



100 John West Way
Aurora, Ontario
L4G 6J1
(905) 727-3123
aurora.ca

Town of Aurora

Committee of the Whole Report

No. OPS26-010

Subject: Waterworks By-law Update

Prepared by: Dan Naccarato, Manager of Public Works

Department: Operational Services

Date: March 10, 2026

Recommendation

1. That Report No. OPS26-010 be received; and
2. That staff bring forward the new Waterworks, Water Meter and Water Rates By-law, and any related by-law amendments, to a future Council meeting for enactment.

Executive Summary

This report presents proposed updates to the Town of Aurora's (the Town's) Waterworks By-law Number 3305-91 to modernize the existing regulatory framework and to ensure it reflects current operational requirements, industry best practices and legislative standards. The existing Waterworks By-law, originally enacted as By-law 3305-91, has undergone only limited amendments to "Schedule A" over time and no longer fully supports the Town's evolving needs:

- The need to modernize the existing bylaw to address concerns with water meters and the distribution system.
- Summary and rationale for the proposed amendments to the Waterworks By-law.
- Proposed updates were developed with cross-departmental expertise and a collaborative process strengthening the bylaw framework.
- Aligning Aurora's bylaw with proven municipal standards across Ontario and the Greater Toronto Area to ensure current and defensible practices.

- Introducing a modern, compliance-focused enforcement tool through Administrative Monetary Penalties.

Background

The need to modernize the existing bylaw to address concerns with water meters and the distribution system.

By-law 3305-91 is the most recent bylaw governing water meters and water related rates. While Schedule A has been periodically amended to reflect increases in the cost of water services, the core provisions have remained largely unchanged for more than 30 years. During this time, metering technologies, construction practices, operational procedures, and industry standards have advanced considerably.

The current bylaw lacks clarity around responsibilities for meter installation and protection, enforcement mechanisms, requirements for access, and standards for leak management. It also does not reflect modern development practices or the use of advanced metering technologies. These gaps have created operational inefficiencies and inconsistent application of standards across different property categories.

Staff have therefore initiated a comprehensive review to update the framework, broaden its scope to ensure it reflects current operational requirements and best practices. The attached proposed new bylaw incorporates the positive aspects of By-law 3305-91 with modern required changes, making it more aligned with bylaws in other municipalities.

The updated bylaw has been developed through a detailed review to broaden its scope and to introduce clearer and more consistent requirements. The proposed revisions clarify roles and responsibilities, establish standardized metering practices, enhance protections for the drinking water system, and strengthen compliance tools.

Analysis

Summary and rationale for the proposed amendments to the Waterworks By-law.

The Table below identifies the main proposed updates to the by-law:

Category	Key Update(s)	Rationale
Roles, Definitions & Accountability	Clarifies and formally distinguishes the roles, responsibilities and accountabilities of property owners, occupants, tenants and account holders and the Town. Establishes clear assignment of obligations that were not differentiated in the current bylaw.	To eliminate ambiguity, improve accountability, and ensure obligations are clearly assigned to the appropriate party.
Modernize Definitions & Property Classifications	Introduces updated terminology and definitions to reflect current technologies and property classifications, including the addition of Industrial, Commercial, and Institutional (ICI) properties, replacing outdated apartment-focused language.	To align the bylaw with other municipalities and to ensure consistent regulatory applications across all property classes.
Mandatory Metering Standards, Single Meters and Installation Responsibility	Establishes mandatory water metering and standardizes measurement through one meter per service connection to ensure consistent and accurate water use measurement. Resolves inconsistencies in the current bylaw by requiring one meter per service connection for new construction (unless otherwise authorized by the Town), while permitting existing installations to remain under a grandfathering provision until property changes occur.	To ensure accurate consumption measurement, equitable billing and improved water management/loss control. To standardize service delivery moving forward while minimizing disruption and financial burden on existing properties.

Category	Key Update(s)	Rationale
	Assigns responsibility to property owners for meter installation, protection, leak management and provision of authorized Town access for inspection and servicing. Eliminates the option for flat rates for new properties and requires the installation of a water meter. Existing properties currently billed a flat rate can continue with this arrangement until there are any major renovations or re-development of the property.	To clearly allocate operational responsibilities and ensure meters are protected and accessible for effective system management. To ensure all new properties are metered, while recognizing the potential financial impacts to existing property owners by providing a phased implementation approach.
Town Maintenance Responsibility	Confirms that ongoing meter maintenance remains the responsibility of the Town.	To maintain consistent service standards and preserve integrity of Town-owned infrastructure.
Owner Notification & Inspection Requirements	Requires owners to notify the Town when meters are installed, arrange tagging and identification within prescribed timelines, and ensure properties are not occupied until meters are inspected and approved.	To ensure installations meet technical standards and are verified before water service commencement.
Private Plumbing Responsibility	Requires owners to maintain and repair all private plumbing systems, including piping, fixtures, building control valves and leak remediation.	To delineate public versus private responsibilities and reduce avoidable system losses and service disruptions.
System Protection & Public Health Safeguards	Strengthens protections by prohibiting unauthorized access, cross-connections, tampering with meters, breaking seals, altering configurations or modifying plumbing that could comprise measurement integrity.	To protect drinking water quality, maintain system integrity, and ensure accurate measurement and billing.

