

Healthy Housing Quality Solutions Lab

Discovery Phase Summary Report



December 2019



Contents

Introduction.....	2
Reading this Document.....	2
Methodology	4
A Co-Design Approach	4
Lab Phases	5
Lab Events.....	6
Overview of Discovery Phase Lab Events	6
System Points of View	7
Understanding Stakeholders	7
Intersections of Housing and Health	8
Healthy Buildings	8
Healthy People.....	8
Healthy Communities	8
Healthy Systems	8
Trends and Patterns Affecting the System	9
Framing the Problem.....	10
Overlapping Perspectives	12
Defining “Success”.....	13
Success Criteria	13
“Our solution must...”	13
From “Needs” to “Opportunities”	14
Healthy Buildings	14
Healthy People.....	14
Healthy Communities	15
Healthy Systems	16
How Change Might Happen	17
Barriers and Enablers of Change.....	17
Summary	18
Next Steps	18
Appendix	19
Discovery Phase Lab Events.....	19

Introduction

This Healthy Housing Quality Solutions Lab (“the Lab”) is a collaborative initiative of Wellesley Institute and SHS Consulting. This CMHC-funded project aims to respond to the issues of disrepair and housing quality in Toronto’s private rental apartment sector. The Lab also explores the intersections of housing and health and the system dynamics, stakeholders, and processes that create the outcomes and realities seen today.

The overarching design challenge for this Lab is:

How might a healthy housing initiative for older private rental apartment buildings ensure good repair and quality of housing in Toronto?

How might we identify best practices and initiate new regulatory or program interventions to address this challenge?

Understanding that the issue of healthy housing quality is multi-faceted, the aim of the Lab is to work with a wide range of stakeholders, representing diverse ages, stages, and backgrounds to frame the problem, understand the current state, and eventually co-design a set of potential ways forward in the form of prototyped solutions or ideas. This Lab builds and draws on recent initiatives and research in the domain of healthy housing quality in Toronto and around the world.

Reading this Document

This Discovery Phase Summary Report captures key findings from the engagements that took place in the Discovery phase of the Solutions Lab. The document begins by outlining the Methodology and co-design approach used, including an overview of the Lab events that took place. The System Points of View section synthesizes the initial Lab findings, outlining the connection between housing and health, the players in the system, emerging trends, and the initial framing of the problem from the perspectives of different stakeholder groups. [Drawing](#) from collaborative exercises with the whole system, the Defining “Success” section details some of the potential intervention points and criteria for what a successful solution might look like. The document concludes with a summary and description [next steps](#) for the Lab.

Defining Key Terms

The following terms will be used throughout this Summary Report:

- **“The Lab”** refers to the Solutions Lab project and activities related to it.
- The **“Lab team”** refers to the team of researchers and consultants who are carrying out the Lab.

- **“Lab participants”** refer to people who informed and contributed to the Lab, including all those who participated in a Lab event.
- **“Lab events”** refer to any information-gathering or co-design activity that took place between the Lab team and Lab participants. For this Lab, these included interviews, workshops, and other events.

Methodology

This section outlines the methodology and overall approach for this Healthy Housing Quality Solutions Lab. The co-design approach, Lab phases, and Lab events are described here.

A Co-Design Approach

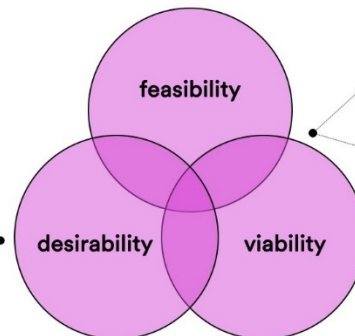
The methodology for the Solutions Lab is informed by co-design, a creative, inclusive approach to problem-solving, and developing and evaluating solutions. Co-design is a participatory and iterative process that invites a diverse mix of stakeholders to share their perspectives and work together towards collaborative solutions. The goal of the approach is to generate solutions that are desirable (to the people it will serve and who will deliver the solution), feasible (in its delivery, from a capability and technological perspective), and viable (from an economic and financial perspective). The Balanced Breakthrough Model (pictured [below](#)) describes the intersection of these three lenses as where the most innovative solutions lie. Using this approach, the Lab team hopes to connect with those closest to the issue, engage decision-makers, and build champions for a healthy housing intervention.

The balanced breakthrough model is often used in design approaches and indicates where innovative solutions emerge.

What are we trying to achieve for the future beneficiaries of the solution?

What issues must be understood to come up with a solution?

What's desirable from the perspective of the people we will serve?



What is the business problem we're trying to solve?

