TENANT ENGAGEMENT STRATEGY

HAVE YOUR SAY.

Make CityHousing Hamilton the Best Possible Place for You to Live

Prepared by CMP Consulting and Policy Planning Plus
Acknowledgments

An initiative such as this is only possible with the cooperation and participation of all affected. The consultants wish to thank the CityHousing Hamilton Project Team: Theresa Phair, Laura Woodcox, Kate Mannen and CEO Brenda Osborne for their guidance and support in the strategy development process. The team helped to shape the conversation cafes and the design of the survey, as well as being champions of the initiative throughout. A special thanks to Jeff du Manoir and Mike Acciaroli for assistance with the webpage and online surveys — although not official project team members, they played a key part in the team’s success. Staff of CHH who promoted the engagement process with tenants and with service providers, made an invaluable contribution to its success; and the many more staff who participated in the focus group and completed the staff survey, ensured that staff perspectives were heard. Service providers from many different agencies and sectors, showed their deep commitment to the welfare of tenants at CHH by attending one of the focus groups and sharing their wisdom, the result of years of supporting tenants of CHH.

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We save our biggest and loudest thank you for the tenants of CHH. Your frank and open comments will make the strategy real. You cared enough about the quality of life at CityHousing Hamilton to attend one of the cafes, complete the survey, participate in the test focus group, send in comments, and volunteer to help implement the strategy. If tenant engagement at CHH is successful, the credit will be yours.
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Introduction

CityHousing Hamilton is implementing a number of recommendations flowing from a comprehensive Operational Review of its operations carried out in 2009. One of these recommendations was the development of a Tenant Engagement Strategy as part of a long-term strategic plan. CityHousing Hamilton (CHH) owns and operates approximately 7,000 social housing units with a total of more than 13,000 residents. Tenants are made up of seniors, families and single individuals. The tenant population includes a significant number of newcomers as well as people with disabilities and other barriers to full participation. CHH recognizes that it will need an effective tenant engagement strategy to build positive relationships and to allow stakeholders to contribute to the building of healthy communities within CHH facilities. The goal for the strategy is to reach all stakeholders who are interested and who would like to participate.

Tenant engagement is a concept that has been gaining ground across Canada and around the world in recent years. More and more, housing providers are recognizing the benefits of actively and meaningfully involving tenants in the work of planning, monitoring and contributing to the quality of life in the buildings in which they live.

Recently in the province of Ontario, the Housing Services Act 2011 came into effect. The HSA contains new requirements regarding the development of local housing and homelessness plans and the inclusion of housing providers and the public in developing those plans. This means that local planning for the housing needs of citizens is being mandated for the first time. In addition there is a specific requirement for housing providers to develop staff and volunteer training plans. These new training requirements set the stage for more involvement by tenants and for the training of tenant volunteers to be able to participate in meaningful ways, and for staff to be provided with knowledge and tools to work with tenants in achieving common goals.

Finally, the City of Hamilton as part of its strategic plan has identified resilient neighbourhoods as a key strategic priority and created a special office of Neighbourhood Development reporting to the City Manager to lead this effort. CHH properties exist in city neighbourhoods, many of the same neighbourhoods the City wishes to strengthen. There is an obvious connection, then, between the City’s strategic plan and CityHousing Hamilton’s tenant engagement activities. Proactive and well-executed tenant engagement will increase the success of the City’s neighbourhood development strategy.
TENANT ENGAGEMENT STRATEGY

Definition of Tenant Engagement

Tenant engagement is the process by which tenants become involved in the activities and influence the decisions that affect their quality of life at CityHousing Hamilton. Tenant engagement includes preparing and equipping tenants and staff to participate; and involving tenants in monitoring and evaluating the quality of their participation.¹

Why Tenant Engagement?

The research on tenant participation revealed many different reasons to engage tenants. In some jurisdictions it is legally mandated. In others it is simply good customer service or even a smart business practice. Dr. Tony Gilmour makes a compelling case:

"Tenants are knowledgeable about the communities they live in, therefore, a useful source of “on the ground” information for management. They can provide feedback on problems with property design and maintenance, potentially minimizing costs. Tenants will usually be the first to identify sources of anti-social behaviour. Participation helps both tenants as well as the housing organization they are involved with. Serving on boards or tenant committees is thought to build an individual’s social capital, reducing feelings of isolation and teaching new skills. Active tenants will often be well-connected to other voluntary organizations, thereby embedding the housing provider in a local support network. Hence some academics consider tenant involvement can play a part in building community capital and social inclusion."²

The reasons for and benefits flowing from active tenant engagement are becoming increasingly recognized. A large body of experience is building which will continue to influence CHH Tenant Engagement Strategy going forward. Specific desired outcomes for the strategy at CHH are described in greater detail in the Proposed Strategy section.

¹ Please note: for the purposes of this paper, the terms tenant engagement, tenant involvement and tenant participation, are used interchangeably.
² Tenant Participation, Dr. Tony Gilmour, Elton Consulting Kinetic White Paper Series, January 2011
The Process of Developing the Strategy

The goal of this project was to design and deliver a Tenant Engagement Strategy that would enable CHH stakeholders to be effectively involved in working together to improve tenants’ physical and social living environments.

The development of this CHH Tenant Engagement Strategy had two phases:

**Phase 1: Information Gathering**—Information collected from a variety of sources and using a variety of methods to guide the design of the strategy and to ensure it meets the needs of all stakeholders

**Phase 2: Developing the Strategy**—Synthesizing and analysing the data gathered, designing and testing the strategy with key stakeholders to ensure it meets the needs of all stakeholders, determining appropriate methods of communication, mapping out the implementation of the strategy and identifying training/orientation needs.

In light of the size of the CHH business (7,000 units and 13,000 plus residents), and the acknowledged diversity and complexity of the CHH tenant population, the proposed approach and methodology were designed to be both accessible and efficient, providing the most reliable information, gathered in an inclusive and barrier-free manner, while maximizing efficiencies wherever possible. CHH staff and community service providers are important voices at the CHH table so these groups were also consulted regarding the design of the strategy.

Start as You Would Continue

An important element of the design of the strategy development was to use approaches and methods that would model best or promising practices in community development and tenant engagement. Participating in the strategy development process allowed stakeholders – tenants, staff, and community service providers – to experience first-hand some of the opportunities and the challenges of working together. It is hoped this will set the tone and lay the groundwork for tenant engagement at CHH in the future. The title of the project – *Have Your Say* – sent a strong message that CHH wanted to hear from tenants and that tenants would be listened to if they participated.

Communications

Communications was a critical dimension of the strategy development and will be fundamental to the success of the strategy itself. Communication is always happening in organizations—the question is whether the communication is consistent, reliable, authoritative, and accountable. When it is not, communication becomes suspect and people look for informal or unofficial ways to get the information they need—and often it is wrong or at least not completely accurate. In the absence of well-managed official communications methods supported by staff in their interactions with tenants, unsubstantiated reports, rumours, gossip or speculation take their place. Inconsistent messages undermine confidence in management; lack of follow-through on commitments (whether those commitments were authorized or not), breeds cynicism and distrust. Because communications at CHH, up
to this point, was reportedly somewhat inconsistent and unreliable, the strategy development process involved a concerted communications effort.

This effort involved a “look” (graphic design and colours) as well as a tag line: *Have Your Say – Make CityHousing Hamilton the Best Possible Place for You to Live.* Thus, any communication related to the project would be readily identifiable. A contact person and a dedicated phone extension for the Information Gathering phase were established and publicized. A web page was created on which all the material about the project was posted as well as a dedicated email address for people to RSVP to events and to submit registration forms and surveys or just make general inquiries or comments. There was a large number of tenants (about half it turned out) who would not use the electronic medium, so print and fax options were provided for all the communications materials, as well as physically posting them and making them available through CHH staff on site.

At the start of the process, a memo was sent from the CEO to all CHH staff telling them of the project and what was involved. A letter from the CEO was sent to all service providers connected with CHH to advise them of the initiative and alerting them to the fact that they would have an opportunity to input. The CEO’s message in the summer newsletter told readers about the strategy and this was posted on the website. Printed flyers and posters were distributed to all CHH locations through the Community Relations Workers and Property Managers. All posters with meeting information were translated into the seven most commonly spoken languages at CHH and posted on the website as well as printed and posted. At the tenant Picnic in the Park in July, we set up a booth to promote *Have Your Say,* and invited tenants to take posters promoting the café and the survey. Entry in a draw for a cash prize was offered as an incentive for completing the survey.

It became clear that in spite of these multiple delivery vehicles, people had gotten out of the habit of paying attention to communications and so we could not presume they knew what was happening. This was true not just of tenants but of staff and service providers as well. The ‘take away’ from this experience for CHH is the lesson that it will take time for everyone to learn where to look for reliable communications and to take the time to absorb the messages; so communications must be frequent, very reliable and consistent, especially in the early stages of the strategy. Over time, if this is done faithfully people will turn to and eventually rely on the communications methods used.

**Review of Tenant Engagement Practices at CityHousing Hamilton**

To say that CityHousing Hamilton is embarking on a process to develop a strategy for tenant engagement is not to say that tenant engagement has not been happening at CityHousing Hamilton. The fact that a staff team dedicated to Tenant Support Services has existed for many years, currently made up of a Manager of Tenant Engagement and Support Services, Community Relations Workers (7), Public Health Nurse, Family Support Worker, Home Economist, Community Developer and Recreation Coordinator, suggests that tenants are being engaged at various levels.

In addition, CityHousing Hamilton has designated a number of “community houses” – units set aside for use by tenants and community agencies providing services to tenants. Community events such as BBQ’s, picnics, clean ups, dances, sports leagues and tournaments are organized at different locations, often initiated and led by tenants. In seniors buildings in particular, staff actively engage
tenants in planning activities and supporting each other as well as facilitating needed home health services often in partnership with community agencies.

In addition to these examples, a number of buildings have functioning Tenants’ Associations and Residents’ Councils supported by the staff of CHH. In 2009 a comprehensive tenant satisfaction survey was conducted and in the past two years, CHH has mandated annual meetings at all CHH buildings and complexes in order to report to tenants on CHH activities and allow for questions and input. A community gardens initiative was undertaken in 2010 and is ongoing and expanding. In the summer of 2011, through a three way community partnership made up of tenants, a local community agency and CHH, two children’s playgrounds were built at CHH’s family complexes. More examples of tenant engagement are to be found in the sections containing the staff input in this report.

Clearly, tenant engagement has been happening at CHH, but not as part of a coordinated, system-wide effort. At this point, responding to emerging best practice in the field of social housing and to come into line with the new directions emerging from the Housing Services Act 2011, CityHousing Hamilton wishes to make tenant engagement a coordinated, informed, consistent and measurable activity in which everyone plays a role and is working toward common goals.

**How to Use This Report**

This report is intended as a resource and reference to be used throughout the strategy. It has been written and organized in such a way that those responsible for implementing and evaluating the strategy will have a guide. The many topics of interests to tenants, the various ways in which tenants want to be engaged, the types of barriers they face and different suggestions for removing them are all collected in the report. Staff and service providers suggestions for improving their respective and collaborative efforts are contained in the report as well.

It cannot be stressed enough how important it is to use the information collected to inform the choices made as the strategy unfolds. Doing so will have (at least) two results:

1. It will let tenants know that CHH is actually using the views and opinions tenants expressed to set the direction for tenant engagement, something of which they were very sceptical in the cafes and the surveys;
2. It will tell staff and service providers that CHH wants to use their knowledge and expertise to put tenants at the centre and it will hold them accountable for doing so.

The recommended strategy itself both provides a clear and progressive structure for delivering the activities of the strategy and leaves room for flexibility to use best judgement in the moment to determine which activities or topics are most likely to resonate at a given point in time. Finally a comprehensive annotated collection of websites and resources from other jurisdictions is provided, organized under topics such as policies, principles, tools, etcetera, so that, as the strategy unfolds and staff are looking for ideas to solve a particular problem or address a specific situation, they have a menu of options that have been tested in other places to consider.

Between the wealth of information collected across CHH, the tightly woven but flexible strategy, and the access to practices and tools from other jurisdictions, the stage is set for a successful tenant engagement.
Information Gathering

The development of an appropriate and reliable strategy required information from a variety of sources. Tenants themselves were the first and most important group to be consulted and the lion’s share of time and resources was allocated to this group. Seven conversation cafes were held across the city at locations selected to achieve a reasonable cross-section of tenants who live in CityHousing Hamilton. Cafes were scheduled at different times of the day and on different days of the week to maximize opportunities for people to attend. Nutritious food and small but meaningful tokens of appreciation were provided to encourage tenants to attend, signalling that CHH places a value on their time and input. These were especially important since many tenants were either unfamiliar with or sceptical of the concept of “tenant engagement.” Transportation was provided where needed as well as child-minding, signing for hearing impaired and cultural interpretation and translation. Removing barriers to participation was a key consideration from the beginning and throughout the process. In addition to the conversation cafes, a tenant survey was conducted allowing anyone – whether they attended a cafe or not – to have input. The survey was offered in electronic and paper formats over a significant period of time, again, to allow for maximum possible participation. Through all these methods we wanted tenants to have the opportunity to tell us the following:

- How are they currently involved?
- What issues are important enough to tenants to want to become involved?
- What ways would tenants like to be involved in addressing these issues?
- What are some of the obstacles that would prevent tenants from becoming involved?
- What would encourage or facilitate tenants’ involvement?

Since tenant engagement, to be effective, must be supported by well-trained and well-equipped staff, it was important to gather input from staff as well, and in particular from those who work in tenant services. A survey of all staff was carried out as well as a focus group with Tenant Services staff.

Community agencies that deliver services to CityHousing Hamilton tenants, either on site at CHH facilities or off site at their own facilities, were invited to provide input as well. It is recognized that these agencies are playing a critical role in supporting better tenancy and in enhancing the quality of life for tenants at CHH. Two focus groups were conducted with a significant number of service providers who gave feedback not only on tenants’ needs and barriers, but on their perceptions of and hopes for continued partnership with CityHousing Hamilton.

The final piece of the information gathering exercise was a review of articles, websites and tenant engagement initiatives from other jurisdictions. There is a wealth of resources available to support and inform the CHH strategy as it moves forward. Each jurisdiction works within its own legislative and regulatory framework and national and local historical, social and cultural differences must be taken into account when considering adopting approaches from elsewhere. With that said, the review revealed some key themes and principles that seemed to be consistent across the board. These resources are organized by topic and are provided in an appendix to the report for ease of reference.
Tenants Conversation Cafes

Conversation cafes are an innovative approach to community conversations, inviting people to take part in discussions about issues of concern to them in an informal setting. The principles of conversations cafes are:

**Inclusivity:** Create an inviting climate in which everyone is inspired to speak and listen, and where diverse perspectives may emerge.

**Support:** at each Conversation Cafe gathering, ideally every table has a host.

**Open access:** Anyone may participate who follows the agreed upon process and principles. Conversation Cafes are open to all, without charge.

