

Toronto
Community
Housing



Event report

Tenant Community Action Table (TCAT)

Central Region
150 River St., Toronto

September 2024

torontohousing.ca/tes



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Primary theme and objective

Learn about the primary theme and objectives for the September 2024 TCAT event.

Primary theme

The TCAT event focused on presenting the proposed changes to the Tenant Engagement System Model. These changes are based on recommendations from a recent review. Event activities aimed to make sure the model represents all tenants and remains effective, particularly those living in townhouses and high-rises. There was also an emphasis on bridging communication gaps between tenants and TCHC staff, especially Community Services Coordinators (CSCs).

A marketplace with information booths was on-site so that tenants could learn more about a variety of topics and give feedback. Topics included translation and interpretation services, the crisis transfer process, tenant insurance, and The Centre for Advancing the Interests of Black People.



Objective

The event's key objective was to review the model. We asked for tenant leader feedback to make sure the model is fair, and tenants are represented based on building size.

The continuing goal of the TCAT is to improve collaboration between tenants and TCHC. This is done by encouraging leaders to act as effective liaisons between their communities and TCHC, making sure their voices are heard on important local issues.

Additionally, the event encouraged participants to bring meaningful feedback to the table.



Summary of the main themes

Recap of the main themes from the September 2024 TCAT event.

Proportional representation of community liaisons

The group voted in favor of continuing with the proportional representation model (Model 1). This version aligns the number of community liaisons based on the size of the building. This model was considered simpler and easier to implement. That is important for new tenants and those unfamiliar with the structure of tenant representation. While the model was supported, there were calls to accommodate additional representatives for townhouse communities. These communities have stated that one or two representatives might not be enough to support their needs.

Frustrations with feedback mechanisms

Tenants expressed concerns about the lack of feedback from previous meetings. Tenants also voiced frustration that they were attending these meetings but receiving little to no actionable feedback. Tenant leaders struggle to give answers when their neighbours ask them questions. This can lead to a general feeling of disengagement. They suggested that a formal feedback system be put in place. This could help communicate more consistent responses to concerns.



Townhouses vs. high-rises

Tenants living in townhouses said that their environment presents challenges that high-rise buildings do not experience. One attendee said that townhouses should have additional representation as their needs often differ. The group also suggested having one representative for the building and one for the townhouses to make sure tenant needs are thoroughly covered.

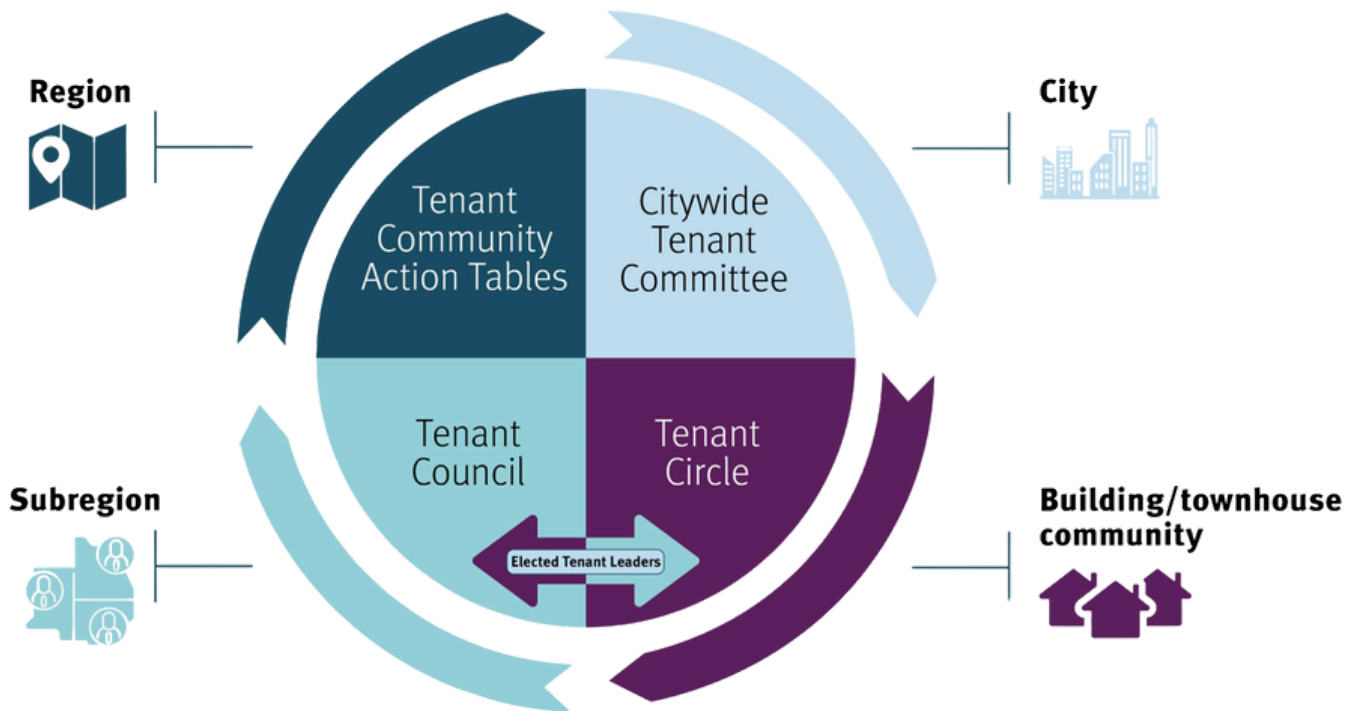
Tenant engagement and CSC involvement

Several tenants brought up concerns about the lack of engagement with their CSC. Many tenants were unaware of who their CSC was or what their role involved. The tenants expressed that CSCs should be more visible and engaged within their communities. They need to attend more tenant meetings and work closer with tenant leaders to make sure there is consistent communication.