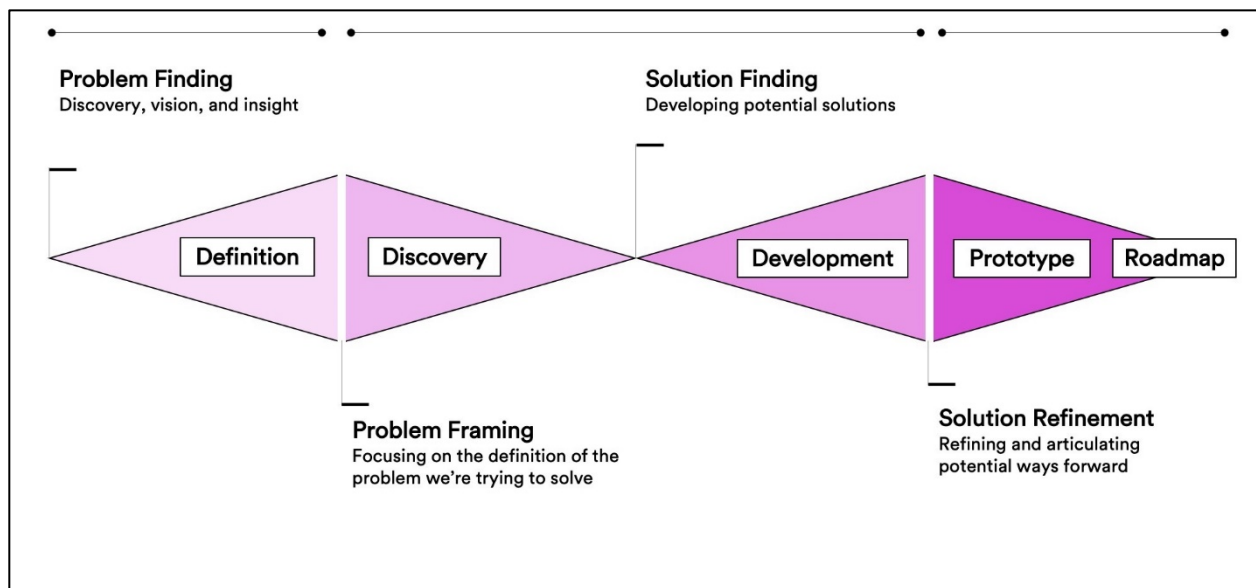
What's viable from a business perspective and feasible from a capability and technology perspective?

Adapted from Brown, 2008 and Stanford d.School

Lab Phases

The Lab process is outlined in five phases, as pictured below: Definition, Discovery, Development, Prototype, and Roadmap. Over the course of these phases, the Lab process guides the Lab team and participants in moments of divergence (where questions are asked, and new information is gathered) and moments of convergence (where information is synthesized, and patterns are found). This structure gives life to the iterative nature of the design process.

This Discovery Phase Summary Report marks the end of the Discovery phase, and a point of convergence after all of the information-gathering to date.



Lab Events

The methodology and co-design approach for this Lab includes eight key Lab events where Lab participants provide their input, experience, and expertise in each phase of the process. The following table provides an overview of these events. As shown, there are four Lab events that took place during the Discovery phase. This document includes information and feedback from these events.

Phase	#	Lab Event	Participants	Details
Advisory		Meetings of the Lab Advisory Committee	Subject matter experts and key stakeholders	Ongoing meetings
Discovery		Interviews with subject matter experts	Subject matter experts (14*)	September to November 2019
	1	Workshop on the City staff perspective	City of Toronto staff (8)	September 26, 2019 (3 hours)
	2	Workshop on the tenant perspective	Tenants and tenant advocates (18)	October 2, 2019 (2 hours)
	3	Interviews on the landlord perspective	Landlords and building owners (6)	October and November 2019
	4	Information-sharing and convening forum	All stakeholders (34)	October 28, 2019 (full-day event)
Development	5	Ideation workshop on “going wide” to come up with ideas	All stakeholders	To be scheduled in 2020 (3 hours)
	6	Solution development workshop on refining and evaluating ideas	All stakeholders	To be scheduled in 2020 (3 hours)
Prototype	7	Solution prototyping and testing workshop on receiving feedback	All stakeholders	To be scheduled in 2020 (3 hours)
Roadmap	8	Solution validation workshop on requirements for implementation	Smaller group (Advisory Committee, for instance)	To be scheduled in 2020 (3 hours)

* Indicates the number of participants who attended the Lab event.

Overview of Discovery Phase Lab Events

The Discovery phase Lab events were opportunities to uncover the issues around healthy housing quality, from dealing with maintenance requests and unit repairs, to larger-scale retrofits in aging buildings, to examining current relationships between landlords and tenants. A key component of this phase was also to begin to identify the potential barriers, enablers, and opportunities for change and action.

Descriptions of the Discovery Phase Lab events and a comprehensive list of participants can be found in the Appendix of this document.

System Points of View

As described in the Methodology section of this report, the co-design approach and events intended to reveal dynamics, experiences, and points of view from key stakeholders and actors in the system. This section provides an overview of the findings from the co-design events, which highlight these perspectives and approaches to framing the “healthy housing quality problem” from varying viewpoints.

Understanding Stakeholders

Through the Lab process, the Lab team gathered pieces of information to support the illustration and analysis of a full picture of the current system related to healthy housing quality in Toronto. To effectively map and understand a complex system, designers often begin by identifying and categorizing the stakeholders and actors within the Lab context. For this work, Lab participants assisted the team in identifying and describing these stakeholder groups. These are summarized in the table below.

Group	Stakeholders	
Tenants	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Advocacy groups (including Federation of Metro Tenants' Associations (FMTA) and ACORN)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Individuals and families living in Toronto's rental apartments• Tenant associations
Landlords	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Landlord associations (e.g. Greater Toronto Apartment Association (GTAA))	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Building owners• Investors• Property management staff
Government	Municipal <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Public Health• RentSafeTO• Municipal Licensing Standards (MLS)• Shelter, Support and Housing Administration (SSHA)• Toronto Fire Services• Social Development, Finance & Administration (SDFA)	Provincial <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Landlord and Tenant Board (LTB)• Residential Tenancies Act (RTA) Federal <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Canada Housing and Mortgage Corporation, National Housing Strategy
Related services and agencies	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Social services• Legal aid (e.g. Advocacy Centre for Tenants (ACTO))• Non-profit support agencies• Trades people	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Third party accreditation (e.g. Certified Rental Building Program (CRB))• Electrical Safety Authority (ESA)

Over the course of this Lab, the roles, interests, and influence of these listed stakeholders will continue to be examined and discussed.

Intersections of Housing and Health

A key component of the co-design work was to come up with a collective definition of “healthy housing quality”. To do so, the Lab team drew on social determinants of health research from Mikkonen, J., & Raphael, D., 2010 and others, combined with sentiments and experiences of this Lab’s co-design participants.