The project held seven open discussion groups modeled after conversation cafes. These sessions took place in various venues across the city and were designed with the various tenant groups – seniors, immigrants, youth, singles – in mind. It was anticipated that 40 (or more) people would participate in each session. In general, participation was significantly less than anticipated. In addition to

<table>
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<th>Participants</th>
<th>Specific</th>
<th>Key Actions Identified at Each Session</th>
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<td>226 Rebecca (11) First Place (4) 360 King (1)</td>
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<td>500 Limeridge (9) 395 Mohawk (3) 1150 Limeridge (3) 980 Upper Ottawa (4)</td>
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<td>23</td>
<td>2 Oriole (16) 1 Oriole (4) Other (3)</td>
<td>Tenant Group More community involvement (Strengthen McQuesten) Safety and Security Improve Maintenance and Property Improve Relations CHH</td>
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<tr>
<td>August 9, 2011</td>
<td>James St N</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>441/447 James (2) MacNab (1) Strathcona (12) Strachan (1)</td>
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<td>45</td>
<td>181 Jackson (18) 95 Hess (7) 200 Jackson (14) East 21 (2) 1781 King (2) 360 King (1) 395 Mohawk (1)</td>
<td>Safety and Security Maintenance and Property Tenant Relations</td>
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| 7 sessions | 159 | | | |

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**Table 1 - The Cafe Sessions Summary: Overview**
Tenants Conversation Cafes

gathering tenant input, these sessions provided an opportunity for the natural leadership within the tenant community to emerge. They made it possible for tenants to express their interest in participating further in the planning and development process. As noted in the introduction, the strategy development process was designed to set the stage for implementation. The conversation cafes, with their inclusive and accessible approach and opportunities for natural leaders to emerge, was an intentional aspect of this approach.

Summary of Themes

How are people currently involved in activities in the CHH buildings or townhouse units?

There was a wide range of responses to this question from “absolutely no opportunities for us to be involved” to “we all get to know each other here and there is a great sense community.”

Highlights

For the family buildings/ complexes children’s programming and play space were key areas of involvement. Some people described their involvements with “the dynamic and engaging children’s after school programs” and the opportunities for families to participate in programs, community garden, playground builds, baseball leagues, Muslim children’s program and block parties. Others said “in our area we have nil.”

For seniors, First Place was described as having many opportunities for people to be involved – a wide-range of social and recreational activities, gardens, and cafe, as well as organized tenants groups providing a forum to address building issues and /or organize social and recreational activities. Other seniors buildings were said to have nothing and “we come to First Place for activities.”

Community gardens have generated a lot of community involvement and become a focal point for those areas that have them.

Several of the buildings/complexes have organized committees, either formal tenants associations or “action” committees. People have very different experiences with these groups, some seeing them as very positive ways to get things done and others seeing them as creating cliques and conflict within their buildings/complexes.

People also talked about all the many less structured activities they do, including keeping an eye out for each other’s kids, planning and enjoying the BBQs and street parties, helping with each other’s chores and watching out for one another’s property.

In Summary

Currently there are very many different levels of involvement or tenant engagement. Some of these are CHH initiated and /or facilitated, such as Community Gardens, children’s programming, parks, some tenant groups and senior programs. Others are community organized.
There are some formal tenant associations and some loosely structured groups, and many, many informal involvements.

**What are the key issues facing tenants that need to be addressed to make CHH the best possible place to live?**

**Children and Families:** There was considerable concern from families who have children and live in complexes where there is no or very limited child-friendly space, playgrounds or programs. Tenants from places with child-friendly amenities were keenly looking for ways to improve and enhance them. Many people talked about the lack of supervision for children and youth. Participants described situations where children were hanging around outside with no parental supervision until after midnight and some of these children are very young (i.e. as young as 3 years old). They said that there needs to be more evening activities for children, especially youth programs. If people try to address the situation (lack of supervision), it “becomes a big problem because if I approach a parent about a concern, I get a very angry/violent response and threatening / rude notes, etc.”

In some areas there are no parks or playgrounds, so monitoring the children’s safety outside is hard; the children have no access to safe outdoor play spaces and as participants said - “There are major safety issues,” “Kids are learning bad habits” and “the whole survey lacks adequate parental supervision.” In other areas there have been shootings and stabbings so “many people won’t let their kids go to the other end of the survey where there is a lot of violence.” Some parents said they asked staff if they could create a park without success: “We were told we would have to do it ourselves. We need help with this so this response was frustrating.”

**Maintenance and Property:** In every session, concern and frustration over property and maintenance issues were expressed. These included - garbage and recycling, bug, pest and animal control, elevators out-of-service, unkempt grounds, poor signage, lack of repairs to units, and the list goes on. There are both individual tenant maintenance issues (what is required in their particular unit) and common area issues. People also were unsure about the process for getting things done. For some, there were long wait periods for what appear to be priority issues; others said some requests did not get responded to at all. People were also unclear about the process for requests, what recourse to take if they received shoddy service or disrespectful responses to requests. They did not know what reasonable expectations should be with regard to wait times, responses and complaints. And there is not a clear understanding about what responsibilities belong to the tenant and what to CHH. Some felt that certain people got priority service while others got little because they were viewed as complainers or trouble makers. There was a sense from some tenants that they are not treated in a respectful or courteous manner. As one person put it, “It takes far too long to have a maintenance request addressed; the assessment gets done but then nothing happens (many people had this experience); many people waiting 2-3 years for work to get done.” Other participants had issues with the quality of work. “Quality of the maintenance work is poor i.e., no primer on the paint jobs; when the contractor is asked why they aren’t using primer they say it’s because they aren’t getting paid enough for this job to use primer” lack of quality control for sub-
contractors and there is a need to specify what tenant vs. CHH is responsible for regarding repairs and maintenance i.e., “we were stuck with a $2,000 bill for our hot water heater.”

Safety and Security: In every session safety and security was identified as a pressing concern. There was concern that the wrong people are being let into the building with doors being locked or unlocked; fears of drugs and criminal activity (although this did vary in degree and intensity); the stress of being hassled or harassed by strangers or even fellow tenants; avoidance of going out at night, letting kids play outside after dinner or walking through parking lots or neighbourhood paths late at night; and in some areas, anxiety about youth hanging around with not much to do. More “basic” safety issues were also identified, such as the need for traffic calming bumps; proper signage so ambulances can find addresses; and safer areas for scooters.

In two sessions, smoking was identified as an issue that impacts non-smoking tenants. Some tenants said they would like designated smoking areas clearly marked. It was understood that there are smokers’ rights too and that the whole problem may not be able to be solved in the short run; but, with some planning, perhaps CHH could have smoking buildings or non-smoking buildings or floors. This would be implemented over time.

Organization of Tenant Groups: At several of the cafes, people talked about the pros and cons of tenants committees and groups. For many, it was a way of bringing people in a building or complex together to plan social events or to address collective issues – a community-building endeavour. However, although there were several positive examples of how tenants’ actions groups or associations were working well, in many case people expressed disappointment that these groups often became cliques or exclusive groups run by a few individuals who did things their way and left others behind.

Tenant Relations: Most of the groups, at one point or another, identified the problems they were having in dealing with “difficult tenants.” People described many different situations with “difficult tenants.” These include the following: the mother who lets her young children run wild without supervision; noisy neighbours partying late in the night; people with drug/ alcohol and/or mental health problems; people who were just rude and/or bullied other tenants; and people who rewired their own units. There was also concern about lack of trust among different cultural groups and that some cultural groups experienced racism and/or harassment from other tenants. People who are keen on making the area the best possible place to live really were unclear about how to address issues with difficult neighbours.

Note: The consultants were not in a position to verify the facts of tenant statements; the significance of tenant comments is that they reveal perceptions which are then shared with other tenants, creating a culture. Whether or not specific examples are completely accurate, is less important, than the fact that the overall perception is believed to be true.
CHH Relations: There was a sense from many participants that the relationship between some CHH staff and some tenants is quite strained and unproductive. Tenants do not always know who they can turn to if they have an issue, a question or a complaint. Who is responsible for what? Tenants do not feel well informed about what is going on and several people indicated that they do not feel respected or trusted by CHH staff. They do not know the criteria by which decisions are made and decisions seem “quite arbitrary.” As one person put it “If you work with one CHH staff you might get some assistance but the same request to another CHH staff person could go unresponded to.” There appears to be no service standards or agreed-upon expectations.

What can we do to address these issues?

The cafes generated lots of wonderful ideas about what could be done and what tenants could do to address these issues.

1. Supporting the Children

“The kids have to have something… they have nothing.”

“We need to speak up together for our children to grow up in a healthy place so they are not falling over broken bottles and playing on shopping carts and mattresses. We need to come together to do this. It is really important.”

The Goal

In all areas there needs to be a focus on supporting children. This includes areas that already have children’s playgrounds and programming, and those that do not. Tenants can work together to plan, fundraise, and develop or enhance existing or new programs and facilities. The focus needs to be not only on young children but also older ones as well. Developing volunteer programs for older youth would not only meet a community need but help prepare those youth for future employment opportunities.
What we can do to help make this happen?

- There should be an overarching CHH Policy that all complexes with families have the appropriate play space/amenity space, (standards to be worked toward)
- Learn from our own successful neighbourhoods
- Support tenant leadership with the help of CHH staff
- Create a tenant group

2. Safety and Security

“We want to feel safe and secure in our units, our building and our neighbourhood.”

The Goal

A safe living environment - free from being hassled by drug dealers (some areas), from being bullied or intimidated, or hurt by leftover bottles or drugs - a place where tenants feel free to walk out at night.

What we can do to help make this happen?

Create a neighbourhood watch program bringing the police, CHH staff and other community service providers together to address the safety issues. Together the group could review the ‘Hot Spots’ and develop plans to address the concerns. Tenants from different areas could keep a watchful eye on their area.

Receive information from CHH about security/safety procedures, strategies/actions taken by CHH, work in progress:

- Better dissemination of information about security procedures and actions
- Better follow-up with tenant(s) once a security concern is identified
- Better explanation of what ‘Security Tenants’ do; what their roles and responsibilities are; CHH to organize building safety/security meetings for tenants & other partners

More cafe sessions like this one to enable tenants to get together with CHH staff and the police and other service providers to figure out the right solution for their building or complex.

Time to share concerns, identify solutions/actions, monitor progress and share information

3. Maintenance and Property

The Goal

A higher standard of cleanliness and overall better physical care of the buildings and surrounding areas will enhance the physical property and also increase safety of tenants. Improving the units tenants live in and the common spaces are priorities for all. CHH staff need to be responsive to requests on a timely basis. Accountability is important.
What we can do to help make this happen?

Processes need to be put in place about how to request and follow-up with needed repairs and other maintenance issues. This includes what are the expectations, what are reasonable timelines and what are the quality expectations. These processes should be well-publicized.

Groups of tenants could organize themselves to handle certain clean up jobs. This could be accompanied by learning / discussion sessions about recycling or pest and pet control etc. Tenants with particular trades or skills could volunteer and help with the more complex jobs, training others, particularly youth in the process. Youth could be enlisted to support the work and help with the education.

There could be building maintenance teams in each building or complex or clustered in a neighbourhood (to accommodate more than one building). These groups could identify issues, plan for preventive maintenance, and give input into the budget and priority areas.

Some CHH staff support is required to make this happen and there is a need to be clear what are the responsibilities /accountabilities of the landlord.

4. CHH Relations

“Service depends on who you get – not on standards.”

The Goal

A more available, accessible and responsive CHH staff. Creating and maintaining respectful relationships between tenants and CHH staff is critical as are enhanced communications between CHH staff and tenants. The goal is to have better communications with courteous, responsive and supportive staff with an on-site presence.

What we can do to help make this happen?

- Create Learning Opportunities for tenants and CHH staff
- Tenants need to learn about the roles and responsibilities of CHH staff and “who is our primary CHH contact; who do we go to with questions or concerns; who will advocate on our behalf; and who is the authority figure we can go to with our concerns and see action / follow through”
- CHH Staff receive Sensitivity and Customer Service Training to Support Tenant Relations. It is not so much about the staff’s procedures as about their approach
- Develop Face-to Face Strategies such as having staff on–site and clear understanding about how, when and where to access them.
- Create a Tenant Action Committees or Associations: CHH staff attendance and presence at Tenant Meetings is seen to be critical to talk about their roles and meet the tenants. At buildings where there are no associations or tenant groups, ask CHH to host a meeting where tenants can meet staff.
Tenants Conversation Cafes

- (Continue to) Hold Annual Building Meetings – On-site meeting once a year in every building with the CEO, senior housing staff, the City Councillor and on-site staff as a golden opportunity to involve tenants and to keep them informed.

- Involve Local Councillors and External Community Members in issues. Have the local Councillor attend occasional Action Committee meetings or Association gatherings to talk about changes how CHH addresses the issues. Also engage community members and external resource people in a tenant groups’ work helps to strengthen its response and approach.

- Put in place policies and procedures that ensure responsiveness: Staff members need to be guided by consistent policies and procedures that ensure responsiveness and accountability. Staff evaluations need to be tied to the incumbent’s ability to respond to tenants needs; this should be measurable for increased accountability.

5. Tenant Relations

“I have had a very negative experience of the building. I feel I have no alternatives with the rent being so low. It has felt abusive living here and I sometimes feel bullied. There are people problems and a lack of privacy. I just want to get out. It has been such a negative experience that I don’t want to get involved.”

The Goal

To enhance tenant relations – “Good Neighbours Make Good Friends” This includes: ensuring that tenant procedures and rules are adhered to, the creation of positive volunteer opportunities, and the establishment of tenant groups supporting tenant needs.

What can be done to make this happen?

- Welcome new tenants. Create a welcoming committee and proper orientation. Many tenants new to the buildings have never received any orientation and knew (or still know) nothing about what their responsibilities are as tenants. Develop more culturally supportive environments for newcomers, e.g. lounge rooms that are culturally sensitive – spaces, food and processes need to be culturally sensitive and accessible to everyone.

- Support to help tenants understand their responsibilities and expectations as tenants: Ongoing education and support is important.

- Provide information and access to community services, senior services, and broader community networks and resources to tenants who are in need of support. Enable high need tenants to be assessed properly and placed in supportive housing. High need tenants with significant mental health issues and other barriers to successful tenancy should be assessed properly and placed in complexes that provide supportive housing.

- Create opportunities for Tenants to support each other, e.g. Chinese support group. Special groups of tenants could form to formally support distinct tenant needs.

- Tenants should be assessed and placed in buildings based on their needs.
6. Organization Tenant Groups

“If we create the right process, bring people together and moderate properly, we’ll get great results and we don’t need tenant groups or associations. We need tenant teams that work together.” “It takes a community to build a community.”

**The Goal**

More formal CHH organized opportunities for tenants to get together and to build a sense of community. More meetings and more say because “it is through consistent meetings and actions that we can dismantle tenants’ fears and cynicism – the very things that stop action.” “We need a larger city-wide committee to meet monthly on security issues or issues of concern to tenants.”

