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Social Planning Council of Ottawa

Seventy-Five Years of the Social Planning Council 1928 - 2003

By *Allan Moscovitch*
Professor, School of Social Work
Carleton University

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Social Planning Council of Ottawa
280 Metcalfe Street, Suite 501
Ottawa, Ont. K2P 1R7
(613) 236-7060
www.spcottawa.on.ca
office@spcottawa.on.ca



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Origins

On Monday September 12th, 1927, a group of Ottawa citizens met for a lunch at the Chateau Laurier hosted by the Rotary Club. They were there to hear a guest speaker, J.H.T. Falk, executive director of the Montreal Council of Social Agencies and to discuss establishing a similar organization in Ottawa. There were 29 people in attendance including the city's magistrate, and the commissioner of Ottawa's Social Service Department.¹

After Falk's presentation it was decided that the meeting approve the formation of a Council of Social Agencies and that a committee be appointed to prepare a constitution and by-laws.²

The first meeting of the Ottawa Council of Social Agencies took place on the 1st of February 1928 at eight o'clock in the Palm Room at the Chateau Laurier. A total of 24 agencies applied for membership in four divisions: eight in child welfare; eight in family welfare; five in health and three in education and recreation. Membership fees were set at \$10 per year. With 19 paid subscriptions, the fledgling council had a budget of \$190.

¹ Those in attendance were representative of the social services in Ottawa in 1927. Among the participants were: Mr. Thomas Blair, Rotary Club, Crippled Children's Committee, Mrs. A.G. Mather, Infants Home and Hospital, Mr. K.A. Greene, Perley Home for Incurables, Mr. T.H. Hutchinson, YMCA, Mrs. H.P. Hill, May Court Club, Miss K. Symes, Canadian Girl Guides, Major G. Best, Salvation Army, Mr. Ainslie W. Greene, Boy Scouts Association, Mr. Joseph P. Dunne, Ottawa Children's Bureau, and St. Patrick's Asylum, Mr. J.J. Allen, Ottawa Welfare Bureau, Colonel D.T. Irwin, Children's Aid Society, Mr. A.W. Bayman, Protestant Home for the Aged, Mr. Fred McCann, Ottawa Boys Club, Mr. Arthur J. Ames, Kiwanis Club, Mrs. C.A. Douglas, YWCA, Mrs. J.A. Wilson, Red Cross Society, Mrs. C.H. Thorburn, Protestant Orphans' Home, Mrs. S.S. Holden, Ottawa Day Nursery, Miss Hazel Todd, Social Hygiene Council, Mrs. Asa Gordon, King's Daughters Guild, Home for Friendless Women, Mr. Payne of the Ottawa Association of the Blind.

² Minutes of the Meeting, prepared by R. Hopper, Secretary, Ottawa Council of Social Agencies, Minutes, Papers of the Social Planning Council, City of Ottawa Archives, 39 D 90, Box 3.

The first elected officers of the council were not unlike those in the member agencies. All were men despite a substantial number of women attending the first meeting as well as playing a prominent role in the administration of social services in the area. Most, but not all, were volunteers.³ The officers of the new council were primarily executives drawn from business including manufacturing, building contractors, as well as the civil service.

It was not until 1933 that a constitution for the Council of Social Agencies was approved. The council's principal purposes were to: promote the study of the social needs of the community; establish how agencies could improve their services or respond to unmet needs; and increase the awareness and interest members of the community in the social needs of all community members.

Following the recommendations of a report submitted to the council in 1932 by Charlotte Whitton outlining both a financial and administrative plan for the council, there would be two types of members, active and associate. Each active member would have to file copies of a constitution, policies and board membership, agree to use the Social Service Exchange, cooperate with other members, and if appealing to the public for funds, file an audited financial statement. There would also be four divisions of the agency members: health services, children's services, family welfare, handicap and dependency, and recreation and character building services. The officers of the new organization would include a president, a past president (known as the honorary president) an honorary secretary, a treasurer, and four vice presidents, the latter chosen to represent the Protestant, English Catholic, French Catholic, and Jewish population of Ottawa.⁴

Whitton's recommendations on the organization of a financial federation included three community chests, one Protestant and General including the small Jewish appeal, one English Catholic and one French Catholic. The final result in 1933 was two chests: a Protestant and General, and a Catholic. Each would raise funds to support some of the 20 agencies that joined in the first combined campaign, to support the Social Service Exchange, the Council of Social Agencies and the financial federation itself. The campaign would operate by direct appeal.⁵

Initially known as the Ottawa Federated Charities, by 1935 it had officially changed its name to the Ottawa Community Chests. In French it would be known as La Caisse de bienfaisance d'Ottawa.⁶ The first combined financial

³ Minutes of the First Annual Meeting of the Ottawa Council of Social Agencies, Papers of the Social Planning Council, City of Ottawa Archives, 39 D 90, Box 3.

⁴ Constitution of the Ottawa Council of Social Agencies, Adopted January 20, 1933.

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ "Chronological History of the United Appeal of Ottawa-Carleton," Historical Files, Municipal Archives of Ottawa, 39D90 Box 3, dated June 1970.

campaign was set for October 30 to November 6, 1933. In its first year of operations the Ottawa Federated Charities collected \$159,883 including \$24,100 from the city's Emergency Relief Fund.⁷

The council now expected to have additional funds as a result of the formation of the Ottawa Federated Charities and moved to hire an executive secretary in the person of Marjorie Stinson Thomson. Thomson, a graduate of the Toronto School of Social Work, had worked with the Family Bureau of Hamilton and the Canadian Council on Child and Family Welfare (later the Canadian Welfare Council).⁸ She was hired part time at a salary of \$100 a month.

