



2011 SPLOST Fact Sheets and Interactive GIS Web Maps Cobb County

Cobb County voters approved a four-year Special Purpose Local Option Sales Tax (SPLOST) in March 2011 to provide \$492 million for projects affecting transportation, parks and recreation, county facilities and public safety. From the beginning, county officials were committed to ensuring transparency by making information about the effectiveness of the 2011 SPLOST program easily available to the public. Beginning In January 2012, Cobb County's Information Services Department partnered with other county departments to create online fact sheets for each project and an interactive GIS web map. Information Services also deployed a 2011 SPLOST application for mobile devices. Since June 2012, Cobb County citizens have had convenient access to the latest information about the various projects through the web and their mobile devices.

About the Situation

Cobb County needed a cost-effective way for citizens to easily access the latest information available about projects that are part of the 2011 SPLOST program – information such as location, budget, expenditures to date, start and end dates, public notices and contact information for the project manager. Depending on the county department, project information was available only in computer spreadsheets or other applications. In some cases, a system needed to be created to hold a department's project information. It almost goes without saying that funds for developing a technology solution were extremely limited, so Information Services was determined to use existing, in-house resources to keep costs at a minimum.

Innovative Solution

Web-based project fact sheets were developed in Visual Studio 2010, and an interactive GIS web map of SPLOST projects was developed and is presented through GeoCortex Essentials, Cobb County's web-based mapping system. Fact sheets for each project are dynamically linked to various departmental data management systems so they display the most up-to-date project information possible. Users find links to lists of projects by type (i.e. transportation) on the 2011 SPLOST website. After selecting the type of project, users can access fact sheets for specific projects from a drop-down menu. They can also link to the county's interactive GIS web map of SPLOST projects and access fact sheets for specific projects while viewing the map.

Cobb County citizens do not need to contact a county department by e-mail or telephone to obtain information about projects of interest to them. As a result, communication with the public has been greatly enhanced, and calls to county departments concerning SPLOST projects are minimal. Linking fact sheets to the interactive GIS web map enables users to visualize SPLOST projects countywide and in their neighborhoods. Users can search for specific projects, conduct a variety of analyses, and produce reports and maps of SPLOST projects that can be easily shared with others.

The fact sheets and GIS web mapping were developed entirely with county resources, and no new technologies were acquired. They have led to other transparency initiatives in the county and created a better citizen/government relationship by setting a new standard in delivering timely information to the public.