



## Tenant Engagement Refresh Update

Item 4C

January 25, 2021

Tenant Services Committee

**Report:** TSC:2021-07

**To:** Tenant Services Committee (“TSC”)

**From:** Chief Operating Officer

**Date:** January 8, 2021

### **PURPOSE:**

The purpose of this report is to provide the TSC with an update on the implementation of the Tenant Engagement System Refresh.

### **RECOMMENDATION:**

It is recommended that the TSC receive this report for information.

### **RECENT DECISION HISTORY:**

On November 24, 2020, the TSC received the Chief Operating Officer’s Report on Tenant Services and Initiatives, which included an update on the Tenant Engagement System Refresh (TSC:2020-43). Due to timing, the TSC did not discuss the Tenant Engagement System Refresh, thus TSC:2020-43 was deferred to the January 25, 2021 TSC meeting. This report provides an update to the information contained in TSC:2020-43.

### **UPDATE:**

Toronto Community Housing (“TCHC”) has marked a milestone in the Tenant Engagement System Refresh as tenants in Phase 1 communities have completed their tenant leadership selection.

In September 2020, the elections process was initiated when the nomination process for community representatives and the open call for building/townhouse committee members was reopened. In total, 57 communities were selected to be part of Phase 1. 42 communities selected the Building/Townhouse Committee model and 15 communities selected the Community Representative model. Table 1 outlines the tenant leadership roles status by communities.

*Table 1: Tenant Leadership Roles by Communities*

	Phase 1	Phase 2	Phase 3
Total Communities	57	170	103
• Leaders In-Place	39	-	-
• Leaders Partial In-Place	6	-	-
• No Leaders	12	-	-

Through the Phase 1 election process, 87 Community representative positions have been filled:

- 24 of 87 positions filled for Community Representative model; and
- 63 of 87 positions filled for the Building/Townhouse Committee model, with 384 building committee members participating in this system.

As a result, there are now 409 tenants participating in the new engagement system at the conclusion of Phase 1, which is an 81% increase in tenant participation in local decision making when compared to the former tenant engagement system.

### **LESSONS LEARNED AND RECOMMENDATIONS:**

As a result of Phase 1, a participant debrief was held and key lessons learned were identified by staff and tenants that can be utilized during the implementation of future phases of the election process (see Attachment 1).

1. Staff apply the key lessons learned to Phase 2 and 3;
2. Ensure ongoing communication of safety measures;
3. Utilize alternative online platforms for online engagement;
4. Increase efforts to educate tenants about 'tenancy in good standing';
5. Increase awareness of the 'tenancy in good standing' process;
6. Facilitate tenants' access to internet;

Additional details on actions and timelines for Phases 2 and 3 are provided in Attachment 2.

**IMPLICATIONS AND RISKS:**

The City's Shareholder Direction requires TCHC to maintain a democratic system of active tenant participation and involvement that will:

- provide a Tenant council structure or similar organization;
- provide for Tenant input into decisions at the corporate and local levels;
- provide for Tenant input for setting local spending priorities and service levels; and
- include Tenant representation on the Board.

The timeline for when tenants can elect their community representatives or form committees will be dependent on the completion of the local engagement option selection process and each community's level of engagement and readiness to establish tenant leadership. To ensure as many tenants participate in the establishment of each community's engagement model and tenant elections, engagement teams will continue with outreach and support to encourage tenants to participate.

**SIGNATURE:**

*"Sheila Penny"*

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Sheila Penny  
Chief Operating Officer

**ATTACHMENT:**

1. Phase 1: Lessons Learned
2. Tenant Elections: Updates and Next Steps

**STAFF CONTACTS:**

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## **Attachment 1: Phase 1 Lessons Learned**

Tenants provided the following recommendations based on their participation in the engagement process:

1. Tenants expressed a fear of participating in the Tenant Engagement System during the pandemic, however they indicated they would feel comfortable participating through online platforms.
2. Tenants would like to be informed of safety measures being implemented in this process and how it aligns with the City of Toronto's Public Health Protocols.
3. Tenants requested that staff use online platforms that are easily navigated such as Zoom. More information on different online platforms is required to increase awareness and tenant participation.
4. Establishing and participating in the tenant engagement system is a key priority for our tenants.

Other lessons learned and recommendations identified include:

### **1. Outreach Methods:**

- Phone calls to tenants as a first point of contact is effective. Staff prioritized reconnecting with tenants who expressed interest via phone calls.
- When engagement activities resumed, tenants valued the door-to-door contact, which had a positive impact in tenant participation.
- Leverage community partners and tenant groups to increase tenant awareness and participation in the overall process.
- Educate tenants on the use of online platforms and reduce the fear of participating due the pandemic, in turn resulting in an increase of tenant participation in the process.

