



CHAPTER 353 PROPERTY TAX ABATEMENT
LIBERTY DOWNTOWN AREA PROGRAM
GUIDELINES

The Liberty Municipal Redevelopment Corporation (LMRC) shall be formed to serve as a tool to bring about the revitalization of Liberty's downtown and surrounding area. Stock in the corporation will be owned wholly by the City of Liberty 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 1829, Liberty is the second oldest incorporated town west of the Mississippi River. Portions of the downtown area are included on the local and national register of historic places and include individual buildings on the national register as well. 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

- 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.

LEVEL A

Abatement of costs of improvements (excluding acquisition)

OR

100% abatement for 10 years
whichever occurs first

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

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

LEVEL B

Abatement of cost of improvements (excluding acquisition)

OR

100% abatement for 10 years
then
50% abatement for 3 years
whichever occurs first

Level 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
% of Exterior Improvements	50% exterior

LEVEL C

Abatement of cost of improvements (excluding acquisition)

OR

100% abatement for 10 years
then
50% abatement for 5 years
whichever occurs first

Level C	
Investment Threshold	Minimum \$300,000
Abatement Period	Equal to improvement cost or 10 years 100% abatement, then 5 years 50% abatement, whichever occurs first
% of Exterior Improvements	50% exterior

- 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.
- Construction materials shall be purchased from businesses within the City. For those purchased outside the City limits the items must be pre-approved as part of LMRC action. Materials may also be purchased outside the City limits if materials are not available from businesses within the City or where a contractor has a purchase agreement with a specific business. If receipts show purchases that clearly can be purchased from a business within the City and the purchases were not pre-approved, the item may become ineligible to count toward abatement project.
- All improvements are to be approved by the LMRC 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:

Eligible Exterior	Eligible Interior
Masonry work	Painting
Paint	Plumbing
Signs	Electrical work
Architectural assistance	Structural alterations and reconstruction
Awnings	Energy conservation (insulation, weatherstripping, sealing, etc.)
Materials	Flooring
Labor	Stationary attached fixtures
Window and door replacement/repair	Design assistance (except decorating assistance)
ADA accessible improvements	Heating/HVAC improvements
Energy conservation	ADA accessible improvements
Roof replacement/repair, gutters and downspouts	Equipment rental specifically used for project (hourly/weekly/monthly)
Demolition	
Pavement improvements (off street parking, sidewalk, etc.)	
Landscaping/fencing/drainage improvements	
Lighting	
Equipment rental specifically used for project (hourly/weekly/monthly)	

Ineligible improvements include, but are not limited to:

Ineligible Exterior	Ineligible Interior
Inappropriate cleaning methods	Furniture
Work not meeting appropriate and required design standards	Appliances

	Inventory
	Display fixtures (unattached to wall)
	Any improvements completed as part of an insurance claim or being reimbursed as part of an insurance claim
	Purchase of equipment
	Food/refreshment purchases

Program Implementation

- The Chapter 353 Liberty Downtown Area Program 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 a larger abatement than set forth in each level may submit a proposal and make application for consideration.
- Applications for the program will be available through, and accepted by the LMRC.
- 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.
- The LMRC will meet as needed to review applications, unless determined otherwise by the board.
- The LMRC 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.
- The granting of tax abatements are conditioned upon the property owners/tenants executing a Development Agreement with the LMRC in a form acceptable to LMRC.