FINAL REPORT

August 1998

REGIONAL CHAIR'S TASK FORCE
ON BILINGUAL SERVICES
AT THE REGIONAL MUNICIPALITY OF
OTTAWA-CARLETON

Task Force

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1   CURRENT SITUATION

1.1   Background

For twenty-five years now, the working environment of the Regional Municipality of Ottawa-Carleton (RMOC) has acknowledged the bilingual character of the region. Early in its inception, the RMOC recognized the language needs of its population and of its broader clientele.

While progress was slow in the beginning, the past years have seen increased efforts and a continuing striving to improve bilingual services to the public.

In 1973, the Region adopted Bylaw No. 78 recognizing English and French as its official languages.

Beginning in 1991, Regional Council received an annual report from the Review Committee on Delivery of French-language Services, co-chaired by the Regional Chair and the Mayor of Vanier.

In 1996, Regional Council confirmed its commitment to Bylaw No. 78 by adopting a policy outlining guiding principles for its implementation.

To give effect to this latest policy, and noting that deficiencies occurred mostly in the provision of services in French, Council capitalized on the presence of the French Language Services (FLS) Committee it had created in 1995. This Committee is a standing body of the Regional Municipality, composed of staff members and of three members of the public at large. When the Committee was created, the importance of regular evaluation of its performance was underlined.

The mandate of the French Language Services Committee is:

1. To develop a policy and a policy statement that reflects the RMOC's commitment to French language services;

2. To identify needs or issues within the French-speaking population, and their relationship to the provision of services by the RMOC;

3. To ensure ongoing consultation between the French-speaking community and its representatives, the Committee and Staff of the RMOC, in

accordance with the RMOC's Public Consultation policy;

4. To promote the development of French language sevices throughout all departments of the RMOC;

5. To advise on all aspects of French language services within the RMOC and oversee implementation of FLS policy, and;

6. To examine the existing services provided by the RMOC, adjusting, strengthening and supporting such services where required.

On April 22, 1998, the Regional Chair launched the present task force, with a mandate to:

- review the adequacy of official language services currently provided by the Corporation;

- examine the approach by other Canadian municipalities in providing services in both official languages to their citizens; and

- report to Council and make appropriate recommendations.

On June 3, 1998, Regional Council adopted a motion on municipal restructuring. It resolved to hold public consultations on a new single-tier model of municipal governance. In a context of restructuring, service delivery in both official languages will obviously remain very important.

The motion adopted by Council states specifically:

That municipal restructuring shall be built upon the following guiding principles:

(7)…continue the policy adopted by the RMOC since 1973 of recognizing English and French as its official languages and of implementing this policy in the provision of quality services to the residents and clients of any new municipal governance structure, upon its constitution. In so doing, the new municipality will strive to be a model in this respect for Canada, given that its territory encompasses the capital of Canada, a country having English and French as its official languages.

1.2 Current Policies

Regional Bylaw No. 78, adopted in 1973, is a first policy recognizing English and French as the official languages of the RMOC. It ensures access, quality and

continuity of services in both official languages.

It should be noted, however, that this Bylaw states that:

> "The rights and privileges of employees in the service of the Regional Corporation or in the service of agencies or local boards thereof shall not be impaired or affected in any way at any time in their careers in the municipal service or the service of such agencies or local boards as a result of such employees being unilingual English-speaking or unilingual French-speaking."

The policy on French-language services adopted in 1996 sets out the following principles:

- The RMOC recognizes the necessity of actively offering services in French at all levels of service.

- The RMOC recognizes the different approach that its Departments must develop to reach the francophone population in Ottawa-Carleton.

- The RMOC recognizes the importance of fostering a work environment which encourages the use of both official languages.

- The RMOC recognizes the necessity of formally designating certain positions as bilingual in order to ensure the accessibility, quality and ongoing development of services in both official languages.

- The RMOC recognizes that each Department is responsible for the implementation of all aspects of this policy and for its implication.

1.3   Clients

The 1996 federal Census reveals the following distribution of the population of the RMOC by mother tongues:

- 469,120 declare English as their mother tongue;
- 110, 235 declare French as their mother tongue;
- 121, 090 declare several other languages.

