

CHAPTER 2025-50

No. 436 **AN ORDINANCE IN AMENDMENT OF CHAPTER 12 OF THE CODE OF ORDINANCES OF THE CITY OF PROVIDENCE ENTITLED "HEALTH AND SANITATION", AS AMENDED, TO ADD ARTICLE VII, "GAS-POWERED LAWN EQUIPMENT"**

Approved November 12, 2025

Be it ordained by the City of Providence:

SECTION 1. Chapter 12 of the Code of Ordinances of the City of Providence, entitled "Health and Sanitation", as amended, is hereby further amended as follows:

Sec. 12-132. – Definitions.

For the purposes of this article, the following definitions shall apply:

Gas-powered leaf blower means any leaf blower, directly powered by an internal combustion or rotary engine using gasoline, alcohol, or other liquid or gaseous fuel.

Electric-powered leaf blower means any leaf blower that is powered solely by electricity.

Sec. 12-133. – Purpose and Intent.

The City Council of Providence recognizes the adverse health and environmental impacts of using gas-powered leaf blowers. The impacts are as follows:

- (a) Gas-powered leaf blowers produce dangerously high noise levels, commonly exceeding acceptable thresholds set by the World Health Organization. Exposure to sound levels of this caliber for extended periods can have adverse health effects such as hearing damage, hearing loss, and hypertension.
- (b) Gas-powered leaf blowers produce low-frequency sound waves that travel farther, and more readily penetrate barriers such as walls, thus magnifying the sound they produce and their disturbance to the public.
- (c) The most common type of gas-powered leaf blowers are 2-stroke combustion engines, which inefficiently process fuel. Up to a third of the gas and oil they use is not burned but emitted as toxic and carcinogenic fumes such as nitrous oxide, carbon monoxide, and volatile organic compounds. These toxic fumes lead to the formation of ozone, acid rain, and smog, as well as pose negative health risks to operators and the public.
- (d) The exhaust and particulate matter emitted by gas-powered leaf blowers is shown to degrade local air quality as well as increase the risk of heart disease, asthma, cancers, and low birth weight, posing significant health threats to operators and people in the near vicinity.

The City finds these adverse effects sufficient to issue this ordinance. For the sole purpose of protecting and enhancing environmental and public health, it is hereby declared to be the policy of the City to transition away from the use of gas-powered leaf blowers to electric leaf blowers no later than January 1, 2033.

- (a) This ordinance is consistent with the City's 2019 Climate Justice Plan of transitioning from the use of fossil fuels fairly and equitably, particularly regarding the improvement of community health.
- (b) The city understands the limitations of electric leaf-blower technology as well as the financial cost of transitioning, therefore is implementing a multi-year phase-out policy to allow for compliance.

- (c) The City acknowledges the financial burden of phasing out gas-powered electric leaf blowers and will conduct the proper outreach and education regarding existing state funds that can be reimbursed to residents who purchase electric-powered leaf blowers.

Sec. 12-134. – Transition.

It is hereby declared to be the policy of the City to phase out the use of gas-powered leaf blowers beginning on January 1, 2028, and to prohibit such use entirely as of January 1, 2033.

(a) City Use Phase-Out and Education (January 1, 2028 – December 31, 2032)

As of January 1, 2028, the use of gas-powered leaf blowers by any city department and city contractor shall be permitted only between October 1 and December 15 of each calendar year.

(b) Public Phase-Out and Education Period (January 1, 2030 – December 31, 2032)

As of January 1, 2030, the use of gas-powered leaf blowers by any person, including city departments and city contractors, shall be permitted only between October 1 and December 15 of each calendar year.

(c) Permanent Prohibition (Effective January 1, 2033)

As of January 1, 2033, the use of gas-powered leaf blowers anywhere within the city limits by any person, including city departments and city contractors, shall be prohibited.

Sec. 12-135. – Energy Department Commitment.

The City of Providence hereby commits to working with the Rhode Island Office of Energy Resources and the Rhode Island Commerce Corporation to develop assistance for small business owners in the transition to electric equipment. This is to make the transition away from gas-powered leaf blowers as equitable as possible and to eliminate the financial burden on small landscaping companies.

Sec. 12-136. – Violations.

