

2022 Seattle City Council Statement of Legislative Intent

Council Budget Action: Agenda

Tab	Action	Option	Version
OSE	003	B	001

Budget Action Title: Request that OSE and SPR develop a plan to phase out the use of gas-powered leaf blowers

Ongoing: No Has Attachment: No

Primary Sponsor: Alex Pedersen

Council Members:

Staff Analyst: Yolanda Ho

Date		Total	LH	TM	KS	AP	DJ	DS	AL	BC	LG
	Yes	0									
	No	0									
	Abstain	0									
	Absent	0									

Statement of Legislative Intent:

This Statement of Legislative Intent (SLI) would request that the Office of Sustainability and Environment (OSE), Seattle Parks and Recreation (SPR), and other departments as needed, develop a plan to phase out the use of all gas-powered leaf blowers in Seattle within two years. Following implementation of the two-year plan, the goal would be for the City to ban the use of gas-powered leaf blowers. While gas-powered leaf blowers do not contribute substantially to Seattle's overall greenhouse gas emissions, they can cause localized air pollution and the low-frequency sounds they produce are particularly disturbing to the human ear, negatively impacting people within the proximity of someone using a gas-powered leaf blower.

The plan should build off of the response in 2014 to SLI 70-1-A-1 (Department of Planning and Development Leaf Blower Recommendations) and consider the approach other jurisdictions have taken to prohibit the sale and use of gas-powered leaf blowers, such as California. The plan should include, but not be limited to, the following:

- Evaluation of available commercial-grade electric leaf blowers on the market (e.g., battery life, charging time, efficacy as compared to gas-powered leaf blowers, etc.);
- Costs associated with transitioning all City-owned leaf blowers to electric (e.g., labor, equipment, charging infrastructure, etc.) and potential strategies for reducing these costs;
- Identification of key external stakeholders who should be engaged in discussions related to the use of leaf blowers, such as major institutions, landscaping company owners, etc., as well as community groups or other organizations concerned about the noise and air pollution caused by gas-powered leaf blowers;
- Creation of a buy-back program for privately-owned gas-powered leaf blowers;
- Considerations regarding health and safety impacts on workers who use gas-powered leaf blowers as compared to other methods of leaf removal;
- Racial Equity Toolkit (RET) analysis; and
- Timeline for implementation, with specific steps, that takes into consideration the needs of businesses, City departments, residents, and other stakeholders; general availability, cost, and efficacy of commercial-grade electric leaf blowers; racial equity; enforcement; program costs and administration; and potential risks. Key external stakeholders and others identified through the RET should be engaged in the

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development of the proposed timeline.

To develop this plan, OSE and SPR are requested to convene an interdepartmental team consisting of departments that currently use gas-powered leaf blowers and those that would be involved in administering the buy-back program for privately-owned gas-powered leaf blowers.

OSE and SPR should submit a report to the Sustainability & Renters' Rights Committee, or successor committee, and the Central Staff Director by September 2, 2022.

Responsible Council Committee(s):

Sustainability & Renters' Rights

Date Due to Council: September 2, 2022