The unique character of the National Capital also has an impact on the services offered. These services affect residents, corporate entities and persons who are not residents of the RMOC. The significant financial input of tourists, the majority of whom

are English-speaking or French-speaking, cannot be ignored.

1.4   Languages of Service

Reports from the French Language Services Committee, the Internal Auditor's Report and other administrative documents highlight some aspects of service delivery in both official languages.

- Reception and General Information
  An information and service hot line operating 24 hours a day serves the clients of the RMOC in both official languages. The Region is currently designating as bilingual all positions assigned to Reception Services.

- Parallel Development
  The RMOC recognizes the importance of developing awareness campaigns that reflect the linguistic and cultural realities of its anglophone and francophone communities. Therefore, parallel methodologies are applied in all public health awareness campaigns.

- Correspondence
  All correspondence with the clients of the RMOC is in the language of the correspondent.

- Publications
  All information documents, notices appearing in newspapers and radio advertisements are available in both official languages, as are publications intended for staff.

- Services
  Bilingual teams are in place to serve anglophone and francophone clients, particularly in services of a more personal nature such as Social and Health Services. Moreover, Centre d'accueil Champlain, a home for senior citizens, most of whom are francophones, offers services in both languages.

- Media Relations
  All press releases are drafted in both official languages.

- Council Meetings
  Committee recommendations that appear on Council agendas are now available in both official languages. Simultaneous interpretation is also available during Council meetings which are also televised in English and in French.

- Languages of Work
  The RMOC has launched a process leading to the designation of bilingual

positions throughout the Corporation.

- RMOC Dictation
An awareness raising event takes place annually during the"Semaine de la francophonie". This event allows francophone and francophile staff to display their skills and to assess their linguistic knowledge.

1.5 Initiatives Related to the Linguistic Component of Services

In its research, the Task Force found that many administrative actions have been undertaken in the past three years to implement the official languages policy. As mentioned in 1.1, it was realized that the deficiencies occurred primarily in the delivery of services in French and efforts have been concentrated there. The Task Force took particular note of:

- The launching by Council of the French Language Services Committee in July 1995. (Report submitted to Regional Council, adopted July 12, 1995)

- The development of an administration manual to support initiatives of the various regional departments. (Administration Manual - April 1997)

- The Internal Auditor's report (March 1998) recommending a staff reorganization in order to allocate the resources required for the support of the new policy on French-language services. (Internal Audit Report - March 1998)

- The creation of the French Language Services Division reporting directly to a senior manager. (Memo from the Chief Administrative Officer - March 12 1998)

- The launching of the designation process under the supervision of the newly-created French-language Services Division. (Call for tenders - June 1998)

1.6 Emerging Profile

Although it is still too early to assess the impact of many of the above-mentioned initiatives, many achievements can already be seen.

Progress is of course faster and easier in situations of higher demand or where the capacities of staff are already well adapted. For example, the Task Force noted in its discussions that services involving interaction with individuals (e.g., Social Services, Health Services) are well equipped to serve the public in either official language.

Elsewhere, staff already in place made it possible to reach a fairly satisfactory level of service. Such is the case, for example, in the Environment and Transportion Department.

It should be noted that this policy is intended for all departments of the RMOC, including operating entities such as OC Transpo.

Other situations are more problematic. For example, the Ottawa-Carleton Regional Police Services seem to experience delays and difficulties in delivering services in French. The composition of the work force, the nature of the work, the distribution of staff in the field and the particular legal and administrative structure of Police Services (Council and Board) are probably contributing factors.

In the case of some regional services, delivery cannot be limited merely to linguistic accommodation. For care provided to clients in senior citizens homes or in child care centres, the Region must strive not only to offer services in both languages, but also to foster a cultural environment that meets the needs of the intended clients. It should be noted that in some homes for seniors and child care centres, some anglophone clients might find it difficult to integrate.

Awareness raising campaigns must be adapted to the particular culture of their target clients. A mere translation of the literature in both official languages is neither sufficient nor acceptable. Parallel development must take place for all awareness and information campaigns.

