

Toronto Community Housing



Tenant Engagement Refresh Update

Item 8B

October 5, 2023

Tenant Services Committee

Report: TSC:2023-42

To: Tenant Services Committee ("TSC")

From: Acting Chief Operating Officer

Date: August 30, 2023

PURPOSE:

The purpose of this report is to provide the TSC with an update on the implementation of the Tenant Engagement System Refresh.

RECOMMENDATION:

It is recommended that the TSC receive this report for information

BACKGROUND:

In June 2022, TCHC developed and presented to the Board a four-step plan aimed at consulting with tenant leaders, receiving their feedback, and developing recommendations to make necessary changes to the Tenant Engagement System.

The plan includes the following:

- I. Launch of Community Actions Table at the regional level;
- II. Establishment of Tenant Advisory Committee;
- III. End-of-year Regional Forum; and
- IV. Launch of Citywide Tenant Forum in 2024.

The implementation of this transformative four-step plan is already underway, demonstrating TCHC's commitment to enhancing tenant engagement and fostering positive change.

Tenant Advisory Committee

In December 2022, in parallel with the Tenant Advisory Committee (“TAC”) selection process, Toronto City Council issued a directive to the Deputy City Manager, Community, and Social Services, tasking City staff to review the proposal for a new Tenant Advisory Committee including:

- Terms of Reference;
- recruitment and confirmation of members;
- the role of tenant directors in a Tenant Advisory Committee; and
- the role of the City.

Following the Toronto City Council directive, TCHC and City of Toronto staff commenced an initiative to expand the existing Tenant Advisory Committee by six members to ensure broader tenant representation. The aim of the initiative was to enhance the diversity and inclusivity of the current TAC membership.

Following a multi-round request for new applicants, 13 applicants were shortlisted for interviews, which were held virtually between July 11 and July 13, 2023. After the interviews, six additional members were selected for the Tenant Advisory Committee, while unsuccessful applicants received emails from Toronto Community Housing Staff expressing gratitude for their participation and providing contact information for their Community Services Coordinator, Engagement. This allowed the non-selected applicants to remain engaged in the broader activities and programming of the Tenant Engagement System such as Community Representatives, Building-Townhouse Committee members, Tenant Action Funds and local community initiatives. Tenant Engagement System staff continue to work with other TCHC divisions to identify tenant engagement opportunities for unsuccessful applicants to participate. The onboarding of all 21 tenant members was completed on July 25, 2023, with an in-person meet and greet session.

Subsequently, the following meetings have taken place:

- August 3, 2023: Orientation for Tenant Directors of the Board (Online)
- August 17, 2023: Develop Terms of Reference (In-Person)
- August 24, 2023: Develop Terms of Reference (In-Person)
- August 31, 2023: Develop Terms of Reference (Online)

Tenant Directors of the Board, TCHC’s CEO, the Deputy City Manager of Development & Growth Services, and tenant members will attend the first

Tenant Advisory Committee business meeting scheduled for the second half of September 2023.

Community Action Table

The Community Action Table brings together a diverse group of stakeholders who collaborate closely with tenants, staff, and partners. Its primary objective is to address the tenant-identified priorities within each community, forming the Tenant and Community Action Table. To achieve this, the following key objectives have been established:

1. Share information and resources: The Community Action Table aims to facilitate the exchange of information and resources, with a specific focus on addressing community priorities. By sharing valuable insights and knowledge, stakeholders can collectively work towards addressing pressing issues and promoting community development.
2. Build a Community of Practice: The Community Action Table fosters the development of a vibrant community of practice. By nurturing a supportive network, members can learn from one another, share best practices, and collectively contribute to achieving common goals.
3. Capacity building of community representatives: A vital focus of the Community Action Table is to enhance the capacity of community representatives. Through various training and development opportunities, members gain valuable skills and knowledge to actively contribute to the Table's objectives. This capacity-building empowers representatives to advocate for their communities and drive positive change.

