

HAMILTON ACORN'S STONEY CREEK CHAPTER

"STATE OF PARKADES" SURVEY IN RIVERDALE WEST

ACORN Hamilton, October
2024



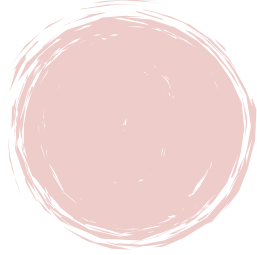
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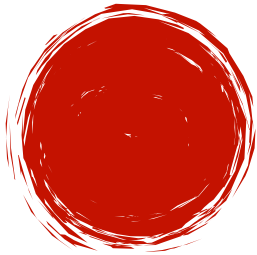
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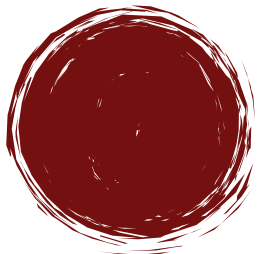
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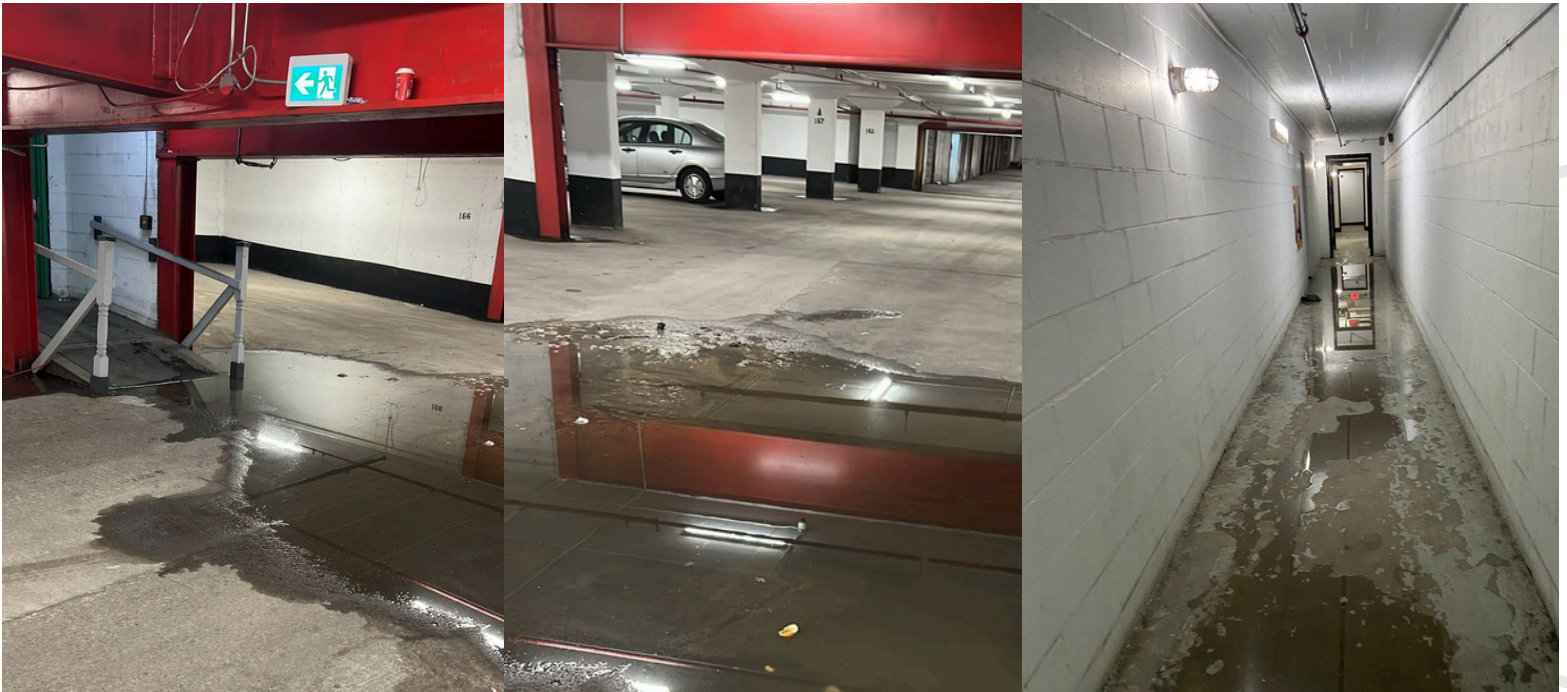
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WHAT IS ACORN?