**What can be done to make this happen?**

- Organize teams in a building or complex without it becoming a clique or an exclusive group. Each building/complex is very different with respect to its readiness to organize and therefore the structure and method of organizing or involving tenants should differ from building to building, community to community. It will be essential to find meaningful ways to engage recent newcomers to Canada.
- Create tenant educators to help lead and plan meetings.
- Create tenant advocates or tenant advocate groups. Create different mechanisms for organizing tenants depending upon the unique circumstances of each building / complex.
- The Tenant Team Concept. This is a group of tenants who meet on a regular basis to address tenant concerns and help to build community assets. It will serve as a conduit /liaison to CHH but also seeks their own solutions using their own expertise and skills as well as partnerships with other community organizations and funders; networking role.
- The Tenant Advocate Concept: This includes formalizing a role of a natural ‘building leader or facilitator’; the person who people usually go to when they need help, support or advice. This advocate would need to be a good listener and as neutral / objective as possible; be available to meet with tenants on a regular basis as a group and help to resolve concerns or disputes within building or with property manager, etc. and to provide information about how issues are being resolved or addressed.
- Welcome Wagon concept: This includes Identifying tenants who are settled immigrants (i.e., been here a while) and willing to serve as ‘welcome wagon’ for new arrivals; can help newcomers to settle and become involved.
- For these ideas to work, it will be necessary to host ‘get to know you’ events to bring neighbours together i.e., BBQ. There needs to be flexibility with different arrangements for different groups depending upon the needs and circumstances of each building/complex.
- The potential for success of these groups could be impeded if the ‘vote’ method of selecting a tenants’ group is applied. This doesn’t work well because nobody comes out to vote except friends of those who are running for a position. It also won’t work in a fractured building community: “it just wouldn’t work in my building….nobody gets along and nobody knows each other.”
Create synergies across complexes: tenant associations and action groups that are working well should share their approach and successes with other buildings in order to build synergy and responses across CHH’s diverse complexes.

Overall what would facilitate or impede you getting involved?

“Involvement will be impeded if there is fear of repercussions for speaking up and taking action, e.g. losing apartment or not being treated well by staff or other tenants; if confidentiality is not respected and if CHH does not manage processes properly and respectfully or provide the right tools and training for tenants to manage processes properly and respectfully.”

The opportunities to do so (to get involved in things) must be relevant to tenants.

Table 3 - What would facilitate or impede tenants getting involved

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The Environment</th>
<th>Access</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Welcoming and supportive — no cliques, positive attitudes (no cynicism, no bullying, non-judgmental approach)</td>
<td>• Suitable clean common space</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• RESPECT — no fear of repercussions</td>
<td>• Appropriate timing of meetings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Easy to get to</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Accommodate health needs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Child minding</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Have our voices heard</td>
<td>Resources</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Financial Resources / Human Resources / Education, Resources and Tools to Start New Initiatives,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• To support project and activities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• To help organize</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• To cover travel and food costs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clear Communications</td>
<td>Address discrepancies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Need to know about events in a timely way</td>
<td>• Between buildings / complexes with respect to the assets / infrastructure (i.e., some buildings have no green space or playground and very little tenant involvement; while others have a community house, playground, and a very engaged population)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Materials translated, interpreters</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Respect</td>
<td>Share the ‘success stories’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• for different cultural groups</td>
<td>• across CHH and with other buildings/complexes so that it can be replicated;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• diverse needs</td>
<td>• provide ideas/tips on how to make it happen in your own community</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Follow-up</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Most importantly tenants will not be engaged if CHH does not follow up on the ideas and suggestions generated through these cafe sessions or if it fails to keep residents informed. Lack of change will lead to people thinking nothing ever gets done or change. The implementation of these ideas would be facilitated by being heard and listened to by CHH and making sure suggestions “do not end up on the shelf”</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Tenants Survey: Summary of Findings

Survey Methods and Response

The CityHousing Hamilton (CHH) Tenant Engagement Survey was developed as one of several mechanisms to gather input from CHH tenants regarding the development of a tenant engagement strategy. The survey took approximately 10 to 15 minutes to complete and asked about how tenants are currently involved in their building and how they want to contribute to the creation of a healthy living environment at CHH. On-line and hard copy formats were made available during a 7 week period (August 8th to September 23rd).

The survey employed a convenience sampling method (i.e., no systematic method of sampling tenants was used). A limitation of this sampling method is it can lead to the over- or under-representation of certain groups within the survey population (CHH tenants). Therefore, generalizations of survey findings need to be made with caution.

A total of 235 surveys were returned (224 complete and 11 partially complete). Of these, 54% were in hard-copy and 46% were completed on-line.

Section A: Respondent Characteristics

The majority of survey respondents:

- Live in Ward 2 (59%) or Ward 3 (12%)
- Have lived in their unit for 1 to 3 years (30%) or more than 10 years (22%)
- Live by themselves (77%)
- Are 60 years or older (60%) or 40-59 years (27%)
- Are female (67%)
- Identify English (93%) as the language they like to use best for communicating

It is important to compare the characteristics of the survey respondent population with those of the current overall tenant population. This comparison will help to determine if the survey findings are representative of the tenant population in general or certain sub-groups. This comparison will also help to identify which groups’ opinions were not well represented via the survey.

The characteristics of the survey respondent population were compared with the characteristics of the survey respondent population from the 2009 CHH Tenant Survey (Table 4). This comparison shows that the convenience sample led to hearing more from middle age to older tenants living on their own in the downtown / lower Hamilton area who are most comfortable communicating in English. Conversely, the survey findings are less representative of younger tenants living in east
TENANT ENGAGEMENT STRATEGY

Tenants Survey

Hamilton or Hamilton Mountain (with or without children) and/or tenants who are most comfortable communicating in languages other than English.

Table 4 - Survey Respondent Population from the 2009 CHH Tenant Survey

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age / Education Category</th>
<th>2009 Tenant Survey 4 Percent (%)</th>
<th>2011 Engagement Survey Percent (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>60 years or older</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>59 years or younger</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>... 5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Living Arrangements</th>
<th>2009 Tenant Survey 4 Percent (%)</th>
<th>2011 Engagement Survey Percent (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Live on their own</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Families with children</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Families without children</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Length of Residency</th>
<th>2009 Tenant Survey 4 Percent (%)</th>
<th>2011 Engagement Survey Percent (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Less than 1 year</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1-3 years</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4-5 years</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6-10 years</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More than 10 years</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Section B: How Tenants are Involved Currently

Involvement in Community Building Activities

Survey respondents were asked to identify whether they were involved in a range of community building activities over the past year. The activities most often reported included:

- Reading a CityHousing Hamilton newsletter or flyer (90%)
- Attending informal activities in their building (such as, coffee clubs, BBQs, etc.) (67%)
- Helping out a neighbour or friend in their building (such as, pet sitting, babysitting, taking them to appointments, etc.) (55%)
- Attending formal CityHousing Hamilton organized activities (such as, annual picnic, community garden, workshops, etc.) (47%)

---

4 The 2009 tenant telephone survey population used a stratified random sample stratifying according to mandate of the project the tenant resides in (i.e., family/mixed, seniors, and singles) in order to ensure a representative survey sample within each of these three categories.

5 Student was not a response option in the 2011 survey therefore comparison data does not exist.
Thirty-one percent (31%) of respondents reported using services/programs offered in their building community. Exercise room / fitness, coffee or tea socials, cards and bingo, and community gardens were the most common types of services/programs used.

Forty percent (40%) of respondents felt there were important services/programs missing from their building community (such as, exercise room or classes, activities for children and youth, access to computers and internet, and more social events to get to know other tenants).

**Satisfaction with Current Involvement**

Survey respondents were asked about their level of satisfaction with the range and number of activities offered in their building.

- 48% agreed or strongly agreed that the activities offered in their building are of good quality
- 39% agreed or strongly agreed that there are enough activities for themselves
- 31% agreed or strongly agreed that there are enough activities for other members of their household

Respondents were also asked about their level of satisfaction with the way CHH keeps them informed and involved.

- 61% of respondents were satisfied or very satisfied with the way CHH keeps them informed about issues and activities
- 42% of respondents were satisfied or very satisfied with the way CHH consults with them about issues and activities

**Barriers to Involvement**

The most common barriers to participating in CHH activities or events were:

- Being unaware of available activities (24%)
- Cost of transportation (18%)
- Lack of transportation (17%)
- Lack of interest (9%)
- Too busy with work (9%)
- Not at ease / uncomfortable in social situations (9%)

Twenty-six percent (26%) of respondents reported there were no barriers to participation.

**Tenant Associations**

- 48% of respondents reported their building or complex had a Tenants’ Association
- Of these, 22% were a representative on their Tenants’ Association
- And 54% had never attended a Tenants’ Association meeting
Section C: How Tenants Would Like to be Involved Going Forward

**Being Informed**

- Mail (40%) was identified as the best way for respondents to receive general information followed by bulletin boards/posters (29%) and email (17%)
- 59% of respondents have access to regular internet
- 76% are likely to read the ‘Housing Matters’ newsletter and 66% are likely to attend meetings in their building as ways to stay in touch with CHH issues and activities
- 26% reported being likely to use the CHH website

**Giving Input**

Respondents were asked to identify the ways in which they would like to give their views and opinions about living at a CHH property. The most favoured methods were:

- Attend building-wide events (such as, BBQ) where CHH staff and management come to hear tenant views (56%)
- Attend Tenants’ Association meetings (45%)
- Complete a telephone survey or fill out a questionnaire (39%)
- Participate in a Tenant Conversation Cafe (36%)

**Participating in Decisions**

Respondents were given a list of ways they could be involved in decision-making and acting on decisions about their building. They were then asked to indicate whether they would be likely to participate in any of the presented methods. The methods most often selected were:

- Tenant forums – regular meetings where tenants get together to give feedback and discuss issues before any decisions are made; membership is open to all tenants (67%)
- Becoming a member of a Tenants’ Association (56%)
- Being part of a small working group on a particular issue (55%)
- Tenant teams – a group of tenants who come together to work on building a sense of community in their building and address concerns or problems (52%)

Section D: Creating the Best Possible Place for Tenants to Live

Respondents were asked to consider a list of areas and items in their building that can make it a safe and healthy place to live. The following were identified as the most important aspects of their building:

- Quality of their unit (79%)
- Building security (76%)
• Quality of common areas (72%)
• Pest control in unit (69%)

Thirty-six percent (36%) of respondents identified living in a smoke-free building as one of the most important aspects of a safe and healthy place to live.

Respondents were asked to identify the most important thing that they would like to see happen in their building. The two most common areas identified were:

• Maintenance / property issues (53%)
• Safety and security (31%)

When asked how they wanted to be involved in addressing the above issues:

• 75% wanted to receive information
• 47% wanted to provide feedback and suggestions
• 36% wanted to take part in discussions and decisions
• 32% wanted to participate in taking action
• 15% wanted to take a leadership role

The most common barriers to getting involved with building issues/concerns were:

• Lack of transportation (18%)
• Not at ease / uncomfortable in social situations (17%)
• Not feeling welcome (12%)

The following arrangements were identified as facilitators for tenants to get and stay involved in their building community:

• Have a neutral party facilitate the discussion (34%)
• Offer the events in the evening (29%)
• Offer the events in the afternoon (29%)

Additional Comments – A few sample quotes

“There is a lot of negativity here in the people. A lot of people don’t like change.”

“Honesty and respect should be most important in all organizational groups. The trust must be there or else it will fail.”

“We just want peace of mind and security…”

“I am very happy that I chose this building as my home. The residents are very pleasant and the superintendents are very approachable and respectful. The employees at CHH have always helped me when I have a question. I thoroughly enjoy living here.”

“I am very satisfied with the way my building is taken care of.”
“This is already the best place to live. That’s why I am here.”

“The gardens are a delight – thank you.”

“I want action on issues – not meetings.”

“Please give us a place to have a say. We have a lot of great tenants but we have nothing here to help us problem solve, and we have a lot of issues.”

“We want and try very hard to enjoy our lives but we need some cooperation from CHH. It seems that we are always forgotten...when we try to communicate with CHH we hit a brick wall. You say you really care...but do you?”

“Give me the tools so I can be instrumental. Give me a sounding board so my voice can be heard.”

“This is a great first step in the right direction.”
Staff Survey: Summary of Findings

Survey Methods and Response
A CityHousing Hamilton (CHH) Tenant Engagement Survey was developed for CHH staff as one of several mechanisms to gather input from staff regarding the development of a tenant engagement strategy. The survey asked about how staff currently interact with tenants and sought staff feedback on a range of tenant engagement techniques.

The Staff Survey was sent to most CHH staff (not including most security tenants, custodians and grounds and maintenance personnel). The on-line survey was available for a 16 day period (from Wednesday, September 28th to Friday, October 14, 2011) and took approximately 10 to 15 minutes to complete.

A total of 57 staff completed a survey (54 complete and 3 partially complete) for a response rate of 76%.

Section A: Respondent Characteristics
There was representation from all CHH sections among the survey respondents with the largest percent coming from Operations (49%) followed by Tenant Engagement & Support Services / Recreation (18%) (See Table 5).

The majority (88%) of staff respondents reported that their role requires them to interact directly with tenants.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 5 - Survey Respondents and Survey Response Rates by CityHousing Hamilton Section</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Percent of Survey Respondents (%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Business Services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finance &amp; Admin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asset Renewal &amp; Maintenance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Operations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tenant Placement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rent Calculations / Eligibility/ Arrears Collection / Maintenance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>On-site Staff</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tenant Engagement &amp; Support Services / Recreation</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Section B: How Staff Interact with Tenants

Frequency and Method of Communicating with Tenants

The majority (86%) of staff respondents interact with tenants on a daily basis.

Telephone (96%), in-person (96%), and mail including newsletters (60%) were the most common methods of communication. 56% use email or text messages.

Staff respondents were asked to identify their primary method of communicating with tenants; in-person (52%) and telephone (32%) were the two most common responses.

Type of Interactions with Tenants

The most common reasons for tenant interactions were:

- maintenance or repairs (80%)
- general CHH information (76%)
- application process (62%)

The most common actions in response to tenant interactions were:

- linking tenants to other CHH services or supports (83%)
- informing tenants about what is going on in their building (75%)
- linking tenants to City of Hamilton services or programs (62%)
- linking tenants to other community services or supports (60%)

Strengths and Areas for Improvement

Staff were asked to think about the ways they interact with tenants and identify what works well (or is a strength) and what does not work well. Both questions were open-ended.

The most commonly identified strengths of current interactions with tenants were:

- Staff’s ability to listen to tenants’ concerns and ideas and to help them problem solve or navigate the housing system
- Good opportunities for face-to-face interactions with tenants. This more personable approach helps to build trust and rapport with tenants.

The most commonly identified areas for improvement were:

- Inter-departmental communications (i.e., sharing information and being aware of ‘who is doing what and when’)
- Availability of more effective communication mechanisms with tenants (i.e., too much reliance on mail/letters and telephone).
Staff respondents were asked to identify what would help to make their interactions with tenants more satisfying. The most common responses were:

- better coordination and team work within CHH (75%)
- better communication within CHH (56%)
- more clarity with respect to roles, responsibilities and expectations (54%)
- increased availability of interpretation to address tenant language barriers (48%
- more available time (44%)
- better communication methods with tenants (44%)

The majority (57%) of staff respondents rated the quality of CHH relations with tenants as ‘good’, 21% rated the quality as ‘very good’, and 20% rated it as ‘fair’.

**Section C: Looking Ahead – Engaging Tenants in the Future**

*Keeping Tenants Informed*

Staff respondents were asked to rate how successful they thought a range of communication methods would be at keeping tenants informed with CHH issues and activities.