The use of a gas-powered leaf blower in violation of this ordinance shall be subject to the following:

- (1) In the first year of the Public Phase-Out and Education Period (January 1, 2030 – December 31, 2031), the first three instances of non-compliance will receive a warning accompanied by education and resources to support compliance. Subsequent instances of non-compliance will be addressed in accordance with Section 12-136.3.
- (2) Beginning January 1, 2032, the first instance of non-compliance will receive a warning from the Department of Public Works.
- (3) Each subsequent instance of non-compliance will be subject to a \$100 fine per instance of violation.
- (4) Violations will be issued to the owner of the property on which the leaf blower was used or contracted for use.

SECTION 2. This ordinance shall take effect upon passage.

IN CITY COUNCIL
OCT 02 2025
FIRST READING
READ AND PASSED

Jina L. Mastrosanni
CLERK

IN CITY COUNCIL
NOV 06 2025
FINAL READING
READ AND PASSED *As Amended*

Rachel M. Miller
RACHEL M. MILLER, PRESIDENT
Jina L. Mastrosanni
CLERK

I HEREBY APPROVE.

Beatt Smily

Mayor

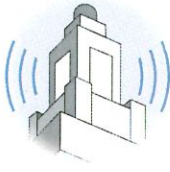
Date: *11/12/2025*

Mastroianni, Tina

From: sharon sock <sharonsock18@gmail.com>
Sent: Sunday, October 12, 2025 10:34 AM
To: Clerk, City
Subject: [EXTERNAL] oppose Councilmember AnderBois' leafblower ordinance amendment as currently structured

While I feel that Providence needs to address the noise issues in the city, I CANNOT SUPPORT Councilmember AnderBois' leafblower ordinance amendment as currently structured. Eight years is simply too long for Providence residents to wait — and the landscaping workers who live here — to wait until they can *finally* be free of the excessive and unnecessary noise and other toxic emissions from gas-burning leafblowers. The proposed ordinance amendment literally *sacrifices residents' and workers' health and environment for the benefit of landscaping company owners and workers who live outside the city.* If they insist on continuing to use polluting gas-fueled equipment, they're free to do so in cities and towns outside of Providence.

It is imperative that we reduce the noise level in Providence NOW!



Providence Noise Project

"Noise is the New Smoking"

Oct. 14, 2025

Testimony in Opposition to the Proposed Gas-Leafblower Ordinance Amendment

We are writing to urge the City Council to postpone the final vote on the gas-leafblower ordinance amendment, to allow more time to address several glaring flaws in it — first and foremost, the unnecessarily long 7-year timeline to end the use of gas-burning leafblowers in Providence in 2033 — and, in the absence of such a delay, to express our firm opposition to it.

After many years in which gas-leafblower regulation proposals did not proceed beyond either the draft or public-hearing stages, the current ordinance amendment was introduced in late 2024 and had a hearing in early 2025, after which residents heard nothing about it until Sept. 22 of this year — nearly *eight months later* — when we suddenly got the minimum two-days notice under RI state law that the Environment Committee would be voting on it.

After a brief summary of several fundamental changes, a three-person quorum voted to pass the amendment on to the full City Council, which immediately scheduled it for the two votes required for final passage. During the interval between the votes, Providence Mayor Brett Smiley told WPRI 12 that the city would prefer to end its use of gas leafblowers earlier than 2033. (A provision for doing so was removed from the final version without any explanation.)

The amendment does not take effect for over a year, until Jan. 1, 2027, yet the City Council insists on voting on it as rapidly as legally possible, instead of providing PVD residents — and apparently also the mayor — with an opportunity to publicly discuss and revise the only version we've seen since the original draft was introduced a year ago. Two days is simply not enough time for residents to read, analyze, discuss, and offer input on the final version. The undue haste of the final three votes is contrary to the public interest, and fundamentally undemocratic.

Taking a few weeks or even months to discuss and improve the ordinance amendment will in no way delay its implementation or effects. What it *will* do is add critically needed elements that residents and the mayor have requested — including and especially reducing the deadlines for city workers and contractors, and the general public, to stop using gas-fueled leafblowers.

