

**Your TSPLOST Dollars At Work**

Before I update our readers on our current TSPLOST, first allow me to provide some background on what TSPLOST is and what is does. TSPLOST stands for Transportation Special Purpose Local Option Sales Tax. This is a sales tax that is approved by voters in a referendum. This sales tax is a version of a traditional SPLOST (Special Purpose Local Option Sales Tax).

A SPLOST is also approved by voters on a referendum and allows local governments to collect an additional percent of sales tax, usually one penny on each dollar spent to be dedicated to three areas: (1) Public Safety, (2) Parks and Recreation, and (3) Streets, Roads and Bridges. It is required for the local governments to identify specific projects in which those sales tax dollars are spent. These sales tax dollars can be spent to purchase a large fire apparatus such as a ladder truck, build a playground or new park, or expand a roadway to address capacity issues as long as these projects fit the aforementioned three categories. Unfortunately Fulton County does not have a traditional SPLOST. So funding capital issues like I just described must come out of the General Fund which is primarily supported by - you guessed it - property taxes. This means those who pay property taxes serve as the primary funding mechanism for capital improvements. So having another source of revenue like a SPLOST, TSPLOST or ESPLOST is extremely helpful.

Back in 2016, all the Mayors in Fulton County, with the exception of Atlanta, got together to pursue a TSPLOST in order to address the myriad of transportation issues. The difference in TSPLOST and SPLOST is that TSPLOST must be spent on transportation related projects that are approved by voters on a referendum. All the cities worked together to get a TSPLOST on the November 2016 ballot. This was/is a five year TSPLOST in which ¾ of one cent on every dollar collected at the point of sale and distributed to each City to be used towards their designated projects.

The City of Chattahoochee Hills recognized that it has over 88 miles of paved roadways which all require some degree of maintenance. And it cost, on average, $500,000 to pave one mile of roadway. With a General Fund of just over $3,000,000, which is designated entirely for municipal operations, it would take decades generate funds to pave and/or repair all these roadways. So it was critical for the TSPLOST to get voter approval. Fortunately, the TSPLOST only needed a majority of the cities to pass this referendum as opposed to 100% of all cites. Passage meant all cities would get their share of the sales taxes collected even if the receiving City voters did not support the referendum. As an side, the 2016referendum failed in only two Fulton County cities - Palmetto and Chattahoochee Hills; but because of the way the TSPLOST law was written, these two cities still received their share. It should also be known that no matter where the sale is made in the entire County, each city would still get their allocated portion of ¾ of a penny on each dollar. And this share is based on population. Since our population is low compared to other cities in Fulton County, we receive .4% of ¾ of every sales tax penny spent in the entire County.

Fast forward to present time, we have been collecting these TSPLOST funds for 4 and ½ years beginning in April of 2017 with the first deposit received in June of 2017. To date, TSPLOST has provided $2,030,600 to be used for roadway maintenance and improvements in the City of Chattahoochee Hills. Of that amount the City has spent $1,166,891 plus an additional $892,286 from the General Fund for a total of $2,059,177 on roadway projects. These have included paving a portion of Rico Road, all of Wilkerson Mill Road, Rivertown Road from Cochran Mill Road to South Fulton Parkway, and Atlanta Newnan Road from Hutcheson Ferry Park to the Coweta County line as well as making deep patching repairs to Rico Road from South Fulton Parkway to Hutcheson Ferry Road, a portion of Rivertown Road, and a portion of Cochran Mill Road. Within the next month, we will use the remaining TSPLOST funds collected in the amount of $1,179,257 for yet another roadway repair and maintenance project. This project has been awarded by the Mayor and Council to E.R. Snell.

Very briefly, this project includes ,(1) crack sealing South Fulton Parkway from the bridge east for 3.5 lane miles, Hutcheson Ferry Road from Selbourne Lane to Cochran Mill Road for 6 lane miles, Campbellton-Redwine Road from South Fulton Parkway to Rivertown Road for 8.6 lane miles, (2) striping of Campbellton-Redwine Road from South Fulton Parkway to Rivertown Road for 17.2 lane miles, Hutcheson Ferry Road from Selbourne Lane to Cochran Mill Road for 12 lane miles, Rico Road from South Fulton Parkway to Hutcheson Ferry Road for 14 lane miles, Rivertown Road from Campbellton Redwine to Cochran Mill Road for 11 lane miles, Cochran Mill Road from Hutcheson Ferry Road to South Fulton Parkway for 10.8 lane miles and South Fulton Parkway from the bridge east to Campbellton Redwine Road for 1.75 mile, and (3) resurfacing of South Fulton Parkway from the bridge over the Chattahoochee River east to Campbellton Redwine Road and Cochran Mill Road from Old Cochran Mill Road north to 0.1 mile north of Wilkerson Mill Road. This project is scheduled to be completed with 90 days of the mobilization.

The 2016 TSPLOST is up for renewal and on the Ballot on November 2nd, 2021. If approved, this roadway maintenance and improvement funding source will continue for another five years from April 2022 to April 2027. Sample ballot are available from the Fulton County Department of Registration and Elections.