Engage Together

The proposed model for the Tenant Engagement System





Community priorities

(Identified previously by Community Representatives)

What feedback and solutions did we hear from Community Representatives?

Tenants stressed the importance of having a clear and well-structured system for community representation. This is particularly important in larger or townhouse communities.

The proportional representation model was generally supported. Tenants did call for more flexibility to make sure all voices are heard, especially in townhouses.

There was a significant call for improved feedback mechanisms. Tenants were frustrated that they were not receiving updates or answers to their concerns. This left them feeling disconnected from the decision-making process.

Solutions

- There should be flexibility in the proportional representation model. Environments that need more support, like townhouses, could benefit from more representatives.
- Establish a formal feedback loop where tenants receive timely updates on their concerns and any actions taken. This could include a tenant portal or bulletin system where responses to common concerns are publicly accessible.



Record of attendance

The number of tenants that attended the event, comparing the numbers to the last TCAT.

Twenty-five tenant leaders attended. This attendance was down from the previous event. This could reflect the ongoing frustration tenants feel about the lack of feedback from past meetings.



Why are TCATs important?

What are TCATs?

Tenant Community Action Tables are held quarterly. One meeting is held per region, and Community Representatives gather with TCHC staff to achieve the following objectives: resource sharing, capacity building, and addressing local priorities.

Community and Committee Member Representatives are encouraged to use this forum to compare notes with other leaders on addressing top priorities in their community and build a stronger network with other tenant leaders, staff and partners.

This year's set of TCAT meetings centred around a specific topic that guided the activities for the day:

- March: Maintenance processes
- June: Strategic Planning
- September: Future of the Tenant Engagement Model



How the event delivered on the objectives of the TCAT

Description of how the event delivered on TCAT objectives for the region and tenant feedback.

The TCAT event met its objectives by presenting the proportional representation model. Tenants got to vote and give input on how representation should be structured. They got an opportunity to express concerns and frustrations. Recurring concerns were about TCHC's lack of feedback and engagement.

The event also highlighted gaps in delivering on broader TCAT objectives. Tenants pointed out that there is often a lack of follow-through on issues raised at these meetings. This demonstrates that TCHC needs to strengthen the processes that make sure tenants' voices are heard and acted upon. While the event provided a necessary space for dialogue, there remains a significant opportunity for TCHC to improve responsiveness and transparency.



How we are achieving the objectives of the TCAT

The path to achieving resource sharing, capacity building, and addressing local priorities.

Resource sharing

Tenants highlighted a lack of accessible resources. This is especially hard for townhouses, where tenants often have to go out of their way to retrieve materials or information. TCHC needs to develop more localized resource hubs or make sure representatives are better equipped to share materials.

The marketplace did provide an opportunity for tenants to learn about different topics and bring resources back to their communities. Participants appreciated the marketplace and would like to see more of it in future, but with different topics.

Capacity building

The proportional representation model helps build capacity by enabling more tenant participation. This will be even stronger with the potential inclusion of additional people from townhouses. Community Representatives are essential in making sure tenants can actively participate in TCHC governance and decision-making processes.



Addressing local priorities

Tenants raised several local priorities like improving CSC visibility and engagement. They also want better communication on building maintenance and security issues. The meeting allowed these priorities to be discussed. The effectiveness of addressing these concerns will depend on TCHC's actions moving forward.



Suggested action items

Overview of suggested action items for Toronto Community Housing following the event.

Enhance CSC involvement

CSCs should be more visible and engaged in their communities. This could involve regular community visits and participation in tenant meetings. TCHC should develop better communication channels between CSCs and tenants.

Implement a feedback mechanism

Tenants need a clear and consistent way to get feedback on the issues raised in meetings. This could include creating a tenant feedback portal or regular reports on the actions taken in response to tenant concerns.

Increase representation for townhouses

The unique needs of townhouse tenants should be addressed by increasing representation for these areas. This will help make sure that the distinct challenges faced by townhouse tenants are effectively represented and acted upon.



Improve resource access

TCHC should make resources more accessible, especially for tenants in townhouses. This could involve creating local resource hubs or making sure Community Representatives have the materials they need to distribute to their communities.

Clearer decision-making processes

Make sure the decision-making process is straightforward and transparent for Community Representatives attending council meetings. Representatives should alternate attendance. Communication between liaisons should be encouraged to make sure there is consistent understanding.



Next steps

You might be wondering “what’s next?”

Your next Tenant Community Action Table is happening in December!



Date

Tuesday, December 10



Time

5 to 8 p.m.



Location

Central YMCA, 20 Grosvenor St.

Registration closes on **Monday, November 25 at 11:59 p.m.**

Learn more and register at the link below.

torontohousing.ca/TCAT-reg

**You can also contact your
Tenant Participation
Coordinator to register.**



647-471-9768



Tania.Reid@torontohousing.ca



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