In early 1933, the council also decided to open an office at 245 Cooper Street, within the offices of the Canadian Council on Child and Family Welfare.⁹ The newly founded Ottawa Federated Charities opened an office at 172 Wellington Street. By December, the council decided to move and share accommodation with the Federated Charities. The Social Service Exchange, its sister agency, the Christmas Exchange, and its two employees now came under the control of the Council of Social Agencies.

The Council Responds to the Depression

Ottawa was somewhat insulated from the effects of the Depression for two reasons. A government building program in the early years of the slump helped to sustain economic activity in the region for several years. But, by 1933 the value of building permits had fallen to just 14.7 per cent of what it was in 1930.

In the early years of the Depression it was the Family Welfare Bureau that was primarily responsible for the provision of relief. At the beginning of 1933, the city formed the Ottawa Public Welfare Board to administer "direct Relief chargeable to public funds and relief services."¹⁰ The change was evidence that the private agencies could no longer provide relief to the increasing numbers in need. The new supervisor of staff for the board was Bessie Touzel.

In December 1935 the executive of the Council received a report from the Family Division prepared and presented by Touzel on the need for supplementary relief.¹¹ In January 1936 the Council agreed to undertake a campaign to persuade the public to donate second-hand bedding, furniture,

⁷ Chronological History of the United Appeal of Ottawa-Carleton, Municipal Archives of Ottawa, 39D90 Box 3, Historical Files.

⁸ Ibid, 6.

⁹ Minutes of a Special Meeting of the Officers of the Ottawa Council of Social Agencies, February 3rd, 1933.

¹⁰ Annual Departmental Reports of the City of Ottawa, 1934, 204-05.

¹¹ Minutes of the Executive Committee of the Council of Social Agencies of Ottawa, December 20, 1935, 2.

and other household utensils in an effort to respond to local need and “to decrease the need for public funds for these articles.”¹² Members were concerned not to give the public the impression that “private donations can ever be sufficient to cover the need for Supplementary Relief as reported by the relief-giving agencies.”¹³

Controversy related to relief led the city’s Board of Control to announce, in April 1936, that it would be appointing 12 special investigators to re-examine the files of families on relief. After discussion, the council agreed to extend their cooperation to this investigation.¹⁴ In September 1936, a special council executive meeting was held to discuss the recently announced changes in the city’s relief policy. While the report of the Board of Control’s special investigators led to 28 convictions, saving the city a few hundred dollars, it was pointed out that it had paid over \$3000 for the report. The city then decided to discharge 42 workers, mostly women, from its relief department and hire untrained male replacements. Further, the city was also now dealing with a change in the way relief grants were provided from both the federal and provincial governments.

As a consequence the council moved that:

...certain aspects of the reorganization of the city Welfare Department are not in the best interests of the citizens, since it seems evident that there will be impaired efficiency in service to those on relief and an impossible burden placed on private philanthropy.

In March 1936 Mrs. Thomson resigned from the council. Commenting on the role of the Council of Social Agencies during the Depression and after, Mrs. Thomson argued that its members had an obligation to document and expose the social conditions that they observed. Her words expressed the approach taken by council members in succeeding generations as well:

The social obligation to “bear witness” to the effects of inadequate Housing and Supplementary Relief, to the gaps in our social legislation which permit non-resident families to be treated as outcasts, and to the need for leisure-time activities which will give constructive leadership to our deprived citizens, demands that we voice our convictions articulately and fearlessly.¹⁵

¹² Minutes of the Executive Committee of the Ottawa Council of Social Agencies, January 31, 1936, 2.

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ Minutes of the Executive Committee of the Ottawa Council of Social Agencies, April 24, 1936, 4.

¹⁵ Report of the Executive Secretary, Council of Social Agencies of Ottawa, February 14, 1936, 20.

In 1934 meeting, the Federated Charities asked the council to act as an authority on the activities of Ottawa social agencies. In the same year the executive approved the first extension education course on social work in Ottawa under auspices of the Montreal School of Social Work. The promotion of training for staff in the field remained a continuing theme at the council over the years.

In addition to the establishment of the community chests, and its conflict with the city over relief, the council was involved in several other initiatives in the 1930s. A major success was the merger in 1935 of the Kiwanis Boys Club and the Ottawa Boys Club to create a non-sectarian Ottawa Boys' Clubs. The new organization was recommended for funding to the Ottawa Community Chests.¹⁶

The Ottawa Council of Social Agencies in War and Reconstruction, 1940 - 1951

As Canada headed into the war, the demand for assistance grew. The Christmas Exchange, coordinated by the council, received 400 more applications in 1939 than in 1938.¹⁷

The issue of residence for relief, which had occupied the concerns of council in the Depression, was discussed again at a June 1940 meeting. It was announced that in Ontario, residence would be the municipality in which the family resided on 1 August 1937, unless they had been self-supporting in another place for a minimum of 12 months. The council was in agreement that the private agencies did not have the funds to support non-residents denied relief and that this should be a public responsibility. At a subsequent meeting it was agreed that the Catholic Family Services and the Ottawa Welfare Bureau would select six cases of hardship due to ineligibility for relief and plan what further steps to take to publicize the issue.¹⁸

In November, the council had received notification from the Department of National War Services that dates had been assigned from January to June 1941 for six war-related campaigns. The council was concerned that the diffusion of effort would result in less funds raised. They passed a resolution calling for unification of effort and for the Board of Trade to take the initiative to coordinate campaigns. By January 1941, it was agreed to support the establishment of the Co-ordinating Council of Civilian War Services and to provide support services to it.

