

TORONTO OMBUDSMAN

THE OFFICE OF LAST RESORT

Toronto's residents rely on services they get from municipal government. Anyone can run the risk of receiving poor service or experiencing bad administration.

HELPING MAKE A GREAT CITY BETTER

2.7 million residents call Toronto home. Our office helps resolve public complaints concerning City services.

AN IMPARTIAL INVESTIGATION BY AN OMBUDSMAN IS A SIGN OF A HEALTHY DEMOCRACY

SEE INSIDE

OMBUDSMAN'S MESSAGE

Complaints and frustration increase

INVESTIGATIONS

Investigations bring more improvements

PEOPLE'S STORIES

More than 1,800 residents helped in resolving their complaints

OFFICE OF THE OMBUDSMAN

January 31, 2014

To the Mayor and Members of Toronto City Council

I am pleased to submit my 2013 Annual Report to City Council for January 1 to December 31, 2013, pursuant to section 173 (2) of the *City of Toronto Act 2006* and the City of Toronto Municipal Code Chapter 3.

Yours sincerely,



Fiona Crean
Ombudsman
City of Toronto

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OMBUDSMAN'S MESSAGE

“The growing demand for our services is a clear indication of the importance of having an independent Ombudsman who can be trusted by the public to respond to complaints with impartiality and confidentiality.”



It has been a turbulent year in Toronto government. Our own office has faced the challenge of an increase in the number and severity of complaints. Some of the increase can be attributed to our success in becoming better known. But there is another more troubling reason: the increase in socio-economic inequality continues to grow.¹ We know that the more a resident is marginalized, the more likely they are to come into contact with government services that are essential to their well-being – programs such as public housing, social assistance and public health. Whatever the causes, the growing demand for our services is a clear indication of the importance of having an independent Ombudsman who can be trusted by the public to respond to complaints with impartiality and confidentiality.

While we continue to deal with disputes such as the enforcement of bylaws by City inspectors, there are more complaints that involve fundamental human rights such as housing and transportation. People with disabilities complained that Wheel-Trans videotaped them without their knowledge and did not tell them they were using those tapes to review their eligibility for the transit service. Vulnerable seniors in public housing were evicted or threatened with eviction for non-payment of rent arrears. A not-for-profit organization serving a highly marginalized community nearly closed its doors when the City improperly charged them taxes for a building that was tax exempt.

The rise in complaints is no accident. It is a function of the increase in poverty and exclusion. And it is likely one of the causes for another trend we have seen: the increase in the level of anger and distress from the public. Some of our complainants are frustrated with public services, while others are fed up with a local government that they see as failing to meet their expectations. These emotions are what drive the unreasonable conduct and lack of respect that we and many public servants have seen. In the past year, we have experienced more incidents of desperate behaviour than the previous four years combined. There is no doubt that this lack of civility makes the work of service delivery more challenging for everyone concerned.

Over the past year, the Toronto Public Service has conducted itself with dignity and professionalism as it continues to face acute pressures. Budgets have been flat lined and some 2,540 jobs have been left vacant. There may be various ways to interpret that number, but for public servants one obvious consequence is that they are doing more work with fewer resources.

The stress and lack of resources clearly have had an impact on the morale of public servants, and their standing in the eyes of the public. At community meetings, I have repeatedly heard disparaging, often unwarranted comments about the public service. Many public servants have confided to me their apprehension and fear about doing their jobs well in light of the strained environment. We see those impacts in our office.

Public trust in government is crucial for both the relationship of the public and its civil service to be legitimate and effective. “Trust functions as ‘the glue that keeps the system together’ and ‘the oil that lubricates the policy machine’.”²

Trust can be repaired with a dedicated focus, and complaints are a good place to start. We know that the average complainant is at a relative disadvantage compared to the organization that is being complained about. The public servant or agency is more likely to enjoy the advantages of superior status, access to information, and a far more detailed understanding of policy and procedures.

Learning from complaints is a powerful way to improve public service, enhance the reputation of a public body and increase trust among the people who use its service.

I would encourage divisions and agencies to welcome complaints and continually improve their complaint mechanisms.

The resulting increase in accountability is probably the most significant reason a well-managed complaints system can improve service to the public. It also saves money and provides reassurance that the operation is fair and builds confidence.

“The stress and lack of resources clearly have had an impact on the morale of public servants, and their standing in the eyes of the public. At community meetings, I have repeatedly heard disparaging, often unwarranted comments about the public service.”

As I have said before, being a public servant these days is particularly challenging.

My office has been helping public servants meet some of those challenges. We have received many more requests from the public service for guidance on policy, program implications and complaint handling. This is a positive development, as our mandate becomes better understood and accepted. Some divisions, such as the City Clerk’s Office and Toronto Employment and Social Services, have long sought our assistance and been champions of our presence in local government, but this year has seen a marked increase in requests for input and advice from other parts of the public service.

We have also adopted some new approaches as our role in government matures. We are placing a greater emphasis with public servants on prevention and advice. Our core focus continues to be on finding systemic fixes to problems. To that end, we recently came up with a new approach. I announced an investigation into “red tape” because the phenomenon appears to be bigger than any one complaint or any one division of the public service. As part of the investigation, I asked residents to get in touch to tell us their stories of dealing with red tape. Those stories have helped shape areas for investigation.

Over the past year, our investigation results have improved public service in the key areas of process and transparency, performance and accountability, fairness, training and communications. Recommendations aimed at improving or developing policies and procedures and ensuring better communications continue to dominate our findings.

There is an increasing emphasis in our recommendations on holding staff and the organization accountable for service delivery. This focus is evident in recommendations addressing the roles and responsibilities of staff, management and the organization involved.

The rate of compliance with our recommendations is high. This is a testament to the public service’s willingness to be held to account and make improvements where required. For that I am grateful to the leadership of the Toronto Public Service. We are also very appreciative of the daily challenges faced by front-line staff who for many people, are the public face of City Hall and so often perform the most important work of all.

I want to thank Toronto’s residents for their thoughtfulness and courage in bringing us their complaints, the elected representatives who have championed this office’s mandate, and the public servants who work so hard to deliver services in particularly challenging times. And last but not least, I want to applaud our remarkable team who dedicate many hours to serving the City with tenacity, unflinching dedication and a healthy dose of humour.

FIONA CREAN
Ombudsman of Toronto



¹Poverty and Employment Precarity in Southern Ontario (PEPSO) & United Way Toronto. (2013). It’s More than Poverty: Employment Precarity and Household Well-being. <http://www.united-waytoronto.com/downloads/whatwedo/reports/ItsMoreThanPoverty2013-02-09FRReport.pdf>

²Hertogh, M. (2013). Why the ombudsman does not promote public trust in government: lessons from the Low Countries. The ombudsman, tribunals and administrative justice section. *Journal of Social Welfare & Family Law*, 35(2), 245-258.

CITY COUNCIL CHAMPIONING THE OMBUDSMAN'S MANDATE

CITY COUNCIL USING OMBUDSMAN RECOMMENDATIONS TO IMPROVE PUBLIC SERVICE

Since Council set up the Office of the Ombudsman, it has been increasingly using Ombudsman recommendations to improve policies, programs and procedures in the administration of the City. Like the Ombudsman, Council's goal is to improve governance by identifying and addressing areas to achieve greater fairness, accessibility and transparency. As the Ombudsman's role becomes better understood and accepted, Council's directives are increasing exponentially.

Council typically references the Ombudsman in a couple of contexts, namely, for an expert opinion on a matter or because of an Ombudsman investigation that may be relevant to other issues.

Council directives can be grouped into six trends.

1. Making sure public servants and City Council know about issues raised in Ombudsman investigations

For example, in 2010, Council asked the City Manager to give a copy of the Ombudsman's report, *No Time to Waste*, to every division head and require them to read it. In 2012, Council requested copies of the report on the *Parking Dispute System* be sent to the Disability Issues Committee and Toronto Seniors' Forum for them to give feedback to the City Manager.

2. Requiring senior public servants to consult the Ombudsman for an expert opinion

These directives have included the Economic Development Committee asking the public service in 2011 to consult the Ombudsman on business improvement areas flowing from her investigation on the subject.

In another instance, Council directed Shelter, Support and Housing to consult on customer service and equitable access to services.

3. Improving existing law, policies, programs and procedures

Council changed the law in several instances. For example, revisions were made to the Municipal Code for Business Improvement Areas and made a bylaw change to authorize a one-time adjustment to residential water accounts in certain circumstances.

In the case of the Ombudsman's investigation into the public appointments process in 2012, Council asked that the public service stagger appointments so that not all board members are replaced at the same time and continuity is maintained across the terms of Council.

4. Recommending improvements to existing provincial laws

In 2011, as a result of an Ombudsman recommendation, Council asked for a report from the City Manager on the implications of asking the province to enact a *Toronto Public Service Act*.