Key statements provided by Lab participants begin to illustrate the experiences of the intersections of housing and health. The conversations revolved around four levels of intersection, where participants indicated and described dynamics affecting healthy housing quality. These are **healthy buildings**, **healthy people**, **healthy communities**, and **healthy systems**.

Healthy Buildings

This first level of intersection relates to long-term maintenance and sustainability of the building. For Lab participants, this often comes in the form of the pace, consistency, and quality to which issues such as pests, vital services, physical structure, and other common quality concerns are dealt with. For the City of Toronto, a healthy building also includes the ability to reduce a building’s environmental impact and increase its resiliency over time in the face of climate change. Problems related to heat are top-of-mind for the City, as power outages and more days of extreme heat become a reality for Torontonians. Dealing with heat-related upgrades and maintenance can be costly and complex.

Healthy People

This level of intersection explores how people’s physical and mental health, safety, and quality of life are related to and impacted by the health of the buildings in which they live. Lab participants reinforced the importance of providing tenants with a place that is comfortable, safe, and clean, where they can have pride in their home. These factors can affect a person’s mental health. In addition, certain repair issues such as elevator disrepair are especially serious for people with disabilities, older adults, and people with young children.

Healthy Communities

The third level of intersection identified by Lab participants was the lens of community. This is related to the relationships between tenants, landlords, and City staff. These intersections are impacted by the affordability of someone’s home (and potential threats to that affordability), security of tenure, inclusivity and dignity, and social equity in the system. Many Lab participants discussed the importance of building and maintaining good working relationships between these three stakeholder groups, using open lines of communication to foster cooperation around common goals and interests.

Healthy Systems

Finally, conversations in the Lab events revealed the need for a systems-level lens on healthy housing quality issues. One participant stated, “housing inadequacy impedes effective action

in many spheres: social services, education, healthcare, job training, and employment.” The Lab team also learned [that](#) there is a sentiment that Provincial and Municipal legislation does not currently intentionally link issues of healthy housing quality to health evidence. This calls for a more evidence-based approach to dealing with healthy systems issues.

Other themes that arose from the Lab events and reflect a need for a focus on systems-level change are the need for transparency and accountability, a responsive and proactive system in the face of sustainability challenges, and relationships that help stakeholders strive toward a common vision for the future.

Trends and Patterns Affecting the System

Through conversations and co-design events, Lab participants identified trends and patterns that might be affecting the current system, its dynamics, and outcomes for stakeholders. These are summarized here, supported by quotes from Lab participants. These quotes are intended to demonstrate the sentiments and experiences of the current system.

Housing as a Human Right

Despite policy efforts to enact rights-based approaches to housing, there is a sense that housing has not been recognized as a human right.

“In Canada, society views housing as a privilege. It is not viewed as a human right nor as a community asset.”
– Lab participant

“This notion that housing is a ‘private’ matter has been instilled over time; it is now interwoven with our attitudes and actions.”
– Lab participant

Financialization of Housing

The financialization of housing is a growing phenomenon in Canada, which can reinforce adversarial relationships between landlords and tenants due to an enhanced feeling of conflicting interests. In addition, people are being “renovicted” (evicted for the purposes of performing renovations and increasing rents) as the value of units continue to climb.

“Real estate is the newest form of investment. It becomes no longer a place to live, but a place to make money.”
– Lab participant

“There is a link to the financialization of residential real estate... The attractiveness of buildings in gentrify-able neighbourhoods to big international investment firms.”
– Lab participant

“There is the dynamic of dis-investment, whether in neighbourhoods or in individual buildings, as a way to hasten tenants into vacating the building so they can be re-rented to others at a higher rate.”
– Lab participant

New Economics of Rental Housing

There is renewed appetite for building new purpose-build rental housing.

“Especially in the current context in Toronto (vacancy at or below 1%), there is a huge current demand and larger anticipated demand for rental housing.”

– Lab participant

Technology

Technology is playing an increasing role in many aspects of the system, including community conversations and engagement through social media, more sophisticated online maintenance request systems, and building system monitoring.

Framing the Problem

Through involvement in the Discovery phase, the Lab team gathered perspectives from tenants, landlords, and City staff on healthy housing quality issues and synthesized the information further to identify “pains” and “gains” from each stakeholder perspective. **Pains** are obstacles that are in the way when trying to reach an outcome or benefit. These are also risks or negative impacts one seeks to avoid. **Gains** are the desired outcomes and benefits. These could be functional, social, financial, and/or emotional¹.

The following tables provide a summary of the pains and gains as described by tenants, landlords, and City staff.

