

City-Wide Framework for Multi-Tenant (Rooming) Houses

*Overview of
Proposed
Framework*
April 2021



Agenda

Multi-Tenant Housing in Toronto

Regulatory and Compliance
Framework Overview

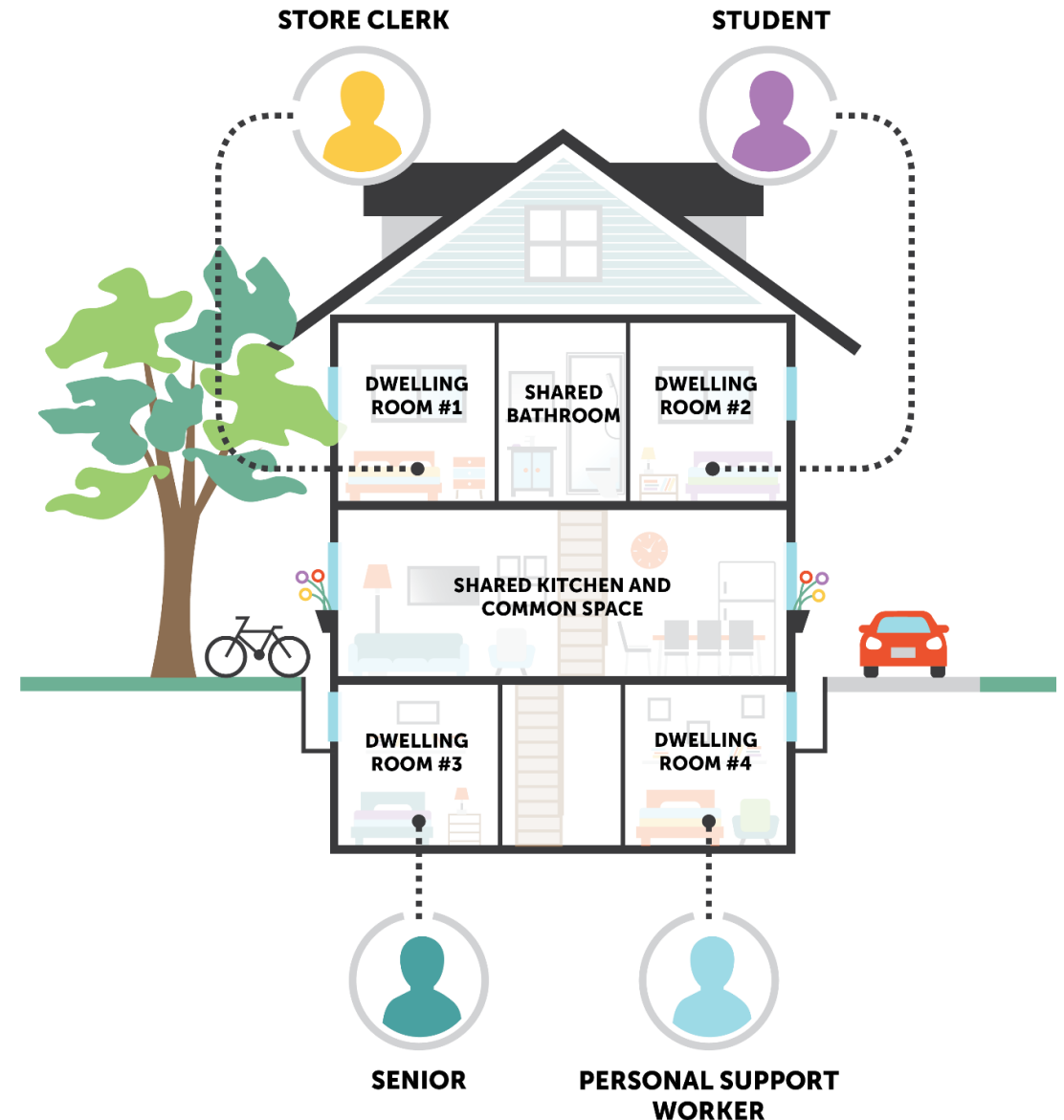
Four Framework Components

How to Share Your Feedback
and Next Steps



Multi-Tenant (Rooming) Houses

- Are one of the most affordable options in the private rental market.
- Provide single-room accommodation to diverse communities.
- An average bachelor apartment in Toronto is about \$1400/month.
- A room in a multi-tenant home ranges from \$400-\$700/month.



