

March 24, 2022

Matthew Green, Secretariat Clerk,
Planning and Housing Committee
10th Floor, West Tower, City Hall
iec@toronto.ca

Dear Chair and Members:

RE: Item PH 32.4 RentSafeTO Updates and Service Gaps

We are writing on behalf of the Flemingdon Thorncliffe Tenant Resident Network (Wards 15 and 16). We represent tenants from a number of tenant associations in our two communities. We have been meeting monthly since September 2019. Many of our tenant associations have been active for more than 20 years.

Our mandate is to bring together community ideas for addressing the issues/concerns of tenants through the following means:

1. Forming tenant associations, especially to collectively advocate for changes in buildings related to maintenance, rent hikes, legal housing rights/human rights being respected/enforced, etc.
2. Creating an environment for developing collective action/advocacy to change municipal (and intersecting provincial and federal) policies and programs.
3. Empowering residents to become more engaged and involved with the community.
4. Utilizing collective resources to address community issues.

In September 2019, we had two community meetings and invited staff from RentSafeTO, Federation of Metro Tenants, and Don Valley Community Legal Services (previously Flemingdon Community Legal Services) to provide information on RentSafeTO processes to assist with maintenance and repairs, tenant rights and eviction prevention and the formation of tenant associations. We have also met with Councillor Jaye Robinson and Councillor Denzil Minnan Wong to advocate for better quality responses on maintenance, repairs, elevator safety, COVID difficulties including lack of cleanliness, lack of enforcement of masking and mail not being delivered by Canada Post.

We continue to communicate with our Councillors and RentSafeTO, however we would like to address the issue of Service Gaps that we as tenants have encountered with the RentSafeTO program from September 2019 to February 2022.

We include our four Recommendations and attached is our detailed report on Service Gaps we have identified as tenants since the 2019 RentSafeTO Evaluations within our community.

Our Recommendations include:

1. Implementation of a process to trigger a new Audit within the recommended two year period before the next scheduled audit if 311 calls increase more than 50% in any 6 month period.
2. Tenant Association Rep's should be included in any Evaluation and/or Audit tour. Tenants be provided with a pre evaluation check list 10 days before the Evaluation and/or Audit which can be completed and submitted to the RentSafeTO team.
3. More effective and accessible communication tools need to be strengthened or developed to provide timely and quality information for tenants. Landlords are not providing information on Evaluations and/or Audits and Orders to Comply. Tenants are unable to access detailed information from the Tenant Notification Bulletin Boards or from reports from the Investigation website.
4. Continue to develop more continuity of referrals, education and clarification of the roles of RentSafeTO and 311. Tenants are frustrated when it is perceived that they are being referred to TSSA or Toronto Police Services or other similar organizations and their matters are not resolved.

In conclusion, there needs to be accountability, responsibility and greater co-ordination between Landlords, City, and Province to ensure tenants are not encountering difficult barriers when using their voice to provide a safe and clean environment to live in and to raise our children.

Thank you for your consideration of the above comments on behalf of our tenants.

Yours truly, and on behalf of the
FP TP Tenant Resident Network

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Cc:

MLS Manager

Councillor Denzil Minnan-Wong

Councillor Jaye Robinson

Flemingdon Thorncliffe Tenant Resident Network Report, March 2022

RentSafeTO Audits

Recommendations:

Currently many buildings in our community have ratings over 70% (2019 Evaluation) and reflect status as of the Evaluation day, even though many issues exist before or after this Evaluation. However, from a recent Tenant Network survey completed in the community, the maintenance and security standards have drastically decreased in quality.

Further Considerations:

There needs to be a mechanism to trigger an earlier audit process before the next scheduled two year Evaluation. There should be an automatic New Audit when the number of maintenance tickets or 311 calls increases substantially (more than 50%) in any 6 month period, or a substantial increase in the number and severity of Orders to Comply.

3rd Party Observations - Tenants Association Rep's should be included on the Evaluation and Audit Tours and be allowed to contribute to conversation during the tour. This allows for open, transparent information and credibility to the Evaluation and Audit. Tenants could also be provided with a Pre Audit check list, and once completed could be submitted to RentSafeTO 10 days prior to the Evaluation and/or Audit.

Although the requirement is to notify Tenants 30 days in advance, tenants are not notified in advance of the Evaluation or Audit. We would appreciate advance notification to work with RentSafeTO staff to have an information table in the lobby, and take tenant complaints.

More Effective Communication with Tenants

Recommendation:

More effective and accessible communication tools need to be strengthened or developed to provide timely and quality information for tenants. Landlords are not providing information on Evaluations and/or Audits and Orders to Comply. Tenants are unable to access detailed information from the Tenant Notification Bulletin Boards or from reports from the Investigation website.

Building Bulletin Boards –the RentSafeTO website provides an example of a standardized bulletin board. (<https://www.toronto.ca/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/934e-sample-tenant-notice-board-feb02-2021.pdf>).

Further Considerations:

This should be a mandatory template. We include Exhibit photos from 2 buildings in our community (page 7). Tenants find the Landlords' bulletin boards hard to read. There should also be a mandate that information be available in the top 3 languages in the building (from Lease information, City of Toronto demographics or 311 calls).

Many of the Landlords in our community are not complying with the Tenant Notification Board. Tenants in our community are not made aware of any Order to Comply notices issued by the City to the landlords. When the landlord notifies the City that the work was completed, there should be a requirement that tenants are also notified, and they should be informed that the work completed was a direct result of a City of Toronto Order to Comply.

If the Landlord subsequently files an Application for an Above Guideline Increase, the tenants need written confirmation to include in their defense that the work completed was a result of an Order to Comply.