¹⁶ Ottawa Council of Social Agencies, Minutes, February 14, 1936, 1.

¹⁷ Minutes of the Executive Committee of the Council of Social Agencies, January 26th, 1940

¹⁸ Minutes of the Executive Committee of the Council of Social Agencies, June 18th, 1940, 1-3. Minutes of the Sub-Committee of Family Division and Executive Committee re Non-Residents, July 4th, 1940.

In early 1942, a survey by the Catholic Family Service, revealed 88 cases where there were more than two people living in one room. The worst situation was of a family of 14 living in two rooms, despite the male parent was employed. It was agreed that the council “should endeavour to arouse public opinion in regard to such situations and try to get the co-operation of the newspapers.” The council sent a letter to Ottawa Board of Control about the situation, resulting in considerable publicity in the newspapers.¹⁹

After a survey at the request of the Department of National War Services, it was found that local agencies could use as many as 50 volunteers. The executive agreed in June 1942 to proceed to set up a volunteer bureau.²⁰ On November 24th a meeting presided by Senator Carrine Wilson was held in the senate committee room to organize the Women’s Volunteer Service Centre.²¹

At the request of the Department of National War Services, the Women’s Voluntary Services Centre was organized in 1943 under the auspices of the Council of Social Agencies. “The centre provides a central office for the registration and placement of volunteers. Its purpose is to give information to volunteers regarding opportunities for service and to supply volunteer assistance to existing organizations for war and community projects.”²²

In its first year of operation it registered 258 volunteers and made 329 placements. An additional 428 people worked on ration books and other special projects for a total of 750 volunteers at 51 organizations. Less than 20 per cent of the placements were with social agencies.

As a result of an agreement between the Dominion and provincial governments, a local committee was set up to look into the need for wartime day nurseries. Joy Maines represented the council at the meeting and agreed to become the secretary. The committee was to contact war related industries to find out if they are having difficulty obtaining staff due to the lack of day nursery facilities.²³

In her 1944 annual report Maines listed the organizations on which the council was represented: Executive Committee of the Health League; Citizens Re-establishment Committee; Citizens’ War Service Committee; Housing Committee of the Public Affairs Council; Budget Committee of the Ottawa

¹⁹ Minutes of the Executive Committee of the Council of Social Agencies, October 31st, 1941, 3; November 28th, 1941, 1.

²⁰ Minutes of the Executive Committee of the Council of Social Agencies of Ottawa, June 26th, 1942, 2.

²¹ Minutes of the Executive Committee of the Council of Social Agencies of Ottawa, November 27th, 1942, 2.

²² Annual Report of the Women’s Voluntary Services Centre, Council of Social Agencies, 1944 Box 39 D 90 #3 (A42/3c)

²³ Ibid.

Community Chests; The Women's Voluntary Services Centre and; The Wartime Day Nurseries Committee.²⁴

At the 1945 annual meeting it was announced that Maines was resigning her post after nine years. In her report she eloquently expressed the approach that was to become the credo of the council in the post war years.

*“Social planning” is a phrase that is sometimes avoided because it has been seized upon for political purposes. Social agencies, however, see the results of lack of planning. Planning becomes offensive only when there is lack of participation on the part of those for whom the planning is done. One group of agencies cannot plan what another group should do without conferring with each other and developing the plan together. Neither can one group in society plan for another and expect them to accept the plan gracefully, unless they have helped to formulate it.*²⁵

Welfare Council of Ottawa, 1952–1968

In the postwar years the council began a period of slow growth. In 1952 the Ottawa Council of Social Agencies became the Welfare Council of Ottawa. By now there were a total of five staff members, two of whom were employed on the Social Service Index. Now located at 74 Sparks Street, the council had 56 members but the budget for the organization no longer came from subscriptions; the council's budget of \$20,450 came almost entirely from the community chests. The council adopted a new constitution and began to allow individual membership. As well, the three council divisions were reduced to two leaving only children's and family, and health.

In May 1953 the board of the council established a Housing Committee on which over 40 organizations were represented. The Committee's report, submitted in March of 1954, noted the gap between housing need and housing stock was some 5,000 dwellings. Further, there were some 4,000 dwellings in need of repair.

A delegation met with the city Board of Control on October 12, 1954. Speaking on behalf of the committee and the council, Dr. Eugene Forsey said:

²⁴ Report of the Executive Secretary, Annual Meeting of the Ottawa Council of Social Agencies, March 10, 1944, Box 39 D 90 #3 (A42/3c)

²⁵ Annual Report of the Executive Secretary, 1945, 7.

*We wish to emphasize, however, that the council is not irrevocably wedded to any particular plan... We want housing for those who need it, at prices they can afford to pay. Section 46 of the National Housing Act will do it. But any plan that will do the job, effectively and promptly, will satisfy us. The essential thing is action; immediate action, to meet a very serious situation.*²⁶

The work of the housing committee revealed the character of the people and the activities of the postwar council: a reliance on social survey data to establish need and a desire to ensure that services were made available to respond to need; a concern for the poor and a desire to fill the hole in community services for them; the idealism to want to respond to apparent need; and the pragmatism to accept a variety of solutions.

