



APPENDIX D:

DO-IT-YOURSELF (DIY) WORKSHOP REPORTS SUMMARY

Multi-Tenant Housing Do-It-Yourself (DIY) Workshops Report Summary

To enhance participation from equity-seeking groups, multi-tenant housing tenants and operators, the City funded existing housing and support related organizations to facilitate their own engagement sessions with their communities using a Do-It-Yourself (DIY) Workshop kit. A summary of organizations and number of participants is below.

Organization	Number of Participants
Bangladesh Centre and Community Services (BCCS)	32
Canadian Mental Health Association (CMHA)	20
Centre for Equality Rights in Accommodation (CERA)	16
Eva's Initiatives for Homeless Youth	26
George Brown College	11
Parkdale Neighbourhood Land Trust (PNLT)	16
Ralph Thornton Community Centre	43
Scarborough Community Legal Services	17
The Council of Agencies Serving South Asians (CASSA)	14
The Housing Help Centre (THHC)	27
The Neighbourhood Group (TNG)	35
University of Toronto	40
West Scarborough Community Legal Services	20
York University Village Housing Association and York Affordable Housing Committee	9

A high-level summary of each organizations report is provided below. The detailed summaries from each organization can be requested through the project team at MTHReview@toronto.ca.

Bangladesh Centre and Community Services

- Participants represented homeowners, landlords, as well as tenants
- Participants completed and shared the questionnaires via emails (with consideration of COVID-19 health and safety protocols) with regular assistance provided by experienced enumerators
- Most participants agreed with the proposed definition of a dwelling room but a sizeable number was either uncertain or did not agree with the definition
- Majority agreed with the proposed definition of a multi-tenant house
- Most participants showed support for the submission of floor plans to the City but some were opposed to the idea
- Majority of participants supported zoning and building permit review
- Most supported the requirement for electrical inspections
- Participants were divided on whether there should be a requirement for a property management plan, and a process for landlords to respond to tenant issues as part of the plan
- Most supported the modernization of the licensing tribunal
- Most participants were in support of the requirements for mandatory insurance and cost recovery fee but many participants were uncertain
- Most participants were comfortable with the new licensing fee of \$25 per room with some supporting \$35 per room but a noticeable support was expressed for keeping the existing regulation of \$100 to \$300
- Majority of participants were in support of the proposed zoning strategy but many were uncertain
- There was almost an equal majority support for 6 and 12 rooms per multi-tenant house in densely populated areas of the city with a very small number of participants against any restrictions imposed on the number of rooms per multi-tenant house
- Many supported the requirement of one compulsory sanitary facility per four rooms
- Most participants indicated that there should not be any legal requirement for minimum number of parking spaces for multi-tenant houses with some in support of at least 2 parking spaces per a 6-room house and 1 parking space per a 12-room house
- There were some suggestions for the installation of modern fittings and surveillance cameras

Canadian Mental Health Association

- Most supported:
 - Updated definition
 - Floor plans
 - Zoning and building permit
 - Electrical evaluation
 - Property standards
 - Modernized licensing review process
 - Insurance and cost recovery
 - Number of maximum rooms
 - One sanitary facility for every four rooms
- Additional concerns/comments:

- Every three rooms should get one toilet, one bath and one wash basin
- Tenants need to know where the stairs are, fire safety plans, both internal and external exits, etc.
- Cost being downloaded to tenants should be avoided
- Train bylaw officers to assess properties for pests
- Landlords should not be responsible for relocating tenants while others said Landlord needs to provide all supports for relocation
- Need a vital service disruption plan
- Insurance (especially fire insurance) should be mandatory, monitored and increased fees for empty buildings
- Bring back the Rent Registry that existed over ten years ago for rooming houses only
- Multi-Tenant Houses with 4 rooms should have at least two parking spaces
- Tenants should be provided with a welcome package that includes the floor plan, house rules, garbage and recycling schedule, their rights as tenants, complaint process, etc.
- Workshop for tenants rights
- Tenants should be provided with funds to relocate, insurance to replace belongings and landlord support

