Council Meeting: 03/18/2025

Agenda: Business Item #: 9. c.

# CITY OF KIRKLAND CITY MANAGER'S OFFICE 123 Fifth Avenue, Kirkland, WA 98033 425-587-3000

### **MEMORANDUM**

**To:** Kurt Triplett, City Manager

**From:** Diana Hart, Government Affairs Manager

Mikayla Binns, Temporary Special Projects Coordinator

**Date:** May 7, 2025

Subject: Electric Leaf Blower Initiative Update

#### **RECOMMENDATION:**

Staff recommends that the City Council receives an update on the City's Electric Leaf Blower Initiative and provides staff with further direction on next steps.

### **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:**

- On April 18, 2023, Council adopted the Electric Leaf Blower Initiative through Resolution R-5585, which identifies the following tasks to be completed during the three-year initiative: learning, partnering with others, community education and engagement, creation of financial incentive programs, and drafting an ordinance for Council consideration.
- Staff conducted tasks in 2024 to advance the Initiative, including establishing a gaspowered leaf blower trade-in program, starting a leaf rake pledge program, holding demonstrations and roundtables with various stakeholders, and gathering data from an internal Parks and Public Works pilot program.
- Staff anticipate that converting Parks and Public Works to only electric-powered leaf blowers would require additional FTEs or reductions in levels of service, as completing tasks with electric rather than gas leaf blowers typically take staff between 50-100% as long to complete.
- Notably, with the exception of leaf blowers, the City has increased use of other landscaping equipment, such as chainsaws, to electric-powered because they are more comparable to or offer advantages to their gas-powered counterparts.
- Anticipated state legislation on electric leaf blowers has been delayed beyond 2025.
- For 2025, staff is considering how best to provide local business rebates to assist with the
  transitioning to electric leaf blowers, similar to the other program for community members,
  and is also exploring options for inclusion in a future ordinance such as restricting the use
  of gas blowers by City staff only between Memorial Day and Labor Day (with the exception
  of tree work and/or storm response) or implementing "electric-only maintenance" at certain
  parks or in certain multi-family areas.
- Council will have the opportunity to share feedback and request additional information related to the Initiative as staff consider various options for developing a potential ordinance to be presented to Council at the end of 2025.

#### **BACKGROUND:**

During the April 18, 2023 Council Meeting,<sup>1</sup> Council adopted Resolution R-5585<sup>2</sup> authorizing the creation of the Electric Leaf Blower Initiative, with the following goals:

- Sunset the use of gas-powered hand-held and backpack leaf blowers in Kirkland by a target date of December 31, 2025;
- Reduce negative health impacts caused by gas emissions;
- Ensure a responsive transition to electric leaf blowers that reduces the burden and maximizes the potential benefit to Kirkland landscaping businesses and residents;
- Be proactive in anticipation of potential State decisions to sunset gas-powered equipment; and
- Develop mechanisms to effectively improve enforcement of existing City noise regulations (KMC 11.84A.070 and KZC 115.95) on all uses of gas- and electric-powered landscaping equipment to provide relief to residents prior to conversion or technological improvements.

The Initiative takes a three-year phased approach that culminates in an ordinance recommended to be adopted by the Council in the fourth quarter of 2025. An update was provided to Council at its April 16, 2024 Council Meeting<sup>3</sup> reporting the efforts of the Initiative's first year.

During the Initiative's first year, the City conducted a pilot program in order to collect data comparing gas blower and electric leaf blower performance throughout the year and across all typical blower uses. Parks tested five models of backpack blowers and two models of handheld blowers. Electric blowers were found to be heavier and less powerful than gas blowers and, although electric blowers operate at a slightly lower decibel level than gas, they generate a higher pitch and must be used for longer periods of time than gas equivalents.

An estimate of the cost to transition to electric blowers was completed in 2023 as well. This evaluation indicated that the cost to transition would result in a doubling to quadrupling of acquisition costs but would have lower operations and maintenance costs. This evaluation was revisited in 2024 and did not significantly change.

