

## City of Toronto Multilingual Information Provisions Policy

**Date:** April 27, 2017  
**To:** Executive Committee  
**From:** City Manager  
**Wards:** All

### SUMMARY

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In 2015, City Council requested the City Manager to report back on an updated *City of Toronto Multilingual Policy*. This report recommends an updated multilingual policy – *The City of Toronto Multilingual Information Provisions Policy*.

Respecting the linguistic diversity of Toronto's residents, the updated Policy helps to ensure that the City's information reaches residents, keeps them informed and engaged, and that City resources for translation and interpretation are used effectively. *The City of Toronto Multilingual Information Provisions Policy* establishes principles and criteria for translation and interpretation of information about City of Toronto's services, programs and engagement activities.

### RECOMMENDATIONS

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The City Manager recommends that:

1. City Council adopt the *Multilingual Information Provisions Policy*, attached as Attachment 1 to this report.
2. Subject to the adoption of Recommendation 1, City Council rescind the *Multilingual Services Policy*, effective August 2, 2017, when the *Multilingual Information Provisions Policy* comes into force.
3. City Council direct the Director of 311 to report back to City Council in 2018, on a potential outreach strategy, including the resources required, and associated costs and benefits, to inform and educate the public about interpretation services offered through 311.

4. City Council request the City Manager, in consultation with City Divisions, to develop the necessary procedures to operationalize the Policy and adjust related City policies, practices and guidelines for consistency.

### **Implementation Points**

The *Multilingual Information Provisions Policy* will come into force on August 2, 2017 in order to provide sufficient time for implementation. Communications materials will be developed including web information to ensure City staff are aware of the Policy requirements. Internal procedures will also be implemented to streamline the administration of the Policy and support divisions.

Once implementation is complete, Strategic Communications Division will take stewardship of the Policy, including handling of complaints regarding non-compliance and initiating a review of the Policy after every Canadian census should significant demographic shifts occur.

The City Manager's Office will also share the approved Policy with City Agencies and Corporations for their consideration.

### **FINANCIAL IMPACT**

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The financial implications of translation and interpretation costs will be borne in the Operating Budgets of City divisions where the principles and criteria for translation and interpretation of information about the City of Toronto's services, programs and engagement activities are applied.

The Deputy City Manager & Chief Financial Officer has reviewed this report and agrees with the financial impact information.

### **DECISION HISTORY**

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On December 9, 2015, City Council adopted EX10.4, "Translation Services for Members of Council" and requested 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. <http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2015.EX10.4>

On December 2, 2009, City Council adopted as amended, EX37.1, "By-law No. 1176-2009 – To authorize the use of languages other than English in notices, forms (other than prescribed forms) and other information for regular municipal election and by-elections in the City of Toronto". <http://www.toronto.ca/legdocs/bylaws/2009/law1176.pdf>

At its meeting on September 25, 26, 27, and 28, 2006, City Council adopted Consolidated Clause 3 in Administration Committee Report 6 regarding "Contracts for City Advertising in Media Venues and Daily Ethnic and Community Newspapers".  
<http://www.toronto.ca/legdocs/2006/agendas/council/cc060925/adm6rpt/cl003.pdf>

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>

At its meeting on July 24, 25 and 26, 2001, City Council adopted Report No. 11 of the Administration Committee, titled, "City of Toronto Advertising Policy".  
<http://www.toronto.ca/legdocs/2001/agendas/council/cc010724/adm11rpt/cl008.pdf>

## **ISSUE BACKGROUND**

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### **Language Profiles in Toronto**

The City of Toronto is one of the most multicultural and linguistically diverse cities in the world. Over half (51%) of those living in Toronto in 2011 were born outside of Canada and, there are more than 180 languages and dialects spoken here. The City's motto, "Diversity Our Strength" reflects the values and traditions of Toronto as a diverse and welcoming city.

Based on the most recent Statistics Canada Census data available, as of 2011, 28% of people in Toronto regularly spoke a language other than English or French at home, compared to 19% in the rest of the Greater Toronto Area and Hamilton. In addition, 7% of Toronto residents reported speaking multiple languages at home, while 5% had no knowledge of either official language of Canada.

Statistics Canada is expected to release updated information on languages based on the 2016 Census in Fall 2017. The updated Policy will allow for the latest census data available to inform translation and interpretation needs.

### **Current City of Toronto Multilingual Provisions**

#### *Municipal Elections Information By-laws*

In 2009, City Council adopted, By-law No. 1176-2009 - To authorize the use of languages other than English in notices, forms (other than prescribed forms) and other information for regular municipal election and by-elections in the City of Toronto. The By-law allows municipal elections information to be made available in any language, where at least 2% of a ward's population speaks that language at home according to the most recent available Statistics Canada Census data.

The Toronto Municipal Code, Chapter 190, Polling and Notification, provides authorization for a Ward Councillor to submit a written request to a City division conducting a poll in a ward, that the poll be conducted in up to two languages spoken by at least 3% of the ward's population according to the most recent available Statistics Canada Census data.

### *Multilingual Services Policy*

In 2002, City Council adopted the City's *Multilingual Services Policy* to formalize practices and provide guidelines for translating and interpreting information into languages other than English in order to improve access to City services and programs by diverse communities. The Policy outlines a range of factors that City Divisions should evaluate when considering translation and interpretation of information, including demographic needs, community and neighbourhood needs. The Policy does not apply to translation and interpretation of information required by municipal by-laws, provincial legislation or service contract requirements, and also does not apply to services provided by City Councillors or the Accountability Officers.

### *311 Service*

The City of Toronto's 311 service provides simple and easy access for residents, visitors and businesses to obtain information about City's services or programs in multiple languages 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Live interpretation over the phone is provided in 180 languages on request by the caller and 311's website can be accessed in 51 languages using auto-translation.

