

Improving Access to Housing Working Group Meeting 4 – July 14, 2025

HRAC Members

Ann-Marie Moulton (Working Group Chair)
Lindsey Lemieux
Bee Lee Soh
Harmy Mendoza

Regrets

Chase Gaudet

City Staff

Yolisa de Jager, Housing Secretariat
Brenna Jarrar, Housing Secretariat

External Experts

Kim Adlard, GTA Disability Coalition
David Meyers, Centre for Independent Living in Toronto (CILT)

Housing Secretariat Support

Asha Sivarajah

The meeting of the Housing Rights Advisory Committee's Improving Access to Housing Working Group started at 1:00pm.

Notes

1. Chair Updates

- The Chair provided an overview of the agenda and the context of the consultations taking place.
- The Group also reviewed the Working Group Guidelines, which had been received at the previous HRAC meeting.

2. Consultation with Centre for Independent Living in Toronto (CILT) & GTA Disability Coalition

- **Overview:**
 - In May, the Chair of HRAC and Chair of the Improving Access to Housing Working Group met with representatives from CILT and the GTA Disability Coalition to discuss how their work may align with HRAC's key priorities. As a result, representatives from CILT and the GTA Disability Coalition were invited to engage with the Improving Access to Housing Working Group and provide a formal presentation at the next HRAC meeting on September 16, 2025 ([HS6.7](#)).
- **Presentation from CILT & GTA Disability Coalition**
 - Representatives provided an overview of CILT's mandate and shared that they are a member of the City's Accessible Housing Working Group.

- Shared that many disabled people often pay market rent while facing increased cost-of-living considerations (i.e. medications, accessibility modifications, support needs, etc.).
- Have observed a growing trend where disabled people are being placed increasingly in institutional settings (i.e. long-term care facilities) due to the lack of affordable and accessible/adaptable housing.
- The waitlist for subsidized accessible/adaptable housing units is 14 years (compared to the waitlist for subsidized housing of 10 years).
- Discussed their advocacy efforts with other orders of government to make accessibility updates to building codes and harmonize these updates across jurisdictions.
- Shared potential opportunities for collaboration between HRAC and CILT:
 - Whether there may be interest for member(s) of HRAC to participate on the Accessible Housing Working Group?
 - Whether it may be possible to have various disability partners provide a presentation at an official HRAC meeting?
- **Working Group Discussion:**
 - **Accountability**
 - Discussed who/which City body is accountable for ensuring that the new set of universal design standards, intended to be included in the City of Toronto's Affordable Housing Design Guidelines, will be applied during the development of City-supported and City-led affordable residential units, as per Council direction ([PH15.6](#))
 - **Accessibility**
 - Aging in place should be considered through a human rights and housing adequacy lens because it enables rights holders to remain in housing that is accessible and allows them meet their needs.
 - There are challenges associated with applying accessibility modifications for older TCHC buildings in comparison to newer buildings.
 - **Disaggregated Data**
 - There are data gaps with respect to people with disabilities in Toronto and residing in (or in need of) community housing, supportive housing, and other forms of subsidized housing.

3. Follow-Up Consultation on Access to Affordable Rental Units & RGI Housing

- **Overview**
 - In follow up to this Working Group's consultation with the City's Access to Housing Team at its last meeting (noted in [minutes](#)), on access to affordable rental units and RGI housing, the Working Group submitted [post-consultation questions](#). The City's Access to Housing Team joined this Working Group meeting with responses to these follow-up questions and provided updates on three potential program enhancements with respect to the integration of affordable rental units onto the City's centralized waitlist.
- **Staff Presentation:**
 - Shared that the objective of the integration is to have a one-window application approach, increased transparency and consistency for applicants, and a simple and accessible application process.

- Staff are required to report back to City Council upon the third year of the roll out of the affordable housing unit integration to identify insights with respect to impacts on priority groups.
- New program components that were brought forward:
 - Optical Character Recognition Technology (OCR): which will automatically review Notice of Assessments to grant pre-eligibility status for applications. Since staff foresee an additional 100,000 eligible applicants for affordable rental units, this would enable human resources to be allocated to provide file administration for priority applications and oversight of Choice Based Housing Cycles.
 - Minimum Income Threshold: intended to ensure that applicants who are eligible for affordable housing have income which can cover the full cost of the rent. For income, a Notice of Assessment from the previous year and additional funds (supplemental income, COHB, etc.) would be considered.
 - Launch and Scramble Considerations: Net new applications for affordable housing units received during a certain period of time after the application launch will be scrambled. The intention is to ensure equitable access for vulnerable applicants who struggle with technology and alleviate application anxiety.
- **Working Group Discussion:**
 - **Applying a Human Rights-Based Approach**
 - Since demand for affordable rental units outweighs supply, how will the City ensure that allocation processes are in alignment with a human rights-based approach and prioritize rights holders in greatest need of affordable housing?
 - **Non-Discrimination**
 - The City should consider including a mechanism so Optical Character Recognition Technology (OCR) is not used for applicants who are survivors of gender-based violence, including financial and economic abuse, as their financial history may impact their eligibility for an affordable housing unit.
 - To improve housing adequacy, people must have access to housing that is affordable and enables them to meet their basic needs.
 - The implementation of a minimum income threshold would prioritize applicants based on income rather than need, which is not in alignment with the City's commitment to progressively realize the right to adequate housing using a human rights-based approach, noted in the Toronto Housing Charter.
 - A minimum income threshold creates an income-based barrier for those seeking affordable housing and who may be disproportionately impacted by housing precarity and/or homelessness.
 - **Equity**
 - Those in greatest housing need should be prioritized within the allocation of affordable rental units rather than relying on a lottery system, which does not consider impacts to groups disproportionately impacted by housing precarity and/or homelessness in Toronto.
 - Applicants who are unsuccessful in being selected for an affordable rental unit must have application decisions communicated clearly to

them and in a timely manner, (as these decisions may have a significant impact on their health, well-being, and quality of life).

4. Next Steps

- The Working Group will review options and considerations ahead of the next official HRAC meeting resulting from its consultation with the City's Access to Housing Team, and in particular, human rights-based considerations with respect to the minimum income threshold and prioritization for access to affordable rental units.

Meeting ended at 3:30 pm.