### **2. Information Sessions:**

- Place a sign-in sheet in the Superintendent's office for tenants to sign-up for meeting timeslots to increase access and overall participation.
- Future information session meetings should emphasize the benefits of becoming a community representative and the impacts they can make in communities.

- Provide concise and transparent messaging, as well as distribute flyers and WebEx links in advance to ensure tenants are aware of the process and how they can participate.

### **3. Nomination Process**

- Schedule one-on-one meetings with all nominees to discuss timelines and expectations in order to avoid delays in the process.
- Confirming 'tenancy in good standing' is a very lengthy process. Coordinating efforts with Tenant Services Coordinators and CSU in a timely manner is key to the success of the nomination process.
- As a result of COVID-19, many tenants fell into arrears, which limited their participation in the tenant engagement process. A consideration for tenancy in good standing should be households with arrears less than \$100.
- For communities that chose the Building Committee model, building committees should be formed before the nomination process.

### **4. All Candidates Meeting**

- Meet with staff and candidates in advance to prep for the all candidates debate to discuss support(s) required prior to and during the meeting such as ensuring candidates have access to a laptop and/or internet.
- Encourage tenants to use telephone audio to avoid delays and connection issues, as WebEx connectivity and the ability of tenants to access the meetings was an issue.
- Tenants are more familiar and comfortable with other online platforms such as Zoom.
- Simplify the details of meeting posters/flyers by providing shorter meeting links and telephone numbers.

### **5. Preparation for Advance Polling and Election Day**

- Assess the voting area(s) to ensure proper Public Health protocols are in place and social distancing can be practiced.
- Secure PPE and ensure all COVID-19 screening and guideline materials are prepared for tenants before they enter the voting area(s).
- Pre-register tenants via phone calls to secure their voting times and reduce traffic in common area(s).

- Create a plan with tenants for in-person voting with 10 minute intervals.

## **6. Advance Polling and Election Day**

Two voting approaches were taken for advance polling and election day:

- Door to door voting where staff took ballots to tenants to prevent them from needing to leave their homes; and
- In person voting with a maximum of two voters allowed at a time to ensure proper social distancing was implemented.

Future phases should secure support staff for the following roles:

- COVID-19 check-in and registration
- Door to door voting
- Ballot collection
- Sanitation station, with staff sanitizing voting area(s) after each vote.

# Tenant Elections: Updates and Next Steps





# Tenant Elections Phase 1 Updates





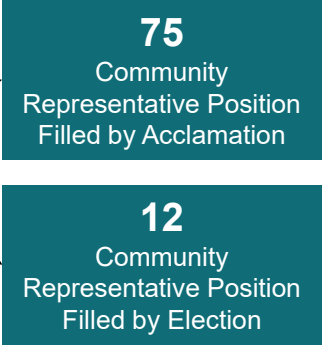


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# Tenant Elections Phase 1 Updates

**57**  
Communities  
Included in Phase 1

<b>Number of Community Representative Positions included in Phase 1</b>	<b>120</b>
<b>Number of Community Representative Positions Filled</b>	<b>87</b>
<b>Number of Community Representative Positions Vacant</b>	<b>33</b>



<b># of Communities chose Community Representative Model</b>	<b>15</b>
Number of Community Representatives Positions Available	36
Number of Community Representatives Positions Filled	24
Number of Community Representatives Positions vacant	12

<b># of Communities chose Building/townhouse Committee Model</b>	<b>42</b>
Number of Building Committees Established	<b>39</b>
Number of Building Committee with not enough members	<b>3</b>

**7 Committees with no leadership positions filled**

# Tenant Participation in New Tenant Engagement System

**81%**  
Increase in tenant Participation in local decision making

 **Building/Townhouse Committee**  
**384**  
Committee Members  
representing **42** communities

**409**  
# of Tenant Participating in the New Tenant Engagement System

 **Community Representatives**  
**24**  
representing **15** communities

Metric	2020 Results
Phase one implementation only (57 communities)	
Number of Community Representative positions (2020 in comparison to 2015)	Increase of 25% (90 positions from 2015 vs 120 position from 2020)
Filled positions rate	Total number of filled positions = 87  (1% Increase from 2015 Filled Positions)
Vacancy rate	Total number of vacant positions = 33  (0% - rate has stayed the same from 2015)



