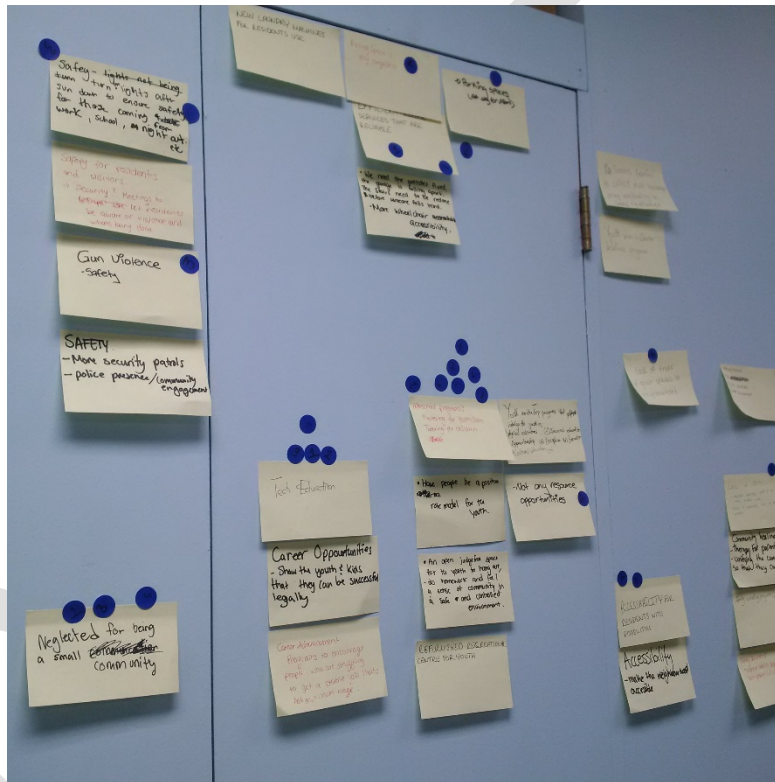


Tenants First: Trialling Innovations in Service Models and Community Development



draft Evaluation of pilot projects
July 2019



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OVERVIEW OF PILOT PROJECTS

The overall focus of Tenants First is to implement a plan in which Toronto Community Housing Corporation focuses on being a social housing landlord, where buildings are in a good state of repair, and tenants are connected to appropriate services and active participants in their communities.

The Tenants First Phase 1 Implementation Plan approved by City Council in July 2017 directed City staff to work with Toronto Community Housing to develop and implement three pilot projects. The purpose of these pilots was to inform the work of Tenants First in developing new tenant-focused service delivery models, and a new mandate for Toronto Community Housing, including a strengthened system of tenant engagement.

The first pilot focussed on testing a decentralized service delivery model, in which decision-making and resources are moved from the central office to the local level of the Operating Unit. Two additional pilots explored new models of tenant engagement and community development.

Through 2017, a joint City-Toronto Community Housing working group for each pilot met to design the three pilots. The pilots were implemented by Toronto Community Housing staff with support from City staff, beginning in January 2018.

METHODOLOGY

This evaluation covers the period from January 2018 – December 2018. For each pilot, an evaluation framework was developed which included questions to be answered by the pilot, outcomes sought through the pilot, and set of actions which show how the outcome is anticipated to be achieved. The framework also identified a set of indicators which could be used to demonstrate progress towards these objectives. The evaluation frameworks were based in conversations at working group meetings, and Tenants First met with management staff, or other staff as relevant, for each pilot to discuss and refine the draft evaluation framework. Throughout the duration of the pilots, data was gathered for each of the indicators, where possible.

To gain a deeper insight into these results, the results were presented to focus groups of staff. Focus groups were facilitated by Tenants First staff who had not been directly involved in the pilot. Tenants First chose not to engage an independent evaluator to carry out the focus groups because of the value for policy staff from the City and TCHC, working on the Tenants First

project, to hear directly from front-line staff. Tenants First staff responsible for overseeing the pilots participated in focus groups with City staff, and attended the TCHC focus groups as an observer. Relevant union representatives were invited to attend focus groups with unionised staff.

A facilitated discussion was led with each focus group, with questions focussing on:

- Aims and understanding of the pilot;
- Reflection on results;
- Roles and responsibilities;
- Impact; and
- Recommendations for scaling up.

In total, 52 TCHC staff and 4 City staff participated in focus groups. Notes from the focus groups were provided back to staff who attended focus groups for verification and further comments. Results from the focus groups were analysed by Tenants First by grouping discussion around the questions identified for each pilot.

In this draft report, preliminary tenant perspectives on the three pilots are based on data gathered through evaluations of specific events (for example, trainings) or general data from the TCHC Tenant Experience Survey. An evaluation survey will be undertaken with communities involved in the Local Action Plan and Youth pilot in summer 2019. Youth leaders involved in the Youth pilot developed a film about their experiences with the pilot which was shown to the City's Executive Committee in July 2019. This report will remain draft until these evaluation surveys have been undertaken with residents and the results incorporated into this report.

The draft evaluation report was shared with staff at the City and Toronto Community Housing for review. The Centre for Connected Communities also contributed comments on the Local Action Plan pilot.

Limitations of this methodology:

- Focus groups were carried out with staff, but not yet with tenants.
- Not all staff who were involved in the pilots attended focus groups, so the results from the focus groups may not comprehensively reflect all staff perspectives.
- The focus groups were carried out by City and Toronto Community Housing staff, rather than an independent evaluator. Responses to focus group questions may have differed if an independent evaluator had facilitated the focus groups.

Many thanks to the Social Policy, Analysis and Research team in Social Development, Finance and Administration at the City of Toronto for their patient and useful guidance on evaluating these pilot projects.

TENANTS FIRST - YOUTH SERVICES PILOT

Weston-Rexdale "YouThe Change"

1. Introduction

Both Toronto Community Housing and the City of Toronto provide a wide range of services to youth, and recognise that youth may need to overcome multiple barriers to be able to access services and to engage in decision-making about their community. The Toronto Youth Equity Strategy (2014) directed TCHC to:

- Review its youth engagement process to ensure access is equitable and barriers minimized to support youth most vulnerable to involvement in serious violence and crime to being involved in feedback and decision-making within the organization;
- Partner with City divisions and community organisation to ensure that recreation programs are accessible to youth living in TCHC, and reflective of youth-specific challenges;
- Partner with City divisions and community organisations to ensure that available employment services are accessible to youth living in TCHC, and reflective of youth-specific challenges;
- Review and implement several initiatives relating to youth mental health, including conducting a review of Resident Access and Support services to better integrate youth support, develop partnerships and improve the referrals system.

In response, Toronto Community Housing worked with City staff to design a pilot to focus on services delivered to youth. The pilot took an innovative approach to providing services to youth by linking outreach and engagement with access to services such as mental health and employment to support youth to maintain their housing. Through this pilot, Toronto Community Housing trialled an approach to engaging youth through community priority-setting, developing local action plans, and developing a Youth Action Plan for the West. This approach has adapted the approach being rolled out across the portfolio as part of the Tenant Engagement Refresh. Toronto Community Housing also trialled new staff positions focussed on connecting youth to employment opportunities; and referring youth to supports.

Operating Unit C comprises 2,611 units in West Toronto. The portfolio includes different building types that generally reflect the broader portfolio stock (high-rise, low-rise and town home complexes). Tenants living within the Operating Unit provide a representative cross section of relevant tenant demographics including seniors, families, and vulnerable tenants. Operating Unit C was chosen for this pilot because of the large number of Toronto Community Housing communities with a high proportion of youth residents.