Multi-Tenant (Rooming) Houses

- The City licenses multi-tenant houses to ensure that they are **safe and well-maintained**.
- Currently, there are approximately **350 licensed multi-tenant houses** in Toronto.
- There are also **illegal multi-tenant houses across the city due to existing zoning restrictions**, but it is a challenge to estimate how many such houses exist across the city.

Multi-Tenant (Rooming) Houses

- Not permitted consistently across the city.
- Unlicensed and illegal multi-tenant houses can result in inadequate and unsafe living conditions and property maintenance concerns.
- Cannot be licensed if they are not permitted.



Multi-Tenant (Rooming) Houses

Current zoning and licensing permissions for multi-tenant houses:

- **Former City of Toronto:** permitted and need to be licensed
- **Former City of York:** permitted in some areas but do not need to be licensed
- **Former City of Etobicoke:** permitted in some areas and need to be licensed
- **Former Cities of East York, North York, Scarborough:** not permitted



Context

Fire and
life/safety issues

HousingTO
2020-2030
Action Plan

High demand for
affordable
housing

On-going appeals
of existing zoning
regulations

Human rights-
based approach
to housing

City policies:
Official Plan,
Strategic Plan,
Poverty Reduction
Strategy

Neighbour and
tenant complaints

Lack of oversight
in many
neighbourhoods

Regulatory and Compliance Framework

Proposed city-wide framework to encourage and regulate **safe, live-able, well-maintained and affordable multi-tenant houses across the city.**

The proposed framework has four parts:

1. Enhanced operator licensing requirements for **health and safety**
2. An **enforcement and compliance** program
3. **City-wide zoning standards** that permit the use across the city, and
4. Initiatives to **support tenants and maintain affordability of housing**

Building on Previous Consultations

2015

City Planning and MLS launched a review and consultation to identify challenges and opportunities related to MTHs in Toronto.

2017

Consultations were held by City Planning and MLS on a proposal for five pilot areas, including temporary zoning permissions, and standards such as seven room maximum.

2019

MLS conducted consultations to further develop the proposed improved licensing regime.

Human Rights Approach

- New **Toronto Housing Charter** adopted as part of the HousingTO 2020-2030 Action Plan.
- The Charter adopts a **human rights-based approach to housing**.
- MTH framework is the first housing policy review using a right to housing lens.
- The proposed MTH framework recognizes **tenants' rights to equitable, affordable, adequate, safe, accessible and secure homes** while balancing the need for compliance and enforcement.

Four Components of the Proposed Framework



1. Enhanced Licensing Framework

Proposed changes being considered include:

- **Zoning and Building Permit Review** – required for all new multi-tenant house operators to demonstrate compliance with zoning bylaws and Building Code
- **Updated Definition** – a building with four or more dwelling rooms that may have shared washrooms and cooking facilities
- **Floor Plans** – required to help with inspections and investigations
- **Electrical Inspection** – required for multi-tenant houses with 10 or more rooms, or as requested by City staff

1. Enhanced Licensing Framework

Proposed changes being considered include:

- **Property Standards** – requiring a property management plan that includes waste management, pest management and a process for landlords to respond to tenant issues
- **Insurance and Vital Services** – requirements for mandatory insurance, operators to cover costs of emergency social services for tenants, and create plans for vital services disruptions
- **Records** – requirement for operators to provide a record of number of tenants
- **Security Deposit** – requiring operators to provide City with a security deposit

1. Enhanced Licensing Framework

The **annual licensing fees** for multi-tenant houses are being reviewed:

- In revising the fees, City staff are taking into account **alignment with existing fees** for the RentSafeTO apartment building registration, and fees in place in other cities.
- Currently, fees of \$100, \$200, and \$300 are charged depending on number of bedrooms, storeys, and whether the operator is owner occupied or a non-profit.
- For the new framework, **a per room licence fee of \$25 to \$50** for all multi-tenant houses is being considered.