In order to reinforce that each Department is accountable for the implementation of the official languages policy, the French Language Services Committee recommended that monitoring procedures not be imposed at the time of dissemination of the implementation guidelines for the policy. It simply provided suggestions to the Departments on the assessment of the implementation. It is therefore not possible for the Task Force to make a systematic assessment of the official languages component of services.

2   SAMPLING OF PRACTICES OF OTHER PUBLIC ENTITIES IN CANADA

The Task Force received and analysed data collected by an external consultant whose mandate was to review the delivery of bilingual services in 14 surrounding municipalities, in the cities of Moncton, New Brunswick and Winnipeg, Manitoba and at the federal government, based on the reports of the Official Languages Commissioner.

The consultant concluded:

- Most municipalities reviewed (10) do not have a policy framework on bilingual services and/or on service delivery.

- Some municipalities offer services without having a policy framework on bilingual service delivery. The best example of excellent delivery without a policy framework is Aylmer, Quebec.

- Six municipalities, including four in the RMOC (Cumberland, Gloucester, Ottawa and Vanier), which together encompass more than 90% of the total francophone population of Ottawa-Carleton have framework policies and offer bilingual services.

- The RMOC (which delivers 80% of municipal services in the region) also offers bilingual services (with a framework policy) which compare favourably with those of the other 16 municipalities.

  Comparatively speaking, the strengths of the RMOC's approach are:
  − the inclusion of stakeholders
  − a culturally sensitive approach.

  Comparatively speaking, the weaknesses are:
  − staffing
  − monitoring and evaluation of the policy and of its implementation.

- Fewer than 10% of the region's francophones live in municipalities that have no framework policies and offer no services in French.

- Except for Winnipeg, most municipalities offer the services at large when they do offer them. Winnipeg operates a system of designated regions.

- Municipalities that offer services very rarely do so through arm's length agencies, serving a single linguistic group. Provincial governments frequently use this approach.

- In general, municipalities, including those of Ottawa-Carleton, have not developed mechanisms to monitor and evaluate the implementation of the policies. However, at least three municipalities have established good working relationships with their stakeholders. They are Aylmer, Winnipeg and the RMOC.

- Comparatively speaking, municipalities that have policies and/or offer services generally have a long way to go to measure up to the national standard demonstrated by the Government of Canada.

  (Report: Evaluation of Bilingual Services, RMOC, Nadeau, Beaulieu & Associé.e.s July 1998)

  Refer to Appendix I for table.

3 CONSULTATIONS

The Task Force reviewed the outcomes of the annual consultations held by the French-language Services Committee with a number of community organizations. This Committee received comments from about a dozen organizations. The Task Force noted the following:

- the significant importance of an active offer of service, of the promotion of a working environment that fosters the use of both official languages and of the designation of bilingual positions;

- the critical importance of political will and commitment on the part of elected officials and of senior management;

- the importance of partnership with and participation of unions for the smooth operation of the designation process;

- the need to develop and advertise systematic procedures for the handling of complaints concerning the quality of languages of service;

- the importance of extending the scope of the policy to cover Commissions that report to Council, such as the Police Services Board, OC Transpo Commission, and agencies funded by the RMOC;

- the development of tools to assist francophone organizations to participate fully in the tendering process and to tender in French;

- the environment encourage clients to request services in French;

- the development of mechanisms to assess the economic spinoffs of an active offer of services in French;

- the development of partnerships with francophone organizations.

4   OVERALL CONCLUSIONS

The issue of municipal restructuring is high on the agenda of elected officials and, at such a time, it is most appropriate to take stock of the linguistic aspect of service delivery. The Task Force has come to the conclusion that whatever the eventual structure of municipal government, arrangements concerning languages of service are possible and necessary.

Quality of service is dependent on many factors. Modern management theories insist on total quality and on client-centred approaches. One of the elements of total quality must be an active offer to clients of a choice of official language of service.

The principles stated in the 1996 policy must translate into clear administrative policies.