ACORN Canada, the Association of Community Organizations for Reform Now, founded in 2004, is an independent grassroots organization that fights for social and economic justice for low and moderate income communities. We believe that social and economic justice can best be achieved by building community power for change. ACORN has over 168,000 low-to-moderate-income individual members in 24 neighbourhood chapters in 10 cities across the country. ACORN started organizing in Hamilton in 2017 and has grown to have four neighbourhood chapters: Downtown, Mountain, East End and Stoney Creek.

INTRODUCTION

The Riverdale West neighbourhood is home to seniors, immigrants, young families, multigenerational households, students, folks on disability – the vast majority of whom are low and moderate income tenants. The 3 major landlords in the area are: Golden Equity, Interrent REIT, and Effort Trust. In these high-rises, the building infrastructure and amenities vary widely. 50-70 Jerome Crescent has closed the majority of their building amenities, and the entrances to the buildings are not consistently accessible – there is also a distinct lack of designated accessible parking spaces. 2520 Barton St E tenants have not had access to their building’s parking facilities for the past 5 years and counting. 40 Grandville Ave tenants have to fight for a parking space due to extensive construction at an adjacent building – those who are stuck parking on the street risk accruing parking tickets. Stoney Creek ACORN gathered data with this report to answer the question: **Can the People Park?**



PREFACE

METHODOLOGY:

Through chapter meetings and doorknocking, we identified some likely problem areas with parking amenities (cost, maintenance, security, accessibility) and developed a survey to gather information on how tenants are impacted when parking becomes a problem:

1. We asked Riverdale residents some general demographic questions - source of income, if they were a renter or homeowner
2. We asked respondents to rate their building on a scale of 1 to 5 their confidence in the upkeep and maintenance of their parking facilities, the safety and security of the facilities, and the appropriateness of the monthly costs incurred by tenants for the use of the facilities
3. We asked if tenants had gotten an AGI (Above Guideline Rent Increase) for their units
4. We also asked tenants for their recommendations on how to improve their building's parking - at both the landlord level and municipal level
5. After several weeks of doorknocking, and a member canvass day, we have gathered 280 responses from Riverdale tenants!

Primary Findings:

1. Tenants are paying an average of \$60 a month, or \$720 every year for use of parking facilities, with the highest single-vehicle parking fee being \$120 and the lowest being \$20. A significant number of tenants who have lived in their building for more than 10 years often don't pay anything for parking.
2. Tenants are deeply dissatisfied with their parking facilities - average ranking across costs, maintenance, and security came in at a score of 1.3, 1.4, and 1.5 out of 5 respectively
3. Tenants are frustrated with lack of planning for alternate parking during parkade construction, lack of enforcement of parking spot assignments, and unreasonably high costs to use the building's parking facilities

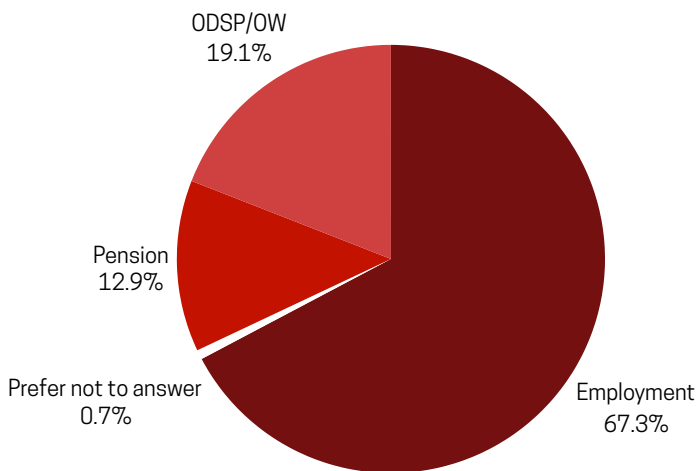
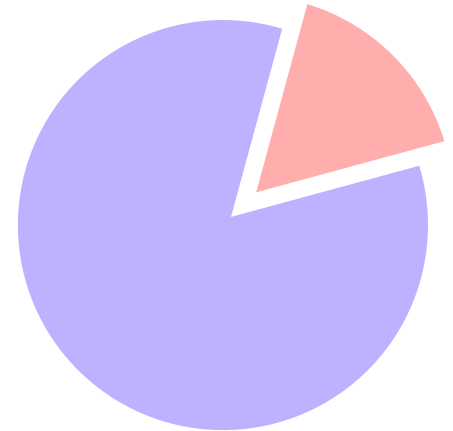


SURVEY RESULTS (1)

DEMOGRAPHICS

QUESTION 1: "ARE YOU A RENTER?"