In 2013, after the report *Housing at Risk*, Council requested that the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care fund the Toronto Community Housing Corporation (TCHC) to enable it to better assist residents with mental health problems.

5. Developing new policies, programs and procedures

Following an Ombudsman's report in 2010, Council asked the City Manager to report on establishing a process where a Standing Committee or Community Council could hear complaints about basement flooding.

With the Ombudsman's recommendation for a public service act, Council directed the City Manager to report on an interim bylaw that sets out public servants' obligations and accountabilities.

In 2013, Council asked the City Manager to include a requirement for a whistleblower protection policy in the new shareholder direction for Toronto Community Housing Corporation.

6. Reviewing existing policies, programs and procedures

When the Ombudsman issued *Potholes, Floods and Broken Branches* in 2011, Council directed the contract with the "service provider" be reviewed to determine whether the adjuster's fee was an industry standard that ensures claimants are treated fairly. In another instance, Council requested a full review of the emergency human services policy as a result of the Ombudsman's investigation into the Wellesley Street fire.

Council directives have strengthened the intent and spirit of Ombudsman recommendations. There is an emerging correlation between those recommendations and Council directives with consequent improvements in public administration.

Council's responses to Ombudsman recommendations are raising the bar for fairness, equity and accountability across the public service. Hence, they benefit all people in Toronto.



FOR YOUR INFORMATION

WHEN THINGS GO WRONG

2.7 MILLION PEOPLE

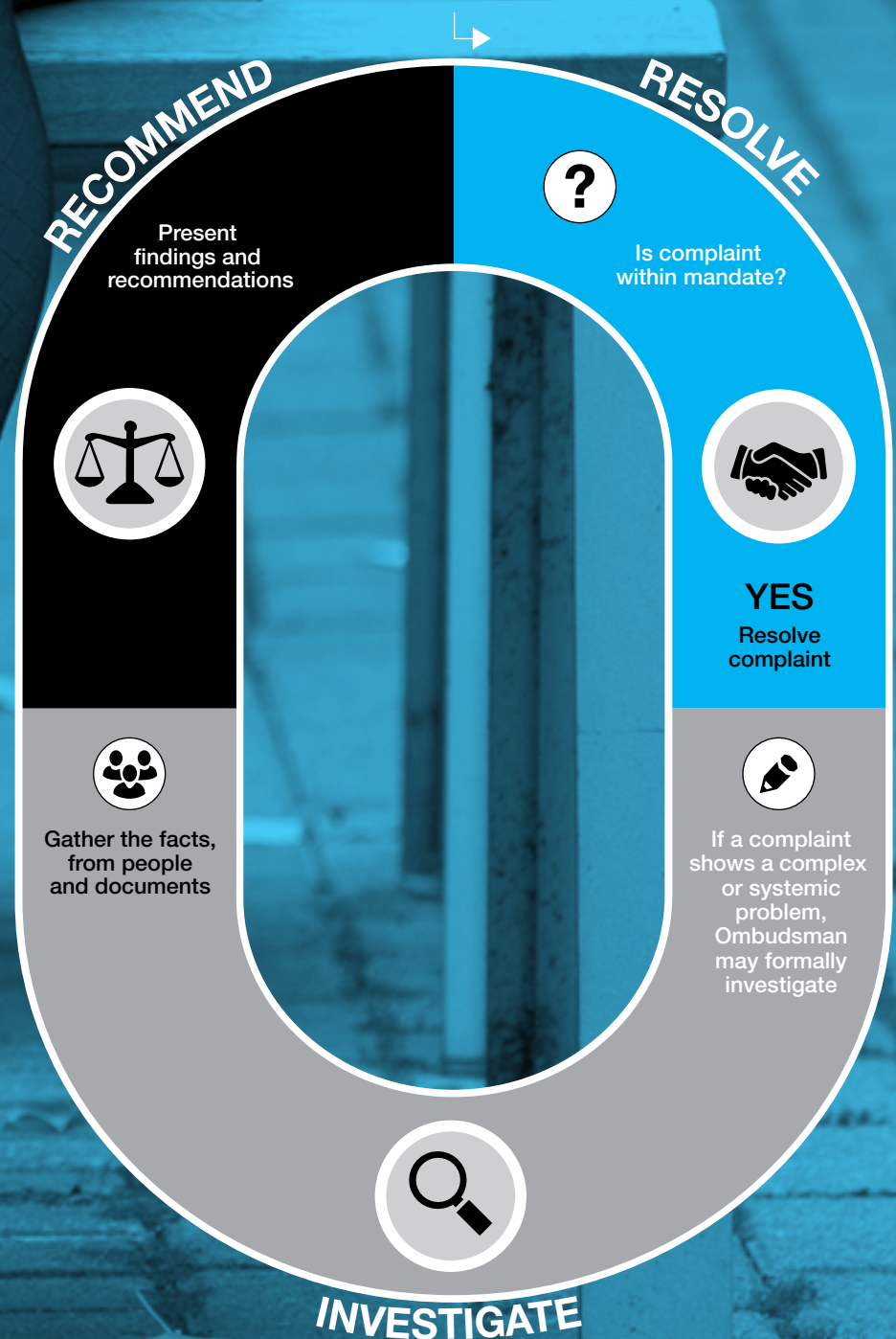
110 CITY AGENCIES & DEPARTMENTS

140 NEIGHBOURHOODS

160 LANGUAGES

COMPLAINT PROCESS ▶

START



ENGAGING COMMUNITIES

OFFICE OF THE OMBUDSMAN REACHES OUT

Spreading the word – Ombudsman here to help



The Ombudsman speaking to a community group in Scarborough.

The Office of the Toronto Ombudsman has four goals in mind as they reach out to people throughout the city:

1. to make sure people in under-represented communities know about the Ombudsman's role and mandate
2. to see that the complainants more accurately reflect Toronto's demographics
3. to develop a constructive and reciprocal relationship with the widest possible range of community groups
4. to better understand issues within specific communities that may inform Ombudsman investigations.

The office has increased efforts to reach residents through umbrella organizations such as the YWCA, Woman Abuse Council, United Way Toronto, Social Planning Toronto, CultureLink and the Ontario Council of Agencies Serving Immigrants.

The Ombudsman has spoken at many sessions for the general public, including the Ontario Bar Association, the University of Toronto School of Public Policy & Governance, and the Ted Rogers School of Management at Ryerson University.

Outreach to Scarborough communities is resulting in an increase in complaints from those areas. The Ombudsman has been meeting with neighbourhood community centres, legal clinics, English-as-a-Second-Language classes, religious groups and people with specific interests such as mental health and seniors.

The Ombudsman also completed a speaking circuit of some 2,000 Toronto Employment and Social Service public servants to make sure they know about her office and pass that information on to clients. She has held these information sessions with those in offices that have high interaction with the public, such as City Planning, Municipal Licensing and Standards, Toronto Water and Shelter, Support and Housing.

Internationally, delegations of administrators and elected officials from China, Japan, Kenya and South Africa visited the Ombudsman's office in 2013. The Johannesburg officials were consulting on the creation of their own municipal ombudsman. The Ombudsman also addressed senior public servants from the Government of India, an event sponsored by the Institute of Public Administration of Canada.

MEASURING THE IMPACT OF INVESTIGATIONS ON PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION

OMBUDSMAN OFFICE BREAKS NEW GROUND

The Office of the Ombudsman has started a project to develop a way to measure the impact of ombuds investigations on government administration.

With the support of a generous grant from the International Ombudsman Institute, the Vienna-based association of people involved in ombuds work throughout the world, the project is using the City of Toronto as a case study.

Ryerson University is conducting the research. From their results, the Ombudsman office will develop an evaluation guide, with the guidance

of an advisory group of ombudsman from various North American jurisdictions.

Ombudsman around the world find it challenging to measure the results from investigations into systemic cases of maladministration. Their work, which is concerned with fair play, is difficult to measure in contrast, for example, to a financial audit.

This project's findings and the resulting evaluation guide will help ombudsman offices measure the impact of their work. This in turn can increase their effectiveness and enhance the performance of public servants and improve the services they provide. The project will also be useful for others working in the field of governance, such as integrity commissioners.

THE OMBUDSMAN'S PUBLIC SERVICE AWARDS

FIVE PEOPLE, ONE DIVISION WIN OMBUDSMAN'S PUBLIC SERVICE AWARDS

At a ceremony in September at City Hall, the Ombudsman's awards went to five individual public servants and for the first time, to a City division.

