



January 17th 2024

**ACORN Written Submission regarding Addressing Renovictions, Tenant Displacement and Property Standards in Apartment Buildings in the City of Hamilton (PED23072(a)) (City Wide)**

ACORN is writing in strong support of the Renovation License and Relocation Bylaw (outlined in Appendix A).

Since 2019 ACORN Hamilton has been calling on the city to develop local tenant protections against renoviction based on the success of an anti-renoviction bylaw in New Westminster, British Columbia.

After a 5 year campaign and several motions passed to direct the creation of a made in Hamilton bylaw, we are excited to support the bylaw being presented by staff today.

As a reminder, Renoviction is the practice and tactic used by landlords to evict or force out tenants under the guise of major renovation. The goal is to displace low- and moderate-income tenants who are paying below market rent and re-rent out units at a much higher rent.

The Renovation License and Relocation Bylaw would be the first of its kind in the Province of Ontario, and the policy is desperately needed. Protecting Hamilton's affordable housing is more important now than ever. The average market rent in Hamilton for a one-bedroom apartment is currently \$1755, compared to \$875 just 7 years ago. Hamilton has lost 15,000 units that rent for less than \$750 a month in the last decade.

Renoviction shatters the lives of families, breaks long-held community bonds, drives up rents in the neighborhood, increases homelessness and strain on social services, incentivizes landlords to allow their buildings to fall into disrepair and destroys existing stock of affordable housing. While tenants do have the legal right to return to their unit at their current rent once renovations are complete, ACORN has yet to see a landlord follow the law and honour first right of refusal.

The Renovation License and Relocation Bylaw aims to address this in many ways, most notably by requiring that landlords provide returning tenants with either suitable alternative accommodation for the duration of the renovations or compensation in the amount of the difference in rent.

Along with the The Safe Apartment Bylaw and Tenant Support Program, the Renovations Licence and Relocation Bylaw will work in tandem to preserve the city's market affordable housing stock.

Thank you to all the tenants that have organized and spoken up since the start of our campaign, special thanks to Councillors Clark, Nann, Kroetsch and A.Wilson for championing this issue, BIG thank you to the city staff involved since April 2023 to develop the bylaw and lastly our key allies who have supported this work: Hamilton Community Legal Clinic, Advocacy Centre for Tenants Ontario and the Hamilton Community Benefits Network.

ACORN is urging all of Council to support the bylaw and move the city forward in addressing the rental affordability crisis in Hamilton.

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*ACORN is a grassroots tenant and community organization with a membership of low and moderate income tenants in Hamilton. We started organizing in the city in 2017 and have four neighborhood chapters: Downtown, East End, Mountain, and Stoney Creek.*