2. Questions to be answered through pilot

- How can youth create change in communities?
- How can we support youth to take employment opportunities?
- How can we support youth and families to maintain tenancies?

- How can the City, TCHC and community organisations work together?

3. Outcomes/goals for the pilot

- Youth leaders involve their community in discovering ways to change and improve communities.
- Youth have access to employment opportunities and feel supported to take and maintain opportunities
- Youth and families are supported to maintain tenancies
- Roles of the City, TCHC and community organizations in supporting youth are clear and coordinated

4. Key deliverables for the pilot

- Priorities identified for 20 communities in OUC
- A Youth Action Plan for the West
- 100 youth in OUC supported through Access and Support case management
- 50 youth hired through Community Economic Development database, job fairs, and job preparation

5. What happened during the pilot?

The workplan developed by Toronto Community Housing envisaged three streams of work: Engagement; Access and Support; and Community Economic Development. Five staff were identified within Tenant and Community Services to deliver the pilot: two Engagement Community Services Coordinators, two Program Coordinators, and an Access and Support Community Services Coordinator. Youth leaders were employed as Program Leaders (Engagement) and Program Coordinators (Community Economic Development). Toronto Community Housing staff identified 20 communities within Operating Unit C, where more than 40% of the tenant population were youth (13 – 30), and conducted outreach in these communities to identify youth leaders. Community profiles were completed for each building, and City staff developed a map of services available to youth in OUC.

- **April 2018:** 14 youth leaders attended Asset-Based Community Development conference in Kitchener.
- **May 2018:** Youth Leadership Day held at the Rexdale Hub attended by 40 youth. Priority setting training completed.
- **July - August 2018:** Youth leaders carried out priority-setting with 20 communities across Weston-Rexdale. Each community identified a number of priorities for their community. These priorities were documented in a community-by-community report. With the help of TCHC staff, youth leaders compiled these priorities into six themes: Maintenance; Youth Programming; Safety and Security; Health, Fitness and Sports; and Youth Hub. Youth identified actions for each these priorities. Actions were workshopped with City and TCHC staff.

- **October 2018:** Youth engaged in dialogue with TCHC senior management (Vice President, Tenant and Community Services; Vice President, Asset Management) and deputed to the Toronto Community Housing Board to share their experience of the Youth Pilot.
- **November 2018:** Youth leaders helped to lead a session with other youth discussing options for a future engagement system for youth, as part of the Tenant Engagement Refresh.
- **December 2018:** Draft Youth Action Plan presented to TCHC and City staff.

6. Results – What has been the impact of the pilot?

The following results were provided by TCHC's Tenant and Community Services Division in March 2019.

Question: How can youth create change in communities?

Community involvement	Results
Extent to which youth feel involved in decision-making in the community	Evaluation forms completed by youth in May indicate that youth participated to be involved in the community, and to make a change. TCHC will carry out an evaluation survey with youth in summer 2019.
Number of youth participating in events	Community launch - 33 youth Capacity-building training and workshops - 171 youth attended training and workshops including: civic engagement and deputations; facilitation and action planning; community priority-setting; evaluation and program logic; grant-writing; media and communications; professional development and networking skills Priority-setting - 605 youth from 17 communities
Number of youth deputing or presenting	Community Launch – 8 Tamarack Asset-Based Community Development conference – 12 TCHC Board meeting – 6 TCHC consultations – 33 Youth pilot working group – 5 OUC Tenant Council – 15 Local agency meetings (Kingsview NIA and North Etobicoke Residents' Council; Rexdale and Jamestown agency meetings) - 16

Discussion

Focussing on youth creates opportunities for youth voices: TCHC staff felt that the existing TCHC engagement system is focussed on adults, and that youth have a 'silent voice'. Staff noted that youth-led programming (eg. music and spoken word at events) and youth-led processes were effective in engaging with the wider youth community. City staff felt that the events were accessible to youth, that youth "wanted things to change", and perceived that youth felt positive that TCHC are focusing on youth. Creating an opportunity for young people to have a voice will also encourage others who are silent to become part of the engagement system.

TCHC staff felt that spending consistent staff time with youth built trust and relationships, and sustained participation. Face-to-face relationships are critical. "Youth are coming to us, rather than us going to them". City staff acknowledged the effort that TCHC staff put into building

relationships over time, and noted a close rapport and high trust between youth and TCHC staff.

Recognizing skills and offering training builds youth capacity: TCHC staff were impressed by the motivation and skills of youth who were involved in the pilot. Many have skills to work with their community; others are developing skills. Building youth capacity now will bring results in the future. Through the pilot, youth completed training in a range of skills including civic engagement and deputations; media and communications; and grant-writing. TCHC staff felt that training gave youth confidence and motivation. City staff felt that TCHC staff worked hard to support youth leaders to be "great presenters", and that the number of deputations at a range of forums was excellent. City staff noted that youth were "pleasantly surprised" that people are interesting in listening to their voices. TCHC staff commented that residents in Rexdale have not participated in civic engagement, but "when you see yourself [in a space], you will come out to those spaces".

During the priority-setting process, youth wanted to involve their peers and "knew how they wanted their communities to be engaged". Youth took the initiative and went door-to-door. Youth now know the process to create an action plan for their community. City staff perceived that, over the course of the pilot, tasks such as event facilitation and presentations moved from TCHC staff to youth leaders, which was seen as evidence of building youth skills and capacity.

Youth increased skills in system navigation: TCHC staff noted that youth involved in the pilot gained knowledge about how TCHC works, and how to get involved in different TCHC processes. These processes ranged from understanding maintenance and the ClientCare call centre system, to presenting to the Executive Leadership team, to making deputations to the TCHC Board. As a result, youth are more engaged in the 'mainstream' world of TCHC - for example, some listen to the Board meeting on-online, and have begun to advocate for changes through the Tenant Engagement Refresh. City staff perceived that youth experienced issues around process – "what to do, where to go, how to find out?". Youth know that they can't make change alone, and that they need to reach out.

Assessment of progress towards outcome: "Youth leaders involve their communities in discovering ways to change and improve their communities"

Both TCHC and City staff were impressed at the number of youth involved in the pilot, and felt that the numbers are very high. Over time, youth took leadership roles in engagement processes, with support from TCHC staff. Through the pilot, youth leaders built skills to identify and articulate community needs, and developed networks to implement actions to meet those needs. Youth leaders are actively engaged in working with TCHC, City and other organizations to achieve change in their communities. Staff felt that the success of the approach can be seen in that the same number of youth have stayed involved through the pilot. City staff commented that it was "amazing to see that number of young people engaged".

Question: How can we support youth to take employment opportunities?

Youth employment	Results
Number of youth receiving training or other support	Number of youth hired – 73 Job readiness sessions and one-on-one supports - 75 Entrepreneurship workshop series – 35 Job fairs and networking – 210 Referrals for youth to employment programs – 250

Youth-focused staff increases access to services for youth: TCHC staff noted that it was helpful to have Community Economic Development staff narrowly focussed on working with youth. Taking a case management approach was seen to allow staff to assist youth with system navigation, and to offer "the right services at the right time". Offering place-based job fairs was also seen as successful, and youth were supported to travel to job fairs at other locations. City staff shared employment opportunities with the Community Economic Development staff at TCHC.

