

C. Industrial revenue bonds

Minn. Stat. §§ 469.152 to 469.1651.

The municipal industrial development laws help cities attract new commercial and industrial development, and keep existing businesses in the city. The law authorizes the council to issue revenue bonds, and use the proceeds to acquire and construct industrial sites and facilities. The city then leases these facilities to private industry and uses the rental fee proceeds to retire the bonds.

A city may issue industrial revenue bonds, also known as municipal revenue bonds, without public referendum. It cannot pledge the full faith and credit of a community as security for these bonds. Thus, the city may not tax property owners to pay principal and interest on the bonds.

For more information, contact DEED 651.259.7114, 800.657.3858. Main Office: 1st National Bank Building 332 Minnesota Street, Suite E200 Saint Paul, MN 55101-1351.

If a city decides to investigate the use of industrial bond financing, it should contact the Department of Employment and Economic Development. The department provides the city with information, advice, and technical assistance. This assistance is important, due to the adoption of federal and state laws allocating issuance authority among the states and their political subdivisions. The commissioner of Securities must approve the project.

D. Commercial rehabilitation

Minn. Stat. § 469.184.

Cities have authority to carry out programs for the rehabilitation of small- and medium-sized commercial buildings. The city must adopt a program ordinance that provides for the adoption of program regulations, including a definition of small- and medium-sized commercial buildings. Loans under the program may be for amounts up to \$200,000. The city may finance the program through the sale of revenue bonds.

E. Tax increment financing (TIF)



Minn. Stat. §§ 469.174 to 469.1794.

Tax increment financing authority is available to most cities. Cities with housing and redevelopment authorities, economic development authorities, port authorities, redevelopment agencies, those cities administering development districts or development projects, or cities exercising port authority powers under a general or special law may use tax increment financing. Amendments to the law, however, may make the use of this development tool more complicated.

Tax increment financing is a funding technique that takes advantage of the increases in tax capacity and property taxes from development or redevelopment to pay upfront public development or redevelopment costs. The difference in the tax capacity and the tax revenues the property generates after new construction has occurred, compared with the tax capacity and tax revenues it generated before the construction, is the captured value. The taxes paid on the captured value are called “increments.” Unlike property taxes, increments are not used to pay for the general costs of cities, counties, and schools. Instead, increments go to the development authority and are used to repay public indebtedness or current costs the city incurred in acquiring the property, removing existing structures or installing public services.

Thus, the property owner in a TIF district continues to pay the full amount of property taxes. TIF involves only the increased property taxes generated within the district. It does not change the amount of property taxes currently derived from the redevelopment area, nor does it directly affect the amount or rate of general ad valorem taxes the city levies. The result of a TIF project is an increased tax base that will benefit all local taxing jurisdictions. Additionally, TIF districts usually spur economic development and redevelopment through creating job, removing blight, and providing more affordable housing.

[Minn. Stat. § 469.177, subd. 1](#)

Amendments to TIF law in 2012, address changes caused by the market value exclusion program. If the market value of a homestead property within a TIF district reduces of the homestead market value in the district, the original tax capacity of the TIF district will be reduced by the same amount. Thus, the tax increment collected by the city will remain the same. If your city has a TIF district with townhouses or condominiums, you may want to verify that valuations are properly adjusted by the county auditor.

[State v. Wicklund](#), 589 N.W.2d 793 (Minn. 1999).

TIF is used to encourage four general types of private development: redevelopment, renovation and renewal, growth in low- to moderate-income housing, and economic development. Public financing using TIF funding for a privately owned facility does not make public space in the facility a public forum for free speech purposes.

A TIF district may involve compact development. Two major conditions must be satisfied:

[Minn. Stat. § 469.174](#), [Minn. Stat. § 469.175 subd. 2a](#), [Minn. Stat. § 469.176, subd. 1b](#), [Minn. Stat. § 469.176, subd. 1i](#), [Minn. Stat. § 469.176, subd. 4c](#), [Minn. Stat § 273.13, subd. 24](#).

- Parcels consisting of 70 percent of the area of the district are occupied by buildings or similar structures that are classified as class 3a property under state law. and
- The planned redevelopment or development of the district, when completed, will increase the total square footage of buildings, classified as class 3a under state law, occupying the district by three times or more relative to the square footage of similar buildings occupying the district when the resolution is approved.

[Minn. Stat. § 469.176, subd. 7](#).

In some specific situations, a TIF authority may request inclusion in a tax increment financing district and the county auditor may certify the original tax capacity of a parcel or a part of the following property types:

- Agricultural.
- Private outdoor recreational, open space and park land.
- Rural preserve property.
- Metropolitan agricultural preserves.

The authority to establish or approve a compact development district expired on June 30, 2012.

