

City of Toronto Proposed Regulatory and Licensing Strategy for Multi-Tenant Houses

Public Consultation Report

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

BACKGROUND

At its October 26, 2016 meeting, Executive Committee directed City Planning and Municipal Licensing and Standards staff to conduct public consultation on the proposed temporary use by-law zoning approach and licensing strategy put forth in the *“Proposed Regulatory and Licensing Strategy for Multi-Tenant Houses and Consultation Plan”* joint report.

The city retained Public Interest Strategy and Communications (Public Interest) to conduct public consultation on a proposed zoning approach that involves implementing a temporary use by-law to allow Multi-Tenant Houses (MTH) in five selected areas where they are currently not permitted and there is evidence of a concentration of illegal and unlicensed MTH. These five areas are:

1. Finch Avenue West, Martin Grove Road, Humber College Boulevard (Ward 1)
2. Finch Avenue West, Assiniboine Road, Black Creek, Keele Street (Ward 8)
3. Finch Avenue East, (Highway 404, Fairview Mall Drive (Ward 33)
4. Steeles Avenue, Highway 401, Highway 404, McCowan Road (Wards 39 & 40)
5. Highway 401, Morrish Road, Military Trail (Wards 43 & 44)

If approved by Council, the proposed by-law would specify a maximum number of dwelling rooms in a Multi-Tenant House in these areas for a period of three years, and also include new use definitions for 'dwelling room' and 'Multi-Tenant House'.

The public was also consulted on a proposed licensing strategy, which would be introduced in conjunction with the zoning in the pilot areas as well as in other areas of the City where multi-tenant houses are currently permitted.

The public was asked to provide feedback on several aspects of both the draft by-law and licensing strategy, including whether the definitions of “dwelling room” and “Multi-Tenant House” are clear, whether the proposed limit of seven dwelling rooms in a MTH is appropriate, and whether the proposed additional licensing requirements are appropriate.

KEY FINDINGS

The consultation activities included six public meetings in the proposed pilot areas, focus groups with key stakeholders such as housing providers, advocacy groups, and

student representatives, an online public survey, and one-on-one interviews with MTH tenants. Generally, the feedback made it clear that any implementation of the proposed changes will require robust education and communication strategies to ensure that all stakeholders understand their rights and obligations. This approach will assist with enforcement, a key theme that emerged throughout the engagement process.

THE DEFINITIONS OF “DWELLING ROOM” AND “MULTI-TENANT HOUSE” ARE CLEAR BUT COULD BE IMPROVED THROUGH SUPPORTING EDUCATIONAL MATERIALS

The definitions of “dwelling room” and “Multi-Tenant House” were generally considered to be clear and understandable by most, but not all participants. However, many suggested that some of the terms embedded in the definitions may not be well understood, particularly by those who are unfamiliar with zoning language and context, including the full range of legislation and regulations that would apply to licensed MTH. In addition, many felt that the definitions should include physical attributes of dwelling rooms, so that people can understand more easily what qualifies as a dwelling room, and therefore as a MTH. It was suggested that supporting educational materials would be helpful in clarifying the definitions.

THE LIMIT OF SEVEN DWELLING ROOMS IN A MTH SHOULD BE BASED ON MTH SIZE

Most participants felt the maximum limit of seven dwelling rooms in a MTH was too high. They advised that it seemed arbitrary and a more appropriate limit should be based on the physical characteristics of the MTH and how many rooms each can accommodate. There was concern that the limit could jeopardize the amount of housing currently provided by existing MTHs in the area if rooms have to be removed or not rented in order to comply with the limit.

THE PROPOSED LICENSING REQUIREMENTS MUST BE ACCOMPANIED BY ROBUST ENFORCEMENT

Many participants appreciate the role of regulations in protecting the living conditions of MTH tenants and neighbours, but cited current enforcement deficiencies as a cause for concern about how well the City would be able to enforce the new proposed requirements.

Participants also offered a broad array of suggestions for further additional requirements, such as a requirement for the MTH license to be publicly posted, for the operator to live onsite, for the payment of fees to lessen any impact on local resources, for the number of dwelling rooms to be limited based on available parking, and for controls against noise and disruptive behaviour.

Others expressed concern that unreasonable and costly regulations would result either in the operator not complying or closing their MTH, putting needed affordable housing in jeopardy.

OPPOSITION TO MTH, BUT IF THEY ARE APPROVED, THEY SHOULD BE REGULATED

Most participants in the public meetings opposed any zoning changes to allow MTH in their neighbourhoods. Nevertheless, many suggested that if they were to be permitted, they should be regulated according to the suggestions made during the consultation.

AFFORDABLE HOUSING IS NEEDED

Many felt that the City should bear more of the responsibility for the provision of affordable housing, as the current MTH market is driven by the shortage of affordable housing, and that local post-secondary institutions should provide more student housing, as MTH provides a great deal of housing for students.

PUBLIC CONSULTATION SUMMARY

METHODOLOGY

Public consultation activities were designed in collaboration with City Planning and facilitated by Public Interest. The public was invited to provide feedback on:

1. The definitions of “dwelling room” and “Multi-Tenant House” in the proposed zoning approach;
2. The recommended limit of a maximum of seven dwelling rooms in a Multi-Tenant House, and
3. The additional licensing requirements in the proposed licensing strategy.

ENGAGEMENT STRATEGY

City staff worked with Public Interest to develop and implement a consultation strategy to ensure maximum participation from the community.

The consultation activities included:

- 2 focus groups: one with housing providers, including operators, and advocates, and one with post-secondary student representatives
- 6 public meetings
- An online public survey
- Two one-on-one interviews with tenants

Public Interest developed and implemented an engagement strategy tailored to ensure maximum participation, with particular attention paid to reducing barriers to participation and ensuring a wide range of perspectives were brought to the table and documented.

Stakeholders consulted include neighbourhoods (the general public), tenants, relevant organizations and institutions, and providers/owners/operators. A confidential online survey was also developed as another opportunity for stakeholders and other interested parties to provide feedback.

The consultation format and facilitation were specifically designed to ensure broad participation from all those who attended and to increase opportunities to capture opinions about the challenges, benefits, and solutions through methods that allowed for rigorous analysis and reporting on findings (see Appendix 6 for Public Consultations Participation, Locations, and Local Findings).

The information, views, and opinions expressed in the findings of the final report do not

represent the views or opinions of Public Interest or the City of Toronto.

DATA COLLECTION

Data was collected using a combination of tools. At neighbourhood consultations worksheets and facilitators' notes were used to record small group discussions (see Appendix 7).

Tenant focus groups were guided by a set of discussion questions, and conversations were recorded (see Appendix 2). Key informant interviews with MTH tenants were also guided by a set of discussion questions (see Appendix 3). Note takers were present at all focus groups and consultations, and qualitative data from key informant interviews was also recorded by a note taker.

Follow-up email feedback was collected and an online survey was used as well.

The structure of the data gathering process was tailored using various methodologies to optimize input from each set of participants. Neighbourhood consultations provided neighbourhoods with open access to the process. The focus groups provided an opportunity for participants to drill down into practical experiences, and the survey was designed to provide anonymous input from residents across the city. Consent was collected from all participants engaged in focus groups and consultations (see Appendix 2.) An emphasis on anonymity was stressed throughout the process and as a result no personal identifiers were attributed to comments made during data collection.

Public Interest was careful to ensure appropriate language was used throughout the process, allowing participants to voice their concerns and offer prospective solutions for MTH-related issues, legislation, and compliance issues. The small group work that took place at large neighbourhood consultations ensured a greater volume of input and greater participation for those who are not as comfortable speaking in large groups. At public meetings where time allowed, each small group reported back their discussions to the group including major challenges with the regulatory and licensing strategy and proposed solutions.

DATA ANALYSIS AND REPORT ON FINDINGS

After all the data was collected from consultations and follow-up correspondence, focus groups, surveys, it was themed and coded as part of the analysis. Themes were drawn from responses to the questions asked as well as other general feedback received from the consultations and focus groups. Every theme was documented and assessed for frequency. Themes were cross-checked by two researchers to make sure no theme was excluded in the final report, and the data was collaboratively checked by the full research team at different stages of the process.

FOCUS GROUPS

DISCUSSION GUIDE

Public Interest developed a focus group guide (Appendix 2) and presentation (Appendix 3) with the support and approval of City of Toronto staff. The focus group guide posed key questions about the proposed zoning approach and licensing regime and was designed to be used in conjunction with a presentation to clarify various aspects of the proposals, as certain aspects of the zoning approach are difficult to describe without visual aids.

PROMOTION

Focus groups were advertised through listserv e-mails, personal invitations, and phone calls, building on contact lists established during the consultation on rooming houses in 2015.

Participants were required to sign consent forms (Appendix 2) before participation allowing for the use of their input to guide the review.

LOCATIONS

The focus groups were hosted at civic centres downtown and in North York to accommodate maximum participation and ensure that the locations were transit-friendly, accessible environments.

FORMAT

The focus groups were hosted by two to three staff, depending on the number of participants. Focus groups were scheduled for two hours, and were recorded. Notes were also taken throughout the focus group. Recordings and notes were reviewed for common themes.

ATTENDANCE

Two focus groups were hosted: one for non-profit and community members who are either housing advocates and/or have experience in supporting clients in finding and retaining multi-tenant housing, and one for students.

The focus group for housing staff and advocates was heavily attended, with 24 participants who signed in and a small number who did not, as they were not required to do so.

The student focus group was attended by 5 participants who were representatives of organizations such as student unions, including representatives from the University of Toronto Scarborough, Ryerson University, and York University. Since the consultation fell outside the academic year, the student representatives emphasized the need for further consultation on campus during the academic year to allow more students to

participate in the consultations and to learn about any potential changes to current housing regulations.

PUBLIC MEETINGS

A total of six public meetings were held – with at least one in each of the areas where the proposed zoning approach is recommended:

**June 6, 2017: University of Toronto
Scarborough Campus** 1265 Military
Trail
36 registered attendees

**June 7, 2017: James Cardinal
McGuigan School**
1440 Finch Ave West
4 registered attendees

**June 12, 2017: Oriole Community
Centre**
2975 Don Mills Road
49 registered attendees

**June 13, 2017: Stephen Leacock
Community Centre**
2520 Birchmount Road
150 registered attendees

**June 15, 2017: Elmbank Community
Centre**
10 Rampart Road
144 registered attendees

**June 21, 2017: L'Amoreaux
Community Centre**
2000 McNicoll Avenue
177 registered attendees

PROMOTION

Public meetings were advertised through various media in an effort to reach as many community members as possible. The meetings were advertised through the distribution of mail flyers to over 29,000 homes in the pilot areas, in five local newspapers, through the City of Toronto website and twitter account, and in some of the local Councillors' newsletters and email updates. Also, notices and invitations were sent to local networks and, where possible, organizations that participated in the City's Rooming House Review in 2015, whose feedback informed the 2016 staff report.

MEETING FORMAT

A consistent format was used at the public consultation meetings:

1. A PowerPoint Presentation by Public Interest explaining the background and context of the study; the proposed zoning approach, including the use definitions and dwelling room limit; and licensing strategy;
2. A question period for clarification; and
3. "Breakout" discussions at tables in the room, with comments recorded by volunteer note-takers to ensure all participants had an opportunity to contribute. Public Interest staff circulated among the breakout groups to assist in facilitation and answer questions.

At the public consultation meetings, community members were asked to sign in, and to indicate if they consent to the disclosure of their contact information to the respective ward Councillor(s) for the purpose of communicating with them further about the proposal. Signing in was not mandatory.

Meeting feedback forms were made available during and after the meeting, and the facilitators encouraged all attendees to fill out the feedback form.

At each meeting, Public Interest staff provided a PowerPoint presentation to explain the proposed zoning approach and licensing requirements. Time was allotted for any elected officials who were present to welcome the community and address the room. Public Interest staff, City staff was present and available to address any questions, comments or concerns raised by the community, and elected officials attended some meetings.

DOCUMENTING FEEDBACK

The public consultation meeting format was specifically designed to document the input and feedback of all those who attended. Note-taking sheets for volunteer note-takers were placed at the tables where attendees were seated, and facilitators handed out the sheets to attendees who were standing in the room. The discussion questions allowed Public Interest to collect comments from every participant, no matter the size of the audience.

