

NORC Innovation Centre Policy Recommendations for 2026 City of Toronto Mayoral Candidates

The [NORC Innovation Centre](#) at University Health Network is a dynamic hub for learning and innovation dedicated to naturally occurring retirement communities (NORCs). By harnessing the unique density of NORCs, the NIC fosters thriving aging in place communities that are inclusive, accessible, and designed to address health and social care gaps in innovative and impactful ways.

Toronto's population is aging quickly, with residents aged 65 and older projected to make up 20% of the city's population by 2041. Accompanying this growing demographic is a growing desire among older adults to age in the homes and communities of their choosing.

Approximately 20% of Toronto's community-dwelling older adults live in NORCs – apartments, condos and co-op buildings that were not intentionally designed for older adults but have, over time, come to house a significant number of them. Our [recent data](#) shows that there are 531 NORCs in Toronto, housing 84,135 older adults.

For cities, NORCs present a unique opportunity. When a large number of older adults live at the same address, services can be delivered more efficiently, effectively, and directly to residents. This means that the city's elderly population can remain living independently for longer, as opposed to having to move to long-term care or retirement homes. Evidence shows that such strategies can have positive impacts on older adults' health, while also taking pressure off downstream public services, which can be costly to municipal and provincial governments.

With the upcoming municipal election, there is an opportunity to demonstrate leadership on seniors' issues and strengthen Toronto's position as an age-friendly city. We encourage you to consider the following practical ideas in support of that vision:

- Prioritize the release of the third seniors strategy to advance aging in place and support for programming in NORCs and beyond
- Make getting around the City safer for seniors by reducing vehicular speed, ensuring pedestrian crossing signals are sufficiently timed, and prioritizing snow clearance around NORCs

- Make neighbourhoods more walkable for seniors by installing more benches in public spaces and increasing green spaces near NORCs
- Improve transit accessibility by adding additional bus stops and community buses in areas with a high concentration of older adults
- Offer public health services, such as flu shots, exercise, onsite in NORC buildings to improve uptake and accessibility
- Offer training and small-sized grants to older adults leading aging-in-place programming in their NORC buildings to bring wellness activities directly to their buildings

These are just a few of the ways you can help make Toronto a world-leading city for older adults while supporting residents to remain healthy, independent and connected to their communities. If you wish to learn more about these and other ideas, we'd be pleased to set up a meeting.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Melissa Chang', with a stylized, flowing script.

Melissa Chang
Director, Operations and Sustainability
NORC Innovation Centre