Having a CHH staff on-site presence, open meetings in their building with other tenants and CHH staff, and one-on-one meetings between a CHH staff and a tenant were identified as the three methods most likely to succeed

- Websites (in general) were identified as the least likely to succeed

*Opportunities for Tenant Input*

Staff respondents were asked to identify which methods they thought would be successful at providing tenants with an opportunity to express their views and opinions. The most favoured methods were:

- Organize building-wide events where CHH staff and management come to hear tenant views (66%)
- Promote a feedback line / email address so tenants can communicate their concerns to CHH (56%)
- Support the creation and function of ‘Tenants’ Associations (51%)

*Tenant Participation in Decisions*

Staff respondents were asked to identify which methods they thought would be most successful at involving tenants in decision-making. The methods most often selected were:
- Tenant forums – regular meetings where tenants get together to give feedback and discuss issues that affect housing before any decisions are made; membership is open to all tenants (63%)
- Tenant teams – assist with the creation of tenant teams - a group of tenants who come together to work on building a sense of community in their building and address concerns or problems (50%)
- Support the creation and functioning of Tenants’ Associations (48%)

**Additional Tenant Engagement Ideas**

Staff were asked if they had any additional ideas about how to successfully engage tenants. Improving general communications with tenants, offering more building social events and opportunities for physical activity, and increasing staff on-site presence were the most commonly identified ideas.

**Tools and Resources to Support Staff in their Role of Tenant Engagement**

Staff respondents were asked to identify the kinds of tools they feel they need to interact and/or engage with tenants in a positive and effective manner. The most common responses were:

- Common vision / understanding of tenant engagement amongst all staff (72%)
- Management commitment to tenant engagement (66%)
- Training / professional development in housing legislation, policies and practices (58%)
- Training / professional development in tenant engagement best practices (58%)

Staff respondents were asked to identify the most important tool to support their interactions/engagement efforts. The most common responses were:

- Common vision / understanding of tenant engagement amongst all staff (50%)
- Management commitment to tenant engagement (15%)
- Training / professional development in tenant engagement best practices (10%)

**Section D: Creating the Best Possible Place for Tenants to Live**

Staff respondents were presented with a list of areas and items that contribute towards making CHH buildings a safe and healthy place to live. They were then asked to identify which of the areas/items they thought were the most important to tenants.

- Building security (92%)
- Quality of their unit (87%)
- Pest control in unit (81%)
- Quality of common areas (75%)
Staff Consultation

In addition to the staff survey distributed to all CityHousing Hamilton staff, a focus group session with Tenant Services staff was held in September. The conversation cafes with tenants held over the summer months, were having the effect of opening up some key opportunities for engagement. As well, because of the Have Your Say process, tenants’ expectations of action were heightened. It was determined that bringing together specifically the Tenant Services staff for an in depth discussion, would be a way to create momentum and to lay the groundwork with the staff for implementation of the strategy. In this context, then, the goals for the session were:

- To gain a common understanding of what Tenant Engagement looks like currently at CHH
- To review the preliminary findings that are emerging from the Cafes
- To identify the challenges and opportunities based on the above
- To develop some plans to address the challenges and exploit the opportunities

What Is Tenant Engagement?

In response to the question of what tenant engagement looks like, the group came up with the following:

- Involving residents
- Stronger communities
- Partnership
- Good communication
- Tenant satisfaction
- Voluntary – not all tenants want to participate
- Education
- Tenants don’t always speak for other tenants
- Getting buy in
- Staff role critical in sustaining
- Follow-through or lack of
How are you involved in tenants’ lives?

Tenant Services Staff are involved in tenants’ lives in a variety of ways:

- They teach them life skills and provide organizational support.
- They offer advocacy – both with CHH and others, such as CAS/CCAS, Ontario Works Connect and advocate for health services.
- They play a steering role helping tenants with system navigation.
- Staff can be involved in crisis management as well as providing support and referral to tenants.
- Staff help them avoid eviction.
- Because many tenants, especially seniors, are lonely and isolated, staff may fulfill a social relationship, a substitute for family. This can be as simple as sharing a cup of tea.
- When family members disappoint, staff may be called upon to do “damage control” reassuring tenants who feel forgotten or abandoned.
- Staff also attend annual tenant meetings.

What do you think tenants expect?

- Tenants expect information about community services both within CHH facilities and outside.
- They expect help with literacy and translation, especially with government forms or communications from school about their children.
- Staff feel that some tenants do not know they can expect anything.
- Tenants expect maintenance requests to be responded to quickly.
- They expect a safe, well-maintained home.
- They expect the Tenants Services Staff to trouble shoot for them.
- When a tenant wants to transfer they expect it to be processed fast- often related to threats of crime or violence; sometimes the person is “transient” – this is how they deal with problems with neighbours or other tenants.
- Tenants often want to hear what they want to hear.
- Tenants expect us to be able to resolve issues with their neighbours.
- Newcomer groups sometimes believe CHH has more power and authority than it has to control tenant behaviour or to evict people with problem behaviour.
- They want a safe place for children to play.
- Tenants expect confidentiality and safety especially when reporting.
- They expect staff to be gatekeepers.
- Tenants expect privacy. Tenants want respect.
- Tenants expect staff to listen to them - ALL staff not just the TSS.
• They don’t expect to be treated as a potential fraud.
• They expect not to be judged.
• They don’t expect drug dealers and sex trade workers.

**Tenants Groups living in CityHousing Hamilton**

There are a wide variety of people living within CHH and many have barriers and multiple barriers. It is important to remember too that tenants have assets and can contribute a great deal to make living at CHH a positive experience. Staff have a role to play in overcoming the barriers and in empowering tenants to use their assets to the benefit of the community.

• Seniors
• Singles with barriers- concurrent disorders
• Families
• Single-headed households-(usually women)
• Students
• Immigrants/Refugees
• People with addictions and mental health issues
• Chronic homeless – when they arrive the professional supports disappear and the “street” supports move in

Note: staff pointed out that since the end of annual inspections and of initial visits, staff do not always know who their tenants are. There is a constant change of staff; staff are not trained. Need better orientation and integration.

**What opportunities for better tenant engagement do staff see?**

The staff were able to identify dozens of opportunities to engage tenants better without spending a lot of money. These could easily be organized into themes and worked up into an action plan with a time frame.

• Identify and build on tenants’ skills and talents
• Change the way all of CHH treats tenants
• Central Committee for Tenants
• Messaging to tenants
• Engage other City departments- such as recreation, community services, culture
• Partnerships with Service Providers
• Staff resources (this has cost implications)
• Changing times- not the 80’s or 90’s – opportunity for new approaches
• New CEO- opportunity to set expectations of performance and hold people accountable
**Staff Consultation**

- Managers need to be aligned with new culture – consistency
- Better use of technology - BlackBerries for everyone
- Train people in the use of technology
- Internal communications for staff
- Cross-training of departments and cross-team meetings
- Tenant placement
- Tenant services
- Property Management
- “A day in the life…” – shadow each other; learn what each other does
- Attend the tenant tribunal
- Central distribution / communications
- Better information management (OW has a model)
- New software being designed and implemented
- Bring issues to the team table
- Assess current meetings and frequency
- Meetings with agendas and minutes with actions (make sure everyone approves the minutes)
- Regular meetings with the Property Managers
- Building/Complex meetings could save time
- Set common standards – develop and enforce
- Start with small things
- Use other staff resources e.g. team of volunteers will come and do activities
- Inform staff of what is available
- Better organized/planning
- Action planning
- Look at other departments for ideas of how to do things
- Give people the tools to do the job
- Case conferencing
- Share these suggestions with the new manager
- Focus on culture shift with other departments
- Follow through
- Support from management
- Address staff performance (staff discomfort with “reporting”)
- Remove silos
- CRW/TSS role needs to be recognized - many people don’t know we are here
- Give staff tools and access to information and you will empower them

**Conclusion**

There was a great deal of overlap between what we heard from tenants and what we heard from tenant support staff and service providers. Staff provided very concrete strategies to facilitate tenant engagement; these strategies have three different foci:

- Internally, on how CHH organizes its work and cooperates in carrying it out;
- How CHH relates to tenants and helps tenants organize themselves and make their contribution;
- Externally, how CHH works with other City departments and service providers to make services available to tenants.
Service Provider Consultations

Service providers from community agencies play a critical role in the lives of tenants of CityHousing Hamilton and CHH looks to community agencies to provide needed supports to tenants. Some of the service providers deliver services on site at a CHH building or complex. Of these, some have dedicated space donated by CHH for that purpose. Others serve CHH tenants in their agency offices off site from CityHousing Hamilton. CityHousing Hamilton recognizes the value of partnership with community service providers and sees them as a critical part of the tenant engagement strategy.

Two focus groups were held with service providers: one in August and one in September. Representatives of 17 agencies delivering 23 programs attended in total. This does not exhaust the number of agencies in Hamilton providing services to CHH tenants but does reflect a meaningful representation and cross-section. The agencies attending served clients from all groups: children, youth, seniors, newcomers, women, families, homeless, disabled, mental health and addictions, police, volunteers.

Services offered by outside agencies

The services provided vary as much as the tenants at CHH. They include housing supports where the service provider holds the lease on units and provides case management to the clients who live in them. They include Early Years Centres, child care centres, recreation programs for children, and after school academic programs for children. Recreation programs for seniors are provided primarily by CHH staff but home health care for seniors is being provided as part of a pilot funded by the LHIN and delivered by a partnership of two community service providers. Services for people with disabilities are provided both within CHH and outside. Transitional and supportive housing services are provided by a number of agencies for women leaving Violence Against Women shelters, for men and women leaving homeless shelters, and for adults with developmental disabilities. Mental health and addictions support workers are attached to some CHH buildings. Services for newcomers are offered as well.

Barriers to Service and Participation

While CHH has a mix of market and Rent Geared to Income units (RGI), it was recognized that poverty is a significant barrier for many CHH tenants. The use of market rent history rather than subsidized rent history for eligibility is a barrier in this regard. Poverty also means many tenants having trouble paying the rent and staying housed. Not being able to afford reliable transportation or quality child care further blocks tenant participation. In addition to poverty being a barrier, for disabled people there is a lack of accessible units. For seniors and others, social isolation is a barrier. Immigrants and refugees face language and cultural barriers. Some individuals struggle with literacy.
Accessing technology and being computer literate are also barriers to many. Cultural attitudes about gender, race, age, ability and class can create barriers as well.

The quality of relationships among tenants and between tenants and CHH staff was cited as a barrier to participation: not allowing tenants to define their needs but rather presuming to tell them what they need; staff not listening/tenants not being heard.

The service providers reinforced what tenants said about relations with other tenants: namely, that bullying behaviour and strong personalities drive some people away; as well, gossip and exclusionary attitudes discourage people from putting themselves forward.

Beyond these easily identified barriers, the service providers identified more subtle barriers operating among tenants, barriers such as lack of trust of institutions (“us vs. them” dynamic), feelings of fear and anxiety, feelings of lack of respect and dignity, being perceived as only having deficits. Many have internalized messages of being unimportant or having nothing to offer. When tenants feel under-valued, disrespected or that their input is not worth listening to, their contribution is blocked and they do not bring forward their strengths. They are often stretched to their limits, physically, intellectually and emotionally. Being able to organize themselves to access services becomes an insurmountable obstacle because of the stresses of daily living. CHH and service providers need to take this into account when planning tenant engagement to ensure these tenants are not left behind.

Service providers identified barriers to their own ability to deliver services. Tenants often do not trust service providers because they view the service providers as “them.” Building trust is key. Funding is a barrier; for example, the home health care program is only able to support 25 seniors in their home but so many more could benefit from it if it moved from being a pilot to a full-fledged, funded program. Communications is another barrier to service delivery - both from the language/literacy angle and from the communications vehicle perspective. Newcomer tenants may not have a comfort level in English and service providers are not always able to provide service in their own language. Tenants, whether newcomers or not, may have literacy challenges and so the written word becomes a barrier to communication. On the technical side, many of the tenants do not have computers or email; it is difficult to find reliable ways to contact them otherwise. For example, the Volunteer Centre depends on email contact to recruit and place volunteers. Lack of information is a major barrier for tenants. They do not know what services are available or how to find out.

Service providers reported a lack of coordination among themselves and with CityHousing Hamilton. Examples of new coordinating efforts such as the McQuesten Planning table in the Oriole Crescent neighbourhood, is raising hopes for better results in this area, although the right people are not always at the table. Some service providers were learning for the first time of the existence of Community Relations Workers assigned to CHH buildings and complexes. These are not new positions-they have been in place for many years. It was acknowledged that the numbers of CRW’s had been reduced by about half in the 1990’s. When the service providers learned that there are 7 CRW’s for 13,000 tenants, they saw the problem. It was no longer a surprise that many service providers and also tenants do not know CRW’s exist. Service providers also reported that they sometimes perceive a lack of sensitivity towards tenants by CHH staff although others felt this was improving. It was recognized that lack of programming and meeting space is also a barrier to delivering services to CHH tenants.
What might help remove the barriers?

Service providers came up with a number of excellent suggestions for reducing barriers both for tenants and for the agencies trying to serve them. Generally, all agreed that additional resources are required. But they also identified specific recommendations, some of which could be implemented without additional cost.

To overcome language barriers, they recommend that CHH plan, and when needed budget, for translation/interpretation services; for simple situations (non-legal), they felt staff could identify individuals within the building- neighbours for example- who speak the language thus saving money. Executing legal documents and signing for hearing impaired tenants, it was recognized, are more specialized and do need a budget. To overcome cultural barriers towards women and children, service providers shared tactics to make it possible for a woman to visit a service provider and get help.

More and better communications- using every means possible- was stressed as essential to reducing barriers and making tenants feel important and included. Service providers need reliable sources of information too. Service providers could then take more responsibility for informing tenants of what they know – and they could get out and meet them.

It is also important to clarify and communicate the roles of the different CHH staff and also to have CRW’s present more in the buildings and complexes. This recommendation was echoed by the staff focus group.

Service providers noted that it was important to ensure CHH staff have the required diplomacy and sensitivity skills required to work with tenants and the complex situations that arise in CHH.

Both groups recommended regular coordinating meetings between CHH staff (CRW’s, Property Managers, Security) and service providers, perhaps quarterly, so they can get to know each other and can plan their work together. Joint lunch-and-learns were also suggested as a way to bring CHH staff and service providers together to learn together. They could also form partnerships to help CHH achieve what it is trying to achieve- not just CHH providing a platform for service providers. An existing example of this is the partnership with St. Joseph’s Home Care who secured a New Horizons grant and partnered with CHH to conduct the community garden project. This approach brought in more resources to serve more people and enhanced the living conditions for CHH tenants. St. Joseph’s Home Care and Catholic Family Services have gone on to secure funding from the Local Health Integration Network (LHIN) to pilot a home health care service for seniors so that they can remain in their homes. There are numerous other examples of potential partnerships which could be realized with more coordination and joint planning. Participating in more local planning tables (hubs for example) could also help to reduce barriers caused by lack of coordination and information.

Service providers offered advice on how CHH could promote and improve tenant engagement at CHH complexes and buildings.

- Look at tenants who are loud, noisy or boisterous; they may be potential leaders; offer them training and skills development.
- Give tenants the best service possible
• Start with tenants—it can’t be top down-
• Choose issues that tenants care about and that affect them directly, such as smoking, drugs, prostitution
• Tenants have to see results
• Challenge bullying/define consequences
• Create a Conflict Resolution policy and help tenants to use it
• Educate tenants at the time of intake as to their rights and responsibilities
• Practice transparency—outline the limits and the boundaries for tenants both with CHH and with each other—don’t leave them feeling unclear or unprotected by policy and support
• Set a tone at the outset that is tenant-centred
• Make them aware of what’s available in terms of engagement and services
• Create a positive space within CHH

When asked what role could service providers play in promoting tenant engagement at CHH, they suggested the following:

• Agencies can offer education and training to both staff and tenants
• Agencies could be a source of information about CHH
• Agencies can offer support to participate e.g. help tenants complete surveys;
• Distribute notices about surveys or events

Describing the Partnership with CHH

In preparing for the agency focus groups, it was identified that there are few and differing written partnership agreements between CityHousing Hamilton and service providers working with CHH tenants. This is true even when the services are provided on CHH sites.