The attendees were asked to discuss two sets of questions, and had an opportunity to respond at their table discussion. Their responses were recorded and collected by facilitators at the end of the meeting.

Where time allowed, representatives from each table were invited to provide a brief summary of the key points of their table discussion to all participants in the room.

Comments and questions raised during the question period were also noted and recorded.

REDUCING BARRIERS TO PARTICIPATION

At registration, participants were able to give as much or as little contact information as they felt comfortable with. Those who were worried about confidentiality were not required to provide contact information.

To ensure that there was ample opportunity for participants to engage and have their issues documented at the consultation, a significant amount of time was spent in small groups. This process reduced the barrier of participation for those who were not comfortable speaking in a large group. It provided the space for thoughtful consideration and dialogue about the consultation questions and ensured that more participants' perspectives were heard and recorded than would be possible in a large group format. The process was designed to ensure that participants could discuss the

issues that were most important to them.

Public Interest maintained active facilitation throughout the consultations to continually reduce barriers to participation. Facilitators roved from table to table to ensure understanding of the process, help draw out participation, and in some cases aid documentation of a group's perspectives on the worksheet. If certain participants' voices were not being heard, the roving facilitators could intervene and mediate the conversation, so that as much data as possible could be recorded on the worksheets.

For those participants who still did not feel that their perspective was captured through the process and/or wanted the opportunity to express more of their thoughts, the promotion of the online survey was another feature of the process that ensured these perspectives were captured.

Translation was made available at neighbourhood consultations where advance notice was given.

CITY COUNCILLOR AND CITY STAFF ATTENDANCE

City staff from both City Planning and Municipal Standards and Licensing were in attendance at all neighbourhood consultations. Occasionally they were asked questions from the floor. In addition, some neighbourhood consultations were attended by City councillors and/or their staff. At these consultations, the Councillor and/or staff provided a few words of welcome and their perspective on MTH.

MEDIA

Media were in attendance at three of the six neighbourhood consultations. If a reporter wanted to interview a participant, he or she was asked to move the interview to a place that did not disrupt the process. For media questions of the City, media were referred by Public Interest to City Staff in attendance.

ONLINE PUBLIC SURVEY

OBJECTIVE

The objective of the online survey was to ensure that a diverse representation of participants could participate in a confidential process that was available at any time. As the public consultation meetings were held in proposed pilot areas, the survey also allowed participation from across the city. The online survey also enabled the participation of those who could not attend other consultations due to a variety of issues such as timing, location, comfort in larger groups, or concerns about confidentiality.

In addition, the online survey was an opportunity for those who participated in other engagement processes to make their voices heard further and provide more information.

DEVELOPMENT

As part of the public consultation process, Public Interest developed a survey collaboratively with City staff that was available on-line between May 26 and June 29, 2017.

PROMOTION

The survey was open to the public and was promoted on the City of Toronto website, by City councillors, and to participants in the broader consultation process, including at public consultation meetings, focus groups, and one-on-one discussions.

PLATFORM

The survey was administered using the Survey Gizmo online platform and analysis tools. All survey data was included in the analysis.

REDUCING BARRIERS TO PARTICIPATION

By ensuring a process that was completely anonymous, participants could feel comfortable participating in the survey. By being available online 24 hours a day and completely anonymous, the survey reduced barriers related to confidentiality, convenience, and comfort.

The survey was also kept purposefully short so that time would not be a barrier to participation, and all questions were optional so that there were no forced responses and no pressure to choose responses that did not reflect the participant's perspective or made the participant uncomfortable.

PARTICIPATION AND RESPONSE

A total of 531 responses were received. 321 respondents completed the survey completely, and 210 completed it partially. No responses were disqualified.

ONE-ON-ONE INTERVIEWS WITH MTH TENANTS

OUTREACH

Two interviews were conducted with MTH tenants. Tenants were challenging to connect with, at least in part because some were reluctant to expose their current MTH as operating illegally as there was concern this could jeopardize their home. The focus group that had initially been planned was replaced by a series of interviews with MTH tenants who were identified and referred to Public Interest by advocacy and service organizations.

Tenants reported having lived in multiple MTH over time, in various areas of the City and GTA, in both licensed and unlicensed properties.

FORMAT

The discussion guide originally developed collaboratively between Public Interest and City staff for a MTH tenant focus group was adjusted modestly and used for the interviews (Appendix 3), which took one hour each and were conducted by telephone.

REDUCING BARRIERS TO PARTICIPATION

Interviews were conducted by telephone to allow for flexible timing and location. Tenants were offered anonymity to ensure frank and honest feedback. One interview was conducted with the services of a Tamil interpreter who was present in the room with the tenant, to allow them to provide feedback in their own language.

Consent to participate was given verbally. After consent was obtained, the facilitator led the participants through the discussion based on the key informant discussion guide (see Appendix 4).

KEY FINDINGS

OVERALL ISSUES AND PROPOSED SOLUTIONS

DEFINITIONS OF “DWELLING ROOM” AND “MULTI-TENANT HOUSE”

ISSUES

Definitions are mostly clear, but some terminology is not

Most participants in all consultation activities felt that the definitions were clear. A significant number of participants did find that some of the terms in the definitions or which are listed as not included in the definitions required further explanation. Such terms included “student residence,” “bed-sitting room,” “room,” “cooking facilities,” and “consideration”.

PROPOSED SOLUTIONS

Use plain language

Relatedly, participants recommended plainer language be used overall, which suggests that the proposed terminology might be more easily understood by people experienced with zoning than by those who are not.

Requirements should be included in definitions

The conversations at the consultations began with a question about the definitions, and several participants suggested that additional requirements should be included in the definitions, when, in fact, they might be more appropriately placed in other policies and regulations. The researchers note that some of these requirements may already be captured in the proposed licensing requirements or may be found in other legislation and regulations (such as the Ontario Building Code).

Nevertheless, these suggestions are recorded as received. Summarized suggestions for requirement to be included in the definitions were:

- Dwelling room sizes and physical characteristics; for instance, does it imply four walls and a door?
- Limits on the number of tenants (rather than on the number of dwelling rooms).
- A distinction between MTH and short-term “Airbnb-style” rentals.
- A requirement that the operator live on-site.

LICENSING REQUIREMENTS

ISSUES

Operators may not comply

The proposed additional licensing requirements for MTH generated substantial conversation about the ability and willingness of operators to comply.

Although many participants disapprove of the proposal to allow MTH in their neighbourhood, many also understood the importance of regulations that ensured good living conditions, which benefits MTH tenants and neighbours alike.

PROPOSED SOLUTIONS

Participants felt that these requirements would only be effective if they were accompanied by effective enforcement, including surprise inspections and significant penalties for violations. Significantly, however, many tenants, advocates, and operators also expressed concern that if the cost and burden of compliance are unreasonably high, operators may choose to not comply, or increase rents on tenants with low incomes, or cease operating their MTH, potentially jeopardizing needed affordable housing. They therefore suggested that financial and educational supports should be made available to operators to assist in the transition to compliance. Consultations elicited a large number of possible additions to the list of proposed requirements to increase transparency, compliance, clarity and accountability.

Many of these suggestions for regulatory requirements may already exist in other legislation or regulations, such as the Ontario Building Code. It is critical that MTH tenants, operators, and neighbours understand their rights and obligations. The rollout of the proposed changes should therefore be accompanied by robust education and communications tools and programs in plain language.

OTHER ISSUES

Concern about the duration of the pilot

There is concern about the three-year duration of the pilot. Specifically, participants felt that operators may choose not to comply if it means they provide their information to the City and then the pilot is not extended or made permanent. There was concern that non-compliant MTH could then be identified by the City and targeted for enforcement, despite their good-faith participation in the pilot. Similarly and for the same reason, operators identified that there may not be much incentive to invest in complying.

Questions about evaluation

Participants expressed concern that it is not clear to them how the pilot will be evaluated, how various stakeholders would have input into the evaluation, and how

success would be determined.

FOCUS GROUPS KEY FINDINGS

CLARITY OF DEFINITIONS

During both of the focus groups, participants agreed that while the language itself was clear, certain key words should be explained in more detail.

Housing advocates strongly recommended clearly defining “cooking facilities”, as the term could be taken to refer to a range of appliances from full ovens and stoves to hot plates and electric kettles. There was also concern that simply banning certain cooking appliances, such as hot plates and microwaves, would be difficult to enforce and harmful to vulnerable clients.

Student advocates strongly recommended clarifying what constitutes a “room,” noting that students often occupy “rooms” that are marked off by curtains or other divisions to create separate spaces. The number of dwelling rooms, therefore, may be irrelevant to the landlord, who may decide to divide up three dwelling rooms into six “bedrooms” divided by curtains.

PROPOSED DWELLING ROOM LIMIT

Housing advocates expressed concern for the seemingly arbitrary limit of dwelling rooms proposed for a multi-tenant house. They wondered if existing multi-tenant houses would be grandfathered, and given time to potentially eliminate dwelling rooms if necessary to comply with the limit.

Both groups were concerned that landlords may use the limit of seven dwelling rooms to justify overcrowding by increasing the number of tenants per room in order to receive more rent without breaching the dwelling room limit.

LICENSING REQUIREMENTS

While both groups appreciated the intention for licensing requirements to improve living conditions, there were several concerns.

Clarity needed between zoning and licensing

Housing advocates felt strongly that there should be more information on the difference between licensing and zoning requirements, noting that for laypeople, there may be confusion between the two.

Concern that onerous requirements could jeopardize affordable housing

While participants felt that the licensing requirements would be beneficial for their clients, they were concerned about what it would mean for owners and operators. If

owners and operators felt pushed out of the multi-tenant housing sector, it could dramatically reduce the stock of affordable rental units, which would be devastating for the increasing numbers of individuals that are struggling to find and retain housing, and affordable housing in particular.

Concern that costs of compliance will be downloaded to students

Student advocates were also concerned that any costs incurred by landlords to license or update their properties would be downloaded to students, or that landlords could justify significant rent increases because of the work they may have to do.

Supports needed for operators to comply

Both groups suggested that incentives and support should be available to operators to make the necessary changes, and that without such support, compliance would be difficult to achieve. In addition, operators may be reluctant to apply for a license that is temporary, as they will have exposed themselves to potential future jeopardy if the pilot is significantly altered or not made permanent. Many of the changes are thought to "look good on paper", but would not necessarily result in the operator complying, which could result in inaccurate reporting.

Tenants would be unlikely to report non-compliant operators

The expectation that tenants would report landlords who do not meet the requirements, or made false claims about compliance, did not seem realistic, as reporting their landlord could potentially jeopardize their tenancy.

Concern that property managers have limited capacity to comply

Amongst the student advocacy participants, there was some concern for property managers, who they felt are limited in their capacity to improve residences, particularly if they are not the owners.

Parking is not a significant concern

Both groups agreed that parking requirements seemed unnecessary, as parking is rarely a significant need for tenants. Housing advocates advised that many people currently living in multi-tenant houses cannot afford a car, and rely on public transit. Student advocates advised that students tend to live close to campus and other community amenities such as libraries and do not often use cars.

Develop a MTH registration system

Recommendations included developing a registration system similar to those required for apartments, and that the City of Toronto take a significant role as facilitators rather than enforcers, providing a prioritized list of what must absolutely be required to obtain a license, as well as a list of longer-term priorities for the landlord. Providing funds for these changes was also recommended.

Conduct surprise inspections

Participants also recommended surprise inspections, as they felt that if the landlords know in advance that they may be inspected, they could create the illusion of compliance. Unexpected inspections would provide a truer image of actual living conditions.

Consider a rent cap

The last strong recommendation was to consider a rent cap as well for landlords and operators, as keeping rent affordable is part of the bigger challenge.

ENFORCEMENT

Concern that enforcement could result in loss of housing

There was concern amongst participants about the impact of enforcement when operators fail to meet the requirements. Participants asked about the consequences and penalties and whether it could result in a loss of housing for tenants or an increase in rent.

Stringent requirements and enforcement cause concern about compliance and loss of housing

Both housing and student advocates were concerned for their clients and current tenants, who may face relocation or eviction if the temporary use by-law and expanded licensing strategy are implemented. Another concern was that if fees are not waived for some landlords, they might simply go underground and not register. Given that the communities chosen have significant volumes of illegally operating multi-tenant houses, landlords may not see any advantage to licensing their multi-tenant house.