CERA

- Most participants supported, or were neutral on, all proposed requirements.
- A few were opposed or concerned about the zoning and building permit review and the impact on existing MTHs, insurance and cost recovery, definition and licensing fees.
- Some also indicated that floor plans are supported but may not be very practical and should be simplified
- Education and outreach should be targeted to service providers, community agencies, newcomers, schools, shelters
- Resources to be provided include public information sessions, handouts, infographics, newsletters, multi-language resources, phone line,
- In cases of emergency, tenants need financial compensation, paid emergency housing (not at a shelter), timeline of relocation process, information about rights,
- Comments/Feedback
 - A city-wide “no displacement” policy should be created to protect people living in multi-tenant housing from becoming homeless due to the City’s actions.
 - Understanding is needed for the different power dynamics between tenants and operators
 - A balance of online and physical materials provided
 - City staff should provide follow-ups to those who are relocated
 - The City needs to have an enforcement arm, against operators who aren’t meeting the minimum compliance standards.
 - Concern about the impact on affordable housing. Consideration of how to achieve the proposed framework without scaring people off
 - Renovation costs might be too high – City could help provide a loan to enable the legalization process.

- Concerned about what incentives we could give to encourage people to do this safely – look at tax structure.
- There needs to be a clear plan for people with disabilities who choose to live in multi-tenant housing.
- Remove the cap on the number of bedrooms allowed in multi-tenant houses. Toronto already has property standards that can be used to address overcrowding

Eva's Initiative

- Eva's Initiatives conducted three consultation groups with predominantly homeless youth or at-risk of homelessness.
- All consultations groups were provided in-person with a virtual option.
- Participant worksheets indicated support for all proposed requirements. One opposed the definition and a few noted uncertainly with proposed fees
- Feedback/Comments:
 - Need effective ways to file complaints
 - Top issues are cleanliness, safety and "free of violence"
 - Be mindful of generational gaps and having staff that represent client demographics
 - Hire people for personal-care MTHs with different life experience. Have workers that make residents feel safe, not robots who dont have feelings.
 - Make sure tenants know their rights and not just their responsibilities
 - This kind of questionnaire/workshop can help improve relationships between tenants and landlords; especially the licencing.
- Resources/Supports:
 - Education and outreach should target students, people in search of housing, homeless, students, home owners, non-profit organizations, shelters, housing workers, schools, black and other racially marginalized youth.
 - Resources like social media, flyers and, in-person communication, bulletin boards, youth and community programs, housing support for awareness
 - Landlord and Tenant Board information and housing worker support to understand rights
 - Financial support in emergency situation for moving costs

George Brown College

- Participants filled out a questionnaire and provided feedback through a discussion
- Most supported:
 - Training and qualification for operators and persons-in-charge
 - Minimum standards for staffing, sanitation and cleaning
 - Clearer expectations for tenant admittance
 - Specific standards for the safe storage and access to prescription drug
 - Enhanced standards for meal plans and food premise inspections
 - Requirements for operators to maintain records of emergencies and incidents
 - Requirement for operators to develop a safety plan
 - Requirement to develop specific policies and procedures related to resident admission, resident care, and cleaning and disinfecting
 - The proposed definition for multi-tenant houses and dwelling rooms

- The proposed maximum number of dwelling rooms
- Proposed minimum of one sanitary facility for every four dwelling rooms
- Proposed parking rates
- Suggestions include:
 - Require a license for tenants, this makes it so they have to follow all rules and that they can be punished with fines and/or removal of licenses if they do not follow them
 - There should be 1 sanitary facility for every 3 dwellings instead of 4 people.
 - It would help to make it easy and cheap to create rental agreements/documents on the government website itself.
 - A database that helps both students and landlords with each other.
 - Help tenants feel engaged in the tenant role and be helpful in providing ideas to improve multi-tenant housing processes.
 - Easy to understand information without complicated jargon
 - Online courses
 - Information and resources through emails
 - Send print outs my mail which include links to video resources that summarize all the information in articles.