Maintenance Calls to 311- Website Reports

Recommendation:

More effective and accessible communication tools need to be strengthened or developed to provide timely and quality information for tenants. Landlords are not providing information on Evaluations and/or Audits and Orders to Comply. Tenants are unable to access detailed information from the Tenant Notification Bulletin Boards or from reports from the Investigation website.

In conjunction with the RentSafeTO Building Evaluation Results website, tenants use the 311 Investigation webpage to monitor the maintenance issues for their buildings. It would be helpful to tenants if the RentSafeTO Evaluation and Audit Reports could include a link to the Investigation Page as it is difficult to co-ordinate between the 2 webpages.

On a review of the Investigation Details for a specific building, the details do not include access to the Investigation Report, only the file number. Currently the website does provide minimal information: Status of the file - Open, Closed or Rescheduled; if an Order to Comply has been issued; and provides what Bylaw is being investigated - Zoning/Property Standard/Heat. However, this does not provide detailed information about the maintenance or repair or how it was resolved or what still needs to be completed. This information would assist in understanding the Audit/Evaluation Report and ratings.

This lack of detail is not helpful for a tenant to provide evidence for a Tenant Application before the Landlord and Tenant Board or an evaluation of problems for new tenants. There is no link or information on the website on how to obtain a copy of this report.

The image displays three screenshots of the 'Investigation Detail' web interface. Each screenshot shows a table of investigation data for a specific address.

Address	Investigation#	In Date	Notice / Order Date	Expiry Date	Issue	Status
49 THORNCLIFFE PARK DR	22 107771 PRS 00 IR	Jan 26, 2022	N/A	N/A	Property Standards---	Closed
71 THORNCLIFFE PARK DR	22 121784 PRS 00 IV	Mar 4, 2022	Mar 15, 2022	Apr 14, 2022	Order Issued Property StandardsOrder to Comply	Order Issued
49 THORNCLIFFE PARK DR	22 106227 ZON 00 IR	Jan 21, 2022	N/A	N/A	Zoning---	Closed

<https://secure.toronto.ca/InvestigationActivity/setup.do?action=init>

Further Considerations:

Link the RentSafeTO Evaluation/Audit Reports website and the Investigation Activity website.

Provide direct links to the Investigation Reports and outcomes.

311 Calls/Maintenance/Security Concerns

Recommendation:

Continue to develop more continuity of referrals, education and clarification of the roles of RentSafeTO and 311. Tenants are frustrated when it is perceived that they are being referred to TSSA or Toronto Police Services or other similar organizations and their matters are not resolved.

Tenants are concerned that often the 311 (RentSafe TO) responses are not appropriate or timely. Tenants are confused as to where to turn to for assistance.

Tenants were recently advised by 311 to contact the TSSA office for the Province regarding multiple Elevator Repairs. When contacting the TSSA office, they were advised to contact the City of Toronto By-Law enforcement offices.

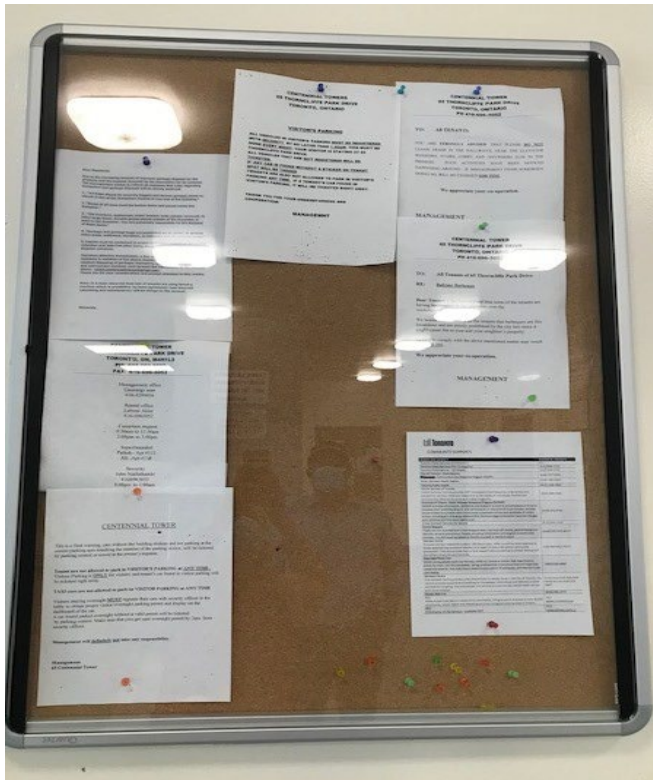
Pest Control is a major problem within our community including increased rat population and cockroaches. Again it is requested that there be a greater emphasis put on education and enforcement strategies that include Building Management, RentSafeTO and Waste Management Services.

Issues often arise that leads tenants to call their building security number. Depending on the incident, tenants are advised to call either 311 or Toronto Police Services. When they call these two services, they are referred back to the building management.

Security within the RentSafeTO Audit and then investigations refer to the physical components of the building – locking systems, cameras, fire access, and garage access. Although security incidents are not within the mandate of the Municipal Licensing and/or RentSafeTO, tenants are advised to call 311 when the tenant issues are not resolved by building management. This is another example of confusion of responsibilities involving building security. When tenants contact 311, there should be more accessible clarification or communication concerning the role of the landlords, 311, RentSafeTO for security incidents.

Exhibit A: Photos of Tenant Boards (see page 2) Effective Communication

1st Bulletin Board – some information, but not complete. Emergency Contact information in a totally different location from the Tenant Board.



2nd Building Bulletin Board – more information provided, however the tenants are from a community of multiple languages spoken, therefore the information is not as accessible.