The 2013 recipients are:

- Phillip Abrahams, General Manager, Shelter, Support and Housing Administration
- Denise Andrea Campbell, Director, Community Resources, Social Development, Finance and Administration
- City Clerk's Office
- Trish Horrigan, Policy Planning and Project Consultant, Shelter, Support and Housing Administration

- Pamela Ludgate, Supervisor, Water and Parking Tags, Revenue Services
- Joan Taylor, Chief of Staff, Toronto Transit Commission.

The Ombudsman's Award recognizes outstanding service in resolving claims of unfairness brought to the Ombudsman's office about the City of Toronto. To be eligible, the public servant must meet one or more of the following criteria:

- demonstrating leadership in problem solving and good customer service

- initiating innovative approaches to dispute resolution
- encouraging the application of problem solving at a systems level
- providing exceptional responsiveness and cooperative service during a complaint inquiry or investigation.

Nominations come from Ombudsman staff, residents and other stakeholders. The jury is made up of prominent community, business and civic leaders.



CONNECTING WITH COMMUNITIES

In 2013, the Ombudsman met with thousands of residents, public servants and members of community organizations.



WHAT WE DISCOVERED

INVESTIGATIONS

The Ombudsman launches a formal investigation when a complaint involves complex or conflicting information, multiple issues or cases where there are systemic or public interest implications.

An investigation, which can take several months and up to a year depending on complexity, usually results in a formal report and recommendations.



TCHC CONTINUES EVICTING SENIORS

More than 25,000 seniors live in rent-g geared-to-income units owned by the Toronto Community Housing Corporation (TCHC).

In October 2009, Al Gosling died after being evicted for arrears from his TCHC apartment, where he had lived for 21 years. TCHC asked the Honourable Justice Patrick LeSage to conduct an independent review of the eviction.

In his findings, Justice LeSage emphasized the importance of eviction prevention and personal contact with vulnerable tenants. He noted that TCHC's application of its eviction prevention policies was either inconsistent or inappropriately used.

The Ombudsman made similar conclusions in two investigations in 2009 and 2012. After each, TCHC made policy revisions and developed guidelines to ensure fairness in eviction processes.

However, complaints continued so in October 2012, the Ombudsman launched an investigation to find out whether eviction prevention policies were applied consistently and in keeping with Justice LeSage's recommendations. The investigation examined the files of 79 seniors who were evicted in 2011 and 2012 on the basis that they had not paid their rent.

The Ombudsman's report in June, *Housing at Risk – An Investigation into the Toronto Community Housing Corporation's Eviction of Seniors on the Basis of Rent Arrears* found the TCHC had not changed its practices.

The report cited examples:

- Mr. B was late reporting a change in his income, which resulted in a retroactive increase. He suddenly owed more than \$3,000. TCHC provided three different figures over two days. After this, he accumulated further arrears for three years before TCHC evicted him. Mr. B died three weeks later from a heart attack.
- Ms. F, who has developmental disabilities, lived without incident in her unit for 30 years. After receiving noise complaints in 2011, TCHC began eviction proceedings, hoping this would change her behaviour. This use of the eviction process was coercive and contrary to policy. Staff also removed her subsidy, believing unverified reports that her boyfriend was living with her. Without subsidy, Ms. F could not afford her rent and was evicted. TCHC later admitted it should not have removed her subsidy or evicted her for arrears.
- Mr. D had run into problems with TCHC over his behaviour but was not evicted for cause, which is hard to prove. Instead, after he missed his October payment, TCHC applied to evict Mr. D for rent arrears, saying he owed \$404. Even though he made some payments before the hearing, TCHC evicted him. Staff gave him directions to a shelter and offered him a bus ticket.

Contrary to policy, staff do not regularly make personal contact with seniors who have fallen behind in their rent. The contact is through a barrage of excessively bureaucratic letters, which are often poorly written and confusing.

There are no standards for how much time seniors have to pay back their arrears, or how much TCHC can require them to pay on top of their rent. This results in inconsistency and unfair treatment.

The Ombudsman made 30 recommendations ranging from staff training and performance management to properly implementing existing policies and bringing its practices into line to ensure equitable, consistent, lawful and humane conduct toward its senior population.

TCHC agreed with all the Ombudsman's recommendations. Following a Council directive, the Ombudsman continues to monitor eviction and arrears proceedings.



SPEEDING UP BUSINESS LICENSING APPEALS

Many businesses need a licence from the City. These include taxicab drivers and owners, restaurants, and retail food stores.

In one case, a taxi driver applied to renew his licence and paid the fee. Municipal Licensing Services (MLS) wrote to him that he was missing some paperwork and had 30 days to provide it. Unfortunately, he was out of the country visiting an ill relative. When he did not send in the paperwork, MLS returned his cheque.

The driver learned this when he returned to Toronto. He then completed the forms, paid the fee, and took the refresher course. However, MLS reviewed his driving record, noted he had driving infractions and told him it could not renew his licence.

MLS said he could appeal, but it would be up to eight months to have a hearing. In the meantime, he was unable to work.

The Ombudsman had received other complaints about the delay and lack of consistency when the Licensing Services section was preparing cases for hearings at the Toronto Licensing Tribunal. She decided to investigate the accessibility of the tribunal hearing and the procedures and service delivery capacity of the Licensing Services section.

The investigation found a significant backlog in cases being prepared for hearing. It was the result of problems in the licensing process and, to some extent, understaffing.

Licensing Services had recently begun changes that were dealing with the problem of delay. It had also expanded the practice of pre-hearing reviews. These measures improved processing times and reduced the size of the backlog. The problem of staff vacancies, although lessened, continued to pose challenges.

The Ombudsman recommended that MLS fill the staff vacancies, consider a review of the structure and processes of the licensing section, and document the procedures for preparing tribunal reports in a policy manual. The City agreed.



WATCHING WHEEL-TRANS WATCHING RIDERS

The Toronto Transit Commission (TTC) installed video cameras in all its vehicles between 2006 and 2008. The TTC said the cameras were to deter crime and agreed to consult with the public before expanding their use.

However, in 2010, Wheel-Trans, which provides a door-to-door service for Toronto residents with limited mobility, started using the video to check on the eligibility of their riders, without consulting the public or telling the passengers.

Wheel-Trans user Mr. T, who lives with diabetes, neuropathy and an amputated leg, says the video surveillance “rubs me the wrong way. When you see someone on camera for such a short time, it might not appear that he is having difficulty, when really the person is. A camera gives you a superficial impression.”

The Ombudsman investigation looked at the files of the 75 passengers who were declared no longer eligible for Wheel-Trans under their Questionable Rider Program. If someone tells the TTC a Wheel-Trans user may not be eligible, Wheel-Trans does a reassessment interview.

The investigation report released in July, *Wheel-Trans is Watching – An Investigation into the Toronto Transit Commission’s Use of Video Surveillance on Wheel-Trans Vehicles*, found that riders being reassessed were never told the TTC had video of them boarding a Wheel-Trans vehicle, so they could not prepare an adequate response. The reassessment panel did not use any scoring guidelines when viewing the video. Riders had no information about the reassessment process or criteria, beyond the time and place of the interview.

The TTC never consulted the public when they started using video surveillance. And the warning notice on Wheel-Trans vehicles is so small that most people do not see it.

The Ombudsman made 11 recommendations concerning public consultation, notification and video recording policy. The TTC agreed to implement all of them. In the meantime the TTC has stopped using video surveillance for reassessment until the Ombudsman’s recommendations are implemented.



CITY REPEATEDLY BROKE PROMISES TO NON-PROFITS

The City has a below-market rent (BMR) policy that lets some non-profit community groups lease City space in a way that is cost-neutral to the City. In return, these community agencies provide key services to Toronto residents at a lower cost than the City could.

Less than one per cent of City properties are part of this program. The BMR agencies cover all the operating costs of the facility.

In February 2012, six non-profit agencies leasing space in the same City building went to the Ombudsman. The City was raising their rent by 550 per cent, requiring them to move from a rate of \$3.20 per square foot to \$17.74. The agencies said the City had failed to provide an adequate explanation.

The Ombudsman decided to investigate and in March released *Promises Made, Promises Broken*. The investigation found that City staff repeatedly broke their promises and commitments to the agencies. Staff from the City’s Real Estate and Facilities divisions gave them widely varying estimates of pending rate hikes, never provided notice of the increases in writing, failed to explain or justify the increases, and invoked harsher terms than those given to other agencies. For example, staff told the agencies an increase of 36 per cent was to pay the sales tax, but the HST is only 13 per cent.

Over seven years, the City charged one non-profit group more than \$20,000 for property taxes, when none were owed. Although City staff found the

error in 2008, no correction was ever made and the charges continued.

The Ombudsman made 22 recommendations, which included having the City fulfill its outstanding promises by May 31, having the City provide written notice for changes, develop criteria and a transparent rationale for any differential treatment, and having the City Manager apologize to the agencies for the way they were treated.

