



**CHAPTER 353 PROPERTY TAX ABATEMENT  
DOWNTOWN COMMERCIAL DISTRICT  
PROGRAM GUIDELINES**

The Excelsior Springs Urban Redevelopment Corporation (URC) shall serve as a tool to bring about the revitalization of Excelsior Springs’s downtown and surrounding area. Stock in the corporation will be owned wholly by the City of Excelsior Springs and the corporation is managed by a board of directors. The purpose of the corporation is to provide a streamlined, cost-effective means for individual property owners to obtain partial tax abatement on their downtown properties in return for making improvements.

Incorporated in 1882 in order to take advantage of the curative waters found in the mineral springs, Excelsior Springs is nestled in a small valley and clings to the rugged hillsides. The community was built around the many different kinds of mineral water that can be found in our local springs. Portions of the residential area that surrounds the downtown are included on the local and national register of historic places and include individual buildings on the national register as well. Properties included in the Hall of Waters District are generally bounded by Isley Blvd, Excelsior Street, St. Louis Avenue and Saratoga Street. The exact boundary is depicted by the Boundary Map included as part of the Development Plan.

The maturity of the area brings with it both charm as well as challenge in that many of the buildings do not conform to current standards.

The ultimate success of the downtown area is dependent on private sector commitment. It is up to the merchants, building owners, professionals and investors to improve the value of their properties and condition of their buildings. A number of downtown buildings have been altered in a manner that does not improve the appearance or the image of the area. In some cases, alteration is not consistent with the overall design of the structure itself. Such building treatments are in direct conflict with the adopted design guidelines established for the historic area or are not compatible with surrounding buildings.

This incentive program is intended to stimulate improvements to the downtown area by providing an innovative financing mechanism. It presents an opportunity to preserve our community’s heritage, and to enhance and promote the unique atmosphere which the downtown area can provide. It also represents an opportunity for property owners to make improvements that allows their property to be competitive with other business locations.

**Description of Program**

This program is intended for commercial properties and may be used for properties zoned commercially.

The program provides different levels of abatement depending upon the amount of investment that is made in the project. Missouri law requires at least 100% abatement for the first 10 years and allows up to 50% abatement for up to the next 15 years.

***In order to receive an abatement, ALL exterior blight must be removed or abated prior to an abatement of taxes. Failure to maintain a blight-free property will result in a loss of the abatement. Under the 353 program, the property owner is only paying taxes on the value of the land with the improvement value being abated.***

**LEVEL A**

Abatement of costs of improvements (excluding acquisition)

OR

100% abatement for 10 years whichever occurs first

<b>Level A-1 "Minimum Exterior"</b>	
Investment Threshold	Minimum \$15,000
Abatement Period	Equal to improvement cost or 10 years 100% abatement, whichever occurs first
% of Exterior Improvement	100% exterior

<b>Level A-2 "Minimum"</b>	
Investment Threshold	Minimum \$25,000
Abatement Period	Equal to improvement cost or 10 years 100% abatement, whichever occurs first
% of Exterior Improvement	50% exterior

**LEVEL B**

Abatement of costs of improvements (excluding acquisition)

OR

100% abatement for 10 years

Then

50% abatement for 3 years

whichever occurs first

<b>Level B</b>	
Investment Threshold	Minimum \$150,000
Abatement Period	Equal to improvement cost or 10 years 100% abatement, then 3 years 50% abatement, whichever occurs first
Minimum Requirement	Remediation of all exterior blight

**LEVEL C**

Abatement of costs of improvements (excluding acquisition)

OR

100% abatement for 10 years

Then

50% abatement for 5 years

whichever occurs first

<b>Level C</b>	
Investment Threshold	Minimum \$300,000
Abatement Period	Equal to improvement cost or 10 years 100% abatement, then 3 years 50% abatement, whichever occurs first
Minimum Requirement	Remediation of all exterior blight