Make it easy to report non-compliance and receive support

Some participants felt that enforcing the licensing requirements should include a “one-stop shop” for tenants and owners and operators, where people can report challenges with compliance, and be supported in solving those challenges.

For tenants, such support could include being linked to a housing support worker or case manager who can support them in reporting issues, finding other housing, or relocating, with access to funds if needed. Student advocates pointed out that for many students, multi-tenant housing is a short-term accommodation, and that without outreach, they might not see the need to report any compliance issues. Additionally, given that tenants have a difficult time convincing owners and operators to create small improvements in the residence, larger changes may not happen at all.

For landlords and operators, resources should be available to ask questions without consequences, follow up with MLS staff if needed, and access funds for improvements.

While there was some concern for landlords, both focus groups concentrated on the

impact the approach may have on the tenants themselves.

DURATION OF PILOT

There was significant concern in both groups about the three-year trial period.

Participants asked what to expect after these three years; would there be significant incentives for landlords to continue their compliance practices? Participants also asked about the criteria and process for determining whether the trial was successful. They questioned what data would be collected, by whom, and how it would be reviewed such that tenant perspectives would be included in consideration of the impact of the zoning approach. Additionally, as it is only a three-year trial, landlords may not have significant incentive to change anything; it could be potentially difficult to convince them to update the health and safety standards of their property if the approach is seen as a temporary solution.

There was also concern about barriers to participation faced by vulnerable populations in any feedback process. Newcomers and immigrants may require multilingual feedback forms, people struggling with mental health challenges may need to be engaged in different ways, and the LGBTQ community will require outreach to participate. There was also some concern about consultation fatigue, given the City's rooming house review in 2015 and the current consultation. Participants want to see progress on issues already identified.

Lastly, there was concern for the consequences if the pilot project is deemed to fail. Participants were particularly worried that there may be regulations that shut down multi-tenant houses, or that landlords may decide it is ultimately more profitable to have self-contained apartments instead.

PUBLIC MEETINGS KEY FINDINGS

CLARITY OF DEFINITIONS

While some participants found the definitions clear, most did not. Some common recommendations were, in order of most- to least-recommended:

- The definitions are missing key elements, including:
 - A limit on the number of tenants, perhaps based on the square footage of the dwelling room or MTH
 - Consideration of the size of dwelling rooms and MTH.
- The definition of a “room” should better delineate its physical aspects. How big is it? Does it have lockable doors? Windows? Does it require four walls, or can it be curtained off?, etc.

- References to what an MTH "is not", should be better defined, in particular "student residence" and "bed-sitting room".

Some of the terminology in the definitions of "dwelling room" and "Multi-Tenant House" should be more clearly defined, particularly exceptions such as "student residence" and "bed-sitting room." Many participants felt that the definition implied that renting to students in a building would exempt it from the by-law.

- The distinction between MTH and "Airbnb-style" short-term rentals should be addressed and clarified.
- Consideration should be given to defining MTH as a commercial use.
- The zoning by-law should include a maximum number of MTH per geographic area or neighbourhood.

PROPOSED DWELLING ROOM LIMIT

Participants felt that the proposed limit of seven dwelling rooms in a MTH is too high, most often citing a strain on local resources and the changing character of the neighbourhood from predominantly single-family residential homes as the main issues. Other reasons provided were: overcrowding, a strain on infrastructure such as water pressure, water sewage, waste pick-up, fire hazards, as well as taxes being increased due to the need for more services.

Some participants expressed concern about the living conditions of tenants based on living in close quarters.

Feedback relating to the maximum number of dwelling rooms included:

- The number of permitted dwelling rooms should be reduced (various proposals were made between zero and five).
- The number of dwelling rooms in MTH should be determined by the size of the building (i.e. total residential square footage), rather than an arbitrary one-size-fits-all number.

LICENSING REQUIREMENTS

Meeting attendees offered suggestions about additions or revisions to the proposed licensing requirements, but emphasized that the success of any policy will rely on robust enforcement. Many thought that licensing can help manage MTH, but they expressed significant doubt about the City's ability to enforce the requirements, given their belief that there is currently a lack of sufficient enforcement of current by-laws. Feedback and suggestions included, in order of most to least commonly raised:

- The number of residents per room should be limited.

- Owners should be required to live at the property.
- Publicly visible signage should be required to identify MTH.
- Significant fines should be established for non-compliance.

OTHER FINDINGS

- Parking should be limited to a maximum number per dwelling room or MTH. Suggestions ranged from zero, to one per house or per room.
- Many participants felt there was little enforcement of existing by-laws and favoured more aggressive enforcement over new MTH proposals being implemented.
- Many participants expressed strong opposition to establishing any zoning permissions for MTH in their area and felt any MTH would change the character of the neighbourhood.
- Participants also felt the proposal would have to include a robust enforcement strategy for it to work.
- Other participants did support MTH, subject to proper enforcement, as a source of income for homeowners and affordable housing for tenants, such as students, people with low incomes, and newcomers.
- Participants expressed concerns about the risk of negative impact on neighbourhood safety and security from increased traffic, noise, and nuisance.
- Many residents expressed frustration with the by-law review process, feeling that the outcomes were unlikely to change, regardless of the input they gave. In addition, they were unhappy that their neighbourhoods were selected for the pilot, and concerned that this policy would not be implemented in other neighbourhoods, but only in their community. They want to be provided information and opportunities for further participation in decision-making.
- Concern was expressed about MTH potentially having a negative impact on property values.
- Participants believed that the City should be doing more to provide affordable housing to relieve the demand for MTH. Participants also felt that the impact on existing MTH and tenants before, during, and after the pilot should be considered. The risk that tenants could be evicted and that they may not have adequate protections were concerns.
- Participants also believed that the City and post-secondary institutions should be doing more to provide student housing to relieve the demand for MTH.
- Some residents are concerned that international students are exploited by MTH

operators, and more protections should be provided

- Participants wanted a clear understanding of how the success of the pilot will be evaluated.

MTH TENANT INTERVIEW KEY FINDINGS

CLARITY OF DEFINITIONS

Definitions are clear, but not necessarily to tenants who don't read English

There was mixed opinion about the clarity of the definitions of “dwelling room”, with one tenant reporting that they were very clear and straightforward, and the other pointing out that they are not easily understandable to tenants who do not speak or read English. For instance, even the term “dwelling room” itself is language not commonly used by tenants.

Definitions are appropriate, but shared cooking facilities should be mandatory

The interviewees indicated that the definitions of “dwelling room” and “multi-tenant house” are appropriate, including the approach to cooking facilities. It was, however, suggested that if private cooking facilities are not permitted in a dwelling room, shared cooking facilities to which all tenants have access should be made mandatory in MTH.

PROPOSED DWELLING ROOM LIMIT

Seven dwellings rooms is high but appropriate, depending on size and cooking facilities

Tenants suggested that the limit of seven dwelling rooms in a MTH is generally appropriate, although it can be too high in some cases, where the house is not big enough to accommodate them. As one tenant put it, “Five people sharing a kitchen is chaos – two or three can be managed. But it depends on the house; a big house with multiple kitchens may accommodate more.”

Living conditions are related to unit size, and should be managed through licensing

In addition, tenants reported that rooms in MTH with four or more of them tend to be very small, and the living conditions tend to be better when there are fewer, larger rooms. The City should allow four or more rooms, but take care of living conditions through licensing.

LICENSING REQUIREMENTS

Proposed licensing requirements are supported

Tenants felt that the additional proposed licensing requirements are appropriate, and an improvement over the existing ones. They would be beneficial to MTH tenants,

providing them a basis for complaints and to compel compliance by operators. When asked if additional requirements should be imposed, interviewees did not suggest any, but felt that further requirements could be considered as part of the evaluation process.

ENFORCEMENT

Strong enforcement is supported, but operators should have help from the City in complying

The interviewees felt strongly that the proposed licensing requirements would be beneficial to tenants and should be strongly enforced. Tenants largely agreed with the sentiment expressed at public meetings that current enforcement is insufficient or altogether absent. One tenant said that “there’s no downside to enforcement; requirements for MTH should be enforced as much as they are for high-rises”.

Despite their feelings about the need for strong enforcement, the tenants also suggested that landlords should have assistance from the City – including financial support, if necessary – in complying. There was concern that the higher costs of enforcement might be downloaded to operators, and ultimately to tenants. One tenant suggested that rent controls would be needed to ensure that MTH tenants do not end up shouldering the cost of compliance.

SUPPORT FOR MTH ZONING

Increase in MTH will improve housing access and affordability

Interviewees strongly supported the introduction of MTH into areas of the city where they are currently not allowed, suggesting that the increased supply will reduce prices and make it easier to find much-needed affordable housing. Interviewees advised that the primary or sole reason they live in MTH is that it’s all they can afford. They also hoped that it would be implemented without delay or further consultation, although consultation should be part of the evaluation.

The pilot areas should be expanded, particularly into areas with fewer students

Tenants suggested that the pilot areas should be expanded to the whole city. One interviewee pointed out that while many MTH tenants are students, and rent for short terms, many others are not, and limiting the pilot to student-dense neighbourhoods may not allow the city to understand the impact on longer-term tenants or tenants who chose their neighbourhood in order to live close to specific ethno-cultural communities.

Home-owners may not support MTH because of their experience with unlicensed properties

The interviewees spoke of the stigma associated with MTH, and the general opposition of homeowners in the neighbourhood, but suggested that such opposition come from their experience with illegally-operating MTH. However, the problems they associate

with MTH, such as noise, garbage, and partying, would be mitigated by licensing and better enforcement.

DURATION OF PILOT

Concern about the pilot; the changes should be made permanent

There was concern about the duration of the pilot, with the suggestion that it could be “scary for tenants and landlords” because of the uncertainty it creates about their ongoing housing if the pilot is not made permanent, and that it should be made permanent. Making it permanent would improve conditions, whereas they felt that not doing so might make conditions worse. They suggested that at the very least, if the pilot works, it should just be rolled out across the city without further consultation except as part of the evaluation.

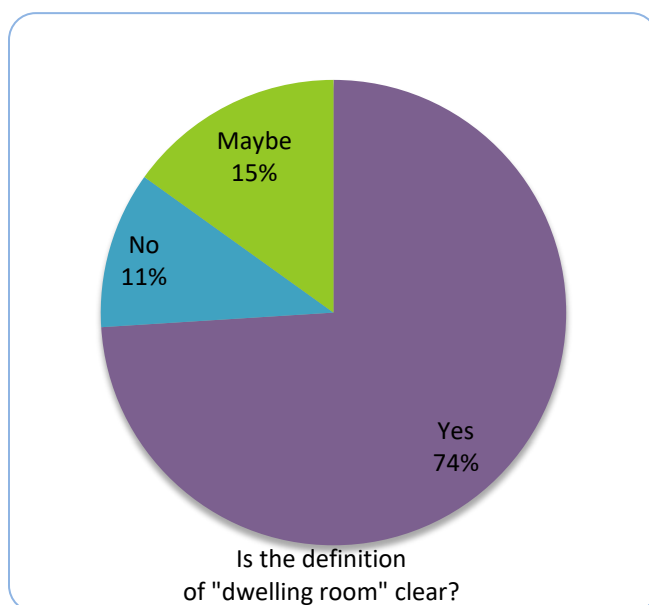
INCLUDE TENANT VOICES IN EVALUATION AND DECISION-MAKING

Tenants indicated that the process of evaluating the pilot should include MTH landlords, tenants, and City staff and should be conducted in more languages than just English. Extra effort should be made to include tenants, as their fear of being stigmatized as low-income may inhibit their participation. Landlords, as well, might be deterred from participating by having to reveal that they are operating an illegal MTH. The results would therefore be skewed towards the views of opponents.

ONLINE PUBLIC SURVEY KEY FINDINGS

PROPOSED BY-LAW DEFINITIONS

Is the Definition of “dwelling room” Clear?



74% of respondents indicated that the definition of “dwelling room” in the proposal is clear. 10.9% said it is unclear, and 15.1% said it is maybe clear.

The most common reason given by respondents (39.7%) for the definition being unclear to them is that the terms in the exceptions, such as “student residence”, “cooking facilities”, “sanitary facilities”, “bed-sitting room”, were not clear and should be better defined.