1. Enhanced Licensing Framework

Personal care multi-tenant houses

provide additional support services such as cleaning, laundry, meal preparation and medication storage.

Proposed requirements for personal care multi-tenant houses include:

- **Training and qualification** for operators and persons-in-charge
- **Minimum standards** for staffing and cleaning
- Standards to ensure landlords can provide tenants with the **necessary personal care services**
- Standards for **safe storage and access to prescription drugs**
- Improved **standards for meal plans and food** premise inspections
- New requirements for operators to **maintain records of emergencies and incidents** and provide the records upon request to the City

2. Compliance and Enforcement Program

This will include a four-part approach:

Collaboration	Education and Outreach	Compliance Strategy	Enforcement Strategy
Dedicated Municipal Licensing and Standards (MLS) enforcement team along with Toronto Fire Services, Toronto Building, Toronto Public Health and other divisional staff as needed.	Identify unlicensed operators and notify them of bylaw requirements; provide education and support for tenants, operators, owners and communities on the process to submit a complaint.	Annual inspections of licensed multi-tenant houses and investigations of unlicensed operators.	Increased fines , modernized housing tribunal and remedial action.

3. City-wide Zoning Strategy

New, consistent definitions for “multi-tenant house” and “dwelling room”

Dwelling Room – a room used as living accommodation that is available for rent and that is not self-contained. A dwelling room may contain private sanitary (washroom) facilities or cooking facilities, but not both.

Multi-tenant House – a building with four or more dwelling rooms that may have shared common facilities for sanitary and cooking.



3. City-wide Zoning Strategy

Multi-tenant houses would be permitted in all zones that permit residential uses (subject to conditions).



Maximum number of dwelling rooms in a multi-tenant house would be **6 rooms in most residential neighbourhoods.**

Zoning strategy supports Official Plan policies and the City's human rights-based approach to housing.

3. City-wide Zoning Strategy



Parking for MTH would be **based on transit access.**



An MTH with six rooms in areas of the city **well-served by transit** (such as the downtown) would require **one or no parking spaces.**



Two parking spaces would be required for an MTH with **six rooms** in most neighbourhoods.

4. Supporting Tenants and Maintaining Housing Affordability



The proposed framework will require that operators **conform with licensing requirements**, which may require renovation work.



Work would be necessary to ensure occupant safety, but potential for **significant cost impacts on some operators**.

4. Supporting Tenants and Maintaining Housing Affordability

The following may help with these costs and understanding what is expected in the building permit process:

- Toronto Building is developing a **package of compliance options** for operators to choose from to meet the Ontario Building Code requirements.
- The Housing Secretariat is looking at ways to support tenants' safety and security by maintaining affordability of multi-tenant houses. This includes **incentive programs for eligible landlords** to undertake building retrofits.

Implementation Plan

The City is developing an overall implementation plan and phased approach to ensure a smooth and orderly transition to a new framework:

A first phase will be launched to bring existing operators into compliance, and it will include expansion of a dedicated enforcement team to continue enforcement and compliance work within the currently licensed multi-tenant housing stock and unlicensed areas.

A second phase will provide an opportunity for new operators to apply for licences. This will allow for a gradual phasing and for City staff to work towards implementation.

Implementation Plan

Throughout the implementation, city staff will take a **tenants and communities-first approach** that promotes:



**Safe and Liveable
Houses**



**Identifies High-Risk
Operators**



**Takes Enforcement
Actions** to Address
Immediate Risks to
Life and Safety



**Mitigates Negative
Impacts** on
Neighbourhoods and
Third Parties

Next Steps

Feedback from consultation will be **recorded and summarized into a report** for City staff.

The **consultation results will form part of a final Staff Report to the Planning and Housing Committee** in mid-2021 including:

- recommended zoning by-law amendments
- new licensing by-law for multi-tenant houses



**Share your
feedback by
May 18**

Visit the project webpage
to learn more:

www.Toronto.ca/MTHreview