

CONSIDERATION OF PROHIBITING GAS-POWERED LEAF-BLOWING MACHINES

City Council
February 28, 2022





Recommendation

Office of the City Manager

1. Find that the actions proposed herein are exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) in accordance with Section 15061 (b) (3), the General Rule that CEQA only applies to projects that may have an effect on the environment; and
2. Direct the City Attorney to prepare an ordinance to amend Title 9 (Public Peace, Morals and Welfare), Chapter 9.37 (Leaf-Blowing Machines) of the Pasadena Municipal Code to prohibit the use of gas-powered leaf-blowing machines within Pasadena and related amendments



Background

Office of the City Manager

- October 18, 2021
 - > City Council referred discussion to prohibit use of gas-powered leaf-blowing machines to Municipal Services Committee
 - > City Council also raised a number of questions for staff to investigate further



Background

Office of the City Manager

- December 14, 2021
 - > Municipal Services Committee supported prohibition of gas-powered leaf-blowing machines within Pasadena.
 - > Additional topics:
 - Prohibit on Holidays
 - Limit surfaces where they can be used, and potential impacts to City operation
 - Phased Implementation



Current Regulations

Office of the City Manager

- **PMC 9.37 (Leaf-Blowing Machines)**
 - > Hours of allowed use
 - > One leaf-blowing machine per property at any one time
 - > Duration
 - > Debris blown onto adjacent property/public right-of-way must be picked up within 15 minutes
 - > Decibel limit of 65 db at 50 feet
 - > Annual certification by ⁵Public Health Dept.



Recommendation

Office of the City Manager

- Prohibit use of gas-powered leaf-blowing machines citywide
 - > Two-stroke engines produce high relative emissions
 - > Decibel level at source 95-155 db
 - > Exemption for emergency responders and to clear downed trees for public safety
 - Gas-powered tend to be more efficient



Recommendation

Office of the City Manager

- Do not prohibit leaf-blowing machines on holidays
 - > Negative impact to City services/parks maintenance
 - Hardscape: increase time and cost by 250%
 - Turf/Vegetate: increase time and cost by 300%
 - > Some holidays are celebrated outdoors. Reasonable to expect homeowners would want to use landscaping equipment to prepare.

11/15/2017 10:00 AM



Recommendation

Office of the City Manager

- Do not prohibit leaf-blowing machines on vegetated areas
 - > Negative impact to City services/parks maintenance
 - > Near-impossible to enforce
 - > Could include informational materials under 'best practices'
 - > If prohibition – exemption for Rose Bowl and City operations



Recommendation

Office of the City Manager

- Phased Implementation
 - > Time to inform and educate residents/landscapers
 - > Staff Recommendation
 - City operations: ten months
 - Citywide: one year
- Violations
 - > Responsibility of who authorized use, not user, unless same person

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- Direct costs to replace all leaf-blowing machines
 - > ~40 leaf-blowing machines (\$66,000)
 - \$750 each + 3 batteries (\$300 each) = \$1,650
 - » Battery life (2 years) = \$36,000
 - > Unknown cost of purchasing and installing charging stations, including portable ones for City vehicles
 - > City contractors would pass along costs, unknown
- Outreach program/materials



- Residential Lawn Mower Rebate Program
 - > Residential public
 - > Battery-powered electric lawn mowers
 - Does not include corded electrical lawn mowers, nor any other landscape equipment
 - > Up to \$250



- Commercial Electric Lawn and Garden Program
 - > Commercial landscapers and gardeners
 - Also local governments, school districts, colleges and non-profits
 - Equivalent operable gasoline- or diesel-powered lawn or garden equipment must be exchanged.
 - > Cost is reduced (up to 75 percent) through pre-authorized dealerships¹³

- Commercial Lawn & Garden Battery Buy-Down Rebate Program
 - > Rebate up to 75 percent for replacement battery
 - Equipment previously funded by Commercial Electric Lawn and Garden Program
 - Up to three batteries per piece of electric lawn and garden equipment.