- ❖ Incentives provided by this program are to be used to defray expenses associated with exterior and interior rehabilitation to existing buildings within the designated downtown area shown on the attached map. The incentive can also be used for new building construction however, acquisition costs of property is excluded from abatement calculation.
- ❖ All improvements are to be approved by the URC Board of Directors as well as appropriate development review process through the Development Department (Planning, Historic Preservation and/or Building). Compliance with ADA requirements shall be considered at all times. Accessibility to buildings shall be from front entrance to buildings whenever possible.
- ❖ Building owners and tenants within the geographic boundaries are eligible to apply for participation in this program. Tenant applicants are required to submit written evidence of building owner approval of the application.
- ❖ Example of eligible and ineligible activities related to project rehabilitation are as follows:

**Exterior**

- Masonry work
- Paint
- Signs
- Architectural assistance
- Awnings
- Materials
- Labor
- Window and Door replacement and repair
- ADA Accessible improvements
- Energy conservation
- Roof replacement/repair, gutters and downspouts
- Demolition
- Pavement improvements (off street parking, sidewalk, etc.)
- Landscaping/fencing/drainage improvements
- Lighting

**Interior**

- Painting
- Plumbing
- Electrical work including lighting
- Structural alterations and reconstruction
- Energy conservation (insulation, weatherstripping, sealing, etc.)
- Flooring
- Stationary attached fixtures
- Design assistance (except decorating assistance)
- Heating/HVAC improvements
- ADA accessible improvements
- Materials
- Labor
- Demolition

**Ineligible improvements include, but are not limited to:**

**Exterior**

Inappropriate cleaning methods

Work not meeting appropriate and required design standards

**Interior**

Furniture

Appliances

Inventory

Display fixtures (unattached to wall)

**Program Implementation**

The Chapter 353 Hall of Waters Commercial District shall adhere to the guidelines established within the City's Chapter 353 Policy as adopted by the City Council.

Projects that are projected to have a greater economic impact than envisioned within these guidelines and desire to have a larger abatement than set forth in each level may submit a proposal and make application for consideration.

Application for the program will be available through, and accepted by URC. Applications are available online at [www.cityofesmo.com](http://www.cityofesmo.com). The City will accept applications on behalf of URC. A \$200 filing fee is required with the final application. This fee will cover the cost of staff time for review and to cover all of the costs associated with mailings and public notices. The applicant is required to first complete a Pre-qualification application and meet with staff to determine eligibility for the program.

With submission of a final application, the applicant shall provide a copy of the project design, letter from the owner expressing approval of the project (only if owner is not the applicant) and cost breakdown by major categories for review. ***Proof that all blight has been remediated at the site is also required and can be provided by photos taken and provided to staff for review. An onsite visit may also be made.***

The URC will meet as needed to review applications, unless determined otherwise by the board.

The URC will review the application, and determine whether it meets the guidelines for submission to the City for approval or rejection of amendment of the Development Plan. Historic Preservations Commission (HPC) may also review applications.

The granting of tax abatement are conditioned upon the property owner/tenants executing a Performance Agreement with the URC in a form acceptable to URC.

### Review/Appeals

- A. Review: All completed work will be reviewed by City staff to ensure code compliance and by a representative of the URC (these may be the same person) to determine compliance with the commitment for tax abatement prior to granting the tax abatement.
- B. Appeals-Tax Abatement: Determinations by the URC regarding the granting of tax abatement may be appealed to the City of Excelsior Springs.

### Periodic Review

The URC will conduct on-site inspections and may conduct on-site interior inspections every three years after the property has received tax abatement to ensure compliance of the guidelines. Properties receiving tax abatement must also be maintained in compliance with the minimum standards, codes and ordinances of the City. Unresolved code violations or failures to comply with the guidelines may result in repeal of the tax abatement. The URC can initiate proceedings to revoke tax abatement anytime code violations or noncompliance with these standards are reported as unresolved. Property owners refusing access to their structure for the purpose of periodic review inspections shall have the property tax abatement rescinded.

