Toronto Community Housing

Rapid Rehousing Program Community Impact Assessment Update

Item 12E
April 15, 2025
Tenant Services Committee

Report:	TSC:2025-10
To:	Tenant Services Committee ("TSC")
From:	Chief Operating Officer
Date:	March 18, 2025

PURPOSE:

This report provides the Tenant Services Committee ("TSC") with an update on Toronto Community Housing's ("TCHC") ongoing work to strengthen and mature the Rapid Rehousing Initiative ("RRHI") program, and to help address the overall increase in vulnerability within certain TCHC communities.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

It is recommended that the Tenant Services Committee receive this report for its information.

REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS:

Background

The Rapid Rehousing Initiative ("RRHI") launched in 2020 and is a partnership between the City of Toronto ("the City"), Toronto Community Housing ("TCHC"), and Toronto Seniors Housing Corporation ("TSHC"). The program places applicants directly from the City's shelter system into TCHC's rent-geared-to-income ("RGI") housing. All RRHI participants are matched with community agency follow-up support for the first 12 months, with the opportunity of extending or reinstating these supports beyond 12 months based on demonstrated need.

In Q3 2024, TCHC completed a community impact assessment at the direction of the Community Safety Advisory Committee. Based on the findings of that work, TCHC and the City identified both immediate and long-term steps to continue strengthening and maturing the RRHI program, and to help address the overall increase in vulnerability within certain TCHC communities. TCHC and the City are working collaboratively to implement those recommendations, as outlined in this report, as well as some additional program changes for 2025 including:

- Shifting to a low-acuity model: RRHI participants needed to be assessed and having low- to moderate-support needs. Beginning in Q1 2025, RRHI will shift to a low-acuity model so individuals must be assessed with low-support needs through the STARS Assessment Tool to be referred to the program.

- TCHC is committed to maintaining the unit allocation number that were achieved in 2024, which does represent a decrease from previous years of the program. The City understands that this change facilitates 2025 as a year to focus on program improvements in partnership with TCHC.

- Increase the proportion of families housed through RRHI: TCHC has recommended that a larger number of family-sized units be made available to RRHI. The City is supportive of this shift with the awareness that a limiting factor may simply be the vacancy rate for larger units, recognizing there are other demands on those units.

Action Items from the September 20, 2025 CSAC Meeting
At its meeting of September 20, 2024, the CSAC requested management to:

- Provide information regarding the response time from both TCHC and the City or Community Partner when issues are identified with RRHI tenancies.
- Provide percentage of RRHI tenancies that are successful:
  - Extra referrals, extra support beyond the standard one-year period;
  - Tenancies that, while not evicted, are being managed as part of a potential eviction process;
  - Time required to establish RRHI tenancies as successful;
- Link unsuccessful RRHI tenancies (evictions) with length of prior homeless experience; and
- Compare the number of RRHI tenants who passed away in comparison to the data in TCHC as a whole.

Action Item - Response Times

There are a number of processes in place currently to ensure that issues with RRHI tenancies are addressed quickly:

- The City has email Customer Service Standards to respond within 48 hours. When issues are identified with RRHI tenancies, City staff respond within the reported day, either by phone or email, so issues are identified and actioned as soon as possible.

- Program staff at the City establish contact with the assigned follow-up support case manager to connect on the tenancy in question. This sets in motion case-specific actions to connect with the tenant to provide support.

- Staff from the City and TCHC meet monthly to discuss key metrics on social housing and Rapid Rehousing. During these meetings any at-risk tenancies are flagged for discussion and problem solving.

Tracking on response times is not a standard reporting metric that TCHC and the City collect. This type of data collection, tracking and analysis would require a manual review of individual case files. Additionally, the ability of the follow-up support worker to connect with a tenant is dependent on the tenant responding. Ongoing reporting on this metric is not possible unless a tracking and reporting system can be implemented which would have a financial and human resources impact in a future budget year

Alternatively, TCHC and City staff are recommending that a Service Level Standard be established through the follow-up supports portfolio. This can be explored in 2025 as part of the program changes being implemented.