The City Manager agreed to all the recommendations and said the investigation was “comprehensive” and “balanced.”



SKATING ON THIN ICE AT CITY ARENA

A complaint of unfair treatment over a contract for advertising on a Zamboni led to an investigation of the procedures and governance at the one of the City’s eight arenas operated by a board of management.

Mr. N had been advertising on the arena’s Zamboni for a decade. He told the Ombudsman the board had contacted him on December 23, 2011, while he was out of the country on holiday, and had given him a week to match what they described as a firm offer from another business that was willing to sign a ten year contract, with full payment up-front, at an annual rate that was seven times more than the rate he currently paid for the space.

The investigation found that the arena board misrepresented the competing bid, which they had been discussing with a competitor for over three months before telling Mr. N he could lose his contract. The arena cancelled the contract a week before the board approved the cancellation.

The board did not have adequate policies for managing advertising, sponsorship or procurement and did not follow the requirements of the Relationship Framework that governs its interaction with the City.

The Ombudsman made 18 recommendations to improve the governance of the arena. They included recommendations that the board apologize to Mr. N and develop policies and ensure governance training for board members and that the City Manager look at alternative governance models for Council to consider.

The board and the City accepted all the Ombudsman’s recommendations.



CHECKING IMPROVEMENTS IN DEALING WITH EMERGENCIES

In 2011, the Ombudsman investigated the emergency services the City provided after the 200 Wellesley Street fire. In response to this report, City Council asked the Ombudsman to review the City’s responses into three earlier emergencies — the Queen Street West fire, the Secord Avenue fire and the Sunrise Propane explosion. Council wanted to know how far the Toronto Public Service had come in implementing the recommendations made after these emergencies.

In February 2013, the Ombudsman presented her *Council Directed Review on City’s Response to Three Prior Neighbourhood-Level Emergencies* to Council. This was the first time the Ombudsman conducted an investigation based on a Council motion.

The City’s reports and those of other organizations had made 66 wide-ranging recommendations, including measures such as the ability to identify emergency staff at the outset, a disaster relief fund, better training, comprehensive communications, and improved response to the immediate needs of people and pets. Some recommendations involved the provincial government also making changes.

The investigation found, based on the information the City provided, that it had fulfilled 53 of the 66 recommendations and intended to fulfill the outstanding ones by the second quarter of 2013.

The Ombudsman recommended the City revise its procedures so that the Deputy City Manager would be notified for all emergency incidents identified as

level 2 or 3. Previously, that manager would be notified only in cases of the highest ranked emergencies.

The Emergency Planning Unit was transferred into the Office of Emergency Management (OEM) in April 2013. The OEM reports that 10 of the remaining 13 recommendations are complete; the three outstanding are in progress. These three recommendations relate to ongoing public education campaigns and signing agreements with partners, such as the Red Cross, to help in emergencies. The OEM continues to update the Ombudsman on their progress.

1.



CREDIT GOES TO LIMBO INSTEAD OF WATER

Mr. E bought a house and paid \$700 for what he assumed was a deposit for a new water meter. He expected a refund — for almost two years. He talked to Revenue Services several times but was not able to resolve the issue. He finally called the Ombudsman.

Ombudsman staff asked a manager to look into it. The manager found the previous owner had owed \$700. To expedite the house closing, Mr. E had paid the \$700, but the previous owner had also paid the \$700. The City did give Mr. E a credit for the \$700 but just left it sitting on Mr. E's file. Ombudsman staff had the credit applied to Mr. E's current water bill and a new statement was sent.

promised payments. Ombudsman staff asked to meet with TCHC staff to try to resolve the matter.

Mr. X also contacted his local Councillor's office, who worked with Ombudsman staff and TCHC to find a solution. The Councillor's office arranged to have a credit counsellor work with Mr. X on his budget and develop a financial plan to pay back the money owed. TCHC completed a review of his file, and following several negotiation meetings with Ombudsman staff involving the Councillor's office and TCHC staff, an agreement was reached that addressed TCHC's concerns and allowed Mr. X to remain in his unit.

TCHC agreed to forgive \$2,000 of the arrears. Mr. X agreed to pay his rent in full and on time and \$50 a month of the arrears.

The City arranged for installation of a new water meter when the second son could be at his mother's house to let them in. The water charges will likely be less when the bill is based on actual readings.

City staff were probably just as happy as the Z family as they clear their tax debt and keep their home.

4.



WAITING FOR THAT CALL COSTS

While Mr. Q was visiting Toronto from another country, he received three traffic tickets. From home, he sent a letter to Court Services asking for a phone conference with a prosecutor to discuss the charges. During this discussion the prosecutor told him two charges would be dropped and the third reduced. The prosecutor told him to be available at a set time for a phone call to finalize the charges. No mention was made of a court appearance. Mr. Q stayed off work, waited for the call at the appointed time, but did not receive one. He then

Since 1982, he has been paying the extra rent and trying to get the mistake corrected. This year he heard there was an Ombudsman who might be able to help, so he called.

Ombudsman staff contacted TCHC, who looked at the records back to 1982. Following Ombudsman staff interventions, TCHC found there was an error. TCHC calculated Mr. G's rent and sent him a refund for \$623.18.

6.



'SHE SAID, THEY SAID' RESULT IS NO PLACE TO SLEEP

Ms. H and her children were on the Toronto Housing Connections waiting list for housing. Housing Connections phoned her to look at a house that needed some work. Ms. H found it acceptable and Housing Connections told her she would be able to have the house in two months. Ms. H told them she had to give her current landlord 90 days' notice or forfeit a month's rent. Housing Connections said they would

2.



NEGOTIATING A SOLUTION

Mr. X, a senior, phoned the Ombudsman to ask for help. Toronto Community Housing Corporation (TCHC)

3.



PATIENCE, PERSISTENCE PAY OFF

Mr. Z lives with and looks after his ailing mother in a home his mother owns.

PEOPLES

Often intake staff handle complaints that range from a few hours to days through phone calls, emails and meetings.

was going to evict him as he owed more than \$11,000 in unpaid rent.

This happened just before the release of the report of an Ombudsman investigation that dealt with TCHC's eviction of seniors. Ombudsman staff were surprised, as TCHC had already agreed to recommendations that would likely have found a solution other than an eviction letter.

Mr. X knew that he owed TCHC money. However, he disagreed with the amount. Mr. X said that his rent was calculated incorrectly, as TCHC failed to take into account a reduction in his income when his federal government cheque was reduced. He also withheld his rent for a time because the landlord failed to address maintenance issues in his unit. He thought TCHC should have considered this when calculating the amount he owed.

Ombudsman staff called the TCHC. TCHC replied, saying they were prepared to evict Mr. X. TCHC had tried to involve Mr X's son, as well as the provincial guardian and trustee, in finding a resolution, but with no success. TCHC said Mr. X had reached a settlement with the Landlord and Tenant Board but he did not make the

They have not paid property taxes in several years, as Mr. Z believes they have already paid their taxes. They also refuse to let City staff into the house to install the new water meter, which is required by the City.

For almost three years, Mr. Z has been in contact with the Ombudsman's office about the taxes. He, and sometimes his mother, have met or talked many times with the Ombudsman. Since the Z family stopped paying their water bill, saying it was too high, the water bill arrears have been added to the property tax arrears.

The City began to talk about having to sell the property for tax arrears. It cannot forgive any property taxes.

Ombudsman staff looked into the history of payments and found the City was correct. Mr. Z continued to believe the City was "trying to cheat" his mother despite many attempts of Ombudsman staff to explain the billings.

Ombudsman staff talked several times with Ms. Z, but she was unable to act on her own. In one pivotal conversation, however, she said, "Can you talk to my other son?" Surprised to find there was another son, Ombudsman staff talked with him. This son arranged a second mortgage on the house and paid the property tax arrears.

received a letter saying he was convicted of all three offences and ordering him to pay the fines.

Mr. Q tried several times to reach the call centre. When he did, he was told his only option was to appear in person. He asked for a supervisor and received two phone numbers. He left a message but received no reply. He next called the Ombudsman.

Ombudsman staff called Court Services. They found that on the day of the appointed phone call, the long distance line was not working, so Mr. Q did not receive his call. They honoured his plea, dropping the two charges and reducing the third.

5.



PAYING TOO MUCH RENT FOR 31 YEARS

Mr. G's landlord is the TCHC. In 1982, he received an eviction notice for rent arrears. Mr. G says the TCHC made a mistake in how they calculated his rent and he was not in arrears. But he paid the extra rent to avoid being evicted.

pay the first month's rent, so Ms. H gave her landlord two months' notice.

A week before the move, Ms. H went to look at the house and found it under renovation. She was told it did not pass the safety inspection and she could not move in. She called Housing Connections who told her they had not given her a specific date and that she should have signed a lease before giving her notice. Her apartment was already rented. She and her family had nowhere to live.