Stakeholder engagement in 2023 and early 2024 included two virtual Open Houses for landscaping businesses licensed in Kirkland and an equipment demonstration for Kirkland's Parks crews, supervisors, and managers and those in other local cities. Regional coordination and legislative efforts included hosting a Roundtable and Demo for regional cities, a Roundtable and Demo for regional and state government elected officials and industry representatives, and tracking of any related legislation during the State's legislative session. In December 2023, Representative Amy Walen introduced to the Washington State Legislature HB 2051<sup>4</sup> related to this issue, but the bill was not adopted.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> April 18, 2023, Meeting Materials <a href="https://www.kirklandwa.gov/files/sharedassets/public/v/1/city-council/agenda-documents/2023/april-18-2023/10b">https://www.kirklandwa.gov/files/sharedassets/public/v/1/city-council/agenda-documents/2023/april-18-2023/10b</a> business.pdf

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> Resolution R-5585 https://docs.cityofkirkland.net/CMWebDrawer/RecordHtml/548298

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup> City Council Meeting Materials April 16, 2024, https://www.kirklandwa.gov/files/sharedassets/public/v/1/city-council/agenda-documents/2024/april-16-2024/8h4 other-items-of-business.pdf

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup> HB 2051 from 2023: <a href="https://app.leg.wa.gov/billsummary?BillNumber=2051&Year=2023&Initiative=false">https://app.leg.wa.gov/billsummary?BillNumber=2051&Year=2023&Initiative=false</a>

### **DISCUSSION/ANALYSIS:**

In 2024, the second year of the Initiative, staff continued community and stakeholder engagement efforts, legislative involvement, and equipment testing. Efforts to engage and educate residential community members proved popular, while the barriers to businesses and City teams fully transitioning from gas to electric blowers identified in 2023 remain. Alternatives to gas blowers beyond electric blowers were explored and the efforts of the Initiative became more broadly tied into the City's wider sustainability goals and efforts.

The "Completed Actions" section of this memo explores completed Initiative actions and new learnings. The "Proposed Actions" section of this memo suggests potential actions for Council to consider as staff prepare to bring forward a draft ordinance at the end of 2025.

#### **Completed Actions**

# 1. Community Engagement

### Recycling and Trade-In Events

The City of Kirkland held a trade-in event in May 2024 to help the Kirkland community dispose of their gas-powered leaf blowers in exchange for a voucher toward the purchase of a new electric leaf blower. In May, 44 vouchers were given out, with relinquished gas-powered leaf blowers recycled at a City recycling event the following weekend. Due to community interest, the City hosted a second trade-in event in October 2024, giving out 88 vouchers and recycling the gas-powered leaf blowers exchanged at the event. In total, 132 vouchers have been provided to community members, with 83 redeemed at one of three participating Kirkland businesses as of February 27, 2025. There is continued community interest in future trade-in events.

### Leaf Rake Pledge Program

Through engagement with community members, staff identified that leaf rakes may be another alternative to gas-powered leaf blowers for some community members, especially residents with relatively small yards to maintain. Launched in September 2024, the goal of the Leaf Rake Pledge Program is to educate community members about the adverse impacts of gas-powered leaf blowers using an educational quiz. The first 100 people to complete the pledge received a leaf rake.

Completing the pledge also requires the pledge-taker to sign up for both the *This Week in Kirkland* newsletter and the *Kirkland Conserves* newsletter, ensuring that the community member has the tools to stay up to date with further Initiative programs. Staff continues to explore alignment with the City's Storm Water team's goals to educate the community about using rakes to clear storm drains. As of February 27, 2025, 217 people have taken the pledge. The pledge is housed on the City's Electric Leaf Blower Initiative webpage.<sup>5</sup>

#### City Hall 4 All

The Leaf Rake Pledge Program was launched at the 2024 City Hall 4 All event, where leaf rakes were given away to community members who took the pledge. All 100 rakes were given away

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup> www.kirklandwa.gov/leafblowers

well before the end of the event. Additional Initiative-related community education and engagement components of City Hall 4 All included an electric leaf blower tennis ball racecourse and a guest from Quiet Clean Kirkland joining the live podcast to speak about electric leaf blowers and leaf rakes.

### 2. Regional Coordination and Legislative Agenda

In Resolution R-5585, Council expressed interest in pursuing a regional approach to the transition, with the acknowledgement that this collaboration may further advocacy efforts at state and federal levels.

#### Elected Officials Demo and Roundtable Discussion

In December 2024, the City partnered with Representative Walen to host a second electric equipment demo and roundtable discussion, this time with the goal of further information sharing and review of Representative Walen's new draft bill around leaf blowers to be introduced during the 2025 legislative session. This event provided an opportunity for elected officials, City staff, and landscape industry experts to share ideas and concerns regarding statewide implementation of a gas-powered leaf blower ban in the context of the bill.

