

Survey Overview

As part of the engagement strategy to inform the development of a Hamilton-style Renovictions By-law in Toronto, the public had an opportunity to respond to a survey posted (with supporting materials) at www.toronto.ca/renovictions from August 23 to September 30. The survey questions can be found in Appendix A to this Attachment. The public was informed of the survey through various channels:

- Linked on relevant City webpages
- Advertised through City social media platforms
- Promoted at public consultations
- Distributed through Members of Council
- Promoted through news coverage from several media sources

Specifically, the survey asked for suggestions on how the City could effectively implement and communicate information around a proposed Renovictions By-law. The survey contained eight questions - four closed-ended questions to identify the respondent's role, experience with renoviction, preferred communication method(s), and general location in the city, and four open-ended questions to collect feedback from the public around the implementation of the bylaw.

Responses to close-ended questions were analyzed based on frequency of responses.

Responses to open-ended questions were reviewed, analyzed and labelled using a common set of tags.

Respondent Data

In total, the City received 1416 survey responses. The distribution of the respondents' role in the housing market is outlined in Figure 1. The majority of survey respondents (63%) indicated that they were tenants. The next most common respondent group were landlords (18%). Respondents were given the option of writing in a response as "other" if they did not fit into any of the existing five categories: tenant, landlord, tenant advocate or representative, landlord advocate or representative, legal representative.

Respondents were allowed to select multiple categories. The most common cross-selection were landlords or tenants indicating they were also advocates and representatives of the corresponding or opposite group. For the purposes of this analysis, the only double-labelled respondents considered independently were those who indicated they were both a landlord and a tenant (categorized as "both landlord and tenant").

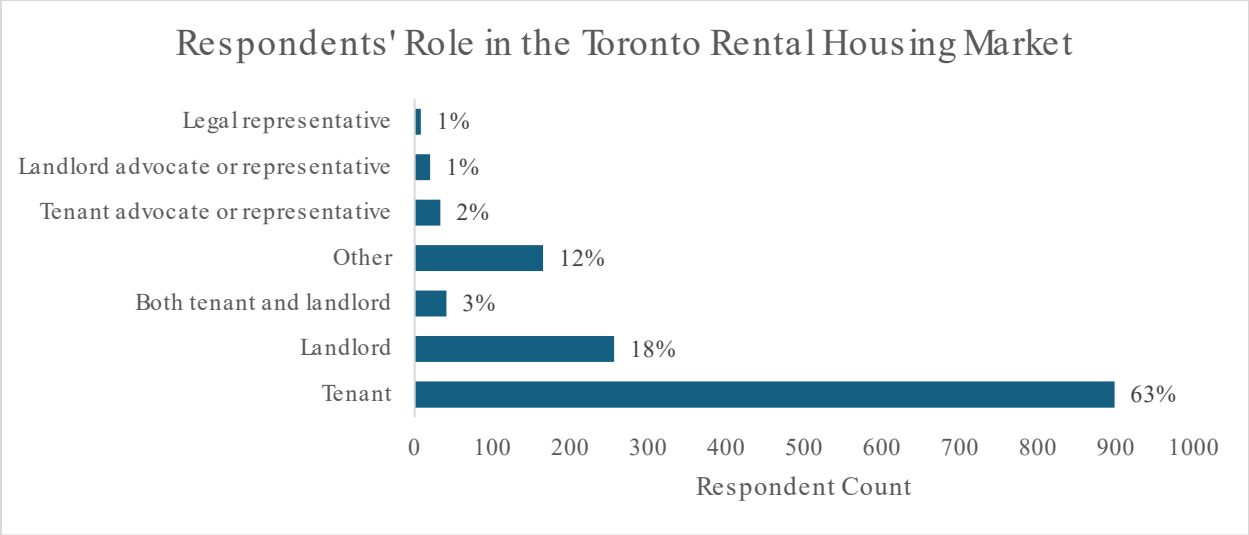


Figure 1. Number of respondents per role¹

Experience with Renovictions

In the survey, respondents were asked whether they have ever been affected by a renoviction. Out of the survey respondent population, 14% of landlords (53 out of 273) indicated they had issued an N13 to a tenant, and 23% of tenants (220 out of 960) indicated they had received a notice of eviction due to renovation (Figure 2). These values should be considered only in the context of the survey and may not be generalizable to the broader population of Toronto.

¹ Where respondents selected more than one role, primary roles were assigned. Where a tenant selected tenant or landlord in addition to either an advocate or legal representative role, their primary role was assigned to be the selection of landlord or tenant. Where the respondent selected both landlord and tenant, they were categorized as “both landlord and tenant”.

Respondents who have received or delivered notice of eviction due to renovation

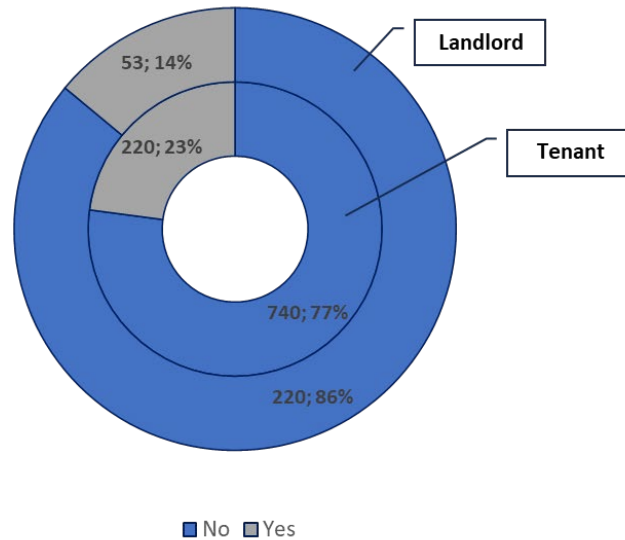


Figure 2. Proportion of landlords and tenants who identified in the survey that they have received or delivered a notice of eviction due to renovation, respectively. Numbers inside the circles indicate the number of respondents who selected a particular response and the corresponding percentage.

