

Memo

To: Mayor and Members of Council

From: Swaraj Mann, Manager – Corporate Strategy
Strategy, Policy and Communications Department

CC: ELT
Vicki Tytaneck, Town Clerk

Date: May 17, 2024

Subject: Petition related to the use of gas-powered equipment

Comments

This memo provides additional context to Item 10.2 (Use of Gas-Powered Equipment) on the agenda for the Council meeting on May 27, 2024. Specifically, staff is sharing additional input, in the form of a petition that was received from the public, on top of the established consultation approach (which included a survey with 800+ respondents, an open house, and meetings offered to Residents Associations).

As noted in the staff report, the town has also received feedback from residents that the use of small, gas-powered equipment has negative impacts related to climate, air quality, health, and noise, and that such equipment is unnecessary due to the availability of alternatives.

This petition, organized by a group called Quiet Oakville, was submitted to town staff with a cover letter that indicated the signatures were collected in the summer of 2023. The text of the petition is in advocacy of a “ban or limit on all gasoline-powered leaf blowers in the Town of Oakville and encourag[ing] investment in electric- or battery-powered leaf blowers.” Staff note that the petition included information for 450+ petitioners including names, signatures, emails, and/or addresses, for which publication in the staff report could raise privacy and confidentiality concerns.

However, staff would like to ensure Council’s awareness of the petition’s top line advocacy request and call to action—attached to this memo, with appropriate removal of identifying information—and note that the opportunity exists for any individual Member of Council to directly examine the petition in its entirety at Town Hall. Should you wish to view the full petition, please contact swaraj.mann@oakville.ca.

Town of Oakville | 1225 Trafalgar Road, Oakville L6H 0H3 | 905-845-6601 | oakville.ca

Petition to Ban or Limit Gasoline-Powered Leaf Blowers in the Town of Oakville

To the Town Council of Oakville—

Whereas gasoline-powered leaf blowers:

- Contribute significantly to air pollution by spewing one-third of their fuel as unburned aerosol
- Pose a serious health risk to residents and equipment operators by emitting a variety of pollutants, including carbon monoxide, nitrogen oxide, and volatile organic compounds
- Create noise pollution by emitting up to 100 decibels of low-frequency sounds that penetrates walls
- Create stress by disrupting the tranquility of neighbourhoods, calling into question Oakville's moniker, "Liveable Oakville"
- Increase Oakville's carbon footprint by increasing the emission of greenhouse gases
- Contribute to soil erosion and the loss of valuable nutrients
- Disrupt the ecosystem and biodiversity, driving birds and animals from their habitats

We, the undersigned, petition the Town of Oakville as follows:

To call upon Oakville Town Council to ban or limit all gasoline-powered leaf blowers in the Town of Oakville and encourage investment in electric- or battery-powered leaf blowers.