



## STAFF REPORT ACTION REQUIRED

### Translation services for Members of Council

<b>Date:</b>	November 13, 2015
<b>To:</b>	Executive Committee
<b>From:</b>	Ulli S. Watkiss, City Clerk
<b>Wards:</b>	All Wards
<b>Reference Number:</b>	

### SUMMARY

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This report is in response to MM7.10 "Translation Services for Councillors", adopted by City Council at its meeting in June 2015, which requested the City Clerk to consult with Members on the best way to deliver translation services to Councillors and report back to Council with recommendations before the end of 2015.

In accordance with Council direction, the City Clerk met with interested Councillors over the summer and fall 2015. Councillors addressed the following concerns– a lack of awareness of the funding and the resources that are currently available to support Members of Council, the lack of detailed translated materials on City programs and services, and the need for City Council to review and approve an updated City of Toronto multilingual policy.

### RECOMMENDATIONS

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The City Clerk recommends that:

1. City Council request the City Manager to report back on an updated City of Toronto multilingual policy, including options on how translated materials on City programs and services can be made readily available to Toronto's diverse communities.

## **Financial Impact**

Funding for accessibility services for Councillors, including translation and interpretation services, are provided for in the City Council annual operating budget in the amount of \$44,000.

Adoption of this report will not have any financial impact. The future report by the City Manager may have financial impacts, which would be detailed at that time.

The Deputy City Manager and Chief Financial Officer has reviewed this report and concurs with the financial impact statement.

## **DECISION HISTORY**

At its meeting on June 10, 11 and 12, 2015, City Council adopted MM7.10, "Translation Services for Councillors" and directed the City Clerk to consult with interested Members of Council on the best way to deliver translation services to Councillors and to report back to Council with recommendations before the end of 2015.

<http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2015.MM7.10>

At its meeting on January 29 and 30, 2014, City Council approved EX37.1 "2014 Capital and Operating Budgets" and approved a funding of \$1,000 for each Councillor Office, from the Council General Expense Budget, to assist Councillors in meeting AODA requirements.

<http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2014.EX37.1>

At its meeting on March 10 and 11, 2015, City Council approved EX3.4 "2015 Capital and Operating Budgets" and approved the pooling of the AODA support funding for Councillors into a pooled fund of \$44,000, with allocation on a first-come first-served basis.

<http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2015.EX3.4>

At its meeting on February 13, 14 and 15, 2002, City Council adopted Report No. 4 of the Administration Committee, titled "City of Toronto Multilingual Services Policy".

<http://www.toronto.ca/legdocs/2002/agendas/council/cc020213/adm2rpt/cl004.pdf>

Between 2003 and 2006, annual reports were submitted to City Council on the implementation of the Multilingual Services Policy.

<http://www.toronto.ca/legdocs/2003/agendas/committees/adm/adm030603/it020.pdf>

<http://www.toronto.ca/legdocs/2005/agendas/committees/adm/adm050106/it007.pdf>

<http://www.toronto.ca/legdocs/2006/agendas/committees/adm/adm060502/it014.pdf>

## **COMMENTS**

The City Clerk met with interested Councillors during the summer and fall of 2015 to gather their feedback and requirements regarding translation services for Councillors.

Feedback from Councillors identified four main themes:

- Lack of information about resources that are available to Councillors to provide translation, interpretation, ASL and closed captioning services;
- Lack of multilingual materials provided by divisions about basic City services for constituents and interpretation services in meetings and programs, requiring Councillors to prepare this information themselves;
- Lack of sufficient funding from the Council General Expense Budget for accessibility services, causing Councillors to resort to other means to try to provide these services themselves;
- Need for Council to review the City's multilingual policy (which was approved by City Council in 2002 and last updated in 2006), to ensure that the City's translation and interpretation practices properly reflect the City's motto of "Diversity Our Strength".

### **Lack of information about resources that are available to Councillors**

Based on preliminary feedback, the City Clerk's Office developed and distributed a Guide to Translation, Interpretation and Accessibility Services for Members of Council in July 2015 (updated in October). The Guide provided information on corporate vendors for translation and interpretation services, as well as vendors who can provide American Sign Language and Closed Captioning Services. As well, the Resources to Councillor intranet page has been updated with the Guide information.

The City Clerk will continue to monitor and gather information about service providers and services that are available, and will continue to provide updated information to Councillors as required.

### **Lack of multilingual materials provided by divisions about basic City services**

Many Councillors expressed frustration that information about basic City services are often not available in languages that meet the needs of the people who live in their wards. As a result, they have to arrange to have basic information provided by the City translated by either community members or their own staff, so that the information is available and accessible to their residents.

The availability of multilingual materials from City programs varies significantly. Some programs, such as Public Health, have a wide variety of information in different languages. Other programs adopt a multilingual blurb approach, providing only very simple information about what the brochure is about, with the ability to call a central phone number for further information.

How divisions and programs should provide their information to City residents in different languages is closely linked to the implementation of the City's multilingual policy.

**Lack of sufficient funding from the Council General Expense Budget for accessibility services**

The City Council annual operating budget includes funding in the amount of \$44,000, to be shared amongst Councillors for accessibility services. Allocation of this pooled fund is on a first-come first-served basis.

Councillors are aware that interpretation and translation are not inexpensive, therefore they are hesitant to use the small amount of pooled funding.

Councillors' feedback was that the amount of \$44,000 is insufficient to meet the multilingual requirements in their wards. Many of them use various and different strategies to meet their constituents' needs, such as hiring staff with multilingual skills or using community members and community groups to provide translation or interpretation services.

The City Clerk's Office will closely monitor this budget, and will highlight any need to change the budget in future years' operating budget deliberations.

**Need for Council to review the City's multilingual policy**

The City of Toronto's Multilingual Services Policy was last updated by City Council in 2006. The City Clerk's Office consulted with the City Manager's Office, including its Corporate and Strategic Policy, Strategic Communications and Equity, Diversity and Human Rights Divisions on the opportunity to review and update the City's multilingual policy.

Staff all agree that given the existing policy is more than 13 years' old, it is opportune to review and update the policy.

The City Clerk therefore recommends that Council request the City Manager's Office to review and update the policy for Council's consideration.

**CONTACT**

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**SIGNATURE**

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City Clerk