

Annual Report of the SPLOST 2016 Oversight Committee to Glynn County Residents

Dear Fellow Glynn County Residents:

We present to you our report on the progress made since April 2017 to the present on the SPLOST 2016 projects undertaken by the Glynn County Commission, the City of Brunswick, the Jekyll Island Authority, and the Joint Water and Sewer Commission.

On November 6, 2016, Glynn County voters approved a referendum to impose a one percent sales tax to fund numerous specified capital projects in our community. This special tax is called a Special Purpose Local Option Sales Tax, or SPLOST. The SPLOST 2016 referendum established a SPLOST 2016 Oversight Committee to ensure that all SPLOST 2016 projects are completed in an efficient, transparent, and fully accountable manner and in keeping with the purposes of the overall SPLOST 2016 program.

The capital projects planned and approved by the voters for the Glynn County, the City of Brunswick, the Jekyll Island Authority, and the Joint Water and Sewer Commission include the following:

- intersection and road improvement projects,
- sidewalk improvements,
- drainage projects,
- an animal control facility,
- a Veterans Memorial and courthouse parking improvements,
- Mary Ross Park improvements,
- trails and way markers,
- cemetery restoration and renovation,
- public safety improvements, including new fire and police vehicles and emergency communication equipment,
- neighborhood and park improvements, and
- rehabilitation and rerouting of sewer collections lines, basins and lift stations.

The total cost for all projects is \$71,595,000, to be paid for by the additional one percent sales tax.

The collection of this tax began on April 1, 2017, and will continue until September 30, 2020. If \$71,595,000 is collected before September 30, 2020, collection of the one percent sales tax will be discontinued. As of February 28, 2019, \$40,130,591 has been collected, and county projections indicate that \$71,595,000 will be collected on or by the September 30, 2020, the SPLOST end date. The dollars collected have been distributed to the City of Brunswick in the amount of \$7,753,230, the JWSC in the amount of \$8,408,400, the JIA in the amount of \$1,288,619, and Glynn County in the amount of \$22,608,306.

We note that as of April 15, 2019, 15 SPLOST projects have been completed (see attached list), and another 52 projects are in design, contracting, or bidding stages. These projects have many issues concerning right of way, private property, DOT, and DNR permissions, and the need to coordinate with other ongoing or anticipated projects paid for by other federal, state, county or local funds. We anticipate, based on presentations made to us by county, city, JIA, and JWSC officials that most of these projects will be underway within the next 12 months.

For two projects - the animal control facility and the Veterans Memorial - start dates have not been established. The proposed cost to build the animal control facility exceeded the amount of funds allotted in the SPLOST referendum. The facility will need to be either reduced in scope or additional funds be identified. Groundbreaking for the Veterans Memorial was also delayed because of the need to reduce the project scope to match the amount of SPLOST funds allotted. Projects for Mary Ross Park have also been delayed. The city has tasked the Urban Redevelopment Agency with responsibility of the development/improvement of Mary Ross Park, and this has proven to be a major stumbling block.

Two intersection improvement projects on St Simons Island - the traffic roundabouts at the East Beach Causeway and Demere and at the intersection of East Beach Causeway and Ocean Drive - are in the pre-contracting phase. Many of us on the committee, as well as some traffic engineers and island residents, question the appropriateness of the chosen strategy of using single lane traffic circles instead of other kinds of intersection improvements, such as additional lanes or signaling. The committee is also concerned about the high estimated taxpayer cost of these two projects (\$2,205,600). The committee believes it would be beneficial if the county delays these two intersection projects until a planned comprehensive traffic study is completed.

The SPLOST 2016 Oversight Committee has been meeting regularly since April, 2017. (see attached schedule of meetings). During each meeting, presentations are made by officials from the county, city, and JWSC regarding project status, projected and actual expenditures, and challenges to project completions. We appreciate county, city, and JWSC staff for their time, their candor, and their willingness to keep us updated on these projects. We welcome additional citizen input at our meetings and through writing us with questions and concerns.

Lance Sabbe, Chairman
Philip Graitcer, Vice Chairman
John Dow
Robert Franklin
Jane Fraser
William Kitts
Ron Maulden
Ronnie Perry
Robert Terjesen

