

Dear Mayor, Council and Clerks office,

This email is to express my support for a staff recommendation to implement a Vacant Homes tax November 4. A vacant homes tax discourages property owners from leaving homes empty purely for investment or speculation. By incentivizing owners to rent or to sell their vacant properties, more housing units enter the market, which can help ease housing shortages and moderate rent and home prices. The tax can provide municipalities with a dedicated source of funding for affordable housing initiatives, homelessness prevention, and community development. Even if some owners choose to keep properties vacant and pay the tax, that revenue can be reinvested to address local housing needs.

To be most effective I am in support of Get Involved Guelph's following list of recommendations:

1. A vacant home tax rate of 4%. This will generate a meaningful incentive to bring housing back into use, generate funds to be applied to affordable housing, and generate funds to pay for the administrations of the program.
2. Mandatory declaration. Mandatory declaration is the only equitable way of ensuring that all vacant housing is subject to the program and the best means of identifying all of Guelph's legitimately vacant homes.
3. Direct surplus revenue to the local non-profit housing sector for quick application. (See Hamilton's Affordable Housing funding Program.)
4. Establish a vacant homes registry and annual inspection to circumvent demolition by neglect. Cost to be covered by vacant home owners.
5. Establish effective penalties. Set fines at \$10,000 for individuals and \$50,000 for corporations.
6. Initiate the program in 2026.

Thank you for your consideration.

Best wishes,

Donna Jennison

■ Stevenson St. North
Guelph, ON