During 1954-55 a council committee first chaired by Mrs. Mark Gillin concluded that a way had to be found to provide homemaker services. A public meeting in June 1955 was called to test interest in a new agency and to elect a provisional executive. A provisional executive was elected at the beginning of 1956 the Visiting Homemakers Association was established and became an independent agency providing homemaker services as well as a member of the council.²⁷

The next year the council distributed a questionnaire to agencies on the organization of a Central Volunteer Bureau. Given the strong interest, the council moved to prepare a plan. In October 1957 the Central Volunteer Bureau was established and in its first year of operations made 570 placements at 54 agencies.²⁸

The council had a busy year during 1957-58. During this time, two new organizations with their roots in the work of the council came into being. Founded in the fall of 1955, the Rehabilitation Coordinating Committee became the Rehabilitation Institute of Ottawa on September 30th, 1957. In the same year the council brought together representatives from five senior citizens' clubs to form the Ottawa Senior Citizens Association.²⁹

The year 1958 was a landmark in the history of the council because at the end of that year the Social Service Index closed after more than 44 years of operation. The closure of the index reflected the changes taking place in the relationship between public and private welfare during the 1950s.³⁰

²⁶ Welfare Council of Ottawa, Remarks by Dr. Eugene Forsey, Leader of the Housing Delegation, October 12, 1954.

²⁷ Welfare Council of Ottawa, Annual Report, 1955-56, 1-2

²⁸ Welfare Council of Ottawa, Annual Reports, 1956-57; 1957-58, 13; 1958-59, 8.

²⁹ Welfare Council of Ottawa, Annual Report, 1957-58, 11.

³⁰ Welfare Council of Ottawa, Annual Report, 1958-59, 10-11.

A Special Committee on Youth Services was organized in the fall of 1958 following the death on November 23rd of a 20-year old youth in a street fight. With representation from 40 organizations, the committee completed a report recommending the establishment of a Youth Services Bureau “with the responsibility of maintaining a continuing review of youth problems and of devising ways and means through which these problems can be handled most effectively.”³¹

The Youth Services Bureau was approved as a three-year demonstration project by the city of Ottawa with a smaller contribution from the Ottawa Community Chest.³² By June 1965, six years after its beginnings, the Youth Services Bureau became an independent agency, leaving the auspices of the Ottawa Welfare Council.³³

In 1962 council incorporated under the name of the Welfare Council of Ottawa. Letters patent for the council were granted on the 25th day of April 1962 under the provincial Citizenship Act of 1960-61.³⁴

During the early to mid-‘60s the council worked to accommodate the changes to social services such as becoming involved in the growing movement, at the time, of urban renewal. As well, by 1966, the council’s budget had more than doubled to \$84,204 from \$41,604 four years earlier. Four years later, in 1970, the council’s budget had more than doubled again to \$174,208. By 1974 the council’s budget had grown by a further 30 per cent to \$224,823. By this time the United Way of Ottawa-Carleton, was providing 60 per cent of the funds and the new regional government was providing over 25 per cent.³⁵

Despite increases in money supply and the ability to respond to changes the council worked to remain relevant. The federal government announced plans to implement a major new social welfare legislation which would dramatically change the framework of social services. In his 1967 executive director’s report John Horricks noted the increasing demands placed on volunteers and went on to say that the council “must face realistically the need for more staff and more specialized staff.” Later, he argued that “since we are concerned with both tax-supported and voluntary organizations it would seem appropriate that additional funds might be sought from the public sector.”³⁶

³¹ Welfare Council of Ottawa, Annual Report, 1958-59, 5.

³² Welfare Council of Ottawa, Annual Report, 1961-62, 12. The City provided \$15,000 per year and the Community Chest provided \$5,000. per year.

³³ Ottawa Welfare Council, Annual Report, 1965-66, 8.

³⁴ Municipal Archives of Ottawa, 39D90 Box 3, Historical Files.

³⁵ Social Planning Council of Ottawa and District, 47th Annual Report, 1974-75, 4, 20-22.

³⁶ Ottawa Welfare Council, Annual Report, 1966-67, 9-10.

The Social Planning Council of Ottawa and District, 1968-1989

By 1968 the council changed its name to the Social Planning Council of Ottawa and District. The new name came at the end of a period of rapid change in social welfare in which most of the structures of a Canadian welfare state had just been put into place. In particular, the 1966 Canada Assistance Plan called for the federal government to pay 50 per cent of the costs of provincial/municipal programs of social assistance and social services to prevent poverty. The consequence was a rapid expansion of social services across the country including in Ottawa-Carleton.

The council's Survey of Needs and Resources published in December 1967 provided a review the system of social, health, and recreational services then available on the cusp of the expansion that would follow from the Canada Assistance Plan. At that time, there were already 163 public and private social service agencies expending in excess of \$62 million dollars. Of these funds, 85 per cent were derived from public sources.³⁷

During 1967-68, the council moved to new offices at 85 Plymouth Avenue where it remained co-located with the United Appeal joining the Red Cross at this new more spacious location. A year later, the council proposed a mayor's committee on youth, an idea that was accepted by the mayor and the city. After a year's work, the council reported that the activities of the Committee on Youth had resulted in the establishment of a drop-in centre run by the YMCA, a hostel, and an employment agency for youth.³⁸

Amalgamation of Ottawa with the surrounding municipalities resulted in the formation of the Regional Municipality of Ottawa-Carleton in 1969. At the same time each of the municipalities retained their own local government. In the division of responsibilities between the two levels of local government, it was the regional government that was selected to administer public social services.

The Information and Referral Service, now renamed the Welfare Information Service (WIS), was handling almost 2500 inquires per year in 1969. In early 1970, participants in a forum on information services decided to set up a Central Information Centre to replace the WIS. The Social Planning Council would provide the secretariat for this initiative.