Parkdale Neighbourhood Land Trust (PNLT)

- Participants represented 10 room house or 'bachelorette' buildings in Parkdale
- Participants were interviewed over the phone or in person (with consideration of COVID-19 health and safety protocols)
- Most tenants interviewed see the idea of a city-wide licensing and standards system for rooming houses as a positive development.
- While tenants tended to like the idea of multi-divisional inspections (TFS, TPH, MLS, etc.) of common areas, many do not like people coming into their units any more than absolutely necessary. When in-unit inspections are necessary, as much notice as possible should be given to the tenants.
- Tenants generally did not think that limiting the number of rooms in a building based on neighbourhood type made sense, and thought any room caps should be calculated on a case-by-case basis, based on a minimum square footage per room, a minimum number of kitchens and bathrooms, and the square footage of the building.
- A surprising majority of tenants brought up allegation issues with inspections and those enforcing regulations.
- Most didn't care about parking,
- If there are closures for code violations / safety issues, they should be only when absolutely necessary, and temporary (landlord or city responsibility to bring up to code)
- Some feel incentives are a practical way to avoid closures, while others feel landlords would take advantage of it without doing the work, or feel they shouldn't be paid extra to do the things they're already supposed to be doing,
- Tenants tend to feel the 4-1 room to kitchen & bathroom ratio is acceptable, but not ideal.
- Most tenants feel that tenant education and outreach about rights & avenues for complaint is important. Mailed packages of information (clear & accessible language) & information posted

in common areas are popular ideas. Mixed feelings about in person outreach -- some feel it's absolutely necessary, others that it's intrusive or could put the tenant at risk with the landlord.

Ralph Thornton Community Centre

- Almost all of the participants would be from M4M postal codes.
- The majority would be residents of multi-tenant housing, operated either by private landlords or facilities such as the Edwin (operated by Woodgreen Community Services).
- Rules and Requirements for Landlords
 - Landlords have to be held accountable: (10 people commented).
 - Ensure who is coming in: (8 people commented).
 - Signs, policy and (high) security: (9 people commented.)
 - Keep an eye on people's safety: (7 people commented).
 - Fix problems such as broken doors and locks faster: (10 people commented).
 - Do not let in people with ongoing criminal records: (10 people commented).
 - Respect the tenants: (6 people commented).
 - Better garbage system.
 - Take problems seriously: (2 people commented).
 - Be stricter on drugs. Do not allow illegal drugs: (4 people commented).
 - Do good background and credit checks.
 - Ensure safe flooring.
 - Reduce noise issues.
 - Limit number of guests.
 - More information on rules for both landlords and tenants.
 - Basements with separate entrances.
 - Pay more attention to the environment.
- Supports for Tenants
 - Personal support workers. (5 people commented).
 - Guidance: (12 people commented).
 - You just pay for the room (sharing of kitchen) No lock on the door.
 - Be aware of situation (know how to keep the place clean, no stealing): (15 people commented).
 - More structure:
 - Show respect towards others: (4 people commented).
 - Mental health support: (4 people commented).
 - Personal space.
 - Tenants need to know that bad behaviour will jeopardize their 'standing.'
 - Ground rules.
 - Need to know howOur to communicate and solve problems.
- Concerns of Tenants
 - Invasion of personal space.
 - Fire hazard not set up for more than one fire escape. (6 people commented).
 - Helping people to get along. (2 people commented).
 - Pest control. (9 people commented).
 - Stealing and criminal activities: (19 people commented).

- Lack of access to stove and fridge: (9 people commented).
- Sharing bathroom and the lack of cleanliness: (4 people commented).
- Untrustworthy landlords: (4 people commented).
- Lack of security: (12 people commented).
- Would like to have overnight guests: (2 people commented).
- People overdosing on the property: (2 people commented).
- Keeping the place safe and clean: (3 people commented).
- Unjust housing: (3 people commented).
- Neglecting the use of the fire alarm.
- Men and women living together.
- Ventilation.
- No lock on the door.

Scarborough Community Legal Services

- All participants are tenants with mixed histories in terms of types of tenancies, many have lived experience in MTH
- Unanimous support among participants for:
 - updated definition of multi-tenant house
 - floor plan update requirement
 - zoning and building permit reviews
 - electrical evaluation
 - property standards
 - modernized licencing review process
- Unanimous opposition among participants against:
 - Insurance and cost recovery (imposed on or passed down to rooming house tenants)
- Mixed opinion among participants regarding annual updates for multi-tenant house licencing fees
- Other feedback and suggestions:
 - Education for both tenants and landlords of multi-tenant houses of their rights and responsibilities
 - Clear and multi-lingual information for tenants on where and how to report issues
 - Suggestion for rent regulation or control to go alongside MTH framework
 - Consistent enforcement needed
 - Financial incentives for MTH tenants and landlords
 - Some skepticism towards effectiveness of new MTH framework

