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## Tax allocation districts back on table

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LAWRENCEVILLE - With Tuesday's actions by Gwinnett's redevelopment agency, the stage has been set for the Board of Commissioners to revisit five proposed tax allocation districts at a public meeting to be held in September.

If the TADs are approved, it could signal the beginning of revitalization and redevelopment efforts commencing in the five aging commercial areas they'd serve in Gwinnett's three community improvement districts. It would also signal, according to the presentation delivered to the agency Tuesday, the largest economic development initiative in Gwinnett history.

"The Gwinnett Place Mall area is one at a crossroads," said Gwinnett Place CID Director Joe Allen in supporting the TAD's initiative. "I hear every day from developers that they need this tool."

If approved by commissioners, the TAD districts would define the areas and boundaries where real estate property tax monies gathered above a certain threshold could be used for specific improvements in that area. The funds raised from a TAD are then placed in a tax-free bond where the money can continue to grow and be repaid over time with the increased tax revenues as the property in the district appreciates.

In the Gwinnett Village CID, the two TADs being considered are in the Jimmy Carter Boulevard vicinity east and west of Interstate 85 and along Indian Trail-Lilburn Road and Oakbrook Parkway. With four potential project sites in the Jimmy Carter TAD and three in the Indian Trail TAD, officials estimate the current taxable values on the properties could spike from about \$66 million to just under \$660 million.

In the Evermore CID, the two TADs are largely along the U.S. Highway 78 corridor, one called Park Place and the other called Lake Lucerne. With four projects potentially coming in Park Place and with one possible in Lake Lucerne, the current taxable values could rise from about \$30 million to \$170 million.

In the Gwinnett Place CID, the four potential redevelopment projects visualized would mean the current taxable value rises from just over \$128 million to just under \$479 million.

Additionally, officials estimated the redevelopment efforts could garner 8,730 additional housing units, more than 10 million square feet of commercial and retail space and an additional 1,575 hotel rooms with the market value of all the redevelopment totaling \$4 billion. They also anticipate 36,000 jobs being created.

The move by the redevelopment agency drew praise from Glenn Stephens, who will be leaving his post as the Director of Planning and Development to take on his new role of County Administrator.

"I'm happy we've gotten to this point and that we've gotten there correctly," Stephens said. "Redevelopment is one of the foundations of the unified plan."

Before the redevelopment agency met to approve the TAD districts, Lilburn resident Donald Valtman spoke at the afternoon Board of Commissioners meeting to let them know he wasn't in support of the idea.

"This is not the time to donate county taxpayer funds to CIDs or TADs," Valtman said.

In a three-page handout that specified why TADs weren't a good idea, Valtman said the county would be locking itself into 15 years of fixed, low tax receipts at a time when its current and future budget situations mandate a dire

"From a CID and developer's standpoint, now is a good time to freeze property values," he said. "Due to the current real estate downturn, virtually all TAD property valuations are at or close to their historic lows."

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