- Of 280 respondents, 100% reported being a renter
- Due to this, we cannot make conclusions about homeowner sentiment for parking in Riverdale using this data.



QUESTION 2: "WHAT IS YOUR PRIMARY SOURCE OF INCOME?"

- Of 280 respondents, 187 reported their primary income source was employment.
- The remainder of respondents were mainly divided between ODSP/OW and Pension

MISC IMPLICATIONS/COMMENTARY

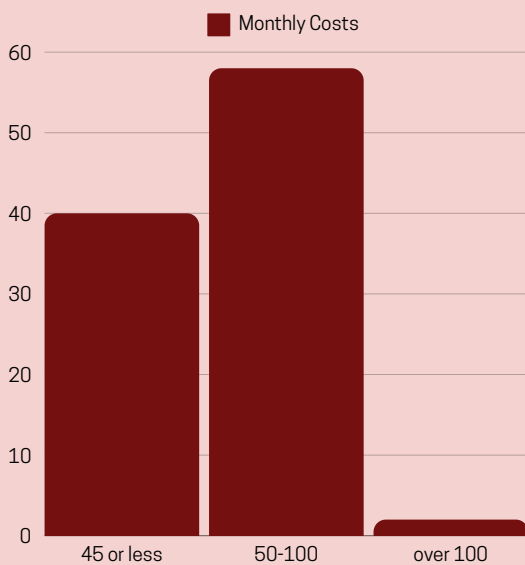
The majority of tenants whose primary income source was either pension or social assistance were longterm tenants who reported paying a low cost or no cost parking fee.



SURVEY RESULTS (2)

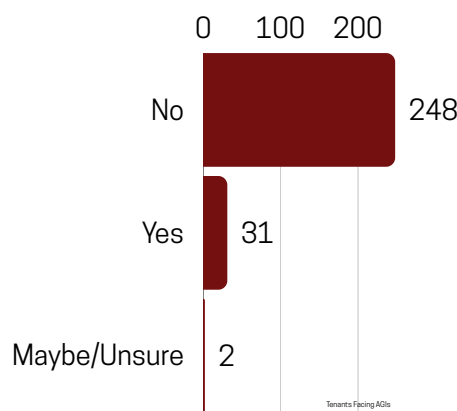
PARKING/LIVING COSTS

QUESTION 3: IF YOU ARE A RENTER, DO YOU PAY FOR PARKING? IF SO, HOW MUCH PER MONTH?



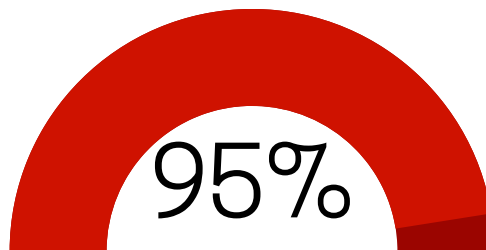
- The average costs incurred by tenants for parking on a monthly basis came in at slightly below \$60
- 40% of respondents reported paying \$45/month or less
- 58% of respondents reported paying \$50-100/month

QUESTION 4: HAVE YOU RECEIVED AN AGI (ABOVE-GUIDELINE RENT INCREASE) IN THE PAST 5 YEARS?



- 88 % of respondents have not been recently charged with an AGI
- the 10% of "No" respondents do all live in the same building

QUESTION 5: TO YOUR KNOWLEDGE, DO ALL TENANTS PAY THE SAME AMOUNT FOR PARKING?



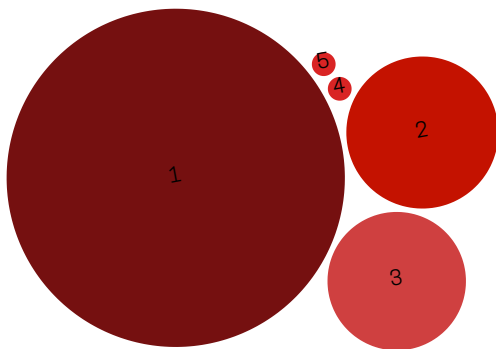
- 95 % of respondents reported that they were aware that tenants are charged different amounts for parking



