



Tenant Protections

COMMUNITY OUTREACH REPORT

cityofboise.org/tenant-protections

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Rents in Boise have increased dramatically in recent years. That, plus low vacancy rates, have resulted in a lack of options - even for tenants who can afford to pay. Community members and groups who work closely with tenants have raised a number of concerns. Issues range from seniors whose rents rise while their incomes stay fixed, to tenants whose affordable homes are being replaced by new units they can't afford, to residents who meet the required qualifications to rent, but are turned away because part of their income comes from sources like child support or public assistance.

To address concerns and help support residents, the Mayor and Boise City Council explored a package of potential tenant protections during an April 2023 work session. Before moving forward with the package, a city team made up of the Mayor's Office and the Office of Community Engagement went into the community to hear from residents who were directly impacted.

Outreach included:

- Four in-person community meetings in areas of our city that have the highest population of people who rent their homes, including Ann Morrison Park, Library! at Hillcrest, City Hall Plaza, and Esther Simplot Park
- One hybrid internal focus group with City of Boise employees who volunteered to share their input on the tenant protections package
- A webpage that mirrored the in-person experience, featuring a comment form for people to provide feedback digitally
- Meetings with stakeholder groups and partners, including housing advocates, including Jesse Tree, Idaho Legal Aid, Idaho Apartment Association, Boise Regional Realtors, among others

COMMUNITY OUTREACH OVERVIEW

Each meeting had a short presentation, boards showcasing the proposed tenant protections, and a discussion about what we got right, what we need to consider, and what we may be missing. Feedback cards were available for people who didn't feel comfortable sharing in a group setting. A webpage also included information on the package and a form asking residents the same questions posed at the in-person meetings.

While attendance at the in-person sessions were low (**32 people**) we did receive input from **107 residents through our webform.**

Date + Time	Location	Number of Participants
June 20 at 5:30 p.m.	Ann Morrison Park	0
June 22 at 11 a.m.	Internal Focus Group	18
June 27 at 6 p.m.	Library! at Hillcrest	5
July 6 at 5 p.m.	City Hall Plaza	7
July 11 at 6 p.m.	Esther Simplot Park	2

THEMES

IN-PERSON OUTREACH

Everyone at the in-person events was supportive of the tenant protections package. Some people were surprised that some of the protections, specifically the prohibiting retaliatory conduct and notice of landlord and tenant rights, weren't already required. This led to conversations about where these protections would be required – within city limits, county, or statewide.

Recurring questions:

- What can the city do to limit landlords/property managers from raising rents?
- When would these protections be put into place?
- How long would landlords/property managers have to begin adhering to the protections before we took enforcement action?
- What would enforcement look like?
- How will the city provide education to renters and prospective renters, and landlords, if these protections move forward?
 - Specific concerns about connecting with hard-to-reach populations, including aging adults, people who prefer a language other than English, and those living with disabilities?
- How will the city ensure landlords/property managers are not finding other loopholes to discriminate against renters, especially those who use a Section 8 voucher?

Recommendations on protections the city should consider, in addition to the proposed package, included:

- If landlords/property managers plan to demolish or significantly renovate a property, they should not be allowed to rent units at least 6-months before.
- Require a point-of-contact and a “respond within” limit in the Notice of Landlord and Tenants Rights protection.
- Add, “cannot discriminate against those who call for emergency services,” in the Prohibiting of Retaliatory Conduct protection.
- Require language accessibility for all documents and protections.

ONLINE OUTREACH

We received over 100 responses to the online survey, 60% of which were from Boise renters. Of these renters, 70% said that the proposed protections address issues facing renters, although most renters also stated that they felt that more could be done. The remaining 30% expressed they felt the proposed protections do not address issues facing renters because they do not go far enough.

About half of the renters used the open comment section to voice a desire for a cap or limitation on rent increases. Many respondents who were not renters said they felt that the proposed protections would address issues facing renters.

Common messages from renters included:

- Support for proposed tenant protections package
- Stories of stress and fear that result from a lack of stability and access
- Concerns that proposals don’t go far enough, and won’t impact affordability
- Questions about protections that already exist
- Requests to address additional issues, including housing quality

Common messages from landlords:

- Concern that protections will create unnecessary burden
- Concern that tenants who are not paying rent or are violating their lease will be protected from eviction
- Concern that landlords who don’t wish to comply may leave the market
- Belief that these measures are unnecessary

NEXT STEPS

City staff presented community and stakeholder feedback to Mayor and Boise City Council on July 18, 2023.

Per Boise City Council’s direction, staff will make requested adjustments and a public hearing will be scheduled to create additional opportunity for community feedback. If the Council, after that hearing, passes any of the ordinances, City of Boise staff will develop a community engagement plan that will include targeted outreach to impacted groups. A start date of January 1, 2024, is recommended to provide time for outreach and education efforts before the ordinance goes into effect.

ADDENDUM

BOISE NEIGHBORHOODS WITH HIGHEST PERCENTAGE OF RENTERS

Neighborhood Association	% of Renter Occupied Homes	Planning Area	Neighborhood Park	Neighborhood Library
West Downtown	74%	Downtown Boise	Ann Morrison Park	Main Library!
Downtown	71%	Downtown Boise	Ann Morrison Park	Main Library!
Lusk	69%	Downtown Boise	Ann Morrison Park	Main Library!
Liberty Park	76%	Central Bench	Liberty Park	Library! at Hillcrest
Morris Hill	59%	Central Bench	Morris Hill Park	Library! at Hillcrest
Central Bench	52%	Central Bench	Cassia Park	Library! at Hillcrest
West End	63%	North/East Ends	Esther Simplot Park	Library! at Collister
Veteran's Park	46%	North/East Ends	Esther Simplot Park	Library! at Collister
North End	44%	North/East Ends	Camel's Back Park	Main Library!