



Hamilton

# INFORMATION REPORT

<b>TO:</b>	Chair and Members Planning Committee
<b>COMMITTEE DATE:</b>	April 5, 2022
<b>SUBJECT/REPORT NO:</b>	Rental Housing Licensing Pilot Program and Transition Plan Update (PED21097(b)) (Wards 1, 8 and parts of Ward 14)
<b>WARD(S) AFFECTED:</b>	Wards 1, 8 and Parts of parts of Ward 14
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<b>SIGNATURE:</b>	

## COUNCIL DIRECTION

At its meeting on August 13, 2021 Council approved item 9 of Planning Committee Report 21-012 directing staff to report back to the Planning Committee every 6 months with an update on the Rental Housing Licensing Pilot Program for wards 1, 8 and parts of ward 14.

## INFORMATION

The following is the first update on the status of implementing the Rental Housing Licensing Pilot Program (Pilot Program) for wards 1, 8 and parts of ward 14.

### Transition Plan Status

#### Staffing Recruitment and Training:

The City Departments and Divisions involved in the pilot program are working together to ensure that the appropriate staffing levels align with the various stages of the pilot program roll out. Prior to hiring new staff, trained and experienced existing staff in Planning (Zoning Verification Certificates); Fire Department (Fire Inspections); and Licensing Services (licence applications and property standards inspections) will undertake the initial stages of the pilot program to ensure a smooth roll out prior to fee collection.

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.

## **Education Development**

Staff from the relevant City Departments and Divisions including Corporate Communications meet regularly to provide input into the development of education/awareness resource materials.

The following is a summary of those efforts:

**Webpage:** The Rental Housing Licensing webpage has been developed and posted at [www.hamilton.ca/rentalhousinglicence](http://www.hamilton.ca/rentalhousinglicence). The website includes information on the Licensing By-law (Schedule 31) and pilot program including the application package, supporting documentation, requirements, applicable fees and all relevant contact information should the public have questions. The website also outlines the phased in process by property address in which owners are required to submit applications. Staff have developed an interactive map to assist all property owners, residents and tenants in identifying whether certain properties are within the pilot program areas. The interactive map attached as Appendix “A” to Report PED21097(b) also provides dates based on property address as to when applications are to be submitted.

**Door Knocker:** A door knocker for “field” use by Municipal Law Enforcement Officers has been developed, attached as Appendix “B” to Report PED21097(b). Officers have begun to distribute this door knocker within the applicable wards. The door knocker includes additional information on other relevant by-laws such as the Yard Maintenance (By-law 10-118), Property Standards (By-Law 10-221), Snow and Ice (By-Law 03-296), and Noise (By-law 11-285) and includes where the public can report potential unlicensed rental housing units. It also includes how occupants can make a complaint regarding a property standards problem with their rental unit.

**Other Communications:** Corporate Communications staff will continue to support the pilot program in developing media release, social media and resource materials for Councillors, stakeholders, and the public.

## **Implementation**

**Administrative Processes:** Property owners have two options for submitting a rental housing license application; in person at Licensing & By-Law Service, 330 Wentworth Street North or on-line using a dedicated email address ([rentalhousing@hamilton.ca](mailto:rentalhousing@hamilton.ca)) and on-line payment portal. For general inquiries the public is encouraged to review the website and direct questions to the relevant departments identified on the website. The AMANDA database has been upgraded to process applications, initiate fire and property standards inspections, track enforcement efforts if orders are issued and provide detailed reports.

Information collected pre-COVID suggested that the pilot area in wards 1, 8 and parts of ward 14 had approximately 2,000 potential rental properties that may be subject to the Rental Housing Licensing By-law. Staff recently completed another review and confirmed that of the

2,000 identified pre-COVID properties, there are now approximately 1,525 potential rental housing units. Staff suspect that information gathered from other sources will increase the number of potential rental properties to 2,000+.

To begin the administrative licensing process a notification letter attached as Appendix “C” was sent to the 1,525 identified property owners informing them of the pilot program and how to apply for a licence. Notification letters will continue to be sent out as new properties are identified and/or an investigation will be initiated. The geographical phased in approach, by property address for submitting applications begins in April 2022.

Property owners of potential rental housing units were originally able to begin applying for a Zoning Verification Certificate in January 2022 however at the time of drafting this report, no application requests have been submitted. Due to the COVID-19 Omicron variant and the Provincial direction to return to Stage 2 of the Reopening Ontario Act in December 2021, there were some service level impacts as some key staff in implementing the pilot program were redeployed and/or were responsible for dealing/managing COVID-19. However, despite the redeployment delay; Staff were able to move forward implementing the milestones in the pilot roll out.

#### **APPENDICES AND SCHEDULES ATTACHED**

Appendix “A” to Report PED21097(b) - Pilot Program Geographical Map

Appendix “B” to Report PED21097(b) - Door Knocker

Appendix “C” to Report PED21097(b) - Property Owner Notification letter