



REPORT
Meeting Date: 2016-04-07
Peel Housing Corporation

For Information

DATE: March 29, 2016
REPORT TITLE: **SUMMARY OF 2015 PEEL LIVING TENANT SURVEY**
FROM: Mwarigha M.S., General Manager, Peel Living

OBJECTIVE

To provide an overview of findings from Peel Living's Client Satisfaction Survey, administered from June to September 2015.

REPORT HIGHLIGHTS

- This report presents key findings from the 2015 Region of Peel Client Survey, first conducted in 2011, to assess client satisfaction with the housing and operation services, and quality of life supports provided by Peel Living. The survey was completed by 600 randomly selected households from a diverse range of Peel Living's tenant population.
- The survey revealed a growing trend towards the use of electronic technology by tenants with important implications for the current direct-contact tenancy service model used by Peel Living. There are several initiatives underway to enable the transition to tenant self-serve options, as well as changes to the current human service model.
- The survey points to a number of key drivers to tenant satisfaction that require consideration by the Board, including the need to: increase investment in the refurbishment of unit interiors, re-examine the current model of security services and the cost implications, and the service level/quality implications for tenant groupings that have diverse aspirations and expectations.
- In 2015, the Board of Directors approved a number of initiatives as part of a Business Transformation Project, including a full review of its tenant and community value model. The key service level and quality issues raised above will be incorporated into the above review commencing this spring in order to guide a full Board discussion including budget allocations and ultimately inform the development of a strategic plan.

DISCUSSION

1. Background

This report presents the results of the 2015 Region of Peel Tenant Survey that was first conducted in 2011 to assess client satisfaction with the housing and operation services provided by Peel Living. The 2011 and 2015 survey instruments included questions about quality of housing services as well as the impact of tenant services and supports on overall quality of life outcomes. Including quality of life measures enables Peel Living to assess the degree to which its buildings and communities provide not only quality housing but also other opportunities for the overall success of tenants.

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The survey was completed by 600 randomly selected tenants representing different types of households:

- single, family, senior and other,
- length of tenure ranging from 1 year to more than 15 years, including indication of whether Peel Living is viewed by tenants to be a transitional or long-term housing option,
- tenancy types including rent-geared-to-income subsidy, rent-supplement, and market.

In summary, although the survey results show that overall tenant satisfaction levels with Peel Living services remain very positive at 7.2/10, there are areas of service delivery that need continued attention. The findings are discussed in greater detail below and highlight continuing current practices where they will keep the high rating and others where improvements are needed. A summary of the main findings is attached as Appendix I.

2. Findings

The following sections discuss a number of key findings and issues for the Board's attention.

Access to Electronic Technology:

The 2015 survey asked tenants for the first time if they have access to internet and e-mail services. The results are very encouraging and show that over 90 per cent of tenants have access to the internet or e-mail either at home, work or school, including close to 60 per cent having access in their homes. Equally encouraging is that close to 70 per cent of tenants surveyed responded that they would like to use self-serve options to access Peel Living services in the future. From separate tenancy data, about 40 per cent of Peel Living tenants already pay their rents directly through the internet.

In general, the growing trend towards using electronic technology will have important implications for the traditional direct-contact tenancy service model of Peel Living. To enable this transition, staff are exploring partnerships with existing vendors to provide affordable access to electronic communication services to tenants. The Region of Peel is also in the process of implementing new housing technology that will provide added capability of self-help electronic access and potentially transform the current service delivery model.

Tenancy Groupings & Satisfaction:

The survey results reveal that different demographic groups have differing levels of satisfaction with Peel Living services; seniors having the highest average scores and families with children the lowest. Similarly, market rent tenants have lower average ratings than rent-geared-to-income tenants in their overall satisfaction with Peel Living facilities and services. The survey also shows that tenants that aspire to be with Peel Living long-term have a higher satisfaction rating than those that see Peel Living as transitional housing.

Although Peel Living aspires to have a mixed blend of tenancies - hence healthier communities - it is clear that different tenant groups have different levels of service expectations. This factor poses a challenge about how much service customization Peel Living can afford for different tenant groupings given its limited resources. To inform the Board's discussion on an appropriate service menu to the diverse tenant population, staff will incorporate the issues raised by this survey into the upcoming Tenant & Community Value Model initiative this spring. The results will be incorporated into the Board's strategic plan development process.

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Buildings & Unit Quality Drivers:

The quality of both building and interior unit services is a very important driver of tenant satisfaction. The survey indicated that staff should continue to be proactive in maintaining the good level of satisfaction with the current standard of cleanliness of hallways and stairs and the quality of grounds keeping. The low score of satisfaction with respect to the state of the interior of tenants' unit/homes is a priority area that will require priority attention in the immediate future. The survey also pointed out that security both inside and outside of Peel Living buildings continues to be an area of notable tenant dissatisfaction as was the case in 2011.