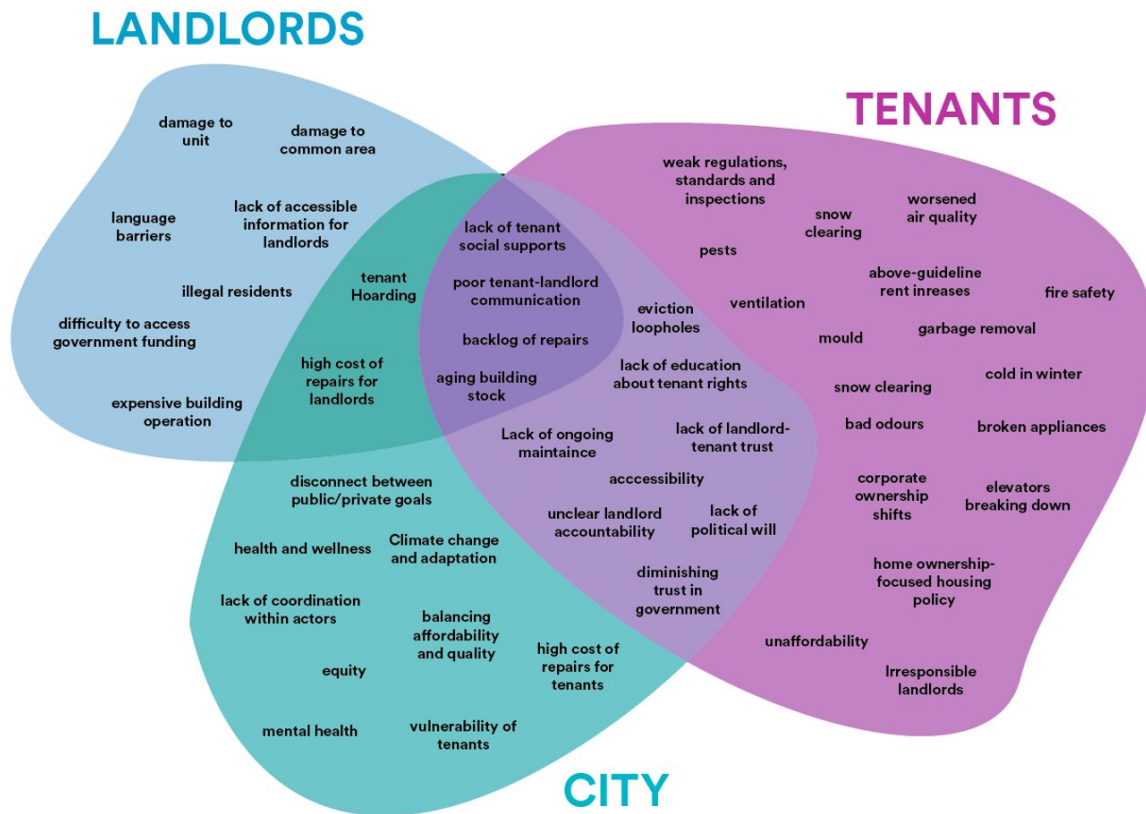
Tenants	Pains	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Conflict between the interests of tenants and landlords (e.g. profit vs. quality housing, threat of “renoviction”)• No effective channels to communicate effectively with landlords and superintendents about issues• Lack of transparency about repairs and capital projects/plans• Lack of ongoing maintenance and quality repairs, leading to fear for safety (e.g. electrical systems causing fire)• Frustration from “lack of control” over state of housing and lack of tools, knowledge, and supports to fight for quality housing• Physical and mental health impact of living in a home with issues of disrepair• Diverse viewpoints among tenants on what needs to change (e.g. safety in buildings)• Lack of education on tenant rights• Fear of above guideline increases (AGI)

¹ Osterwalder, A. et al. 2014. Value Proposition Design: How to Create Products and Services Customers Want. Wiley.

	Gains	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sense of safety and security in the building • Ways to access supports • More effective ways of communicating with landlords to achieve alignment and resolve issues • Transparency about when repairs happen • Trust in landlords and regulatory bodies to do their jobs • Living in healthy housing
Landlords	Pains	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Losing potential rental revenue over units that cannot be rented due to disrepair • Lack of accessible information for landlords, especially support for smaller landlords • Working with building management staff who may not have the knowledge or skills to deal with problems that arise; cultural miscommunication and lack of face-to-face communication with tenants • Enhanced problems due to aging housing stock • Problematic tenant behaviour (due to lack of social supports) can exacerbate repair needs • Lack of business case for larger-scale retrofits • Perception that all landlords are “bad” • Dealing with ineffective regulations that increase administrative costs without achieving the desired outcomes for buildings with persistent quality issues • Increased administration leading to reduced ability to reinvest in properties
	Gains	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Having productive two-way communication with tenants; having engagement within the building • Support from the government to complete large-scale retrofits • Tenants who take care of the building and prepare their units for repair work/treatments • A sense of a “two-way-street” with tenants in ensuring a healthy building state • Earning a return on investment while being socially responsible and giving back to the community • Recognition of landlords who are doing the work and maintaining well-run buildings • Industry and government working together on regulations and standards
City	Pains	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of jurisdiction to be able to address some of the issues • Lack of will of governments to take ownership of problems; need of “cultural change” • Lack of a “rights-based” framework for housing, despite the Federal Government’s legislated “right to housing” • Lack of coordination between divisions and clarity around roles; having to refer people to other departments; housing separated from other social community services • Disconnect between the private and public sector on what is meant by healthy housing quality • Lack of coordination and action on evidence-based policy to enact change • Scale of the problem of aging housing stock and the cost of solving it • Housing unaffordability in the city; low competition, scarcity, disinvestment, etc.
	Gains	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Better coordination on overarching goals • Collaboration between different levels of government • More clarity around the system and roles; “a map or diagram on how the different pieces work together - housing quality system” • Improved effectiveness of programs and enforcement of regulations • Improved quality of life for tenants and preservation of housing stock • Meeting climate change and resilience goals

Overlapping Perspectives

The Lab team visualized how the issues experienced by tenants, landlords, and the City overlap. Some of the dynamics, synergies, and tensions are described in the next section.



Defining “Success”

The Lab’s Discovery Phase concludes with conversations about what successful outcomes and interventions might look like for stakeholders in the system and how change might happen. This section describes the findings from those conversations.

Success Criteria

Success criteria around the development of the healthy housing solutions were co-developed with participants during the Forum Lab event. The success criteria will be integrated as design principles that inform the solution development and refinement phase of the Solutions Lab, as well as the framework for evaluation.

“Our solution must...”

