

Morrow completes the TriCity triumverate with vote to join project

Lake City and Forest Park already approved effort

By Curt Yeomans

[#MORROW](#) — The proposed TriCity Opportunity Zone that is intended to spur economic growth through tax credits across three cities in northern Clayton County is a go.

[#ort](#) of.

The Morrow City Council voted unanimously to participate in the project Tuesday. It's a significant milestone for the proposed zone because it means all three cities that had been expected to participate in the project have officially agreed to work with the University of Georgia's Carl Vinson Institute of Government to get it set up.

Lake City approved it last month and the Forest Park City Council voted to join in last week. Officials from the three cities have been working on the proposal for more than a year.

We're all in," Morrow City Manager Jeff Eady said. "It is big. It's been a long process and we're breaking new ground here. We're three cities working together on an economic development project for an urban redevelopment plan and we're hoping to create an opportunity zone that can spur some economic development across all three cities."

Morrow, Lake City and Forest Park will equally share the cost of hiring the Carl Vinson Institute to develop the opportunity zone. Each city will pay \$8,333 to cover the expense.

But Morrow's decision to join with Lake City and Forest Park doesn't mean the opportunity will definitely exist. The cities will work with officials from the institute to develop an opportunity zone application that must still be approved by the state's Department of Community Affairs before it can be created.

Documents released by the cities last month show the state will require the three cities to demonstrate they have poverty, underdevelopment, general distress and blight. Census blocks neighboring the proposed zone must also have at least 15 percent poverty for the area to be considered.<#>However, if state officials approve the opportunity zone, any business that moves into the zone or any existing business that adds at least two jobs, will receive a \$3,500 tax credit for every new job.

[it](#)'s a potential economic boom that has officials in the three cities, as well as the county, excited. Clayton County Economic Development Director Grant Wainscott said his office will give the cities assistance if they need it to get the opportunity zone approved and up and running.

I think this is huge," Wainscott said. "You're taking three cities with unique advantages and a common connection with Highway 54, and getting them to provide another tool that can be used to boost economic development in the area."