



TCHC Tenant Advisory Committee
Tuesday, February 18th, 2025
6:00 p.m. – 8:00 p.m.
Location: 100 Queen Street West, Committee Room 2

MEETING MINUTES

| Organization | Participants |
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| TAC Members | Present In-Person: Ines Garcia, Present Online: Robert Benzanson, Jorry Cross, Tabitha David, Petra Jeffers, Debbie Menezes, Doug Maybank, Charmaine Roye Regrets: John Corso, Susel Munoz, Karlene Nation Not Present: Tracy Izzard, Abdul Rahman, Tameka Richards, Shabnam Shekh, |
| Non-Voting Members | Present Online: Marcel Charlebois Tenant Board Director. Not Present: Ubah Farah, Tenant Board Director. |
| TCHC Staff | Present In-Person: Nadia Gouveia, Chief Operating Officer Jenelle Estwick, Executive Assistant Pablo Vivanco, Director, Tenant Engagement Christine Aina, Manager, Tenant Engagement (Acting) Alejandra Marulanda, Tenant Participation Coordinator, Tenant Engagement. Junior Taylor, Community Safety and Support Manager Zainab Godwin, Manager, Operational Initiatives |
| City of Toronto Staff | Present In-Person: Emily Gaus, Housing Consultant, Housing Secretariat Anna Nguyen, Housing Consultant, Housing Secretariat |

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| | <p>Not present: Sean Baird, Chief Executive Officer; (Co-Chair) Jag Sharma, Deputy City Manager (Co-Chair) Zanib Habib, Programs Coordinator, Housing Secretariat</p> |
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Welcome, Introductions, Land, and African Ancestral Acknowledgments

- TCHC's COO Nadia Gouveia, started the meeting by reading the Land and African Ancestral Acknowledgements.
- Nadia welcomed Pablo Vivanco the new Director of Tenant Engagement.
- **Review of the TCHC Tenant Advisory Committee's Agenda, Minutes, and Action Items:**
- Adoption of the Tenant Advisory Committee's last meeting minutes from December 4th, 2024, were deferred due to not meeting quorum along with the agenda for the evening.

Crisis Priority Transfer Program – Presentation Q&A

Nadia introduced guest speaker Zainab Godwin, who presented the Crisis Priority Transfer Program, for the TAC to provide feedback:

- **TAC Member:** What is an example of what would qualify as a crisis transfer and what wouldn't under the current program?
- **TCHC Staff:** An example for qualifying for a crisis transfer may include targeted gun violence where the Toronto Police confirm remaining in the unit would be unsafe. An example of not qualifying, is you live 20 homes away from gun violence, and no evidence indicates that you are a direct target/person of interest.
- **TAC Member:** What if a tenant is facing harassment from another tenant, would they qualify?
- **TCHC Staff:** If Toronto Police can confirm the harassment is putting the tenant in danger, yes.
- **TAC Member:** What is the timeline to process a crisis transfer application?

- **TCHC Staff:** An intake specialist will contact you within 2 business days; however, the review process varies due to many factors (e.g., pending Toronto Police report or medical documentation).
- **TCHC Staff:** While we wait for the outcome of the transfer, TCHC local teams may be activated to provide support during this time.
- **TAC Member:** Is the TCHC staff support during the crisis transfer application process new? Will the intake specialist provide guidance on the application or refer a tenant to their CSC?
- **TCHC Staff:** To clarify, the support will come from the local regional teams if you require assistance accessing services or support during the application process.
- **TAC Member:** In my personal experience, we never received support with our transfer application. I had to translate on behalf of my family and consistently had the onus to follow up with TCHC. Additionally, we should bring back the swap program where families from over-housed and under-housed units had the option to swap units to better accommodate their needs. It feels as if TCHC picks and chooses who gets support and who doesn't, nothing is standardized.
- **TCHC Staff:** The Crisis Priority Transfer simply reviews and processes applications. TCHC local staff can guide you on how to complete the application and connect you to resources. Over-housed moves are going through phases and are handled by the City of Toronto, there is a significant backlog as the choice-based system only became available in recent years.
- **TAC Member:** Overall, it's unlikely folks who haven't had to go through the crisis transfer application process may not know the details or process of the program.
- **TCHC Staff:** The program has been in effect since 2019, and tenants can reach out to their local offices for information and guidance.
- **TAC Member:** An incident occurred in my building regarding someone's safety where they were a victim of violence and went through the crisis priority transfer program and were moved successfully. I feel that if tenants know about the program and

where to access support and resources, it's a good program to use.