Assessment of progress towards outcome "Youth have access to employment opportunities and feel supported to take and maintain opportunities"

Through the pilot, youth were involved in a range of community economic development initiatives and a number of youth were employed as a result of this work. Staff noted the benefits of integrating the Community Economic Development team with engagement events, because it allowed the Community Economic Development to engage with youth who may not have accessed the services directly.

Question: How can we support youth and families to maintain tenancies?

Youth employment	Results
Number of youth referred to Access and Support CSC	97 youth 67 youth from OUC/OUW 30 youth from other OUs
Number of tenancy issues resolved	Risk of eviction (arrear; unit condition; anti-social behaviour) - 21 Maintenance - 6 Pests - 5 Housing concerns - 35
Number of referrals to community-based supports	Mental health – 43 Income and employment – 25 Community outreach – 11 Transitional housing – 9 Physical health – 8 Legal – 7 Shelter system – 6 Educational – 5 Crisis services – 3 Other – 6

Youth-focused staff increases access to services for youth:

Youth were connected to services through referrals to the youth-focussed Access and Support Community Services Coordinator. Tenant Service Coordinators made referrals when they investigated arrears, or came into contact with families through the Annual Rent Review process, and identified issues which could be addressed through supports for youth or families. Other referrals came from family members. However, staff reported that the most effective referrals came from youth themselves, or from a friend.

Similar to the Community Economic Development work, staff felt that engagement events were a useful forum for Access and Support staff to meet youth who may be in need of supports or need to refer a friend. Staff noted that "really good referrals came from engagement activities".

Increasing the visibility of supports reduces stigma

TCHC staff felt that, through the increased visibility of Access and Support services, the stigma around mental health is going away. Ten youth are engaged in planning a Youth Mental Health conference, which will bring together agencies to support youth. It is more difficult to address stigma around addictions. City staff confirmed that mental health and income are key issues for young people. Staff also reported that the work of Access and Support has reduced calls to police, through providing resources to give attention and support to youth and families.

Progress towards outcome "Youth and families are supported to maintain tenancies"

A significant number of tenancy issues were resolved through the work of the Access and Support staff. The youth-focussed Access and Support CSC was focussed on Operating Unit C, but referrals came from across the city. Staff felt that this indicates that there is a need for youth-focussed CSCs across the organization.

Question: How can the City, TCHC, and community organizations work together?

Roles and responsibilities	Results
Number of actions within Local Action Plan committed to by organizations	City of Toronto - 6 actions focussing on providing funding, providing training, access to recreation spaces, and hiring local youth. Toronto Community Housing - 5 actions focussing on beautification, urban farming, access to space for youth activities, and connecting youth to scholarship opportunities. Joint - 3 actions focussing on improving safety, hosting community dialogues, and providing training.

TCHC staff are skilled in building trust and relationships: TCHC staff felt that the pilot allowed them to be proactive, rather than reactive. For example, youth identified building maintenance as a key concern for themselves and for their families. Both City and TCHC staff stated that addressing maintenance issues promptly was seen as critical for building trust with youth, and emphasized the value of youth being able to see change.

City staff connect youth to wider opportunities and initiatives: TCHC staff acknowledged that youth are building relationships outside of TCHC, and staff understand the value of connecting

youth to the broader community. City staff emphasized that capacity-building initiatives such as the Youth Pilot can support youth to a point where they are ready to take independently opportunities when they arise. For example, Toronto Stronger Neighbourhood Strategy (TSNS) resources are available to the wider community and youth living in TCHC can apply for these resources. City staff feel that their role is to identify agency partners through, for example, inviting youth leaders to present to agency tables, or connecting youth with other initiatives such as the United Way project in Kingsview Village. TCHC staff noted that they are not aware of any regular grants available from the City for youth initiatives, except for the Community Crisis Response grants which are available after a violent incident has occurred.

Need to create more opportunities to connect youth to community organizations: The draft Action Plan developed by youth leaders did not include actions for community organisations. TCHC staff felt that there is a misperception that there are a lot of agencies active in the OUC community. Conversely, City staff felt that there are a lot of resources in the area, so "it's about creating the opportunity to connect".

Progress towards outcomes "Roles of the City, TCHC and community organizations in supporting youth are clear and coordinated"

The pilot demonstrated that, when given appropriate resources, TCHC staff are successful at consistently engaging with youth locally. City staff acknowledged that engaging young people is not easy, and felt that the work of the TCHC staff in engaging youth was "stellar" and showed outstanding leadership. City staff can support by responding to priorities directly through City programs and services or through facilitating connections to agencies. However, these roles need to be further clarified. TCHC staff were concerned that "City staff didn't understand what we were doing", and that City staff were not clear about their role in the pilot or how they could support TCHC staff and youth. Specifically, there is a need to clarify the relationship between TCHC Community Service Coordinators, and the work done by the City's Community Development Officers.

7. Opportunities and challenges

- *Opportunities for internships, year-round work and youth entrepreneurship:* Staff noted an opportunity to improve employment by offering year-round work, because people struggle after summer jobs finish. TCHC currently has the capacity to train youth in trades, however staff felt that internships should also be available in areas like community development. There are opportunities to support youth entrepreneurship through social procurement at TCHC – for example, youth could be supported to set up an enterprise to organize the 3000 barbeques that TCHC holds every year; or a decluttering service; or a moving company to work with tenants relocated from revitalization sites. There is also a need to highlight mentors and opportunities outside of TCHC.
- *Opportunity for youth to be more involved in City initiatives:* City staff would like to increase opportunities to engage with youth leaders more directly, and identified that more work could be done to integrate youth into other initiatives. For example, agencies funded to work with vulnerable populations and youth leaders could be encouraged to engage with

this initiative. There are other opportunities to involve youth in Local Planning Tables through paid roles such as note-takers.

- *Challenge to appropriately define youth:* The pilot employed the City's definition of youth, which ranges from 13 – 30 and encompasses a wide range of youth with diverse needs. Staff suggested that more time should be spent understanding the demographics of different communities, and targeting support and programs to specific demographics. For example, 15 year olds need more support to run a community priority-setting process than 25 year olds; younger youth are willing to take up summer employment but older youth want employment related to their education and training which will advance their careers. Similarly, supports are more easily available for under-18s (referred directly to an agency) than for over-18s (registered on waitlist) so different approaches are needed.
- *Challenge to improve collaboration between City and TCHC staff:* Early meetings between TCHC and City staff to design the pilot were seen as "interrogative" rather than mobilizing knowledge to support youth. TCHC staff felt that they were not invited to collaborate with City staff on the project, and "did not feel like partners". Later meetings were seen as more collaborative when TCHC staff felt that they were not "told what to do" by City staff, and that there was more "back-and-forth" about the project. City staff acknowledged that, during the design of the pilot, City staff offered a lot of ideas but were unsure how to actively support TCHC to carry out the pilot project. After the draft Youth Action plan was developed, specific City staff from different divisions were able to begin to work directly with TCHC staff and youth leaders to implement specific actions. TCHC staff felt excluded from communications between the City and TCHC management, specifically about resources and the future of the Youth Pilot.
- *Challenge to improve integration and communication within Tenant and Community Services:* The Youth Pilot brought together three teams from within Tenant and Community Services. Although TCHC employed an "integrated team" approach, some staff felt that there was little integration between the three streams of the pilot. As a result, staff were not fully aware of the work of the other teams, and how to refer youth between teams. This lack of integration was seen as a missed opportunity to refer youth to supports or employment opportunities. Staff suggested that the pilot could have been improved if teams had met together more, and if the purpose of the pilot had been communicated better across the organization.
- *Challenge to find opportunities relevant to older youth:* TCHC staff noted that employment opportunities are different for different youth age ranges. For example, older youth may have university degrees and do not want entry-level jobs. Staff noted a need to find partners with more jobs that are relevant to youth experience and training, 'better jobs', and university-level opportunities. Staff also felt that there is a need for new partner agencies who can offer mental health supports to older youth.