The partnerships between CHH and the service providers take many different forms. Some are quite formal, legal agreements such as head leases where an agency holds leases on a number of units and places their clients during the provision of service; others are a simple oral agreement about the provision of space for exclusive or shared use in delivering programs. People suggested that it appears when money is involved a written agreement is always in place; other than that there is no written understanding of the respective responsibilities of the parties. This lack of uniformity can be problematic especially when there are changes in staff or programming.

At the focus groups, when asked to describe the terms of their partnership with CityHousing Hamilton, participants expressed puzzlement (it had not occurred to some that any terms were necessary “tenants are free agents and can interact with service providers without CHH permission.”); and then some expressed concern: fear of bureaucracy and ten page legal contracts sprang to mind. As the discussion continued, people started to recognize that there needs to be some reciprocity in the arrangements that allow agencies to access both the tenants and the properties of CHH. A reciprocal understanding of the need for vulnerable person screening and criminal reference checks for staff
and volunteers, and agreements on privacy and release of personal information/ confidentiality, were examples of the kinds of policies that need to be addressed in a partnership agreement, in addition to use and responsibility for space, utilities, maintenance and cleaning.

**Benefits of Partnership with CHH**

Service providers identified a number of benefits that their agencies enjoy as a result of their partnership with CityHousing Hamilton. Getting to know other service providers is a significant one. Not every agency receives the same benefits – these depend on the groups they serve and the nature of the need. These might include: rent-free space, free phone utilities and internet, money for cleaning supplies, some funds; access to buildings and tenants.

Participants recognized that families are able to access sustainable, affordable housing and that is essential to the agency’s success. Some said they could not provide their service without CHH. They cited the fact that CHH staff understand the Ontario Works process and it is not an obstacle as it is with private landlords. They also reported that they can access information about clients that they would not otherwise have.  

**What do you expect or need from CHH?**

Service providers say they need CityHousing Hamilton to keep their promises in order to establish trust. They need clear, transparent and honest communication so they know who to talk to for what rather than for staff to tell them it’s not their job. They expect follow up to requests for meetings. They want to be taken seriously. They need CHH to simplify the process for tenants. They need CHH to understand the agency’s role as an advocate and give them good quick information so they can serve the tenants. Once a release of information is signed, they would like open dialogue with staff. They need to understand how CHH works, an organizational chart with who does what would help. They need CHH to tell them what it can and cannot do and to work across silos rather than turf wars. Better relations with property managers would be welcomed. They would like a simple written agreement that they can understand that outlines responsibility. They need consistent responses; all staff saying the same thing. They expect to be treated with respect, good customer service and a smile. They would like to see consequences for staff performance, especially rudeness.

**What does CHH have a right to ask of you?**

Service providers feel they should be able to offer CityHousing Hamilton some kind of certification of standards as to how they provide services. They can promise professional staff who have been vetted and trained in safety. They can ensure their staff follow established procedures and can communicate about results they are achieving with CHH tenants. CHH has the right to expect agencies

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6 This statement reinforces the need for a formal agreement concerning release of personal information.
to keep facilities clean and safe, to carry appropriate insurance and publish their hours of operation. Agency staff can be expected to follow proper procedures.

Agencies are willing to share their expertise to raise CHH literacy in mental health and addictions issues. The agency can provide excellent tenants and support those tenants so CHH has fewer problems. The agency can as a guarantor of support to tenants and help tenants in emergencies. They can secure waiver/release of information so they can work with CHH to improve quality of life for tenants. CHH has a right to learn about results the agency is achieving for CHH tenants.

**Agency Advice about Important Elements of a Tenant Engagement Strategy**

- Explain to tenants why CHH wants to engage them. Why do you need to engage them?
- Better communications. Hold more meetings like the cafes.
- CHH is there to provide housing; it can’t be everything to everyone.
- Hold more meetings like the cafes of CHH to address violence or drug use.
- Work with us, respect our expertise, we are not the enemy; let us help, we are on the same side.
- Engage tenants on the issues that are appropriate to CHH’s mandate; follow through to build trust; treat them with respect and be transparent and clear about expectations. Define tenants’ rights and responsibilities.
- Understand the systemic barriers that people face. Stay flexible to address new problems that arise.
- Make coordination of service provision part of the strategy and when partnering make sure there is a clear understanding of what everyone brings to the table.
- May need to do something at the street level.
- Provide Safe buildings

**Conclusion**

The agencies offered many insights into how CHH is perceived in the community. They also revealed a lack of awareness of many of the services that CHH provides to tenants and the opportunities for partnership that exist. As the conversations continued, a genuine excitement began to build among at least some of the service providers for what was possible and also a recognition that the agencies have an obligation to work collaboratively with CHH. CHH is not just a platform for the agencies to deliver services.
Recommended Strategic Approach

Tenant Engagement at CityHousing Hamilton

Based on the findings of the conversation cafes, the tenant surveys, the staff focus groups, staff surveys and service provider consultations, the following strategic approach for the engagement of tenants within CityHousing Hamilton has been developed. The recommended approach is not only a reflection of what was heard from tenants, staff and service providers who are all part of the CHH picture, but is also informed by a thorough review of tenant engagement activities in other jurisdictions from a wide variety of articles and websites. The complete literature review can be found in the appendix to this report and provides a wealth of resources and tools that can be accessed and utilized as the strategy is rolled out.

A tenant engagement strategy by necessity should be flexible and responsive as housing provider and tenants develop a relationship of trust and mutual respect growing into a productive partnership for the benefit of both.

A Working Definition

Tenant engagement is the process by which tenants become involved in the activities and influence the decisions that affect their quality of life at CityHousing Hamilton. Tenant engagement includes preparing and equipping tenants and staff to participate; and involving tenants in monitoring and evaluating the quality of their participation.
Purpose of Tenant Engagement

The research on tenant participation revealed many different reasons to engage tenants. In some jurisdictions it is legally mandated. In others it is simply good customer service or even a smart business practice. Dr. Tony Gilmour makes a compelling case:

Tenants are knowledgeable about the communities they live in, therefore, a useful source of “on the ground” information for management. They can provide feedback on problems with property design and maintenance, potentially minimizing costs. Tenants will usually be the first to identify sources of anti-social behaviour.

Participation helps both tenants as well as the housing organization they are involved with. Serving on boards or tenant committees is thought to build an individual’s social capital, reducing feelings of isolation and teaching new skills. Active tenants will often be well-connected to other voluntary organizations, thereby embedding the housing provider in a local support network. Hence some academics consider tenant involvement can play a part in building community capital and social inclusion.7

The reasons for and benefits flowing from active tenant engagement are becoming increasingly recognized. A large body of experience is building which will continue to influence CHH Tenant Engagement Strategy going forward.

Dr. Gilmour reports that he has observed two basic approaches to tenants in his international research in social housing: tenant as customer/consumer and tenant as partner/stakeholder. In the tenant as customer approach, found most commonly in the United States, tenants are allowed to express their views and are consulted and asked for input. However, in this approach, strictly applied, tenants do not actively participate in decision-making and depend on management to implement their wishes. In the second approach more commonly found in the United Kingdom, tenants are woven into the management structures and have genuine decision-making roles. The first approach can be achieved much more easily than the second. To involve tenants as partners and stakeholders will require time and significant investment in training and supports for both staff and tenants. At CityHousing Hamilton, the recommendation is first to master and entrench the customer service

7 Tenant Participation, Dr. Tony Gilmour, Elton Consulting Kinetic White Paper Series, January 2011
approach. Once this has been accomplished, it will be possible to move to the tenant as partner and stakeholder.

**The Outcomes**

Many positive outcomes are possible when tenant engagement is rooted in the local reality, embraced as the “way to do business” and implemented in a measured and considered way. Desired outcomes for a tenant engagement strategy for CityHousing Hamilton are:

- Successful tenancy/Better occupancy
- Resilient neighbourhoods
- Enhanced tenant relations
- Experience of equity
- More efficient service provision
- More effective service delivery
- Better integration of community services into CHH
- Return on Investment
- Stewardship of assets
- Moving on to private housing - possibly home ownership

**Tenants at the Centre**

No matter which approach is used, tenants must be at the centre. Tenants are the reason CityHousing Hamilton exists. Tenants indicated over and over again, they want to feel respected, listened to and treated with dignity. Clearly tenants want clean, safe, well-maintained buildings, places for their children to play and meaningful activities for themselves; but they also want a quality relationship with their housing provider. This means effective and consistent communications both formal and informal must be present throughout the system. This way tenants feel “in the loop” about what is happening in their housing and why. Currently some tenants feel left out and perceive that others have “inside information” because of having a preferred relationship with a representative of CHH. Providing all tenants with reliable and consistent information, and doing this in ways that will reach the diversity of tenants, will go a long way to affirming that tenants are at the centre and not an afterthought.

Tenants said that they understand that things cannot always be done as quickly as they want or that there may not be enough money to do everything; but they want to see a sense of planning and prioritizing and that delays have legitimate reasons and are not simply due to lack of competence or care and attention. Tenants therefore will feel immediately more satisfied, if they receive reliable, consistent, credible information, if there is follow up and follow through, and if there is accountability for the decisions that are being made.
Tenants, like any other customer, want to feel valued and they feel valued primarily when they receive polite, courteous service and understand how and why decisions are made. So a key element of the strategy is developing effective communications mechanisms with tenants and delivering reliable consistent information to them on a regular basis. Because there is a wide diversity of tenants – language, educational and cultural, age and ability, the communications must use a variety of methods.

Some tenants want more than to be informed. They want to give input and be actively involved, and want to affect or even make decisions. Many tenants indicated a willingness to help with tasks such as clean ups, playground construction, conducting walk-throughs to identify deficiencies, neighbourhood watch committees for safety and security, community gardens, environmental activities such as recycling and composting, among many others. This desire needs to be accommodated within a strategy that puts tenants at the centre. Involving tenants in these ways will require tenant education. Time and resources will need to be invested in making it possible for tenants to participate in these more active ways. During the information gathering, it was obvious that there are many tenants who already have many of the skills and experiences required as a result of work or volunteer involvements. There are many more who would like to become involved but will need support to do so. Therefore, investing in tenant training and skills development is also a key element of the strategy as well as identifying tenants who already have the skills and can lead the way.

**Staff**

Putting tenants at the centre of the picture means staff need to see tenants as their primary stakeholder. Tenants’ experience of staff is their experience of CHH. Therefore, how staff behave and the manner in which they relate to tenants will shape tenants’ experience of CityHousing Hamilton. This is true especially of staff who have direct contact with tenants, but it is also true of staff who work behind the scenes, as well as staff who work on physical plant and any outside contractors brought in by CHH. Everyone involved needs to understand that the tenant is at the centre of what CityHousing Hamilton does. CHH is tenants’ home. Rather than seeing tenants as a “problem,”
staff need to see tenants as their customer. Staff need to demonstrate that tenants are valued and worthy of dignity and respect.

Beyond this, staff need to learn how to work with tenants in such a way as to build tenant capacity to be better tenants. Good tenancy is a goal of any social housing program and staff will be instrumental in achieving this goal by learning how to bring forward the best of what tenants have to offer, and how to discourage tenant behaviours that can lead to problems. Staff can do this, first, by learning and applying the necessary skills in their direct relations with tenants; but they can also do it by working collaboratively with other City departments, and other service providers in the community. There are many different players in the lives of tenants; staff have to take advantage of opportunities to work collaboratively with these to support tenants in developing the skills to participate effectively. Addressing staff attitudes and training staff in how to relate to tenants, is another key element of the strategy.

**Management**

Management is responsible for giving direction and monitoring the performance of staff; for providing the training and coaching supports staff need to do the work; and for organizing staff resources and relationships in ways that are conducive to success. Management is ultimately responsible for staff performance by clearly articulating expectations and holding staff accountable for meeting them. Effectively managing a housing organization made up of over 7,000 units and 13,000 people, requires investing in tools and technology; so in addition to training and supervising staff performance, management has a responsibility to provide the tools and put in place the information management and communications systems required by any large, modern organization. Outside of this tenant engagement strategy, and parallel to it, CHH is building a completely new customized information management system that will support the tenant engagement strategy by providing accurate, timely and up to date information. This will mean management will have the ability to track and monitor as never before. At the individual staff level, the issuance of Blackberries means that staff now have the ability to communicate and respond more quickly. In terms of consistency of information and messaging, plans to redesign and maintain the CHH website will also be an important support to the tenant engagement strategy.

Another key element of the strategy then is effective management of human and other resources to support a tenant-centred culture.

**Board of Directors**

A tenant-centred culture needs to be mandated at the highest level of the organization.

The Board of Directors needs to make tenant-centred housing a corporate policy and set the standards of service for the whole organization. In addition, the Board needs to monitor adherence to the principle of tenant-centred by requiring regular reporting on progress towards specific tenant-centred goals. Finally, the Board itself needs to reflect the value of being tenant-centred by developing policies that reflect this value and by instituting mechanisms for the Board to stay connected to tenants and their concerns.
Service Providers
The many community organizations who work with the tenants of CityHousing Hamilton can also play a key role in the success of the tenant engagement strategy. Those service providers that utilize space within CHH buildings and complexes have a particular obligation to ensure that they are working in partnership with CHH and as far as possible are developing complementary plans and goals so that tenants continue to be at the centre of the collaborative efforts. It is recommended that service providers and CHH develop collaboration agreements outlining their respective responsibilities and the purpose and expected outcomes of their collaboration.

Some Givens That Inform the Work

- The main driver of tenant satisfaction is repairs and maintenance.
- Tenants may be motivated to become involved if CHH demonstrates a commitment to improving the physical condition of the building or complex where the tenants live.
- There are different levels of engagement – only a small percentage of tenants will become actively involved – everyone does not have to be actively involved for tenant engagement to work.
- Different activities will be attractive to different groups – some people will be comfortable with formal activities while others will prefer informal ones.
- Special strategies will be needed to overcome barriers experienced by some groups – seniors, ethno-racial and linguistic groups, people with disabilities, youth, gender.

Figure 2 – Pyramid of Participation

Image copyright TPAS Cymru 2009
The Strategy: A Phased Approach

The recommended strategy will be phased in over 5 years. Each phase builds on the previous one and the previous phase continues as a foundational layer, thus each layer extends the strategy towards its desired goal of engaged, involved tenants. Within each phase are discrete components with actions and leaders.

Figure 3 – The Strategy
Implementation Plan

Phase I: Preparation / Readiness

Activities

1. Address Building Issues to restore confidence and build trust
2. Cross-Department Training and Planning for CHH Staff
3. Maintain Tenant Connections

1. Address Building Issues

Goal: Restoring Confidence and Building Trust with Tenants

In order to be able to trust that their ideas and opinions will be listened to, tenants need to see that their primary concern (building condition) is being seriously addressed by CityHousing Hamilton.

Action: Property Managers to produce a written Maintenance Service Commitment for tenants and post in the buildings

Action: Meetings to be held in each building or complex to discuss building issues with tenants – share priorities and explain reasoning. Refer to Building Condition Assessment and Facilities Committee of the Board.