Category	Key Update(s)	Rationale
Administrative Monetary Penalties (AMPs)	Introduces AMPs to enforce compliance, subject to development of applicable fee schedule and legislative requirements, including an amendment to the AMPs By-law.	To provide an efficient, proportional and enforceable compliance mechanism that supports regulatory effectiveness.
Application and Occupancy Controls	Establishes application processes and timelines for new meter installations and prohibits occupancy without a water meter.	To ensure all active properties are metered from the outset and integrated into the billing system.
Meter Installation Standards	Provides formal requirements and guidance for proper installation to prevent damage, neglect, and to ensure accessibility for maintenance.	To reduce damage, ensure worker safety and facilitate ongoing maintenance and accurate readings.
Meter Sizing	Requires meter sizing to be determined by professional engineers retained by the owner based on expected flow rates to ensure accurate measurement and minimize under-registration or water loss.	To optimize measurement accuracy, prevent under-registration, and protect system performance.
Ownership of Metering Equipment	Clarifies that meters, remote readout devices and Advanced Metering Infrastructure (AMI) equipment are Town property.	To clarify asset ownership, support lifecycle management and protect municipal investment.
Cost Responsibility for Meters	Formally establishes that property owners are responsible for paying to the Town a cost-recovery fee for the supply of a new water meter, reflecting existing practice.	To ensure growth-related infrastructure costs are borne by benefiting properties rather than the broader tax base.
Bypass Piping Prohibition	Prohibits new bypass piping installations and authorizes the Town to require removal of existing bypass piping at the owner's expense.	To prevent unmetered consumption and maintain the accuracy and integrity of billing.

Category	Key Update(s)	Rationale
Meter Chambers	Expands and clarifies requirements for water meter chambers, including installation standards, responsibility and maintenance obligations. Maintains requirement for chambers when meters cannot be installed inside buildings.	To ensure safe, accessible and compliant installations where indoor placement is not feasible.
Access for Inspection	Requires unobstructed access to buildings and meters, including for meters located in a meter room. Permit inspection fees to be charged where access is denied or meters are inaccessible.	To enable efficient operations, minimize service delays, and recover costs associated with non-compliance.
Meter Testing	Establishes updated processes for testing meters suspected of inaccuracy, aligned with current industry standards and specifications.	To maintain billing accuracy and provide a transparent, standardized verification process.
Meter Relocation	Provides a formal process and authority for relocating water meters, when required.	To allow operational flexibility while ensuring installations remain safe, accessible and compliant.
Meter Replacement	Specifies that meter replacement costs are covered by the Town while owners must maintain plumbing systems and comply with Town response times.	To protect municipal assets while ensuring private systems do not hinder replacement activities.
Leak Enforcement & Service Interruption	Authorizes the Town to shut off water service if owners fail to address leaks within their buildings, or as a result of non-payment, supporting system conservation and emergency response.	To conserve water, prevent system losses and protect infrastructure during shortages or emergencies.

Category	Key Update(s)	Rationale
Service Discontinuation Process	Clarifies and strengthens procedures for discontinuation of water service, ensuring proper disconnection of meters and recovery of associated costs.	To ensure accurate account closure, asset protection, and recovery of municipal costs.
Temporary Water Use (Construction/Contractors)	Updates provisions for temporary construction water use by contractors or builders, including payment through temporary metering or bulk water fees. Once a permanent meter is installed, the metered volume governs ongoing billing.	To ensure fair and accountable billing for temporary consumption and reduce untracked water use.
Private Fire Hydrants	Introduces requirements for private fire hydrants, assigning maintenance and repair responsibility to property owners.	To clearly define ownership and to ensure hydrants remain functional and compliant for fire protection.
Fire Hydrant Protection & Water Use Controls	Prohibits tampering with, covering, or obstructing hydrants and prohibits unauthorized water withdrawal. Requires Town permission and appropriate backflow prevention when access is granted.	To protect public safety, prevent contamination and maintain reliable fire protection infrastructure.
Fire Flow Testing	Formally incorporates fire flow testing as a recognized service consistent with existing Fees and Charges By-law provisions.	To standardize service delivery and ensure cost recovery for this specialized service.
Billing	Clarifies that where the owner of a property is not the account holder, the owner shall be jointly and severally liable for the payment of all water rates payable for their property, and that amounts owing may be added to the tax roll and collected in the same manner as taxes.	To provide a transparent, standardized process that ensures the Town can recover unpaid amounts.

Proposed updates were developed with cross-departmental expertise and a collaborative process strengthening the bylaw framework.

The proposed updates were developed through collaboration across multiple Town Departments and Divisions, including Operational Services, Legal Services, Building, Finance, and By-Law Services.

