

In the first half of 2015 there have been a number of exciting announcements regarding SunTrust Park and mixed use development. Delta Airlines announced it will continue its long time partnership with the team as the exclusive sponsor of the Delta SKY360 Club, a new premium hospitality area in SunTrust Park. In March, Comcast shared their plans to occupy a nine story office tower in the mixed use development, bringing 850 new jobs to Cobb County and creating the most technologically advanced ballpark in the world! Just last month, Omni Hotels announced that it will build a four star, full service hotel, that will serve as a cornerstone of the mixed use community.

While the Atlanta Braves have been working with corporate partners to construct the ballpark and mixed use community, Team Cobb has been working diligently to ensure that come opening day 2017, residents, commuters and visitors can safely and conveniently access and enjoy the ballpark and mixed use development.

Cobb County has always been proactive with transportation improvements and had several projects planned and in process before the Braves announced their move. More than \$1 billion dollars of transportation improvements currently underway will positively impact game day travel.

The county is equally committed to pedestrian safety in this major activity center. I am proud of the County's ongoing efforts to construct a multi-use bridge connecting the Cobb Galleria Centre to the mixed use community. The bridge will provide a safe and accessible connection for hundreds of thousands of annual visitors and the employees, who work in one of the strongest commercial markets in Georgia, to the dining, shopping, entertainment and park amenities that will be part of the mixed use development.

Similarly, a study is underway to explore the best options for implementation of a Cumberland District Circulator. The goal is to provide a new transportation option for Cumberland residents, workers, shoppers and visitors.

Multiple media outlets have covered the work Cobb County is doing to ensure a world class experience for vehicles and pedestrians alike. Unfortunately, from day one, certain media outlets have negatively reported about these projects based on subjective, biased opinions and false assumptions.

These outlets are trying to make it look like I have provided inaccurate and conflicting information to the public by introducing bits and pieces of unrelated information that are then taken out of context. I have stated repeatedly that short of any minimal required local match, Cobb County taxpayers will not bear the burden of the cost of this project. That said, our intention from day one has been to achieve 100% funding through multiple sources and that remains my focus. As the studies are completed and designs finalized, several funding sources, outside of local taxpayer dollars, will be identified and as we do on every transportation project, Cobb County will pursue all funding opportunities and partnerships. The development of this project is no different than any other infrastructure project implemented in the history of Cobb County. To that end, as the bridge evolves from the study to construction phase, we will continue to be fully transparent with project costs, funding sources, design and delivery.

While we are still studying to determine the final plan and impact of both the pedestrian bridge and circulator system, there are some things we know for sure about this catalyst project. Since the Board of Commissioners voted in November, 2013 to bring the Atlanta Braves to Cobb, the County has already experienced significant economic benefit, even though we are still 2 years away from Opening Day.

Property taxes collected for the site have more than doubled from \$250,000 in 2014 to \$512,000 in 2015 and it is still just dirt. The ongoing construction has resulted in \$200 million in contracts awarded to Cobb County companies. Two new class A office towers that will eventually house thousands of high paying jobs have been announced on neighboring properties and we have seen an 11% increase in hotel motel taxes from FY 13 to FY 14.

Ultimately, no amount of skepticism or opinions based on false assumptions can take away the fact that this is indeed a very exciting time in Cobb County! We can all be extremely proud of the community we are building together. I look forward to working with the Board of Commissioners to continue to make progress toward making Cobb County THE place to live, work, AND PLAY BALL!

Timothy D. Lee

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Timothy D. Lee". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'T' and a long, sweeping underline.

Chairman, Cobb County