Action: Training in new software-use to track work and report on priorities addressed in each building
2. Cross-Department Training and Planning for CHH Staff

**Goal: Shift in Thinking among CHH Staff and Increased Collaboration between Departments**

**Action:** Senior Management to review staff meeting format and schedules; develop regular inter-department meetings (especially PMs and TSS) to carry out ongoing joint planning and coordinate areas that overlap and impact on each other's work. Ensure decisions made and accountabilities assigned are recorded and reviewed.

**Action:** CHH Staff to produce Service Principles or Statement of Commitment regarding serving the Tenants of CityHousing Hamilton

**Action:** All PM and TSS to receive training in customer service principles and/or community development principles as a first priority. A longer-term training plan to be developed to include: legislative framework of the work (new HSA), best practices in tenant engagement, diversity and inclusion, collaborative methods, shared leadership models, etc.

**Action:** Training in new software – use to track work

3. Maintain Tenant Connections

**Goal: To Retain Current Levels of Tenant Involvement and Communicate CHH Accountability for the Strategy**

**Action:** Continue to hold Annual Meetings by building or complex

**Action:** Develop a special newsletter or quarterly update and tell people what you are doing (print and distribute because our survey showed that print is still
the preferred method although you should provide electronic version too as a significant number use this format)

**Action**: form a CEO Reference Group to share plans and seek feedback on how the strategy is working

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**Phase II: Participation by Tenants**

(Keep Phase I activities going to build staff skills, maintain trust and buy in of tenants while moving into Phase II)

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**Goal: To Experiment with How CHH and Its Tenants Want to Work Together**

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**Activities:**

1. Three Pilot Wards selected for Intensive Work
2. Create Tenant Working groups
3. Train Tenants, Staff & Partners
4. Connect to City Strategic Plan

**Action**: Hold another series of Conversation Cafes – starting in September

- Report on progress of strategy to date
- Invite ideas for new initiatives by neighbourhood
- Lead to ward-specific actions

**Action**: Develop a process for selecting 3 pilots and include consideration of strategic partnerships with other City departments, including the Neighbourhood Strategy, and community partners including service providers and possibly funders (e.g. community gardens project).

**Action**: Develop a plan for each pilot including creation of tenant working groups and training of tenants, staff, and partners for their roles. Consider asset-mapping.
Phase III: Resilient Neighbourhoods

(Phase II learnings about structures and mechanisms continue into Phase III)

**Goal: To Apply the Learnings from the Pilots into the Broader Tenant Engagement Strategy**

**Action:** Review results from 3 pilots and determine principles of engagement for CHH with their tenants

**Action:** Share results with the Neighbourhood Strategy to identify ways to build resilient neighbourhoods

**Action:** Develop CHH wide themes to guide work going forward; invite tenants to vote on themes

**Action:** Reference Group morphs into CHH Tenant Council
**Measuring Success**

The strategy is an iterative process, a journey of tenants and housing provider together. While time frames have been provided, it is important to recognize that depending on the success off each phase, the timing of the next phase could be affected. Meeting exact timelines is less important than the forward motion and the sense of all concerned that progress towards the goal is being made. Setting benchmarks and making them known to everyone will be important to keep everyone engaged and motivated.

**Evaluation**

How will CHH know if it is being successful in engaging tenants?

1. **“Tenants at the Centre” has become embedded in the CHH culture**
   - [Develop specific measures]

2. **Involving hard-to-reach groups**
   - [Develop specific measures]

3. **Increased tenant satisfaction**
   - [Develop specific measures]

4. **Return On Investment (ROI)**
   - [Develop specific measures] e.g.
     - -e.g. better buildings, fewer repairs and maintenance, fewer complaints, lower vacancy rates, etc.
Appendices
Communications Plan

Goal of Communications Plan
To inform tenants about ways they can participate in the implementation of the Tenant Engagement Strategy for CHH; and to encourage them to participate so that the Tenant Engagement Strategy will be well-founded and have maximum chance of success.

Purpose of TES
To Work with Tenants to ensure the provision of quality housing services at CityHousing Hamilton

Key Messages
- At CityHousing Hamilton tenants are at the centre
- To be the best it can be, CHH needs tenants to be involved- in both formal and informal ways
- Phase 1 of the strategy is all about laying a firm foundation
- In this phase, we will be focusing on training staff, planning and designing processes so that we can work together effectively for a long time to come

Audiences
- Tenants –sub-groups of tenants- seniors, newcomers, families with children, singles
- Tenant Associations or Tenant Councils
- Service providers working with CHH tenants
- CHH staff

Vehicles
- Tenants and others will be kept informed of developments in the area of tenant engagement through a variety of vehicles:
  - Phone line – x 6679 – call to receive updates
  - Web page- log on to learn what’s happening
  - CHH Newsletter- a regular column – read to stay in touch with events
  - Posters on TES bulletin boards/section of bulletins boards informing tenants of upcoming events, milestones and go to people
  - Word of mouth through staff
  - Memos/Updates to Staff
- Correspondence with Service Providers
- Tenants will be able to ask questions and leave comments on the webpage and the phone line. These will be answered/acknowledged.

**Key Events**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>January 19, 2012</td>
<td>Present strategy to the Board of CHH</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>February 6, 2012</td>
<td>Open Public Meeting to Present Strategy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March</td>
<td>Release of Report</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>February-April</td>
<td>Presentations to CHH and City staff groups</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Presentations to tenant groups and service providers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>July</td>
<td>Announcement of creation of Stakeholder Reference Group</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>On going</td>
<td>Updates on phone line, web page, and newsletter.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Recommendations:**

A point person for communications will be needed to ensure that communications are kept fresh and consistent.

It is recommended that information be provided through all the various vehicles identified. Do not put information in only one place. If a poster is designed and printed, make sure it is on the website too, and that the information on the poster is put on the phone message and printed in the newsletter. Messages and notices need to appear in all formats—electronic and print and voice—so that people receive the same information no matter what format they prefer.

As much as possible provide translations of materials. If it is not possible to translate everything, try to provide the most basic information about meetings and milestones in the main languages spoken.

It is also recommended that staff see everything that is going to tenants so that staff can appear knowledgeable and be supportive of the communications. The extent to which staff are on top of the developments in the strategy, to that extent, tenants will have confidence in CHH intention to engage them.

Provide staff with regular written updates about the strategy and encourage them to talk with tenants about them.
In involve staff in developing and keeping current the Q&A for the communications plan – this will develop their abilities to anticipate what tenants will want and need to know; it will help them listen more to what tenants are saying; and it will build ownership of the answers.

Have staff prepare and deliver the presentation about the strategy to different groups so they become comfortable talking about it and answering questions.
Training Plan for CHH Staff

Primary Training Activities

These six areas are recommended as the cornerstones of the tenant engagement strategy and are intended for all CHH staff. It is recommended that staff be organized in interdepartmental groups for training. For some of the topics, materials and training services are readily available. For others, they may need to be developed. The topics are broad and may need to be broken down into subtopics with modules for different aspects of the topic. CHH staff are not expected to be in-depth experts on all these topics. But they should understand and appreciate the salient information for their work at CHH. The test question should be: what information or skill, if they did not have it, would impede staff ability to do their job.

### Statutory and Regulatory Context

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Goal</th>
<th>A solid foundation in the laws and regulations that cover social housing in the Province of Ontario. (Housing Services Act; Residential Tenancies Act; Access for Ontarians with Disabilities Act; Human Rights Act, etc.)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Who: All CHH staff</td>
<td>When:</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Working at CHH

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Goal</th>
<th>A solid understanding of the vision, direction, policies, procedures and tools (e.g. new software) required for working at CHH; how CHH is structured, its relationship to the City of Hamilton; goals for the City of Hamilton and related departments such as Community Services and Neighbourhood Development; social housing: theory and practice.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Who: All CHH staff</td>
<td>When:</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Knowing Our Community

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Goal</th>
<th>A general knowledge of the City of Hamilton as a community: demographics, economic drivers, cultural and recreational groups and activities; and specific knowledge of CHH and its communities. (Groups living at CHH).</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Who: All CHH staff</td>
<td>When:</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Customer Service

Goal: To create a culture of excellent customer service among staff — putting tenants at the centre.

Who: All CHH staff

Communications

Goal: To improve the effectiveness of CHH communications within CHH and between CHH and its various stakeholders.

Who: All CHH staff

Conflict Resolution/Mediation/Alternative Dispute Resolution

Goal: To equip staff with skills and tools to de-escalate conflict and foster harmonious relationships between and among tenants, and between staff and tenants.

Who: All CHH staff

Targeted Training for Tenant Services Staff

In addition to the six core areas recommended for all CHH staff, there are specific skills and knowledge that will be important for Tenant Support staff to acquire and deepen over time. Some of the topics are recommended for all TSS; others could be assigned to staff based on interest and job requirements or population served.

- Community Development / Community Building
- Adult / Popular Education Methods
- Group Process Principles
- Facilitation Techniques
- Diversity Training
- Asset Mapping
- Healthy Child Development/Family Systems
- Newcomer Settlement
- Homelessness
- Addictions and Mental Health Issues
- Disabilities
- Aging
- Social Services System
- Services in the Community
- CCAC / Health Services
- Community Policing – New Initiatives
- Partnership Development
- Micro-Enterprise / Social Enterprise
Community colleges and adult education programs offer courses on many of the above topics. Also expertise in many of the above topics is available from community partners who would be happy to share their knowledge with CHH staff. It is suggested that a roster be produced and agencies be scheduled in regularly to present on the different topics.

Not all training needs to be in a classroom or presentation format; in fact, learning is often more successful when it is practical- an experiential process of watching and doing with someone who is skilled or practiced. Visiting agencies or shadowing others should be considered when designing the training experiences.
Literature Review

Introduction

As part of the tenant engagement strategy and plan undertaken by CMP Consulting and Policy Planning Plus for CityHousing Hamilton, this literature review presents current leading-edge research, frameworks, plans and strategies, policies, and resources and tools related to the tenant engagement process.

During the scan, hotbeds of activity emerged in the United Kingdom and Scotland due to a long history of social housing and national regulations that require the development and assessment of tenant engagement strategies and programs. Initially, large-scale development of social housing was developed and managed by local councils in the UK (comparable to Ontario municipalities).

Since the late 1970’s, the role of council housing in the UK has been reduced as a result of the introduction of “right to buy” legislation and an emphasis on the development of new units by housing associations (independent, not-for-profit organizations comparable to private non-profit providers in Ontario). Housing associations in the UK are supported at a national level by the National Housing Federation and some of their reports and publications are noted throughout this document.

With regards to other countries in Europe, differing regulatory frameworks suggest that a review of tenant participation practices is best determined by looking at local provider case studies and evaluating them based on desired outcomes. In the United States, tenant engagement activities are also strong on the west coast. Funding from the government has supported tenant involvement, particularly with respect to the establishment of Tenant Councils.

Within Canada, both Ottawa Community Housing and Toronto Community Housing Corporation continue to develop and enhance tenant participation strategies and programs across their portfolios.

Throughout this report, references are made to tenant engagement, tenant participation and tenant empowerment. Though these terms are interchangeable, the goals of the individual strategies can influence the terminology. For example, tenant empowerment is used most often to describe strategies that are moving tenants towards co-management frameworks and, especially in the UK, individual ownership. It is noteworthy that studies show that tenants often do not understand these terms: involvement, engagement, participation and empowerment.

The following document presents research, frameworks and key best practices that have informed the development of the CityHousing Hamilton’s tenant engagement strategy and its processes. In addition, practical tools and resources have been cited to support the implementation of programming.
This document has been divided into the following sections in an order that reflects a flow from broad, high level research to practical engagement tools and resources:

1. Research
2. Frameworks, Plans and Strategies
3. Policies
4. Resources including evaluation tools, guidebooks, handouts, handbooks, communications tools and interactive and online resources.

**Research**

The following cited documents are research-based findings that define best practices for tenant participation. The primary sources of information include tenant surveys, case studies that compare and highlight best practices at both the national and local level, the analysis of existing compacts and contracts, tenant interviews and discussion groups.

While much of the available research is UK-based and encompasses an over-arching framework of regulatory requirements at the national level, broad themes emerge that reflect trends towards outcome-based models of participation with evaluative components, and the provision of opportunities based on individual tenants’ desire and abilities.

**The Place of Inhabitants: Residents’ Participation in Create Sustainable Housing & Neighbourhoods, CECODHAS Housing Europe, 2011**

http://www.housingeurope.eu/issu/1890

This document presents the research findings of CECODHAS Housing Services Europe, a federation of public, cooperative and social housing providers across 19 EU member states. The aim of the report is to learn about how social housing providers are involving their tenants and residents in providing services, the role of residents and how to put them at the centre of our work.

Involving inhabitants in decision-making and the delivery of social housing, as the examples in this report show, help to ensure long term sustainability by increasing residents’ satisfaction with services, increasing quality of the homes and surrounding environment, enhancing relationships among neighbours and creating a sense of pride and belonging to the local community.

The framework for the report is the development of a common set of quality principles for the relationships between providers and users that place tenants at the centre of the organization’s work. The report compares tenant participation in five large European countries by examining regulatory frameworks and case studies of good practices.
The report provides details (measures, tools, and challenges) on the following key best practices from the case studies including:

- using a variety of methods to mobilize tenants
- collecting users’ opinions/outputs
- consulting tenants and involving them in decision making
- involving tenants in the management of the organizations
- involving tenants in the delivery of services.

These best practices represent input from a broad cross-section of providers with differing regulatory requirements, size and scope of housing and services. They can inform a framework for tenant participation strategies in Hamilton.

**Understanding Tenant Involvement, Tenant Services Authority, United Kingdom, 2009**


This report was created by Ipsos MORI for the Tenant Services Authority (TSA), the legislated regulator of social housing in England. A key objective of TSA is to ensure that tenants of social housing have an opportunity to be involved in its management and the decisions that affect both housing services and participation opportunities.

The methodologies that inform this summary include qualitative research, discussion groups and in-depth tenant interviews to further the understanding of tenant attitudes towards their participation and to demonstrate a rigorous model for effective engagement of stakeholders.

The focus of this summary is on the identification of barriers to involvement and concludes the key barriers to be:

- a perceived lack of need in that tenants are satisfied with the housing service
- a sense of disengagement and stigma attached to being involved
- lack of knowledge on what engagement opportunities are available and
- housing service providers’ belief that all tenants want to get involved when research indicates this is a false assumption.

In short, this study finds that tenants are motivated to get involved by enhancing the overall quality of their housing.

The full report details research findings and provides practical recommendations at:
Tenant Participation, Kinetic White Paper Series, Dr. Tony Gilmour, Elton Consulting, January 2011


Dr. Tony Gilmour wrote this white paper and it reviews tenant participation strategies by surveying five large Australian community housing providers and comparing their effectiveness to like providers in the UK and the United States.

The paper compares two key approaches: the first is to treat tenants as customers in order to give them a say about what happens in their homes; and second, to treat them as partners and integrate them into formal governance structures. Housing in the United States treats its tenants as customers, whereas housing organizations in the United Kingdom weaves its tenants into the structure, modeling a true empowerment and partnership model. Dr. Gilmour notes that Australia is ahead of the United States and is approaching the United Kingdom in terms of its best practice in the area of tenant engagement.

Case studies in the paper suggest a correlation between levels of participation, in particular, where tenants served as directors, and overall satisfaction with the housing services.

