



INFORMATION REPORT

TO:	Chair and Members Planning Committee
COMMITTEE DATE:	January 16, 2018
SUBJECT/REPORT NO:	Quality Index for Rental Units (PED18026) (City Wide) (Outstanding Business List Item)
WARD(S) AFFECTED:	City Wide
PREPARED BY:	Ken Leendertse (905) 546-2424 Ext. 3059
SUBMITTED BY:	Ken Leendertse Director, Licensing and By-law Services Planning and Economic Development Department
SIGNATURE:	

Council Direction:

At its meeting of September 10, 2014, City Council directed staff to report back on the feasibility of conducting a Quality Index for rental unit in the City of Hamilton.

Information:

Quality Index for rental units can take on many forms. It could be the cost of renting an apartment in Hamilton based on the Rental Market Report from the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC). It could be reflective of the vacancy rates for specific areas and types of living accommodation. Quality Index could also be the total number of rental units in relation to households. However, in the context of the request from the Council, quality index for rental units is the quality of the housing stock in relation to Property Standards.

Property Standards By-laws, passed under the *Building Code Act* (BCA), provides the framework for municipalities to require that buildings, structures, surrounding lands and vacant property be maintained and improved, on an ongoing basis (retrospectively), to minimum standards set out in the by-law. There is an obvious difference between the maintenance of buildings and the construction of buildings. Property standards do not relate to the construction of new buildings or renovations or repairs to them, rather these standards relate to existing building structures and the property in which they are situated, regardless of whether they pre-existed the by-law. The Property Standards By-law must confine itself to the standards of maintenance established by Council, and for the most part adopting a much lower benchmark than what is found in the BCA.

OUR Vision: To be the best place to raise a child and age successfully.

OUR Mission: To provide high quality cost conscious public services that contribute to a healthy, safe and prosperous community, in a sustainable manner.

OUR Culture: Collective Ownership, Steadfast Integrity, Courageous Change, Sensational Service, Engaged Empowered Employees.

In order to improve the quality of rental units in the City, Council approved the Proactive By-law Enforcement Program in 2010. Dubbed “Project Compliance” the program focus was to advance the City’s strategic goals related to a safe and healthy community by identifying property standards defects and maintenance issues in rental units and seeking compliance by property owners.

The Proactive Enforcement Team was made permanent in 2013 and continues to investigate and focus on the standards of living of rental units in Hamilton. Team members meet with the tenants during inspection of the rental property to ensure that the minimum property standards are being met. The following chart provides a high level summary of the efforts from 2015 and 2016:

	2015	2016
<i>Property Standards By-Law</i>		
Properties Attended (includes apartment buildings)	151	433
Number of Investigations	1,876	1,796
Number of Orders Issued	146	108
<i>Yard Maintenance By-Law</i>		
Properties Attended	67	625
Number of Orders Issued	59	75
Total Fee For Service	\$17,662	\$7,377
Total Contractor Charges	\$18,691	\$11,500

The concept of a Quality Index is based on a subjective scale relating to location and price that is driven by the market and vacancy rate. Staff research found no model in relation to quality standards for rental properties. Property Standards By-laws determine if the property is either compliant or non-compliant. It would not be practical to rate the quality of the entire rental stock without inspecting each unit and rating it on a subjective scale.

Staff concludes the current tools in place with the Proactive Enforcement Team targeting rental residential properties meets the City’s strategic goal related to a safe and healthy community.

The item respecting Quality Index for rental units be identified as complete and removed from the Planning Committee Outstanding Business List.

Appendices and Schedules Attached

N/A

KL:st