

2017 General Assembly Wrap-up for DeKalb County Issues

SPLOST for infrastructure: SB 156 passed both houses and requires two referendums be passed by DeKalb voters. The first would create a one-penny SPLOST that can fund: transportation improvements, public safety facilities and repairs to public facilities. The second referendum that must be passed would replace HOST with EHOST to provide tax relief to both city & county homeowners. The legal glitch that prevented the SPLOST from advancing in 2016 has been removed. Also, if both referendums pass, the property assessment freeze for homestead properties will remain in effect during the EHOST/ SPLOST years.

1. **Charter Review Commission:** The Senate passed a bill mandating a Charter Review Commission as the Board of Commissioners had requested, but the House changed the bill so much that the Senate could not agree with it. If a Charter review Commission is to be formed, it will be up to CEO and/or the Board of Commissioners.
2. **Ethics Reform:** The senate passed an ethics bill as requested by your Ethics Board but the House once again changed and weakened the bill so much that the Senate could not agree to the House version. Nothing was passed.
3. **Additional MARTA Funding:** A bill permitting DeKalb to hold a future referendum to increase MARTA sales tax for DeKalb projects was introduced in the Senate, but failed to get out of committee. However, there will be several state study commissions that will examine funding and governance of mass transit in metro regions. They could lead to additional funding for MARTA.
4. **Other local bills:** an attempt to require recently created cities in DeKalb to pay for pension legacy costs was introduced, but will be held over until next year. Bills requiring additional requirements for new cities and annexations failed, but Committee rules were strengthened. A bill creating the City of Greenhaven was introduced on the last day of the session, and can be taken up next session.