SURVEY RESULTS (3)

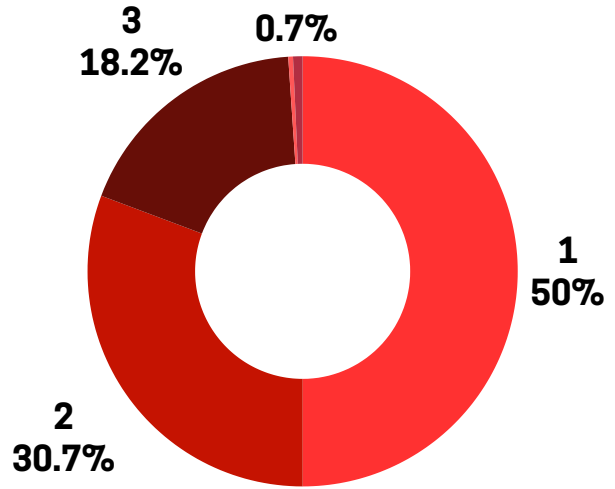
QUESTION 6: ON A SCALE FROM 1-5, RANK YOUR AGREEMENT WITH THE STATEMENT:

“I AM FULLY CONFIDENT THAT THE PARKING FEES I PAY GO TOWARDS THE ROUTINE MAINTENANCE OF THE PARKING FACILITIES IN MY BUILDING.”



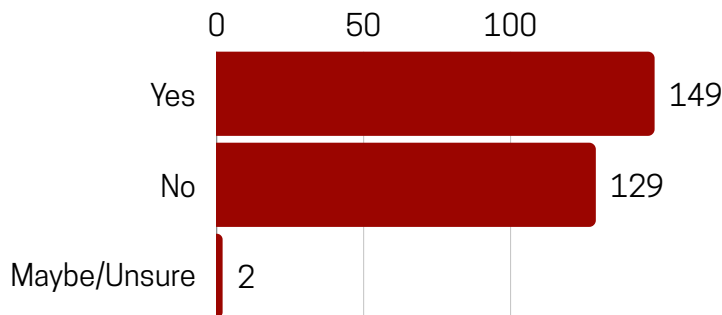
- 72.5 % of respondents scored the reasonableness of parking fees with a 1 - strongly disagree

QUESTION 7: ON A SCALE FROM 1-5, HOW WELL-MAINTAINED DO YOU FEEL YOUR BUILDING'S PARKING FACILITIES ARE?



- 50 % of respondents scored the state of repair of their parking facilities with a 1 - strongly disagree

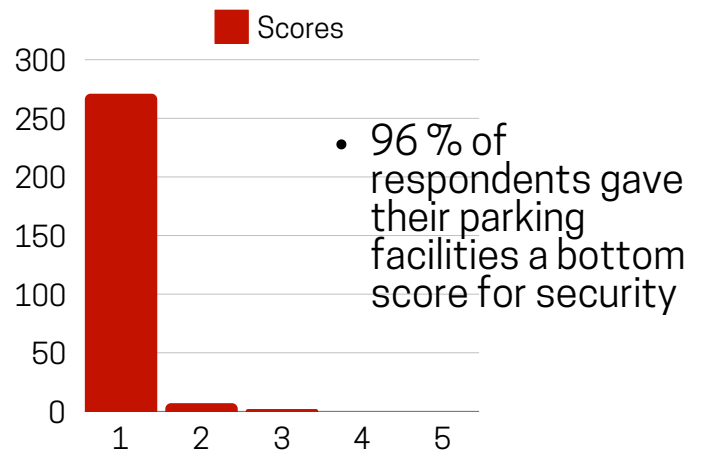
QUESTION 8: HAVE YOU PERSONALLY SEEN YOUR BUILDING'S PARKING FACILITIES UNDERGO MAINTENANCE/REPAIRS WITHIN THE LAST 6 MONTHS?



- 53 % of respondents reported seeing some maintenance in their parking facilities

QUESTION 9: ON A SCALE FROM 1-5, RANK YOUR AGREEMENT WITH THE STATEMENT:

“I FEEL CONFIDENT IN THE SECURITY OF MY BUILDING'S PARKING FACILITIES.”

