

Building Strong Renoviction & Rental Replacement Bylaws

Protecting renters, preventing displacement, and preserving affordable housing.

What is a Renoviction Bylaw?

A renoviction bylaw is a municipal tool that helps prevent unfair evictions by regulating renovation-related displacement. It requires landlords to get a license before moving forward with renovations, ensuring there is clear proof the work is necessary. Effective bylaws also set clear rules for tenant notification, and includes oversight and enforcement to ensure landlords are accountable and tenants are treated fairly.

What is a Rental Replacement Bylaw?

A rental replacement bylaw is a municipal tool that helps prevent loss of affordable housing when rental units are demolished or converted. It requires landlords to get a permit before removing rental units through demolition or conversion. If affordable units are lost, they must be replaced with the same number of units rented at similar rates. It also ensures tenants receive compensation and support to find new housing if their home is no longer available as rental housing.

Why are these bylaws needed?

- Provincial protections alone are not enough. Tenants are often left to navigate complex systems like the Landlord and Tenant Board on their own, bad-faith renovictions are difficult to prove, and even when tenants are legally allowed to move back into their home (known as a “right of return”), this is rarely enforced in practice.
- In many cases, tenants are displaced during renovations or redevelopment, and when units return to the market they are re-rented at significantly higher prices, resulting in the permanent loss of affordable housing.
- The result is increased displacement and homelessness, and growing pressures on already strained social systems. A strong municipal bylaw helps close the gaps by adding proactive oversight, clear rules, and real enforcement.

What makes a bylaw effective?

Effective bylaws require a license, provide transparent information to tenants, include compensation, enforcement, and accountability. A strong bylaw provides tenant protections and real accountability, not just process.

Key components of effective bylaws:

1. **Mandatory licensing** where landlords must get municipal approval before moving ahead, creating a checkpoint before displacement happens. This should apply broadly to all rental units.
2. **Proof that renovations, demolition or conversion are legitimate** with approaches like a building permit, detailed scope of work, and independent expert proof, to confirm displacement is truly necessary and to help prevent bad-faith evictions.

3. **Tenant transparency and participation early in the process** including tenants receiving a formal notice, a clear explanation of rights and options, access to supports early in the process, so they are informed, supported, and able to plan.
4. **Renoviction Bylaw specific - Enforceable right of return with rent protection** so that tenants can return after renovations at the same rent (with only legal increases). Without this, renovictions are loopholes to raise rents.
5. **Rental Replacement Bylaw specific – One-for-one replacement at similar rents** ensures that when affordable units are removed, they are replaced with the same number of units at similar rent levels. This prevents the loss of affordable housing through redevelopment.
6. **Mandatory tenant supports during displacement** including providing a temporary comparable place to live or financial support to cover higher rent if tenants find their own place (rent-gap payments) and help with covering moving costs. This helps to prevent homelessness and permanent displacement.
7. **Strong enforcement and penalties** where the municipality actively monitors and inspects to ensure rules are being followed, can deny or revoke licenses, and issue meaningful fines when rules are broken. This is important because without real enforcement, the bylaw becomes optional and does not protect tenants.

Responding to Common Pushback

Tenants are already protected under provincial law.

- In practice, existing protections are reactive, rely on tenants filing complaints, and are rarely enforced, especially in real time.
- Municipal bylaws add proactive oversight and clear rules before displacement happens, helping prevent harm rather than responding after it occurs.

Landlords need flexibility to renovate.

- Effective bylaws do not stop renovations. They ensure they are legitimate and fair.
- Responsible landlords benefit from clear rules and a level playing field.

This is too complex to make happen.

- Proven models already exist. Hamilton and Toronto provide best practice examples.
- Simpler models that lack enforcement don't work. They create process without protection.

Municipalities don't have capacity and it will be too expensive.

- In reality, weak bylaws create higher costs by allowing displacement to continue, which increases homelessness and the need for far more expensive emergency and crisis services.
- Strong, clear rules upfront reduce complaints, disputes, and enforcement burdens over time.

Key Messages

Process alone is not protection. A bylaw that only requires licensing and provides information to tenants, but lacks compensation, enforcement, and accountability, will not

stop renovations. Without stronger measures, it risks becoming a rubber stamp that still allows displacement.

Effective bylaws must prevent harm, not just respond to it. Strong renovation and rental replacement bylaws are proactive (before eviction happens), tenant-centred (not complaint-driven), and properly enforced with real consequences. This is what makes the difference between rules that exist on paper and rules that actually discourage bad-faith and unlawful evictions.

Strong bylaws protect housing and communities. Weak bylaws do not solve the problem. They can legitimize it. Strong bylaws keep people housed, preserve affordable rentals, reduce pressures on public systems, and create clearer, fairer rules for everyone.