

City Council

Notice of Motion

MM13.13	ACTION			Ward: All
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Crisis Looms as Aging Booms: Creating a Path Forward to Age in Place - by Councillor Josh Matlow, seconded by Councillor Vincent Crisanti

** Notice of this Motion has been given.*

** This Motion is subject to referral to the Economic and Community Development Committee. A two-thirds vote is required to waive referral.*

Recommendations

Councillor Josh Matlow, seconded by Councillor Vincent Crisanti, recommends that:

1. City Council request the Government of Canada to develop a national strategy to better support the Naturally Occurring Retirement Communities model and Naturally Occurring Retirement Community programming across the country to enable aging in place.
2. City Council request the Province of Ontario and the Government of Canada to establish long-term sustainable funding streams to support capital infrastructure and programming costs associated with Naturally Occurring Retirement Communities.
3. City Council request the Province of Ontario to explore opportunities to streamline home care services in Naturally Occurring Retirement Communities in order to simplify seniors access to services and refine the current fragmented system.
4. City Council request the City Manager to work with the General Manager, Seniors Services and Long-Term Care, the Medical Officer of Health, Toronto Public Health, the General Manager, Transportation Services, the General Manager, Economic, Development and Culture, the General Manager, Parks, Forestry and Recreation and the Chief Planner and Executive Director, City Planning and report to Economic and Community Development Committee before the end of the fourth quarter of 2024 with a Naturally Occurring Retirement Community Strategy that includes, but is not limited to, the following:
 - a. explore working with University Health Network's Naturally Occurring Retirement Community Innovation Centre on building greater system capacity for innovation, research and knowledge of Naturally Occurring Retirement Communities;
 - b. explore replicating the COVID-19 mobile vaccination program that was informed by Naturally Occurring Retirement Community data and criteria for other public health initiatives that provide routine vaccinations in order to improve accessibility, build community, and efficiently reach large numbers of seniors;
 - c. explore establishing road design guidelines that support the mobility and safety of older adults;

d. explore widening efforts to implement more benches along main streets, parks and green spaces, prioritizing areas with a high concentration of seniors and surrounding Naturally Occurring Retirement Communities;

e. explore expanding Residential Apartment Commercial Zoning across the City, with a priority on Naturally Occurring Retirement Communities, for small-scale non-residential uses like retail and community facilities in buildings to offer programming that helps older adults age in place;

f. through the development application review process, explore incorporating the impact mall closures and plaza demolitions have on the emotional and social well-being of older adults and marginalized communities, and work with applicants to develop alternatives; and

g. explore the feasibility of designating certain new affordable housing developments to include a minimum percentage of units designated to older adults, which may reduce Toronto Seniors Housing Corporation wait-lists and potentially decrease unnecessary institutionalization.

5. City Council direct the General Manager, Seniors Services and Long-Term Care to explore incorporating the above aging-in place recommendations into the Toronto Seniors Strategy 3.0.

Summary

Institutionalizing seniors takes older adults away from their existing support networks and is a costly way of providing housing. Supporting our seniors to age in place as an alternative will require innovative housing models, infrastructure, and coordinated services to ensure their independence, safety, health and social well-being are being supported. A Naturally Occurring Retirement Community is typically a multi-unit residential building that over time may naturally come to house a high density of older adults. In 2021, approximately 489 residential buildings were characterized as Naturally Occurring Retirement Communities in Toronto, housing 70,013 adults aged 65 years and older, and 30,346 adults aged 80 years and older.

Naturally Occurring Retirement Communities are paths for older adults to age in place, while providing opportunities to realign the delivery of existing health and social services in a more efficient and innovative way. In addition, Naturally Occurring Retirement Communities programs strengthen and sustain healthy communities of older adults by addressing important determinants of healthy aging such as isolation, nutrition, physical fitness, and sense of purpose.

It is crucial that the City develop a comprehensive strategy to support aging in place now. In 2016, Toronto crossed a demographic turning point with more people living in our city over the age of 65 than under 15. Subsequently, the percentage of our population over 65 has only increased—from 15.6 percent in 2016, to 17.1 percent in 2021, to an estimated 21.2 percent in 2041. This will place Toronto in the same category as “super aged” societies like Japan, where one in five people is a senior citizen. With seniors being the fastest growing age group nationwide, all levels of government need to create new paths to allow for more older adults to age in place.

We owe it to our seniors to take the necessary steps to better support seniors to age in place through a coordinated Naturally Occurring Retirement Community Strategy.

Background Information (City Council)

Member Motion MM13.13