13.2% of respondents suggested that plainer language was needed. In addition, 13.2% of respondents indicated that the physical characteristics of the room are not clear, making it difficult to understand what qualifies as a dwelling room and what doesn't.

14.7% of participants said that the nature of tenancy was not clear and specific. They wondered, for example, if a lease would be required, and with whom, and what "consideration" meant?

Is the definition of "dwelling room" appropriate?

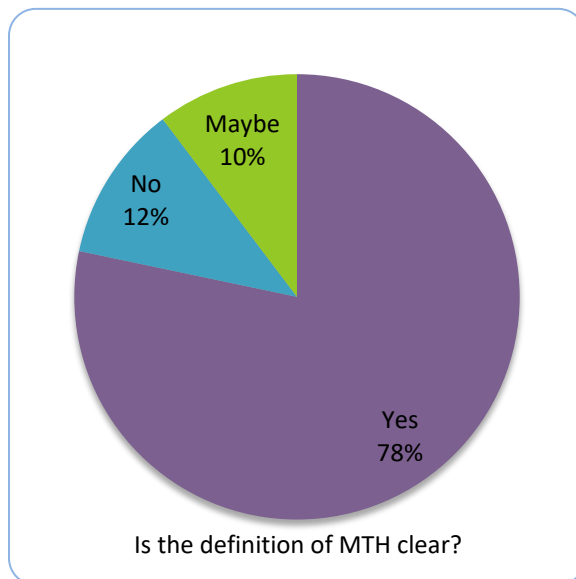
When asked if the definition of "dwelling room" is appropriate, 63.9% of respondents said yes, 18.6% said no, and 17.5% said maybe.

Of those who felt it is not appropriate, 19.8% felt that the definition needed more details, such as the size of the room, the number of people the room will accommodate, what the parking requirements are, and what the length of tenancy is (to distinguish it from short-term rentals.)

37.3% of respondents indicated that the language was too vague, unclear, or complicated, and that plainer language should be used.

8.1% said the definition should include protection for tenants, and 8.1% reported that it requires better distinction from "student residence."

Is the definition of MTH clear?



When asked if the proposed definition of Multi-Tenant House is clear, a majority (78.3%) of respondents said yes. 11.4% said no, and 10.3% said maybe.

The most common reason for the definition seeming unclear is that it requires better distinction from other types of housing, in particular, student residences, apartment buildings, etc.

23.3% of participants simply indicated that the language is too complicated, unclear, or vague.

13.3% of respondents suggested that the definition should spell out the number of

leases in an MTH, and the number of people living there. 6.7% said it lacked reference to the building type, structure, size, etc. and should include such consideration.

3.3% of respondents suggested that the definition should include consideration of whether or not the owner lives in the MTH.

Is the definition of MTH appropriate?

A majority (61.7%) of survey participants indicated that the definition of Multi-Tenant House is appropriate. 20.7% said no, and 17.6% said maybe.

22.9% of respondents who felt the definition is not appropriate said that it is unclear or too vague and that plainer language should be used.

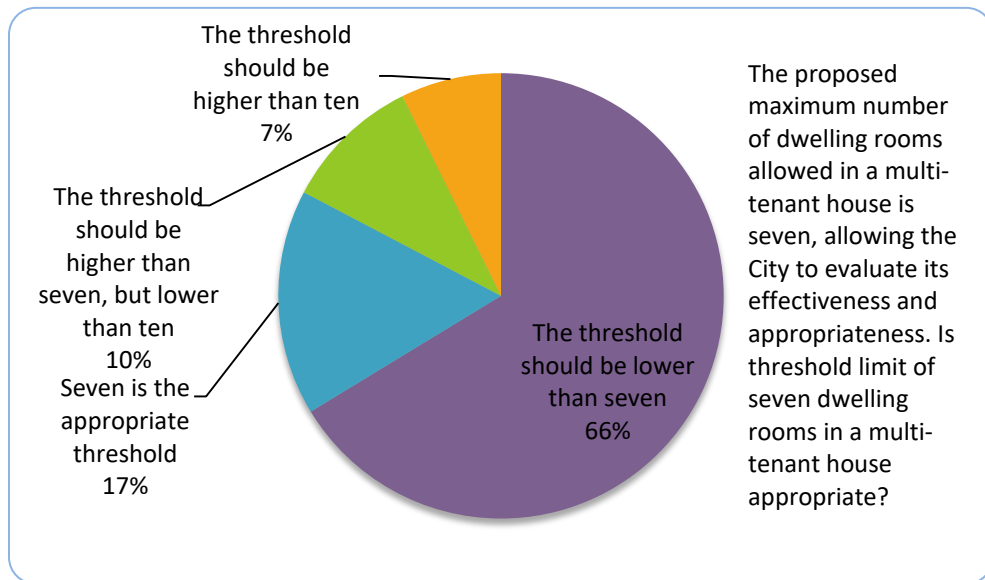
Amongst those who felt the definition is not appropriate, 16.1% said it should include consideration of how many tenants an MTH can include, as well as the number of leases, and the relationships amongst tenants, for example, do family members count?

Some respondents (11.5%) said that student residences should be included in the definition, or that they must be more clearly distinguished. This finding may suggest that participants assume any student dwelling is a student residence, and that an MTH occupied by students may therefore be disqualified as a MTH.

LIMIT ON NUMBER OF DWELLING ROOMS

Is the limit of 7 dwelling rooms appropriate?

When asked if the limit of 7 dwelling rooms in a MTH is appropriate, 66.3% of respondents said it should be lower than 7. 16.4% said that 7 is appropriate, 10% said it should be higher than 7 but lower than 10, and 7.3 % said it should be higher than 10.



PROPOSED ADDITIONAL LICENSING REQUIREMENTS

Which of the proposed additional licensing requirements are most important?

Participants were asked which of the 9 proposed additional licensing requirements for MTH are most important, and ranked them as follows ("fairly important", "very important"):

- | | |
|--|---|
| 1. Annual fire inspections | can be used as a multi-tenant house) |
| 2. Require fire safety plan to be posted on site | 7. Require posting of allowed maximum number of tenants on property |
| 3. Annual property inspections | 8. Site of floor plans of multi-tenant house |
| 4. Waste management plan | 9. Parking plan |
| 5. Property maintenance plan | |
| 6. Zoning review (ensure property | |

Should there be any additional requirements?

When asked if there should be any additional requirements on MTH operators, 15.8% said better enforcement and tougher penalties should be included. 10.9% said that there should be additional property maintenance requirements. 10.3% said that there should be more protections for tenants (mechanisms for complaints, etc.) and 1.3% said that there should be more controls on disruptive behaviours, such as noise, smoking, etc.

9.8% of respondents requested requirements for conspicuous notification and signage identifying the property as a MTH, with contact information for communications and complaints.

5.3% of respondents said that the owner should be required to live on the property, and 4.3% suggested requirements related to size and square footage.

3.3% said there should be fewer regulations.

APPENDIX 1: FOCUS GROUP CONSENT FORM & DISCUSSION GUIDE

FOCUS GROUP CONSENT FORM

Public Interest Strategy and Communications is conducting this focus group on behalf of The City of Toronto, as part of a study to better understand the impact and implications of the proposed multi-tenant house zoning approach and licensing requirements. We are asking you to participate in this project and to provide your opinion on this approach.

Your participation in this project is voluntary. If you decide not to participate, this will not have any impact on programs and services you receive now or in the future from any of the agencies associated with the City of Toronto.

The focus group will take approximately 2 hours of your time and will be recorded so that our partner, Public Interest can review the discussion after it is complete. The facilitator will also be taking detailed notes during the discussion.

Risks and Benefits: There are no risks in your participation.

Anonymity: Focus group participation is anonymous and will remain between the participants and Public Interest. We are asking that you respect the confidentiality of the other participants and do not discuss what they said outside of the group.

Security: The focus group materials (written discussion notes, audio-tapes etc.) will be kept locked at Public Interest, including computer files. Only members of the project team will have access to these materials. They will provide City of Toronto with written summaries of the project and these reports. This report will not identify any of the participants and once the report is completed any or all material written, recorded, or on computer will be destroyed.

If you have any questions or concerns about this focus group, please contact:

CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE

I, _____, have read the above information about the focus group being conducted by Public Interest on behalf of the City of Toronto. I also understand that my participation is voluntary. I understand that I can choose not to answer any of the questions and that I can choose to leave the focus group at any time.

I agree to participate in the City of Toronto Multi Tenant House Zoning Approach focus group.

Participant's Signature

Date: _____

FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSION GUIDE TEMPLATE

Hello, my name is _____. I work at Public Interest and we are conducting focus groups on behalf of the City of Toronto on the proposed Multi-Tenant Housing zoning approach. The public consultations include focus groups with tenants to learn about the City's proposed zoning approach and to get your feedback. In addition, there is an online survey.

Thank you so much for agreeing to speak with us today! I am hoping to learn your thoughts and insights on the topic of multi-tenant houses, often referred to as rooming houses. Our focus group today should take about 2 hours to complete, and I will do my best to keep us on time.

Just a reminder that anything you tell me will not be personally attributed to you in any reports that result from this interview. No personal information is being collected, and no identifying information will be included in any reports.

I'm going to be taping this discussion to help me remember what everyone has said. Please try and speak up and one at a time so that your voices can be captured clearly on tape.

This tape will not be shared with anyone outside of our project team, including the City of Toronto, and no one individual will be identified in our report. I will also ask that what is said in this room stays in this room; we would like to respect everyone's privacy and confidentiality.

No answer is wrong or right. I encourage everyone to express their opinions, thoughts and ideas as freely as possible.

Do you have any questions before we start?

ROUND OF INTRODUCTIONS

To inform this discussion we will begin with a 15-minute presentation about the City's proposed zoning approach for multi-tenant houses.

Ask people to introduce themselves, their agency, and their connection to multi-tenant housing tenants.

DEFINITIONS: (15 MINS)

1. Are the definitions for "dwelling rooms" and "multi-tenant house" we presented clear?
2. Are the definitions for "dwelling rooms" and "multi-tenant house" we presented appropriate?
 - Why or why not? Are they missing anything?
 - Is a limit of seven (7) rooms appropriate? Why or why not?

- How do you feel about excluding private kitchen facilities from the definitions?
- Is this distinction between “dwelling rooms” and “multi-tenant house” important to your work?
- How do you think these definitions will impact multi-tenant housing tenants and other stakeholders, such as owners, operators, and community members?

ZONING APPROACH (30 MINUTES)

3. Are the proposed 5 areas good choices for the zoning approach? Why or why not?
 - What other communities should be considered?
 - How will community members respond to these boundaries?
4. Do you see value of the proposed zoning approach? Is it a good response to the issues often associated with multi-tenant houses? Why or why not?
 - What part of the approach do you suspect tenants or their landlords will have the most difficulty with?
 - What would you see as its greatest benefits?
5. What would be the best way to start implementing the approach to encourage robust participation?

LICENSING

6. Based on your experience, is there a difference between licensed multi-tenant houses and unlicensed or non-permitted multi-tenant houses?
 - Explore differences in operators, owners, maintenance, and health/safety standards.
7. What do you think of the proposed new requirements on multi-tenant operators?
8. Should there be any additional requirements on multi-tenant house operators?
9. What are the barriers to compliance and enforcement/reporting for:
 - Multi-tenant housing operators
 - Tenants
 - Community members

FINAL QUESTIONS (15 MINS)

10. What principles would help the approach operate smoothly?
11. What would you like to see at the end of the pilot (three years)?
12. Do you have any concerns about the trial period being three years?
13. What do you think the overall impact of the zoning approach will be for:
 - Tenants
 - Multi-tenant housing operators
 - Community members
14. Do you have anything else to add? Any comments or suggestions?

End with thanking all participants for their time, and informing them that we will be following up.

Let service providers know they can follow progress on our website and let their stakeholders know there is an online survey and neighbourhood consultations.

