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Economic & Community Development Committee
10th floor, West Tower, City Hall
100 Queen Street West
Toronto, ON M5H 2N2

November 22nd, 2024

Re: EC17.6 - An Approach to Support Naturally Occurring Retirement Communities (NORCs) in Toronto

Dear Chair & Committee Members,

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 that their independence, safety, health and social well-being is being supported. A Naturally Occurring Retirement Community (NORC) is typically a multi-unit residential building that over time may come to house a high density of older adults. In 2021, approximately 489 residential buildings were characterized as NORCs in Toronto, housing 70,013 adults aged 65 years and older, and 30,346 adults aged 80 years and older.

NORCs 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, NORC programs strengthen and sustain healthy communities of older adults by addressing important determinants of healthy aging including 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 threshold with more people living in our city over the age of 65 than under 15. Since then, 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 are senior citizens. 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.

While I am pleased to see that staff have begun this work, the recommendations in MM13.13 were not fulfilled. This is why I am requesting Committee to refer the item back to the General Manager, Seniors Services and Long Term Care to report to the April 8th 2025 meeting of Economic and Community Development Committee to ensure that a comprehensive strategy is developed.

We owe it to our seniors to take the necessary steps to better support them to age in place through a coordinated NORC Strategy.

Recommendations:

1. Committee refers the item to the General Manager, Seniors Services and Long Term Care to report to the April 8th 2025 meeting of Economic and Community Development Committee on the recommendations in MM13.13

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'J. Matlow', with a large, sweeping horizontal stroke underneath.

Councillor Josh Matlow
City Councillor
Toronto – St. Paul's
www.joshmatlow.ca