



COMMUNICATION UPDATE

TO:	Mayor and Members City Council
DATE:	March 30, 2026
SUBJECT:	Vacant Unit Tax – March 2026 Mailout (City Wide)
WARD(S) AFFECTED:	City Wide
SUBMITTED BY:	Clayton Pereira Director, Revenue Services Corporate Services Department
SIGNATURE:	<i>Clayton Pereira</i>

To ensure property owners are aware of the Vacant Unit Tax (VUT) declaration period, a reminder letter (attached) will be mailed to approximately 46,000 residential property owners who have not declared as of March 23, 2026.

Reminder letters and emails began the week of March 23, 2026 advising property owners to submit their declaration by April 15, 2026. A late declaration fee of \$250 will apply starting April 16, 2026, with the final deadline to declare being May 15, 2026.

All residential property owners are required to submit an occupancy declaration each year to determine whether their property is subject to the Vacant Unit Tax.

Background

The Vacant Unit Tax is one of the multiple measures that Council has approved to address the City's housing crisis. The program aims to increase the supply of housing in Hamilton by encouraging residential property owners to keep their properties occupied rather than vacant.

OUR Vision: To be the best place to raise a child and age successfully.

OUR Mission: To provide high quality cost conscious public services that contribute to a healthy, safe and prosperous community, in a sustainable manner.

OUR Culture: Collective Ownership, Steadfast Integrity, Courageous Change, Sensational Service, Engaged Empowered Employees.

As of 2025, the City has charged an additional one per cent tax on any property that has been left vacant for more than 183 days in the previous tax year. Following the recovery of administrative costs, revenues generated from the Vacant Unit Tax will be reinvested into affordable housing initiatives.

If an occupancy declaration is not submitted, the property will be considered vacant and the Vacant Unit Tax will be charged. A principal residence will not be subject to the tax, but all residential property owners are still required to submit an occupancy declaration annually.

Exemptions

There are some instances where a property may be left vacant and be exempt from the Vacant Unit Tax:

- **Death of an Owner:** exemption applies to year of death plus one subsequent year or, until a certificate of appointment of estate trustee has been issued in the estate of the deceased person by a court of competent jurisdiction, provided that an application for a certificate of appointment of estate trustee has been made to the court.
- **Major Renovations:** major renovations or redevelopment make occupation of a unit impossible for more than 183 days in the same calendar year, provided a building permit has been issued.
- **Uninhabitable / Hazardous Property:** exemption applies to the uninhabitable / hazardous determination year plus one subsequent year after.
- **Sale of the property:** the VUT will not apply in the year of the sale if the transfer is to an unrelated individual or corporation.
- **Principal resident is in care, institutionalized or hospitalized:** the period of time when the principal resident resides in a hospital, long-term or a supportive care facility.

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- Court order: if a court order prohibiting occupancy of the residential property is in effect.
- Non-profit housing: the exemption applies to designated housing projects owned and operated by non-profit corporations.
- Model Homes: properties used exclusively for sales and marketing purposes.
- Unsold New Inventory: newly build units held by developers up to six months following the occupancy permit in a calendar year.

Key Dates

Date	Details
December 2025	Notice to declare letters with declaration instructions are mailed to residential property owners
December 17, 2025	Mandatory declaration period begins
Week of March 23, 2026	Reminder to declare letters are mailed to all residential property owners that have not yet declared.
April 15, 2026	Mandatory declaration period deadline, to avoid late declaration fee
April 16 - May 15, 2026	Late declaration period with \$250 Late Declaration Fee
First week of June 2026	Vacant Unit Tax charges are mailed out on VUT tax bill
June 30, 2026	First Vacant Unit Tax payment is due
June 15, 2026	Appeal period begins
September 30, 2026	Second and final Vacant Unit Tax payment is due

For more information about the Vacant Unit Tax, visit www.hamilton.ca/VacantUnitTax or contact vacantunittax@hamilton.ca.

APPENDICES AND SCHEDULES ATTACHED

Appendix “A” to Communication Update – VUT Reminder to Declare Letter



Hamilton

City of Hamilton
City Hall, 71 Main Street West
Hamilton, Ontario
Canada L8P 4Y5
www.hamilton.ca

Vacant Unit Tax
Revenue Services
Corporate Services Department

Insert Date

Owner
Owner
Address
Address
Address

**RESIDENTIAL VACANT UNIT TAX
DECLARATION REQUIRED BEFORE
April 15, 2026**

INFORMATION REQUIRED FOR THE DECLARATION:

**Property Address
Roll Number
Access Code**

ACTION REQUIRED: City of Hamilton - Vacant Unit Tax

Our records indicate the **2025** occupancy status declaration has not been received for **[PROPERTY ADDRESS]**. All residential property owners are required to submit their Vacant Unit Tax declaration annually to confirm the occupancy of their property. To avoid the Vacant Unit Tax being applied to your property, please complete your 2025 declaration by **April 15, 2026**, and avoid a Late Declaration Fee.

Late declarations will be accepted from **April 16 to May 15, 2026**; however, a **\$250 Late Declaration Fee** will apply during this period.

If this property is your principal residence, you will not have to pay the Vacant Unit Tax, but you must still submit a declaration every year. A declaration is required for every residential property you own, regardless of whether the property is occupied or vacant.

If a declaration is not completed by May 15, 2026, your property will be deemed vacant and a Vacant Unit Tax charge of [XXXXX] will be added to your property tax account as of June 9, 2026.

<u>Residential Assessment</u>	<u>Tax Rate</u>	<u>Vacant Unit Tax Charge</u>
[XXXXX]	1%	[XXXXX]

Payment of the Vacant Unit Tax will be due in two equal installments, the first due on June 30, 2026 and second due on September 30, 2026.

How to Submit Your Declaration - please ensure you have your roll number and unique access code available as found on the first page of this reminder notice:

Declaration Options	Details	Time Requirement
 Online	www.hamilton.ca/VacantUnitTax 	5 minutes or less
 Paper	<p>Completed paper forms can be mailed to:</p> <p>Vacant Unit Tax, 71 Main Street West, Hamilton, ON, L8P 4Y5</p> <p>OR dropped off in-person at any Municipal Service Centre. To find a location near you, visit www.hamilton.ca/MSC.</p>	5 minutes or less
 Email	vacantunittax@hamilton.ca	5 minutes or less
 Phone	<p>905-546-2573</p> <p>Long-distance charges may apply if you are calling from outside Hamilton.</p>	<p>Please note: High call volumes may cause delays between Monday to Friday from 8:30 am-4:30 pm.</p>

If you have already submitted your declaration and have received a confirmation number, kindly disregard this notice. We appreciate your cooperation and support.

For more details, please visit www.hamilton.ca/VacantUnitTax.

Thank you

Vacant Unit Tax Team