



Councillor Josh Matlow

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City Hall, 100 Queen Street West
Committee Room 1
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May 6, 2018

Re: EX 34.2- Toronto Seniors Strategy Version 2.0

Dear Mayor Tory and Executive Committee Members,

I am writing to request that you adopt the recommendations in the Toronto Seniors Strategy (TSS) – Version 2.0 to support our ageing population. This next phase of the Strategy is a result of a broad community effort led by City Staff, the TSS Accountability Table, and my office.

The ageing demographic is an incredible triumph in terms of life expectancy. At the turn of the 20th century, life expectancy in Canada was 51. The average lifespan in our country is now 81, and continues to rise. All Torontonians will benefit from the energy and experience more seniors will bring to our communities. But we first need to move forward with measures to ensure that the needs of our ageing population are met.

Unfortunately, the City's delivery of housing and services for seniors is inadequate to meet the needs of Toronto today. With the number of seniors now surpassing the number of children younger than 15 for the first time in Toronto's history, and demographic trends projected to continue in this direction, the problem will only get worse if action is not taken now.

Version 2.0 is the result of an extensive and inclusive engagement process across every one of Toronto's wards that reached 3,000 seniors and caregivers. We also learned about the needs and concerns of Toronto seniors and caregivers in the form of a survey that had 7,000 responses, and was translated into the ten languages spoken most often by seniors in Toronto.

As co-chair of the Accountability Table, the members and I have spent the last 15 months creating Version 2.0 with constituents. The Table is comprised of over 75 members from all sectors related to ageing and seniors' issues in Toronto, including seniors, caregivers, community agencies serving seniors, advocacy, equity and diversity organizations, academic and research partners, community funders, local businesses, school boards, hospitals, long-term care homes, and the Toronto Central Local Health Integration Network. At the municipal level, the 15 City Divisions and 5 City Agencies most involved in the provision of services for seniors participated in the engagement process. The Strategy was also developed in collaboration with provincial and federal partners.

Version 2.0 builds on the success of Version 1.0, making 28 new recommendations, including the establishment of a Seniors Housing and Services Division at the City to provide a one-stop shop for councillors' offices and residents to seek information and guidance on all matters related to seniors. In addition, the Tenants First strategy will help us achieve the City's goal of providing seniors housing and services in a more comprehensive and holistic way, closer to where they live.

As Toronto's Seniors Advocate, I encourage the chair and members of the Executive Committee to support the recommendations in TSS 2.0 and Tenants First.

Sincerely,

Josh Matlow
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