Distribution

Respondents were asked to weigh in on a preferred method of distribution for a Tenant Information Notice, which would notify the tenant that their landlord has applied for a renovation licence. The top methods of distribution were almost equally popular, with 51-58% of respondents having selected them: notice posted on the property (58%), email (57%), personally delivered by landlord or a representative (55%), and Canada Post mail (51%). The least popular option was to post the notice on a website or online portal (22%).

Clarity and Distribution of By-law Regulations

A goal of the survey was to receive feedback on how the bylaw could be clearly communicated to encourage compliance among landlords. The need for clear, understandable regulations and supporting documentation was a top suggestion. Respondents emphasized that both landlords and tenants should be educated on any process changes. A comprehensive communication strategy to reach diverse groups across the City through various communication channels and languages, with content that is accessible for all audiences should be employed.

Respondents also recommended the City provide additional support to both property owners and tenants through dedicated education programs, City-wide outreach initiatives, and City representatives or a "hotline" to answer questions and refer the public to additional resources.

Respondents proposed numerous methods of distribution of information relating to the bylaw, which ranged from consolidating information on one webpage, distributing it through mail-outs (including in conjunction with the property tax bill), including it with the lease agreement, posting information in community gathering spaces, and hosting public information sessions.

Tenant and Landlord Support

Suggestions around legal support and access to information for tenants facing eviction due to renovation were common, either in the form of providing a cost subsidy, providing a lawyer or paralegal for tenants, or the City supporting organizations which offer legal aid. Feedback through the survey identified the importance of tenant access to clear information and supports to effectively navigate the provincial process when faced with an eviction due to an N13 notice.

Many respondents agreed that some form of compensation should be offered to tenants who are required to leave due to renovations and stated the importance of being offered the right to first refusal. Covering moving costs, considering the location of the temporary accommodation, and meeting accessibility needs were common suggestions related to the Tenant Accommodation Plans. Some respondents also opposed the proposal for landlords to cover any moving or rent-related expenses, suggesting it went beyond a landlord's responsibility.

Specific concern around the senior population came from both a tenant and landlord perspective. Some were worried about the effects of potential displacement and rent increases for seniors, while others were concerned about the ability for long-term landlords to recuperate costs with additional financial burdens.

Other Feedback

Through the survey's open-ended questions, other feedback around the Renovations By-law was received. Some recurring topics included:

- The need for additional supports at the level of the provincial Landlord and Tenant Board
- Improved clarity around the role of the municipality and the province on issues of landlord-tenant relations and the Residential Tenancy Agreement
- Permissible renovation scope, and the ability or inability for tenants to reject the proposed renovations

- Equity for both landlords and tenants when considering the bylaw and its implementation
- Further development of affordable housing projects in the city
- Effective enforcement of the bylaw and appropriate financial penalties for its contravention

Additionally, there were respondents who stated that the bylaw was insufficient, and some who commented that the bylaw was unnecessary and therefore were not supportive. Of the latter, respondents cautioned that a bylaw which might impose additional financial commitment on landlords may provoke some small landlords to remove themselves from the rental market. On the contrary, some respondents noted that the City not acting swiftly would be to the detriment of vulnerable tenants in the city.

Conclusions and limitations

Through this survey, staff sought direct feedback on how the City could most effectively implement the Renoviction By-law with supports for both tenants and landlords. Staff received feedback on ways to clearly communicate bylaw-related information, how to distribute material to reach affected parties throughout the City, and what supports tenants would benefit from when receiving an N13 notice. These suggestions and feedback were considered in the development of the bylaw.

Survey data and conclusions are limited to the respondents of this survey and should not necessarily be generalized beyond the scope of the survey.

Appendix A: Renovictions By-Law Survey Questions

1. Which of the following best describes your role in the Toronto rental housing market? Please choose all that apply.
 - Tenant
 - Landlord
 - Landlord advocate or representative
 - Tenant advocate or representative
 - Legal representative
 - Other (please specify - please do not include any personal information in responses)

2. If you answered 'tenant' to Question 1 above, have you ever been evicted from a rental unit for maintenance, repair, or renovation work? Or have you ever received an N13 notice?
 - Yes
 - No
 - N/A

3. If you answered 'landlord' to Question 1 above, have you ever evicted or tried to evict a tenant to carry out maintenance, repair, or renovation work?
 - Yes
 - No
 - N/A

4. What can we do to make the rules clearer and easier for landlords or property owners who want to renovate their apartments and follow the rules?
Long answer

5. What supports would you suggest that tenants need in order to exercise their rights to prevent a renoviction, and to understand their rights under a future Renovictions bylaw?
Long answer

6. Which method(s) would be the most effective to notify tenants about their landlord applying for a renovation licence? [select all that apply]
 - Canada Post mail
 - Email
 - Notice posted on the rental property

- Internet portal or website
- Personally, by the landlord or their representative
- Other (please specify- please do not include any personal information in responses)

7. What are the most important things for the City to consider as it is developing a Renovictions bylaw for Toronto?

Long answer

8. Please provide the first three characters of your postal code

Short answer