

A vacant home tax in Peel?

Public input sought next week

A vacant home tax is applied to homes that are vacant for at least six months over a 12-month period.

A vacant home tax is a tool that can be used in cities facing challenges related to housing. The challenges can include rising home prices and limited availability of homes for sale or rent.

There are several approaches that can be explored by municipalities to address the affordability crisis they face, and a vacant home tax is one of them. As directed by Regional Council, Peel is exploring the feasibility of a vacant home tax in Peel.

“There's a housing affordability crisis in Ontario including Peel,” said the Region. “Calculations show that it would take the average family 26 years to save a large enough down payment for current home prices and 51 years for a family earning minimum wage. Research and real-world experience suggest that a vacant home tax is one of many tools that can contribute to easing the affordable housing crisis in the shorter term.

“By implementing this tax, Peel Region may be able to encourage owners of vacant properties to either sell or rent out their empty units. This would create more supply of available units which could lower average property sale and rent prices.”

While not mandated by legislation, all municipalities that have implemented, or are considering, the vacant home tax have pledged to use collected revenues to increase housing supply and support housing initiatives:

Rent relief programs

Building and maintaining affordable housing

Providing grants to non-profit organizations to assist the community.

“We're consulting with the public to get input to shape the development and implementation of a vacant home tax in Peel,” said the Region, noting public consultation sessions set for April 26 and May 3. “We want to understand what you think it should accomplish, how it should be operated, and identify potential risks.”

For more information, visit www.peelregion.ca/vacant-home-tax.