Over the past few years the organization has focused on building systems renewals (e.g. roofing, exterior, HVAC, etc.). Staff have incrementally re-balanced the capital budget to focus on home interior modernization, including kitchens, bathrooms, flooring and plumbing. As a start, close to \$800,000 is allocated for this purpose in 2016. Traditionally, major capital items with larger liability implications have taken up the lions-share of budget allocations. However, the Board needs to review the current service levels and budget allocations, and consider a higher allocation to interior retrofits given that it is a key driver of tenant satisfaction.

In regard to security, staff remodelled security services in the last couple years to include more rigorous building patrols and have noted a reduction in major incidents and call volumes by tenants about security incidents. Recognizing the importance of tenant safety and security, staff will further investigate this issue as part of the upcoming Tenant & Community Value model review. This will enable a deeper understanding of the ongoing security pain points for tenants, and explore more cost effective ways of increasing tenant satisfaction in this area of service.

Quality of Life:

The quality of life measures in the survey focused on the opportunities and benefits offered through connections to the community and neighbourhood. In general, tenants feel very connected to the areas in their immediate living environments as indicated by a high level of pride in the buildings and neighbourhoods in which they live. Proximity to services and transit, as well as to a doctor's office and social services were all key contributors to the positive rating of neighbourhood suitability. This observation reinforces Peel Living's long standing choice to locate its buildings in compact and well serviced communities.

Despite a positive assessment of connection to their neighbourhoods, many families in Peel Living buildings indicated a low level of participation in community non-school programs, especially in relation to children programming and services. In addition, the survey results also point to the need to foster greater levels of trust and relations between tenants in family buildings, as well as for more supports to enable greater choice and opportunities to achieve better life outcomes. Although senior's buildings with a long tradition of active resident associations show a higher level of community engagement, staff will investigate further what mechanisms work effectively in promoting better community engagement in family buildings. Staff will also embark on further education and outreach activities to improve access to community programs.

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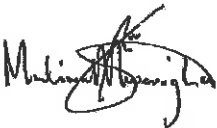
CONCLUSION

The tenant survey continues to be an important tool to aid staff in improving both quality of building services as well as opportunities for the success of all Peel Living tenants. The survey demonstrates that Peel Living tenants are transitioning to internet and electronic means of accessing services at a significant rate. Peel Living needs to ready itself for potential impacts to its current human service model.

The survey results point to a number of areas requiring direct staff action, particularly in improving customer service and community engagement in family buildings, and promoting neighbourhood services to tenants. At the same time, the survey points to a number of strategic decision areas that the Board will need to grapple with regarding key pressures to the current service levels:

- Firstly, in relation to the challenges posed by a diverse tenant population and income mix and the challenge of customizing to the needs of different tenant groupings.
- Secondly, is the degree to which the current budget allocations need to shift to areas that are key drivers in the tenant satisfaction survey, namely the need to invest more in refurbishment of unit interiors and in the area of building security services.

To support the Board in this endeavour, staff will incorporate a number of the main issues identified in the survey into the upcoming Peel Living Tenant & Community Value model evaluation and in future discussions about budget allocations. Ultimately, this initiative will provide options for the Board to include in its strategic planning process.



Mwarigha M.S., General Manager, Peel Living

Appendices

Appendix I – Peel Living Tenant Survey Findings

For further information regarding this report, please contact Muliwa.Mwarigha@PeelRegion.ca, Extension 3549.

SUMMARY OF 2015 PEEL LIVING TENANT SURVEY

Appendix I

Findings

- This report presents the results of the 2015 Region of Peel Tenant Survey for Peel Living that was first conducted in 2011 to assess client satisfaction with its housing and operation services.
- The survey was completed by 600 randomly selected tenants representing different types of households.
- The survey results show that overall tenant satisfaction levels with Peel Living services are above average at 7.2/10.
- Questions about access to internet and e-mail services show a growing trend toward using electronic technology that will have implications for the current direct contact tenancy service model of Peel Living.
- The survey reveals that different demographic groups have differing levels of satisfaction with Peel Living services, with seniors having the highest average scores and families with children and market rate tenants the least.
- Despite a positive assessment of connection to their buildings and neighbourhoods, many families in Peel Living buildings indicated a low level of participation in community non-school programs, particularly in relation to child programming and services.
- High scores were given for the response rates of both the maintenance call centre and frontline staff services.
- The survey indicated a good level of satisfaction with the current standard of cleanliness of hallways and stairs and the quality of grounds keeping.
- Security both inside and outside of Peel Living buildings continues to be an area of notable dissatisfaction, as was the case in 2011. This is an area of major attention and although service improvements have been made in the last couple of years, there is still more work to be done to meet higher tenant expectations.
- The quality and condition of both buildings and interior units are important drivers of tenant satisfaction. Following years of capital renewal shortfalls and an emphasis on building systems renewal, staff have incrementally re-balanced the capital budget to focus on home interior modernization. Staff have already noted higher tenant satisfaction in buildings where interior refurbishments have recently been completed.

