

# Electric Leaf Blower Initiative Update



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# Presentation Overview





# Background

## Review of Year One (2023) Actions Taken

- Parks and Public Works Pilot and Data Collection
- Cost estimate of transitioning from gas blowers to electric blowers for Parks and Public Works
- Two virtual Open Houses for businesses
- Equipment demonstration for Kirkland's City crews and other cities
- Roundtable and demo for regional cities
- Roundtable and demo for regional and state elected officials and industry reps



# Actions Taken & Key Learnings



- Year Two (2024)
  - Two trade-in events for residential gas blowers in exchange for a \$100 electric blower voucher
  - Leaf Rake Pledge Program
  - City Hall 4 All rake giveaway and community engagement activities
  - Roundtable and demo for elected officials in partnership with Rep. Walen
  - Virtual roundtable for Kirkland businesses
  - Development of draft business rebate program and corresponding manufacturer demo event
  - Continued Parks and Public Works Pilot Program and Data Collection



# Actions Taken & Key Learnings

<b>Pros of Electric Blowers</b>	<b>Cons of Electric Blowers</b>	<b>New Learnings</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Use of electric leaf blowers in some scenarios is appropriate.</li><li>• Reduced exposure to noxious gases from gas-powered blowers.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Electric leaf blower technology is improving, but not quickly enough.</li><li>• For typical use cases, gas-powered blowers are more efficient and preferred.</li><li>• Negative ergonomic impacts of the weight of electric leaf blowers on crew members.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Evaluation of charging infrastructure in City facilities is necessary to support a full transition.</li><li>• Additional FTE would be necessary to avoid service level implications in the case of a full transition to electric blowers.</li><li>• Many landscapers are small business owners as well as members of the BIPOC community and could be negatively impacted by a ban of gas blowers.</li></ul>



# Looking Forward: Year 3 of Initiative

2025: Propose an Ordinance for Council consideration sunsetting hand-held and backpack gas-powered equipment city-wide while continuing City, business, and resident transitions.

State Legislative Updates – No action in 2025, but still likely in the future.

## Potential Options to Explore:

- Local Business Rebate Program
- Restrict City use of gas blowers between Memorial Day and Labor Day
- 'Electric-Only Maintenance' Pilot
- Infrastructure Assessment
- Accessories for electric blowers (equipment holsters, extra batteries, etc.)
- Expand electric equipment use beyond leaf blowers
- Continue community engagement and education
- Enforcement considerations
- Extended Initiative or deferred Ordinance timeline



# Looking Forward: Year 3 of Initiative

## Discussion Questions

- What does Council need going forward to make an informed decision at the end of 2025?
- Do any options presented in the memo seem like good options to explore in developing a draft Ordinance?