1. **Involve intersectoral collaboration across actors in the system** (tenants, landlords, levels of government, other sectors) and support capacity-building for all stakeholders to work together.
2. **Include a shared definition for healthy housing**, that includes dimensions of physical, mental, emotional and social/community health.
3. **Integrate a rights-based approach to healthy housing** that ensures equity and dignity for tenants.
4. **Have an accountability framework** with metrics that are measurable, evaluable and transparent.
5. Include long-term considerations around **environmental sustainability and climate resilience**.
6. **Protect the availability of affordable housing** stock over the long-term.
7. **Lead to tenant empowerment** through education and the support of collective advocacy.
8. **Improve communication between tenants and landlords**.
9. **Be grounded in evidence** in the forms of both quantitative data and qualitative lived experience.
10. **Be inclusive of both short-term and long-term outcomes** so that the solution may be immediately actionable, while being future-oriented.

From “Needs” to “Opportunities”

The pains and gains developed from initial research findings, and as summarized above, were presented back to Lab participants at the Lab Forum event. In groups, participants were asked to validate the points and generate initial ideas for intervention. Some of the themes that surfaced are synthesized below and are listed against potential opportunity areas identified by Lab participants.

Healthy Buildings

From needs...	...to opportunities.
<p>Accountability for ongoing maintenance</p> <p>In buildings that are not well-maintained, “superficial” repairs are performed, instead of fixing more serious structural issues in buildings.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More rigorous accountability around housing standard violations may be needed. • Inspection reports can be provided to tenants of the results to ensure transparency and accountability. • Tenants also wants to see more disincentives like financial penalties around the violation of property standards.
<p>Complexity of renovating the aging stock</p> <p>The aging housing stock continues to increase the complexity and severity of the maintenance problems.</p> <p>These issues exist within a policy and funding environment where long-term investments are difficult and expensive (especially in the context of climate change). Landlords want to make long-term investments into their buildings but do not always have reliable information around what a good retrofit looks like.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More information and financial supports (funding, tax incentives) for large-scale repairs and retrofits can help. • A one-stop shop that includes information about landlord responsibilities and expectations would be useful, as well as tax code changes to incentivize building retrofits.

Healthy People

From needs...	...to opportunities.
<p>Power imbalances affecting relationships</p> <p>In a relationship-driven system, where power imbalances are prevalent, there is a need to work with and support tenant voices in solution development.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is an opportunity to bring the voices of people with lived experience to the forefront. • The importance of continued work with people with lived experience was an important message emerging from the Lab events. One participant stated, “by working together with tenants, it will be easier to address the barriers, stigma and mistrust that tenants face when trying to advocate for themselves.”

From needs...

Housing and health initiatives are siloed

There are clear linkages between housing and health outcomes, however there are no distinct linkages in metrics between people working across these two domains in the City.



...to opportunities.

- There is an opportunity to create more understanding around the linkages between housing and health. This would require public health metrics and property standards to be aligned.
- Definitions for “healthy housing” and what success would look like should also be widely adopted by the system. Data on environmental health conditions may also be required.

Healthy Communities

From needs...

Adversarial relationships

Adversarial relationships between tenants and landlords can be exacerbated by a lack of education and awareness about tenant rights and expectations as a tenant.



...to opportunities.

- There is an opportunity to improve access to good quality information for both tenants and landlords.
- This opportunity includes providing new channels of communication and information-sharing between all stakeholders to ensure problem-solving can be done effectively by trained staff and trades people, and so that tenants can know what to expect and what is expected of them.
- Investment into tenant education around online platforms is also necessary, especially with older non-English speaking tenants.

Lack of transparency around maintenance activities

Tenants wish to be informed about their rights and have access to up-to-date and thorough information about the progress of construction and maintenance on their buildings.

An absence of effective channels of communication between landlords and tenants can lead to eroding trust and lack of accountability from the viewpoints of both groups, especially related to maintenance activities.



- Ideas include providing user-friendly information about what work is being done, why it is being done, and if the proper permits have been secured (this is already being done by several GTAA building owners interviewed)
- According to GTAA building owners, the liaison between the building owner and the tenant needs to be diligent on complaint follow-through and documentation for landlords and tenants on work orders and ensure transparent communications that is accountable.
- Empowering tenants can be a win-win for all stakeholders involved, especially around renewing trust around landlord-tenant relations.

Healthy Systems

From needs...	...to opportunities.
<p>Lack of system-level view on the issues</p> <p>Without more proactive municipal partnership with tenants, it is difficult to create policies and programs that are grounded in lived experience.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lab participants suggested the City can find more proactive ways to partner with tenants. • For example, there was a recommendation (based on San Francisco's code enforcement program) where the City educates and hires tenants around the enforcement of property standards in order to expand the capacity of city inspections. Hiring tenants as enforcement workers is also an opportunity to build capacity with and offer work to non-English-speaking or low-income tenants.
<p>Lack of inter-departmental government collaboration and solutions</p> <p>There are many City agencies involved in housing that are not directly connected. The Lab events revealed a potential lack of "inter-sectoral work" or alignment between key stakeholders and actors connected to the issues of healthy housing quality. There is a potential need for more spaces of collaboration across City departments and sectors.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A collective decision around how we define healthy housing can support the shared understanding and coordination of all the actors involved within the system. There is an opportunity for the system to work more collaboratively, towards a common vision of healthy housing. • There may be an opportunity to host a discussion about roles and a shared vision for the future. This Lab begins the conversation. • Other ideas include information sharing agreements or opportunities to allow diverse stakeholders (like tenants) to participate at the decision-making table. The St. Jamestown action team was shared as an example of an inter-departmental systemic approach by the city to address building issues.
<p>Absence of a cohesive narrative to mobilize action</p> <p>Action on this issue tends to be reactive and mobilization of resources around housing happens only through powerful narratives, for example, by declaring a crisis in housing.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A compelling narrative around housing that is aspirational is a powerful way to create political will, collective buy-in and public demand for action. • Lobby for new and updated legislative healthy housing standards (e.g. through the development of health-based habitability standards)
<p>Fear of rental rate volatility</p> <p>A recurring theme that came from several Lab participants across all three stakeholder groups was the opportunity to find ways to ensure housing repairs and retrofits can happen while maintaining affordability for tenants.</p> <p>The fear of rental rate volatility (e.g. above-guideline increases) can be financially detrimental to tenants who live on fixed incomes.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Suggestions included an incentive available to support repairs, linked to affordability criteria, or mechanisms to ensure savings from retrofits are being passed on to tenants. • There was an idea to require landlords to be in good standing when they apply for City permits and grants through a certification process and find ways to sustain the cost of the program by financially penalizing bad landlords.

