



CCTV Cameras and Crime Prevention

Item 4E

March 24, 2021

Tenant Services Committee

Report: TSC:2021-20

To: Tenant Services Committee (“TSC”)

From: Chief Operating Officer

Date: March 12, 2021

PURPOSE:

The purpose of this report is to provide the TSC with information on the impact of closed-circuit television (“CCTV”) cameras in helping to reduce crime in Toronto Community Housing (“TCHC”) communities.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

It is recommended that the TSC receive this report for information.

REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS:

At its meeting on September 3, 2020, the TSC requested a report outlining the impact of CCTV cameras in helping to reduce crime in TCHC communities.

BACKGROUND:

TCHC takes the safety and security of its tenants seriously and a mechanism used to help provide tenants, employees and visitors with an increased perception of safety and security is the deployment of more than 13,000 CCTV systems across the TCHC portfolio, with cameras in every community. TCHC keeps control of and is responsible for the CCTV surveillance systems in its buildings, and recognizes that the use of CCTV systems must balance safety needs and a tenant’s reasonable expectation of privacy.

TCHC's use of CCTV and the collection, use, disclosure, storage and disposal of information captured by CCTV is governed by the *Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act* ("MFIPPA") and the Information and Privacy Commissioner of Ontario's Guidelines for the Use of Video Surveillance.

CCTV cameras by themselves will not necessarily prevent crimes, nor will they solve TCHC's safety issues. Rather, CCTV cameras are just one of the many safety measures that can support safe and secure communities for TCHC tenants.

CCTV Equipment in TCHC Communities

TCHC does not place CCTV cameras anywhere that tenants, employees and the public should reasonably expect privacy, and will only place CCTV cameras in public areas and common areas of TCHC property. For example, TCHC will not place cameras directly in front of a tenant's door, or in washrooms and change rooms.

CCTV recording equipment is stored in a secured environment and access to CCTV footage is limited to staff who require the information in the performance of their duties. Any properties where CCTV cameras are in use has signage posted to inform tenants and the public of the CCTV equipment and that video surveillance is being used in the area.

Impact

Since security cameras are part of an overall security program and not a 'stand-alone' tool to deter crime on TCHC properties, there is not a security impact measurement specific to their sole use on our properties.

Although TCHC cannot quantify the impact of CCTV cameras in crime reduction, the following are examples of crime response and prevention outcomes that may result from their deployment in TCHC communities:

- CCTV increases the chance of preventing criminal acts against property or persons from occurring in the first place as its visibility serves as a natural deterrent;
- CCTV footage allows the opportunity to review incidents that will subsequently inform post-incident tenancy management and community safety and support actions;
- CCTV often has a wide range and can be deployed to cover those areas that criminals often use to access properties and locations, such

as rear access points. Having insight into these areas can offer a significant deterrent; and

- CCTV has the effect of extending a neighbourhood deterrent, making the area as a whole much less of a target for crime. It can also make the neighbourhood feel more secure as a community. Tenants often express feeling a greater sense of safety and security when CCTV cameras are present in their communities.

Furthermore, additional benefits beyond a reduction in crime may be realized from a CCTV system including:

- **Reduced Fear of Crime:** Reduced fear of crime in an area may increase the number of people using the area, hence increasing natural surveillance. It may also encourage people to be more security conscious;
- **Aid to Police and Other Investigations:** Footage captured through TCHC's CCTV camera system can be used to assist with police and other investigations. This has an equal relevance and benefit for TCHC in the context of civil matters, for example with slip and falls, which when captured by CCTV can assist TCHC in civil proceedings;
- **Provision of Medical and Other Assistance:** CSU Dispatch Operators upon receiving a call or notification of incident can check in real time the safety of an environment or status of a situation via CCTV access;
- **Place Management:** Cameras can be used to look for lost children, to monitor traffic flow, public meetings, or other activities that may require additional resources, or to determine if alarms have been activated unnecessarily thus removing the need for a police/special constable response; and
- **Information Gathering:** CCTV can be used to gather information and to review a requisite area for unusual behavior/actions in a safe and less intrusive manner.

IMPLICATIONS AND RISKS:

CCTV may help provide TCHC's tenants, employees, visitors and properties with an increased perception of safety and security, along with other measures that the organization and community may put in place. The use of CCTV in TCHC communities may help to discourage people from committing crimes, and may help to identify people who commit crimes on TCHC properties. TCHC seeks to balance the potential benefits of this tool for our communities with our tenants' reasonable expectation of privacy. TCHC's

focus is to create safe, healthy communities and the use of CCTV equipment is one measure that may be used to achieve that goal.

SIGNATURE:

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