Conclusion

This pilot demonstrates the importance of Toronto Community Housing's role in youth engagement and community development. Toronto Community Housing staff have interactions with tenants through landlord functions (eg. Annual Rent Review) and also through engagement activities. Through these interactions, staff are able to build relationships with youth through consistent and face-to-face contact. Integrating work with youth increases effectiveness. Staff emphasized the value of engagement, Access and Support, and Community Economic Development staff working together to support and connect youth, including attending joint events and referring youth between teams.

The pilot also illustrates that most City staff work at a city- or neighbourhood-scale, while TCHC staff work at a building- and community- scale. Because of this, there is an opportunity for Toronto Community Housing staff to help implement City strategies to address youth issues, and also for City staff to connect Toronto Community Housing tenants and staff to wider civic initiatives, such as Local Planning Tables in Neighbourhood Improvement Areas.

The high number of youth engaged in the pilot suggests that the innovative community-by-community approach taken by Toronto Community Housing staff and Youth Program Leaders to engaging youth was successful. Results also suggest that providing support to youth can have a positive impact on their family's tenancy, and that building trust with youth creates other community benefits. Each of these results highlights the value of youth-focussed staff in effectively engaging and supporting youth living at Toronto Community Housing.

Acknowledgements

Firstly, thanks to the youth of Operating Unit C who participated as residents and youth leaders in their communities.

Many thanks to the staff from Toronto Community Housing who designed and implemented the Youth Focus Pilot, and to the Managers, Community Services Coordinators, Program Coordinators, and Youth Program Leaders who participated in the focus groups.

Thanks also to City staff from the Community Development Unit, Community Crisis Response Program, Confronting Anti-Black Racism Unit, Youth Violence Prevention, Parks, Forestry and Recreation, Youth Development Unit and Toronto Youth Partnerships for Employment for support and contribution to this pilot, and for participating in the focus groups.

TENANTS FIRST - LOCAL ACTION PLANNING PILOT

1. Introduction

Toronto Community Housing has built experience in community development through Social Development Plans created as part of revitalization projects, and the City of Toronto's current approach to community development includes neighbourhood-based Local Planning Tables as well as targeted initiatives such as Tower Renewal. As part of their Tenant Engagement Refresh, Toronto Community Housing were interested in trialling Local Action Planning processes with a community which is not undergoing revitalization.

Toronto Community Housing and City staff worked together to design a pilot to bring together residents from Toronto Community Housing and from private rental and condominium buildings to develop a shared vision for their community. This vision was documented in a Local Action Plan which outlines priorities identified by residents and recommends collective actions for residents, TCHC, the City, and community organisations.

Mornelle Court is a community in North-East Scarborough which includes 3050 Ellesmere Road, 750 Morningside Avenue, 70 Mornelle Court, 80 Mornelle Court, 90 Mornelle Court, 100 Mornelle Court and 110 Mornelle Court. 90 Mornelle Court and 110 Mornelle Court are Toronto Community Housing buildings which are contract-managed by DEL. Approximately 3500 people reside in the Mornelle Court community.

2. Questions to be answered through pilot

- How do we connect residents to resources, opportunities and networks?
- How can we engage residents in a Local Action Plan?
- How can the City, TCHC and community organisations work together?

3. Outcomes/goals for the pilot

- Residents are connected to resources, opportunities and networks to address their needs.
- Residents from a range of buildings are engaged in decision-making at a local level.
- Roles of the City, TCHC and community organisations in community development are clear and coordinated.

4. Key deliverables for the pilot

- Local Action Plan for Mornelle Court

5. What happened during the pilot?

The workplan developed by Toronto Community Housing and workshopped with a joint City-TCHC working group envisaged a staged process of community outreach and a Local Action Planning process, supported by training for residents and asset mapping. In May 2018, City Council funded the Centre for Connected Communities to co-develop with residents a governance and leadership structure for the Mornelle Community Hub at 90 Mornelle Court.

The Centre for Connected Communities supported the Tenants First pilot where it aligned with their process.

- **March – April 2018:** TCHC and City met with Mornelle Service Providers Table and with TCHC tenants to inform them about the pilot.
- **July 2018:** A community barbeque was held to share information about the pilot and validate issues to be addressed in the Local Action Plan.
- **September 2018:** Outreach to Mornelle Court community to invite residents to be involved in a Mornelle Court Local Action Plan Advisory Group to co-design a Local Action Plan, including sharing information through intercepts in public space and an information session for residents interested in joining the Mornelle Court Local Action Plan Advisory Group.
- **September - October 2018:** At the request of TCHC staff, the Centre for Connected Communities facilitated a six-week priority setting process with the Mornelle Court Local Action Plan Advisory Group. This community priority-setting process formed the basis of the Local Action Plan. The five priorities identified through this process were: Sharing information; Community Safety; Active Residents; Social Wellbeing; and Connected Children.
- **January 2019:** A draft Local Action Plan was drafted by City and TCHC staff, and presented to members of the Mornelle Court Local Action Plan Advisory Group for their review.

6. Results – What has been the impact of the pilot?

Data was collected by Toronto Community Housing and City staff from a range of sources including attendance records, an evaluation carried out with residents of the training and Local Action Planning process, and focus groups with staff. An evaluation survey with residents will be carried out over the summer, and added to this report.

Question: How do we connect residents to resources, opportunities and networks?

Summary of results:

Connecting residents	Results
Programs and services available to residents	There are a range of programs and services available to residents, including: after-school programs; youth drop-in programs; food pantry; religious activities; seniors exercise. Programs and services are both resident-led, and led by external service providers. Through the Local Action Plan, residents have expressed an interest in accessing programs and services focussing on: cyber-bullying education; personal safety training; increasing physical activity; mental health workshops; and mobile services for children.
List of spaces available and how they are used	90 Mornelle Court: Community hub; main floor space; and community room 110 Mornelle Court: Small community space; and storage room Other spaces: Classroom space at 3050 Ellesmere; fitness and garden areas in outdoor spaces; playground at 110 Mornelle.

Residents were connected to opportunities through a range of events: TCHC staff noted that some residents have been connected to service providers through the BBQ which was held in July 2018. For example, one resident successfully accessed a Parks People grant. Other

initiatives to connect residents with opportunities include TCHC staff holding an event with the City's Parks, Forestry and Recreation to give out the City's Fun Guide on-site, and work by Tower Renewal with the community to design and install a mural on the basketball court at 90 Mornelle Court. City staff were impressed by the number of activities already happening in around Mornelle Court, including the number of resident-led initiatives.

Through Local Action Planning process, City staff identified that there are further opportunities to connect residents to programs and services currently available (for example, cyber-bullying resources provided through schools). TCHC staff perceived that, through the pilot, residents have gained a better understanding of the purpose of the South-East Scarborough Local Planning Table.

Need to improve information and community about resources: Joint work to map resources revealed that non-TCHC residents were not aware of the extent of the community space at 90 Mornelle Court. Non-TCHC residents were also not aware of the space at 110 Mornelle. City and TCHC staff noted that there are other spaces and services within the community (for example, space for karate classes at the condo building, fitness areas in the outdoor spaces, and facilities such as the Pan Am Centre in the wider community). These spaces could be considered as part of a future iteration of the Local Action Plan.

