

## **Benefits of Membership in the Association of Francophone Municipalities of Ontario (AFMO)**

<b>Date:</b>	February 9, 2009
<b>To:</b>	Executive Committee
<b>From:</b>	City Manager
<b>Wards:</b>	all
<b>Reference Number:</b>	

### **SUMMARY**

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This report summarises the mandate of L'Association française des municipalités de l'Ontario/the Association of Francophone Municipalities of Ontario (AFMO) and identifies the benefits of the City of Toronto's membership in the organization.

#### **Financial Impact**

This report has no financial impact.

#### **Equity Statement**

AFMO's mandate aligns with City Council policies regarding service provision to diverse communities in general and Francophones in particular.

### **DECISION HISTORY**

City Council on September 24 and 25 adopted EX23.6, which recommended continuation of the City of Toronto's formal membership in AFMO (<http://www.toronto.ca/legdocs/mmis/2008/ex/bgrd/backgroundfile-14999.pdf>). Council requested the City Manager to report to Council through the Executive Committee on the activities of AFMO and how the City's membership benefits the City.

### **COMMENTS**

AFMO was created in 1989 to promote the management and delivery of services at the municipal level in both English and French. The association is committed to working with both the federal and provincial governments in the development of a range of linguistic and support tools to assist elected councils and managers to deliver programs

and services in both official languages. AFMO is an autonomous association with an explicit mandate and is not part of the Association of Municipalities of Ontario (AMO).

AFMO currently has a membership of thirty-nine municipalities, representing more than ninety percent of the Francophone residents of Ontario. There are also more than 30 associate members, including provincial organizations and institutions that have partnerships with the municipal sector in Ontario.

AFMO is the only provincial municipal association created to address linguistic duality at the municipal level pursuant to the *Official Languages Act* of Canada and the *French Language Services Act* of Ontario. The *French Language Services Act* defines 23 regions of the Province of Ontario affected by the provisions of the language legislation. The City of Toronto is a designated region under the Act. The *French Language Services Act* guarantees each individual the right to receive provincial government services in the designated regions of the province, including the City of Toronto. Under section 14(1) of the Act, the council of a municipality that is in a designated area “may pass a by-law providing that the administration of the municipality shall be conducted in both English and French and that all or specified municipal services to the public shall be made available in both languages.” City Council has not passed such a by-law, but has been proactive pursuant to the intent of the Act.

Following amalgamation, Council re-constituted the City of Toronto French Committee in March 1999 (Corporate Services Committee Report 2(2)) to:

- “promote the development and identity of Toronto’s Francophone community;
- promote Francophone interest at Municipal Council;
- encourage Francophone participation of different municipal committees;
- work to increase the number and quality of French Language services offered by the City;
- facilitate the links between City Council, the Community Councils and Francophone taxpayers; and
- be fully integrated into the consultative and decision-making structure of the City.”

Council’s Policy on Multilingual Services (Administration Committee Report 2(4) adopted by Council February 13-15, 2002) includes explicit provisions for French language service delivery. Whenever materials are translated into languages other than English, they are also translated into French.

AFMO has access to provincial and federal funding to assist municipalities with the translation of By-laws. AFMO also posts model translated By-laws on its website as a reference and resource for its members. By-laws can be translated by AFMO upon request and no limit has been placed on the number of by-laws submitted for translation. However there is a limited number of translators available through the AFMO and on an annual basis, Toronto City Council approves over 1,000 by-laws, many of which are transaction based. Therefore, staff have identified a priority list of 14 By-laws for translation by AFMO. These priorities are based on requests for information received by Access Toronto.

AFMO has provided the City with an additional forum to network on issues of shared municipal interest. For example, in December 2007, AFMO adopted resolutions in support of a National Transit Strategy and municipal access to a share of revenues that grow with economic growth, such as the equivalent of one cent of the GST.

AFMO's mandate of strengthening the provision of municipal government services in both French and English is congruent with the City of Toronto's efforts to respond effectively to the ethno-racial, cultural and linguistic diversity of the City's inhabitants. Toronto's participation in AFMO provides a forum within which the City can learn from the experiences of Ontario municipal governments that provide services to Francophone communities. It also enables Toronto to share its considerable experience in responding to diversity.

## **CONTACT**

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## **SIGNATURE**

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