

## Aurora moves forward on cracking down on idling vehicles

Aurora could begin the next phase of their anti-idling campaign as early as this month.

Sitting at the Committee level last week, Council gave the tentative green light to a key change in their anti-idling policy: reducing idling time from five minutes down to two minutes

The change will bring Aurora in line with surrounding communities which have a much narrower window on idle cars before bylaw officers can knock on car windows for enforcement and education.

“Staff have been tackling vehicle idling over the last year and a half through the implementation of the Anti-Idling Policy, which was approved by Council on October 22, 2020,” said Natalie Kehle, Energy and Climate Change Analyst for the Town of Aurora. “In addition to approving the Policy, staff were directed to report back to Council after one year with a policy review. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the initial anti-idling education campaign was delayed to the Fall of 2021.”

Compared to other York Region municipalities, Aurora and King were the only two that use their respective Noise Bylaws to limit vehicle idling.

But enforcement can no longer be done through Noise Bylaws. While enforcement of the new policy will be a challenge, staff admitted, education will still go a long way towards making a difference.

“Due to recent changes in the Noise Bylaw, the Anti-Idling policy can no longer fall on it for enforcing limitations on idling in relation to vehicle air pollution,” said Kehle. “The new Noise Bylaw has a broad provision that speaks to unreasonable and persistent noise on site, not idling itself or the air pollution from the vehicle. Not without its own challenges, another mechanism would be to implement a standalone bylaw that is specific to emitting greenhouse gas emissions and other exhaust products from idling, rather than based on noise generation.”

“Though the Anti-Idling Policy no longer does have an enforcement mechanism, Aurora Bylaw Officers continue with an education-based approach and work with the Communications team for a continued effective public education campaign. The anti-idling education campaign requires ongoing implementation and resources. The Policy outlines, in addition to the initial education campaign, two other types of education campaigns: a seasonal reminder and periodic/targeted campaigns.

“Proposed ongoing public education activities from the Town include: seasonal reminder campaigns occurring in the Fall and Spring times starting in 2022; Bylaw Services continue to investigate complaints, while using an education first approach; distribution of anti-idling education material; Bylaw Services identifying areas where idling compliance may be a problem so that education efforts are appropriately targeted; using mobile signs to inform and educate the public about the restrictions and encourage voluntary compliance, especially in idling ‘hotspots’; social media to encourage the commitment of individuals not to idle; periodic and targeted Anti-Idling campaigns which consist of educating a focused group based on needs, such as GO station users, school zones, Town recreation centres and bus stations, and carpool parking lots; public anti-idling signage at Town Facilities; and tracking idling complaints to the Town.”

Councillors last week passed the recommendations without comment and without providing any further direction to staff on the development of a standalone anti-idling policy.

By Brock Weir  
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