

SPLOST Q & A Oct 2 2013

Q. Is the SPLOST sales tax we will vote on November 5 a new tax?

A. No, it is just a continuation of the 1 penny sales tax we have had since 1986.

Q. Do most other counties in Georgia have the SPLOST sales tax?

A. Over 95 % of all counties utilize this sales tax.

Q. Why is the county having the election on SPLOST in November, when there are no other elections? Won't it all cost the same?

A. No. A single purpose election is much easier to operate and requires less time and ballot expense and therefore less money. Besides, it was necessary to hold the election now to help prevent the possible loss of revenue in the future.

Q. Does the SPLOST sales tax help keep our property taxes lower?

A. YES. As we have said before, most of the projects will involve required infrastructure and repair/maintenance of county facilities, roads and bridges, and public safety vehicles and equipment. We have several facilities that may need new roofs or new HVAC equipment prior to 2021. So we can pay for them with the already existing sales tax or higher property taxes.

Q. Why are there sometimes cost overruns on SPLOST projects?

A. Normally, when SPLOST projects are decided on, it is almost impossible to accurately estimate future cost. For example, the new SPLOST, if approved by the voters, does not begin until March of 2015 and does not end until March of 2021.

It is next to impossible to know now, in 2013, what a vehicle may cost, or a fire engine, or building costs/ new roofs, seven or eight years from now. So we try to make educated estimates, but they are just that, estimates. For example, we do not know the future of the Farmer's Market and how much more the demand will be to build and expand in a few years, until the future is here. But we try to make as accurate of estimates as possible.

Q. Does the quality of a project impact the cost?

A. Certainly it does. Take the Community Center for example. It could have been built out of concrete blocks, with tile floors, but because it was to promote economic development in our county which we hope will also mean more jobs, we determined that we needed to build something very nice and long lasting.

Q. Why do we have to vote on the SPLOST?

A. State law requires that every five or six years the public must vote on continuing the sales tax. The idea behind this is that if the public feels like they have gotten their moneys worth and the county has successfully managed the projects and selected good projects, then the voters would reward the county and themselves with a continuation of the sales tax. Likewise, if there was bad management and projects were built that were not in the best interest of the public, then the voters could vote to discontinue the sales tax.