At the beginning of the 1970s, the council was engaged in a wide range of initiatives. With an interest in making improvements through social planning, committees multiplied to bring together staff and volunteers in the social

³⁷ Social Planning Council, Survey of Needs and Resources, December 1967, 6-8.

³⁸ Social Planning Council of Ottawa and District, Annual Report, 1968-69, 27-28.

services, health, and recreation. New agencies proliferated as a result of these initiatives, among them were:

- The Neighbourhood Services Committee was established to develop a model for the development of neighbourhood services by local agencies cooperating together. Two coordinated services were in operation in the spring of 1970, one in Lower Town East and the other in Dalhousie Ward. The council covered the cost of a director hired in June 1970 for the first two neighbourhood-based social and health service centres. By June 1972 the director and supervisor of the units and the clerical staff became employees of the regional municipality.³⁹
- The Committee for Dental Services for People on Low Incomes continued its work completing a brief to regional government in December 1969. A recommendation by the committee was finally realized in May 1973 with the transfer of the dental clinics to the Regional Area Health Unit.⁴⁰
- In 1972-74, the council received \$89,258 from the Local Initiatives Program to operate a project that they titled Tasks Odd and Diverse, or TOAD, the purpose of which was to provide transportation for disabled persons. Through demonstrating the need for the service the council paved the way for disability transportation system by 1977.
- The Street Clinic, started in 1969, and with the assistance of the council became the Centretown Health Care Incorporated in 1973. Initial funding was provided by the Ontario Ministry of Health to hire a doctor and a nurse.⁴¹
- Following the recommendations of the Adolescent Resource Committee, regional government approved the funds for a Youth Coordinating Committee in 1973.
- The Council on Aging was begun in 1973. The council received sufficient funding to hire its first staff member, on April 1, 1975. Its mandate was to provide “information and coordination for the improvement of the delivery of services to older citizens.”⁴²
- A steering committee for a citizen advocacy program in Ottawa was established in September 1974. In March 1975, the committee was brought under the temporary auspices of the council.

³⁹ Ibid, 27.

⁴⁰ Social Planning Council of Ottawa and District, Annual Report, 1973-74.

⁴¹ Social Planning Council of Ottawa and District, Annual Report, 1973-74, 30.

⁴² Social Planning Council of Ottawa-Carleton, Annual Report, 1974-75, 29;1975-76, 32.

- The Community Information Centre, begun in 1965 as a council project and funded in part by the United Way was incorporated in July 1974 and became fully independent by November of that year.
- The Christmas Exchange, a project since the 1930s when it came to the council with the Social Service Index was made into a separate agency in the summer of 1974.⁴³
- The council's Job Placement and Personnel Committee, formed in June 1976, developed Line 1000, a cooperative job finding and placement service available to clients of the member agencies of the project. Line 1000 was funded as an outreach project in November 1979 by the federal Ministry of Employment and Immigration.⁴⁴
- At the request of Regional Social Services a joint SPC/District Health Council Committee prepared a proposal in the fall of 1977 on the most effective rehabilitation program for psychiatrically disabled. The result was the Causeway program, opened in 1979.⁴⁵

At mid-decade, the council had 87 member organizations run by a board of 33 members with almost equal numbers of men and women. There was an executive committee of seven. In the same year there was a small change in name to the Social Planning Council of Ottawa-Carleton.⁴⁶

In the fall of 1974 the council's involvement in bilingual services was strengthened by the founding of the Comité Consultatif sur le Bilinguisme with a mandate to set up a central translation service and language training for unilingual staff.⁴⁷

As governments in the region expanded their funding and their roles in the provision of social services, the Social Planning Council was there to help in these new directions. It sought and was successful in obtaining a wider range of funding, while it retained and expanded its role as the "social planning arm of the United Way."⁴⁸ While it became more involved with governments, it also became more involved with community groups and with individuals who were not directly the representatives of agency members. The council also became involved in outreach programs to newcomers and francophones as well participating in research and public consultations.⁴⁹

⁴³ Ibid, 41-42.

⁴⁴ Social Planning Council of Ottawa-Carleton, Annual Report, 1979-80, 31.

⁴⁵ Social Planning Council of Ottawa-Carleton, Annual Report, 1978-79, 26-27.

⁴⁶ The 1975 Annual Report contained a new section that outlined some of the basic details of the organization of the Council. Social Planning Council of Ottawa-Carleton, Annual Report, 1974-75, 2,18.

⁴⁷ Social Planning Council of Ottawa-Carleton, Annual Report, 1974-75, 15-16

⁴⁸ Social Planning Council of Ottawa-Carleton, Annual Report, 1975-76, 2.

⁴⁹ Social Planning Council of Ottawa-Carleton, Annual Report, 1975-76, 5; 1976-77, 5.