Making Voices Count: Reviewing Practice in Tenant Involvement and Empowerment, Tenant Services Authority, United Kingdom, 2010

http://www.tenantservicesauthority.org/server/show/ConWebDoc.20477

This Tenant Services Authority report reviews tenant involvement within a framework of British regulatory changes that require tenants to be empowered to hold landlords accountable for the delivery of services aligned to local priorities.

Methodologies that informed the findings include the analysis of providers’ tenant participation compacts and extensive interviews.

The structure of the review demonstrates why new approaches are needed; in particular, it builds a case for the movement towards a more business-like relationship where tenants are treated as customers and providers are held accountable to regulated and locally defined standards through the use of impact statements and accompanying assessment tools.

Though these approaches are driven by regulatory requirements, the report is comprehensive and broad in scope. It provides a framework for the development of an evolutionary review that reflects a thoughtful, value-based focus, and practical resources that include key questions providers can use when reviewing policies.

This summary was commissioned by the Welsh Assembly Government to gain a detailed picture of the level, quality and types of tenant participation activity in Wales and to evaluate the benefits that they bring to the design and management of social housing.

Key findings of the evaluation process support the continued increase in the use of information technology and more autonomy for tenant involvement at the local level. This evaluation supports research that suggests participation levels depend on individual needs and time commitments; and vary based on age, gender, ethnicity and support needs.


This study was commissioned to examine levels of participation with respect to disabled tenants in Scotland. Key findings point to this population being under-serviced in spite of the existence of the housing sector and broader human rights regulation that require inclusive policies and procedures.

Through the examination of national and local policies and frameworks, the report recommends that policies and engagement strategies for disabled tenants require:

- a commitment to disability equality and its implementation
- clear recognition of roles and responsibilities
- the provision of guidance, support and training
- dedication of resources and appropriate capacity within organizations and
- the development of processes that set targets, standards, collect data, and monitor progress.

The recommendations provide a starting point for the development of inclusionary policies and programs.

Assessing Landlords’ Progress, Tenant Services Authority, United Kingdom, 2010

This 2010 report by the Tenant Services Authority is driven by a regulatory power-sharing model between providers and tenants and was designed to provide information for the development of national standards for tenant involvement.

The research method used was to first survey tenants to see what their expectations are and then to assess landlords’ performance based on the survey findings. Key findings with respect to providing a
greater role for tenants point towards partnership models and the need for more structure and formalized strategies. Further, tenants and landlords find the language related to tenant engagement confusing; they prefer the language of “tenant involvement” to “tenant engagement” or “tenant empowerment.”

A landlord assessment model requires meaningful input from tenants and requires a dedication of both time and money to ensure the input is representative of all tenant populations.

**Frameworks, Plans and Strategies**

As expected, the United Kingdom leads the way in the development of frameworks, plans and strategies that provide housing providers and tenants with information and templates for participation programs and initiatives. Much of this information is developed as a deliverable of a larger strategic vision of integrating tenant participation activities into the broader community.

Local Ontario examples from Ottawa and Toronto reflect this movement towards a more holistic model of tenant participation – one that broadens the definition of community and seeks partnerships that expand the scope of traditional tenant participation models and expected outcomes.

**Ottawa Community Housing Healthy Communities Initiative, ONPHA Presentation, November 2009**


In addition, a hard copy of material provided by Ottawa Community Housing related to Healthy Community Initiative has been provided to CHH.

The Ottawa Community Housing Healthy Communities Initiative is based on the exploration of, and then common definition for, the determinants of a healthy community. It mirrors emerging strategies in the UK that view tenant communities as part of broader communities and highlights the desire to foster partnerships outside of their buildings right in the neighbourhood.

Emerging indicators of a healthy community were defined as a positive social environment, a safe place to live, pride of place by tenants, and engagement with the broader community. The development of measures and programs that foster healthy communities throughout the organization is at the heart of this initiative.

The development of this initiative was facilitated by a steering committee of senior staff and engaged a consultant to develop a framework that analyzed the data from two pilot projects and tenant surveys. The data collection materials were formatted to focus participants’ answers in the areas of the identified characteristics of a healthy community in order to provide meaningful feedback. This process provided a comprehensive quantitative and qualitative measurement tool that formed a framework for assessments and continual improvement opportunities.

Ottawa Community Housing engaged a broad spectrum of community members to provide input and dedicated resources to develop, implement and evaluate the pilot projects and tenant surveys.
This initiative provides a framework and structure for the development of high-level strategic directions in tenant engagement services with a heavy focus on community engagement.

**A Good Practice Framework for Tenant Participation in Scotland, Communities Scotland, 2004**


This framework was developed by the Department of Urban Studies at the University of Glasgow for Communities Scotland. It structures tenant participation strategies around the development, implementation and support of thoughtful processes.

The recommendations in this framework were informed by case studies involving both landlords and tenants and suggest a clear relationship between the dedication of resources to tenant participation and its effectiveness, and that good practices involve tenants at all stages of what is considered an on-going, evolving, and emergent process.

The document offers a comprehensive, structured approach to the identification of best practices for tenant involvement, including strategies for engaging traditionally excluded groups, innovative methods for involving all tenants including key steps in planning and implementing participation activities, checklists and points to consider, and monitoring and evaluating strategies based on inputs, outputs and desired outcomes.

**National Framework for Tenant Participation Compacts, Department for Communities and Local Government, United Kingdom, 2005**


This document defines compacts as “agreements between council landlords and tenants setting out how tenants will be involved in decisions affecting their homes and communities. Their aim is to help councils and tenants to develop a shared vision for their area, planning what they want to see changed or improved and agreeing how it will be done.”

The framework was commissioned by the Deputy Prime Minister’s office in the UK to create a toolkit to help councils and tenants agree and implement effective strategies for tenant involvement at the local level.

This framework was informed by research that supports the premise that the compact model is effective in helping strengthen and improve relationships between tenants and providers. The document provides a comprehensive blueprint for the development, implementation and performance measurement of a successful tenant participation strategy program.

The foundation of this model is the development and alignment between tenants and landlords of a set of key standards for the dedication of resources, how meetings will be conducted, how information is structured and disseminated, terms of reference for tenant groups, how tenants’ groups are involved in decision making, and for monitoring and measuring performance.
Housing and Homeless Services; Tenant Participation – a New Direction, Consultation Paper, Queensland Government, 2010


This consultation paper was created by Housing and Homelessness Services in Brisbane, Australia, for the Queensland Government and provides a sample framework for a discussion process to help develop a tenant participation program. The paper sets out ideas for discussion and feedback to improve the tenant engagement program and to ensure tenant participation is a vital part of social housing in Queensland. The paper also acknowledges that any new participation programs must integrate elements of the Queensland Government’s Seniors Strategy.

The paper is structured around five key areas of discussion; establishing new goals, redefining the roles of both tenant groups and service providers, establishing a theme to guide program activities, enhancing and expanding activities, and the delivery of the new program. This discussion framework is not focused on defining and discussing the empowerment model but it drills down into the practical by focusing on an “action” list that provides suggested starting points and background information to help focus discussions.

Housing and Homeless Services; Tenant Participation Survey, Queensland Government


This tenant feedback survey was created by the Housing and Homelessness Services in Brisbane, Australia to provide tenant input to the structure of the consultation process (see above) and inform the development of a tenant participation program. It models a solid and comprehensive structure for a participation survey.

Participation: the Next Generation, Policy and Practice Report, TPAS Cymru, Wales, 2009

www.participationcymru.org.uk/11489.file.dld

This report was created by TPAS Cymru to provide a report on policies and practices to Welsh providers as they move towards a participation model that reflects a wider view on what defines a tenant community and where tenants can play a role in dealing with the larger issues in the wider community arena.

Though this report is informed by regulatory systems that are not present at the same level in Ontario, it provides a useful framework for strategies based on tenant motivation as informed by individual interests and ability to commit time.
The report defines and examines the historical “ladder” model that measures success by moving tenants from being informed on activities and events developed and implemented by the landlord, to becoming active, empowered partners. It goes further and proposes a new practice framework that collapses the “ladder” and provides a pyramid model that presents participation opportunities at every level of engagement. It also minimizes hierarchy and recognizes the complexity of tenant and landlord involvement.

**An Action Plan for Community Empowerment: Building On Success, TPAS Cymru, United Kingdom, 2007**


This action plan was created by the Department for Communities and Local Government in the UK to synthesize regulatory requirements and identified best practices into a broad, outcome-based plan with a focus on strengthening local citizen and resident leadership as part of decision making processes at the community level.

As per regulations, this is a power sharing model, but includes helpful details and a summary chart with actions in three key identified areas: (i) development of local empowerment opportunities (ii) supporting and enabling tenants to take empowerment opportunities (iii) and strengthening local representative democracy. At the heart of success is the need to build trust with tenants and residents.

Case studies on successful local initiatives across diverse populations provide some new and interesting ideas for tenant participation initiatives.

**TCHC Community Management Plan, Toronto Community Housing Corporation, 2010-2012**

[http://www.torontohousing.ca/emp](http://www.torontohousing.ca/emp)

This plan was developed by Toronto Community Housing as a roadmap to animate the vision and desired outcomes of their strategic plan. The tenant engagement strategy is seen as an integral part of a community management strategy and embraces the theme of Strengthening People. This reflects UK-based regulatory-driven models that include tenant participation as part of broader community engagement strategies.

It is a focused and structured document with practical tenant engagement strategies, defining outcomes, and then providing measurable strategies to achieve the outcomes.

**Tenant Participation: Back to Basics, Presentation by Alison West to TPAS Cymru, November 2004**

[http://www.nec.ac.uk/info/category-browse?usca_p=t&category_id=2501](http://www.nec.ac.uk/info/category-browse?usca_p=t&category_id=2501)

This transcription of a talk given by Alison West to TPAS Cymru speaks to research on the motivation of tenants to participate, and the specific challenges of tenant engagement in non-ownership
housing. Her research supports the idea that many tenants only want to engage in issues that directly affect their housing.

The author summarizes her findings to promote the idea that programs not forget the basics; involving people in a small way in their own surroundings is an excellent way of improving the local environment, e.g. a child who has helped to plant a tree is not likely to tear it down.

Alison West builds a case for aiming for a good, strong active community; however, tenants choose to define it.


Created by the Moray Council in Scotland, the strategy is based on a framework that both engages and enables tenants to take part in decision making processes that influence housing policies, conditions, and related services.

The strategy was developed around a set of defined aims informed by core principles, and provides an example of a concise, measurable action plan that charts the detailed objectives of the plan and then dedicates resources, defines timelines, and desired outcomes for each action.

**Effective Resident Involvement and Consultation in Sheltered Housing, Department for Communities and Local Government, United Kingdom, 2009**


This good practice guide was commissioned by a ministerial working group for the Department for Communities and Local Government in the UK. As with all nationally commissioned documents, it is informed by regulations that place tenants in a co-management position, but endeavors to provide good practices that go beyond these requirements.

The guide identifies some of the barriers affecting providers and commissioners and provides practical help and advice on how to overcome these, promoting the wider importance of genuine, effective resident involvement. There is also a related seminar series to accompany the publication of this document.

The guide includes a detailed section on identifying effective approaches to involvement, barriers and cases studies on successful initiatives to engage older tenants, and in-depth case studies of initiatives that have had very positive outcomes and demonstrated unforeseen benefits.

Though focused on involving senior tenants, the creators of this document believe it has application outside of this population.
Tenant Involvement and Empowerment Program, East Kent Housing Website
http://www.eastkenthousing.org.uk/get%20involved.aspx

This website for East Kent Housing demonstrates a strategy for providing tenants with survey results and the accompanying actions the provider will take to address them. The provision of information on how the tenants’ input has been used models an effective vehicle for validating tenant participation efforts.

Toronto Community Housing Corporation, TCHC Partnership Models

*Hard copy has been submitted to CHH’s office.*

These Toronto Community Housing Corporation examples illustrate the benefits of developing partnerships to provide tenants with personal growth opportunities and support UK research on the trend towards tenant participation initiatives reflecting a broader definition of community.

Capita National Tenant Engagement Conference, September 2011, London England


Part of ensuring that tenant engagement strategies are evolving and continually improving involves staff and tenant participation in professional development opportunities including local, national and international conferences and workshops that highlight emerging trends, new ideas, current best practices and exciting research in the sector.

The September 2011 Capita Conference in London, UK highlighted the implications of a more flexible offer for tenants and devolution of power to councils and communities (a current trend in the UK). Topics included:

- Partnership working between tenants and senior level management to steer landlords’ policy
- Supporting tenant panels and engaging them in performance management
- Measuring the effectiveness of the tenant participation strategy by assessing successful outcomes
- Demonstrating value for money
- The role of residents in directing and assessing housing associations' performance
- Community-led commissioning
- Linking tenant engagement wins back into organizational wins

Policies

Policy documents traditionally reflect a top-down hierarchy based on levels of responsibility and accountability. As most of the current documentation comes from the UK where emerging models for tenant empowerment are driven by regulatory requirements that speak to a partnership between the landlord and tenant in managing housing and services, frameworks that guide tenant participation
activities lean towards business models where instructional documents are defined as principles, aims, strategies and outcome statements. Samples of these are found throughout this report. Only one document that is first and foremost a policy document was uncovered through the literature scan.

**Statement of Policy on Tenant Participation**

http://www.hsha.org.uk/default.asp?ID=1

This sample policy statement was created by Hanover (Scotland) Housing Association to outline their position on tenant participation. The policy aims are based on legislated requirements to provide opportunities to tenants to participate and influence decisions about their housing and related services.

This is a concise document and suggests a simple policy framework of identifying key principles, strategies, and evaluating and monitoring progress. The list of key principles (Appendix 1) – that provides starting points for discussion on ways of working together – informs both the development and implementation of a tenant participation program.

**Resources**

**Evaluation Tools**

The following are evaluative in nature and include the use of surveys, case studies and matrix tools. They provide interesting frameworks for evaluative processes using both quantitative and qualitative methods.

**Tenant Empowerment Program Review**

http://www.tpas.org.uk/

This program review was conducted by TPAS, a national organization that synthesizes government policy with front-line service delivery and grassroots tenants’ groups in the UK.

The review is survey-based and provides both a concise template for this type of evaluation as well as best practices in the areas of tenant training and capacity building (including on-line information services), how providers communicate to tenants, and includes lessons learned by tenant organizations that have collapsed. The survey has been designed with a national UK scope in mind.

**Value for Money and Tenant Engagement**

www.housemark.co.uk

This document, commissioned by HouseMark Performance Improvement in the UK, provides a view of the integration of nationally regulated standards for tenant participation into an assessment model that focuses success on value for money (VFM). The framework is structured around six national standards that social housing providers must meet.
The report presents a model VFM matrix that captures in a systematic way information about the impact of involvement programs on the tenant and the provider, the total cost of tenant involvement and costs attached to specific initiatives, and the efficiencies in time or money saved as a result of tenant involvement.

The use of case studies provides a context for how VFM can be assessed qualitatively. This type of evaluation can be re-purposed by substituting VFM criteria with other metrics that reflect the desired outcomes for a broad range of programs.

Guide Books


This guide was created by Communities Scotland to provide tenants, tenant groups, local authorities and housing staff with a downloadable resource of practical advice, helpful tools including assessment checklists, and case studies that demonstrate good practices.