Action Item: Percentage of Successful RRHI Tenancies

To date, and for the purposes of this action item, the success of RRHI tenancies has been assessed based on the completion of the housing placement at TCHC (i.e., movement of client from chronic homelessness to a housing unit at TCHC), and the absence of legal action leading to eviction for the tenant while housed by TCHC.

A review of City data on return to homelessness from discharge to permanent housing shows that most destabilized tenancies occur during the first one to two years post-housing event. While individual cases will vary, in general, if an individual has been stably housed for 2+ years their tenancy may be established as successful.

By this metric, 54% of RRHI tenancies have been successful.

Going forward, TCHC staff are working with City staff in Housing Secretariat (HS) and Toronto Shelters and Support Services (TSSS) to set a joint definition of a successful RRHI tenancy. Some factors under consideration, based on the results of the community impact assessment include:

- Rent Payment (i.e., N4, revoking pay direct)
- Loss of Eligibility (i.e., taxes and AR not up to date)
- Unit Maintenance Issues (i.e., N5, AUI triggers)
- Level of Crisis and Response (i.e., lack of crisis calls / Niche reports)
- Behaviour Based Issues (i.e., N6/N7)

Staff are considering when to assess the success metrics and may complete the assessment when a tenant has been discharged from follow-up supports. This timing of the success assessment will provide staff the opportunity to identify whether additional supports are needed beyond the standard support timeline of 12-18 months.

RRHI tenants may be referred and connected to longer-term case management supports in the community through services such as the Access Point depending on their support needs. Individuals housed through RRHI receive follow-up case management supports for a minimum of one-year post-housing. While individuals are anticipated to smoothly transition into housing during the first 12 months, there is flexibility to support individuals for longer durations of time.

Action Item: Evictions and Length of Prior Homelessness
Based on a manual assessment of the files of RRHI tenants who have a completed eviction for cause on file, the average length of prior homeless experience was 273 nights of homelessness throughout recorded history of shelter use on file. This compares to the general Rapid Rehousing tenant population, who have had a total shelter stay of 504 nights of homelessness throughout recorded history of shelter use on file.
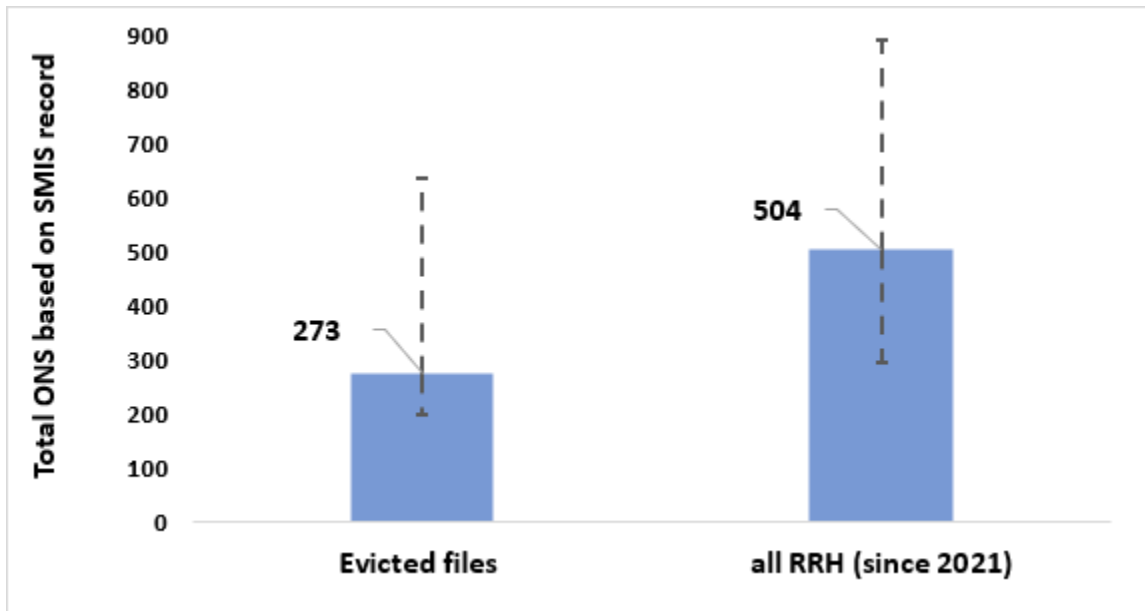
Figure 1: Total Recorded Overnight Stays of Individuals Housed via RRHI, Evicted Files and All RRHI Tenancies