Assessment of progress towards outcome: "Residents are connected to resources, opportunities and networks to address their needs"

Through the pilot, staff felt that staff and some residents are more aware of resources, opportunities and networks. However, access to resources and networks is limited by the ability of residents to find and share information. Improving "Communication" was a priority identified by residents through the Local Action Planning process, because residents want to share more information about opportunities with their communities. Actions included establishing a bulletin board in a common public area to share information about opportunities, networks and resources with residents across the community. Staff from the Centre for Connected Communities noted that there is further work to do to understand both how residents can be connected to personal supports and services, and how grassroots leaders can be better connected to Local Planning Tables to get support for community based initiatives. The Centre for Connected Communities is also advancing work to reduce barriers to accessing community space, and increasing programs and services.

Question: How can we engage residents in a Local Action Plan?

Community involvement	Results
Residents feel involved in decision-making in the community	Results from evaluation with residents involved in the Advisory Group in October 2018 included that residents felt more confident and connected, had an increased sense of belonging, and felt ready to make change in the community. Residents identified a need for increased communication.

Number of residents participating in events	Information session (April) - 9 residents (TCHC only) Community celebration (July) - Over 100 residents (TCHC and non-TCHC) Information meeting (September) - 11 residents (TCHC and non-TCHC) Advisory Group (Sept – Oct) - 13 residents (TCHC and non-TCHC)
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Using a range of methods engages a range of residents: Most staff considered that the numbers of residents engaged in events were good, and observed the need to balance involving a large number of people with having a smaller group who can work effectively to make decisions together. Other staff considered that the numbers participating were low, compared to priority-setting processes held in other TCHC communities.

Staff observed that it was important to use all methods available to outreach to the community, including posters, fliers, and email. The BBQ was very successful in bringing residents from across the community together, and creating opportunities to connect, share information, and encourage a community cohesion.

13 residents participated in decision-making by attending Advisory Group meetings to develop a Local Action Plan. Advisory Group members committed to all six training and priority-setting sessions. Workshops and training were held with members of the Local Action Plan Advisory Group, including consensus decision-making training. Through the Local Action Planning process, new priorities were identified (for example, cyber-bullying).

Bringing together residents from Toronto Community Housing and private buildings builds connections across community: The Mornelle Court Local Action Plan Advisory Group involved residents from buildings owned by TCHC at 90 and 110 Mornelle Court, as well as residents from private rental buildings at 80 Mornelle Court and 750 Morningside Rd; the townhouses at 100 Mornelle Court, and the Mapledale condominium building at 2050 Ellesmere Rd.

Staff felt that it was good to have residents from non-TCHC buildings involved in the process, and this process has built connections between TCHC and non-TCHC residents. TCHC staff noted the need to continue to gather information from different groups within the community (eg. youth) to ensure that issues not selected as priorities by the Mornelle Court Local Action Plan Advisory Group are also addressed.

Need to balance between building on previous work and identifying new issues and opportunities: In 2013, a needs assessment was carried out by Mornelle CAN with the Mornelle Court community. In response to feedback from early meetings, the Working Group reviewed the Mornelle CAN report and used this report as a starting point for developing the Local Action Plan. For example, the Centre for Connected Communities developed a banner which visually represented the needs identified in the Mornelle CAN report, and approximately 45 residents participated in adding to and validating this data at the community BBQ in July. TCHC staff felt that illustrating to the community that existing material has been reviewed and considered is critical in generating community support for the process.

Assessment of progress towards outcome: "Residents from a range of buildings are engaged in decision-making at a local level"

Through extensive outreach, residents from six out of seven buildings were engaged in a Local Action Plan Advisory Group. This Advisory Group participated in training, including consensus decision-making, and made decisions about priorities for the wider community. TCHC staff felt that, through the Local Action Planning process, residents have moved "up the scale" towards engagement in decision-making. Further evaluation is required to understand how much residents outside the Advisory Group are informed about the pilot, and to review demographics to identify whether holding engagement events at different times would connect with different parts of the wider community. The Centre for Connected Communities have also identified an opportunity to explore the nature and purpose of 'engagement' – for example, is "engagement" collecting data from the maximum number of residents or is engagement helping grassroots groups and individual residents feel empowered to take ownership for actions?

Question: How can the City, TCHC, and community organisations work together?

Roles and responsibilities	Results
Number of actions within Local Action Plan committed to by organizations	Residents - 11 actions, focussing on: communication, community groups, events and activities City of Toronto - 11 actions, focussing on: networks, building relationships and partnerships, connecting with opportunities Toronto Community Housing - 8 actions, focussing on: sharing information, access to space, referrals Third-sector organizations - 10 actions, focussing on: community mapping, space governance, education, training, programs and services

Significant effort is required to coordinate City and TCHC processes: A significant amount of effort was invested at the beginning of the project in defining roles, resources, and coordinating activities. This effort resulted in a Project Charter, a Communications Protocol, and a timeline which integrated the Tenants First pilot, planned TCHC Tenant Engagement Refresh activities, and the work by Centre for Connected Communities to co-develop a governance structure with residents. Staff felt that a flier prepared by Centre for Connected Communities for the community BBQ clearly set out the roles and responsibilities of City staff, TCHC staff, and Centre for Connected Communities staff, however some staff and residents reported remaining unclear about responsibilities.

TCHC staff felt that the Local Action Planning process was complicated by the City's initiative to fund the Centre for Connected Communities to develop a governance and leadership structure for the Mornelle Community Hub, because it meant that residents were invited to be part of two separate but related processes.

Toronto Community Housing staff have a strong relationship with residents and local agencies: Toronto Community Housing staff have strong existing relationships with tenants, and played a key role in engaging with tenants of 90 and 110 Mornelle Court. Beyond this, TCHC staff also coordinated a Mornelle Service Partners Table, and developed a distribution list of residents (including non-TCHC tenants) active in the community. It is envisaged that the

agencies sitting on the Mornelle Service Partners Table may participate in implementing the Local Action Plan.

City, Toronto Community Housing and Centre for Connected Communities staff hold different roles in outreach:

Different organizations held different roles and responsibilities in outreach. TCHC staff posted fliers within the TCHC buildings as well as sharing information with the Mornelle Court distribution list. Tower Renewal staff gathered contact details for landlords and property managers in private buildings and made initial contact, and Tenants First and a TSNS community animator dropped fliers off to the private buildings. To recruit residents for the Local Action Plan Advisory Group, Tenants First staff, Centre for Connected Communities staff and a TSNS community animator conducted outreach through intercepts in public spaces. These intercepts were successful in enlisting members of the Advisory Group from the condominium and private rental buildings, as well as from the TCHC communities.

City staff connect residents to wider resources and networks: City staff have existing relationships with other City divisions, and also with wider networks. Because Mornelle Court is within a Neighbourhood Improvement Area, residents have access to resources such as a Community Development Officer and Local Planning Table. Working with Community Development Unit enabled the project to draw on resources, such as local community animators, to assist with outreach. Working with Tower Renewal has resulted in strong resident engagement in other initiatives in the community, including creating a mural on the basketball court at 90 Mornelle Court. TCHC staff expressed frustration that City staff were not always aware of other activities carried out by City divisions in the community (for example, community mapping by Toronto Public Health).