In January 2025, Representative Walen decided to delay her bill until a future legislative session, allowing for more time to gather information and to further generate informed, thoughtful approaches to implement the potential ban.

### 3. Stakeholder Engagement

# Landscaper Roundtable Discussion

In Spring 2024, the City held an additional virtual roundtable discussion for Kirkland landscaping businesses, who were invited to share feedback on the transition. The main topics of discussion focused on how the City can best support businesses through the cost of transition as well as the realities of the landscaping industry in our region. These insights were used to develop the draft business rebate program and to inform potential enforcement of a gas blower ban.

Businesses that currently do not utilize electric landscaping equipment identified the value of being able to demo equipment prior to committing to purchasing. As many manufacturers utilize platforms that are not interchangeable with equipment from other manufacturers, identifying a platform that best meets an individual business's needs was seen as a barrier to transitioning. Staff determined that hosting a demonstration event for businesses would be of benefit in combination with any businesses-targeted rebate program that could be developed as part of the Initiative. Staff has identified Fall 2025 as an appropriate target to host a manufacturer demo for local businesses.

### 4. Internal City Parks and Public Works Pilot Program

The City's Parks and Public Works teams continue to explore the use of electric leaf blowers in the field. As the daily users of the equipment, their insights are particularly valuable as staff prepare to draft an ordinance at the end of 2025. Leaf blowers are versatile tools for City crews and landscapers, used for tasks ranging from cleaning grass clippings to moving wet leaves to clearing debris from sidewalks and roadways. Parks and Public Works crews, supervisors, and

managers provided additional insight into labor and service level implications, technology advancements, environmental considerations, and equity and enforcement concerns.

### Labor Implications

Parks and Public Works teams have identified that electric blowers available on the market today take longer to complete tasks than gas-powered blowers. For Parks, completing tasks with electric blowers during heavy uses in the Fall would require an additional 2.5 to 3.0 FTEs when compared to the current staffing needed to complete work using gas-powered blowers. These heavy uses typically take staff twice as long to complete tasks using electric blowers. An alternative would be not to add FTEs but incrementally reduce the service levels. For Public Works, Fall season uses of blowers take approximately 50% more time to complete the same tasks with electric equipment compared to gas-powered blowers. Public Works staff further raise concerns that taking longer to complete jobs would impact the physical wellbeing of the crews in addition to adversely affecting levels of service if they are not combined with increases in staffing.

### Future Staffing

The Parks, Recreation, and Open Space plan and the 6 Year CIP both contemplate adding additional active recreation park land and open space acreage. This primarily is accomplished by purchasing new property from willing sellers. If successful, the labor hours needed to maintain new park lands would increase. The City would need to again decide between additional FTEs or lower service levels there is a transition to all electric blowers occurs.

# Technology

Staff have not observed significant advances in the cost, power, longevity, or weight of the electric blower equipment since the last update to Council.

Parks staff have raised concerns with investing in new electric equipment that does not meet current needs, as it is relatively expensive and more difficult to repair than gas-powered equipment. Parks staff emphasize that there have been numerous "wins" as they have explored electric equipment as part of this Initiative. One such example is that on trees less than 10 inches in diameter, electric chainsaws reduce risk to an arborist through both the removal of the pull-start tab and the lack of noxious fumes accumulating in the arborist's bucket, both of which are risks with gas-powered chainsaws. Other equipment where electric is often preferred over gas-powered include electric hedgers and electric weedwhackers. City crews are not inherently opposed to electric equipment but prefer equipment (whether gas or electric) that helps them complete jobs more quickly, efficiently, and safely.

Public Works highlighted that most other electric-powered equipment works well for its crews and that staff has primarily converted to using electric equipment. The blower continues to be the hangup; electric blowers just do not compare to gas blowers in terms of functionality. This demonstrates that there is room for more electrification of City landscaping equipment beyond electric leaf blowers but also shows that the electric leaf blower technology is not improving as quickly as hoped. Increasing the scale and scope of improved electric technology is not likely to be incentivized or prioritized by the new federal administration. At least for the next four years technological advancement is uncertain and will be driven by private sector decision making. Service Level Implications

If tasks related to cleaning up leaves take twice as long for crews to complete using electric blowers, there will be resulting service level implications if not supported with additional staffing.