It is an example of a user-friendly, accessible resource for guiding stakeholders in the development of tenant participation programs and initiatives.

**A Guide to Engaging Muslim Communities, Chartered Institute of Housing, United Kingdom, 2008**


This comprehensive guide was commissioned by the Chartered Institute of Housing in the UK to provide landlords with information and tools to engage Muslim tenants. It reflects extensive research and provides practical advice based on issues specific to the Muslim community.

The guide is framed around the assumption that Muslim communities define themselves primarily through their religious practices. It offers a framework for the development of inclusive tenant engagement programs using alternative constructs, and provides comprehensive strategies and best practices, as well as case studies on engaging women and youth.

Many of the key messages can inform the engagement practices for other under-represented or marginalized communities.

Handouts

This scan found many examples of tenant handbooks that focus on tenant rights and responsibilities; information on tenant participation tends to be included in strategies, plans and on organizational websites.
Ottawa Community Housing Tenant Association Handbook


This handbook was created by Ottawa Community Housing to provide information to tenant associations. It includes practical information on all aspects of running a tenant association including elections, executive positions, managing finances, and running meetings. It also provides sample constitutions and tenant association charters.

Communications

Catalyst Communities Resident Involvement Statement: Placing Residents at the Heart of Decision Making, United Kingdom, May 2011-12

http://www.chg.org.uk/catalyst-communities-housing-association/resident-involvement

The Catalyst Housing Group is made up of three housing associations in the London area of the UK. The website for this group has a home page targeted to residents that includes information accessible in a “file folder” tab format on getting involved, consultations, funding available to tenants, training, and other useful information.

Their resident involvement statement is also available for download. This document is framed like a contract or charter, and each section includes “action points” that are measurable activities for which the provider is accountable.

The document starts with a list of aims and then lays out how the plan will achieve each aim using an action-based framework that includes consulting, communicating, encouraging and supporting tenants to participate based on their individual abilities and desires to commit time and energy. To this point, the section titled “Ways for you to get involved” uses time clock icons to rate how long each participation activity may require.

This tenant involvement document demonstrates a clear, creative and accessible communications tool.

Tenant Participation Compact

http://www.camden.gov.uk/ccm/ems-service/stream/asset/?asset_id=2149716

This document was created by the Camden UK Housing Council and is structured around a framework of legislated responsibilities of the landlord to provide and measure tenant participation opportunities. It is unique in that it includes a glossary that provides a common definition of terms found in the compact.

This document is focused on the rights of tenants, and “guarantees” detailed activities that provide involvement opportunities, support, and funding. This compact also sets standards for meetings and lays out clear processes for monitoring performance.
Want Your Voice Heard? Then Get involved and Tenants Training Brochure

http://www.dudley.gov.uk/housing/council-housing/tenant-participation/

These UK Council tenant communication brochures offer a chart of participation options using a framework of self-identified time commitment by the tenant, and they provide a list of internal and external tenant training opportunities. The formats are clear, colorful and engaging.

The Sounding Board

http://www.reading.gov.uk/residents/Housing/CouncilTenants/TenantInvolvement/the-sounding-board/

The Sounding Board is a section on the Reading Council Housing UK website that provides tenants with a forum to provide information and opportunities to express opinions to the housing provider on a variety of issues.

Interactive and Online Tools

The tools listed in this section range from a broad portal that provides access to training, to game-based interactive tools that can be targeted to specific demographics and/or issues. These tools require access to the Internet and some require software development and licensing fees. They demonstrate the growing trend towards providing electronic and online communications options across the spectrum of tenant communications and programs.

Housing e-Academy

http://www.housingea.co.uk/

The Housing e-Academy is an innovative web portal that provides e-learning opportunities for tenants, staff and contractors. Training modules can be customized.

The focus of this site is the strategic use of online solutions to enhance or replace traditional approaches to education and training.

InLiving Role Playing Game for Young Tenants

http://www.inliving.co.uk/

This URL provides an online role-playing game where players create customized characters that are guided through scenarios in which their in-game character will have opportunities to gain additional skills, exploit subsequent opportunities and face some of the trials and challenges that are associated with living independently and successfully maintaining tenancy.

The premise to InLiving is to promote independent living skills, primarily amongst young people who are prospective first-time tenants or who may already be experiencing their very first tenancy.
This role-playing model could be adapted to engage tenants by broad issue, demographic, or issues specific to a community or building.

**Using Social Media in Social Housing**


The UK Guardian newspaper features sections for professional networks, including one for housing issues that provides insights, best practices and advice for the social housing community. This link leads to a social housing blog that states the case for using social media to communicate and interact with tenants. Examples of practical uses for social media include sending reminders of appointments, setting up a Facebook page that tenants can contribute content to, and includes links to providers who are using these tools effectively.

**Tenant Participation Facebook Pages**

**Created by tenants:**


This URL links to a Facebook page created by tenants of a single non-profit housing building in Brooklyn, NY (325 1st Street). Tenants have posted photos, updates on maintenance issues and invitations to social events. This social media tool needs an administrator and can be created and the content controlled by the provider or a tenant association.

**Created by the housing provider:**

[https://www.facebook.com/hulltp](https://www.facebook.com/hulltp)

The URL shows a Facebook page created by the City of Hull in the UK to provide information, including notification and invitations to events, and links of interest to tenants.
Conversation Cafe Comment Cards

At each cafe, tenants were invited to complete a comment card if they wished. The cards asked tenants to complete the following statements:

- In my building, it would be great if…
- And here is how I would like to be involved…

Following are the responses organized by cafe location.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>FIRST PLACE – JUNE 30, 2011</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>In my building it would be great if…</strong></td>
<td><strong>And here is how I would like to be involved…</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>There was more security in the building, more cooperation between tenants and Club 226</td>
<td>Do not know-tried to be involved but have been attacked and criticized for my efforts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Faith SNLPS? All worked together to talk about hope</td>
<td>As Chaplain at Firstplace, I offer my Seniors and the other buildings faith and pastoral support. Invite other buildings and First Place to Church and prayer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Better Security watching people who do not live here and have a reason being in the building</td>
<td>Senior activity, Buddy system</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Security was in this building 24/7 to screen movement of front entrance. Staff at FP would be empowered to make more decisions that don’t need OK of Upper Management</td>
<td>I would participate in any discussions regarding any changes made</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>We had regular tea parties to welcome all people</td>
<td>Contribute ideas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The security were improved to 24/7. If, as promised, the tenants would be of a high calibre</td>
<td>I would like to assist in organizing other activities, e.g. watercolour art/oils</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I would like it the way it is now and I enjoy what I do</td>
<td>I try to help people and sell tickets for Louanne — I like it here</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Security was more aware. No Security 2 days/week</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>We had Security 24 hours a day and everybody felt safe and everybody felt welcome</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tenant Comment</td>
<td>Tenant建议</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>226 Rebecca — that there was more cleanliness</td>
<td>Help clean up or pick up after others</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>226 Rebecca — we could improve the cleanliness of the elevators and remove and replace the carpet in hallways — carpets are not clean or healthy — allow inside lock and chain inside apt</td>
<td>I would be happy to be on a rotation to clean my floor if that is what it takes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It looked better</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Office staff would respond to questions &amp; concerns</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>One can contact by phone one's friend moved down to Assisted Living — from outside as well as inside</td>
<td>Am going to.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>People didn’t smoke or just sit on the wall in front of the building</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Housing would secure cameras throughout the building</td>
<td>Be a committee member on some of the tenants association</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>We had better education of Fire Alarm Response</td>
<td>I would like to see a working group to deal with the issue</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The service elevator would be more accessible</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The kitchen/cafeteria provided nutritious meals, low salt, vegetable &amp; entrees such as spaghetti or pasta, etc</td>
<td>Attending meetings/group with food service representatives. Notes in bulletin, posters, signs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The elevators would stop even if one is open on your floor. It will go right past. I am in a wheelchair and most often I can’t get on or they don’t want me on</td>
<td>I am a rep and I want to see the reps doing a good job. The Good Shepherd should not be bringing the bags in the front and they should be using the service elevator. Why is the service elevator sitting on different floors for hours not in use?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vegetables are included with Pasta or Meat &amp; Potatoes</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>There would be more agreement between people who live together. Rules will make things easier in whatever capacity</td>
<td>Sorry to say so I am involved in too many things already</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>People get along and get to know their neighbours and not be so critical of management</td>
<td>I am now President of the Reps for the year as well as Floor 2-2c and will be aware of things going on and be of help where needed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>KENORA – JULY 18, 2011</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------------------------</td>
<td>--</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>In my building it would be great if...</strong></td>
<td><strong>And here is how I would like to be involved...</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| The kids safety. Animals clean up. Violence, fighting | More police involvement with the survey, put speed limits and Speed bumps to stop speeding cars.  
Get the community closer/talking so there’s more communication within the survey |
| It was a more safer area for kids. |  |
| Need bigger house for STAR with air condition | I’ll volunteer if needed |
| Need Park- the kids don’t have anything to do (slide, swings, teeter totter) etc | I would help keep it clean and keep an eye out for kids destroying the equipment |
| Better communication between Housing and Staff | On a committee to improve housing and make it more child friendly |
| All the parties and drug dealing would be gone and more people would get along | Working with housing to provide information on the units involved |
| Upgrade while living there, cleaning crew | I would get involved if there are areas I can help out. |

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>WEST MOUNTAIN – JULY 27, 2011</strong></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>In my building it would be great if...</strong></td>
<td><strong>And here is how I would like to be involved...</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I will like the CHH to put AC and carpet in each unit</td>
<td>I would like to be involved in pay a lot.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It has carpet even only on stairs. This will help my children’s safety because stairs are slippery. Thanks</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>There is a CityHousing rep available on site or available by phone (or toll free)</td>
<td>Any way possible that would be a positive asset to make the complex better</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Like to help women who are about to go into the empty nest syndrome</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comment Cards</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------------</td>
<td>-------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TENANT ENGAGEMENT STRATEGY</strong></td>
<td><strong>Comment Cards</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>There is carpet</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>There is a central air conditioner</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I would like this CHH to clean my area, put kitchen air fan, front and back door screen (net).</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>At least number the parking lots @ Purnell. Ambulance and therapists, fire dept call back to get directions to Unit 48 in particular. Would prefer signage as to where units are</td>
<td>Limited energy. Would help if a community house were available. Info locked board to read what’s going on. Why are the cameras not in use for protecting tenants? City needs documentation of incidents but having incidents recorded on film would be very concrete evidence.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I have a home improvement</td>
<td>Call CHH</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I help</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Put another bathroom in the main floor. Do regular cleaning such as furnaces and the mould around the windows, Update or renovation</td>
<td>I can help by giving a good view and opinion when I ask for maintenance. Thank you</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**LIMERIDGE – JULY 20, 2011**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>LIMERIDGE – JULY 20, 2011</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>In my building it would be great if...</strong></td>
<td><strong>And here is how I would like to be involved...</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extend our back yards as there is a great deal of wasted land and we have no garages we could use the room. Everyone has the space behind and it would reduce the cost of maintenance (lawn) which would pay for the extra fencing.</td>
<td>I would like to be the property representative (superintendent) - the voices are not being heard or some aren’t even voicing their needs as they have given up. It would allow for follow up and eyes at the site. We need a new playground to give our children a safe place to play.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not only the empty units get renovated. Some of the other units are in need of new appliances and renovations.</td>
<td>I cannot really get involved with renovations besides painting. Appliances and repairs are out of my control.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>580 Limeridge – We could have some playground activities for the younger and teenage kids.</td>
<td>Have people in the survey to sign a petition and go forward with funding.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sub-Contractors did repairs in a reasonable amount of time if the building was cleaner</td>
<td>To sit on a committee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>On a positive note, I feel Mohawk Gardens — bldg, gardens, staff and residents are really great!, of course there is always room for improvement and there is concern about the</td>
<td>Would like to sit on a committee</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
opening and closing of front doors. I am a new tenant and had a problem with my apt but the staff have resolved the problem — another positive. They need to get the City to trim the pine trees on Mohawk Rd along our parking lot because the sap drips on our cars and this cause paint damage.

**JAMES ST NORTH – AUGUST 9, 2011**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>In my building it would be great if...</th>
<th>And here is how I would like to be involved...</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>If we had a defibrillator for heart... not legible</td>
<td>To teach CPR to ... fire drills - ..........not legible</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All tenants get encouraged to use of Common Room with Internet and Cable TV</td>
<td>By refusing private keys to some tenants.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Welcome, orientation to new comers, communication with staff: who does what</td>
<td>We are revising our tenant association and I am heavily involved</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Computers were reintroduced in our building.</td>
<td>Volunteering in various assignments</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>We could try and motivate people and try and use our communications skills making fellow tenants feel comfortable in building!!</td>
<td>I am available and open to Volunteering</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Everyone got along better and everyone should be treated the same</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>We could motivate more residents to take part in various activities</td>
<td>I am presently very involved in not only physical but political, housing issues.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>We could get a tenant council and tenant community room with a Bulletin Board for communication and community events</td>
<td>Volunteer to help with educating tenants, recycling and garbage organization, safety and security.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>We could have tenant community for our area</td>
<td>I will like to volunteer in help for any activity.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>JACKSON ST – AUGUST 23, 2011</strong></td>
<td><strong>In my building it would be great if...</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------------------------------</td>
<td>-------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The elevators should be modernized</td>
<td>Assist recreational activities, ping pong, shuffle board, pool</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The lounge staff should reflected the building make-up. At the moment they feel they don’t belong 95 Hess</td>
<td>Part take in a social program, donate some time to show to teach something.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>There is a waiting/chart room 200 Jackson</td>
<td>Monthly tenant meeting for the issues of the building where I live</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>We need a waiting room and new elevator 200 Jackson</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>People (women) were not harassed or spoken to like pieces of meat</td>
<td>Not sure about this end</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>If they lower the rent by 11% per month, fix the elevators sooner</td>
<td>If they lower the rent, I would more sending money I am a bingo call Senior Centre</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Safety, services, more elevators, security cams, in each floor, (build new elevator) 181 Jackson</td>
<td>Green team, newspaper (that is what I’m doing since illegible.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>We have access to video camera in lobby even w/o cable/bell etc. No more mail slots 181 Jackson</td>
<td>Monthly tenant meetings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>We got two new elevators Area for tenants to wait for pick up 200 Jackson</td>
<td>CHH is the best meeting I have ever been to. I hope we as tenants can help solve some of these problems, I also like to see more of these CHH meetings.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The security was not as laxed as it has been</td>
<td>Tenants should have more input.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Got rid of drugs and dealers, elevators that kept working.</td>
<td>Ask and I would help, have offered my abilities, they have</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tenant association</td>
<td>Guard should be sitting at Doors at night- there would get to know the people of the building and the coming and going of said building</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------------</td>
<td>----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>more programming, get rid of bugs</td>
<td>refused to utilize them In the saying of what go on and help with the solution of fixing thing and butting them right</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>refused to utilize them</td>
<td>Would like to be involved</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

They had a better way of dealing with Blue Bins, storing Bins in room on 1st Floor, Hunter St room. This serves as an incubation room for roaches, bins are brought to elevator with roaches jumping out on 1st floor hallway and elevators. They are taken off at 2nd floor, going to 2nd floor exit at Jackson with roaches jumping out on 1st floor hallways elevators, jumping out in 2nd floor hallway to go out exit. The 2nd floor exit has a ramp and vent hoaching with roaches.

95 Hess St