

[Print this page](#) [Close](#)

## Gwinnett plans largest economic effort in its history

By Patrick Fox  
The Atlanta Journal-Constitution

4:46 p.m. Thursday, August 13, 2009

A public hearing will be held Tuesday to present the case to form five tax allocation districts for redevelopment of almost 1,000 acres in Gwinnett County.

The proposal has been billed as the largest economic initiative in the county's history by Chuck Warbington, executive director of the Gwinnett Village Community Improvement District.

Warbington, speaking at the CID's monthly meeting Thursday, said that if the five tax allocation districts, or TADs, are formed, it could mean 36,100 jobs and \$1.6 billion in annual payroll to the county. The measure could triple the taxable value within the districts from \$640 million to \$1.9 billion in 15 years, he said.

TADs are specific areas marked for redevelopment that can use public money to fund improvements. Funding occurs through the issuance of bonds, which are paid off with the increased tax revenues as property within the district appreciates.

The county's three CIDs, Gwinnett Village, Gwinnett Place and Evermore, are leading the drive for the TADs. The five districts would account for just under 1,000 acres with a current market value of \$561.5 million.

They include: Gwinnett Place TAD near the mall, the largest of the five at 376 acres; Indian Trail TAD near I-85, 158 acres; Jimmy Carter Boulevard TAD around I-85 to Buford Highway, 286 acres; Lake Lucerne TAD near Snellville, 64 acres; and Park Place TAD, also near Snellville, 114 acres.

Georgia first passed legislation to allow for the creation of tax allocation districts in 1985. The first use of the funding tool came in 1999, when the Atlantic Station TAD was created, according to Atlanta attorney Sharon Gay, who concentrates on land use and TAD financing.

Gwinnett County paved the way for the formation of TADs through a referendum passed last fall.

Gay said tax rates do not vary between residents outside or within TADs.

"You pay the exact same property tax (rate) as everybody else," Gay said. "What's different is what happens to the money."

When a TAD is formed, property values within the district are frozen as far as local taxing governments are concerned, she said. As public money, in the form of bonds, is pumped into revitalization efforts, property values climb. The taxes paid on this appreciated portion of the property is set aside to pay off the bonds or for new development, Gay said.

"The process is completely opaque to the property owner," she said. "You just keep paying your taxes."

Gay said early studies suggest TADs benefit all taxpayers.



"The evidence has been that there isn't an increased demand for service delivery, and often there is a decrease," she said. "You're replacing old infrastructure with new. You're clearing out blighted and distressed areas. You're clearing out vacant properties. Crime rate goes down. Calls to 911 go down. Fire safety is improved."

The public hearing will be at 4 p.m. Tuesday at the Gwinnett Justice and Administration Center, 75 Langley Drive, Lawrenceville.

The county commission is tentatively set to vote on the measure in September.

Find this article at:

<http://www.ajc.com/news/gwinnett/gwinnett-plans-largest-economic-115057.html>

 Print this page  Close

