

FOCUS ON

Our Support Services Capital Projects Team: Leading the way in green building

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Anyone who has ever built or renovated a home can appreciate the value of having a construction manager to keep the work on schedule and within budget. For county government, this can be a daunting task. Complex projects, numerous contractors, and the needed funds to complete work can pose all sorts of challenges.

When Gwinnett County builds or renovates a new or existing facility, the Capital Projects team in our Support Services department works with designers and contractors to make sure the County gets full value for its dollars. The team members in this section are equipped with diverse backgrounds and top-notch expertise in the field of construction management. Thanks to their dedication to the work and voter-approved SPLOST, each County facility meets the highest standards for construction excellence and environmentally friendly building practices.

The team is led by Facilities Management Division Director **Mike Plonowski**. Since coming to Gwinnett in 1992, he has managed the design and construction of 42 new facilities, including 12 fire stations, eight fuel sites, five library branches, and four police precincts. Additionally, he has managed operations, services, repairs, and maintenance for more than four dozen County-owned buildings in addition to overseeing capital projects, records management, mail services, housekeeping, and grounds maintenance. Previously, he managed several multi-million dollar construction projects for the Fulton County Building Authority. He holds a bachelor's degree from Duke University and a master's degree in urban life/community development from Georgia State University.



Jeff Hairston is one of two project managers responsible for new construction and renovation of County facilities.

Jeff Hairston and **Gray Booth** are project managers. This duo handles an impressive workload to further the County's mission to provide high-quality essential services to Gwinnett's ever-growing population. In recent years, they've supervised the construction of new fire stations, police and fire training facilities, and a senior services center plus numerous renovations at libraries, senior centers, and police headquarters.



The Capital Projects team ensures that all County facilities such as the new Medical Examiner's Office and Morgue are built to the highest environmental and construction

Gray has been with Gwinnett County since 1997 and has supervised the building of many County facilities. With a background in construction management and a degree in civil engineering from North Carolina State University, he has led eight construction projects and one renovation of Gwinnett's public libraries. He also supervised the construction of the new Fire Academy facility and the joint project to build the Lilburn City Hall and the Lilburn branch of the Gwinnett County Public Library. This project is the first of its kind and represents the strong partnership between Gwinnett County and its municipalities. The city hall and library building is slated to open in late 2016.

Jeff has been with Gwinnett County since 2005. He has a background in corporate real estate and project management. Like Gray, he handles a variety of construction projects including the construction of the Police Headquarters Annex that houses the 911 Center. Recently, he broke ground on the new Medical Examiner's Office and Morgue building. On the horizon, he will lead the long-awaited SPLOST project to renovate and expand the Gwinnett Justice and Administration Center. Jeff has a bachelor's degree in business management from Shorter College.

Both Gray and Jeff have played a pivotal role in turning Gwinnett into a leader in green building and renovation practices. For example, the Hamilton Mill Library branch was Gwinnett County's first green

library, originally built to LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) silver standard and later upgraded to gold. Other practices like complete retrofits to County plumbing and electrical facilities have contributed to Gwinnett County's Gold Level designation in the Atlanta Regional Commission's Green Communities program.

"Environmental considerations play a bigger part than you might think when it comes to construction of new facilities," said Gray. "A good example of our commitment to green building is the reuse and adaptation of older facilities that are still structurally sound. This sometimes speeds up projects and helps decrease environmental impacts. The Fire Academy is one of those projects where we have been able to build a state-of-the art facility on the existing grounds while minimizing service disruptions."

Angelia Parham heads the entire Support Services department, which also includes the Facilities Management, Fleet Management, Real Estate and Records, and Fiscal and Solid Waste divisions. She points to the important role of voter-approved SPLOST programs that have helped finance dozens of capital projects, beginning with the construction of the Gwinnett Justice and Administration Center in 1985. "By investing more than \$2 billion in sales tax funds for these improvements, Gwinnett has minimized long-term debt and saved more than \$1 billion in financing costs compared to issuing bonds," said Angelia.

SPLOST programs have helped finance dozens of capital projects, beginning with the construction of the Gwinnett Justice and Administration Center in 1985. These funds, by law, can only be used for capital improvements, not salaries. Gwinnett commissioners over the years have offered a series of successive and successful programs that have provided many police and fire stations, libraries, parks, greenspace, and courtrooms in addition to roads, bridges, sidewalks, and other transportation safety improvements.

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