APPENDIX 2: FOCUS GROUP SAMPLE PRESENTATION

City of Toronto Multi-Tenant House (MTH) Proposed Zoning Approach

Service Providers Focus Group



Focus Group Purpose

- We're here today to:
 - Discuss the Proposed Zoning Approach for MTH
 - Understand the acceptability of what is proposed
 - Understand your views and perspectives on this approach






Project Overview

- The main objective of the project is to assess the proposed Zoning Approach
 - 4 Focus Groups (2 for service providers, 2 for tenants)
 - 5 Key Informant Interviews
 - 6 Public Consultations
 - Survey
 - Data Analysis
 - Final Report




THE ISSUE





The issue

- MTH are an important component of affordable housing in the City, and part of the City's Affordable Housing Strategy
- A patchwork of by-laws
 - MTH are permitted in former City of Toronto and some areas of former Etobicoke and York



The issue

- MTH have appeared in areas of the City where existing zoning by-laws do not permit them
 - Unlicensed, operating illegally
 - Generate a high number of complaints from tenants and neighbours
- At the same time, licensed MTHs have decreased in the former City of Toronto
- A zoning by-law allows the City to establish use permissions. This enables the City to regulate MTH and improve safety and property conditions for tenants and neighbours





PROPOSED ZONING APPROACH



Proposed Zoning Approach

- City Staff are proposing a temporary permit by-law for 3 years, to permit multi-tenant houses (MTH) in five selected areas where MTH are currently not permitted
- New “use” definitions
- A maximum threshold (number of rooms)



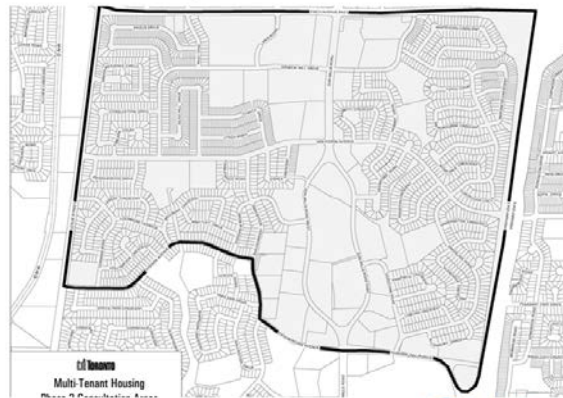
Map of Pilot Areas



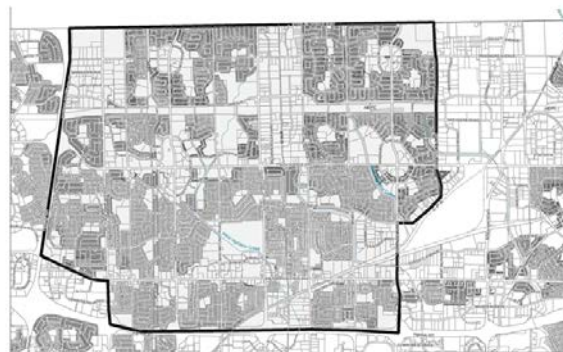
Map of Pilot Areas



Map of Pilot Areas



Map of Pilot Areas




Map of Pilot Areas



PROPOSED AMENDMENTS TO THE ZONING BY-LAW: DEFINITIONS





Dwelling Room

- A room provided, for a fee or other consideration, for living accommodation and which may contain private sanitary facilities but not cooking facilities. A dwelling room is NOT a:

- Bed-Sitting Room
- Room in a Crisis Care Shelter
- Group Home
- Hospital
- Hotel
- Municipal Shelter
- Nursing Home
- Religious Residence
- Residential Care Home
- Retirement Home
- Seniors Community House
- Student Residence
- Tourist Home



Multi-Tenant House

- A building containing more than three **dwelling rooms** that may have private sanitary facilities or shared common facilities for sanitary and cooking. A multi-tenant house is NOT a:

- Apartment Building
- Hotel
- Crisis Care Shelter
- Municipal Shelter
- Nursing Home
- Residential Care Home
- Retirement Home
- Seniors Community House
- Student Residence
- Tourist Home





PROPOSED AMENDMENTS TO THE ZONING BY-LAW: THRESHOLD



Threshold (maximum number of rooms)



- The temporary use by-law proposes to permit a maximum of seven dwelling rooms in any one multi-tenant house
 - basis for establishing a maximum is to evaluate the appropriateness of this use and its intensity



Questions about Definitions and Threshold



- Are the definitions of MTH and dwelling room clear?
- Is the permission for 4-7 dwelling rooms appropriate?



Temporary Use By-Law



- The temporary use by-law means that multi-tenant houses will be permitted in the pilot areas for three years
- This temporary approach will allow the City to assess the appropriateness and effectiveness of the approach
 - May be extended for an additional three years
 - May be revised and/or made permanent



Requirements on Multi-Tenant Operators

Current Requirements on licensed Multi-Tenant Operators

The following are current requirements on licensed multi-tenant operators in the permitted areas of the City:

1. Annual Fire inspections*
2. Annual Property Standards Inspection
3. Fire Safety plan posted on site
4. Licensing Fee

*Fire and property standards inspections are done once every two years for owner occupied multi-tenant houses.

Proposed Additional Requirements on Multi-Tenant Operators

Proposed Additional Requirements

The following are additional requirements that have been identified based on practices in other cities and input from public consultations completed in 2015.

Proposed Additional Requirements	Purpose
Zoning Review	Clarify and ensure compliance with permitted land-use
Property Maintenance plan	Assist operators in understanding minimum property standard requirements and ensure compliance
Site or floor plans	Ensure minimum living standards and quality of living space
Waste management plan	Mitigate impact on tenants and surrounding community
Parking plan	Confirm compliance with zoning by-law requirements
Applicable building permits are cleared	Ensure minimum building standards are met and property is safe for tenants and surrounding community
Written confirmation of the maximum number of tenants	Achieve compliance with occupancy standards and to capture demographic trends

Questions about additional requirements on MTH operators



- What do you think of the proposed new requirements on multi-tenant operators?
- Should there be any additional requirements on multi-tenant house operators?





Questions about tenants





- How do you think MTH tenants will respond to the proposed zoning approach?
- What concerns might MTH tenants have with the approach?
- What overall impact do you expect the proposed zoning approach to have on tenants?
 - Will it change anything in MTH tenants' current housing situations?
- Who should we talk to? Are you able to make referrals to MTH tenants?





Questions about Operators

- How do you think MTH operators will respond to the proposed zoning approach?
- What concerns might MTH operators have with the approach?



Questions about communities

- How do you think MTH tenants will react to the proposed zoning approach to permit MTH?
- How do you think community members will react to the proposed zoning approach to permit MTH?
- What should the City consider when rolling out the zoning in the pilot process?





Questions? Comments?



APPENDIX 3: ONE-ON-ONE TENANT INTERVIEW GUIDE

Hello, my name is _____. I work at Public Interest and we are conducting focus groups on behalf of the City of Toronto on the proposed Multi-Tenant housing zoning approach. Multi-tenant houses are also known as rooming houses. The public consultations include interviews with tenants to find more about regulations and enforcement of multi-tenant house standards, and how the proposed zoning may impact your life. In addition there is an online survey.

Thank you so much for agreeing to speak with us today! I am hoping to learn your thoughts and insights on the topic of multi-tenant houses. Our discussion today should take about an hour to complete, and I will do my best to keep us on time.

Just a reminder that anything you tell me will not be personally attributed to you in any reports that result from this interview. All of the reports will be written in a manner that no individual comment can be attributed to a particular person.

To be clear, living in an unlicensed rooming house is not illegal, nor will we be sharing the identities of anyone in this room to the City.

Do you have any questions before we start?

GENERAL QUESTIONS: (20 MINS)

1. Why did you choose to live in a multi-tenant house?
2. How many other tenants do you share with?
3. What do you like about living in a multi-tenant house? What are the benefits?
4. What do you not like about living in a multi-tenant house?

(Prompts: quality of the accommodation? safety of the accommodation? Location? Other tenants? Neighbours? Landlord?)

5. Would you prefer to live in other accommodations? Why or why not? If yes, what stops you from living in those preferred accommodations?
6. Have you lived in multi-tenant houses in other places within Toronto? If you know, were they licensed or unlicensed?
 - If licensed, how did/does it compare to your current housing?

7. How would you describe your landlord?

[Prompts: think of the first words that come to mind. What have your interactions with them been like, Positive or negative? Are all landlords same? Was anyone better than other?]

8. Do you know your landlord? Do they maintain/operate the property themselves or hire someone to do it?

(Prompts: explore level of maintenance and operation of properties that are directly managed or not. Explore issues around 'absentee landlords')

EXPLANATION OF ZONING AND LICENSING PROPOSAL TO INTERVIEWEE

QUESTIONS ABOUT ZONING APPROACH (30 MINS)

In this section, we will review the definitions proposed by the City for the pilot zoning approach.

Just as a reminder, the [INSERT DEFINITIONS]. We're going to talk about your impressions on the new definitions and the approach itself.

9. Are the definitions clear? *(Do they make sense? If any part of the definition is unclear, what is it? Why is it unclear? What language would clarify the definition?)*
10. Under the proposed zoning approach, a temporary by-law would limit the number of "dwelling rooms" to seven. This means that multi-tenant houses can have up to seven rooms for tenants, with private or shared sanitary facilities (bathrooms) and kitchen.
- How do you think this definition will impact multi-tenant housing tenants?
 - Will it change anything in your current housing situation? *(Encourage listing concerns, and expanding on how these concerns are connected to the approach.)*
11. The temporary use by-laws would permit the licensing of land, buildings, or structures for up to three years as multi-tenant houses, in areas of the city where they are currently not allowed. City Council may decide to approve a further extension for three more years. There is no guarantee that the by-law will be extended beyond the first three years.
- What impact, if any, do you think this trial period will have on your housing situation?

12. Do you think there should be more enforcement of standards for multi-tenant houses? What should be better enforced? Are there any downsides of better enforcement?

- How does enforcement impact your housing?
- What would you do if your multi-tenant house were closed down?

13. There are additional licensing requirements that are proposed in the new approach. [REVIEW REQUIREMENTS]

- What do you think of the proposed new requirements on multi-tenant operators?
- Should there be any additional requirements on multi-tenant house operators?

13. How will the overall zoning approach, including the additional licensing requirements, impact your housing?

- What will it mean for your day-to-day activities?
- What would the benefits of the proposed zoning approach be for you?
- What should the City consider when rolling out the pilot? Are there any supports tenants will need?

14. What are your overall impressions of the proposal?

QUESTIONS ABOUT LANDLORDS (15 MINS)

15. How do you think your landlord will respond to the proposed zoning approach?

- What barriers do you think your landlord will face in complying?
- What would “sell” your landlord on this approach?

MULTI-TENANT HOMES IN THE COMMUNITY (5 MINS)

16. How do you think community members will react to the proposed approach? (Try to explicit specific emotional responses and their reasoning.)

- How do community members currently feel about multi-tenant houses and their tenants?
- Is there any prior community history we should be aware of in your neighbourhood?

FINAL QUESTIONS (5 MINS)

17. What do you hope will happen when the three-year pilot project is complete?

18. Do you have anything else to add? Any comments or suggestions?

End with thanking all participants for their time, and informing them that we will be following up.

Let participants know they can follow progress on our website and let their stakeholders know there is an online survey and neighbourhood consultations.

APPENDIX 4: PUBLIC MEETING PROMOTIONAL MATERIALS

NEWSPAPER AD

City of Toronto Multi-Tenant House Zoning Approach Public Consultation Meetings



Learn about the City's proposed zoning approach for
Multi-Tenant (Rooming) Houses and share your thoughts.

All meetings 6:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m.

Tuesday June 6

University of Toronto Scarborough Campus
Room HW805
1265 Military Trail, Scarborough

Wednesday June 7

James Cardinal McGuigan School
Cafeteria
1440 Finch Ave W, North York

Monday, June 12

Oriole Community Centre
Multipurpose Room B
2975 Don Mills Road, North York

Tuesday, June 13

Stephen Leacock Community Centre
Main Floor
2520 Birchmount Rd, Scarborough

Thursday, June 15

Embank Community Centre
Gym
10 Rampart Road, Toronto

Wednesday June 21

L'Amoreaux Community Centre
Main Floor
2000 McColl Ave, Scarborough

Proposal

A 3-year pilot project endorsed by City Council will introduce a temporary zoning by-law to allow multi-tenant houses in 5 selected areas of the city where they are currently not permitted. This will help the City to assess the effectiveness of the by-law. The proposed by-law will allow a maximum of 7 dwelling rooms in a multi-tenant house.

