

# Electronic Cigarettes

(A. Knack)

## Recommendation:

That the March 23, 2015, Community Services report CR\_1951, be received for information.

## Report Summary

**This report provides additional information on electronic cigarettes including their origins, health risks and benefits, and how other levels of government are currently addressing their increased use and availability to the public.**

## Previous Council/Committee Action

At the December 17, 2014, City Council meeting, Councillor A. Knack made the following inquiry:

That Administration provide a report outlining some basic details of electronic cigarettes including information about health risks and benefits, how other levels of Government (including Edmonton Public and Catholic School Boards) are addressing electronic cigarettes (example: sales, where they can be used), and if our current smoking bylaw is applicable to electronic cigarettes.

## Report

### Electronic Cigarette Origins

- The electronic cigarette was developed in China in 2003. It has been available in Canada since around 2007. The battery operated device atomizes a liquid cartridge that emits water vapor rather than smoke fumes as found in a normal cigarette. Concentration levels of known toxicants measured in the vapor are shown to be much lower than that found in combustible cigarettes. The device is also sometimes referred to as an Electronic Smoking Product.

### Health Risks and Benefits

- Based on available research, there does not appear to be enough data to provide conclusive evidence either way on the health risks or benefits of electronic cigarettes. There are few studies done in Canada on their use, efficacy, and safety. This has made it more difficult for agencies or orders of government to classify and regulate these devices.
- Some studies that looked at smoking cessation showed they may be effective as a smoking cessation aid; however, Health Canada and Alberta Health Services do not endorse these products for that purpose. Some groups feel the use of electronic cigarettes glamorizes smoking behaviour that will lead to more youth taking up smoking.

- Restrictions on the use of Electronic Smoking Products, whether they contain nicotine or not, are consistent with the recommendations that the Council of Chief Medical Officers of Health made to the provincial and territorial Ministers and Deputy Ministers of Health, and to the House of Commons Standing Committee on Health.
- Some municipalities, like the City of Red Deer, have already amended their bylaws to provide clarity that electronic cigarettes cannot be used in areas where smoking is currently prohibited.

### Other Levels of Government

- The introduction of electronic cigarettes in Canada is relatively new. This has led to other orders of government and organizations taking a cautious approach to the product. Health Canada has not fully evaluated the electronic cigarette for safety, quality, and efficacy, and advises Canadians against purchase or use of such products.
- In recognition of the lack of evidence around their safety and efficacy, Alberta Health Services supports Health Canada's position and warnings. To that end, the use of electronic smoking products in Alberta Health Services facilities or on Alberta Health Services grounds is not permitted. The Government of Alberta is currently monitoring research on electronic cigarettes and collaborating with stakeholders to determine if they should be regulated.
- Edmonton Public School Board has no formal policies in place, but strongly discourages the use of electronic cigarettes on school property by students or staff. The Edmonton Catholic School Board updated their Smoke-Free Environment policy in May 2014, to include prohibiting use of electronic cigarettes on school property.
- In general terms, the City of Edmonton, through a number of internal policies, does not allow electronic cigarettes inside City facilities and work areas since Health Canada has not approved them.

### Retail Sales of Electronic Cigarettes

- There are no specific restrictions on the sale of electronic cigarettes subject to general consumer protection legislation such as the *Canada Consumer Product Safety Act*. There are also no specific restrictions on age of purchaser at this time.

### Impacts on Current City of Edmonton Smoking Bylaw

- The current City of Edmonton Smoking Bylaw does not apply to electronic cigarettes. This product does not contain tobacco and is not currently regulated under the *Tobacco and Smoking Reduction Act* or Public Places Bylaw 14614.
- Edmonton Transit does enforcement under the Transit Passengers Bylaw 8353 that relates to interfering with the comfort or convenience of another person on

Transit property, but only if there is a complaint related to the activity or behaviour.