They stayed in a cheap hotel for a few days but ran out of money and lived in her car. She did call Shelter, Support and Housing but was told she did not qualify for family shelter. She called the Ombudsman.

Ombudsman staff contacted Housing Connections. At first they said Ms. H was told not to move. After more investigation they said that perhaps the "information was not communicated in detail." They arranged for Ms. H and her family to move into a family shelter until the repairs on the house were done. Ms. H signed her lease.

7.**BARRE OR BARBELL, DEPENDS ON LICENCE**

Mr. and Ms. A live in a second-floor condo apartment. Across the street from their balcony was a performing arts studio. One day the second-floor windows of the studio changed into a wall of glass and the As found themselves watching people riding stationary cycles in a spinning class or lifting weights in what now looked like a gym. Worse, all these people were also watching them, either on their balcony or even in their apartment, unless they closed the curtains.

Mr. A contacted Municipal Licensing and Standards (MLS) as he thought the area was not zoned for a gym. MLS staff told him the zoning language was not clear, that changes were being made and Mr. A should speak to his Councillor if he wanted to pursue the matter.

Mr. A phoned the Ombudsman and laid out his case. Ombudsman staff contacted MLS, and following a number of inquiries and several mediation attempts, senior management agreed to send the file to prosecution to see if there was enough evidence to proceed.

9.**PICKING THE ISSUE TO SOLVE**

Ms. Y, who has a disability, lives in TCHC and had been trying for seven years to get TCHC to fix maintenance and repair problems in her unit, which had been damaged following a flood. She also had more damage to her unit after a pipe burst. Ms. Y paid for the clean-ups herself and wanted TCHC to reimburse her.

She had a second issue with a neighbour, who made too much noise. Ms. Y also said her neighbours let their dog regularly defecate and urinate in front of her door. She had often complained about the problems through TCHC's complaint tracking system, but felt that TCHC hadn't taken appropriate action because the incidents did not stop.

Ms. Y phoned the Ombudsman, whose staff took the unusual step of facilitating a meeting with Ms. Y, her community worker and TCHC senior staff. At that meeting, the group agreed that finding Ms. Y a new apartment was the priority. TCHC also assigned one staff member for Ms. Y to call for all

Mr. V called the Ombudsman and related his story. Ombudsman staff phoned Revenue Services staff, who processed the overpayment and credited the right amount to Mr. V's current taxes immediately.

11.**EVEN OMBUDSMAN NEEDS TO TRY TWICE SOMETIMES**

In April 2012, Mr. J bought a house. In November he received his property tax bill, which included a transfer-to-tax charge of \$156. Mr. J phoned the city and learned this was for a re-inspection completed before April. The charge was for a notice of violation issued to the previous owner. The charge would come off his bill, but it would take a few weeks to get the paperwork done.

Mr. J received several more property tax bills and the amount kept creeping higher. Each time he phoned and received the same answer. In May when the amount reached \$356, he decided to call the Ombudsman.

Ms. C was apprehensive about taking regular transit as she has lost her balance and fallen on the bus in the past. She delayed making medical appointments and decided to phone the Ombudsman.

Coincidentally, the Ombudsman was investigating exactly this issue, and staff told Ms. C changes were coming. As a result of the investigation, Ms. C went to a reassessment interview in August. This interview found she was eligible for Wheel-Trans. She could once again safely schedule her medical appointments.

13.**EXPLAINING THE RULES, FROM THE START**

Mr. K lives in Toronto Community Housing. In 1996, he asked Toronto Housing Connections to put him on the waiting list for several other TCHC buildings, one of which is exclusively for francophone tenants. To keep his place on the waiting list for the francophone building, Mr. K had to attend yearly interviews, which included a language test.

STORIES

Investigators handle more complex complaints that involve research into policy and practice. These cases take longer.

Mr. A phoned the Ombudsman to say he had received a call confirming the case was going to be prosecuted.

8.**SAME-DAY TICKETS PROMPT DIFFERENT-DAY HEARINGS**

On a visit to Toronto, Ms. R parked in a disabled spot. She received a ticket for \$450. Twenty minutes later she received another ticket for \$450. Later she received notices to appear in court for the two tickets, each notice for a different date. She was not able to reach anyone by phone to find out if she could have both tickets heard on the same day. As she lives two hours from the city, in desperation, she phoned the Ombudsman.

Ombudsman staff called Court Services who said one ticket would be cancelled as it was a mistake and Ms. R would have only one court date.

her unresolved issues. TCHC provided Ms. Y with several units to view, before she found an apartment that met her criteria, which included easy access to the subway line and her medical providers. Within three months Ms. Y was settling into her new apartment. Ms. Y and TCHC are still working on resolving the issue of reimbursement.

10.**PROVING THE ALREADY PROVEN**

For several years, Mr. V has been deliberately overpaying on his property taxes. Every few years, he calls the City, asks how much the credit is and then sends in a fax asking to apply the credit to his current property tax. This year, City staff told him he would have to prove he had made the overpayment. Mr. V thought this was nuts as the City obviously had records of what he had paid. As Mr. V did his banking online, it would be complicated and costly to get the bank to produce paperwork the City now wanted. Mr. V asked about this and was told "the process was changed due to an audit."

Ombudsman staff phoned Investigations Services staff and received an email saying the problem was resolved. In Mr. J's next bill the charge was down to \$219. Mr. J called the Ombudsman who contacted Investigations Services staff again. They had only deducted the original amount. Mr. J's July bill was corrected, finally.

12.**OVERTURNING BIG BROTHER'S REASSESSMENT**

Ms. C is a senior with mobility issues who uses a cane and Wheel-Trans to get around. In March, the TTC called her in for an interview to reassess her eligibility. She went and was later told she was ineligible and would have to use regular TTC.

She called to ask why and was told the TTC had watched video of her on a Wheel-Trans bus carrying two bags. This was the first time Ms. C knew there was video of her on Wheel-Trans. No one had asked her about it at the interview, so she never had a chance to respond.

In 2005, Mr. K removed all his choices from his waiting list, leaving only the francophone building. Earlier this year, after attending his yearly interview, the building's managers told him he was ineligible for francophone housing. He was removed from the building's waiting list, leaving him with no transfer options.

Mr. K did not understand why, after 17 years on the waiting list, he was now no longer eligible for francophone housing. He was also worried because he was no longer on any building waiting lists. He phoned the Ombudsman.

Ombudsman staff talked with Housing Connections and found they had delegated management of the building to a property management company that was not consistently administering the language test.

Ombudsman staff reminded Housing Connections that Mr. K would not have deleted the rest of his housing choices in 2005 had he known he was ineligible for the francophone building.

Housing Connections said Mr. K was ineligible for the francophone building but agreed to restore his position on the waiting list for each of the building choices he had deleted in 2005.

14.

ONE CALL SHORTENS THE WAIT

Mr. L was homeless and on a long waiting list with Housing Connections when he came to the Ombudsman for help. Ombudsman staff called Housing Connections and found they did not know Mr. L was currently homeless. With this information added, they assigned him a higher priority for available housing. Mr. L returned to the Ombudsman office five months later to say he now had an apartment and was so thankful.

15.

SINGLE APPEAL MAKES PROCESS EASIER FOR EVERYONE

Ms. M called the Ombudsman because she and her spouse thought they were about to lose their home. She was unable to pay her 2012 taxes,

The forms now make the process clear and easier to follow for residents in extreme sickness or poverty who need to make a tax appeal.

16.

NOISY NEIGHBOURS BAD FOR HEALTH, FINANCES

Ms. O is a Toronto Community Housing tenant who lived with noisy neighbours both above and beside her. She has significant health issues and needs lots of rest. She told TCHC that as a result of the noise she began to suffer sleep deprivation, and her illness worsened. In addition, her next-door neighbour had poor hygiene and housekeeping skills and was chronically infested with bedbugs, which would inevitably invade Ms. O's apartment.

Ms. O asked to be moved to another apartment. The manager said she needed a medical note.

By this time Ms. O was spending money on her health and staying outside her own apartment and going into arrears on her rent. She received an eviction notice. At the Landlord and Tenant Board hearing, she agreed to repay her arrears at \$400 a month, because the policy said the arrears must be paid back by the end of the year. There is no such policy. It was now impossible for Ms. O to buy the medicine and groceries she needed.

Ombudsman staff contacted TCHC, who agreed to set up a more reasonable payment schedule. Staff also raised the issue of the poor treatment by the operating unit manager and the hardship that resulted. TCHC referred the issue to human resources for potential coaching or discipline and agreed to reimburse Ms. O if she could provide receipts.

Ms. O signed an agreement with TCHC in September promising a transfer to a new apartment by the end of this year. She moved to a new unit in December.