Community organizations can play a critical role in facilitation and training: City staff felt that working with Centre for Connected Communities has allowed staff from the City and TCHC to learn more about the 'Connected Communities' approach to community development, which has built staff capacity to engage with communities. City staff also felt that, given the Local Action Planning process included both TCHC and non-TCHC tenants, having a third-party facilitator was useful. Staff noted that because the Local Action Planning process was facilitated by the Centre for Connected Communities, many of the actions identified within the community priorities are resident-led, rather than led by the City, TCHC, or community organizations.

Progress towards outcome: Roles of the City, TCHC and community organisations in community development are clear and coordinated

Because this pilot brought together staff from both Toronto Community Housing and the City, significant effort was required to clarify roles and responsibilities. Although project documents set out roles and responsibilities, ongoing communication and problem-solving was required to attempt to address issues raised by residents and staff. Introducing a third organization, running a related but parallel project, created both challenges and opportunities for defined roles and responsibilities.

7. Opportunities and challenges

- *Opportunity to improve access and use of community space:* Residents have expressed ongoing frustration about difficulties in accessing and using the community space. TCHC staff felt that these frustrations has been addressed, in part, by TCHC developing and sharing new 'Use of Space' policies and information. There have also been issues relating to the maintenance of assets – eg. signage, murals, internet etc. The Centre for Connected Community involvement in the community hub has enabled progress on small issues (for example, Centre for Connected Communities arranged for wifi to be available in the community hub).
- *Challenge to clarify ongoing leadership and ownership for Local Action Plan:* It was originally envisaged that the priority-setting process would be carried out by staff from TCHC and the City. However, TCHC staff asked the Centre for Connected Communities to facilitate this process. The Centre for Connected Communities agreed because of the alignment between goals for the Local Action Planning process, and co-developing a governance and leadership structure for the Mornelle Community Hub at 90 Mornelle Court. The priority-setting process was combined with a six-week training program offered by the Centre for Connected Communities. During the development of the draft Local Action Plan, TCHC staff raised concerns about the priority-setting process because it differed from the priority-setting process used in other TCHC communities which relies heavily on quantitative methods (surveys; dotmocracy; attendance numbers). TCHC has offered to 'own' the Local Action Plan as part of its engagement system. However, the governance structure set up through the TCHC engagement system will report in to TCHC, which may not be appropriate for a group which will include non-TCHC residents.
- *Challenge to work with community dynamics:* Both City and TCHC staff acknowledged that the community has a history of conflict and poor relationships between both residents and service providers. Staff from all three organizations expressed concern around the demand for specific staff to play the role of mediator between residents and organizations. Ongoing tensions affected the ability of the Advisory Group, City staff and TCHC staff to finalize the Local Action Plan as planned.

Conclusion

The Local Action Planning pilot at Mornelle Court offers useful lessons for developing a new mandate for Toronto Community Housing, including that Toronto Community Housing's strengths are in engaging with residents who live within TCHC buildings. It is difficult for TCHC to engage with residents of non-TCHC buildings, and to access non-TCHC buildings.

It is possible for the City and TCHC to collaborate on community development, but joint projects require clear roles and responsibilities, including agreed protocols for communication and conflict resolution. Dedicated City resources, such as the resources available in a Neighbourhood Improvement Area, are critical for ensuring that the residents and Local Action

Plan are connected to relevant opportunities, networks, and resources. The work of Toronto Community Housing staff to engage tenants, as part of community development, should be closely connected to the City's Local Planning Tables in Neighbourhood Improvement Areas to ensure that residents have access to all available resources and can network outside of their own community.

This pilot also highlights challenges for residents and community organizations in accessing space in Toronto Community Housing buildings. When space is intended for access by wider community, there can be barriers to tenants, non-TCHC residents, and organizations using community space in TCHC buildings.

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TENANTS FIRST - DECENTRALIZATION PILOT

1. Introduction

Both the Mayor's Task Force (2015) and the Tenants First 'A Way Forward' report (2016) recommended that Toronto Community Housing explore a decentralized service model, with more localized decision-making in order to ensure closer contact with frontline workers and tenants, and to make more effective use of local partnerships and staff at all level.

The Decentralization Pilot trialled changes in operations to shift decision-making to the level of Operating Unit and front-line staff, including increasing staff resources at the local level. Recent tenant surveys show that there is a very strong relationship between building condition, timeliness of unit repairs, and overall satisfaction. This pilot presented the opportunity to examine areas where local decision making can be supported by systems and processes that improves responsiveness, cost efficiencies and tenant satisfaction.

Operating Unit C comprises 2,611 units in West Toronto. The portfolio includes different building types that generally reflect the broader portfolio stock (high-rise, low-rise and town home complexes). Tenants living within the Operating Unit provide a representative cross section of relevant tenant demographics including seniors, families, and vulnerable tenants.

2. Questions to be answered through pilot

- How can we enable better relationships between staff and tenants?
- How can moving decisions and information to frontline staff improve services?
- What resources are required to support decentralized services?

3. Outcomes/goals for the pilot

- Staff work effectively, efficiently and respectfully with tenants to resolve service issues
- Services are delivered on-time, accurately, and to high standards
- Roles and responsibilities of staff in delivering centralized and local services are clear and coordinated

4. Key deliverables for the pilot

- Decentralized staffing model
- Model-to-model comparison

5. What happened during the pilot?

Toronto Community Housing staff identified 19 service deliverables to be reviewed for possible decentralization. Each service deliverable was assessed in terms of the following factors, and given an 'Overall Risk to Decentralize':

- Tenant Service Benefit (High; Low)
- Cost management autonomy (Low risk; High risk)
- Subject matter expertise (Presently exists; high; medium; none; some)

- Compliance requirements (Procurement process; legislated; process; none)
- Business process requirements (Non-complex; complex)
- Local resource requirements (Yes (FTE); Small (FTE); none; Yes (FTE/Funding);
- Ease to implement (Easy; somewhat difficult; difficult)

Following this assessment, nine service deliverables were excluded from the pilot, either because it is considered more efficient to manage them centrally (vacancy advertising; partnership development) or because there is a high risk to decentralize (tenant transfers; unit condition management; accessibility modification; pest management; emergency response; and capital repair deployment).

The subsequent workplan developed by Toronto Community Housing envisaged decentralizing ten services across four areas of service, including:

- Customer service: Complaint management; Client Care Centre
- Revenue: Rental offer; move out; Landlord and Tenant Board; finance
- Maintenance: Demand maintenance; small capital repair deployment
- Engagement: Vulnerable tenant support; tenant programs and councils

In April 2018, TCHC advised that decentralizing the call centre service would not be feasible. Moving the responsibility of maintenance call-outs to the local level because calls from OUC cannot be separated out from other calls to the call centre. Three additional staff would be required to accept these calls. There are currently 12 maintenance dispatch staff working across the whole portfolio. An extra three staff would be needed to decentralize this function, plus duplicating technology to decentralize the call centre to the OU level.

In August 2018, TCHC also advised that it had not been possible to decentralize the following services:

- Rental Offer - OU staff work with a single individual at the Rental Task Force; but a Leasing Agent has not been employed as envisaged
- Move Out - an additional Community Housing Supervisor has been employed who can assist the superintendent with Pre-Vacancy inspection; vacancy inspection; and follow-up identifying deficiencies; but approvals have not been ported to OUM or Property Accountant as envisaged because it is too difficult to separate these functions from interconnected systems – HMS, EasyTrac, and the move out portal.
- Engagement was also excluded from the pilot because of the ongoing Tenant Engagement Refresh.

Decision-making has been shifted to front-line staff related to the following service deliverables:

- Complaint management: OU Manager manages all complaints, and makes decisions on how to resolve complaints. Tenants were sent a letter encouraging them to talk to the OU Clerk, their TSC, the OU Manager, and then the Director (in that order).