How Change Might Happen

Through the conversations and co-design events, Lab participants described some of the barriers, enablers, and opportunities for change. These will be used in the Development and Prototype phases of the Lab to help participants generate and test their proposed solutions and interventions.

Barriers and Enablers of Change

The following barriers and enablers were identified during the Lab events:

Barriers	Enablers
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• There is a lack of political will from governments to intervene significantly in the housing market.• There is a lack of enforcement of regulations and standards; it can be cheaper for landlords to pay the fine than do the work.• There is a segment of landlords running poorly maintained buildings.• There are individuals living in private rental housing who may require supports.• The scale of repairs needed for aging towers is daunting and costly; landlords may not have the capital to take on large-scale renovations themselves.• There is a lack of “maintenance culture” from all perspectives, with a tendency to be reactive instead of proactive, due to a lack of understanding of building infrastructure.• The system can put landlords and tenants against each other, making regular processes more adversarial.• There are inherent social inequities that might position some tenant groups at a disadvantage when it comes to demanding housing adequacy.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Smaller landlords are being replaced by institutional owners; if publicly traded, they will have shareholders whose reputation can be scathed by unprofessional management.• Tenants are self-advocating and participating in housing issues (e.g. RentSafeTO), providing their insights and creating a shift in how problems are addressed.• While the “greening of towers” is not the same as good repair, there are synergies between the two initiatives.• There are best practices in the community, such as landlords engaging tenants and creating systems for tracking repair work.• There is movement towards greater accountability, such as requiring licensed electricians to sign off on electrical safety plans.

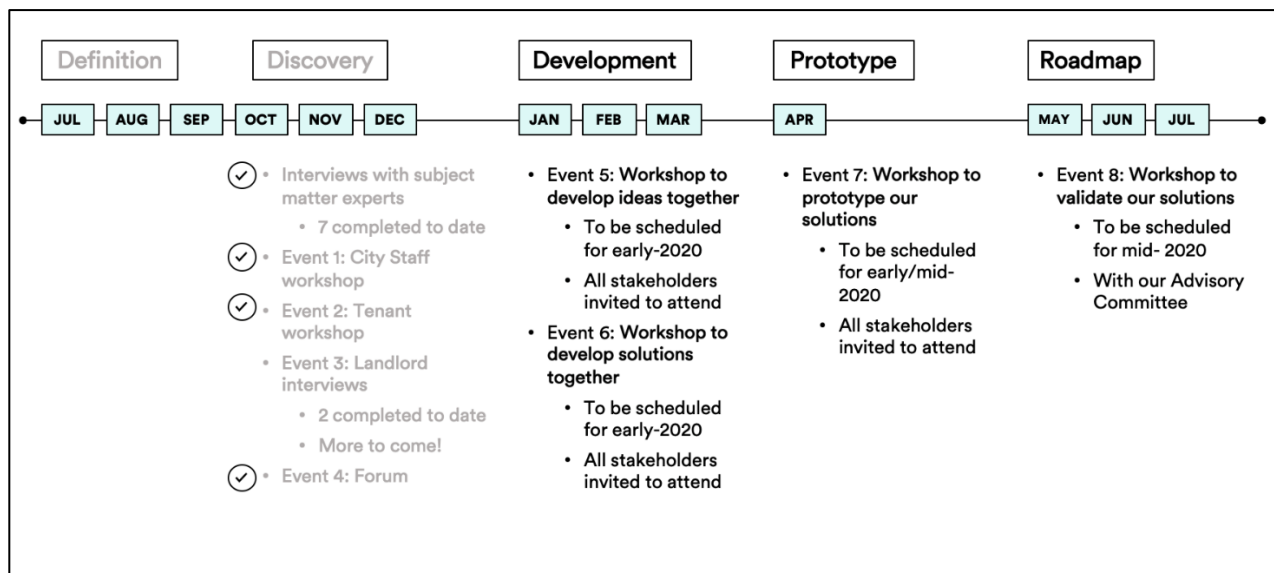
Summary

The four Lab events in the Discovery Phase of this work led to a greater understanding of the current systems and its stakeholders, emerging trends affecting the system, current pain points, and an identification of where successful interventions may lie.

The themes of investigating power dynamics, relationships, and systems-level interventions were evident throughout the Lab events. The next phase of work will build off these preliminary insights.

Next Steps

As the Lab team moves into the Development, Prototype, and Roadmap phases, there are a series of Lab events that will be undertaken to move Lab participants from the wide lens of the Discovery phase to more streamlined solution development and prototyping in the upcoming workshops. The following image provides an overview of the outstanding events that will take place in 2020.