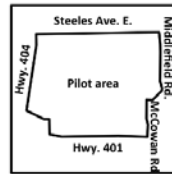
Contact

Visit: toronto.ca/mlshaveyoursay for more info and to take our survey.

SAMPLE INFOGRAPHIC SHARED WITH/BY COUNCILLORS

City of Toronto Multi-Tenant House (MTH) Zoning Approach Public Consultation

Wednesday, June 21, 2017, 6:30 - 8:30 p.m.
L'Amoreaux Community Centre – Main Floor
2000 McNicoll Ave, Scarborough



 <h4>Meeting</h4> <p>Learn about the City's proposed zoning approach for Multi-Tenant Houses (Rooming Houses) in the area and share your thoughts.</p> <p>In this part of the city, the area proposed for the temporary use by-law is:</p> <p>Steeles Avenue, Highway 404, Highway 401, Markham Road.</p>	 <h4>Proposal</h4> <p>A 3-year pilot project endorsed by City Council will introduce a temporary zoning by-law to allow multi-tenant houses in 5 selected areas of the city where they are currently not permitted. This will help the City to assess the effectiveness of the bylaw.</p> <p>The proposed by-law could allow up to 7 dwelling rooms in a multi-tenant house.</p>	 <h4>MTH</h4> <p>In the proposed by-law, a multi-tenant house is a building containing more than three dwelling rooms, provided for a fee or other consideration.</p> <p>A dwelling room is a room used for living accommodation and which may contain private sanitary facilities (such as a bathroom) but not cooking facilities (such as a kitchen).</p>	 <h4>Purpose</h4> <p>Unlicensed Multi-Tenant Houses (previously called rooming houses) appear to be occurring in Scarborough, North York, and parts of Etobicoke. Licensed MTHs are decreasing in areas where they are permitted, mostly in the former City of Toronto and York and some parts of Etobicoke.</p> <p>Zoning by-laws allow the City to regulate and license multi-tenant houses, to enhance safety and improve conditions for tenants and neighbours.</p>	 <h4>Contact</h4> <p>The City of Toronto has engaged Public Interest Strategy & Communications to facilitate community dialogue and welcomes your feedback on the proposed zoning approach.</p> <p>See the website at toronto.ca/mishaveyoursay for more information about how to participate, or to take our online survey.</p> <p>If you would prefer to call, contact Chantal Carey at 416-531-5192 ext. 103, or chantal@publicinterest.ca</p> 
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L'Amoreaux community centre is fully accessible:
<http://www1.toronto.ca/parks/prd/facilities/complex/788/#accessibility>

APPENDIX 5: PUBLIC MEETING POWERPOINT PRESENTATION

Agenda

1. Welcome/Introductions
2. Meeting purpose
3. Meeting Guidelines
4. Presentation: understanding the proposal
5. Questions
6. Breakout table discussions
7. Report back/summary
8. Next steps



Meeting Purpose

- We're here today to:
 - Present the Proposed Zoning Approach and licensing requirements for Multi-Tenant Houses
 - Understand your views and perspectives on this approach





Meeting Purpose

- Consultations conducted by the City 2 years ago on MTHs, overwhelmingly showed that there were many issues in these areas, particularly in terms of **enforcement** and **property standards**
- There are many City policies which recognize the importance of multi-tenant housing:
 - City of Toronto Official Plan
 - Housing Opportunities Plan
 - *Affordable Housing Action Plan*
- Tenants can include students, seniors on fixed incomes, etc. whose incomes only allow them to afford rents offered in MTH
- The City has put together a zoning and licensing proposal to better regulate these houses.



Meeting Purpose

The City has put together a zoning and licensing proposal to better regulate these houses.

Authority/Direction to Staff

- In October 2016, the Executive Committee directed City staff to consult on the proposed zoning approach. The feedback from this and other consultations will help inform/revise the proposal.
- City staff will report back to the Executive Committee before the end of the year on what they heard, **revisions** and recommendations
- Executive Committee will then decide to **refuse, approve or amend** staff's recommendations. Their decision has to be taken to City Council for approval





Meeting Guidelines

To make this meeting useful and productive for everyone:

- One person speaks at a time
- Respect for others' opinions
- Ensure all voices are heard – make space for those who haven't spoken
- Stay on topic





Consultation Overview

- The main objective of the consultation is to get thoughts and feedback on the proposed Zoning Approach
 - 4 Focus Groups (2 for service providers, 2 for tenants)
 - 5 Key Informant Interviews
 - 6 Public Consultations
 - Survey
 - Data Analysis
 - Final Report
 - MLS is also holding information sessions on the proposed changes to licensing requirements in areas of the City where multi-tenant houses are currently permitted to get feedback.







BACKGROUND



The issue



- MTH are an important component of affordable housing in the City, and part of the City's Affordable Housing Strategy
- A patchwork of by-laws
 - MTH are permitted in former City of Toronto and some areas of former Etobicoke and York





The issue

- MTH have appeared in areas of the City where existing zoning by-laws do not permit them
 - Unlicensed, operating illegally
 - Generate a high number of complaints from tenants and neighbours
- A zoning by-law allows the City to establish use permissions. This enables the City to regulate MTH and improve safety and property conditions for tenants and neighbours





Background

- 2014: Phased review of multi-tenant house launched
- 2015: Consultations:
 - 1,500 participants from across the City
 - 559 people attending neighbourhood meetings
 - 127 tenants and stakeholders participated in focus group meetings
 - 742 respondents to an online survey.
- 2016: Staff report to Executive Committee. Recommendations included a proposed zoning and licensing strategy for further consultation.
- 2017: Research, analysis, and consultation with stakeholder groups, and the general public.
- 2017: A report is targeted to be submitted to Executive Committee in September with the consultation feedback and recommendations.





PROPOSED ZONING APPROACH



Proposed Zoning Approach

- City Staff are proposing a temporary use by-law for 3 years, to permit multi-tenant houses (MTH) in five selected areas where MTH are currently not permitted
- New “use” definitions
- A maximum threshold (number of rooms)



Temporary Use By-Law

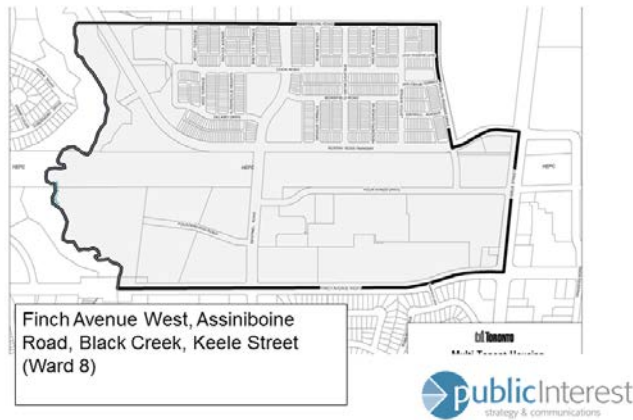
- The temporary use by-law means that multi-tenant houses will be permitted in the pilot areas for three years
- This approach will allow the City to assess the appropriateness and effectiveness of the approach
 - May be extended for an additional three years
 - May be revised and/or made permanent



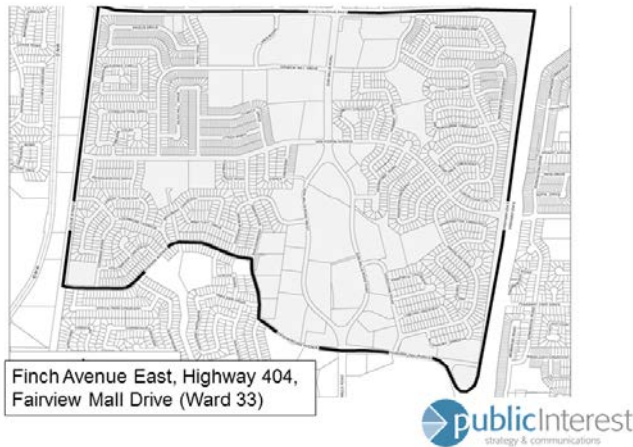
Map of Pilot Areas



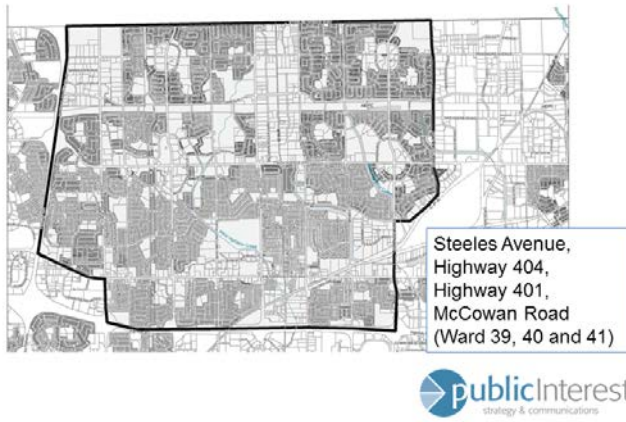
Map of Pilot Areas



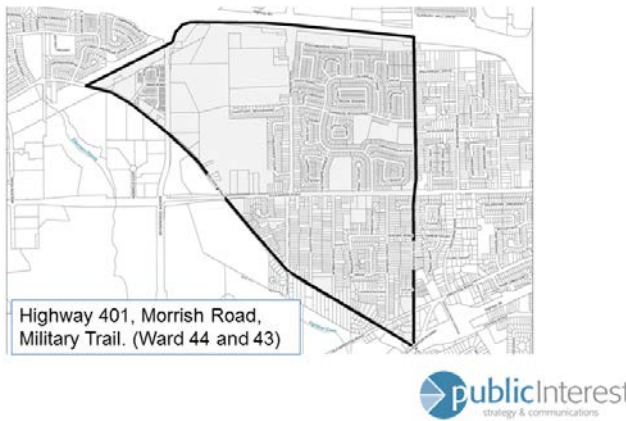
Map of Pilot Areas



Map of Pilot Areas



Map of Pilot Areas



PROPOSED AMENDMENTS TO THE ZONING BY-LAW: DEFINITIONS



Dwelling Room

- A room provided, for a fee or other consideration, for living accommodation and which may contain private sanitary facilities but not cooking facilities. A dwelling room is NOT a:

- Bed-Sitting Room
- Room in a Crisis Care Shelter
- Group Home
- Hospital
- Hotel
- Municipal Shelter
- Nursing Home
- Religious Residence
- Residential Care Home
- Retirement Home
- Seniors Community House
- Student Residence
- Tourist Home



Multi-Tenant House

- A building containing more than three **dwelling rooms** that may have private sanitary facilities or shared common facilities for sanitary and cooking. A multi-tenant house is NOT a:

- Apartment Building
- Hotel
- Crisis Care Shelter
- Municipal Shelter
- Nursing Home
- Residential Care Home
- Retirement Home
- Seniors Community House
- Student Residence
- Tourist Home



PROPOSED AMENDMENTS TO THE ZONING BY-LAW: THRESHOLD



Threshold (maximum number of rooms)



- The temporary use by-law proposes to permit a maximum of seven dwelling rooms in any one multi-tenant house
 - basis for establishing a maximum is to evaluate the appropriateness of this use and its intensity



PROPOSED AMENDMENTS TO LICENSING REQUIREMENTS



Requirements on Multi-Tenant Operators



Current Requirements on licensed Multi-Tenant Operators

The following are current requirements on licensed multi-tenant operators in the permitted areas of the City:

1. Annual Fire inspections*
2. Annual Property Standards Inspection
3. Fire Safety plan posted on site
4. Licensing Fee

*Fire and property standards inspections are done once every two years for owner occupied multi-tenant houses.



Proposed Additional Requirements on Multi-Tenant Operators





Proposed Additional Requirements

The following are additional requirements that have been identified based on practices in other cities and input from public consultations completed in 2015.

Proposed Additional Requirements	Purpose
Zoning Review	Clarify and ensure compliance with permitted land-use
Property Maintenance plan	Assist operators in understanding minimum property standard requirements and ensure compliance
Site or floor plans	Ensure minimum living standards and quality of living space
Waste management plan	Mitigate impact on tenants and surrounding community
Parking plan	Confirm compliance with zoning by-law requirements
Applicable building permits are cleared	Ensure minimum building standards are met and property is safe for tenants and surrounding community
Written confirmation of the maximum number of tenants	Achieve compliance with occupancy standards and to capture demographic trends



QUESTIONS ON THE PROPOSAL



Quick review of breakout discussion guidelines

- We want to hear as many voices as possible.
- There are lots of ways to participate in the discussion.
- We want to respect what people say, even if it does not match our thoughts.
- We want to be aware of not shutting down any voices.



