



Joe Horneck
Acting Mayor
Councillor, Ward 6
City of Mississauga

Premier Doug Ford
Room 281, Legislative Building, Queen's Park
Toronto, ON, M7A 1A1

Hon. Doug Downey
Attorney General
McMurtry-Scott Building
11th Floor, 720 Bay St.
Toronto ON, M7A 2S9

Hon. Paul Calandra
Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing
Room 223, Main Legislative Building, Queen's Park
Toronto, ON, M7A 1A8

February 5, 2024

Dear Premier Ford, Minister Downey and Minister Calandra,

On behalf of the Council of the City of Mississauga, I am writing to you regarding changes that have been made to the Ontario Landlord and Tenant Board (LTB) and the adverse affect they are having on tenant households in Ontario, including the 71,000 in the City of Mississauga.

The LTB serves a critical function, resolving disputes between landlords and tenants and providing information about their rights and responsibilities. It must operate in a timely manner and provide equal access to ensure these disputes are resolved fairly and within a reasonable timeframe.

Recent changes, including moving to a remote service model, have led to a backlog of cases, reaching 53,057 in March of 2023. The removal of in-person services has led to a digital divide for people living in rural and remote areas, people living with poverty who do not have sufficient broadband or devices to participate, people who do not speak French or English, survivors of intimate partner violence where home is not a safe space to conduct a hearing, and individuals with a disability, literacy or numeracy challenges. This divide is illustrated by the Advocacy Centre of Tenants Ontario finding in 2021 that 55.6% of tenants participated by phone compared to only 26% of landlords.

Previously, the LTB offered in-person services at 3 Robert Speck Parkway in Mississauga, including daily on-site mediation, tenant duty counsel services, and counter staff services for Mississauga residents. In-person hearings were scheduled for Mississauga and Brampton residents five days per week. The steps taken to deliver computers or flip phones to parties and the introduction of an IT support line have been insufficient to overcome the digital divide experienced by self-represented tenants when in-person services were taken away from their communities.

The City of Mississauga Council recommends returning to an LTB model that does not contribute to increased homelessness but supports all tenants and in particular low-income residents, vulnerable people and other equity seeking individuals escape poverty, precarious housing and systemic disadvantage.

Mississauga Council therefore request that:

- The Government of Ontario immediately move forward on all 61 recommendations of the Ombudsman's report.
- Tribunals Ontario bring back in-person hearings to ensure effective access to justice for all participants while at the same time permitting digital access where both parties are agreeable.
- The LTB bring back regional scheduling to improve access to housing and homelessness supports, to provide better service for people living with poverty who do not have sufficient broadband or devices to participate in virtual hearings, people who do not speak French or English, survivors of intimate partner violence where home is not a safe space to conduct a hearing, and individuals with disability, literacy or numeracy challenges and so that adjudicators will have increased familiarity with the community.
- The LTB reopen counter service at 3 Robert Speck Parkway and all LTB regional offices so that LTB staff can provide parties with documents on the day of the hearing, can provide immediate support to parties for emergency matters, can minimize delays as documents can be reviewed for minor errors when they are filed and can provide support for applicants and respondents in-person and refer parties to appropriate resources.
- LTB operations are improved by revising LTB forms and notices to ensure they are written in plain language, by mailing correspondence to parties in a timely manner as an alternative to logging on to the portal, by improving website navigation, by reinstating the essential participation of mediators at every LTB session, and by improving back-office processes to ensure relevant documents are included in the LTB portal promptly.
- The LTB create a navigator program to assess remote hearing suitability, to inform tenants of Tenant Duty Counsel and other community supports (such as interpreters and homelessness prevention programs), and to offer mediation services prior to the LTB hearing.
- The LTB conduct an annual review of all of its processes to ensure that it is providing fair and accessible services and to publicly post the findings in a transparent manner.
- The provincial government reinstate funding to Ontario Legal Aid Services in the amount of \$130M.

Thank you for your consideration of these measures to improve the function and service of the Ontario Landlord and Tenant Board. For further information please see the attached resolution from Mississauga Council, passed on January 17, 2024. Please do not hesitate to contact us if you have questions.

Sincerely,



Joe Horneck
Acting Mayor of Mississauga
Councillor, Ward 6