

HARBORD VILLAGE RESIDENTS' ASSOCIATION

Box 68522, 360A Bloor St. W.
Toronto, ON M5S 1X1



May 6, 2025

TO: **Infrastructure and Environment Committee**, City of Toronto

RE: **IE21.4 - Transitioning Towards Zero-Emission Outdoor Power Equipment**

Dear Members of the IEC,

Harbord Village covers the area between Bloor and Collage, between Bathurst and Spadina. As a residents of Toronto who strongly support a ban of two-stroke engine small equipment, including gas-powered leaf blowers and related garden equipment, HVRA urges you to vote in favour of **Option B** as presented in the City Staff report at your meeting on May 7, 2025, and to recommend its adoption by City Council later this month, with these suggested amendments:

- that the effective date of the ban on gas-powered leaf blowers be January 1, 2027, and that a seasonal exemption from October 1 to November 30 apply only until that date, after which no use of gas leaf blowers would be permitted. This timing will provide industry participants with sufficient time to adapt to the use of existing zero emission alternate equipment, and encouragement to manufacturers to continue their efforts to refine technology which can accommodate more demanding conditions during periods of heavy leaf accumulation.

Our view is based on the following points:

1. Gas leaf blowers and related garden equipment represent significant health hazards to operators and bystanders alike. These are caused by excessive noise and harmful emissions that include carcinogens.
2. City Council declared a Climate Emergency in 2019, and a ban on two-stroke equipment and its polluting effects is consistent with the aims of the City's TransformTO Climate Action Strategy.
3. Zero emission alternate equipment is readily available and is constantly being improved to be effective during all seasons.
4. The City's survey of business stakeholders indicates that some landscape businesses have already begun the transition to zero emission equipment, and that approximately two-thirds of respondents would support a phased-in ban. Furthermore, those businesses that have converted to battery-powered equipment have reported benefits to their operations and staff. The Committee and City should reward the progressive!

We will also add that since an outright ban may unjustly punish those who bought gas-powered implements in good faith, the City might want to consider incentives to a quick conversion, such as rebates and/or a buy-back/replacement scheme.

The City's survey of residents indicates that the strong majority of people share this opinion. It is vital that the City take leadership in helping us to veer away from a climate crisis, and that the Committee begin that initiative by supporting a ban on two-stroke small engine equipment.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,
Anne Fleming
Chair, HVRA
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