

Deputation – Victoria Ojubuji

Item 7A - Toronto Community Housing Safety and Wellbeing Strategy (2026-2030)

TCHC BOARD Public Meeting – November 11, 2025

Residents have faced over four years of serious safety, security, and sanitation issues caused by the current food bank operations inside our building. These include blocked fire exits during morning hours, compromised building security from propped-open doors, unauthorized individuals entering and occupying stairwells, and persistent unsanitary conditions from food waste. While some issues have been resolved through resident advocacy, the most critical hazards remain unaddressed.

Residents have repeatedly proposed a simple, low-cost solution: switching to an appointment-based system during food bank service hours. This would eliminate early morning crowding, restore security, reduce sanitation problems, and provide a more dignified experience for food bank users. Despite its benefits, the solution has not been implemented.

We are asking the Board to acknowledge the ongoing risks and direct management to take immediate safety actions within 7 days and implement the appointment system within 30 days. Residents deserve a clean, safe, and secure home, and Board direction is essential to resolving these long-standing issues.

Deputation – Item 7: Safety and Wellbeing

Good Morning

I am submitting this deputation to share the daily realities of our building and the gaps that continue to put residents — especially seniors and people with disabilities — at risk.

A Safety Strategy Must Recognize High-Needs Buildings

A city-wide strategy is important, but buildings like ours require enhanced measures — not standard ones. To be effective, the Safety and Wellbeing Strategy must include:

- After-hours staff presence in higher-risk buildings
- Strong, consistent security coverage, especially evenings and weekends
- A way for tenants to get help without waiting until the next business day
- Clear risk monitoring so buildings with ongoing issues are prioritized

Right now, tenants are managing situations we should never be responsible for.

For years, tenants have taken on responsibilities that should fall under building operations. We clean elevators, hallways, monitors, and overflowing garbage just to maintain basic health and safety in our community. This is not sustainable, and it is not dignified.

There is also a regular presence of unhoused individuals in our stairwells, storage rooms, and accessible washrooms on weekends. With no staff onsite, this often leads to unsafe and unsanitary conditions, including strong odours of human waste in the lobby. In addition, a large number of short-term rentals bring frequent unknown visitors, and individuals who require mental health support often roam the building. Many residents — especially seniors and those with disabilities — feel unsafe and stay inside their units as a result.

Our building simply does not have the basic supports needed to ensure safety after hours. This is not about comfort; it is about wellbeing, crisis prevention, and dignity.

There are also ongoing security gaps. The fob system frequently fails, leaving tenants without reliable entry access. An alternative key-access method must be established to ensure residents are not locked out of their own homes.

Emergency responders, including paramedics, often cannot enter the building promptly. This delay can be life-threatening. A secure emergency access code, managed by the Safety Unit, is urgently needed so first responders can reach residents without barrier or delay.

Winter adds an additional layer of risk. Without staff onsite to salt walkways and entrances, slips and falls become a serious hazard for seniors, children, and anyone with mobility challenges.

Outside the building, residents face daily danger walking through the parking lot to access amenities. On the west side, vehicles approach from multiple directions, forcing tenants — including families and older adults — to navigate constant traffic risks. Some residents try to bypass this by walking under the second-floor balconies, but this is equally unsafe. A balcony panel recently came loose and fell, creating a serious risk of injury. A safe, designated pedestrian route is urgently needed.

To address all of these concerns, I am requesting the reinstatement of staggered staff shifts and weekend staff rotation. A reliable staff presence would deter unsafe activity, support residents, and improve overall building safety.

Finally, I would appreciate an onsite meeting and the opportunity to collaborate on meaningful improvements to the safety and wellbeing of our building.

Thank you.