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TO: Chair & Members, Community Development and Recreation Committee

FROM: Councillor Josh Matlow

RE: A Strategic Plan for Toronto's Seniors

Globally, seniors are the fastest growing population. It has been projected that by 2050, there will be more older people than children for the first time in the world's history. Toronto is anticipating a 38% increase in seniors by 2031.

The City's Ombudsman's report, "A Duty to Care" identified 38,000 Torontonians currently living with dementia and this number is projected to grow to 42,000 by 2015. We know the acuity needs of our seniors are growing and service providers, families and government need to work together to find appropriate solutions for their well-being.

This backdrop for Toronto should be a catalyst for action. That action for change is grounded within the World Health Organization's Age-Friendly Cities initiative. The WHO initiative identifies eight critical features for cities to consider as they affect its senior citizens: outdoor space and buildings, transportation, housing, social participation, respect and social inclusion, civic participation and employment, education, communication and information, community and health services.

Many of the City's services touch upon these critical areas, as do the services provided by other orders of government, broader institutions and the community-based sector. There is a collective responsibility for us to meet the needs of our residents and nowhere is that more evident than with our seniors.

It is time to revisit who our seniors are, what their changing needs are and what government, along with its partner sectors impacted by seniors issues, need to do to

ensure our residents are given the best advantage to succeed in their older years.

It is important that Toronto prepares for an impending demographic shift. We need to ensure that Toronto is a safe, navigable, affordable, accessible and enjoyable city for its older residents.

Recommendations:

1. That Council request that the City Manager report back on recommended actions to be taken in the development of a comprehensive Strategic Plan for Seniors, for consideration at the May 27, 2011 Community Development and Recreation Committee.
2. That this strategic plan be created in consultation with other levels of government, school boards, relevant community organizations and individuals, businesses and academia to ensure that it is truly comprehensive, adequately funded, financially feasible and able to be implemented.

Sincerely,

Josh Matlow
Toronto City Councillor
Ward 22 – St. Paul's