18.

THREE YEARS IN LIMBO, THREE DAYS TO FIX

Ms. S has been running a downtown beauty salon since 2001. In 2009, she became ill and inadvertently let her licence lapse. Two months after the expiration date she went to the Licensing office and paid her penalty and renewal fee. Since then, she's been trying to get her licence. Staff told her she had to submit plans of the premises. They could not give her a licence until Toronto Building approved the plans. Ms. S was not the owner.

The space was already a salon when she took over the lease and she had made no changes. The building owner did not have the plans. No one bothered to tell her she should ask Toronto Building staff to search their files. Staff did give her oral approval to operate but never issued her an official temporary licence.

After three years, Ms. S heard about the Ombudsman and phoned the office. It took three days and several phone

RESULTS

about \$5,000, because both she and her spouse were now disabled and could no longer work.

Ombudsman staff called Revenue Services and found there is a way to appeal based on extreme illness or poverty. Ombudsman staff obtained the form and mailed it to Ms. M, who did not have access to the Internet. Then they helped her fill it out, as it was complicated.

Ombudsman staff kept working on this issue however, as they were concerned about how hard it was to find the form, and it contained some incorrect information. The form set out a single process for appealing nine things. However, there is a completely different process for appeals based on extreme poverty or sickness, involving applying directly to the provincial Assessment Review Board.

Ombudsman staff brought this up with the director of Revenue Services, who took the issue seriously, creating a working group and bringing up the issue with his counterparts across the province. He reported that other municipalities would be making changes as well. By September, the website and forms were revised.

Ms. O could get a doctor's note the next week, but the manager said Ms. O had to deliver the note to her within 48 hours. Ms. O explained this would be difficult because her doctor's office was always booked, and she needed to travel by Wheel-Trans, which needs advance notice. The manager allegedly told her that she "must not really want to move" if she could not make this happen.

So Ms. O, who is on social assistance, spent \$60 on a taxi to get to her doctor's office and convinced her doctor to provide a rush note, for which she was charged \$150 rather than the usual \$20 because it was a rush. This was Ms. O's grocery money for the month.

Ms. O found the manager had put her on the waiting list in the last spot after 42 other requests. There was no reason for the manager's insistence on having the note within two days. Ms. O raised this issue with the manager and then took it to the director but the director said it was the manager's decision.

In the meantime, the manager said Ms. O could sleep in an empty bachelor apartment to avoid the noise. But this was not possible as Ms. O needed a special therapeutic bed and chair to sleep in, and other equipment from her unit that she could not buy in duplicate.

17.

WEBSITE NEEDS TO MEET PEOPLE'S NEEDS

Mr. P called the Ombudsman after he tried to register for a program on the Parks, Forestry and Recreation website. He noted that the registration timed out too quickly and used a small typeface with low contrast, which made it hard to read. He also said it was difficult to manage the long numeric string that was the assigned password. He listed other issues relating to accessibility.

Ombudsman staff contacted a disability advocate working in the Parks division. She understood the importance of the issues and was eager to contact Mr. P to get his ideas on how they could improve their service. Noting the amount of thought that had gone into the complaint, she invited Mr. P to take part in a focus group to evaluate the website as they were revising it.

Mr. P's issues went to those responsible for creating and installing the new web content and design.

calls to fix the problem. Ombudsman staff asked Toronto Building to search the history of the location. They did, and then they sent an approval to Licensing and Standards, who then issued Ms. S her licence, which is now on the wall of her salon.

SIX THINGS

TO KNOW ABOUT YOUR OMBUDSMAN

1

WE RESPECT YOUR CONFIDENTIALITY

2

WE ARE INDEPENDENT

3

WE LOOK INTO YOUR COMPLAINTS

4

WE ARE AN OFFICE OF LAST RESORT

5

WE ADVOCATE FOR FAIRNESS

6

WE OFFER INFORMATION SESSIONS



THE STORY IN NUMBERS

311 TORONTO AFFORDABLE HOUSING OFFICE CHILDREN'S SERVICES CITY CLERK'S OFFICE CITY MANAGER'S OFFICE CITY PLANNING CORPORATE FINANCE COURT SERVICES ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND CULTURE EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES FORESTRY AND RECREATION PENSION, PAYROLL AND EMPLOYEE BENEFITS POLICY, PLANNING, FINANCE AND ADMINISTRATION PUBLIC HEALTH PURCHASING AND MATERIALS MANAGEMENT REAL ESTATE SERVICES REVENUE SERVICES SHELTER, SUPPORT AND HOUSING ADMINISTRATION STATION SERVICES WATERFRONT SECRETARIAT 519 CHURCH STREET COMMUNITY CENTRE APPLINGROVE COMMUNITY CENTRE BUSINESS IMPROVEMENT AREAS CECIL STREET COMMUNITY CENTRE CENTRAL EGLINGTON COMMUNITY CENTRE COMMUNITY CENTRE 519 RIVERVIEW AVENUE LEASIDE MEMORIAL COMMUNITY GARDENS ARENA MCCORMICK PLAYGROUND ARENA MOSS PARK ARENA NORTH TORONTO MEMORIAL ARENA PROPERTY STANDARDS COMMITTEE RALPH THORNTON COMMUNITY CENTRE ROOMING HOUSE LICENSING COMMISSION TORONTO COMMUNITY HOUSING CORPORATION TORONTO COMMUNITY HOUSING CORPORATION TORONTO ATMOSPHERIC FUND TORONTO CENTRE FOR THE ARTS TORONTO LICENSING TRIBUNAL TORONTO PARKING AUTHORITY TORONTO TRANSIT COMMISSION TORONTO ZOO WILLIAM H. BOLTON ARENA YONGE STREET COMMUNITY CENTRE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND CULTURE EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES EMPLOYMENT AND SOCIAL SERVICES FACILITIES MANAGEMENT FIRE SERVICES FLEET SERVICES HUMAN RESOURCES LONG-TERM CARE HOMES AND SERVICES MATERIALS MANAGEMENT REAL ESTATE SERVICES REVENUE SERVICES SHELTER, SUPPORT AND HOUSING ADMINISTRATION SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT, FINANCE AND ADMINISTRATION SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT SERVICES TECHNICAL SERVICES TORONTO COMMUNITY HOUSING CORPORATION TORONTO COMMUNITY HOUSING CORPORATION STREET COMMUNITY CENTRE CENTRAL EGLINGTON COMMUNITY CENTRE COMMITTEE OF ADJUSTMENT COMMUNITY CENTRE 55 EASTVIEW NEIGHBOURHOOD COMMUNITY CENTRE EXHIBITION PLACE GEORGE BELL ARENA HARBOURFRONT COMMUNITY CENTRE STANDARDS COMMITTEE RALPH THORNTON COMMUNITY CENTRE ROOMING HOUSE LICENSING COMMISSION SCADDING COURT COMMUNITY CENTRE SINKING FUND COMMITTEE SONY CENTRE FOR THE PERFORMING ARTS ST. LAWRENCE CENTRE

OVERVIEW

The Office of the Ombudsman handled 1827 complaints in 2013. This was a 28% increase compared to 2012. Six investigations were completed, five of which were systemic reviews and one a Council-directed investigation. Sixty-six complaints are carried into 2014, of which five are investigations.

The five most common issues remained similar to those reported for 2012: poor communication; inadequate, poor or denied service; unpredictable enforcement; wrong, unreasonable or unfair decision; and unreasonable delay.

Nearly 70 per cent of jurisdictional complaints handled in 2013 related to poor communication. This is a disturbing trend when examined against 2011 figures at 40 per cent and 2012 at 55 per cent.

The top 10 areas of the City most complained about in 2013 remained consistent with the year before. Only one division, Shelter, Support and Housing Administration, was new to the top 10 in 2013, while Corporate Finance dropped off the list. Toronto Community Housing Corporation (TCHC) was the organization most complained about. Toronto Transit Commission (TTC) and Municipal Licensing and Standards (MLS) were second and third, respectively. For the first time, Revenue Services did not appear in the top three.

Most complaints about TCHC raised similar concerns to prior years. Common issues included delays in maintenance repairs, unsafe living conditions, and the process for transferring units due to changes in family size, as well as for health and safety reasons. There was also a noticeable increase on two fronts: seniors' evictions and human resource practices at TCHC.

In 2013, there were many complaints about the TTC's Wheel-Trans service. Complaint issues included inaccessible and long wait times on the reservation phone line; appeal processes for both the Wheel-Trans eligibility and cancellation policies; and overall poor customer service for Wheel-Trans users.

The top complaint issues about MLS remain familiar. There were many complaints about inconsistent bylaw enforcement practices, poor communication, and unprofessional behaviour of enforcement staff.

