

ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE – MARCH 23, 2009

COMMUNITY IDLING EDUCATION PLAN

Recommendation

The Director of Economic Development, in consultation with the Commissioner of Legal and Administrative Services and City Solicitor, recommends:

1. That this report be received; and
2. That the Environment Committee adopt in principle the education program presented in this report to address idling education in schools and businesses

Economic Impact

There is no additional economic impact resulting for the receipt of this report. Resources have been allocated in the 2009 budget.

Communications Plan

As there are many audiences involved in this educational campaign, communications will be targeted specifically to each. Economic Development, with assistance from Corporate Communications will communicate with schools, and businesses via the City Page, the City website, the Vaughan Public Libraries and the Vaughan Business Enterprise Centre to highlight the program and encourage participation.

Purpose

The purpose of this report is to provide a detailed implementation plan for an education campaign to complement the City's by-law.

Background - Analysis and Options

At the Environment Committee meeting of December 8, 2008, staff brought a report updating the status of anti-idling by-law and actions that have been implemented to address public awareness and education of the idling issue. The report looked at three target audiences: schools, businesses and City operations.

Two main areas have been identified as target audiences for an external idling education program: schools and businesses. As such, a proposed program has been created to address the educational needs of each of these areas specifically. The proposed programs rely, in part, on concepts derived for the community based social marketing approach, which emphasizes that programs carried out at the community level, engaging people face to face are more effective in motivating behavioural change than information campaigns alone. For this reason, the program includes a focus on activities and small scale workshops to engage teachers, students and members of the business community. Partnerships have been formed with York Region and Windfall Ecology, a local environmental non-profit organization to share resources and off set the costs of delivery as well as capitalize on existing/emerging educational programs and materials. These programs will be delivered mainly by Economic Development staff.

Schools:

Working cooperatively with York Region and Windfall Ecology, two strategies have been identified for raising awareness of the City of Vaughan anti-Idling by-law in schools.

A city-wide poster contest will be launched in April to highlight anti-idling and clean air. The contest will be open to any student enrolled in a Vaughan public, private or separate school. The submission deadline for artwork is June 1st, 2009. The winning poster will be an integral part of the school education campaign. The poster will be used to create banners, bookmarks, and posters which will be printed and made available to all Vaughan schools, as well as displayed in the Civic Centre. The new artwork will be launched in September 2009, when the new school year commences and will be distributed to libraries and community centres for display as well.

In addition to the poster contest, a new program called EcoDriver will be promoted to the schools. This program has been designed and funded through Green Communities Canada, Windfall Ecology and the Province of Ontario and can be geared to both teachers and staff or to high schools students. A series of free lunch and learn workshops will be available to schools that highlight the by-law, dispel common driving myths and provide information about fuel-efficient cars and driving techniques. The City of Vaughan will assist and support Windfall with coordinating the workshops and providing the promotional materials to each school upon request.

York Region has agreed to assist by providing anti-idling promotional items and may be able to assist with printing of new materials based on the winning poster.

Businesses:

The City of Vaughan will work with several large scale employers (for example Vaughan Mills and Promenade) to discuss idling on their property. The EcoDriver workshops and materials, mentioned above, will also be made available to these locations, through Windfall Ecology and City Staff.

The City will work cooperatively with the York Region, Vaughan Business Enterprise Centre and Windfall Ecology to reach the small business community with the anti-idling message. Information will be made available online and in hardcopy format; and/or a seminar style event for small businesses will be held to highlight the savings that fuel-efficient vehicles and techniques offer and to reinforce the by-law. Windfall Ecology has agreed to work with City staff to outreach to small businesses which form a significant portion of the Vaughan community. York Region has agreed to provide additional anti-idling promotional items. Staff will investigate the possibility of offering a webinar to make the information more accessible to the Vaughan business community.

Additionally, staff are investigating the possibility of including a requirement for anti-idling signage as part of the Sustainable Design Checklist for Subdivisions and Site Plan Development, or a condition of development approval.

Relationship to Vaughan Vision 2020

This report is consistent with the priorities previously set by Council and the necessary resources have been allocated and approved.

Regional Implications

Not applicable

Conclusion

The City of Vaughan Anti-idling by-law has been in effect since June of 2004. During that time, there were no complaints, nor have charges been laid. There has not been a significant focus on education.

It is recommended that the Environment Committee adopt in principle the program presented in this report to address idling education in schools and businesses.

An internal education program will be detailed in a complementary report.

Attachments

N/A

Report prepared by:

Rebekah McGurran, Economic Developer – Environmental Sector

Respectfully submitted,

Michael Nepinak
Director of Economic Development