Table Discussions



Questions about Zoning Definitions and Threshold

1. Are the definitions of MTH and dwelling room clear?
 - Yes / No – be specific re: why or why not?
 - Anything we should add or delete from the definition?
2. Is a maximum number of 7 dwelling rooms the right number?
 - Should it be higher or lower – be specific re: why or why not
3. Do you think the proposed zoning approach will be beneficial for the neighbourhood?
 1. Yes / No – be specific re: why or why not?

Questions about Licensing requirements

1. Do you think the proposed additional licensing requirements will help manage multi-tenant house properties?
 - Yes/No – be specific re: why or why not?
2. Would you add or remove any requirements? Why/ why not?



Report back



- Purpose of report back is to quickly share one key point from each of your table so that the entire room can hear the similarities or differences in comments.
- Pick one key point raised at your table.



Online Survey



www.toronto.ca/mlshaveyoursay



Thank you for your thoughts and participation!



City of Toronto
Multi-Tenant House (MTH)
Proposed Zoning Approach

Public Consultation Presentation



APPENDIX 6: BREAKOUT DISCUSSIONS QUESTIONS AND WORKSHEET

Group Discussion

As a group, please discuss the following questions.

- Please choose one note taker to **write down all comments** in the space below – this is what we will use to report to the City of Toronto!

There will be an opportunity to share these discussions with the larger group at the end of your smaller group discussion. Please choose one person to report back to the larger group. **Prioritize one main point for each question for reporting back to the room.** Thank you!

Questions about Zoning Definitions and Maximum Number of Dwelling Rooms

1. Are the definitions of MTH and dwelling room clear?
 - Yes / No – be specific re: why or why not?
 - Anything we should add or delete from the definition?
2. Is a maximum number of 7 dwelling rooms the right number?
 - Should it be higher or lower – be specific re: why or why not?
3. Do you think the proposed zoning approach will be beneficial for the neighbourhood?
 - Yes / No – be specific re: why or why not?

Questions about licensing requirements

1. Do you think the proposed additional licensing requirements will help manage multi-tenant house properties?
 - Yes/No – be specific re: why or why not?
4. Would you add or remove any requirements? Why/ why not?

APPENDIX 7: PUBLIC CONSULTATIONS PARTICIPATION, LOCATIONS, AND LOCAL FINDINGS

JUNE 6, 2017

UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO SCARBOROUGH CAMPUS
1265 MILITARY TRAIL

A community consultation meeting was held on June 6, 2017 at the University of Toronto Scarborough Campus, principally for proposed pilot area bounded by Highway 401, Morrish Road, Military Trail (Wards 44 and 43).

A total of 36 community members signed in to the public consultation meeting on June 6, 2017. Additionally, there were a significant number of people who attended but did not sign in, as it was not mandatory to do so.

QUESTIONS OF CLARIFICATION

Following the presentation, attendees had a number of clarifying questions.

Participants questioned why this area was selected as part of the pilot, and why it didn't go further east.

Questions included how the proposal would apply to families with a number of individuals living together, and whether family and/or roommate relationships are addressed in the proposal. In addition, there was a lack of clarity about what qualifies as student housing, and whether having students as tenants would exclude MTH from the by-law. Questions were also asked about how this bylaw affects short-term "Airbnb-style" rentals and Toronto Community Housing properties.

Attendees cited Highland Creek as a designated village and asked what would be done to maintain its integrity. Will properties be required to display signage that identifies it as a MTH? There was concern that it would be turned into a "party town".

Questioners expressed frustration with the lack of enforcement of the existing bylaws, and asked how it would be possible to enforce the new ones.

SUMMARY OF KEY FINDINGS

DEFINITIONS OF "DWELLING ROOM" AND "MULTI-TENANT HOUSE"

Zoning definitions – Clarity needed on exceptions

Many of the participants felt that the definitions were not clear, particularly “dwelling room”, and recommended that it should be expanded to further define the uses/rooms that are “not a dwelling room”.

LIMIT

Limit too high; should be no more than five

Most attendees felt the maximum number of seven dwelling rooms was too high for one home, and suggested that a MTH should be allowed no more than five dwelling rooms. It was often recommended during the consultation that the number of dwelling rooms should be specific to each Multi-Tenant House, and based in some way on square footage, rather than a one-size-fits-all approach.

PROPOSED LICENSING REQUIREMENTS

Lack of confidence in enforcement of licensing requirements

Many attendees did not feel confident in the enforcement of the proposed by-laws relating to licensing and requirements, as they feel the City has difficulty managing and enforcing existing licensing requirements.

Some participants suggested higher licensing fees for MTH in the area, and felt they would feel more comfortable with the proposed licensing requirements if there were regular drive-by inspections, more City staff dedicated to conducting regular inspections and enforcement, and harsher penalties for non-compliance.

OTHER FINDINGS

Opposition to Multi-Tenant Houses in the area

A large number of attendees expressed outright opposition to zoning permissions for Multi-Tenant Houses in the area, indicating it would change the character of the neighbourhood. They also expressed concerns that their neighbourhood would account a disproportionate amount of the city’s need for affordable housing, and that there is insufficient institutional student housing provided by the University.

Opposition to the three-year pilot study; clarity needed on next steps

The overwhelming majority of the attendees at the public consultation meeting expressed opposition to the introduction of the three-year pilot study in their neighborhood. Questions were raised about the next steps after the three years have ended. Attendees wondered where the tenants would go if the zoning were reverted at the end three-year period. Further, they expressed doubt that owners would invest in turning their home into a MTH when there is uncertainty around whether the permissions will remain after three years.

Parking is a concern

Participants noted that parking will also be an issue if it is not somehow restricted to a maximum number per dwelling, rather than per person living in the Multi-Tenant House- many noted that seven parking spaces is a very high number for a MTH. It was unclear to participants how exactly parking would be managed.

Concern about impact on Property Value

Many attendees felt the MTH located in their area will contribute to a devaluing of their property. They cited poor maintenance of MTH due to the fact that the owners or landlords often do not live in building and are unable or unwilling to keep on top of repairs. Attendees took issue with a possibility of taxes being increased in the neighborhood due to increase in services such as garbage collection, etc.

OTHER CONCERNS

Other concerns raised included that Highland Creek is a family neighborhood with single-family dwellings. It was also raised that tenants of Multi-Tenant Houses are often short term and that their residents have no investment in the property and neighborhood and therefore may fail to dispose of garbage properly. Attendees felt if owners of these MTH lived onsite, it might help to mitigate the various problems around property maintenance that neighborhoods have with MTH. An increase in noise levels was also mentioned as a concern with permitting Multi-Tenant Houses in the area for some attendees. Concerns were also raised about safety in the neighborhood, particularly that of children in schools in the area resulting from an increased turnover of residents in the neighbourhood if MTH are allowed.

JUNE 7, 2017

JAMES CARDINAL MCGUIGAN SCHOOL
1440 FINCH AVE WEST

A community consultation meeting was held on June 7, 2017 at James Cardinal McGuigan School in North York, principally for the community roughly bounded by Finch Avenue West, Assiniboine Road, Black Creek, Keele Street (Ward 8).

A total of four community members signed in to the public consultation meeting on June 7, 2017. Additionally, there was a small number of people who attended but did not sign in, as it was not mandatory to do so. A total of one set of discussion question handouts was filled out by attendees. Public Interest had a note taker transcribing the attendees' responses to the questions asked about the proposed zoning by-laws.

QUESTIONS OF CLARIFICATION

QUESTIONS ABOUT THE PILOT PROCESS, TIMELINES, AND EVALUATION

During the question period following the presentation, participants wanted to know when to expect these changes, and more generally what the next steps are. They also asked about how the proposal would be assessed after the three-year pilot.

QUESTIONS ABOUT DEFINITIONS AND ROOM SIZES

There were questions about how a student residence is defined, and how the limit of seven was determined, with a suggestion that it should be determined by the square footage of a house (90 square feet was mentioned by one attendee), rather than an arbitrary number. Participants also asked about how the zoning would take into account large families.

SUMMARY OF KEY FINDINGS

DEFINITIONS OF "DWELLING ROOM" AND "MULTI-TENANT HOUSE"

Definitions are clear

Attendees generally felt the definitions were clear, but some felt that they could be clearer to help landlords and tenants better understand whether or not their property qualifies as a MTH.

LIMIT

Uncertainty about limit; should be based on size of a MTH or rooms

Most attendees were uncertain about seven dwelling rooms being the right number. It

was strongly recommended during the consultation that the number of rooms in a given MTH should be based somehow of the square footage of the rooms and building overall.

PROPOSED LICENSING REQUIREMENTS

There is a need for MTH, but enforcement is required

Attendees felt there is a need for multi-tenant housing but suggested the City pay special attention to enforcement of licensing and regulations if implementing the proposed by-laws.

JUNE 12, 2017

ORIOLE COMMUNITY CENTRE 2975 DON MILLS ROAD

A community consultation meeting was held on June 12, 2017 at Oriole Community Centre in North York, principally for the community roughly bounded by Finch Avenue East, Leslie Street, Highway 404, Fairview Mall Drive (Ward 33).

A total of 49 community members signed in. Additionally, there were a significant number of people who attended but did not sign in, as it was not mandatory to do so.

QUESTIONS OF CLARIFICATION

OPPOSITION TO MTH IN THE AREA

Many attendees spoke out following the presentation in outright opposition to the proposed zoning, citing potential change to the character of the neighbourhood, and a sense that this proposal would not be made in wealthier neighbourhoods. In addition, there was a suggestion that while affordable housing is needed, an area with a high student population is not the appropriate choice, as students were said to be more transient and “not looking to put down roots in the area”.

QUESTIONS ABOUT HOW IT AFFECTS EXISTING PROPERTIES

It was clear during the question period that there was some confusion about how the proposed zoning might apply to existing properties, for example, those with fewer than three rooms for rent, or with multiple family members living there. There were questions about how and why this area was selected to be part of the pilot. In addition, there were questions about how many people will be allowed per dwelling room, and what the parking plan will be.

QUESTIONS ABOUT ABSENTEE LANDORDS AND COMMERCIAL DESIGNATION

Concerns were expressed about absentee landlords who cannot be contacted to deal with property maintenance, and a suggestion that property managers should be mandatory. Clarity was needed about how this proposal relates to the City’s approach to short-term “Airbnb-style” rentals. In addition, there was doubt that landlords would opt to register and comply with they are already “getting away with” operating illegally, and there is no certainty that the pilot will be made permanent. There were questions about what tax rate – residential or commercial – would be applied to MTH owners.

QUESTIONS ABOUT ENFORCEMENT

There were questions as well about current enforcement, and a call for it to be better.

SUMMARY OF KEY FINDINGS

DEFINITIONS OF “DWELLING ROOM” AND “MULTI-TENANT HOUSE”

Opposition to MTH in the area

There was strong opposition to zoning permissions for them in the neighbourhood, especially with the current state of enforcement of existing illegal MTH.

There is recognition of the need for affordable housing and MTH

There was some recognition of the need for affordable housing and Multi-Tenant Houses,

Definitions should include a set number of people per room

Attendees felt that the definitions were too broad – particularly “dwelling room”. They suggested that the definition include the number of people per room.

LIMIT

Limit should be Lower

The majority of attendees felt the number of seven rooms is too high and should be lowered to no more than four rooms, especially if there is no limit on the number of people per room and shared facilities are limited. Attendees also suggested that each dwelling room should have lockable doors.

PROPOSED LICENSING REQUIREMENTS

Licensing can help manage MTH, but only with better enforcement

Many attendees felt the licensing requirements can help manage the MTH if they are properly and regularly enforced. They also felt that work should be done on bringing existing illegal MTH up to code before implementing this proposal.

Other opinions shared were to fine and shut down existing illegal MTH before implementing these new zoning by-laws.

OTHER FINDINGS

Mixed opinions on benefits of MTH

Some attendees felt this pilot could be beneficial for the neighborhood, as long as licensing and regulations are regularly enforced. Many other attendees felt having MTH in their neighborhood would not be a good fit, as they feel MTH, citing concerns about cleanliness and aesthetics.

