

## Summary of Tenant Assistance Policy Roundtable

On March 11, 2019, the City hosted the Victoria Housing Summit, inviting various housing stakeholders to participate and provide input on the Victoria Housing Strategy update. City staff hosted a “Tenant Assistance Training Workshop and Feedback” session, covering the background information of the policy, the training of the policy procedure, and holding roundtable discussions on feedback on the policy content and areas for improvements.

Approximately 25 stakeholders attended the session, coming from different areas of housing, including developers, property management, non-profit housing providers, tenant advocacy groups, renters, planners from other municipalities, and councillors. Questions in the discussion pertained to meeting policy objectives included the strengths of the policy, and how the policy can be improved in the future for both, policy content and implementation process.

CHALLENGES	ACTIONS FOR CITY STAFF TO FURTHER EXPLORE
<b>Flexibility</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Non-profits to have more flexibility in the TAP</li> <li>• Applicants to be able to express hardships or clause based on project</li> <li>• Need to strengthen engagement process for smaller scale projects (e.g. low-income tenant considerations, proper resource, compensation)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify conditions or separate guidelines of TAP for non-profits. Examples may include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Tenant relocation within their own portfolio or another non-profit's portfolio (within similar neighbourhoods and city);</li> <li>○ right of first refusal offer to return to building with a discount and moving expenses back</li> <li>○ Support moving expenses, additional support for vulnerable tenants</li> <li>○ Develop an income-based compensation/rehousing structure <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ RGI (30%) and rent-on-the-door</li> </ul> </li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<b>Meeting Policy Guidelines</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Challenging for applicants to meet neighbourhood options and rent level with low vacancy rate</li> <li>• Right of First Refusal and 10% discount from current market rate is a disincentive for applicants; tenants find that the rent is still too expensive with the discount (i.e. no uptake)</li> <li>• Tenants with less than one year of tenancy should also be considered in this policy</li> <li>• Privacy concerns of what information is expected for tenants to provide (and whether they want to share their information)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Explore right of first refusal discount on what considerations to make based on market rental</li> <li>• Opt-in option to sign a privacy agreement (compliance with Privacy impact Assessment)</li> </ul>

## Housing Summit – Tenant Assistance Training Feedback

CHALLENGES	ACTIONS FOR CITY STAFF TO FURTHER EXPLORE
<b>Communication</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tenant communicating 'vulnerability' is sensitive and personal</li> <li>• Better communication be provided for tenants and applicants</li> <li>• Education and resources needed for tenants and applicants</li> <li>• Usage of other organizations to share the TAP information</li> <li>• Utilizing the tenant relocation coordinator to be the resource and communication contact</li> <li>• Adding links to TAP information on rezoning signs</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Explore notarized declaration or request for tenant assistance as a form of communication</li> <li>• Explore tenant checklist or FAQ and update website to incorporate RTA and City's regulations</li> <li>• Create contact information for roster of tenant relocation coordinators through an expression of interest (EOI)</li> <li>• Tenant Ambassador hiring and support for education and awareness programs, point of contact, understanding of legislation and policy</li> </ul>
<b>Trust</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Building trust and relationship with tenants, applicants and coordinator is important</li> <li>• With competing interest, the importance of the tenant relocation coordinator is even more important</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Explore furthering education, awareness, and rights for tenants and landlords on this process of assistance</li> <li>• Tenant Ambassador hiring and support for education and awareness programs, point of contact, understanding of legislation and policy</li> </ul>
<b>Tenant Relocation Coordinator</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Having the coordinator act as a third or neutral party is important</li> <li>• Having the right education and background for applicants and tenants</li> <li>• Coordinator not be hired the applicant; City should help with the selection process</li> <li>• Coordinated access system – identifying a better way to connect non- profits that fits vulnerability indicators identified by tenants (e.g. on the website for resources; tenant relocation coordinator)               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Could help absorb the cost of hiring external services from applicants seeking a coordinator (aligns with non-profit mandates)</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Explore EOI on developing a roster of TRC with questions regarding skillsets, qualifications, services</li> <li>• Develop resources for TRC on creating an access hub to connect non-profits that fits vulnerability/ housing needs indicators identified by tenants (e.g. websites)               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Explore a developer's hub where developers can connect tenants with other developers</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

## Housing Summit – Tenant Assistance Training Feedback

CHALLENGES	ACTIONS FOR CITY STAFF TO FURTHER EXPLORE
<b>City Resource</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>City to be part of the tenant relocation coordinator selection process and guidelines               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Properly identify organization, skills, background and fit for applicant requesting external services for coordinators</li> <li>City's role to be a part of the tenant assistance process (development process, contacts, tenant assistance policy)</li> </ul> </li> <li>City needs in-house experts that can navigate the housing sector</li> <li>City should be identifying tenant needs, not vulnerabilities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Tenant Ambassador's job description be created based on the input of the summit and revisions made</li> <li>Explore EOI on developing a roster of TRC with questions regarding skillsets, qualifications, services</li> <li>Explore an assessment tool to accurately identify tenant needs</li> </ul>
<b>Tenant Participation</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Tenants may not want to engage, share information and/or be a part of this process</li> <li>Challenges to properly relocate and house vulnerable tenants</li> <li>Blanket policy for all tenants that any tenants being displaced is vulnerable (remove identification of vulnerability as a whole)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Allow an opt-in/opt-out option for tenant participation in TAP</li> <li>Explore an assessment tool to accurately identify tenant needs</li> </ul>
<b>Standard of Maintenance Bylaw</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Make sure updates to bylaw are coordinated with TAP and the implications of those updates to consider impacts to tenants</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Begin drafting SOM bylaw concurrent to Tenant Assistance Policy one-year review</li> </ul>