### *Resources for Councillors*

The *Guide to Translation, Interpretation and Accessibility Services for Members of Council and Staff* provides Members of Council and their staff with a quick reference document on how to access translation and interpretation services and supports available through the City.

### *Advertising*

All advertising by the City of Toronto must follow the City's *Advertising Policy*. While City Council also approved a directive in 2006 for City advertising in ethnic newspapers, this directive no longer applies. The proposed *Multilingual Information Provisions Policy* establishes provisions for providing City information in languages other than English. The City's *Advertising Policy* will continue to apply to advertising materials in conjunction with the proposed *Multilingual Information Provisions Policy*.

## **Provincial and Federal Multilingual Requirements**

Under the *French Language Services Act*, the Province of Ontario has deemed Toronto to be a designated area, which requires provincial services be made available in both English and French.

The City of Toronto, when it delivers services or programs on behalf of the Province of Ontario (e.g. Ontario Works) may be required to deliver the service in French as per the requirements of a service contract.

Funding arrangements and agreements (e.g. Canada 150) with the federal government may also require that information to be provided in French.

## COMMENTS

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In 2015, City Council requested the City Manager to report back on an updated *City of Toronto Multilingual Policy*. This report responds to that request.

City staff undertook an extensive review of the Policy, including a literature review, a scan of related policies and practices in other jurisdictions, and consultations with City divisions to better understand current practices, and the multilingual support and services required in their service areas.

City staff also engaged the public on their thoughts about how and when information is made available in other languages through an online survey. In total, 1,228 completed surveys were received. The survey results indicate that while most respondents were comfortable accessing information, there is a significant need among a minority of respondents for multilingual supports to access information about City services, programs, and engagement activities. Survey results further indicated that the City should consider a range of factors when considering to translate and interpret information, such as:

- Whether the information is critical for health and safety;
- If language is a significant barrier to participation;
- Languages in which City services are most often accessed; and
- Balance between decisions to translate against the costs associated with translation.

A complete summary of the survey results is available as Attachment 2 to this report and the raw data will be posted to the City's Open Data website.

### **Multilingual Information Provisions Policy**

As the City of Toronto is highly diverse, providing information about City services, programs, and engagement activities in languages that reflects its linguistic diversity is an important way for the public to engage, participate, and be informed of City services, programs, and engagement activities. The *Multilingual Information Provisions Policy* updates the current *Multilingual Services Policy* by establishing clear principles and criteria for translation and interpretation of information about City of Toronto's services, programs and engagement activities.

The updated Policy is set out as Attachment 1 to this report and the key recommended changes are summarized below:

- **Establish translation requirements based on the type of information:** Translation of information about City services, programs and engagement activities must balance the intent, impact, targeted audience and diversity of the City. The Policy establishes categories and associated translation criteria for the types of information the City produces to ensure the message is communicated and received by the target audience, meets the needs of the City and, enhances the business objectives of the City. Furthermore, establishing translation requirements by category allows the City to ensure that information that may or will impact the health and safety of Toronto residents is translated extensively to reflect the diversity of the City and to ensure broad distribution of critical information.
- **Emphasize on translation in localized area:** Recognizing that translation needs differ based on specific geographic areas, neighbourhoods, or wards, the Policy establishes translation criteria for information about City services, programs and engagement activities that are communicated in localized areas. This criteria provides flexibility to balance the needs of the localized area based on evidence, such as program and census data, and the needs of specific neighbourhoods.
- **Clarifying roles and responsibilities:** Outlines the roles and responsibilities of City divisions, including appointing the Division Head to ensure compliance with the Policy. The Policy also establishes a central process to document and track the type of information that is translated annually by the City to ensure accountability and management of translated information.
- **Process for interpretation at public meetings:** Requirements and process for requesting a live interpreter at public meetings and consultations is included in the Policy to ensure interpretation requests can be reasonably accommodated.

In addition, the Policy requires that all City websites provide the option to translate information where available through auto-translation. Auto-translation provides the user the option to select the language they would prefer to receive information, and the information is automatically translated. This practice is consistent with other jurisdictions.

### **311 Service Outreach Strategy**

The City of Toronto's 311 service provides information about City services and programs in 180 languages through a live interpreter on request by the caller. The 311 service is a valuable resource in providing Toronto residents information about a City service or a program in a language of their choice.

An outreach strategy focused on promoting and educating Toronto's diverse population about interpretation available through 311 may help to inform Toronto residents about

services available. An outreach strategy will also allow Councillors to inform residents about interpretation services available through 311.

The cost for 311 live interpretation is based on the duration of the call. Calls are costed by usage per minute. Additional calls will impact the costs and operations of the 311 service. This report recommends that the Director of 311 report back in 2018 on a potential outreach strategy and associated costs, benefits and operational impacts on 311 of additional calls that may request live interpretation.

## **CONCLUSION**

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City Council requested the City Manager to update *City of Toronto Multilingual Policy*. The City Manager's Office in consultation with City divisions, undertook an extensive review of the current Policy.

This report recommends an updated multilingual policy, the *Multilingual Information Provisions Policy*. The updated Policy establishes criteria for translation and interpretation in languages other than English of information about City services, programs, and engagement activities based type of information, impact on localized areas, and clarifies roles and responsibilities for compliance with the Policy, while also establishing mechanisms to manage and track translated information.

## **CONTACT**

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## **SIGNATURE**

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Peter Wallace  
City Manager

## **ATTACHMENTS**

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Attachment 1 - City of Toronto *Multilingual Information Provisions Policy*

Attachment 2 - Multilingual Services Policy Review Survey Results