

Gas Conservation (M. Phair)

Recommendation:

That the October 24, 2005, Asset Management and Public Works Department report 2005PWM112 be received for information.

Report Summary

This report outlines gas conservation programs aimed at public awareness.

Previous Council/Committee Action

At the August 30, 2005, City Council meeting, Councillor M. Phair made the following inquiry:

"With the significant increases in the cost of gas at the pump, I would like the following information:

1. Has the City considered a gas conservation program aimed at the citizens of Edmonton?
2. In what ways might the City encourage a reduction of gas consumption among Edmontonians?
3. Are there measures that City Council might undertake (like prohibiting idling) that would support conservation?"

Report

Responses to Questions

1. Has the City considered a gas conservation program aimed at the citizens of Edmonton?

The City has developed a driver training program which has had success in training drivers to drive with fuel conservation in mind. The program has

also been adapted for bus drivers. The average improvement in tests has been 10 percent. This program has been shared with Natural Resources Canada (NRCAN) as well as other Canadian transit authorities.

Material similar in content is available for citizens through the NRCAN website and in hard copy.

2. In what ways might the City encourage a reduction of gas consumption among Edmontonians?

The City, through the Office of the Environment, has a public outreach initiative (CO₂RE) which has developed a series of nine booklets called "HomeSavers" promoting residential energy efficiency. A new booklet dealing specifically with transportation was planned for development with partners in early 2005, but has been rescheduled to 2006 due to current financial restraints. The booklet will be designed to provide citizens with information regarding efficient driving habits, maintenance, vehicle selection, and transportation alternatives and will be available in both printed and electronic formats. The City has also already featured driving conservatively on TV shots and radio and will periodically repeat this information. Environment week in June 2006 will also be an opportunity to emphasise saving fuel, and greater use of public transit.

3. Are there measures that City Council might undertake (like prohibiting idling) that would support conservation?

Public awareness and promotion are considered to be the most effective ways to encourage conservation. Fuel efficient vehicles, with conservative driving habits that include making fewer trips, can be very effective in reducing overall consumption. A prohibition of idling would be very difficult.

Commercial vehicles need to idle to run high amperage equipment. Taxi drivers can idle more in the winter to manage cabin heat.

Council members' personal commitment to conservation can also be helpful in public awareness.