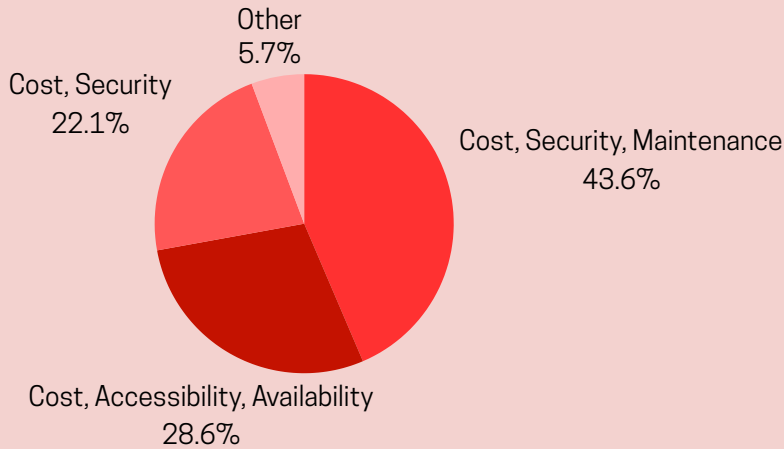


- 96 % of respondents gave their parking facilities a bottom score for security



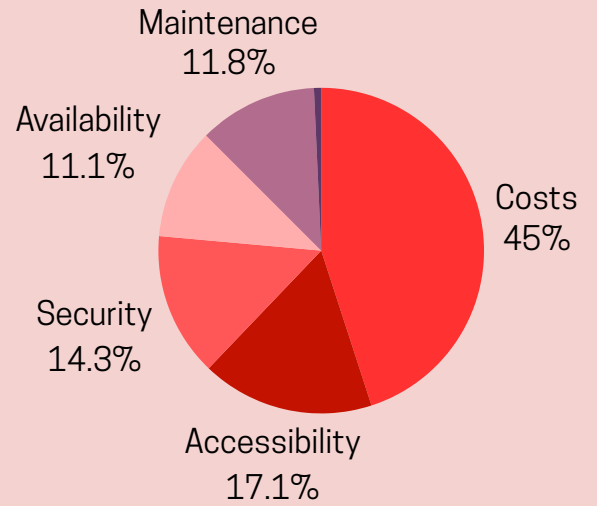
SURVEY RESULTS (4)

QUESTION 10: SELECT ALL THE ISSUES YOU FEEL NEED IMPROVEMENT FOR YOUR BUILDING'S PARKING FACILITIES:



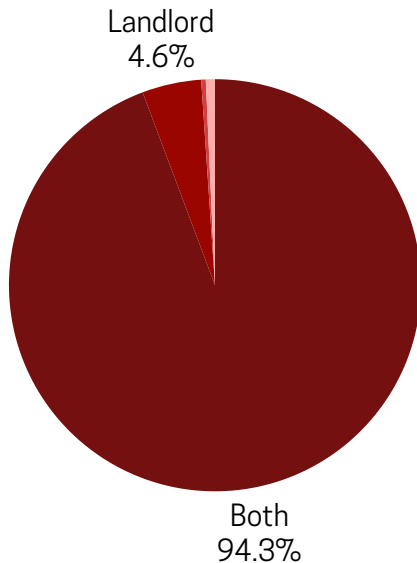
- 43.6% of respondents reported the combination of Costs, Security, and Maintenance as priorities

QUESTION 11: WHICH ISSUE FROM THE PREVIOUS QUESTION MATTERS THE MOST [FOR YOU] TO SEE IMPROVEMENT ON?



- 45 % of respondents reported that addressing cost issues are their main priority

QUESTION 12: WHO DO YOU THINK IS THE MOST RESPONSIBLE FOR MAKING SURE APARTMENTS HAVE ADEQUATE PARKING?



A significant portion of tenants regard parking access in rentals to be a shared responsibility between landlords and lawmakers.