This cross-departmental approach ensures the updated bylaw aligns with existing billing practices, inspection and permitting processes, enforcement capabilities, and customer service expectations.

This collaborative process supports consistent application of the bylaw, reduces the potential for conflicting requirements, and ensures the proposed framework can be effectively administered once implemented.

Aligning Aurora's bylaw with proven municipal standards across Ontario and the Greater Toronto Area to ensure current and defensible practices.

The updated bylaw reflects regulatory practices that are widely adopted by municipalities across Ontario and within the Greater Toronto Area (GTA). These include standardized metering requirements, clear assignment of responsibilities to property owners, access provisions for inspection and servicing, protections against unauthorized connections, and the use of modern compliance and enforcement tools.

Aligning the Town's bylaw with common municipal practices supports consistency for developers, contractors, and property owners who operate across multiple jurisdictions. It also ensures that the Town's regulatory framework reflects current industry standards and expectations related to water accountability, system protection, and revenue integrity.

This alignment reduces ambiguity, strengthens the Town's positions when addressing non-compliance and helps ensure that Aurora's water meter practices remain current, defensible, and comparable to those of peer municipalities.

Introducing a modern, compliance-focused enforcement tool through Administrative Monetary Penalties.

The proposed bylaw introduces the authority to apply Administrative Monetary Penalties (AMPs) as an alternative, compliance-focused enforcement mechanism. AMPs are intended to encourage timely correction of non-compliance related to meter

installation and the water distribution system, protection, access, and unauthorized use, while reducing reliance on the Provincial Offences Act process.

The use of AMPs provides the Town with a modern, proportionate enforcement tool that is commonly used to address regulatory matters where compliance, rather than punishment, is the primary objective. This approach supports operational efficiency by allowing staff to address contraventions in a timely and consistent manner, minimizes administrative burden on the court system, and improves the Town's ability to recover costs associated with enforcement.

The bylaw itself establishes the enabling authority only. Implementation of the AMP Framework will be subject to further work to ensure full compliance with legislative requirements, including the development of a fee schedule, policies and procedures, and appropriate mechanism. Staff are proposing the introduction of AMPs, with supporting work underway to develop the necessary fee schedule and meet all legislative obligations. The necessary by-law amendments to the Town's Administrative Penalty By-law to implement applicable AMPs will be brought forward separately for Council enactment.

Advisory Committee Review

Not applicable.

Legal Considerations

Pursuant to the *Municipal Act, 2001*, the Town operates and maintains the municipal drinking water system. The Town has authority to regulate and pass bylaws with respect to the water distribution system, including the administration of its waterworks and water meters, charging fees for the provision of water, collection of wastewater and storm water, and undertaking enforcement. The Town's current bylaw governing waterworks and distribution requires an update, and as such a new comprehensive bylaw is being proposed to replace it. The proposed by-law also includes rates for the distribution of water, wastewater collection and storm water services, which will be outlined in a schedule attached to the by-law as in the previous version. Other applicable fees will be outlined in the Town's Fees and Charges By-law.

The attached draft Waterworks, Water Meter and Water Rates By-law is being provided for reference and may require further updates. If this report is endorsed by Council, an

updated version of the bylaw will be brought forward for passage at a future Council meeting as required.

Financial Implications

Should the proposed amendments to the bylaw be approved, its accompanying Schedule "A" – Water, Wastewater, and Storm Sewer Rates would require updating to include the rates effective May 1, 2026. The rates are set to recover the Town and Regional costs of water distribution and asset management.

Communications Considerations

To inform residents this report will be posted on the Town's website. The updated bylaw will also be posted on the website and changes to the bylaw communicated as appropriate.

Climate Change Considerations

The recommendations from this report does not impact greenhouse gas emissions or impact climate change adaptation.

Link to Strategic Plan

The updates to the Waterworks By-Law support the Strategic Plan goal of Supporting an Exceptional Quality of Life for All through its accomplishment in satisfying requirements in the following key objective within this goal statement:

Invest in sustainable infrastructure. Maintain and expand infrastructure to support forecasted population growth through technology, waste management, roads, emergency services and accessibility.

Alternative(s) to the Recommendation

1. There are no alternatives to the recommendations presented in this report.

Conclusions

The need to update and modernize the Town's Waterworks By-law has become evident. As operational practices, service expectations, industry standards and legislative

requirements have evolved, the existing bylaw no longer provides the clarity, consistency or regulatory strength needed to support the Town's water system. The proposed updates establish a modern, comprehensive and enforceable framework that supports effective water metering, protects the drinking water system and aligns with current municipal standards. Adoption of the bylaw will ensure the Town is better equipped to manage its water infrastructure, support compliance, and provide reliable, efficient services to residents, businesses and developers.

Attachments

Attachment 1 – Draft Waterworks, Water Meter and Water Rates By-law

Previous Reports

None.

Pre-submission Review

Agenda Management Team review on February 12, 2026.

Approvals

Approved by Sara Tienkamp, Director, Operational Services

Approved by Doug Nadorozny, Chief Administrative Officer