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Town of Aurora  
**Community Advisory Committee**  
No. CAC20-005

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**Subject:** Town of Aurora Proposed Anti-Idling Policy

**Prepared by:** Natalie Kehle, Energy and Climate Change Analyst

**Department:** Planning and Development Services

**Date:** September 17, 2020

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## Recommendation

1. That Report No. CAC20-005 be received; and
2. That the Community Advisory Committee comments regarding the Town of Aurora Proposed Anti-Idling Policy be received and referred to staff for consideration.

## Executive Summary

The purpose of this report is to present to the Community Advisory Committee the proposed Anti-Idling Policy for the Town of Aurora (see Attachment 1). The Policy establishes guidance on limiting unnecessary idling of vehicles and equipment owned by the Town as well as the public within the municipal boundaries. The Policy provisions align with existing Town By-laws limiting vehicle idling by the public, specifically the Noise By-law (By-law Number 4787-06.P).

- The Anti-Idling Policy addresses three important Town goals; limits vehicle idling of Town vehicles and the public, provides a three-pronged education campaign, and introduces an enforcement mechanism for non-compliance.
- The Anti-Idling Policy is based on the Noise By-Law and leverages the Town's existing enforcement mechanism.
- Based on the experience in implementing the Anti-Idling Policy (through the education campaign and the enforcement mechanism), staff recommend that the Policy be reviewed in two years for any modifications and the consideration of a freestanding by-law to better align with neighboring municipalities, if necessary.

## **Background**

### **Council Motion**

On June 26, 2018, Council passed the following motion:

“Now Therefore Be It Hereby Resolved That staff be directed to develop an Anti-idling policy that reviews best practices and includes an enforcement mechanism; and Be It Further Resolved That the report includes a proposed public education campaign.”

### **Previous Town Anti-Idling Efforts**

The Town's Noise By-law (By-law Number 4787-06.P) was enacted in 2006 with provisions limiting vehicle idling with the primary intent of preventing disturbance from noisy vehicles idling in, or near, residential areas, rather than to reduce vehicle emissions.

According to By-law Number 4787-06.P, Schedule A, General Noise Prohibitions, Section 9: the operation of a vehicle that is stationary is limited to five minutes. There are two exceptions: when the engines or motors are essential to the basic function of the vehicle or equipment; and where weather conditions justify the use of the engine or motor for safety or welfare.

The Town's Parks and Public Places By-law (By-law Number 4752-05.P) was enacted in 2005 and includes limits to vehicle idling. The intent for the by-law is to limit nuisances, including noise from vehicle idling, within Town parks.

According to By-law Number 4752-05.P, Section 30 - Other Activities, where the idling of engines is limited to five (5) minutes.

### **Corporate Environmental Action Plan (CEAP) 2010-2015**

Town initiatives involving limiting vehicle greenhouse gas emissions from vehicle idling started in 2010, in the first CEAP. In 2010, the Town introduced an anti-idling initiative, aimed at educating the public on the environmental impacts of idling vehicles. This initiative included the installation of 17 Idle Free Zone signs at six Town-owned facilities.

### **Corporate Environmental Action Plan (CEAP) 2018-2023**

The most recent CEAP also aims at tackling vehicle idling in the Town with the goal of reducing greenhouse gas emissions. Action items include reducing idling from Town

staff, the public and increasing the overall community awareness of the impacts of idling. The proposed Anti-Idling Policy addresses these actions.

## Analysis

**The Anti-Idling Policy addresses three important goals; limits vehicle idling from Town Staff and the public, provides a three-pronged education campaign, and introduces an enforcement mechanism when required.**

Since the Policy applies to all of Aurora, this includes Town Staff and the public. Town staff using fleet vehicles will need to comply with the general provisions of the Policy. In addition to the Policy, Town Staff will have further direction, training and compliance for vehicle idling under the proposed Green Fleet Policy, scheduled to be presented to Council later this year.