Assessment of service quality must be based on attainable and measurable objectives. Administrative guidelines must therefore include tools for the development of objectives and for the measurement of their achievement.

Services in both official languages already exist in the RMOC and in several municipalities in its territory. The RMOC alone delivers more than 80% of municipal services and it does so in both official languages. Many of the services the province intends to transfer to the Regional Municipality are currently offered in both official languages within the boundaries of the RMOC. Any new municipality would therefore be in a position to continue and improve current practices with resources already in place, rather than having to start from scratch.

It is important to emphasize that the linguistic component is an integral part of the nature of a service. It is therefore incumbent upon each staff member to ensure the quality of that service according to his or her scope of responsibilities.

Since language is, to a certain extent, an overarching aspect of all services, elected officials and staff would benefit from the presence of an arm's length entity that could help and advise, provide access to the opinions of clients and also allow the public at large to participate actively in service improvement.

5   RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1   That the RMOC adopt a formal policy on official languages of service, to define and consolidate the implementation mechanisms for the previously

approved principles. (Refer to Appendix II for a suggested outline of this policy.)

      5.1.1 Designation of bilingual positions at all levels of the organization (based on the degree of interaction with the public and on the level of professional interaction).

      5.1.2 Procedures for handling compliments and complaints. (Compliments and complaints concerning language should be integrated into the regular procedures and should be given an equal importance to the rest of all other comments.)

      5.1.3 Development and implementation of internal procedures for monitoring the official languages component of services.

5.2   That Regional Council establish a citizens advisory committee on languages of service in addition to its staff French Language Services Committee. (Refer to Appendix III for a suggested framework of the mandate and composition of this Committee.)

5.3   That the RMOC consider the need to adopt a policy on languages of work to ensure the eventual presence of a sufficient number of employees to implement the policy on languages of service. (Refer to Appendix IV for suggested contents of this policy.)

5.4   That RMOC recommend to Heritage Canada that it target municipalities in its programs intended to foster the bilinguilization of organizations, and that the RMOC take advantage of the grants available under this program.

SAMPLING OF ADMINISTRATIVE PRACTICES

The following table displays the results of the sampling of practices of other public entities in Canada.

The public entities are grouped in four categories according to the percentage of the population represented by the minority. For example:

(F) 32.4% - French minority, 32.4% of the population
(E) 33.8% - English minority, 33.8% op the population

The public entities are the following:

Category A (30% and up) New-Brunswick, Cumberland, Moncton, Aylmer and Vanier

Category B (10 to 29.9%) Canada, Gloucester, Ottawa, Rockcliffe Park and the RMOC

Category C (4.5 to 9.9%) Quebec, Ontario, Kanata, Goulbourn, Nepean, Osgoode, West Carleton, Gatineau and Hull

Category D (under 4.5%) Manitoba, Rideau and Winnipeg

APPENDIX I — SAMPLING OF ADMINISTRATIVE PRACTICES

Jurisdiction groups: **A** = N Brunswick, Cumberland, Moncton, Aylmer, Vanier · **B** = Canada, Gloucester, RMOC, Ottawa, Rockcliffe Pk · **C** = Quebec, Ontario, Kanata, Nepean, Osgoode, West Carleton, Goulbourn, Gatineau, Hull · **D** = Manitoba, Rideau, Winnipeg