Leaving wet leaves on the ground may increase risks from slippery grass and sidewalks or result in grass die-off and unsightly appearance of and damage to lawns and open spaces. In a scenario with only electric leaf blowers, Parks would prioritize leaf cleanups and related tasks to decrease these concerns and instead choose to reduce service levels for other tasks. This necessary adjustment would result in reduced time spent weeding beds, picking up litter, pressure washing, restoring tables and benches, cleaning signs and buildings, and the myriad other ongoing maintenance tasks that keep Kirkland's parks well-kept and inviting. Overall, the result would be the entire park system appearing less "manicured." Parks has tried to transition certain areas from a "manicured" approach to a more "natural" approach requiring less maintenance in the past in part to reduce pesticide use, and the community expressed disappointment at the change. The community has expressed to staff that there is a certain expectation of clean, safe, manicured parks in Kirkland.

Emergency response is another important consideration as staff prepares a draft ordinance for presentation to Council. Parks and Public Works teams need to be properly equipped with backup power and generators to be able to charge electric equipment during power outages. Emergency response may be slowed if crews are relying on electric leaf blowers, as they are less powerful than gas blowers. Maintaining a backup stock of gas leaf blowers is an option but would require regular checks and maintenance to ensure they are in working order for emergencies if they are utilized only in those circumstances. Preparing City teams with the tools and infrastructure necessary to charge electric blowers and other equipment would be vital to emergency preparedness efforts.

### Electric Infrastructure Implications

Another factor in a transition to electric equipment is the infrastructure needed to support more electric equipment at the Parks Maintenance Center and Public Works Maintenance Center. A comprehensive evaluation of equipment storage, power needs, installation of additional charging infrastructure, battery recycling, generators, and safety concerns (including battery fire risk) needs to be completed before a transition to electric equipment can successfully occur. Preliminary consideration by the Facilities team has indicated that electrical upgrades would be necessary at the Parks Maintenance Facility to support a full transition to electric landscaping equipment.

### Environmental Implications

Crews make efforts to mulch, recycle, or relocate leaves to areas that need to build better soils or require leaf litter cover to be healthy. In the rare cases where equipment does not need to be particularly powerful, such as some of the work that the natural areas crew oversees, staff tend to choose to use electric blowers over gas. City crews demonstrate mindfulness and consideration of sustainability principles when completing work. There is room for increased use of electric leaf blowers as part of this broader effort towards greater sustainability in Kirkland, but this opportunity must be balanced with the consideration of the loss of efficiency that may be experienced with a broader transition to electric leaf blowers.

### **Upcoming Actions and Options**

The upcoming and final year of the Initiative brings opportunities to review the scope, get creative about implementation, and continue to learn more about transitioning to electric leaf blowers. Though Resolution R-5585 states that in 2025 staff should "propose an ordinance for Council consideration sunsetting hand-held and backpack gas-powered equipment city-wide while

continuing City, business, and resident transitions," the Resolution also states that "[t]he City Manager may propose changes to these milestones based on new information, learnings, and opportunities." Staff seek feedback from Council as they consider different options for inclusion in the draft ordinance that will be developed later this year. Given the knowledge gathered thus far, many of the potential options considered in this memo explore extending the timeline of the Initiative or deploying an extended term ordinance. This section also presents opportunities for stakeholder and community engagement and general next steps for the Initiative.

#### Local Business Rebates

In response to engagement with businesses in 2024, staff developed a draft business rebate program with the goal of supporting Kirkland's landscaping businesses in transitioning to electric leaf blowers. Through this program, businesses could apply for a rebate of up to \$1,300, set to target the up-front cost difference between a gas-powered and electric blower with necessary additional batteries, in return for the purchase of a qualifying piece of equipment.

Staff waited to see if Representative Walen's bill would pass during the current legislative session before launching the program, as there may have been State rebate programs available for businesses through that legislation. Because the bill has instead been delayed, launching a City rebate program in 2025 using the funding identified for the Initiative to support businesses transitioning to electric equipment may be appropriate.

As the program has limited funding and there are many Kirkland landscaping businesses, staff are also exploring alternative programs to maximize the impact of the funding including partnering with one or a few small landscaping businesses in Kirkland to pilot all-electric work. This type of partnership would enable more ongoing engagement and information sharing with selected businesses to help the City to better understand how using electric equipment affects smaller landscapers.