Minn. Stat. § 469.176, subd. 4c.

TIF economic development districts must:

- Request certification of the district no later than June 30, 2012.
- Must begin construction before Jan. 1, 2012, for development of housing.

Minn. Stat. § 469.1761, subd. 2 or 3.

These districts may not be used to assist housing that is developed to qualify for owner-occupied or rental housing, or similar requirements of other law, if construction of the project begins later than July 1, 2011.

Minn. Stat. § 469.176, subd. 4m.

Cities have temporary authority to spend TIF funds to stimulate construction using economic development districts for any type of project if three conditions are met:

- The municipality funds projects that will create new jobs in the state, including construction jobs, and the project otherwise would not have begun before July 1, 2012, without assistance.
- Construction of the project begins no later than July 1, 2012.
- The request for certification is made by June 30, 2012.

Minn. Stat. § 469.176, subd. 4m (d).

For a development consisting of housing, the authority to spend tax increments expires Dec. 31, 2011, and construction must commence before July 1, 2011, except the authority to spend tax increments on market rate housing developments expires July 31, 2012, and construction must commence before Jan. 1, 2012. This temporary authority to spend the tax increment expires Dec. 31, 2012.

Minn. Stat. § 469.175, subd. 5.

The city using TIF must report annually to the county board, the county auditor, the school board, and the state auditor as to the status of the TIF district or districts and publish the report. The state auditor has established a uniform system of accounting and financial reporting for TIF districts. The city must annually submit to the state auditor a financial report in compliance with these standards.

Minn. Stat. § 469.1771, subds. 1, 2b.

The state auditor may audit TIF districts. If the state auditor notifies a TIF authority of an alleged violation, a copy of the notice is also forwarded to the county attorney. If no corrective action is brought within one year, the county attorney must notify the state auditor, who then notifies the attorney general. If the attorney general finds a substantial violation, the attorney general will petition the state tax court to suspend the authority's power to use TIF for a period of up to five years.

Minn. Stat. § 469.177, subd. 8. *Lake Superior Paper Indus. v. State*, 624 N.W.2d 254 (Minn. 2001). *Brookfield Trade Center, Inc. v. County of Ramsey*, 609 N.W.2d 868 (Minn. 1998).

The TIF agreement with the developer is a complex document. Assistance from a financial advisor and the city attorney is necessary in order to anticipate the many potential problems. An agreement can establish a minimum market value for tax increment assessment purposes, as well as provide that the developer pay a certain level of taxes regardless of any classification rate changes or levy decreases. The agreement should be entered into before the assembly and acquisition of the land on which the completed improvements are to be located.

See Minn. Stat. §§ 469.177, subds. 1b, 11, Minn. Stat. § 469.1771, subd. 1. Minn. Stat. § 469.1793. Minn. Stat. § 469.1814.

The 2001 tax reform legislation, which reduced class rates and provided for the state takeover of the general education levy, resulted in several changes to various statutes to accommodate the changes. These changes considerably reduce the continued viability of TIF in the future.

Minn. Stat. § 469.174.

The law imposes a 180-day statute of limitations on actions to challenge the creation or modification of a TIF district. The law is complex including a “but-for” finding before a city approves a TIF plan and the creation of a TIF district. Cities must follow statutory requirements including but not limited to administrative expenses, plan modifications, reporting requirements, use of increment in pre-1979 districts, excess increments, pooling, decertification, and use of funds outside the district.

Minn. Stat. § 469.175.

Before a district can be created, the law requires a detailed estimate of the impact of a proposed district on city-provided services, such as police and fire protection, public infrastructure, and borrowing costs attributable to the district, in addition to other complex estimations must be prepared.

Walser Auto Sales, Inc. v. City of Richfield, 635 N.W.2d 391 (Minn. Ct. App. 2001); *aff'd*, 644 N.W.2d 425 (Minn. 2002)

Cities should use extreme care in establishing a TIF district and should follow all procedural requirements; otherwise, a court may find the district was not properly established. In one case, a TIF district was not properly established where minimal effort was made to ensure the thorough inspection of the properties, inaccurate methodology was used to establish the condition of the buildings, and the buildings found structurally substandard were not reasonably distributed throughout the district.

Chenoweth v. City of New Brighton, 655 N.W.2d 821 (Minn. Ct. App. 2003).

In another case, a cause of action for inverse condemnation does not arise where a city’s involvement with an adjacent property owner’s development consists of establishing a TIF district, entering into a contract with a private developer specifying the size and value of structures to be built, and providing for substantial city assistance to facilitate development.

Given the complexity of the laws governing the use of TIF, cities or HRAs should not undertake this method of financing community development projects without the advice of an attorney and professional consultants.