JUNE 13, 2017

STEPHEN LEACOCK COMMUNITY CENTRE
2520 BIRCHMOUNT ROAD

A community consultation meeting was held on June 13, 2017 at Stephen Leacock Community Centre in Scarborough, principally for the community roughly bounded by Steeles Avenue, Highway 404, Highway 401, McCowan Road (Ward 39 and 40).

A total of 150 community members signed in to the public consultation meeting on June 12, 2017. Additionally, there were a significant number of people who attended but did not sign in, as it was not mandatory to do so.

QUESTIONS OF CLARIFICATION

FRUSTRATION WITH PROCESS

Following the presentation, attendees had a number of questions. Generally, they expressed frustration that the proposal to permit MTH “keeps coming back” despite past consultations where opposition has been expressed, and that the proposal is perceived to be a “done deal”.

OPPOSITION TO ESTABLISHING MTH IN THE AREA

Participants feel allowing MTH in the area would negatively affect the character of the neighbourhood by increasing disruptive activities.

QUESTIONS ABOUT COMPLIANCE AND ENFORCEMENT

Frustration with insufficient enforcement of existing bylaws was also a common theme, and a lack of confidence that appropriate resources will be applied to it. Questions were asked about how this neighbourhood was chosen as part of the pilot, with a suggestion that it would make more sense in neighbourhoods closer to the subway. There was doubt that owners would register and comply, as they’ve been able to operate for years without doing so.

CONCERN FOR TENANTS

At least one participant expressed concern about what would happen to MTH tenants if the pilot is not made permanent. In addition, at least one participant was concerned that MTH operators exploit students and other vulnerable populations, hiding cash payments and not providing receipts.

SUMMARY OF KEY FINDINGS

DEFINITIONS OF “DWELLING ROOM” AND “MULTI-TENANT HOUSE”

Definitions should include size and number of people per room

A large majority of the attendees indicated that the definitions were not clear, and that on the definitions should include the maximum number of persons allowed per dwelling room, as well as the minimum square footage of dwelling rooms. Attendees felt that the number of dwelling rooms, as well as the number of people allowed per room, should depend on the square footage of the room.

“Student residence” needs clarification

Attendees also felt that the definition of dwelling room needs more clarity – particularly the distinction between a dwelling room and a student residence.

MTH should be designated commercial

Participants also wanted a consideration of multi-tenant houses as commercial businesses.

Landlords should be required to live onsite and post signage

There were numerous questions about whether or not the landlord/owner of the MTH is would be required to live on the premises, with a strong suggestion that they should. Participants felt this requirement would help ensure that operators maintenance take better care of maintenance. Participants also suggested that conspicuous signage should be required indicating they are a legal MTH.

LIMIT

Limit is too high without restriction on residents per room; will be a drain on resources

Most attendees were opposed to the suggested limit of seven dwelling rooms. Attendees felt that number is too high, especially if there is no limit on the number of people living in an MTH. Attendees were concerned the influx of tenants would be a drain on resources such as sewage/water consumption, parking, and would affect property standards in the area. It was suggested the limit should be much lower, with many people suggesting a maximum of 2 dwelling rooms.

PROPOSED LICENSING REQUIREMENTS

Licensing is not supported without effective enforcement

When it came to discussing the licensing requirements, participants had little confidence in proper enforcement of the proposed requirements, as they felt enforcement of existing by-laws is already lacking.

Discussion participants noted that the proposal does not lay out exactly how the City will enforce the by-laws, and if the City will increase their budget to provide more staff

dedicated to enforcement of new and existing legal and illegal MTH.

Properly enforced licensing requirements will help manage MTH

On the other hand, some attendees felt these proposed by-laws, if properly enforced, can help manage MTH.

OTHER FINDINGS

General Opposition to establishing MTH in the area

Most attendees said that they oppose the City moving forward with introducing bylaws to allow MTH in their area.

Universities should provide more housing

It was also noted by attendees that universities need to play a bigger role in providing adequate housing for their students.

Mixed feeling about benefits of Multi-Tenant Houses

Many attendees did not feel that zoning permissions for MTH would be beneficial to their neighborhood. There was great concern from attendees regarding the maintenance of MTH, including garbage build up, increased noise, increased traffic and high turnover of residents and visitors in the area.

There was also concern about MTH owners abusing tenant rights.

Some attendees, however, felt the MTH would be good for the neighborhood, as it can give homeowners a chance to bring in revenue by renting their home using an MTH approach, as well as provide housing for those in need.

Increased strain on services

Attendees also felt that an increase in tenants as a result of MTH in their neighborhood would be a strain on resources such as garbage collection, water pressure/usage, and parking spaces. Attendees felt that traffic would likely increase, affecting the safety of youth and seniors in the neighbourhood.

Additional clarifications to definitions required

Attendees also felt more details should be provided in the definitions related to parking, garbage disposal and maintenance of the property.

JUNE 15, 2017

ELMBANK COMMUNITY CENTRE 10 RAMPART ROAD

A community consultation meeting was held on June 15, 2017 at Elmbank Community Centre (Etobicoke York), principally for the community roughly bounded by Finch Avenue West, Martin Grove Road, Humber College Boulevard (Ward 1).

A total of 144 community members signed in to the public consultation meeting on June 15, 2017. Additionally, there were a significant number of people who attended but did not sign in, as it was not mandatory to do so.

QUESTIONS OF CLARIFICATION

Following the presentation, attendees asked a number of questions.

QUESTIONS ABOUT DISTINCTION BETWEEN MTH AND STUDENT RESIDENCES

There was a question of clarification about the distinction between student residences and MTH, in addition to how many people will be allowed in a MTH, and how much parking will be required.

QUESTIONS ABOUT GRANDFATHERING EXISTING MTH

There were questions as well about existing MTH and whether or not they would be grandfathered as they are, if the new zoning were approved.

QUESTIONS ABOUT ENFORCEMENT

The question of enforcement of existing and potential illegal or non-complaint rooming houses was asked repeatedly.

QUESTIONS ABOUT PROCESS: ESTABLISHING, MONITORING, AND EVALUATING

In addition, attendees wanted more information and clarity about the process of establishing, monitoring, and evaluating the proposal after the three-year pilot. They felt that Humber College was not doing its share to address student housing needs in the neighbourhood, placing the burden unfairly on neighbourhood residents.

QUESTIONS ABOUT PUBLIC NOTIFICATION

One questioner wanted to know if any sort of visible permit or notification would be required for the public.

SUMMARY OF KEY FINDINGS

DEFINITIONS OF “DWELLING ROOM” AND “MULTI-TENANT HOUSE”

Definitions should be clarified; include size of room; limit tenants-per-room

While some attendees said the definitions of “dwelling room” and “Multi-Tenant House” are clear, many others communicated that they are not, particularly “dwelling room”. Participants felt that the number of tenants should be included in the definition and limited to two people per room.

Attendees felt that the size of the MTH should be considered, and the square footage of each room, as the building and rooms should not be too small a space for people living there.

Other recommendations to add to the definition were to ensure landlords/owners live in the MTH, to include the type of parking allocated and how many spots available, as well as penalties if the owner does not meet the regulations.

LIMIT

Mixed opinions about limit, but it should be lower

Some attendees were fine with the number of dwelling rooms suggested, but many others felt seven dwelling rooms is too high for one MTH, and should be lowered. Some attendees expressed that there should be no dwelling rooms at all, while others suggested lowering the limit to a maximum of five rooms is sufficient.

PROPOSED LICENSING REQUIREMENTS

Lack of confidence in licensing without better enforcement

A large majority of attendees had doubts about the proposed licensing and requirements proposed, as they felt the City cannot manage enforcing laws and regulations with existing MTH that are operating illegally.

Attendees felt very strongly about enforcement, and insisted it be stricter if the City adopts this proposal. It was also mentioned several times that there should be higher fines for MTH owners who do not comply with licensing and requirements.

OTHER FINDINGS

Owners should live onsite

Attendees suggested that the City add a requirement that owners/operators MTH must live on the premises, as well as provide up-to-date contact info for City staff conducting enforcement.

Opposition to Three-year pilot study

The majority of attendees expressed opposition to the three-year pilot. Attendees felt that MTH are not a good fit for their neighborhood and questioned the City about moving the pilot to another neighbourhood.

Concern about noise levels and wildlife

Other concerns expressed by attendees were the increased noise levels they felt MTH would bring. Many attendees felt that MTH would result in more garbage and wildlife such as raccoons, etc.

Safety concerns

Safety was a major concern for attendees, as they felt crime will increase in their neighborhoods with the addition of MTH.

Strain on parking

Parking was another concern. Participants do not want cars to be parked on lawns, and do not want an increase in cars from the potential increase of MTH, as this will put too many cars on the street and take up parking spaces.

Should be taxed as commercial properties

Attendees suggested City staff apply higher taxes to MTH since the attendees consider them more commercial operations, rather than single dwelling homes.

JUNE 21, 2017

L'AMOREAUX COMMUNITY CENTRE
2000 MCNICOLL AVENUE

A community consultation meeting was held on June 21, 2017 at L'Amoreaux Community Centre (Scarborough), principally for the community roughly bounded Steeles Avenue, Highway 404, Highway 401, McCowan Road (Ward 39 and 40).

A total of 177 community members signed in to the public consultation meeting on June 21, 2017. Additionally, there were a significant number of people who attended but did not sign in, as it was not mandatory to do so.

SUMMARY OF KEY FINDINGS

DEFINITIONS OF "DWELLING ROOM" AND "MULTI-TENANT HOUSE"

Definitions not clear, and should include room size, maximum number of tenants, and limit on MTH per area

Few attendees thought the definitions "dwelling room" and "Multi-Tenant House" were clear, and thought they should include information about the size of each dwelling room, the maximum number of people allowed in each dwelling room, and how many MTH are allowed per area. In addition attendees were confused by the difference between a dwelling room and a bed-sitting room. Attendees requested further details on what a bed-sitting room is and whether dwelling room would have windows.

LIMIT

Limit too high, should be a maximum of three or based on room size, with limit on tenants per room

With regards to the limit level of seven rooms in one MTH, a large amount of attendees said this number is too high and should be lowered. There was an overwhelming consensus the current effective maximum of three "rooms for rent" should be kept.

Attendees also felt that the number of dwelling rooms should be based on square footage of a room and there should be a limit on the number of people living in each dwelling room.

PROPOSED LICENSING REQUIREMENTS

Some support licensing if it works but have doubts about enforcement

Most attendees felt the licensing requirements suggested would not work since the City has great difficulty managing existing illegal MTH.

Many attendees felt however, that if the City can strengthen their enforcement resources and activities, the proposed licensing requirements would be a good idea.

OTHER FINDINGS

Owners should live on premises

Attendees requested a stipulation be put in the definition to require owners to reside on the premises.

Safety concerns – crime, fire, strangers

During discussions, participants expressed safety concerns related to MTH, citing crime, and unknown, short-term tenants coming in and out of the property. There was concern about fire hazards due to overcrowding as well as maintenance of the property not being kept up. They felt that MTH would not benefit their neighborhood.

Operators should pay for increased demand in resources

Attendees had a major concern that MTH would lead to higher taxes due to an increased demand for municipal resources, and that MTH owners are not required to pay for the increase. They suggested that MTH are really more of a commercial than a residential use and should be taxed accordingly.

Some support for the temporary use by-laws – housing and additional income

Many other attendees felt, however, that this three-year pilot program is a great opportunity for homeowners who may have limited income to obtain additional income and save money by converting homes to an MTH. They also felt that as a result, homeowners would not have to rely on government social programs such as income assistance, etc. Some attendees expressed that MTH are a good way to help in the housing solution and provide affordable housing for low-income persons.

Concerns about commercial business activities and impact

Attendees raised questions on whether or not tenants can operate a business out of their room, as they had concerns around increased traffic, no parking spaces, and more people unknown to them in their neighborhood.

Should require Canadian ownership for accountability

Attendees recommended requiring Canadian ownership of MTH to ensure that owner can be reached should any problems arise, and increasing the number of inspections per year, for fire, building maintenance and inside/outside inspections.

Business tax should be applied

Some participants felt that MTH should be taxed as a business.

Better enforcement needed

Major emphasis was placed on a robust enforcement plan, and increased surprise inspections throughout the year.