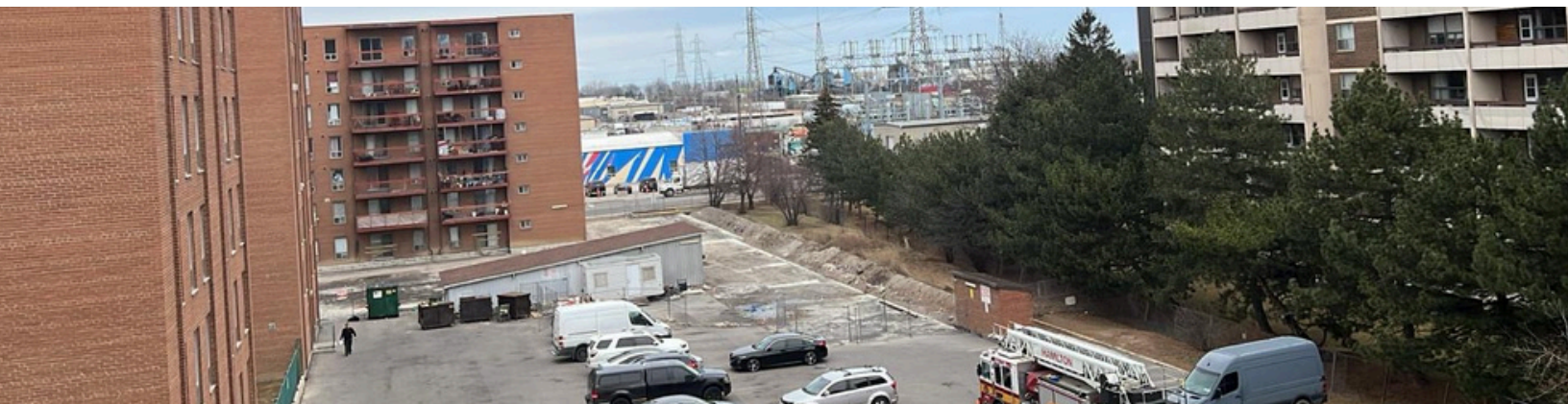
SURVEY RESULTS (4)

QUESTION 13: WHAT STEPS WOULD YOU LIKE TO SEE TAKEN TO IMPROVE YOUR BUILDING'S PARKING FACILITIES?

TOP RESPONSES:

- 1) Reduce/Eliminate parking costs (30% of respondents)**
- 2) Repair parking facilities (16% of respondents)**
- 2) Expand parking access (15% of respondents)**
- 3) Enhance security (13% of respondents)**
- 4) Expand transit (11% of respondents)**

Solution proposals were evenly divided between calling for landlord accountability and seeking new laws or tougher enforcement on existing laws.



SURVEY ANALYSIS



Riverdale Parking Facilities Are NOT Making The Grade:

1. Tenants are being price-gouged ON TOP of their unaffordable rents just to have a supposedly secure place to store their vehicles!
2. Due to the high population density of this neighbourhood, space for overflow parking during parkade construction isn't a viable option.
3. Tenants need options to reduce their dependency on owning a personal vehicle - this could be addressed in a few ways:
 - Major investment in expanding local transit routes, prioritizing a fast-track process for developing the Eastgate transit hub expansion
 - Identify barriers to neighbourhood walkability - encourage mixed-use development over big box store sprawl, create more green space with accessible walking paths, etc
4. Landlords are not holding up their end of the deal when it comes to maintenance and repairs. Useful lifespans of materials such as concrete and rebar are highly predictable and well-known, but maintenance of major structural elements like parking towers seem to be left to crumble until their overdue repairs cause potentially catastrophic safety risks.
5. Lack of adequate parking security and accessibility measures pose major frustrations and barriers to tenants who are paying for a parking spot they can't equitably access. With a large proportion of the high rises in Riverdale West having absentee property management, these issues seem to be of no concern to the landlords who are profiting immensely off their tenants.





ACORN'S DEMANDS/SUGGESTIONS

- Once annual building inspections under the Rental Housing Protection begin, a comprehensive review of a high-rise building's parking structure and maintenance history should be a priority inspection item
- When landlords apply for permits to renovate a parking garage, an element of the permit process should include contingency plans for tenant overflow parking
- We need caps on amenity fees - landlords have been using the lack of regulations on parking charges to price-gouge tenants!
- Visitor parking should be free - homeowners' guests don't have to pay to park in their driveways!
- A densely populated neighborhood like Riverdale West will never have the landmass necessary to meet the parking needs of residents if it stays car dependent. Stoney Creek needs enhanced access to affordable transit, walkable neighborhoods, and cycling infrastructure!

CONCLUSION

Parking lots are joining pools, gyms, saunas, etc on the list of out of reach luxury amenities for low and moderate income tenants. This comes at a time where rent growth is increasing at nearly 4x the rate of wages, meaning more and more tenants are forced to commute in order to make ends meet. Landlords have an obligation to provide amenities at a reasonable cost and in a reasonable state of repair, and are doing neither. ACORN Stoney Creek is organizing to fight back against this slow creep in costs and slipping maintenance standards!

Let the People Park!!

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