followed suit. CTP 2040 identifies local transportation priorities that are grounded in the community's overall vision and plans for the future.

The Planning Division managed a project to rebrand Cobb Community Transit that resulted in the creation of a new logo and name, CobbLinc.

The technical work on the Cumberland Circulator Implementation Plan, Route 10 Service Evaluation, and Route 10X Implementation Plan were completed in 2015. Cobb County had previously been awarded competitive regional grant funds to operate the Route 10X connecting Kennesaw State University to Life University, Cumberland and downtown Atlanta. The Board of Commissioners authorized procurement of six buses to implement the everyday Cumberland Circulator. Additionally, an electric bus feasibility study was conducted for the Cumberland Circulator.

In summer 2015, the Planning Division developed and submitted federal grant applications that resulted in the award of federal funds to conduct a planning study that will involve Phase One of an update to the Cobb County Bicycle and Pedestrian Improvement Plan, assist with developing engineering plans for Windy Hill Boulevard – a joint Smyrna-Cobb County project – and assist with purchase of right-of-way for the Town Center/KSU/Noonday Creek Trail Pedestrian/Bicycle Connector. This Town Center CID project will link the KSU main campus, Fifth Third Bank Stadium, Noonday Creek Trail and Town Center at Cobb.

Utility construction work in right-of-way has increased in the county due to broadband telecommunications expansion and utility pole replacement programs. The county utility group provides needed services to minimize the impacts of utility construction on county roadways, to improve safety, preserve roadway infrastructure and reduce work zone traffic delays. Recent

roadway safety improvements include moving 30 utility poles from the clear zone. A total of 1,700 utility permits were issued and permit fees of approximately \$395,000 from telecommunications companies were collected to offset corresponding permit and inspection costs.



Water



The Water System's "Triple A" bond rating was reaffirmed in 2015 by the nation's top three bond rating agencies, reflecting the system's ongoing financial stability as well as recognizing its growing and diverse economy. At the time of the reviews, Cobb Water was one of only three enterprise municipal water and sewer utilities in the nation to be honored this way.

The Water System received a number of awards in 2015. Again we have won the Environmental Protection Agency WaterSense Large Utility Partner of the Year Award for our efforts in public outreach related to the efficient use of our water supplies. The Water Efficiency Program continues to demonstrate effectiveness and leadership in this area. This was the fourth time the award was presented to Cobb's program in the last six years.

An effective, award-winning Water Efficiency Program has resulted in decreasing per capita water demand during the past several years. This allows service to an increasing customer base without putting additional stress on limited drinking water supplies. An indirect result is the slow rate at which wastewater flows to the treatment plants are increasing. Additional treatment capacity is not expected to be needed until sometime after 2035.

As several projects to improve wastewater treatment effectiveness are concluded (solids handling projects at South Cobb and Sutton water reclamation facilities, chemical feed at South Cobb and ongoing technology/communication improvements at all plants), projects are becoming focused on replacement/renewal of aging water, sewer and stormwater pipelines.

We continue to replace water mains of substandard materials with ductile iron at a rate of about 25 miles per year. In 2015, in addition to a number of sewer and stormwater pipe replacement projects, we were able to repair several miles of pipe with synthetic internal liners. This process is less expensive and much less disruptive than traditional techniques.

The South Cobb Tunnel project is expected to be fully operational in 2016. Construction of the tunnel was completed ahead of schedule and under budget; however, technical issues remain with the influent pump station at its downstream end. The contractor is currently refining

operation of the high horsepower pumps that return flows to the surface for treatment at the South Cobb Water Reclamation Facility.

While most of the organization's focus has been on construction, significant progress has also been made in essential systems and programs. A robust asset management system remains an ongoing priority. The Water System's geographic information system continues to grow and provide increased capabilities in conjunction with county efforts. The Maximo Work Order System provides for efficient management and retrieval of work orders, although it and the billing system need some improvements.

All four of the county's wastewater treatment facilities were recognized with platinum awards for operational effectiveness. The system maintenance division also received a platinum award for outstanding operation in the Large Utility category.