Community Actions Table – Q2 2023 Summary

In Q2 2023, the Community Action Table meetings took place across all three regions (East, Central and West), providing elected tenant leaders with the opportunity to enhance their understanding of Toronto Community Housing's protocols and processes. Tenant leaders were able to interact with internal and external service providers, through one-on-one conversations and group discussion. Local pillar leaders and TCHC staff including Cleaning, Maintenance, Pest Management, the Centre for Advancing the Interests of Black People, and the Community Safety Unit also took part in the meetings. Key external partners, who participated in select sessions, included Crime Stoppers, TTC Special Constables, Toronto Police Services, and the Chester Le safety team.

Across all regions, tenant leaders were given the opportunity to speak with the subject matter experts, gain an understanding of their responsibilities, and explore ways to bring attention to the issues impacting their community.

In the Central Region, the meeting was also an opportunity for tenant leaders to meet Junior Taylor, the new Manager of Community Safety and Support for the region.

Community Action Table – Q3 2023:

The Q3 2023 Community Action Tables, scheduled for the final week of September, will center on Program and Service Delivery, with a focus on the key objectives outlined above: sharing information and resources, building a community of practice and capacity building of community representatives.

Table 1: Upcoming Q3 2023 Community Action Table Information

Region	Location	Time	Date
East	To be determined	To be determined	September 26, 2023
Central	150 River Street	To be determined	September 27, 2023
West	To be determined	To be determined	September 28, 2023

Update on the Review of the Tenant Engagement System

TCHC is undergoing a holistic review of the Tenant Engagement System to evaluate the current state of tenant engagement within TCHC programs. The goal of the review is to make well informed decisions on adopting best practices for the seamless integration of tenant engagement into all aspects of TCHC's operations and decision-making processes.

Recent Key Activities of the Review:

TSC Directors' Insights

One-on-one conversations were held with five Tenant Services Committee Directors, with two more conversations scheduled for Q3 2023.

Community Service Coordinator (“CSC”) Insights

In June, discussions were held across the regions with CSC teams and Community Safety and Support (“CSS”) Managers to gather input on the Tenant Engagement System’s design and implementation.

Tenant Feedback

In July and August, conversations were held with tenants in the East, West and Central regions to gather feedback on two key issues: 1) tenant engagement activities and initiatives that are successful, and 2) areas where improvements are required. Additional conversations will be held before the end of September.

Tenant Community Action Tables

In July, the review team actively participated in the Community Action Tables across the regions.

Exploring Best Practices in other Public Housing Corporations in Canada

Discussions with Toronto Seniors Housing Corporation, CityHousing Hamilton and the Ottawa Community Housing Corporation were conducted to explore best practices for tenant engagement.

Research

Ongoing research regarding the range of tenant engagement activities and the opportunities for tenant participation in decision-making is being conducted in collaboration with public housing authorities in Canada, the USA, Europe, Asia, Africa, and with the initiatives of the Canadian Tamarack and Coady Institutes.

NEXT STEPS:

TCHC is committed to promoting tenant involvement, fostering communication, and improving the overall tenant engagement experience within TCHC. TCHC will:

- Approve Terms of Reference for Tenant Advisory Committee at upcoming meetings;
- Commence planning of regional Q4 Tenant Community Action Tables, which will include Tenant Representatives and building or townhouse members; and
- Further updates on the review will be presented at the next TSC meeting.

IMPLICATIONS AND RISKS:

The City's Shareholder Direction requires TCHC to maintain a democratic system of active tenant participation and involvement that will provide the following:

- Opportunities for tenant engagement regarding their housing and the complete TCHC housing portfolio;
- Opportunities for tenants to provide input on TCHC corporate decisions, including capital plans, operating budget, service levels, service delivery and tenant facing policies; and
- Opportunities for tenant input on setting local spending priorities; and
- Information about opportunities for engagement in other City and community initiatives.

In addition, TCHC's approach to tenant engagement will respect the terms of the Shareholder Direction and the financial targets and performance benchmarks established for TCHC by the Service Manager.

SIGNATURE:

"Nadia Gouveia"

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Acting Chief Operating Officer

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