

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

We submit that the likely effect of licensing some building types and some areas would be to reduce rental housing supply and increase rents among those building types and areas, while not improving rental housing conditions much or at all.

The overarching message in the Maclaren report dated August 12, 2019, is the following:

1. Conditions in most rental units in Ottawa are satisfactory now. As the report says, the issues are with a small minority of properties and landlords.
2. Without effective enforcement, implementing municipal landlord regulation or stricter by-laws would achieve little, if any, positive result.
3. Implementing municipal landlord regulation AND effective enforcement would achieve a positive result, although at the cost of higher rents.
4. "Improving the effectiveness of By-law enforcement could be an alternative to a licensing regime" (page 36)

Landlord licensing or mandatory registration is not needed, and would produce a negative result (namely less rental housing supply and higher rents), whereas more effective enforcement is needed, and should produce a positive result without licensing or registration.

The Maclaren report suggests charging for inspections "after the second (e.g. the first results in the order, the second sees if [the order] has been complied with and, if not, charge for subsequent inspections)" (page 37) and notes "Fines and escalating penalties for non-compliance could be significantly increased for repeat offenders". (page 38) EOLO supports both of those proposals, subject to the principles we suggest herein.

EOLO supports enhanced enforcement processes for dealing with rental housing issues in the City of Ottawa. Enhanced enforcement processes are necessary and sufficient to deal with the problems which have been identified concerning long term rental housing units.

EOLO is in favour of providing more proactive enforcement. Such enforcement should address most of the concerns about exterior appearance raised by the homeowners in Sandy Hill and around Algonquin College.

EOLO's support for a demerit system is strictly limited to increased fines for repeat offenders. Demerits should only arise after the offender (whether landlord or tenant) has notice of the issue, and an opportunity to correct the problem. There should be due process, including a due diligence defence.

EOLO opposes any form of landlord licensing or mandatory registration because landlord licensing or mandatory registration is not needed, and would produce negative results (namely less rental housing supply and higher rents).