By mid-decade, the council was involved in several community development activities. The Housing Committee continued its promotion of housing for people with low income. In 1976, the committee produced a major policy document, *Housing: A Public Perspective*.⁵⁰ Staff at the council took an active role in the work of the social planning team for Le Breton Flats. They were involved with citizen groups in the Woodroffe new community, the Eastern Community, the Ottawa West Neighbourhood study, and the Dalhousie Planning Study. Staff also provided support to the Ottawa Tenants Council and the Federation of Citizens Associations and the Senior Citizens Council.⁵¹

The evaluation process begun in 1979 resulted in some significant changes in the council's objectives and membership as the decade of the 1980s opened. Discussion of citizen participation had been a part of the public discourse throughout the 1970s. The revisions to the objectives presented the council's "intent to work toward these goals through increased citizen participation and advocacy on behalf of those sectors of the community which are most in need." The intent was to institute changes in the membership to involve a wider range of the community in council decision-making. A new Program Planning Committee was put in place to establish yearly council priorities.⁵² Now membership would be extended to everyone volunteering to participate in the council's Standing Committees.⁵³

In the 1970s the council had experienced a substantial growth with a doubling of its budget over the 10 years of the decade. By 1980, the SPC's budget was \$528,570 for the calendar year. The United Way provided 54.3 per cent of the council's funds, while the Regional Municipality provided 20.1 per cent, and the Province of Ontario provided 11.1 per cent. In the 1980s the council would experience almost a tripling of its budget.⁵⁴

In June 1981 the council received funding from the regional government to enable the hiring of an income and employment program coordinator. The council's direction was in response to the deteriorating economic conditions of the early 1980s:

⁵⁰ Social Planning Council of Ottawa-Carleton, *Annual Report, 1976-77*, 45.

⁵¹ Social Planning Council of Ottawa-Carleton, *Annual Report, 1975-76*, 41-47.

⁵² Social Planning Council of Ottawa-Carleton *Annual Report, 1980-81*, 1.

⁵³ Social Planning Council of Ottawa-Carleton *Annual Report, 1981-82*, 1.

⁵⁴ Social Planning Council of Ottawa-Carleton, *Annual Report, 1980-81*, 20, 25.

*With economic conditions as they presently are, and in light of pessimistic forecasts, the council will rely on the Income and Employment Program to keep before us the needs of the lowest income population of the region. There is no doubt, whatsoever, that in times of restraint and high inflation, it is this group that is most adversely affected.*⁵⁵

The expansion of activities and staff forced the council to move to larger premises at 256 King Edward Avenue.⁵⁶

In recognition of the changing direction of the previous decade the council's objectives were rewritten. In future the council would act to "facilitate active citizen involvement in the analysis of social issues, the promotion of progressive social policies, the planning and development of human services," and would "advocate social policies and services which benefit disadvantaged residents of the region." The new bylaws also stated that the council would "assure regular assessment of social needs."⁵⁷

From the results of the program committee work of the council in the early 1980s it is clear that the emphasis in activity was shifting again. Now, more weight was being given to the research produced by professional staff. The Income and Employment Program produced publications on "Income Maintenance Programs in Ontario: The Ottawa-Carleton Regional Picture," and a Survival Guide for the Unemployed. The Special Needs Program produced a report on the Vocational Services for Psychiatrically Disabled Person in Ottawa-Carleton, another entitled the Francophone Psychiatrically Disabled Person in Ottawa-Carleton: A Neglected Population. As well, the Community Monitoring Committee produced Fewer Fingers in the Dike: Perceptions of the Impact on the Community of Children's Aid Society Service Reductions in Ottawa-Carleton.⁵⁸

During 1983, the council initiated a new type of membership. The new category of affiliated working groups are "groups of citizens who have come together in the Ottawa-Carleton region to define social problems, to examine the extent and implications of them, and to work towards the resolution of those problems." In January 1984, the Ottawa-Carleton Health Coalition became an affiliated working group of the council. The coalition was engaged in a campaign titled 'Caring for Medicare' during 1984.⁵⁹

⁵⁵ Social Planning Council of Ottawa-Carleton, Annual Report, 1981-82, 6.

⁵⁶ Social Planning Council of Ottawa-Carleton, Annual Report, 1981-82, 2, 14.

⁵⁷ Social Planning Council of Ottawa-Carleton, Revised Bylaws, 1982.

⁵⁸ Social Planning Council of Ottawa-Carleton, Annual Report, 1984-85, 7-11.

⁵⁹ Ibid, 30-31.

The Citizens' Advisory Committee to Regional Social Services, one such agency became an affiliated working group to the SPC in 1984. The Federation of Ottawa-Carleton Tenants Associations and Provisions Ottawa, the name taken by Ottawa's first food bank, the Ottawa-Carleton In-Home Child Care Providers Association, the Ottawa-Carleton Literacy Advocacy Group and Seules en Grand Nombre were on the list of new organizations affiliating with the SPC in 1985. In 1986, The Council on Addictions Programs, the Grassroots Financial Advisory Services of Ottawa-Carleton, and the Regional Coordinating Committee on Wife Assault joined the council as affiliated working groups while in 1987, it was the Zonta Centre for Young Single Parents that joined with the council.⁶⁰

The regional municipality increased the funding available to the council during 1984 to close to 30 per cent of its revenues. For the first time, the United Way's contribution to the council dropped just below 50 per cent. The agencies using the translation service provided the third largest amount of funding (in return for service) at almost 10 per cent. Total revenues rose to more than \$700,000 for the year with the region's contribution at more than \$213,000.⁶¹

The Social Planning Council was reaching its peak of activity in the mid-1980s, experiencing a period of extensive growth which would continue into the 1990s. Research at the council continued to grow in importance with the publication of the 500- page Trends 1985 report on social needs in the region of Ottawa-Carleton. The Income and Employment Program published a report on child poverty and organized a symposium on policies for full employment from which a book was published. The community monitoring committee published a report on women's issues while the SPC's Health Issues Task Force published its report during 1985. It was a very busy year for the council.⁶² During 1987 council staff completed a major study of emergency services commissioned by the regional social services department. Entitled the Issue is Poverty-An Analysis of Emergency Food, Clothing, and Shelter Services in Ottawa-Carleton, the report indicated that a diverse range of people depend on emergency services. A second major study undertaken by the council and by the Inter-agency ACCESS Committee "focussed on the access which members of minority ethnic groups have to health and social services in the region."⁶³

Advocacy was also of importance. The SPC reacted strongly to the recommendation by regional council's executive to cut the Special Assistance/

⁶⁰ Social Planning Council of Ottawa-Carleton, Annual Report, 1984-85, 20-26; 1985-86, 26-36; 1986-87, 30-44.