Action Item: RRHI tenants who passed away while housed with TCHC compared to TCHC data as a whole

Table 2: Annual Rate of Deceased as of December 12, 2024

RRHI Annual rate of tenants deceased (approximate)	TCHC Annual rate of tenants deceased (approximate)
0.75%	1.6%

Update on Recommendations

The following includes the progress towards the short term and long-term recommendations outlined in report RRHI Community Impact Assessment Report

Improved Tracking and Information Sharing

TCHC has implemented a HoMES tracking methodology which allows staff involved in these tenancies to access information about the support workers assigned to each tenant. All existing RRHI tenancies are in the process of being added to the tracking system on HoMES and new RRHI tenancies are added to the system in alignment with the lease signing process.

For all incoming tenancies, Tenant Services Coordinators ("TSCs") meet with the tenant to sign the lease and explain the rules and requirements of TCHC. For RRHI, to date, this part of the process has been managed by the Agency Support team with the tenant. In order to better support incoming

RRHI tenancies and to ensure that they have a clear understanding of their obligations under their lease, TSCs will be present at all lease signings with RRHI tenants by the end of Q2.

Collaboration with the City on Program Improvements
TCHC and the City's HS and TSSS teams are exploring short- and long-term changes to the RRHI program, including:

1. *Review of the current acuity assessment tool and process*
   Between January and December 2023 Hub Solutions through York University's Canadian Observatory on Homelessness ("COH") led an evaluation of the STARS Supports Assessment tool, including review of process and system impacts on assessing level of support. The evaluation had three objectives: to assess how effective the tool is in identifying needs and matching people to the types of support and level of support needed; to assess how consistently different readers of the tool interpret level of support; and what the overall user experience (both staff and client) was in using the tool.

   The evaluation affirmed the value of the STARS Supports Assessment and the importance of supporting its implementation and use. Specifically, it found that the tool is effective in identifying individual needs at point of offer of housing and matching people with housing and supports. It also found that the tool demonstrated consistency between Referring Agencies and City staff in identifying a client's level of support. Different readers of the same STARS Supports Assessment agreed with the level of support approximately 90% of the time.

   Finally, the evaluation found that the STARS Supports Assessment is a person-centered and wholistic tool that support providers preferred over previous assessment tools used by the City.

   The evaluation made a number of recommendations to the City on the STARS Supports Assessment, the majority of which have already been actioned throughout 2024.

2. *Improving information sharing so that TCHC can access pre-placement information relevant to housing needs, stability, TCHC's obligations as a landlord, and workplace health and safety*
   In 2024, the City introduced early introduction of follow-up supports for all move-ins through the RRHI program. This approach had launched in 2023 as a pilot with seniors housed via RRHI in TSHC units and was expanded to the entire program in 2024. Through this program

improvement, follow-up support case managers are present at lease signings with the individual being housed through RRHI. This provides an important connection point and warm transfer between client, the referring worker and the incoming follow-up support worker. With the program improvement of also having the TSC present, the opportunity for strong connections between all agencies involved with a new tenancy is created.

3. *Exploring a reporting mechanism for regular updates from support agencies or the City on RRHI tenants in their caseload.*
Currently leadership and program staff from both the City and TCHC meet monthly to review relevant metrics of both social housing in general and RRHI. These meetings provide consistent points of contact for TCHC and City staff to connect on any tenancies that may be destabilized.

4. *Review TSHC approach to RRHI and implement all components that are contributing to success of the program in TSHC, depending on available resources.*
As TCHC staff begin to implement the staffing associated with the approved budget business case to support RRHI and High Needs Buildings, insights from the TSHC approach will be incorporated, including:

- Support the case management model for the first 12 months of tenancy (*note TSHC approach is 3 months)
- Manage vulnerability intervention programs, outside the program's supports.
- Implement regional lease signing in collaboration with the city.

Data Collection and Analysis
Additional analysis, research and investigation is needed to better understand that causes and effects of increasing vulnerability across TCHC, and in specific Category 3 buildings.

