

Gow's Bridge



Linking the Old University Neighbourhood to the City of Guelph since 1897

## Old University Neighbourhood Residents' Association Inc.

Re Vacant Home Tax By-law

Members of City Council,

The Executive of the Old University Neighbourhood Residents Association (OUNRA) at its meeting on 28 October 2025 considered some of the merits and drawbacks of a Vacancy Home Tax, that we understand is being considered by Guelph City Council.

We have a number of reflections that we wish to share with City Council. But in sum, we are supportive of this initiative.

We are all aware of the housing crisis that Guelph and much of the country faces. We simply need more places for people to live. And this is an urgent need.

Vacant homes do nothing to alleviate the housing crisis and in addition they create problems that negatively affects those neighbours who have to live beside such vacancies. As City Council tries to incentivize building, so it must incentivize and nudge property owners not to sit on vacant properties.

We are aware that many other cities in southern Ontario have enacted such a tax. There would be certainly much to be learned from their experience and example. We would hope that City Staff would draw on this practical knowledge. There's no need to reinvent the wheel.

Further, we feel that the 2% that is being considered is too low and can be simply written off as an unfortunate expense by some of those sitting on empty property. We would suggest 4% that we believe would incentivize action.

Thank you for your consideration as you debate this important subject.

Respectfully,

John Lawson (Secretary OUNRA)