



## MEDINA, WASHINGTON

### AGENDA BILL

Wednesday, November 19, 2025

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**Subject:** Discussion re: Legislative Direction on Phasing-Out Gas-Powered Leaf Blowers

**Category:** Study Session

**Staff Contact:** Jeff Swanson, City Manager; Ryan Osada, Public Works Director; Jennifer Robertson, City Attorney's Office

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#### **1. Summary of Process to Date.**

The City Council has been considering changing regulations regarding Gas Powered Leaf Blowers ("GPLB") for several years. The City mostly recently conducted outreach in the spring of 2023, soliciting input from the public, including holding an open house in May of 2023. Following multiple council meetings on the topic, on September 11, 2023, the City Council adopted Resolution No. 435 which set the goal of phasing out GPLB by 2028. Resolution No. 435 also required additional community outreach and exploration and phase-in for the City's public works department.

While the City's public works department purchased an Electric Powered Leaf Blower ("EPLB") in 2025, the City did not begin the additional public outreach process as contemplated by Resolution No. 435.

Copies of prior agenda bills and the supporting documents October 27<sup>th</sup> are attached to this Agenda Bill.

#### **2. Summary of Direction from Council on October 27, 2025.**

After discussion on October 27<sup>th</sup>, the City Council direction included the following:

- The Council re-affirmed the goals in Resolution No. 435.
- There was no consensus on a date for a ban. Some Councilmembers expressed an interest in moving towards a complete ban of GPLB to take effect no later than January of 2028, with an effort to expedite the ban to 2027 if possible. However, some councilmembers had no timeline, rather, there was interest in doing outreach and education prior to establishing a firm date.
- The Council perspective varied on whether to allow seasonal use (October – March) of GPLB either during a phase in period or on an on-going basis.
- The Council agreed that use of GPLB should be allowed during emergencies, such as following a major storm.

- Staff should develop a positive, pro-sustainability campaign as an immediate approach. This should include asking homeowners to request EPLB use by their landscaping services vendors.
- An outreach plan for education, communication, and stakeholder engagement should be promptly developed. This should include:
  - development of City webpage,
  - emailing newsletters,
  - providing notices to landscape vendors, and
  - providing notices to large property owners, including Overlake Golf Course.

### **3. Direction on Drafting an Ordinance.**

Based on Council discussion on October 27<sup>th</sup>, the staff prepared a draft code framework for feedback by the Council. The draft framework includes the following as a starting point for Council direction:

- Bans GPLB use after a date certain (to be determined by Council), with the option for seasonal ban either as phase-in or as part of the permanent regulations.
- Creates a seasonal ban (April 1 – September 30) for the phase-in of the effectiveness of the ordinance (or seasonal use can be part of the permanent regulations).
- Allows the use of GPLB during an emergency and for the seven calendar days following the end of the emergency.
- Creates the option for special use exceptions (i.e., roof cleaning).
- Bans blowing debris from one property to another, including prohibiting blowing debris into the street.
- Utilizes the City's Code Enforcement chapter (1.15 MMC) for enforcement and makes the user and the property owner responsible for enforcement.

### **4. Community Outreach Plan.**

The staff proposes the following next steps for community outreach:

#### ***November 2025 – January 2026:***

- City staff will develop list of landscaping contractors who operate in Medina and solicit feedback on banning the use of GPLB in Medina and the impact on their ability to continue to provide landscaping services.
- City staff will also perform outreach to large property owners, including Overlake Golf Course.
- Develop a Medina webpage on GPLB ban proposal, including providing resources and educational materials on the topic.
- Sending e-news information to residents regarding GPBL, requesting residents to begin conversion or request their vendor's use EPLB.
- Reach out to other cities in Washington that have been working on this issue to provide information on what other local cities are doing.

#### ***January 2026 – March 2026:***

- Hold City Council meetings regarding the draft legislation.
- Hold an Open House on GPLB to take additional comment.
- Hold a public hearing on the draft legislation.
- Sending e-news to residents and vendors re: status of proposal and next steps.

***March 2026 – June 2026:***

- Prepare educational/informational materials on draft legislation.
- If legislation is passed, send e-news to residents and vendors regarding new legislation, date the ban will take effect, and any phase-in plans.

***June 2026 – December 2026:***

- If legislation is passed, staff will provide education/information materials to vendors working in the city as well as to our residents and businesses operating inside Medina city limits.

***After legislation takes effect:***

- All enforcement will be done via warning and education for the period set by Council.
- Information will be sent out periodically to vendors regarding the ban (or seasonal ban) of GPLB in Medina.

**Attachment(s)**

- Draft Code Framework.
- The materials provided to council in prior meetings are also attached.

**Budget/Fiscal Impacts** The cost of legislation prohibiting the use of GPLBs include cost of enforcement and the costs converting the Medina equipment from GPLBs to electric. The cost of an electric leaf blower is \$5,000. The City would need to purchase four (4) of the electric leaf blowers to replace the GPLBs in stock as well as additional batteries. Operational changes would be required due to inefficiencies in the equipment.

Costs associated with enforcement would be a general fund expense, and as code enforcement is complaint-driven, the expenditures would vary based on the volume of complaints/calls.

**Staff Recommendation:** Engage in Council discussion and provide staff with additional direction on draft legislation.

**City Manager Approval:**



**Proposed Council Motion:** No motion proposed. Provide direction to staff with next steps.