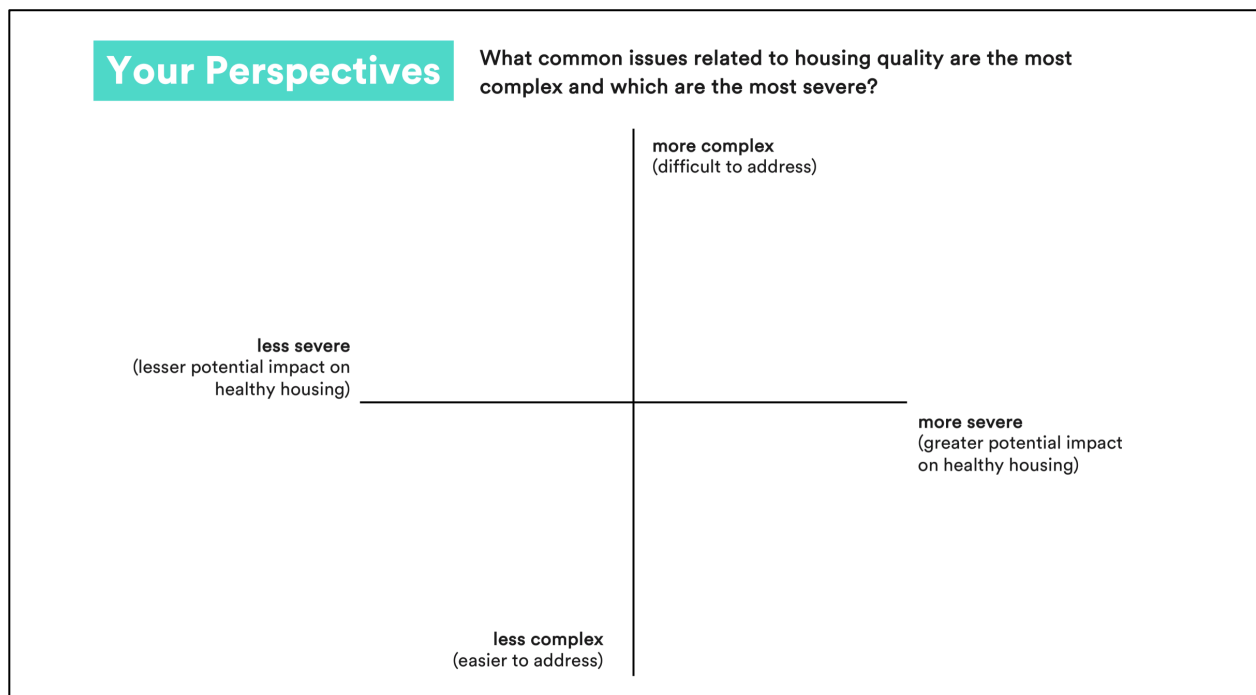


Appendix

Discovery Phase Lab Events

1. City Staff Workshop

The purpose of the workshop was to hear from municipal stakeholders on their roles and perspectives around problems related to healthy housing quality. Lab participants were asked to generate and rank housing quality issues on their level of severity and complexity. There was also discussion on the work of different City divisions and agencies, how issues are currently being addressed, and the barriers and enablers to improving housing quality.



2. Tenant Workshop

The purpose of the workshop was to build empathy with tenants on the issues around healthy housing quality. People from different backgrounds and associations were invited to share their perspectives and experiences as tenants in rental housing. A range of housing issues were presented on an iceberg model (see: Appendix A, page), from physical building disrepair to larger systemic problems. Participants identified and discussed the most significant problems to them, including dynamics with landlords and barriers to accessing healthy housing support.

Your Perspectives

Can you circle up to 4 issues that are the most significant to you and/or to the tenants you represent? Write down anything that might be missing.

The diagram is an iceberg model with a blue water background. The visible part of the iceberg (above the water line) contains the following issues in boxes: mould, pests, broken appliances, bad smells and odours, fire safety, worsened air quality (asbestos, lead), garbage removal, summer heat / lack of air conditioning, cold in winter, overcrowding, ventilation problems, lack of ongoing maintenance, lack of education about tenant rights, threat of eviction, lack of landlord capacity/investment, insufficient landlord accountability, mental health challenges, lack of access to tenant supports, lack of government investment, accessibility, lack of trust between landlords and tenants, weak regulation, standards, and inspections, lack of political will, housing system and policies overly focused on ownership sector, and lack of trust in government.

Name (not required):

Can you describe why you chose these issue(s)?

Issue:

Issue:

Issue:

Issue:

3. Landlord Interviews

Interviews with landlords took place in offices and by phone. The goal was to understand the landlord perspective on healthy housing quality, including the common problems faced by landlords and how they are currently addressed. Participants discussed landlord-tenant and landlord-government dynamics, as well as how the rental apartment landscape has changed. They were also asked to describe the barriers and enablers to improving healthy housing from their perspective.








4. Housing Forum

The final Discovery phase event was a full-day forum event that took place at Massey College with guest speakers Elizabeth McIsaac, David Hulchanski, and Graeme Stewart. The purpose of the day was for the project team to share back the insights that were gathered, get the whole system working together, and to create energy going into the solution development phase of the project. The first activity invited participants to validate the problem framing, synthesized as “pains” and “gains” from the City, landlord, and tenant perspectives. Participants worked together in mixed groups to review the findings and discuss potential intervention points. The second activity was a collaborative exercise to come up with success criteria: *what are the desirable outcomes of an intervention and what does success look like?*