Ward data showed a significant growth in all quadrants but most notably North York and Etobicoke York. Our office continues its efforts to reach out to communities beyond the downtown core.

The Office of the Ombudsman has a complaint system about its own services. This year the Ombudsman received more than 40 complaints that were non-specific and offensive in nature. They ranged from personal insults directed at the Ombudsman to the office being described as pro-union. Few of these complaints received a response.

One complaint was made about staff conduct but when the director followed up the resident did not want to address it. Two complaints were made about delay in service. One was upheld and an apology issued. The other was a result of the staff person being away on holiday. She was reminded to update her voicemail.

COMPLAINT SUMMARY

CLOSED IN 2013

Complaints	1,755
Investigations	6
Total	1,761

CARRIED INTO 2014

Complaints	61
Investigations	5
Total	66



1,797
Complaints received in 2013

30
Complaints carried over from 2012

OUR JURISDICTION TOP 10

- Employment & Social Services
- Municipal Licensing & Standards
- Parks, Forestry & Recreation
- Revenue Services
- Shelter, Support & Housing Administration
- Toronto Building
- Toronto Community Housing Corporation
- Toronto Transit Commission
- Toronto Water
- Transportation Services

CASE CATEGORIES

THE FIVE MOST COMMON OMBUDSMAN ISSUES

1. Failure to communicate adequately
2. Inadequate, poor or denied service
3. Enforcement unfair or not done at all
4. Decision wrong, unreasonable or unfair
5. Unreasonable delay

SERVICES EMPLOYMENT AND SOCIAL SERVICES FACILITIES MANAGEMENT FIRE SERVICES FLEET SERVICES HUMAN RESOURCES LONG-TERM CARE HOMES AND SERVICES MUNICIPAL LICENSING AND STANDARDS OFFICE OF PARTNERSHIPS PARKS, RECREATION AND HOUSING ADMINISTRATION SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT, FINANCE AND ADMINISTRATION SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT SERVICES TECHNICAL SERVICES TORONTO BUILDING TORONTO ENVIRONMENT OFFICE TORONTO WATER TRANSPORTATION SERVICES COMMITTEE OF ADJUSTMENT COMMUNITY CENTRE 55 EASTVIEW NEIGHBOURHOOD COMMUNITY CENTRE EXHIBITION PLACE GEORGE BELL ARENA HARBOURFRONT COMMUNITY CENTRE HERITAGE TORONTO LARRY GROSSMAN FOREST HILL MEMORIAL ARENA OFFICE OF LICENSING AND STANDARDS SCADDING COURT COMMUNITY CENTRE SINKING FUND COMMITTEE SONY CENTRE FOR THE PERFORMING ARTS ST. LAWRENCE CENTRE FOR THE PERFORMING ARTS SWANSEA TOWN HALL COMMUNITY CENTRE TED REEVE COMMUNITY CENTRE YONGE-DUNDAS SQUARE TORONTO COMMUNITY HOUSING CORPORATION 311 TORONTO AFFORDABLE HOUSING OFFICE CHILDREN'S SERVICES CITY CLERK'S OFFICE CITY MANAGER'S OFFICE CITY PLANNING CORPORATE FINANCE COURT SERVICES MUNICIPAL LICENSING AND STANDARDS OFFICE OF PARTNERSHIPS PARKS, FORESTRY AND RECREATION PENSION, PAYROLL AND EMPLOYEE BENEFITS POLICY, PLANNING, FINANCE AND ADMINISTRATION PUBLIC HEALTH PURCHASING AND MATERIALS TORONTO BUILDING TORONTO ENVIRONMENT OFFICE TORONTO WATER TRANSPORTATION SERVICES WATERFRONT SECRETARIAT 519 CHURCH STREET COMMUNITY CENTRE APPLEROVE COMMUNITY CENTRE BUSINESS IMPROVEMENT AREAS CECILIA STONE COMMUNITY CENTRE HERITAGE TORONTO LARRY GROSSMAN FOREST HILL MEMORIAL ARENA LEASIDE MEMORIAL COMMUNITY GARDENS ARENA MCCORMICK PLAYGROUND ARENA MOSS PARK ARENA NORTH TORONTO MEMORIAL ARENA PROPERTY SERVICES CENTRE FOR THE PERFORMING ARTS SWANSEA TOWN HALL COMMUNITY CENTRE TED REEVE COMMUNITY ARENA TORONTO ATMOSPHERIC FUND TORONTO CENTRE FOR THE ARTS TORONTO LICENSING TRIBUNAL TORONTO PARKING AUTHORITY

THE KEY TRENDS

FAULTY DECISION

- wrong
- unreasonable
- unfair
- unexplained

POOR SERVICE

- inability to reach public servant
- unfair treatment
- unfair policies

POOR COMMUNICATION

- written communications unclear, difficult to understand
- calls not returned
- unreasonably long response time
- information lacking or wrong

