



MEDIA RELEASE

Thursday, September 28, 2017

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

City looking for feedback on the Vacant Unit Tax Rebate program

(Barrie, ON) The City of Barrie is preparing to update the Vacant Unit Tax Rebate program and is seeking feedback from the public. The results of the survey will help inform staff recommendations to Council on how this program should be updated.

The Vacant Unit Tax Rebate program provides property tax rebates to eligible owners of vacant commercial and industrial buildings. The Province of Ontario, which has mandated the program since 1998, has recently allowed municipalities' broader flexibility to tailor the program to reflect local community needs and circumstances.

The current rebate is 30% of the property tax for the vacant commercial space and 35% for vacant industrial space. In 2016, the cost to the City was \$422,000 for approximately 400 vacant properties. The 5-year cost (2012-2016) was \$2.33 million (excluding program administration fees).

The City is considering a number of options to update this program, including:

- Revising the eligibility criteria;
- Putting time limits on the number of years owners are eligible;
- Phasing the program out; and,
- Maintaining the status quo.

For more information and to complete the survey, visit Rebates & Deferrals at barrie.ca/PropertyTaxes. The survey closes on **October 22, 2017**.

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