Category	N Brunswick (F) 32.9%	Cumberland (F) 32.4%	Moncton (F) 31.8%	Aylmer (E) 32.0%	Vanier (E) 33.8%	Canada (F) 23.3%	Gloucester (F) 26.0%	RMOC (F) 15.4%	Ottawa (F) 14.8%	Rockcliffe Pk (F) 14.8%	Quebec (E) 8.3%	Ontario (F) 4.5%	Kanata (F) 6.4%	Nepean (F) 5.3%	Osgoode (F) 6.3%	West Carleton (F) 5.4%	Goulbourn (F) 4.5%	Gatineau (E) 6.3%	Hull (E) 8.2%	Manitoba (F) 4.3%	Rideau (F) 2.8%	Winnipeg (F) 4.3%
Overall Framework																						
Overall Policy	O.L. Act	Bilingual Policy	Municipal Bylaw on O.L.	No	Yes	O.L. Act	Bilingual Policy	O.L. Policy	O.L. Policy	No	F.L. Charter	F.L. Services Act	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	F.L. Services Policy	No	Bilingual Policy
Admin. Policies	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Fed Depts and Agencies	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	Yes	No	Yes
Criteria	Not specified	Numbers	Not specified	F.L. Charter	No	Numbers	Not specified	Not specified	None	No	Not specified	Numbers	No	No	No	No	No	F.L. Charter	F.L. Charter	Designated areas	No	Designated areas
Human Resources Policies																						
Staffing	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Not specified	Yes (reception)	Designated @ Sr. Mgmt	No	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	Yes	No	Yes
Training	Yes	Available	Available	No	Yes	Available	No	Available	Available	No	Not specified	Yes	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	Not specified	No	No
Communications																						
Reception	Bilingual	Bilingual	Bilingual	Available	Bilingual	Bilingual	Bilingual	Bilingual	Bilingual	No	French	Bilingual	No	No	No	No	English	Available	Available	Bilingual	No	Bilingual
Translation & Interpret'n	Bilingual	On request	Available internally	On request	Bilingual	Yes	On request	Bilingual	Bilingual	None	Available	Bilingual	None	None	None	None	None	Not specified	As per F.L. Charter	Bilingual	None	Bilingual
Written	Bilingual	Bilingual	Bilingual	Bilingual	Bilingual	Bilingual	Bilingual	Bilingual	Bilingual	English	French	Bilingual	English	English	English	English	English	Available	Available	Bilingual	English	Bilingual
Internet Site	Bilingual	Bilingual	Bilingual	Bilingual	under construction	Bilingual	Bilingual	Bilingual	Bilingual	English	Eng / Fre / Spanish	Bilingual	English	English	English	English	English	Bilingual	French	Bilingual	English	English
Public Meetings	Bilingual	Optional	Optional	Optional	Optional	Optional	Optional	Optional	Case by case	English	French	Optional	English	English	English	English	English	Not specified	French	Not specified	English	Optional
Official Events	Bilingual	Bilingual	Bilingual	Bilingual	Bilingual	Optional	Bilingual (case by case)	Bilingual	Case by case	English	French	Bilingual	English	English	English	English	English	Not specified	French	Bilingual	English	Bilingual
Advertising	Bilingual	Bilingual	Bilingual	Bilingual (except signs)	Bilingual	Yes	Bilingual	Bilingual	Bilingual	English	French	Bilingual	English	English	English	English	English	Not specified	French (except signs)	Bilingual	English	Bilingual
Services																						
Emergency Services	N/A	Available	Bilingual (mandatory)	Bilingual	Bilingual	N/A	Bilingual	Bilingual	Bilingual	English	N/A	N/A	English	English	English	English	English	Not specified	Bilingual	N/A	English	Bilingual
Services to Public	Bilingual	Bilingual	Bilingual	Bilingual	Optional	Optional (as # warrant)	Bilingual	Bilingual	Bilingual	English	French	Bilingual	English	English	English	English	English	Not specified	Bilingual	Bilingual	English	Bilingual
Personnel Services	Bilingual	Optional	N/A	Available	N/A	Available	Not specified	Available	Bilingual	English	Not specified	English	English	English	English	English	English	Not specified	No	Not specified	English	Optional
Language of work	Bilingual	Optional	Not specified	French	Optional	Optional	Optional	Optional	Optional	English	French	English	English	English	English	English	English	French	French	Not specified	English	English
Control Mechanisms																						
Service co-ordination	Not specified	No	No	No	No	Yes	No	F.L. Division	Stand Adv. Cttee on F.L.S.	No	Not specified	Yes	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	F.L.S.	No	Yes
Ombudsman	Not specified	No	Not specified	No	No	Yes: O.L. Comm'r	No	No	No	No	Not specified	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	Yes	No	Yes
Complaints Procedures	Not specified	Mayor's or Exec Offices	No	Client Serv Dept.	Mayor's Office	Yes: O.L. Comm'r	Not specified	Yes	Pers & O.L. Directorate	No	Not specified	Yes	No	No	No	No	No	No	City Clerk's Office	Yes	No	Yes
Evaluation	Not specified	City Clerk's AA, A. cons.	City manager or delegate	No	Not specified	To be completed	Yes	F.L.S. Cttee	Yes	No	Not specified	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	Yes	Not specified	No	Yes
Requests for grants	N/A	No	Yes	No	Yes		Yes	No	Yes	No	N/A	N/A	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	N/A	No	Yes