The Council of Agencies Serving South Asians

- Some attendees were from community organizations such as the South Asian Women's Centre and Ontario Coalition Against Poverty, while others were interested community members
- Attendees discussed at length the barriers that newcomers, refugees and immigrants face when trying to find suitable accommodation upon arrival in a city like Toronto.
- Attendees recommended that such living arrangements need to be dealt with carefully so that regulation and licensing does not result in disruption, dismantlement or criminalization of existing informal and unregulated multi-tenant housing.

- Attendees insisted that the City pay attention to living arrangements like hotels in the city and support their conversion into regulated and legalized multitenant housing where the rights of tenants are prioritized.
- Education should target the general public so that public awareness is increased about housing options in the city.
- Attendees expressed that tenants often have poor understanding of by-laws that govern their homes. Misinformation, lack of knowledge, and inadequate resources can result in landlords taking advantage of vulnerable tenants.
- Tenants should also be informed about the legal supports they can access in case they are facing eviction, and possibly homelessness.
- Attendees suggested that a helpline is needed and emphasized that adequate training must be given to staff responsible for administering this helpline to help alleviate distressed tenants issues.
- Attendees raised concerns about safety, accessibility and privacy in multitenant housing. Attendees highlighted that the city has not clearly addressed gender dynamics and issues about domestic violence in its proposed regulatory framework.
- The proposed number of sanitary facilities to dwelling rooms (4:1) was criticized as the ratio is inadequate, especially while the COVID-19 pandemic is ongoing where the risk of contagious infection is high. One attendee recommended that sanitary facilities should be allotted in accordance with number of people, not the number of dwelling rooms.
- Multi-tenant housing is “one piece of the puzzle”. The City’s proposed framework does not address the debate between private and public housing. Community members agreed that the city of Toronto needs more social housing and co-operatives, as well as more regulations that are focused on minimizing the power and reach of private landlords, and expanding the rights of tenants.

The Housing Help Centre

- Participants included operators and tenants
- Multi Tenant House Operator Licensing Requirement
 - Definition – most said was clear. One suggested size of the rooms and maximum number of tenants to be allowed in a room in the definition.
 - Concern with increased fees being passed on to tenants and displacement if renovations are required.
 - Most landlords noted the recommendation for zoning review and building permit were not clear and more information is needed.
 - Most participants agreed that burden on operators may compromise affordable housing.
- Compliance and Enforcement
 - Guidebook should be brief, clear, and easy to read.
 - Knowing the bylaws and guidelines is the responsibility of both tenants and landlords; both should be provided with multi-channel (e.g. video, digital) educational tools.
- City-wide Zoning Strategy
 - City-wide harmonization a welcome change by tenants; some perceive as essential step in advancing affordable housing in Toronto.

- Landlords are still supportive, but less so than tenants; some are concerned about increased density in some neighbourhoods.
- Most participants found the proposed 6-room maximum to be reasonable, along with no parking spaces if transit is close by.
- Many participants proposed an operating permit for multi-tenant houses that would be valid city-wide, as long as they are not over-concentrated in certain neighbourhoods.
- Supporting Tenants and Maintaining Housing Affordability
 - Both landlord and tenant participants agreed for the need for financial supports and incentives to offset the cost of compliance (e.g., subsidies, low- or no-interest loan programs, grants, etc.).
 - Participants called for both paper and digital channels for reporting issues with multi-tenant houses.
- Additional Feedback
 - While many participants agreed that licencing and enforcement will reduce safety risks for rooming houses and curtail illegal operating practices, some participants expressed concern that the licencing process would discourage landlords and lead them to take this important housing stock off the market entirely, thereby worsening the affordable housing crisis.
 - Participants stressed the importance of plain-language and multi-language guidelines and resources for landlords and tenants, and financial support from the City to ensure that multi-tenant housing is a success.