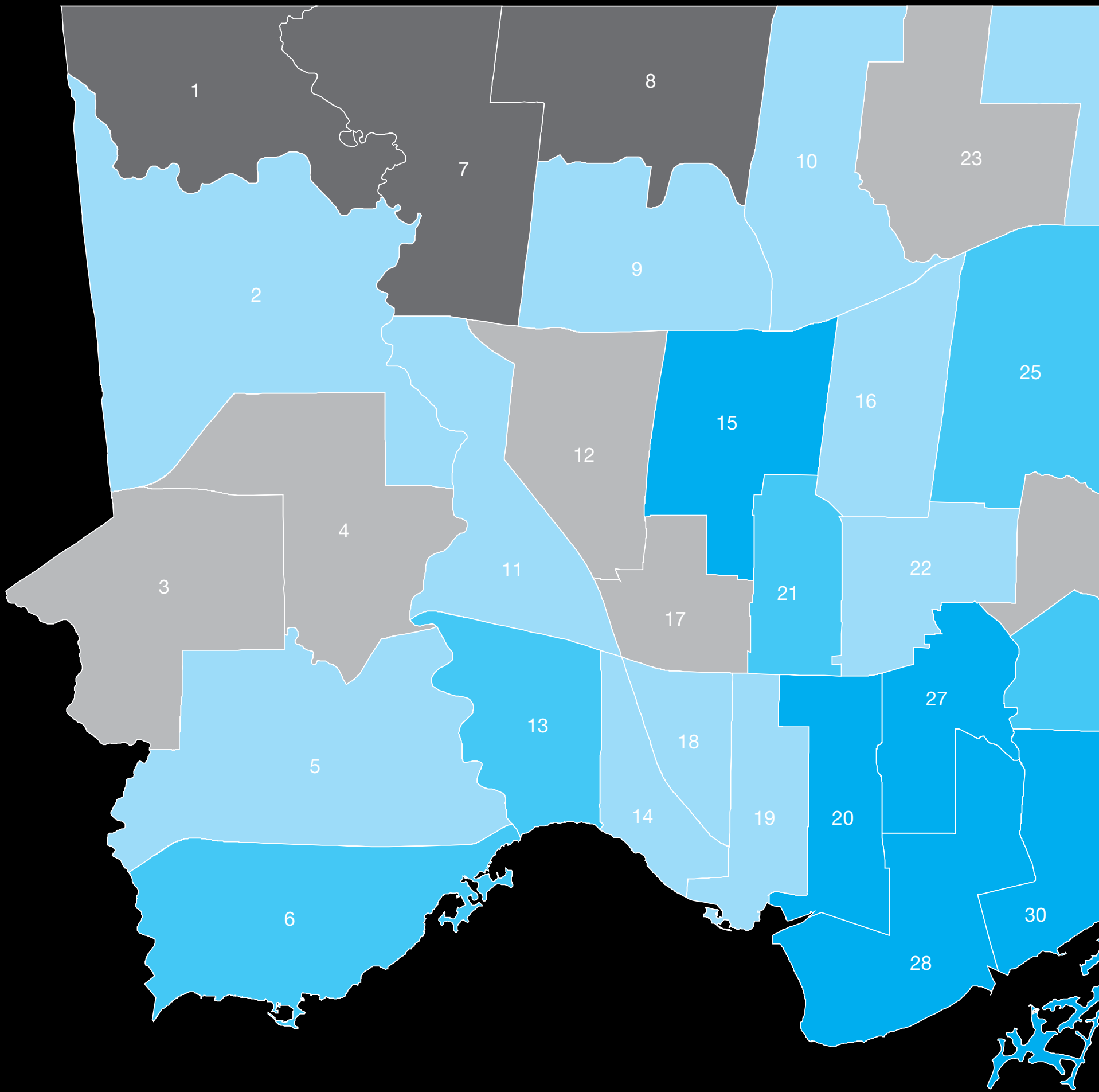
UNREASONABLE DELAY

- in returning calls or emails
- in processing appeals
- in handling complaints

UNPREDICTABLE ENFORCEMENT

- over-enforcement
- under-enforcement

CITY WARDS



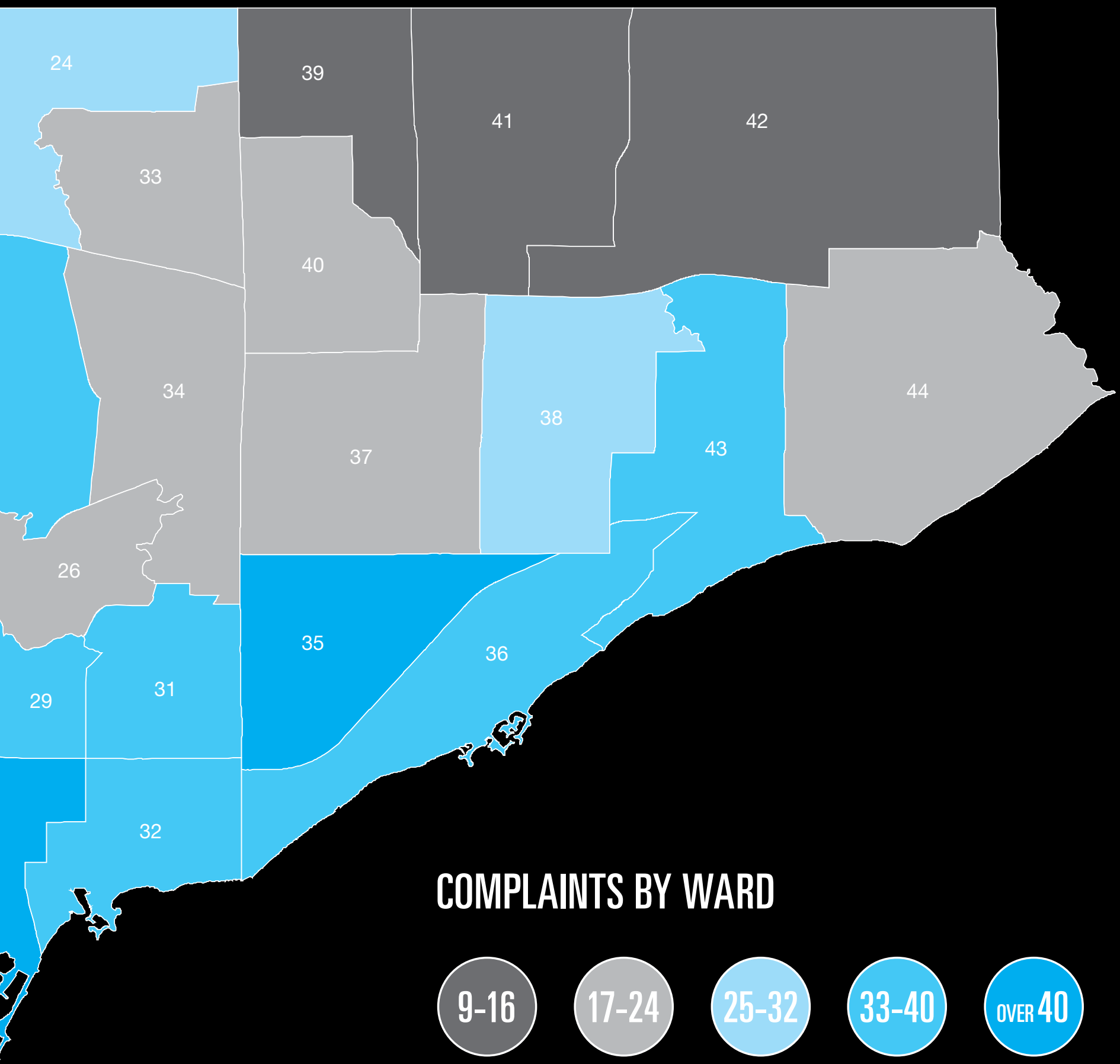
WARD LISTING

- 1. Etobicoke North
- 2. Etobicoke North
- 3. Etobicoke Centre
- 4. Etobicoke Centre
- 5. Etobicoke-Lakeshore
- 6. Etobicoke-Lakeshore
- 7. York West
- 8. York West
- 9. York Centre
- 10. York Centre
- 11. York South-Weston

- 12. York South-Weston
- 13. Parkdale-High Park
- 14. Parkdale-High Park
- 15. Eglinton-Lawrence
- 16. Eglinton-Lawrence
- 17. Davenport
- 18. Davenport
- 19. Trinity-Spadina
- 20. Trinity-Spadina
- 21. St. Paul's
- 22. St. Paul's

- 23. Willowdale
- 24. Willowdale
- 25. Don Valley West
- 26. Don Valley West
- 27. Toronto Centre-Rosedale
- 28. Toronto Centre-Rosedale
- 29. Toronto-Danforth
- 30. Toronto-Danforth
- 31. Beaches-East York
- 32. Beaches-East York
- 33. Don Valley East

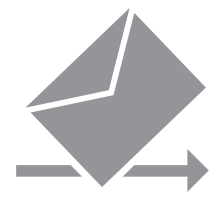
- 34. Don Valley East
- 35. Scarborough Southwest
- 36. Scarborough Southwest
- 37. Scarborough Centre
- 38. Scarborough Centre
- 39. Scarborough-Agincourt
- 40. Scarborough-Agincourt
- 41. Scarborough-Rouge River
- 42. Scarborough-Rouge River
- 43. Scarborough East
- 44. Scarborough East



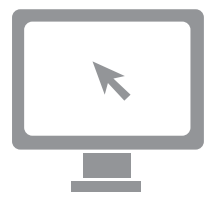
HOW PEOPLE CONTACT US



4% Visit



5% Mail



36% Online



55% Telephone

FINANCIALS

2013 BUDGET

In 2013, the Office of the Ombudsman budget allocation approved by City Council was \$1,570.1 million for the operating year ending December 31, 2013.

2012 EXTERNAL AUDIT

Hillborne Ellis Grant, an external audit firm, performed a successful compliance audit for the fiscal year ending December 31, 2012, a full copy of which is available on the website at ombudstoronto.ca.

OMBUDSMAN AND STAFF

TEACH AND LEARN

In 2013, Osgoode Hall Law School and the Forum of Canadian Ombudsman (FCO) developed the first joint ombudsman certificate program in Canada. Toronto Ombudsman Fiona Crean and Director of Investigations Kwame Addo were both part of the teaching faculty.

Crean was a plenary speaker at the FCO's bi-annual conference on creating barrier-free services. She

also took part on a panel about emerging issues for municipal ombudsman. Crean has been elected to the board of the Forum of Canadian Ombudsman.

Addo has been appointed to the Ontario board of the Society of Adjudicators and Regulators. He is also a member of the advisory committee to Humber College's post-graduate alternative dispute resolution program.

The Toronto Ombudsman team completed in-house training in several areas this year. They wanted to increase their awareness and skills so that they can serve residents with mental health challenges appropriately. The staff also updated and increased their knowledge and skills in administrative law, investigations and technical writing.

THE TEAM

FIONA CREAN
Ombudsman

NANCY FERGUSON
Ombudsman
Investigator

REEMA PATEL
Ombudsman
Investigator

APRIL LIM
Research and
Policy Consultant

LAUREN HOLLYWOOD
Administrative
Assistant



JACKIE CORREIA
Ombudsman
Representative

ZALINA DEODAT
Ombudsman
Representative

KWAME ADDO
Director, Investigations
and Conflict Resolution

SHOSHANNA LEVITT
Ombudsman
Investigator

KATE ZAVITZ
Ombudsman
Investigator

FEEDBACK

He [Ombudsman staff] is an extraordinarily great listener; he's very insightful and quick to grasp the circumstances; he's also extremely resourceful and he's got to be diplomatic to make those folks... change their minds. He, unlike most people, is results oriented...I can't tell you how much I appreciate what you've done by attracting people like him to your office. I just had to tell you what an extraordinary group of people you have working with you.
(RESIDENT)

RESPONSE

I thank you for this outstanding report [Below Market Rent investigation] that will help to improve the quality of public service in our city.
(LEGAL CLINIC)

Great investigation [Toronto Community Housing]. The report is well written, clear and concise. Well done. I am so impressed with the Ombudsman and her take on numerous issues in the City.
(RESIDENT)

You were kind and warm and attentive and made [TCHC resident] feel important ...I've had so much feedback from so many people on how your words have inspired them to continue.
(LAWYER REPRESENTING A RESIDENT)

I'm so grateful for your time, attention and consideration to look into my issue.
(RESIDENT)

CONTACT US

Office of the Ombudsman
375 University Avenue, Suite 203
8:30am-5pm
Monday to Friday
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