



City of San Antonio

Legislation Details (With Text)

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In control: Transportation, Technology and Utilities Committee

On agenda: 5/11/2016

Title: A briefing on air quality control strategies and a proposed vehicle idling limitations ordinance. [Peter Zaroni, Deputy City Manager; Douglas Melnick, Chief Sustainability Officer]

Sponsors:

Indexes:

Code sections:

Attachments:

Date	Ver.	Action By	Action	Result
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DEPARTMENT: Office of Sustainability

DEPARTMENT HEAD: Douglas Melnick, Chief Sustainability Officer AICP CNU-A

COUNCIL DISTRICTS IMPACTED: City Wide

SUBJECT:

Air Quality Control Strategies Update and Heavy Duty Vehicle Idling Limitations Policy

SUMMARY:

A briefing on air quality control strategies and an overview of a proposed vehicle idling limitations ordinance.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) released a more stringent “health-based” air pollution standard of 70 parts per billion on October 1, 2015 impacting San Antonio’s air quality attainment status. Air quality is a significant priority for City Council as it has an impact on our community's public and economic health. Additionally, on October 9, 2013, Councilman Ray Lopez, District 6, issued a Council Consideration Request (CCR) for a comprehensive review of the City’s air quality efforts to ultimately develop a City of San Antonio air quality strategic plan.

ISSUE:

The Office of Sustainability staff has evaluated various opportunities to reduce air pollution by coordinating with multiple City departments, the Alamo Area Council of Governments and the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality. Based on research from consultants (Environ), as well as national best practices, the Office of Sustainability is examining implementation of a suite of pollution reduction measures for City Council consideration such as:

- Heavy duty vehicle idling limitations
- City-wide commuter trip reduction policies and programs
- Voluntary Industrial NOx Reductions
- Voluntary Inspection/Maintenance Programs
- Internal municipal policies focusing on city fleet and employee alternative commuting

The first near-term strategy is a city-wide ordinance limiting the idling of heavy duty vehicles to five consecutive minutes within the City of San Antonio jurisdiction. These idling limits will lower nitrogen oxide emissions and other pollutants from fuel combustion as nitrogen oxide is a precursor to ground-level ozone formation. The policy will focus on heavy duty vehicle idling limitations within sensitive areas: in a school zone, within 1,000 feet of a public school during its hours of operation, within 1,000 feet of a hospital, and in a residential area. Exceptions to this policy include vehicles under 14,000 pounds, vehicles certified as clean idle by the U.S Environmental Protection Agency, idling to provide air conditioning or heating necessary for health or safety, vehicles forced to remain motionless because of traffic conditions, military, national guard, reserve forces, emergency vehicles, law enforcement vehicles, vehicles providing a power source necessary for mechanical operation, passenger compartment heating or air conditioning , maintenance or diagnostic purposes, defrost a windshield, transportation or passenger transit operations (may idling for thirty minutes) and airport ground support equipment.

As of today, forty-four communities in Texas have adopted a policy limiting the idling of heavy duty vehicles, including Austin, Dallas, Houston, City of Leon Valley and Bexar County.

The City of San Antonio in collaboration with Bexar County and the Alamo Area Council of Governments requested public input on the proposed vehicle idling limitation policy from March 4, 2016 - April 29, 2016. Staff will present to the committee a summary of stakeholder feedback with a recommendation to accept additional stakeholder comments through May 31, 2016 and present a final recommendation to City Council in June 2016.

ALTERNATIVES:

The Committee can recommend deferment of a policy examination or recommend not implementing a policy review.

FISCAL IMPACT:

If City Council approves City staff to proceed with implementation of code amendments to limit the idling of heavy duty vehicles, fiscal resources will be required to fund policy enforcement and public outreach.

RECOMMENDATION:

This is a staff briefing only. As a result of public outreach, City staff will provide a final briefing and recommendation to full City Council in June 2016.