

RH4.2 Attachment 1

ATTACHMENT 1: DRAFT 2021 WORK PLAN DETAILS

Considerations for Tenant Advisory Committee 2021 Work Plan

The following are suggested work plan items for the Tenant Advisory Committee to consider. Staff have been directed to report on a potential municipal small sites requisition program so this item will need to be pursued. The other items are suggestions made for the Committee's consideration and to be used as a starting point for the joint development of a work plan.

1. Consideration of a Municipal Small Sites Acquisition Program – Q1 2021

At the October 2020 meeting of the Planning and Housing Committee staff were directed to report in the first quarter of 2021 on the potential of establishing an ongoing Municipal Small Sites Rental Housing Acquisition Program. The program would consider providing dedicated funding and financing to non-profit housing organizations or community land trusts to facilitate the purchase and conversion of at-risk private market affordable rental housing into permanently affordable housing.

2. Launch Communications Campaign on Tenant Rights & Supports – Q2 2021

The City plans to launch a communications campaign in 2021 to highlight tenant rights. Current planning includes the development of bus shelter ads; posters in community centres and agencies; print and digital media; social media and through City publications such as the Fun Guide. Data would be used to target neighbourhoods with high eviction rates. The Tenant Advisory Committee could help test messages and content and provide advice on outreach.

3. Consideration of Renoviction and/or Anti-tenant Displacement Policies – Q2 2021

Other jurisdictions across North America have begun adopting policies to protect tenants from renovictions, harassment and broader displacement. Several jurisdictions in British Columbia have by-laws or policies specific to renovictions. The City of Hamilton does not extend City incentives to landlords not in good standing. New York City has policies protecting tenants from harassment from landlords. Together with the Tenant Advisory Committee best practices can be identified and evaluated to see what could work considering the City's current jurisdiction and authority.

4. Development of Data Strategy to Support Preservation and Evictions Work – Q4 2021

As part of the overall HousingTO 2020-2030 Implementation Plan Council has called for a data strategy that reviews current data assets; develops new metrics and data collection and analysis protocols; explores data sharing and analysis opportunities across external organizations and governments; and calls for options to share performance targets and key indicators through City's Open Data portal.

Specific to the protection of existing affordable rental housing, the City is lacking key data to track the status of legal, informal or illegitimate evictions, affordable rents across the City, loss of affordability due to unit turn over or redevelopment and more. While the

City has program related data on eviction prevention and other programs it cannot be used to draw wider conclusions about the trends in the Toronto market or be used to set strategic priorities since it is collected at the program-level. Part of the City's data strategy needs to include how data collection, analysis capacity and coordination can be improved through consultation with external organizations and community agencies and tenant-led organizations. As a part of the 2021 work plan with the Tenant Advisory Committee the City would like to seek input to develop a baseline to help the City set preservation targets going forward.

Staff Deliverables for 2021

As outlined in the City's HousingTO 2020-2030 Implementation Plan there are numerous initiatives underway that aim to improve tenant outcomes. The following is a list of staff deliverables that are linked specifically to directives from the Sub-Committee on the Protection of Affordable Rental Housing. Staff will engage the Tenant Advisory Committee on these deliverables.

5. Investigation Protocol for Illegitimate Evictions – Q1 2021

The City currently does not have a City-wide protocol to consistently address or investigate complaints of illegitimate evictions. An interdivisional City approach will be developed and presented to the Tenant Advisory Committee for input in Q1 2021.

6. Finalize and Circulate Communications Materials – Q1 2021

As part of Phase II of the communications approach presented at the September 24, 2020 meeting of the Sub-Committee on the Protection of Affordable Rental Housing, staff will be working across divisions to develop products (e.g. brochures) that provide information on the City's various housing programs and supports for tenants. These products will be tested with the Tenant Advisory Committee to ensure that the information meets the needs of tenants, and clearly articulates the roles and responsibilities of City divisions and other orders of government. Staff will share these materials through new and existing partnerships, as well as key points of contact that the City has with both tenants and landlords. Specific products being developed include: content to be shared through RentSafeTO; tenant tool kit; SMS Text Message/Chatbot Service and a renovation eviction assessment tool.

The City also has several means through community and landlord engagement to share the new communication material. For example, the Tower Renewal program engages tenants to implement resident and community engagement and also works with community agencies to support program delivery and share information with residents in apartment tower neighborhoods. It also supports rental housing providers through a variety of initiatives including the Tower Renewal Leaders Forum that brings together property owners to share ideas, information and provide feedback on Tower Renewal and other City programs and by-laws. The Tower Renewal program and its various engagement initiatives will be used to engage both tenants and landlords on the new communications material.

Content to be shared through RentSafeTO

The Housing Secretariat will be working closely with Municipal Licensing and Standards to share tenant information where possible through the RentSafeTO program, such as

by uploading to the RentSafeTO webpage for building owners, providing materials and encouraging landlords to share these with tenants. For example, these materials could be provided to tenants while fulfilling existing requirements under Chapter 354, Apartment Buildings, which currently requires landlords to provide information about the RentSafeTO program upon signing of a lease agreement, and posting program information on the tenant notification board.

Development of Tenant Tool Kit

The City has developed an eviction prevention toolkit that includes:

- A simplified description of the evictions process
- Clear steps and graphics that make processes easy to understand
- Engaging material that helps residents reflect on what resources they need, how to plan for and prepare to fight evictions
- Useful lists of City-funded programs and organizations that can help
- Template letters to landlords that help with communications

The tool kit was informed by feedback from legal clinics, people with lived experience and internal stakeholders. The team will distribute this throughout neighbourhoods that are experiencing high rates of eviction and receive feedback from people with lived experience.

Roll-out of a Housing SMS Text Message/Chatbot

Based on feedback from developing the tenant portal, the City's CXi team developed a housing chatbot that can be accessed via SMS (text messaging). This allow residents to navigate Toronto's rental housing landscape without needing access to the internet or a data plan. Anyone with a cell phone would be able to text the bot a question and receive the appropriate information in a reply text. The CXi team built a scaled-down prototype using RentSafeTO top 5 FAQs to test with residents to determine if SMS information delivery is a method that is useful for residents. This prototype was tested and we plan to begin a formal pilot beginning in Q1 of 2021.

Development of Renovation Eviction Assessment Tool

Toronto Building is undertaking work to review the kinds of work and permits which may legitimately create the need for the tenant to vacate a property either temporarily or permanently. Subsequently it will develop education materials to advise landlords of their obligations under provincial legislation and encourage landlords to undertake the work in a manner that minimizes the need for tenants to move. This tool will be brought to the Tenant Advisory Committee for consideration at the end of Q1 2021.