



CITY COUNCILLOR
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October 15th, 2021

To Infrastructure and Environment Committee Chair and Members:

Re: Phasing Out Gas-Powered Leaf Blowers for Municipal Use

One hour of leaf blowing equals a 1700-kilometre drive.

In September 2020, Council approved a motion to study the feasibility of implementing a seasonal or a year-round ban on two-stroke engine leaf blowers and garden equipment. The report has been delayed due to competing priorities during the COVID-19 pandemic. Since then, the State of California has signed a bill into law that would see a sales ban on gasoline-powered leaf blowers, lawn mowers and other off-road engines by as early as 2024.

This is a welcome move that will promote carbon reduction and address air quality concerns. Most leaf blowers are powered by inefficient two-stroke engines where the amount of contaminants released due to incomplete fuel combustion is comparable to large automobiles. Generated in the process are dangerous hydrocarbons, carbon monoxides and particulate matter that have been linked to health risks and are found to be heavily polluting to the environment.

To demonstrate that it is possible to phase out of gasoline-powered tools, Portland's City Council approved a resolution in 2019 to have the city government transition away from gas-powered leaf blowers. Earlier this year, Oak Bay Council approved a recommendation to have their public works department start a five-year transition from using small engine gas-powered landscape equipment to electric versions.

As the fourth largest city in North America, City of Toronto should demonstrate leadership and ambition in our commitment to reduce carbon emissions, an objective that can be promoted by scaling back the usage of two-stroke engine tools. That means we need to take a step forward with our own equipment stock and start exploring a transition plan to phase out of gasoline-powered leaf blowers for municipal use.

Recommendation:

1. Infrastructure and Environment Committee requests the General Managers of Parks, Forestry and Recreation, Transportation Services and Fleet Services to report back in Q1 2022 with a transition plan and feasibility assessment of phasing out gas-powered leaf blowers for municipal use by 2025.



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Sincerely,

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