The implementation of the Policy includes education campaigns and enforcement by Town's By-law Officers. Education will be the main strategy with the public in implementing the provisions of the Policy. A Town Webpage will be dedicated to idling education, with facts, stats and tips for reducing vehicle idling (see Attachment 4 with the City of Barrie Anti-Idling Webpage as example).

The Town's Communications Team will lead three types of education campaigns:

- (1) An Initial Anti-Idling Town-wide Campaign, which consists of a onetime promotion of the Policy, over the course of a Season, once the Policy is approved by Council. The campaign's main focus is on the environmental and health benefits of limiting idling and on the existing Town By-laws that limit idling in the Town.
- (2) Periodic and Targeted Anti-Idling Campaigns, which consists of educating a focused group based on needs. Periodic focus groups may include, but not limited to:
  - GO station users
  - School zones
  - Town recreation centres
  - Bus stations and carpool parking lots
- (3) Seasonal Reminder Campaign, which consists of an annual reminder of the Policy to the general public.

Campaign strategies may include, but not limited to, social media announcements, Town Notice Board, Town Website, the use of signage, handing out flyers, etc.

By-law will play an important role in implementing an education first campaign in cases of failure to comply, while utilizing the enforcement mechanism outlined in the Policy at their discretion.

**Anti-Idling Policy is based on the Noise By-Law and leverages the existing enforcement mechanism**

The development of the Anti-Idling Policy is based on the existing Town by-laws limiting unnecessary vehicle idling. Aurora has two existing by-laws that limit vehicle idling; the Noise By-law and the Park By-law. Since the Noise By-law is the more extensive of the two in terms of limitations and exemptions, the Policy follows the Noise By-law (see Attachment 3).

The Policy mirrors the general provision of the Noise By-law, which limits vehicle idling to five minutes. Two exemptions are when idling is essential to the basic function of the vehicle or equipment it is running or due to weather conditions.

Non-compliance of the Anti-Idling Policy may lead to penalties, if found to be in violation of the Noise By-law, at the discretion of the By-law Officer.

**Based on the experience in implementing the Anti-Idling Policy (through the education campaign and the enforcement mechanism), staff recommend that the Policy be reviewed in two years for any modifications to the Policy and the consideration of a freestanding by-law to better align with neighboring municipalities.**

Based on a municipal scan of neighboring jurisdictions (see Attachment 2 - including Newmarket, East Gwillimbury, King, Markham and Richmond Hill), Aurora and King are the only municipalities that utilize a Noise By-law to limit vehicle idling. Free-standing anti-idling by-laws are the most common mechanism municipalities in Ontario use to regulate vehicle idling (over 35 Ontario municipalities use stand-alone by-laws). Aurora and King both limit idling to 5 minutes, while other local jurisdictions limit to 2-3 minutes.

The trend in anti-idling policy in Ontario is to further reduce the number of minutes a vehicle is allowed to idle, not only for the reduction in the greenhouse gases emitted from vehicles, but also to support the enforcement of the by-laws. Based on the City of Toronto's experience with anti-idling since the 1990s, they lowered the allowable idling time from three minutes to one minute because it facilitated enforcement of the by-law.

In addition, Natural Resources Canada promotes a one-minute limit as a national guideline for limiting idling time.

Since the Town's Noise By-law was developed with a focus on limiting noise, not idling specifically, there are gaps in the provisions when compared to neighboring municipalities' stand-alone anti-idling by-laws. To align with neighboring Municipalities on idling limits, staff recommend that the Anti-Idling Policy be reviewed after a trial period of two years after this Policy is endorsed, to reflect the lessons learned during implementation and to align with local jurisdictions by-laws. Areas to consider in the alignment are the number of minutes a vehicle can idle (from 5 minutes to 1-3 minutes), and updating the list of exemptions to the by-law to better clarify when a vehicle is in violation or not.