The Neighbourhood Group

- Participants included those who identified as general members of the public, live or have lived in multi-tenant homes, refugee claimants and members of LGBTQ communities (however, many did not provide responses to questions)
- Majority of participants supported the proposed definition of multi-tenant houses and the proposals for MTH operators to submit property maintenance plans and updated floorplans to the City.
- Strong majority of participants agreed with the proposed requirement for zoning and building permit reviews, electrical inspections, and the submission of the number of tenants per MTH.
- Most respondents, who chose to provide feedback about personal care requirements, supported the proposed requirements. Concerns were noted with storage of prescription medication, garbage disposal, relationship between city and operators
- Participants suggested a guidebook would be useful for education and outreach and there is the need for clear information on reporting a complaint and an information sheet.
- There was both support and opposition for the proposed number of dwelling room maximums. There are concerns that six rooms may be too many in an individual house, and not allow for enough bathroom capacity. Meanwhile, some respondents think larger buildings may be able to accommodate a greater number of tenant rooms.
- Participants expressed concern and experience with living in overcrowded, substandard and poorly maintained rooming houses and want the city to do more to ensure a range of housing options for those who need rent geared to income while living on Ontario Works and ODSP fixed incomes.

- Participants reveal they are strongly aware that many landlords are motivated largely by profit, as they have seen this first hand. Some suggest giving landlords tax breaks when they do the right thing, and/or help them with the costs of building materials and certain utilities such as heating. But some respondents stated these tax breaks must come with proof from a landlord.
- Some respondents identified the need for more access to enforcement officers, housing workers, mandatory posting of regulations in the lobby, consistency across buildings, and a hotline where records are kept of complaints. These systems must ensure client identity is protected and should be “anonymous”.
- Top identified needs during a fire or other large scale building crisis include fully paid temporary accommodation, in other housing or possibly in a hotel or shelter. These should be made immediately available.

University of Toronto

- Participants represented community members from across the three University of Toronto campuses.
- Participants who chose to provide demographic information identified themselves as undergraduate students, graduate students or alumni. Most identified as international students and many stated that they had lived in or were currently living in a rooming house at the time of the consultation.
- Amongst those who had lived in a rooming house before, commonly cited issues involved cleanliness, safety, interpersonal conflicts (i.e. between housemates), high cost-of-living, and difficulties with landlords.
- Attendees unanimously supported how the updated requirements would improve tenant safety, but many expressed concern regarding the possibility of said requirements reducing affordable housing stock by overburdening current and potential future MTH operators.
- Incentives and support measure to prevent operators from shifting costs to tenants was supported
- Community members identified a need for educational materials that would meet the needs of various subpopulations that commonly live in MTHs, like students and new immigrants.
- Students, landlords, tenants, immigrants, homeowners, and low-income populations were identified as the key groups that needed to be targeted for outreach and education about multi-tenant housing
- In terms of the tools and resources needed to educate MTH stakeholders, U of T community members favored disseminating information through unions, non-profits, and housing advocates.
- Videos, guidebooks, and accessible documents (digital and print) were some of the favored methods for information delivery.
- Some community members took issue with the proposed room caps, believing that they should be based on the safety requirements of the house itself (e.g. the number of bedrooms, square footage, etc.) rather than the zone the house was built in.
- Attendees were also unsure how non-compliant landlords would be held accountable, or how they would be impacted by the new parking rates.
- Attendees identified a need for improved access to organizations that can advocate for them as well as improved forms of legal education.

- Community members stated that financial and legal supports were two of the key forms of assistance needed should tenants need to be relocated.
- Promote information about MTHs and better educate potential tenants as well as landlords about their housing rights and responsibilities.
- Fund, protect, and incentivize affordable housing across Toronto. Some specific measures for achieving this that were suggested included: the City raising property taxes and using the revenue to fund new affordable housing units; the City adopting a rent-geared-to-income model.

