

November 3, 2008

## **City launches enforcement campaign on apartment buildings in need of repair**

A special City inspection team will launch targeted enforcement Dec. 1 against apartment buildings that are in a state of disrepair. The enforcement will ensure proper maintenance is done so these vital pieces of Toronto's housing stock are maintained and are liveable for residents in the long term.

Eighty per cent of the city's 6,385 multi-residential apartment buildings (MRABs) were built more than 40 years ago; 95 per cent are at least 25 years old. This enforcement program will target apartment buildings that do not meet City bylaw requirements or provincial standards. Rental apartment buildings were generally built with durable construction materials, and with proper maintenance should last for generations to come. They are a vital component of Toronto's housing stock because in recent years, as the city's population grows most residential building construction has been condominiums, not apartment buildings.

"Targeted action is needed now against buildings which are in disrepair to help preserve them and continue their long-term use for residents," said Jim Hart, Executive Director, Municipal Licensing and Standards (ML&S). "This enforcement will make buildings more liveable for residents. It will also complement key City initiatives including Mayor's Tower Renewal and the affordable housing strategy, to be released in 2009, so Toronto has the type of housing it needs for future generations."

Many of Toronto's apartment buildings are located in low income neighbourhoods. Over the past 20 years people in the lowest income brackets have seen their real income decrease against rising costs. While home ownership in Toronto has increased in recent years, renting is a far more common practice with lower income groups, including immigrants.

This MRAB building audit program is one of several long-term enforcement options available to the City to ensure apartment buildings are kept in reasonable condition. The options are described in a staff report to the Nov. 10 meeting of the Executive Committee. The options, ranging from the audit programme to regulation will be researched further for their prospective use in Toronto. Staff will report the MRAB Building Audit Programme results and their recommended long-term option to the Executive Committee in 2010.

ML&S has built a 15-member team which will audit and where appropriate, issue orders against 176 buildings in its first year. Four buildings will be chosen in each ward (four in each of the 44 wards), two of those in consultation with the local City Councillor and two based on staff knowledge and experience. Both privately and publicly-owned buildings will be included in the audit (141 private owned, 35 public owned) reflecting the corresponding segment of the market. The audit will focus on common areas within buildings, parking garages, balconies, the exterior grounds, building electrical, hot water and heating systems. Building residents will be advised as to the team's presence at their building and will be able to bring forward any concerns that have gone unaddressed by landlords about apartment units to the team office, or the district ML&S office.

Orders issued against buildings are matters of public record. Audit results will be tracked and posted on the City's website at [www.toronto.ca/licensing/mrab.htm](http://www.toronto.ca/licensing/mrab.htm).

The MRAB building audit team has been built using existing staff and budget resources. A fee of \$60 per hour will be charged to the building for each visit after the second inspection until an order is completed to meet bylaw or provincial requirements.

The MRAB building audit program aligns with Mayor's Tower Renewal by working to preserve the existing building stock to help meet future housing needs, and to encourage reinvestment with a minimum amount of disruption to tenants. More information on Mayor's Tower Renewal is available at [www.towerrenewal.ca](http://www.towerrenewal.ca). The program also aligns with Housing Opportunities Toronto (HOT), the City's 10-year affordable housing Action Plan, which is to be released in 2009. More information on HOT is available at <http://www.toronto.ca/affordablehousing/hot.htm>

Toronto is Canada's largest city and sixth largest government, and home to a diverse population of about 2.6 million people. It is the economic engine of Canada and one of the greenest and most creative cities in North America. In the past three years, Toronto has won numerous awards for quality, innovation and efficiency in delivering public services. Toronto's government is dedicated to prosperity, opportunity and liveability for all its residents.

**Media contact:**

**Jim Hart, Executive Director, Municipal Licensing and Standards, City of Toronto, 416-392-8445**