

ATTACHMENT 2: 2021-2022 WORK PLAN DETAILS

Background

The Tenant Advisory Committee (TAC) met four times as a group and held additional focus group meetings to identify and consider issues that impact the preservation of affordable rental housing. This document outlines further details on the 2021-2022 work plan items.

2021-2022 TAC Work Plan

TAC members and staff prioritized the work that would make an impact on tenants and that could be accommodated as part of City divisional work plans. In addition to these 2021-2022 priority projects identified, the group will also provide input into key City policies and programs throughout the year. The TAC work plan covers the period of June 2021 to April 2022. Work plan accomplishments will be included as part of the HousingTO Action Plan annual update report.

Issues not addressed this year may be included in subsequent annual work plans.

Working Group on the Preservation of Affordable Housing

1) Initiate the development of a framework to preserve the existing supply of deeply affordable housing - with a first report back on a proposed renoviction policy in December 2021

TAC members have identified a need to proactively address all forms of predatory and illegitimate evictions and tenant displacements. Given the complexity of the issue and based on best practices from other jurisdictions, TAC will work with staff to develop a framework to address these issues going forward. Among other considerations, key elements of a framework include: tenant capacity and organizing; establishment of an interdivisional staff group to address these issues; and gathering and acting on evictions data. TAC will work with staff to develop the proposed renovictions policy which will be the foundation for a more comprehensive framework in the long-term. TAC and staff aim to have a renovictions policy developed by December 2021.

2) Inform the program design and implementation of a small sites acquisition program (Q3 2021)

As part of the 2021 City budget process, Council approved funding for staff to establish a small sites acquisitions program aimed at protecting affordable rental housing at risk of being lost due to sale or conversion. TAC will work with staff to inform the program. Considerations will include a focus on protecting deeply affordable rental housing; maintaining the affordable homes in perpetuity; keeping the housing in public and/or non-profit ownership; and opportunities to help non-profit organizations develop/strengthen capacity.

Working Group on Tenant Rights, Communications and Advocacy

1) Support the distribution of and information sharing about the Eviction Toolkit (Q3 2021)

Staff, in collaboration with stakeholders, recently completed an evictions toolkit that provides clear information to tenants about types of evictions and actions they can take to exercise their rights. TAC will work with staff to promote the toolkit and its distribution beginning in June 2021 and over the summer months.

2) Inform changes and roll-out of enhanced tenant support programs (Q3 – Q4 2021)

SSHA is proposing to enhance tenant supports by modernizing the Tenant Defence Fund. TAC members provided initial comments on program elements and will continue to work with SSHA on implementation, to ensure that tenants remain supported through any transitions.

3) Develop proactive communications on tenant rights (Q4 2021)

TAC will build on the information that has been developed over the past year to include material on a tenant's right to return after renovations are completed and a compilation of best practices on tenant organizing material. Considerations also include the development of material to share with Councillor's offices on community resources to assist tenants.

4) Explore the development of a network of tenant association (Q4 2021)

Tenant associations exist across the City in private, social and non-profit housing. TAC would like to work with other organizations to develop a centralized list of associations and explore opportunities for collaboration.

5) Explore the development of tenant hubs across the City to support tenants to exercise their rights (2022)

Staff, with input from TACH, will explore the development of Tenant Hubs across the City that support residents to learn about, and exercise their rights as tenants. This will include exploring options for new initiatives as well as opportunities to coordinate and improve on existing tenant support programs in the City.

Working Group on Ensuring Well-Maintained Homes for Renters

1) Test and provide feedback on an interactive RentSafeTO web (Q3 2021)

The City's Open Data portal has been publishing regular updates of building evaluation scores, information of registered apartment buildings and investigation activities. To improve data access and user experience, the MLS team launched a project to develop a user-friendly web portal (i.e. an interactive website) where tenants, landlords and the public can view the evaluation scores/ratings of apartment buildings and download a specific report about the building. TAC will work with MLS to test and provide feedback on this new tool with the aim to make continued improvements to information access and visualization of the building evaluation data.

2) Test and provide feedback on options for RentSafeTO updated evaluation tool, based on Council direction that will update the criteria and approach for building evaluations. (Q4 2021)

Staff are working to improve the criteria and approach for building evaluations. As directed by City Council, staff are exploring the introduction of new categories for in-suite property standards requirements and outstanding enforcement activities; revised weighting of evaluation categories to prioritize issues that have greater impact on tenants; and a process to ensure evaluation scores are responsive to ongoing violations and orders between scheduled evaluations/audits. TAC will work with MLS to test and provide feedback on the updated evaluation tool.