- Landlord and Tenant Board: OUC Litigation Clerk and TSCs deal with L1s (Application to evict a tenant for non-payment of rent) and L2s (Application to end a tenancy and evict a tenant). The Litigation Clerk and TSC are co-located which means that they can work closely together. L1s and L2s go to the Operating Unit (OU) Manager who ensures that the Eviction Prevention Policy is being followed. L1s and L2s are then referred to the TSC and then to the Litigation Clerk. The OU Manager has a credit card so that local staff can file the application online. The OU Manager works with the CSC (who is trained in identifying vulnerability) to assess vulnerability, determines how the Eviction Prevention Policy should be applied, and makes the final decision about eviction. The OU Manager is the instructing client at the Landlord Tenant Board, and the Litigation Clerk attends the Landlord and Tenant Board hearing. This model means that all parties are closer to the file.

A model-to-model comparison of the staffing model is provided below.

Service model in other (comparable) OUs	Ratio staff:units (2611 units)	Decentralized service model in OUC	Ratio staff:units (2611 units)
1 Community Housing Supervisor	2610	2 Community Housing Supervisors	1305
2 OU Clerks	1305	3 OU Clerks	870
6 Tenant Service Coordinators	435	7 Tenant Service Coordinators	372
9 cleaners	290	11 cleaners	237
		Litigation Clerk	2610

6. Results – What has been the impact of the pilot?

The following high-level results from Operating Unit C were provided by TCHC's Asset Management Division in April 2019.

Tenancy Management:

Key Performance Indicator	June 2017	Jan 2018	Jun 2018	Jan 2019
TCHC – Arrears (Rent / Parking)	\$8,379,014	\$8,840,853	\$8,424,635	\$9,002,950
PILOT – Arrears (Rent / Parking)	\$338,805	\$320,735	\$308,707	\$331,439
TCHC - Vacancy Rate	2.4%	2.4%	2.1%	2.7%
PILOT - Vacancy Rate	2.4%	3.1%	2.0%	1.4%
TCHC - Outstanding Annual Rent Reviews	9.1%	6.7%	5.8%	4.6%
PILOT - Outstanding Annual Rent Reviews	12.4%	3.2%	2.5%	3.0%
TCHC - Eviction Applications (OU Average)	135	136	119	181
PILOT - Eviction Applications	216	330	227	225

These indicators show:

- A slightly smaller growth rate (3%) as compared to the broader portfolio (4%) and significantly lower than the comparator OUH (21%).

- A significantly higher growth rate among retroactive arrears (37%) as compared to the broader portfolio (7%) and the comparator OUH (23%).
- An improvement in vacancy rates on a shorter time scale than the balance of the portfolio.
- A consistently lower number of outstanding annual rent reviews than the balance of the portfolio.
- A proportionally higher number of eviction applications than the balance of the portfolio.

Administrative Services:

Key Performance Indicator	June 2017	Jan 2018	Jun 2018	Jan 2019
TCHC - Administrative Service Requests (80% handled within 2 business days)	83%	79%	85%	81%
PILOT - Administrative Service Requests	84%	84%	88%	85%
TCHC - Complaint Resolution (80% handled within 10 business days)	82%	75%	84%	65%
PILOT - Complaint Resolution	84%	84%	88%	69%

These indicators show:

- The year over year growth of the volume of requests for service in the pilot area (22%) is greater than the portfolio trend (19%).
- Rates of Administrative Service Levels and Complaint resolution in the pilot are consistently higher than in the balance of the portfolio.

Maintenance Services:

Key Performance Indicator	June 2017	Jan 2018	Jun 2018	Jan 2019
TCHC - Maintenance Service Levels (70% attended within 5 business days)	78%	78%	80%	77%
PILOT - Maintenance Service Levels	72%	79%	86%	81%
TCHC - Cleaning Standards Inspection (95% reported at meeting standard)	96%	Not Available (Technical Deficiencies)	96%	93%
PILOT - Cleaning Standards Inspection	96%		93%	95%

- The year over year volume growth of tenants requesting maintenance work in the pilot area (15%) is higher than the portfolio trend (7%).

Toronto Community Housing staff noted that maintenance service levels among third party vendor assigned work was significantly lower than maintenance service levels for work assigned to Toronto Community Housing staff.

Tenant Satisfaction:

The 2018 Tenant Experience survey measured the following key Drivers of Tenant Satisfaction:

SATISFIED	2017		2018		Change in OUC from 2017
	OUC-OUM	OUC	OUC-OUM	OUC	
Being respectful serving residents	74%	75%	76%	73%	▼
Keeping residents informed of changes	73%	75%	73%	73%	▼
Keeping up cleanliness of building	65%	64%	67%	65%	▲
Keeping up condition of unit	63%	70%	64%	61%	▼
Conducting emergency repairs on unit	68%	75%	66%	71%	▼
Keeping up with regular repairs of unit	61%	69%	63%	66%	▼
Keeping up condition of building	61%	67%	61%	51%	▼
Keeping building safe and secure	56%	58%	56%	56%	▼
Chances to be involved in decisions	58%	59%	60%	58%	▼
Connecting tenants w/community services	57%	60%	59%	56%	▼
Keeping residents in mind w/decisions	52%	53%	52%	48%	▼

These indicators show:

- Key drivers of tenant satisfaction all fell within the pilot area, with the exception of building cleanliness

Toronto Community Housing staff noted that not all of the drivers are the sole responsibility of the staff within the Operating Unit.

Question: "How can we enable better relationships between staff and tenants?"

Hiring additional staff improves communication and responsiveness: Staff felt that tenants benefitted from additional staff working in the Operating Unit, because tenants are able to "see more people, get more answers, and get better response times" for Administrative Service requests. Buildings have been understaffed, and problems exacerbate as buildings age and demographics change. According to staff, hiring additional staff has resulted in positive effects for staff and tenants across a range of roles:

- An additional Community Housing Supervisor (CHS) has halved the number of units that each CHS is responsible for, and the CHSs are able to focus more on challenging buildings and challenging communities.
- Two additional cleaners were placed in two buildings with high vacancies, high turn-over rate, and other issues with cleanliness (Eagle Manor - 1901 Weston and Kendleton Dr – 111 Kendleton Drive). These cleaners are focussing on cleaning vacant units, so there is less time between turnovers.
- These two additional cleaners have relieved the Custodial Maintenance Persons (CMP1s) of cleaning duties, allowing the CMP1s to focus more on small capital repairs. Cleaners with additional support reported feeling "less stressed". Importantly, tenant satisfaction with the cleanliness of the building, as measured through the Tenant Experience survey, improved during the pilot period.
- An additional Tenant Services Coordinator (TSC) has enabled TSCs to rearrange their portfolios, and has allowed TSCs to have "more face time" with tenants. Engaging directly

with tenants requires TSCs to be "more accountable" and results in more consistent advice to tenants. Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) show that there are fewer outstanding annual rent reviews, and more eviction applications within the pilot area.

- An additional Operating Unit Clerk means that TSCs do not need to work at the front desk, and Clerks can also assist TSCs with administrative work such as filing and making phone calls. Having an additional Clerk gives staff sufficient time to engage meaningfully with tenants who visit the OU office, including looking up notes on the Housing Management System and having informal conversations with tenants to remind them of upcoming deadlines.
- Hiring a focussed Litigation Clerk has resulted in a faster process for tenants, and more consistent service. KPIs illustrate that RGI calculations have been done more efficiently, during the pilot period, including increased effectiveness in detecting fraud.