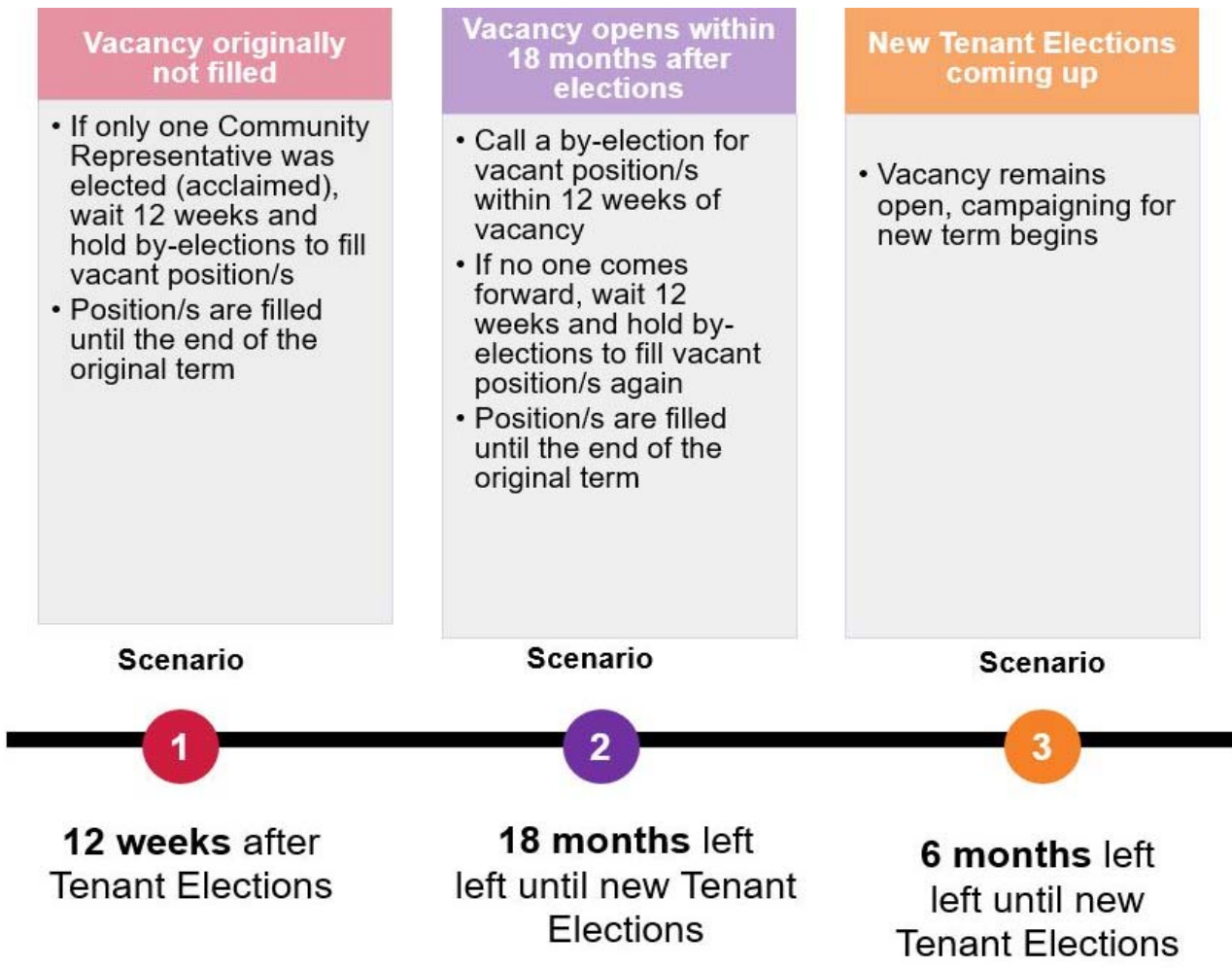
# Tenant Elections Phase 2 & 3

## Next Steps



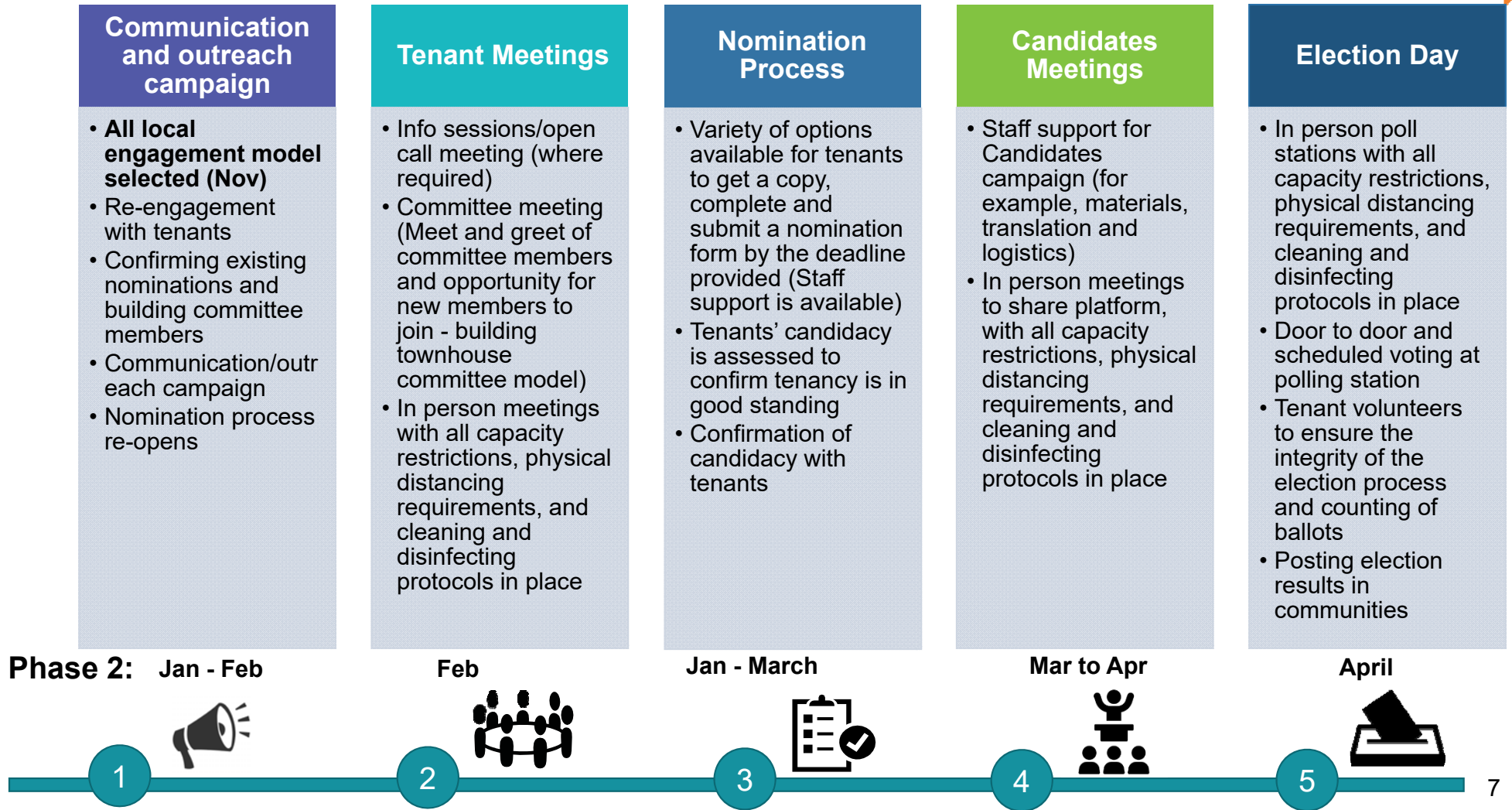
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# By-election Process





# Implementation Plan – Phase two





# Phase 2 Milestones

Community Representative Model	Timeline	Duration
Outreach and communication	Jan 11 to Feb 8	4 weeks
Nomination re-opens	Jan 11 to Feb 12	4 weeks
Information session	Jan 25 to Feb 12	3 weeks
Nomination Process (nomination submission, tenancy in good standing validation and candidacy confirmation)	Jan 11 to March 5	7 weeks
Campaign planning and candidates support	March 8 to March 26	2 weeks
All Candidates Meetings	March 29 to April 16	3 weeks
Advance Polls	April 19 to April 23	1 week
Tenant Elections	April 26 to April 30	1 week
Building/Townhouse Committee Model	Timeline	Duration
Outreach and communication	Jan 11 to Feb 8	4 weeks
Committee membership and nomination re-opens	Jan 11 – to Feb 12	4 weeks
1st Committee meeting (opportunity for new members to join)	Jan 25t to Feb 12	3 weeks
Committee team building activities	Jan 25 to Feb 12	3 weeks
Nomination Process (nomination submission, tenancy in good standing validation and candidacy confirmation)	Jan 11 to March 5	7 weeks
Campaign planning and candidates support	March 8 to March 26	2 weeks
Tenant Elections	April 19 to April 30	2 weeks



# Implementation Plan – Phase three