Abbreviations: AA — Administrative Assistant   Comm'r — Commissioner   F.L. — French Language   F.L.S. — French Languages Services   N/A — Not Applicable   O.L. — Official Languages

APPENDIX II
OUTLINE OF A POLICY ON LANGUAGES OF SERVICE

1. The official languages of the RMOC are English and French. Clients have the right to receive regional services of comparable quality and accessibility in the official language of their choice and this choice is offered actively.

2. As is the case for all policies, senior managers and department heads are accountable for the implementation of this policy.

3. Each Department of the RMOC develops and maintains a plan of linguistic capacity which reflects the needs of its clients in terms of languages of service. This plan includes the designation of some positions as requiring that they be held by incumbents who can carry out their professional duties effectively in both official languages. The plan must provide for the assignment of staff such that throughout normal hours of delivery of a particular service, clients can receive the service in the official language of their choice. The plan must describe the current situation and a schedule of implementation.

   3.1 The designation plans are brought forward to the Advisory Committee and the latter makes recommendations to Council if necessary.

   3.2 The designation plan must take into account, where appropriate, the need for cultural as well as linguistic adaptation in the delivery of some services.

4. Departments receive and handle compliments and complaints related to languages of service. They report regularly to the Advisory Committee on the nature of these representations and on their handling by the Department in question.

APPENDIX III
FRAMEWORK FOR AN ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON LANGUAGES OF SERVICE

1. Membership

The Advisory Committee is composed of members of the public at large, chosen by a selection board of regional councillors, following an invitation for applications and consultation of regional organizations (community social organizations, health, business, education, etc.) Members are appointed for a 3-year term renewable once. Initial appointment will be staggered to ensure continuity.

The following criteria are used by the selection board:

- Candidates must demonstrate their involvement in the community. Complementarity of such involvement should be sought as much as possible.

- Candidates must demonstrate a practical knowledge of the realities of both linguistic communities.

The Committee includes 6 to 10 members, with an equal number of anglophones and francophones, all of whom have a good understanding of both official languages. The Committee elects its Chair, alternating between an anglophone and a francophone.

A regional councillor, a senior manager and the Chair of the staff committee on French Language Services sit as observers.

2. Mandate

The Committee is advisory. It reports to the Corporate Services and Economic Development Committee through the observer Councillor. On an ongoing basis, it provides advice to staff through the observer senior manager. Its specific responsibilities are to:

2.1 submit an implementation calendar and a work plan to the Corporate Services and Economic Develpment Committee;

2.2 review and make recommendations on policies and procedures related to official languages of service;

2.3 receive the designation plans and forward recommendations as necessary;

2.4 receive quarterly reports on compliments and complaints of a linguistic nature and on their handling, and make appropriate recommendations;

2.5 undertake reviews of sectors/cases/departments from a linguistic perspective and make appropriate recommendations; and

2.6 report to Council through the Corporate Services and Economic Development Committee on request or as needed and at least annually.

APPENDIX IV
SUGGESTED CONTENTS OF A POLICY ON LANGUAGES OF WORK

Service delivery requires the presence of a sufficient number of persons able to provide their professional services in the client's choice of language and, in the case of some services of a "personal" nature, sensitive to the cultural realities of the major linguistic groups. The policy will involve practices that foster the recruitment and the retention of bilingual staff. This implies, among other things, a work environment in which people have a sense of belonging and where they have access to the necessary work tools. It is important to respect acquired rights while evolving toward a situation in which, eventually, the incumbent of a designated position could work in both languages but be supervised in the official language of his or her choice.