Stakeholder Engagement – City Parks and Public Works Identified Options

### Seasonal or Time of Day Restrictions

If the use of gas leaf blowers is restricted, one option staff is exploring is to initially restrict the use of gas blowers by City staff only between Memorial Day and Labor Day with the exception of tree work and/or storm response. This timeline would align with the existing Herbicide Use Policy that the Parks Teams already follow, restricting chemical pesticide use (with the exception of controlling noxious weeds and/or aggressive stinging insects) between the two holidays in order to minimize human exposure. For Parks, this policy would reduce the use of gas blowers in parks during the season when community members are outside the most frequently. Parks and Public Works shared that if gas blowers are allowed during certain parts of the year, the best times to use them are during the Fall and Spring seasons as this is when the leaves and debris are the heaviest and require the most power to manage. Electric blowers are better able to handle the relatively lighter loads during the months of June through September than they are for the heavy Spring and Fall loads or during winter storm response. A seasonal restriction would allow staff to further learn the benefits and drawbacks of requiring only use of electric leaf blowers as well as give manufacturers more time to improve the electric leaf blowers available in the market.

Parks currently uses blowers from early morning to late evening, which is the full time allowed by the City's current noise ordinance. Restricting times that blowers are allowed during each day could result in similar impacts as a full transition from gas-powered equipment.

## **Electric Only Pilot Parks**

Another potential path forward could be a pilot of "electric-only maintenance" at certain parks or in certain multi-family areas. Approximately 3,000 homes in Kirkland are adjacent to a City park; the locations of these neighbors could help inform the choice of pilot locations. To keep learning and expanding the use of electric equipment while also extending the timeline of the Initiative if needed, a pilot program of a few areas or parks in Kirkland to be maintained only with electric equipment over the course of a year may be an alternative opportunity to a full transition. The parks or areas chosen could include those located adjacent to homes or otherwise populous areas in order to reduce noise and air pollution for community members, or parks in less popular areas to avoid unnecessary community effects. As additional FTEs may be necessary to pilot certain electric locations in order to prevent reduced service levels elsewhere, staff would identify specific service level impacts or staffing adjustments needed to implement such policies. If a pilot program is utilized, staff will identify metrics for evaluating the pilot that will be used to measure the success and impacts of the pilot.

An important consideration for any ordinance is whether to leave room for caveats and special occasions. There will always be situations where gas equipment may be needed, such as during a power outage or if the electric equipment is being repaired. Allowing room for gas blowers when necessary is vital to maintaining service levels at this time. Maintaining gas-powered equipment for only occasional use will require an intentional program as long periods of no use will have impacts on the operations of the equipment.

# Electric Truck Pilot

One option to diversify and strengthen the City's charging infrastructure is electric trucks; they would enable crews to charge their equipment in the field and serve as large battery reserves. Anecdotal experience shows that charging electric equipment does not drastically drain an electric truck's battery, and the option of doing so would potentially improve efficiency by increasing the amount of battery power crews can take with them to jobs. Additionally, the sight of an electric truck and a crew using electric equipment would be a strong signal to the community. An electric truck could be purchased to help pilot the use of electric equipment in the field and gather real world data. There are some limitations to electric trucks as well. An electric truck would only be a supplement to regular charging infrastructure and routine, not a replacement. The maintenance centers would need to be outfitted with auto chargers to streamline charging of the trucks and generators would need to provide power to chargers in emergency situations. In addition, current electric truck models may not be large enough to support all needs of Parks and Public Works but may be sufficient to replace lighter duty truck use.

# **Ergonomic Assessment**

If the City transitions to fully electric equipment, Public Works highlighted that additional gear will be required to help support the weight of the equipment. This includes shoulder suspenders and equipment holsters. The best-performing electric blower is the heaviest electric blower, which is noticeably heavier than a gas-powered equivalent. Lighter electric blowers either lack the power or the battery longevity to be a reliable alternative for even lighter blower uses. While reducing exposure to fumes, this heavier equipment places a greater ergonomic burden on staff, which may increase the potential for injury when using electric blowers, while at the same time decreasing efficiency and increasing working hours.

## **Expand Initiative Scope**

Another way of continuing the learning process would be to expand the scope of the Initiative to cover more types of electric landscaping equipment. With feedback from staff being generally positive around electric equipment aside from electric leaf blowers, this could be an opportunity

to increase the City's sustainability efforts while acknowledging that the electric leaf blower continues to lag its gas-powered alternatives.

## Community Engagement Strategies

Engagement and education in the community is ongoing. Staff are currently developing a social media campaign meant to educate the public on the many reasons why switching from gas-powered to electric leaf blowers is a good idea. Staff are also developing a program in which community members could receive and display a sign in their yard, declaring it as an "electric-only zone," indicating that only electric equipment is used to maintain it. As planned, the social media campaign and the yard sign program would be released in tandem.

