

COMMERCIAL REDEVELOPMENT ACT

Public Act 255 of 1978, as amended, encourages the replacement, restoration and new construction of commercial property by abating the property taxes generated from new investment for a period up to 12 years. As defined, commercial property means land improvements whether completed or in the process of construction, the primary purpose and use of which is the operation of a commercial business enterprise, including office, engineering, research and development, warehousing parts distribution, retail sales, hotel or motel development, and other commercial facilities. Mixed-use developments may be eligible, but the abatement will only apply to the commercial portion of the property. Land and personal property are not eligible for abatement under this act.

Note: This document should be used as a general guide only and the legislation should be reviewed by local officials.

WHO IS ELIGIBLE?

“Local governmental unit” means a city or village.

WHAT IS A REPLACEMENT, NEW AND RESTORED FACILITY?

“Replacement facility” means commercial property to be acquired, constructed, altered, or installed for the purpose of being substituted for obsolete commercial property. Property impaired due to changes in design, construction, technology, or improved production processes, or damage due to fire, natural disaster, or general neglect shall be considered obsolete. All other new commercial property is considered a “new facility.” For purposes of granting the tax abatement, the replacement or new facility must meet all of the following conditions:

1. Is located on property that is zoned to allow for mixed-use, including high-density residential.
2. Is located in a qualified downtown revitalization district as defined in section two of the Neighborhood Enterprise Zone Act (PA 147 of 1992). This requires either being located in a Downtown Development Authority (PA 197 of 1975), a Principal Shopping District or Business Improvement District (PA 120 of 1961) or an area that is zoned and primarily used for business as determined by the local government unit.
3. The city or village establishes and implements an expedited local permitting and inspection process in the Commercial Redevelopment District. In addition, by resolution provides for the walkable non-motorized interconnections, including sidewalks and streetscapes throughout the Commercial Redevelopment District.

A “restored facility” means changes to obsolete commercial property as may be required to restore the property to an economically efficient condition. Restoration must result in improvements aggregating to more than 10 percent of the true cash value of the property at commencement of the restoration. Restoration includes major renovation including, but not limited to, the improvement of floor loads, correction of deficient or excessive height, new or improved fixed building equipment, including heating, ventilation, and lighting, reducing multistory facilities to one or two stories, improved structural support including foundations, improved roof structure and cover, floor replacement, improved wall placement, improved exterior and interior appearance of buildings, and other physical changes.

WHAT IS THE PROCESS?

Before the commercial redevelopment exemption certificate (i.e., property tax abatement) can be granted for the facility, the city or village, by resolution of its legislative body, must establish a Commercial Redevelopment District. The establishment of the district may be initiated by the local government unit or by owners of property comprising 75 percent of state equalized value of the property in the proposed district. At the time of the resolution’s adoption, property within the district must meet one of the following:

1. Obsolete commercial property or cleared or vacant land and part of an existing developed commercial or industrial zone. The property must have been zoned commercial or industrial before June 21, 1975, and characterized by obsolete commercial property and a decline in commercial activity.
2. Land cleared as a result of fire damage, or cleared as blighted area under Blighted Area Rehabilitation Act (PA 344 of 1945).
3. Cleared or vacant land included in a redevelopment plan adopted by the Downtown Development Authority (PA 197 of 1975) or Principal Shopping District or a Business Improvement District (PA 120 of 1961).

To establish the Commercial Redevelopment District, the city or village must first hold a hearing to establish a Commercial Rehabilitation District and determine in the resolution the district meets the requirements of the act. Once the district is established, the property owners may file an application with the local clerk for a commercial facilities exemption certificate. Applications are available from the Michigan Department of

Treasury. Before acting on the application, the city or village shall hold a public hearing on the application and not more than 60 days after receipt of the application either approve or disapprove by resolution. The local clerk shall provide written notification of the application hearing to the assessor of the local unit of government and each taxing jurisdiction that levies ad valorem property taxes. If approved, the application and resolution must be sent to the State Tax Commission for filing purposes.

COMMERCIAL FACILITIES EXEMPTION CERTIFICATE

The property owner must pay a commercial facilities tax rather than the normal property tax. The certificate must be issued for a period of at least one year, but cannot exceed 12 years. Certificates initially issued for less than 12 years may be extended based upon factors placed in writing at the time the certificate is approved, but shall not exceed 12 years.

DETERMINING COMMERCIAL FACILITIES TAX RATE

For a restored facility: The commercial facilities tax freezes the taxable value of the building at its value prior to restoration, therefore exempting the new investment from local taxes for a period not to exceed 12 years. The school operating tax and the State Education Tax (SET) are also frozen. Land and personal property cannot be abated under this act.

For a new or replacement facility: The commercial facilities tax provides a 50 percent reduction in the number of mills levied as ad valorem taxes, excluding only the State Education Tax (SET). Land and personal property cannot be abated under this Act.

Within 60 days after the granting of a new Commercial Facilities Exemption Certificate, the state treasurer may exempt 50 percent of the SET mills for a period not to exceed six years. The state treasurer will not grant more than 25 of these SET exclusions each year.

DISCUSSION

In addition to the Commercial Redevelopment Act (PA 255 of 1978), several other property tax abatements are available for the rehabilitation of commercial property in Michigan, including the Commercial Rehabilitation Act (PA 210 of 2005) and the Obsolete Property Rehabilitation Act (PA 146 of 2000). Each act has unique eligibility requirements, processes, and lengths and terms of the abatement. Please refer to the Michigan Economic Development Corporation (MEDC) fact sheet for more information on each program and consult the authorizing statute to determine the best fit for your project needs.

SUPPORTING STATUTE

Public Act 255 of 1978: Commercial Redevelopment Act

CONTACT INFORMATION

For more information on the Commercial Redevelopment Act, please contact the *Community Assistance Team (CAT) specialist* assigned to your territory or visit www.miplace.org.