



Tenant Engagement Refresh Update

Item 6C

July 13, 2023

Tenant Services Committee

Report: TSC:2023-34

To: Tenant Services Committee (“TSC”)

From: Acting Chief Operating Officer

Date: June 21, 2023

PURPOSE:

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

RECOMMENDATIONS:

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 spring 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 August 2022, TCHC initiated a city-wide outreach process to identify prospective members of the Tenant Advisory Committee (“TAC”). The goal of the TAC was to ensure diverse representation from tenants across the East, West, and Central regions to provide oversight to recommendations on changes and improvements to the tenant engagement system.

After a comprehensive selection process conducted by regional staff, 14 tenants were chosen as members of the TAC. This selection process aimed to identify individuals who demonstrated a strong commitment to tenant engagement, possessed diverse perspectives, and were representative of the housing community.

On December 14, 2022, a virtual orientation session was held, marking an important milestone in the TAC’s journey. During the orientation, Committee members had the opportunity to introduce themselves, fostering a sense of connection and collaboration. In addition, the members expressed their enthusiasm about working closely with TCHC staff to advance the Tenant Engagement System's goals and objectives, and to contribute to improving programs within their respective communities.

In November 2022, in parallel with the TAC selection process, Toronto City Council issued a directive to the Deputy City Manager, Community, and Social Services, tasking City staff to thoroughly review the proposal for a new Tenant Advisory Committee through the Tenants First initiative. The review covered various aspects, including Terms of Reference, member recruitment, the role of tenant Directors, and the City's involvement. The findings were reported at the February 28, 2023 Planning and Housing Committee meeting and the March 29, 30 and 31, 2023 City Council meeting.

Recognizing the importance of broader tenant representation, the City of Toronto and TCHC have initiated a process to expand the existing TAC. The aim is to ensure a more diverse and inclusive membership on the Committee.

To facilitate this expansion, two information sessions were conducted to provide interested tenants with details about participating on the TAC. In addition, these sessions have served as a platform to engage and encourage tenants to contribute their perspectives and experiences. A total of 49 applications were received by the initial deadline of May 12, 2023. At the May 17, 2023 Governance Communications and Human Resources Committee (“GCHRC”), it was noted that some tenants may have experienced technical barriers when attempting to apply, and may also not have been able to attend the information sessions. In consultation with the Service Manager, TCHC revised the deadline for application submission to June 16, 2023. Additional information can be found in Attachment 1.

Furthermore, an updated meeting has been scheduled for late June, specifically for tenants who are already members of the TAC, to provide essential updates and serve as an opportunity for ongoing communication and collaboration.

The goal is to establish the first Tenant Advisory Committee in July 2023. This Committee will serve as a vital platform for tenants to actively participate in shaping policies and programs that directly impact their lives. By expanding the membership and promoting broader tenant representation, the City of Toronto and TCHC aim to ensure that diverse voices and perspectives are considered in decision-making processes, fostering a more inclusive and tenant-centered approach.

Recruitment Results:

In total, there were 133 applications received through the three rounds of outreach. Next steps include shortlisting applications, conducting tenant interviews, confirming successful applicants, and a TAC orientation session. The goal is for the new Tenant Advisory Committee to meet by the end of July 2023.

Table 1: Breakdown of applications received

Applications Received	Round 1	Round 2	Round 3
East	11	14	16
West	4	13	18
Central	14	20	16
Total	29	47	57

COMMUNITY ACTION TABLE – Q2 2023:

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. Q2 Community Action Tables are scheduled as follow:

Table 2: Schedule of Community Action Tables – Q2 2023

Region	Location	Time	Date
East	10 Gordonridge	12:00 to 4:00 pm	July 8 th
West	5005 Dundas St. W.	12:00 to 4:00 pm	July 15 th
Central	150 River St.	12:00 to 4:00 pm	July 13 th

Key Objectives:

- 1. Share information and resources:** The Community Action Tables aim 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 Tables foster 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 Tables is to enhance the capacity of community representatives. Through various training and development opportunities, members can 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.

UPDATE ON TENANT ENGAGEMENT REVIEW:*One-on-One Conversations*

Conversations are continuing with Directors of the Tenant Services Committee, and with tenants, including youth, in each region through informal tours and discussions.

Regional Group Discussions

At the end of June, each region will host a meeting with Community Services Coordinators (“CSC”), who are the key tenant engagement staff, to listen to their thoughts on the design and implementation of the tenant engagement system. A CSC Retreat is also planned for September.

Research

Discussions will continue on best practices for meaningful tenant engagement with the Tamarack Institute, and with public housing authorities in Canada. Research will also continue on public housing authorities’ approaches to tenant engagement in the USA, Europe, Asia and Africa.

Tenant Perspectives

The 2021 Confidential Survey of nearly 9,000 TCHC tenants will be used to learn more about tenants’ thoughts and views on the range of tenant engagement activities and initiatives that are working well, and on where changes and improvements need to be made. At the end of June, following conversations with the teams of CSCs in each region, the next step will be for the CSCs to assist in organizing conversations with tenant groups, individuals and leaders.

Tenant Advisory Committee

Upon establishing the Committee and formal launch, consultation and the review of potential recommendations will be held with the group.

UPDATE ON TENANT VOLUNTEER POLICY:

The Tenant Volunteer Policy will be used to govern the relationship between tenant volunteers and TCHC staff. This policy is currently in development, pending further consultations with tenants and feedback from the Tenant Advisory Committee, and will include a refresh of:

- the Tenant Engagement System Code of Conduct;

- three Roles and Responsibilities documents for Community Reps, Building/Townhouse Committee Members, and TAF Table Members; and
- a staff procedure for Addressing Breaches of the TES Code of Conduct.

The Tenant Engagement System (“TES”) continues to deal with breaches of the Tenant Representative Code of Conduct. TES staff need a mechanism to hold tenant volunteers responsible for their actions and to address conflicts between tenant volunteers. Until the Tenant Volunteer Policy and its accompanying procedures are approved by the Tenant Services Committee later in 2023, an interim procedure has been developed to guide staff based on the existing Tenant Representatives Code of Conduct.

We plan to bring the new Tenant Volunteer Policy to the Tenant Services Committee upon review and feedback from the Tenant Advisory Committee.

NEXT STEPS:

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

1. Share the invitation with all three Tenant Board Directors to participate in the upcoming Tenant Advisory Committee; and
2. Conduct ongoing consultations and research to develop recommendations for changes to the implementation of the Tenant Engagement System, which is planned to come to TSC in Q4 2023.
3. Conduct ongoing consultations with the Tenant Advisory Committee to finalize the Tenant Volunteer Policy
 - a. Policy will go to TSC Committee for approval (Q4 2023)
 - b. Policy will go to the Board for approval (Q4 2023)
4. ELT to approve the staff procedure *Addressing Breaches of the Tenant Engagement System Code of Conduct* once EDI toolkits are finalized and legal has reviewed the procedure and toolkits

IMPLICATIONS AND RISKS:

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

- (i) Provide a Tenant council structure or similar organization;
- (ii) Provide Tenant input into decisions at the corporate and local levels;
- (iii) Provide Tenant input for setting local spending priorities and service levels; and
- (iv) Include Tenant representation on the Board.

SIGNATURE:

“Nadia Gouveia”

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Chief Operating Officer

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