⁶¹ Ibid, 28-30.

⁶² Social Planning Council of Ottawa-Carleton, Annual Report, 1985-86, 9-16.

⁶³ Social Planning Council of Ottawa-Carleton, Annual Report, 1987-88, 2.

Supplementary Aid portions of the social services budget.⁶⁴ Still closely engaged with the United Way, the council explained the relationship between the two organizations this way:

*The Social Planning Council has worked closely with the United Way of Ottawa-Carleton since its inception. Whereas many other United Ways across Canada have a social planning component within their own organization, Ottawa-Carleton United Way entrusts this responsibility fully to the Social Planning Council. This close relationship is reflected in the by-laws of the two organizations.*⁶⁵

By the mid-1980s it appeared that the economy had recovered from the recession combined with inflation at the beginning of the decade. But, underlying the recovery were some major problems that were becoming more visible. Prolonged unemployment was leading larger numbers of people to social assistance. Extreme poverty and homelessness became more prevalent in Canadian cities in the later part of the 1980s.

Despite the range of activities the regional government was dissatisfied with the council's output in return for the funds that were being provided. In 1989 the council began a restructuring where program committees would be replaced with forums organized around social themes and raising issues for study. The council would now rely on multi-disciplinary staff and a close relationship with the region.⁶⁶

Putting the principles of this reorganization into practice occurred during 1989-90 when the four program committees were replaced by seven forums: income and employment; shelter; special needs; French language services; social assistance reform; health policy; and social services to ethnic and visible minorities. The council maintained its links to affiliated working groups.⁶⁷

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At the beginning of the 1990s, the council was reaching what would prove to be the peak of activity over its 75 year history. In 1990, the council received a total of almost \$1.3 million in revenues. There were four major sources of this revenue: 43.2 per cent was provided by the United Way, 23.3 per cent by the

⁶⁴ Social Planning Council of Ottawa-Carleton, Annual Report, 1986-87, 8-15, 17.

⁶⁵ Social Planning Council of Ottawa-Carleton, Annual Report, 1987-88, 20.

⁶⁶ Social Planning Council of Ottawa-Carleton., Annual Report, 1988-89, 2.

⁶⁷ Social Planning Council of Ottawa-Carleton, Annual Report, 1989-90, 2

regional municipality, 10.4 per cent by the province of Ontario and 9.3 per cent by translation fees.⁶⁸

For several years at the beginning of the decade, the council maintained its level of activity and funding. At the same time there were growing social and economic pressures on the social services and on the non-profit sector in general. With a recession deepening in the country, the numbers of people on social assistance began to grow rapidly despite attempts by the provincial government to maintain spending through deficit financing. This pressure resulted in a change in government in Ontario in 1995 as the NDP were defeated by the Conservatives on a platform of reducing taxes, the deficit, and welfare expenditures while putting those on welfare back to work.

At the federal level, the Conservative government had made repeated attempts to reduce social program spending, several of which were thwarted by public reaction. By the 1990s, there was broader support for deficit reduction at the expense of social program spending. The new federal Liberal government elected in 1993 moved to terminate the Canada Assistance Plan and to replace the Established Programs Financing Act with a new Canada Health and Social Transfer. The new CHST would provide combined funding to the provinces for health, education, and social assistance but with only a residence regulation on the use of the social assistance portion of the funding. The CHST also provided substantially fewer dollars than had been available previously. Expenditure reductions had finally come to the sector by the middle of the 1990s.

In the 1995-96 annual report, council president, Ron Caza noted that “a new era is upon us that has dramatically changed the social fabric of our community.”⁶⁹ When both the province and the region withdrew funding, the council’s budget fell from \$1.021 million to \$450,661. While United Way funding remained stable from 1995 to 1996 it had already fallen from a peak of \$573,785 in 1991.⁷⁰

United Way had now, once again, become the councils principal funder. The result was shift in emphasis, on doing “research on the social and economic reality of the Ottawa-Carleton region, ...linked to direct action with the community. Our involvement in community activities should guide our research choices and the research undertaken should contribute to community action.”⁷¹

A report published in the spring of 1998 captured the new mood. Titled *Doing Less with Less*, it reported on a survey of 300 social and community agencies

⁶⁸ Social Planning Council of Ottawa-Carleton, Annual Report, 1990-9137.

⁶⁹ Social Planning Council of Ottawa-Carleton, Annual Report, 1995-96, 1.

⁷⁰ Social Planning Council of Ottawa-Carleton, Annual Report, 1996-97, 8

⁷¹ Social Planning Council of Ottawa-Carleton, Annual Report, 1997-98, 3.

in the region identifying changes to programs and services that affected the sector since 1996. In order to reduce office costs, the council made a decision to move to a new location on 280 Metcalfe Street.⁷² With reductions from the United Way, the council's budget for 1998 had fallen to just \$387,294. As a result of the precipitous loss of both provincial and regional government funding, the United Way was providing over 82 per cent of the council's budget.