Assessment of progress towards outcome: "Staff work effectively, efficiently and respectfully with tenants to resolve issues"

Overall, staff report that they are working hard, and take pride in resolving issues. This is reflected in the increased response rate to requests for Administrative Services. Staff feel that they are "more accessible" to tenants, and are able to expand their focus beyond the buildings "with issues". Staff felt that "tenants notice the difference". Staff value their relationships with tenants, and "tenants know us". Management staff felt that their presence at buildings is important for setting service expectations. Tenant Service Coordinators felt that they are able to work more effectively and efficiently, and have "tackled a lot of difficult files" since the pilot began. Clerks are able to build respectful relationships because they have more time to interact with tenants.

Staff know that following up with tenants quickly is critical. However, staff feel that their relationships with tenants are compromised because of the lack of local decision-making which means that building staff (eg. superintendents) do not have the control to address complaints.

It is unclear whether the pilot has affected results within the Tenant Experience Survey, either positively or negatively. "Keeping up the cleanliness of the buildings" is the one indicator which has improved during the time of the pilot, and this result could be attributable to the additional cleaning staff and increased supervision.

Question: How can moving decisions and information to frontline staff improve services?

Staff training improves service levels: Staff in different roles reported completing training to address a range of issues, including: Fire Life Safety training; waste management training; EasyTrac training; building science; electrical training including light switches and bulbs; building repairs; plumbing; door and window repairs; snow shoveling; repairs to the toilet; and using computers. Participants also identified that they received "on-the-job" training, including learning about specific buildings. One participant mentioned completing a Paralegal certificate.

Staff mentioned areas where they would like additional training (for example, the legal aspects of TSC work; working with incident reports; and eviction for cause), and support (for example, connections to mental health supports for tenants).

Staff also mentioned that tenants have increased access to information, through increased communications to tenants about how to report maintenance requests. KPIs shows that there were more maintenance requests within the pilot area, than across the broader portfolio, and TCHC staff suggested that this may reflect greater confidence among tenants that reporting maintenance issues will result in maintenance issues being addressed.

Staff noted that the superintendents are very experienced, and are able to answer many questions asked by tenants. Other building staff (eg. CMP1s, cleaners) have also been trained in how to input requests into EasyTrac.

Co-location improves collaboration: Tenant Service Coordinators visit buildings monthly. The Operating Unit Manager meets monthly with each Tenant Service Coordinator, to review their KPIs. Community Housing Supervisors and Superintendents also meet regularly. Staff state that they work closely with each other across Operating Unit C, and with other departments.

Staff felt that the co-location of the Litigation Clerk with the Tenant Service Coordinators improved the timeliness of services, and also the accuracy and consistency of advice given to tenants. Having the Litigation Clerk on-site at the Operating Unit office also allowed the Clerk to have direct contact with tenants, and staff suggested that the work of the Clerk assisted tenants to reach mediated agreements with Toronto Community Housing. Staff noted that the Landlord and Tenant Board is also carrying out a pilot in western Toronto, which has increased the number of files being resolved at mediation.

Assessment of progress towards outcome: "Services are delivered on-time, accurately, and to high standards"

The KPIs measured by Toronto Community Housing show an improved responsiveness in tenancy management, maintenance, and cleaning over the pilot period. However, staff believe strongly that local decision-making would make their jobs less frustrating, and improve services for tenants. Managing move-outs was identified as a specific area where Tenant Service Coordinators felt that decentralization could make a significant impact; and superintendents emphasized the potential of decentralized decision-making about vendors to improve the experience of tenants requesting maintenance and repairs. Tenants commonly ask cleaners or superintendents for repairs, but staff reported that they have to call the Client Care centre or input requests into EasyTrac rather than address repairs themselves.

Question: What resources are required to support decentralized services?

Two service areas were decentralized through the pilot – Complaint Management, which was decentralized to the Operating Unit Manager; and Landlord Tenant Board applications, which were processed locally by the Litigation Clerk who could file on-line using a credit card allocated to the Operating Unit. Other services were decentralized through adding extra staff to the Operating Unit.

Staff noted that other resources to support decentralization could include an Operating Unit budget for capital expenses, and the ability to store replacement parts locally to support superintendents to work directly with vendors.

Assessment of progress towards outcome: Roles and responsibilities of staff in delivering centralized and local services are clear and coordinated

Overall, staff were disappointed with the level of decentralization achieved through the pilot. Superintendents stated that "nothing has changed" in terms of their role, and Tenant Service Coordinators also stated that "Nothing has been downloaded back to us". TCHC management advise that barriers to decentralizing services include the limitations of the current IT system to separate out work orders and requests for service for a specific Operating Unit from the rest of the portfolio, and procurement policies which require vendors to be selected from a centralized database.

Opportunities and challenges

Opportunities:

- As part of the Tenant Engagement Refresh, there is an opportunity to decentralize the engagement system to create innovative ways for tenants to engage with management, increasing responsiveness to tenants.

Challenges:

- The Operating Unit has experienced turnover in key staff during the pilot, including a new Operating Unit Manager, and two Litigation Clerks during the course of the pilot.
- Staff also noted that a number of indicators measured within the Tenant Satisfaction Survey as not within the control of Toronto Community Housing staff (for example, the work of third party vendors).

Conclusion: This pilot illustrates that there are more opportunities to decentralize services within Toronto Community Housing. However, barriers to decentralizing services include system issues (ie. limitations of IT system) and policy issues (e. procurement policies).

Importantly, front-line staff continue to believe that meaningful decentralization will improve the service responses to tenants. Key Performance Indicators illustrate improvements in a number of service areas, although these improvements are not comprehensively reflected in improved tenant satisfaction. Perceptions of local decision-making are also important factors in staff satisfaction and engagement. Further work to complete a model-to-model comparison of costs would also illustrate the cost-effectiveness of decentralization, including more rent collected and fewer arrears.

This pilot has resulted in a number of lessons for more decentralized service model across Toronto Community Housing, including the integrated service model under development for seniors' housing. Firstly, reducing portfolio size and increasing support in the Operating Unit

office enables Tenant Service Coordinators to focus on face-to-face engagement with tenants and eviction prevention processes. Secondly, co-locating Litigation Clerk with Tenant Services Coordinators in Operating Unit office increases speed to process files. Thirdly, ensuring that Operating Units have resources such as a credit card allows Operating Unit staff to use online systems to file applications.

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CONCLUSION

These three pilot projects were intended to test innovations in service delivery and tenant engagement, to inform new service delivery models and a redefined mandate for Toronto Community Housing.

These pilots have contributed to understanding the resources available for community development and how to connect tenants to resources, as well as the importance of supporting tenants to share information and build networks. The pilots offered useful lessons about opportunities to use the strengths Toronto Community Housing staff in tenant engagement, the need to integrate tenant engagement and tenant support across teams, and challenges relating to the use of space in Toronto Community Housing buildings. The results of this pilot also make clear that Toronto Community Housing and City staff play complementary roles in community development, because staff work at different scales and have different sets of networks to support tenants.

Importantly, the pilots suggest that interventions with individuals can have wider community effects – for example, improving responsiveness to maintenance resulted in an increase in maintenance requests; and resolving tenancy issues through improving supports to youth had positive results on families' ability to maintain their tenancies.

Each of these lessons provide useful insights which will inform future development of service delivery models, as well as shaping the new mandate of Toronto Community Housing.