Tenants

EXPLORING OPPORTUNITIES FOR HEALTHY HOUSING

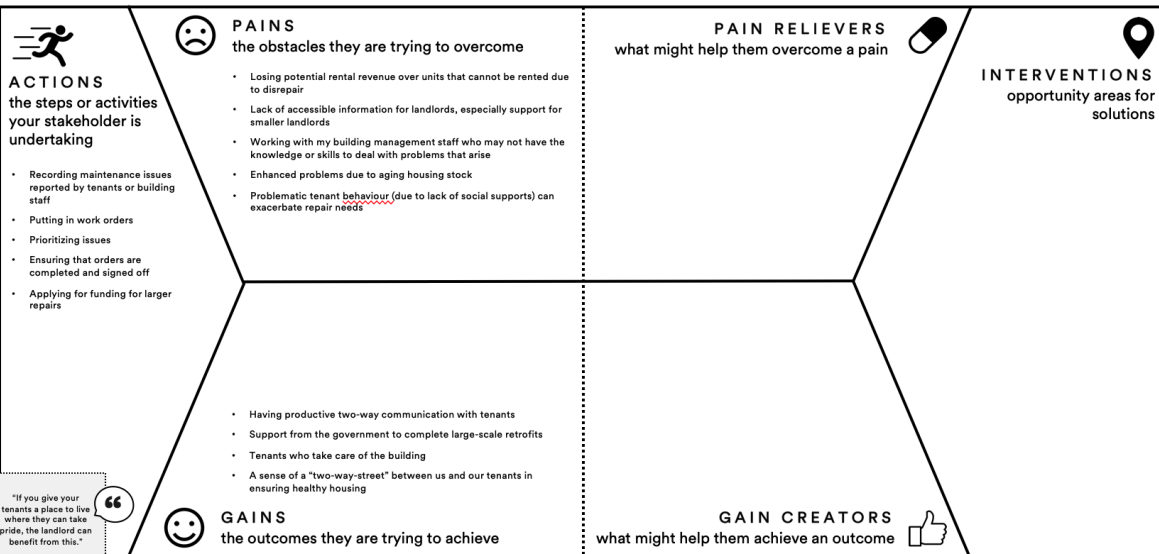
Your table number: _____

 <p>ACTIONS the steps or activities your stakeholder is undertaking</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Solving problems themselves when they're not fixed the first time; "We have to call another person and pay them to come" Calling municipal offices Looking for legal help from agencies Forming tenant associations; working together to solve problems and sharing information Calling a 1-800 number to access property management services 	 <p>PAINS the obstacles they are trying to overcome</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Perceived conflict between the interests of tenants and landlords (profit vs. quality housing; threat of "renoviction") No effective channels to communicate effectively with landlords and superintendents about issues Lack of transparency about repairs and capital projects Lack of ongoing maintenance and quality repairs, leading to fear for safety; e.g. electrical systems causing fire Frustration from "lack of control" over state of housing and lack of tools, knowledge, and supports to fight for quality housing Health (physical and mental) impact of living in a home with issues of disrepair 	<p>PAIN RELIEVERS what might help them overcome a pain</p> 	 <p>INTERVENTIONS opportunity areas for solutions</p>
<p>"People just needed a place that was comfortable, safe, clean, and some place where they wouldn't be ashamed to bring someone."</p> 	 <p>GAINS the outcomes they are trying to achieve</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sense of safety and security in the building Ways to access supports for tenants More effective ways of communicating with landlords to achieve alignment and resolve issues Transparency about when repairs happen Trust in landlords and regulatory bodies to do their jobs Living in healthy housing 	<p>GAIN CREATORS what might help them achieve an outcome</p> 	

Landlords

EXPLORING OPPORTUNITIES FOR HEALTHY HOUSING

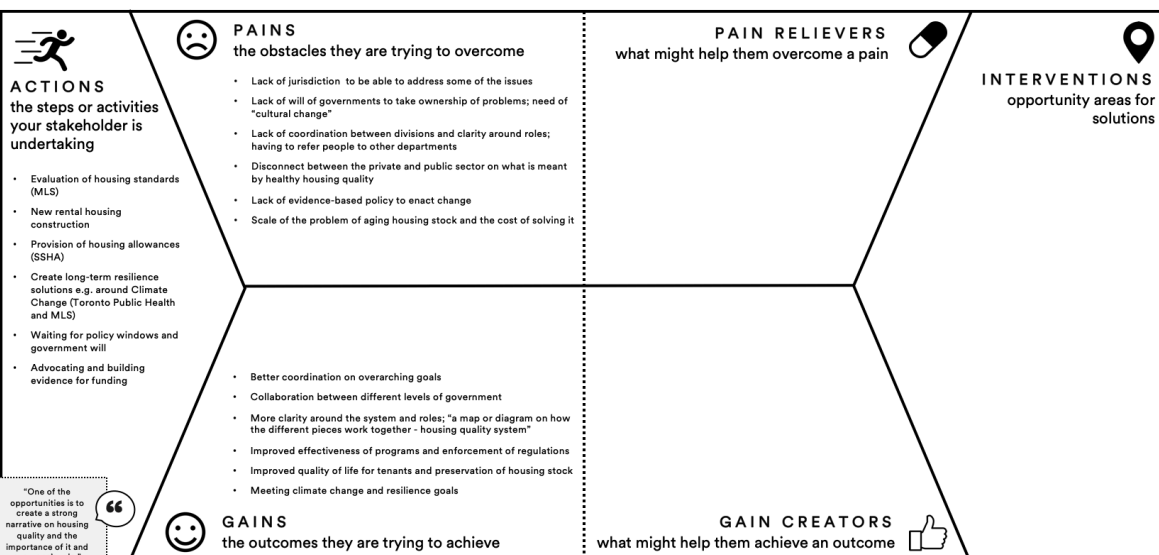
Your table number: _____



City Staff

EXPLORING OPPORTUNITIES FOR HEALTHY HOUSING

Your table number: _____



5. Expert Interviews

In addition to the workshops and key stakeholder engagements, a number of interviews were conducted with academics, representatives, specialists, and other relevant experts. Complementing the workshops, these interviews added background context, how others have framed the issues, and the perspectives of other important players in healthy housing.

The key lines of inquiry were:

- Who are the **key actors** related to the housing quality issue within private rental apartments for low-income families?
- What are the **barriers** to improving housing disrepair? What concerns you about the issue?
- What are the **enablers** of change that you see in the system? Where do you see the **opportunities for intervention**?