The message from the President, David Welch, a professor of social work at the University of Ottawa, sounded a more positive note:

*Last year saw the council finally stabilizing after a rather unstable period. The council recognized its role as different from other community-based agencies in that its mandate was focussed on supporting other community-based agencies through research. Over the past year, the council sought to define its unique role.*⁷³

To help to better plan its work, the council resorted to the time honoured method of bringing representatives of many community agencies together in the first annual consultation. The council also released a report entitled, *A Tale of Two Cities*, produced jointly with the United Way that identified socio-economic trends, offering a picture of Ottawa at the end of the decade. Despite the decline in the number of staff, and its research focus, the council also remained active in several projects in the community including the People's Hearings Monitoring Committee, the Community Economic Development Research Group, L'Assemblée francophone, and the Social Planning Network of Ontario.

The council continued its rebuilding program over the next three years. Despite a further decline in its United Way allocation the council's revenues stayed above \$400,000 through additional project funding received from the city of Ottawa and from private funders. A decision by the United Way to terminate the special relationship, which the two organizations had enjoyed since its inception, led to a further funding reduction.

The council has begun the process of adapting to a changed reality. Through proposals for research, community consultation, and social planning to public and private funding organizations it had begun to rebuild its activities and revenues. It has also begun to rebuild membership from both individuals and organizations in the community. It is now on a path to recreating itself as a community-based organization with the capacity for high quality research. Its research uses data drawn from its own consultations with local service

⁷² Ibid, 5.

⁷³ Social Planning Council of Ottawa, Annual Report, 1998-99, 3.

providers and community groups, surveys of local citizens, and external bodies such as Statistics Canada.

Nonetheless the council remains true to its roots with its many engagements in the life of the community, involving many volunteers in the quest to improve the quality of life for all citizens of Ottawa, in particular for those citizens who have been marginalized by their income, gender, language, ability, age, ethnicity, race, and sexual orientation. The new direction for the council in the 21st century was summed up this way in the 2002 annual report. It is a mandate for the future that continues in its long tradition of the council's commitment to community social planning:

*Our mandate is to provide residents of Ottawa with the means to exercise informed leadership on issues affecting their social and economic well-being. We believe that the exercise of informed leadership is based upon access to high-quality research and greater opportunities for people to share ideas and work together for improvements in their quality of life.*⁷⁴

As of February 2003 the Council changed its' legal name to 'Social Planning Council of Ottawa' in response to the amalgamation of the City of Ottawa.

Presidents of the Social Planning Council of Ottawa

Mr. W. Lyle Reid, 1928 - 30
Major Colonel G.S. Macfarlane, 1930 - 32
K.A. Greene, 1933 - 34
Dr. Campbell Laidlaw, 1935 - 36
Mr. Henri St. Jacques, K.C., 1936 - 37

W.M. Connor, 1941 - 44
A.L. Cawthorne Page, 1944 - 45
Dr. J.A. Stiles, 1946 - 47-?

Mr. Dwight L. Donaldson, 1951 - 52
Mrs. H.Beverley Thorburn, 1952 - 55
Mr. R.C. Laberge, 1955 - 57
Mr. Hyman Gould, 1957 - 59
Mr Neil Morrison. 1960 - September 1961
Mr. G. Malcolm Welch, September 1961 - 64
Magistrate Livius Sherwood, 1964 - 66
Mr. Bernard Benoit, 1966 - 68
Mr. Sterling V. Suggett, 1968 - 71
Dr. June B Pimm, 1971 - 73

⁷⁴ Social Planning Council of Ottawa, Annual Report, June 2002, 3.

Miss A Dorothy Milligan, 1973 - 75,
Tim Hogan, 1975 - 78
Mary Kehoe, 1979 – 80
Gordon Irving, 1980-81, 1981-82, 1982-83
Suzanne Johnson, 1983-84, 1984-85
Rev. Peter Schonenbach, 1985-86, 1986-87
Eleanor Ryan, 1987-88, 1988-89
Ronald Melchers, 1989-90, 1990-91
Margaret Nelson, 1991-92
Mary-Anne Nixon, 1992-93, 1993-94
Ronald Caza, 1994-95, 1995-96
Eileen Dooley, 1996-97
Sheila Redmond, 1997 – March 1998
David Welch, March 1998-98, 1998-99, 1999-2000, 2000-01, 2001-02
Joyce Turnbull, 2002-03

Executive Directors of the Social Planning Council of Ottawa

Mr. W.E. Weld, 1931-33 (Voluntary Secretary)
Marjorie Stinson Thomson, 1933 – March 27, 1936 (Between 1933 and 1953
the Council of Social Agencies and the Community Chests shared an
Executive Director)
Miss Joy Maines, Executive Secretary, May 1936- June 1945
Mr. Sidney. T. Smith, March 1946 – ?
John Yerger ? –1953 In this year he became director of the Community Chest
only
Dr. Joe Laycock, 1953 - September 1, 1962 (Council only. From 1953, the
two agencies no longer shared an Executive Director.)
Kate Macdonnell, 1963 - May 1964
Marion Splane, 1964 (Voluntary Secretary)
John Horricks, Nov 1964 -74
Bill Zimmerman, 1974 –December 1979
Frank Martin, March 1980 - Nov 1988
Suzanne Lavergne, November 1988-April 1989
Jim Zamprelli, April 1989 - 1996
Terry Gilhen, 1996 - 1998
Luc Ladouceur, September 1998 – March 2001
No one filled the position during this period
Dianne Urquhart, 2002-