In addition to these new programs, continuation and expansion of the popular leaf rake pledge program and the trade-in voucher program would help continue to involve and educate our community members.

# Community Gas-Powered Use Restriction Considerations

As staff evaluate potential considerations for a draft ordinance and in evaluating proposals considered in other jurisdictions, a key consideration is whether to restrict private gas-powered leaf blower use beyond the restrictions that are applied to City crews. For example, private use restrictions could be limited to any potential hour-of-use restrictions in neighborhoods, designation of pilot zones where only electric leaf blowers would be allowed, seasonal restrictions, or other related restrictions. Potential paths forward explored in this memo such as seasonal or geographical restrictions of use could apply to community members as well as City crews. Education of businesses and community members regarding any seasonal or geographic restrictions would be vital to the success of the program, and a phased or delayed implementation of fines for offending use of gas blowers may be appropriate as the community adapts to new rules, if adopted.

### Enforcement Proposals

Successful enforcement of any gas-blower restrictions in Kirkland will require a mindful approach. Community members may not be able to tell the difference visually or audibly between an electric or gas blower and may mistakenly report non-offenders to the City's Code Enforcement team. Restricting the use of gas-powered leaf blowers in Kirkland may drive businesses to find clients outside of Kirkland where use is not restricted rather than encouraging their transition to electric equipment.

Many landscapers in the region employ historically disadvantaged and other vulnerable populations. When looking at how to enforce a ban or restriction of gas blowers, the demographic of those affected must also be considered. There may be an outsized impact on lower-income community members, minorities, and small businesses if gas leaf blowers are banned in Kirkland. Compared to their gas-powered counterparts, electric leaf blowers are more expensive to purchase, can be more expensive to repair, and take longer to complete some jobs. These are real financial and logistical burdens for businesses who may not be prepared to transition to electric equipment at the time of a ban or restriction.

One enforcement tool that some cities in California currently use is to fine property owners, rather than offending businesses, for infractions of a gas-powered blower ban. Doing so helps reduce the impact on landscapers themselves and instead incentivizes property owners to hire

landscapers who use electric equipment. Creative ways to enforce a potential ban or restriction could help mitigate adverse impacts on businesses. Given the positive involvement thus far in community engagement efforts, educating community members about the potential ban and encouraging them to hire businesses who use electric equipment may prove more effective than punitive measures against businesses who choose to ignore, cannot afford to comply with, or are not aware of a ban.

### Extending Timeline for Proposed Ordinance

Through the first and second year of the Initiative, Staff have learned that electric landscaping equipment technology is improving, but electric leaf blowers continue to lag their gas-powered counterparts which may impact the timeline of a potential ordinance in Kirkland at the end of this year. Though use of electric leaf blowers in some scenarios is appropriate and even preferred, for typical use cases, gas-powered blowers are still more efficient for City crews to use. The ergonomic impacts of the weight of electric leaf blowers negatively affect crew members, though exposure to noxious gases from gas-powered blowers is reduced. Further evaluation of charging infrastructure in City facilities is necessary to support a full transition to electric leaf blowers, and additional FTE would be necessary to avoid service level reductions in the case of a full transition to electric blowers. Staff continue to explore how to balance the needs of City crews and local businesses with the needs for cleaner air and quieter neighborhoods as they draft a potential ordinance. Reducing negative impacts on local businesses is important, particularly given that many landscapers are BIPOC and/or small business owners.

Because the efficiency and weight of electric leaf blowers have not significantly improved during the Initiative, it may be appropriate to explore an extended initiative or deferred ordinance timeline. A deferred timeline would allow more time for possible State action as well as give manufacturers more time to improve the efficiency of electric leaf blowers. An extended timeline would also give businesses more time to transition to electric equipment, thus reducing the potential burden on them. The power and efficiency of the blowers and longevity and weight of batteries could be utilized as some of the metrics to evaluate when electric equipment is sufficient to replace gas-powered equipment for year-round use.

#### **NEXT STEPS:**

Staff will present a draft ordinance to Council for consideration at the end of 2025 and are seeking feedback as staff consider different options moving forward. Feedback shared with staff will be incorporated into actions undertaken in 2025 and utilized to develop a draft ordinance for Council's consideration in the future.

#### ATTACHMENTS:

None.