

Dear Mayor Guthrie and Members of Council,

I am writing to express my strong support for implementing an effective Vacant Home Tax in Guelph. Housing affordability has reached a critical point in our community, and taking action to bring unused housing stock back into circulation is a necessary and practical step.

As a resident of Guelph, I've seen firsthand how difficult it has become for families, students, and seniors to find suitable housing. I've watched rents in my neighbourhood rise sharply while several nearby homes sit empty for months on end.

To ensure that Guelph's Vacant Home Tax is effective and fair, I urge Council to adopt the following measures:

- **Set the vacant home tax rate at 4%.** This will create a strong incentive to return homes to the rental or ownership market, while generating revenue to support affordable housing and program administration.
- **Require a mandatory declaration** for all property owners. This is the only equitable and transparent method to identify legitimately vacant properties.
- **Direct surplus revenue** from the tax to Guelph's non-profit housing sector for immediate use in affordable housing projects, following Hamilton's successful Affordable Housing Funding program model.
- **Establish a vacant homes registry and annual inspection process** to prevent "demolition by neglect," funded by the owners of vacant properties.
- **Set meaningful penalties** for non-compliance. \$10,000 for individuals and \$50,000 for corporations.
- **Launch the program in 2026** to allow sufficient time for effective implementation.

A well-designed Vacant Home Tax can help ease housing pressures, support local non-profit housing organizations, and promote responsible property stewardship. Guelph has an opportunity to lead by example, and I urge you to move forward decisively on this measure.

Thank you for your attention and for your continued work on behalf of our community.

Sincerely,  
Diane Pinto