## Legal Considerations

The implementation of the Anti-Idling Policy does not affect the Town's current by-laws and enforcement will rely on the Town's existing Noise and Parks By-laws. If enforcement action is necessary, the Town's By-law officers will be required to show that a violation of the Parks or Noise By-law occurred. Consequently, in order to prosecute a charge, an officer would not only have to demonstrate that a vehicle has in fact been idling for a period of longer than five minutes, but rather that it resulted in a noise in violation of the Noise By-law or created a nuisance in a park or a public place in violation of the Parks By-law.

## Financial Implications

The estimated cost for implementing the Anti-Idling Policy is \$3,000 in the first year to support the Initial Anti-Idling Town-wide marketing campaign and no additional costs to support the Seasonal Reminder Campaign and the Periodic and Targeted Anti-Idling Campaigns, as per Table 1 below. The cost associated with implementing the Policy falls under the PDS-Engineering's current budget.

**Table 1 – Estimated Cost Associated with the Anti-Idling Policy Education Campaign**

Pamphlet/postcard (for by-law distribution)	\$ 500.00
Newspaper Ads (Auroran & Aurora Banner)	\$1,500.00
Paid Social Media campaign (Facebook & Instagram)	\$ 200.00

Mobile Signs	\$ 800.00
Ongoing advertising in the Town Noticeboard when space permits (Auroran)	\$ 0
Series of York Region Media Group Geo-Fencing Digital Ads	\$ 0
Ongoing social media posts	\$ 0
Website presence (banner image, dedicated webpage, etc.)	\$ 0
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$ 3,000.00</b>

The \$1,500 estimate is for ads in both the Auroran and the Aurora Banner for initial launch of the Policy. The Noticeboard, which is a full-page ad, goes into the Auroran on a biweekly basis. The Town will promote the anti-idling campaign in the Noticeboard where space permits.

The \$3,000 estimate is for the first year of the campaign, whereas in subsequent years the Policy will be promoted online via social media, the Town's e-newsletter and website, as well as the Town Noticeboard, all of which have no budget implications for this campaign. If there is budget in subsequent years, paid online advertising to reach those not following the Town's social media accounts could be used, as well as Mobile Signs for a specified month in the year.

In a typical year, the Town performs in-person outreach activities regularly, another opportunity to promote the education campaign in person at no additional cost (excluding any printing needs for additional handouts). In-person outreach opportunities will be re-evaluated for next year.

## Communications Considerations

The Town of Aurora will use 'Inform' as the level of engagement for this project, providing information and generating awareness to the public through a robust education campaign.

There are five different levels of community engagement to consider, with each level providing the community more involvement in the decision-making process. These levels are: Inform, Consult, Involve, Collaborate and Empower. Examples of each can be found in the Community Engagement Policy. These options are based on the International Association of Public Participation (IAP2) Spectrum and assist in

establishing guidelines for clearly communicating with our public and managing community engagement.

### **Link to Strategic Plan**

This project supports the Strategic Plan goal of supporting environmental stewardship and sustainability, Objective 2: Continue to invest in green initiatives and infrastructure to promote environmentalism locally.

### **Alternative(s) to the Recommendation**

None.

### **Conclusions**

Staff, having considered the mechanisms available to limit the unnecessary idling of vehicles in the Town, are of the opinion that a Town policy is the appropriate procedure at this time. Staff therefore request that Council endorse the attached Anti-Idling Policy.

The Policy addresses important Town goals in reducing greenhouse gas emissions in the atmosphere within Town limits through a robust education campaign and enforcement mechanism that leverages existing Town by-laws that limit vehicle idling.

### **Attachments**

Attachment 1 – Policy No. CORP XX Town of Aurora Anti-Idling Policy

Attachment 2 – Municipal Scan of Anti-Idling By-laws

Attachment 3 – Noise By-law No. 4787-06.P

Attachment 4 – City of Barrie Anti-Idling Education Website

### **Previous Reports**

None.

### **Pre-submission Review**

Agenda Management Team review on September 3, 2020

## **Approvals**

**Approved by David Waters, Director, Planning and Development Services**