TCHC will continue to collaborate with the City to better understand increasing overall vulnerability and tenant needs in high-vulnerability buildings. This will include conducting unit by unit vulnerability assessments as resources allow.

In Q1 2025, the City launched an evaluation of its supportive housing programs, including Rapid Rehousing. This review will focus on outcomes, community impacts, and program improvements, with TCHC as a key stakeholder. The evaluation's findings are expected in late 2025.

Ongoing and Enhanced Support for Current RRHI tenants
TCHC will continue to work closely with the City's Housing Secretariat and TSSS teams to ensure that RRHI tenants exhibiting anti-social behaviour are supported through the agency partners associated with the program.

In August 2024, the City in partnership with TCHC introduced Anchor Agency Services and Supports into three TCHC communities with higher levels of vulnerability and tenant need:

- 101-121 Kendleton Drive with services provided by Homes First
- 2195 Jane Street with services provided by COTA
- 4175-4205 Lawrence Avenue East with services provided by Scarborough Center for Healthy Communities

This pilot initiative will combine one-on-one supports to tenants, service coordination, and community development at those three different sites serving five buildings with the goal of increasing housing stability, community engagement and community safety.

Since the project launch in August, the three community partner agencies have completed their project start-up including the hiring of staff throughout the fall. All three organizations have also completed needs assessments of the buildings where they are providing service and have introduced community programming.

Longer-Term Recommendations
Shorter-term approaches are not sustainable in the longer term, as the data interview results indicate that the individual support needs and community level impact is increasing in many TCHC buildings.

Dedicated TCHC team
A dedicated support team of seven staff, within TCHC to work with RRHI tenancies has been approved through the 2025 budget process. The team will:

- Support the case management model for the first 12 months of tenancy. manage vulnerability intervention programs, outside the program's supports.
- Manage integrated meetings with follow-up agencies

This team will work closely with the City and referral partners to ensure tenants in higher vulnerability buildings are supported through program discharge and are connected to regional teams

The business case for a community development-focused plan to improve areas of vulnerability and wellness for buildings with a high incidence of vulnerable tenants has been approved by City Council. The implementation plan is underway including:

- Complete Categorization data refresh Identify and select buildings for a vulnerability high needs audit
- Program enhancement for the Rapid Rehousing Initiative
- Data collection plan for all activities in High Needs buildings

Solutions for High-Vulnerability Communities
TCHC will continue working with the City to explore long-term support options for buildings with high vulnerability, taking a whole-building approach to improve conditions and housing stability for all tenants.

IMPLICATIONS AND RISKS:
The Rapid Rehousing program is part of a coordinated housing and homelessness service system that provides access to housing for individuals experiencing homelessness. In a scarce resource operating environment, the Rapid Rehousing program is an important housing referral pathway for individuals leaving the shelter system. Loss of this housing referral pathway would negatively impact individuals experiencing homelessness, and their opportunity and ability to transition into permanent, affordable housing opportunities.

For TCHC, households enter the portfolio with significant needs as a result of the waiting list priority system, whereby applicants who are unhoused are prioritized for access to an RGI unit. While being unhoused does not necessarily mean that an incoming tenant will struggle or have additional needs, the reality remains that individuals and families who have been unhoused and are coming into TCHC from the shelter system often need additional support to maintain successful and stable tenancies. Since the RRHI program accounts for a percentage of the required numbers within the 'disadvantaged' waiting list priority, it is beneficial to TCHC and the City to maintain the RRHI program and the additional supports the program provides to incoming tenants.

SIGNATURE:

"Nadia Gouveia

_____

Nadia Gouveia
Chief Operating Officer

TCHC STAFF CONTACT:

Lindsay Viets, Director Operational Planning and Program Services, TCHC
(416) 981-4131
Lindsay.Viets@torontohousing.ca

CITY STAFF CONTACTS:

Emily Gaus, Manager, City Housing Corporations Relationship Unit,
Housing Stability Services, Housing Secretariat, City of Toronto
(416) 392-9627
Emily.Gaus@toronto.ca

Trish Lenz, Manager, Coordinated Access
Toronto Shelter and Support Services, City of Toronto
(416) 397-1917
Trish.Lenz@toronto.ca