

Real Benefits for Your Home.

A plain-English guide to the Flat Rock Historic District



You're receiving this because your property is within the proposed Flat Rock Historic District. A Public Hearing on the proposal is scheduled for Thursday, May 7, 2026 at Flat Rock City Hall. Before then, here's what designation actually means for you – *in real dollars and real protection.*

Four Things You Should Know

What a local historic district actually does for property owners

01

REAL TAX CREDITS

A **25% Michigan state tax credit** on qualifying exterior work – simply because your home is inside the local district.

02

BONUS FOR BUSINESSES

Commercial properties can **stack a federal tax credit on top** of the 25% state credit – substantial savings on restoration work.

03

LIGHT-TOUCH RULES

No color mandates. The Study Committee adopted baseline Secretary of the Interior guidelines – nothing more restrictive.

04

LEGAL PROTECTION

Designation is the **only way under Michigan law** to legally protect buildings and structures against demolition. Confirmed by SHPO.

THE TAX CREDIT – IN PLAIN ENGLISH

25% *back* on exterior work you probably need anyway.

New roof. Window repair and reglazing. Masonry tuckpointing. Siding repair. Porch restoration. Paint prep and painting. Real money back in your pocket – for the kind of upkeep every older home needs.

A QUICK EXAMPLE

Say you spend **\$12,000** on a new roof and some window reglazing next year. Under Michigan's historic tax credit, you could receive up to **\$3,000 back** – just for being inside the local district. Repairs that needed doing anyway, with a rebate attached.

Honest Answers to Honest Questions

The things property owners most often ask us

Q. Will this affect my property taxes?

No. Inclusion in a local historic district does not increase your assessed value. Under Michigan law (Proposal A of 1994 and the Mathieu-Gast Act), normal repair, replacement, and maintenance cannot be used to raise your assessment until your property is sold.

Q. Can I still paint my house the color I want?

Yes. The Flat Rock Historic Study Committee deliberately declined to regulate color choices. You pick your colors, as you always have.

Q. What if I need to replace my roof or windows?

Normal maintenance and replacement is exactly the kind of work the program supports – and the kind that qualifies for the 25% tax credit. The Historic District Commission reviews work for general appropriateness using the Secretary of the Interior's baseline guidelines. In practice, that means a new asphalt roof is still an asphalt roof. Windows can still be repaired or replaced.

Q. What about work on the back of my house, or the interior?

Interior work is never reviewed. Exterior work is reviewed regardless of which side of the house – that's a state requirement under Public Act 169. But review is straightforward for ordinary maintenance and repair.

Q. Does being in the district help property values?

Generally, yes. Studies across Michigan communities have found that local historic districts tend to stabilize or increase property values over time – because the character of the neighborhood is protected from abrupt change.

What “Legal Protection” Means

Under the Michigan Local Historic Districts Act (Public Act 169 of 1970), local designation is the **only form of historic recognition in Michigan that provides binding legal protection** for the buildings, structures, and resources within district boundaries. National Register and State Register listings are honorary only. A local district gives our community legally binding review authority over what happens inside it – for the homes, the commercial buildings, and the other historic resources that define Flat Rock's character.

YOUR VOICE MATTERS MOST HERE

Public Hearing on the Flat Rock Historic District

Thursday, May 7, 2026 · 5:00 – 7:00 p.m. · Flat Rock City Hall

1 Sign the Statement of Support

The form is on official Historic Preservation Commission letterhead. Your signature is counted, by parcel, and presented to City Council.

3 Speak Briefly if You Can

Two sentences is plenty. Your name, your address, why you support the district.

2 Attend the Public Hearing

You don't have to speak. Just being in the room matters. Numbers matter.

4 Bring a Neighbor

Two signatures. Two voices. Pack the room.

Questions or to request a form: **Lesley Gilliland Harkai**, HD Study Committee Chair ·
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