West Scarborough Community Legal Services

- Participants expressed support for the proposed requirements / standards for multi-tenant housing: updated MTH definition, floor plans, electrical evaluation, property standards, modernized licensing review process, insurance and cost recovery, updated annual multi-tenant house licensing fee
- Participants emphasized consideration for safety measures and particularly noted the need for fire extinguishers, smoke detectors.
- Education of tenants and operators both must be ensured, in particular, tenants who are facing various forms of marginalization
- Educational resources could include: information sessions / workshops and or written material ; use of simple, easy-to-understand language, content focused on rights / responsibilities of tenants and operators
- Participants noted the usefulness of a website link with rental lists of multitenant homes
- Participants noted support for the proposed zoning standards / requirements: limit on room sizes, a minimum of one sanitary facility, parking spaces limit or no parking space depending on transit accessibility
- While availability of affordable housing is necessary access to temporary shelter space in crisis situations should be ensured
- Participants emphasized that the needs of both tenants and operators be considered for both would need support

York University Village Housing Association and York Affordable Housing Committee

- York University Village Housing Association and York Affordable Housing Committee hosted three sessions to gather feedback.
- Participants noted concerns about units that have fewer than 4 people.
- Definition clarity was needed for single housekeeping unit and questions were raised about the inclusion of basements apartments in the definition.
- Floor plans are necessary for health and safety and the City should have minimum requirements.
- Electrical inspections will address concerns around energy use, deterioration of the home, tenant health safety and overall well-being.
- Suggested to review New Brunswick, where they have laws surrounding the role of electrical inspections.
- Participants noted concerns about invasion of privacy for tenants and operators.

- A key issue is pest and waste management and the lack of MTH operator and tenant complaint reporting mechanisms in this regard (MTH complaints not available to Village residents for unlicensed operators)
- Concern for licensing fees passed on to tenants and general transparency about collecting fees
- New licensing fees may push MTHs toward converting to short-term rentals (i.e AirBnB)
- Participants expressed support for the new definitions of multi-tenant house, zoning permissions and the limit placed on the maximum # of rooms but some concern shown with
- Participants also noted that zoning permissions could end up being unevenly distributed across the Village producing different outcomes for tenants and operators
- Participants noted following concerns with multi-tenant houses in Village: abuse of power by operators, non-compliance to licensing and zoning requirements, poor management of properties, mentality to run multi-tenant houses as a means to make more money off of poor students (especially international students)
- Participants expressed concerns that the new zoning permissions will result in a loss of dwelling rooms which may result in less income for operators and high rents for tenants
- Participants expressed strong support for education of tenants and, especially, creating accessible educational resources in multiple languages
- Participants supported the idea of establishing community safety plans or village house watch associations as support groups to assist vulnerable tenants
- Participants expressed overwhelming support for provincial and/or municipal regulations requiring post-secondary institutions to acknowledge private living accommodation for their students
- Participants noted that multi-tenant housing listings need to be updated regularly, and misinformation regarding the advertisement of housing in the village be addressed
- Participants noted concerns with possible high costs for tenants to bear or face dehousing if operators are not supported with meeting the proposed standards
- Participants expressed concerns with how the proposed zoning requirements may challenge the current parking situation across the Village and advised for the creation of a parking lot for Villagers
- Questions:
 - “How will this impact multi-tenant houses in the Village?”
 - “Where can we find [information regarding] the implications of these reviews?”
- Suggestions/Ideass
 - Transparency: Being absolutely clear about where money is allocated and how it will be used
 - Plain Language: Acknowledging the diversity of folks in MTH, the language must be more accessible for both tenant and operators
 - Stigma: The adoption of these policies must work to de-stigmatize the living experience in the Village and its neighbouring communities, while working to foster a sense of community by establishing avenue for communication between tenants and residents.
 - Social Networks: Facebook groups are the most substantive resource for tenant at the moment.

- Rent and lease controls are needed. Tenant indicated that MTH operators utilize illegitimate lease to secure additional financial remuneration from the tenants for abstract reasons
- City to host informational seminars on York University's campus and/or in collaboration with York University
- Education of all stakeholders and community members on their role and responsibilities was noted as critical, and in particular, involving people with least amount of bargaining power (international students, low-income immigrants)
- Participants encouraged the need for engaging universities to play their part in ensuring tenant rights and protections are ensured
- Educational tools to utilize: a centralized multi-tenant housing rights and responsibilities website; landlord and tenant rights made accessible in plain language and multiple translations on the website and other medium with information on relevant services that participants may need to access from time to time
- There is a need for one clear, centralized, standardized, and accessible complaint resolution system
- Free street parking was noted as necessary to accommodate multi-tenant houses with more than two parking units