- **TAC Member:** Are tenants provided with choices for transfer location?
- **TCHC Staff:** Currently, yes applicants can select up to three areas they prefer to transfer to. This is a challenge because tenants tend to select areas where there are no vacancies and offers can't be made. We are seeking input on recommendations on how we can advance these transfers quickly.
- **TAC Member:** Does TCHC rank the three choices selected by the tenant?
- **TCHC Staff:** TCHC does not rank the 3 choices, any vacancy that comes up within the selections can be a housing offer. If the tenant refuses three offers, the file is closed.
- **TAC Member:** That sounds reasonable, refusing 3 options is fair grounds to be disqualified from the program.
- **TAC Member:** Are tenants whose safety is at risk able to move within their community? What if a youth is moved to another community that has an issue with that tenant's community of origin? What would TCHC do in this case?
- **TCHC Staff:** TCHC would work with CSU or Toronto Police to ensure the neighbourhood tenants are being moved to are safe and appropriate.
- **TAC Member:** sometimes it's not the community that makes folks feel unsafe, it's the police.
- **TCHC Staff:** If the tenant advises they do not feel safe (for any reason) in a different location, they may remain in their building. TCHC is open to having a conversation with the tenant and tries to accommodate each unique case accordingly.
- **TAC Member:** If tenants are in crisis, they should take the units being offered to them. When all offers are rejected for no reason, I question if the tenant is in crisis.
- **TCHC Staff:** Some aspects like family, employment, special needs children, etc, make it challenging, and the three options may not be viable. For example, a tenant may be moving due to gun violence and an occurrence may happen at one of the options previously

selected. There is the option to “reject for good cause” and this does not count towards the 3 strikes.

- **TAC Member:** Do tenants know about this? It would be beneficial for tenants to hear about this program as many tenants are unaware of the process.
- **TCHC Staff:** The Crisis Transfer program has been presented to several communities via road show.
- **TAC Member:** If a tenant must move due to a crisis but rejects all three options with no valid reason, would it be worth moving on a first-come, first-served basis?
- **TCHC Staff:** We can consider your feedback.
- **TAC Member:** There needs to be a clearer definition of what is to be considered a crisis to qualify for the program. If you are in a crisis, three transfer choices seem high.
- **TCHC Staff:** TCHC can provide further clarity on the crisis definitions.
- **TAC Member:** Do you have statistics on how many people apply and how many applications your team gets per year?
- **TCHC Staff:** We currently receive a couple hundred applications a month and have 364 applications approved.
- **TAC Member:** Doctors' notes and police reports sound sufficient for an application. Circling back to TCHC's definition of a crisis, what's the length of a crisis that gets approved? Short-term or long-term crisis? If tenants refuse all transfer options, how long are they put back on the list, and would it still be considered a crisis?
- **TCHC Staff:** Once tenants refuse all three options, they are removed from the crisis transfer program. The crisis would have to be something impacting their daily life, where if they cannot move from their current residences, their health or safety is at risk.
- **TAC Member:** If a tenant is not in good standing rent-wise, would they still qualify for a transfer?
- **TCHC Staff:** Yes, and TCHC would support the tenant in getting back into good standing.
- **TAC Member:** Can we consider staff incident reports to be included in the transfer application? The onsite staff can provide

their perspective/support on what events are happening in their buildings, along with a CSU report.

- **TAC Member:** From my personal experience, the transfer application process was difficult to navigate, I had to push TCHC to advocate for my mother. Does TCHC provide translation services? Many tenants rely on their young kids to translate in situations like this, which can be difficult for the family.
- **TCHC Staff:** Yes, TCHC has translation services available for all tenants.
- **TAC Member:** What if a tenant has an issue with a staff member and wishes to transfer because of it? It's challenging for a tenant to report these issues if the history of the issue is being ignored. Tenants are frustrated not receiving support in situations like this.
- **TCHC Staff:** If there is an incident with staff, tenants may report it to the region. If there is a law enforcement report to confirm the incident, the transfer application will be assessed on its merits rather than who the harasser is. Staff may not be applying the policy consistently across the board and this is an area for improvement.
- **TAC Member:** In a situation where staff is causing a tenant to transfer, tenants may be hesitant to apply due to retaliation. Regarding the three options, can you confirm if the three options are refused, or are no longer a priority?
- **TCHC Staff:** Tenants receive three choices based on their options, and if all are refused, the application is closed. The neighbourhoods are vetted by the tenant for safety.
- **TAC Member:** If the transfer unit is not up to standard as far as maintenance is concerned, are applicants supposed to move into a damaged unit? Often, tenants are offered a unit with a promise that TCHC will complete any outstanding maintenance/unit repairs, and it doesn't occur.
- **TCHC Staff:** There are instances where tenants identify items that need to be fixed, and efforts are made by staff to make changes before the move-in. TCHC would not offer a unit that is not in rentable condition. If there are specific examples of this happening, please bring them forward as the expectation is staff are fulfilling these commitments.

- **TAC Member:** Is it possible for tenants to visit the units before they move in? Or have a virtual showing if they're unable to be there in person?
- **TCHC Staff:** We do encourage tenants to visit the unit before moving in, however, sometimes in emergencies, tenants may move in as soon as possible before viewing the unit. In the past, we have offered virtual unit viewings, which we can continue to offer.

Action Items and Wrap-up

- Review and approve the meeting minutes from December 2024 at the next TAC meeting in March.
- TCHC Staff to provide over-housed/under-housed FAQ to the TAC in March.
- TCHC staff will follow up with the TCHC team internally on “how many crisis transfers include TCHC staff” and ensure these incidents are flagged to senior leadership.