

**The City of St. Augustine's Tax Exemption Program is summarized below** and in some of the attached documents that are from the City's Architectural Guidelines for Historic Preservation (AGHP). The required application and covenant is also included for your reference.

**Historic Preservation Property Tax Exemption**

In 1995 the City Commission adopted an ordinance allowing partial ad valorem tax exemptions for historic property if the property is being restored, rehabilitated or renovated according to specific guidelines<sup>[1]</sup>. This exemption applies only to improvements to real property.

The exemption for qualifying properties is from ad valorem taxes levied by the City of St. Augustine on 100% of the assessed value of the improvement for 10 years<sup>[2]</sup>. *St. Johns County also participates in this ad valorem property tax exemption.*

**In order to qualify for this tax exemption, the property must:**

1. be individually listed in the National Register of Historic Places; or
2. be a contributing property to a National Register District;
3. or be designated a historic property or be a contributing property in a locally established historic preservation district.

Further, to qualify for this tax exemption, the improvements to a property meeting one of the above criteria must also:

1. be consistent with the United States Secretary of Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation; and
2. be determined by the Historic Architectural Review Board to meet criteria established by the Department of State.

The minimum valuation of the improvement must be \$20,000 or 50% of the assessed value of the structure before the improvement, whichever is less.

Twenty-five percent (25%) of the proposed improvement must be to the exterior or foundation of the structure.

**How to Apply:**

Applications for the Historic Preservation Property Tax Exemption must be made prior to the start of any construction work on the property, on forms provided by the Planning and Building Division from the Department of State.

The Historic Architectural Review Board must approve the plans, and the Planning and Building Division must issue a building permit for the proposed improvement before the start of any construction.

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[1] Ordinance number 1995-20 and ordinance number 1997-61

[2] Ordinance number 2009-06 changed the exemption period from 5 to 10 years.

The review and approval process for the tax exemption is in addition to the building permit review process already established.

The Planning and Building Division is required to inspect the completed work to ensure that the construction has been completed as indicated on the plans submitted with the application for the tax exemption, and to ensure the continued maintenance of the improvements during the period of time that the exemption is in force.

**Activating the Tax Exemption:**

The review and approval authority of the Historic Architectural Review Board (HARB) and the Planning and Building Division is administrative only. Final approval for the ad valorem tax exemption rests with the City Commission.

The property owner must sign an Historic Preservation Property Tax Exemption Covenant agreeing to maintain the improvements during the period of the exemption. This covenant must then be approved by resolution of the City Commission. The approved covenant must be recorded with the deed to the property to allow the Property Appraiser to activate the tax exemption.

***For this program, it is good to discuss your plans with us before doing work so it can be determined if the work will likely be approved by HARB.***

There is also the **federal Historic Tax Credit program, which provides a 20% income tax credit, but only for income producing properties.** Please see <https://www.nps.gov/tps/tax-incentives.htm> and <https://www.nps.gov/tps/tax-incentives/before-you-apply.htm> for more information. This also has a requirement that the work done meets the Secretary of the Interior's Standards, so it is important to make sure what you are proposing will qualify.

The State of Florida does not yet have a preservation based tax credit, but the State Historic Preservation Office (or the Florida Division of Historical Resources) is the first point of contact if you want to apply for the 20% federal tax credit (**for income producing properties**). Please see <https://dos.myflorida.com/historical/preservation/architectural-preservation-services/rehabilitation-tax-credit/#:~:text=In%20Florida%20the%20SHPO%20is,of%20a%20certified%20historic%20structure.&text=The%20Florida%20SHPO%20is%20the,projects%20seeking%20the%2020%25%20RTC.>

8. For new construction, submit a simple elevation depicting the streetscape on the subject block and the facing block to illustrate how the proposed project meets the scale of the surrounding context.
9. For new construction, submit a footprint plan of the subject block and the facing block to illustrate the existing building setback patterns and historic lot coverage patterns adjacent to the proposed project.
10. Provide a summary statement of the proposed new construction or alteration as a separate memorandum or included on the cover sheet of the proposed plans. Include a description of existing and proposed conditions, consistency with the zoning code, and any other details requiring specific attention.

*(Numbers 8-10 adopted with Ordinance 2011-16)*

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