As the amendment itself states, gas leafblowers “produce dangerously high noise levels ... exceeding acceptable thresholds set by the WHO” — as well as PVD’s noise ordinance — and “toxic and carcinogenic fumes” that lead to “ozone, acid rain and smog” and “pose significant health risks to operators and the public” such as “increased risk of heart disease, asthma, cancers and low birth-weight.” The Council must protect public health from this *before* 2033.

www.providencenoiseproject.org

[@NotSoLoudPVD](https://twitter.com/NotSoLoudPVD)

info@providencenoiseproject.org

Residents would also like one weekend day free of gas leafblower noise, so they can enjoy their property in peace. Landscapers don't generally work on Sundays, so this would not impinge on small business. We also think the city needs to send a clear message to both its inhabitants and landscapers alike that they must stop purchasing *additional* gas-fueled leafblowers well before their prohibition, by ending gas-leafblower sales as of 2027.

Finally, the Noise Project has long advocated for *effective* enforcement mechanisms in the leafblower amendment, so that unlike most other PVD noise ordinances, it doesn't exist merely on paper while otherwise being ignored, but actually serves to end gas leafblower use. This means escalating fines for multiple violations, the legal admissibility of time- and date-stamped video evidence, and after gas leafblowers' eventual prohibition, inspections of landscaper tools.

Finally, the Noise Project's volunteers and supporters are particularly troubled by the undue emphasis that the proposed gas-leafblower ordinance amendment — and particularly its unconscionable delay in ending their use — places on the narrow commercial interests of the vast majority of landscaping company owners who live outside Providence, and thus are not affected by the unhealthy noise and other toxic emissions that their gas equipment generates.

As we assume most Providence City Council members recognize implicitly, the Council is a *municipal* body authorized and limited to regulating conduct *within* city boundaries. As such, its members have a sworn responsibility to represent the interests of their respective resident constituents — not those of other Rhode Island cities and towns (or of adjacent states), all of whom have their own local and state legislative bodies and designated representatives therein.

The Providence City Council is not a state-wide body, and should not legislate regulations on behalf of residents of other parts of RI, which has a duly constituted General Assembly for that purpose. Any member of the PVD City Council who wants to affect *state* policies should run for election to the Assembly, where they must still represent the interests of their constituents. It may be gratifying make state, regional, or even national policy, but that's not the Council's job.

Submitted on behalf of the Providence Noise Project,

John Wilner
Communications Coordinator

Mastroianni, Tina

From: darek niklas <dniklas1@icloud.com>
Sent: Thursday, October 9, 2025 6:41 PM
To: Clerk, City
Cc: info@providencenoiseproject.org
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Gas fueled blowers

Hullo:

From March to the end of October the so called "leafblowers" blow DUST in the air and on the neighbors' houses and lots. When there are leaves on the ground by the beginning of November the blowers serve to pile the leaves into heaps, which is entirely unnecessary while the leaves can - much more simply - be RAKED into the bags or sucked on the trucks.

Thank you,
Darek Niklas
Providence

Mastroianni, Tina

From: Bruce Baldani <brucebaldani@outlook.com>
Sent: Friday, October 10, 2025 10:34 AM
To: Clerk, City
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Leaf Blowers and Landscaping to be read to City Council

Hi,

I am writing this to again address the issue of leaf blowers and landscaping machines in the neighborhood, using a link from the Providence Noise Project.

These leaf blowers and landscaping machines in general are over the legal db levels allowed at any time in the city so how are they legally being used every day of the week?

They are a noise pollution problem, a public nuisance problem, a health problem, and basically illegal. They need to be at the very least set on time limits if they continue to be used. There are many service industry workers, Doctors, nurses etc., in the area that work all kinds of evening and night shifts and don't get home until early in the morning. I myself worked 2nd and 3rd shift for a local Telecommunications company. To work all night and be woken up by basically illegal leaf blower noise coming through my window at 8am when you are just getting to sleep is a major health issue. You go back into work that night without sleeping at all which is dangerous.

I propose these landscaping companies who obviously do not live in the area work here later in the day. They work all day so why start here and then go to other areas in the afternoon? Work somewhere else in the morning and work here later in the day. Is it that they don't want to disturb people in their own neighborhood? And it is not a parking issue because I have talked to some of the company owners on the phone and they agreed to coming later in the day. The problem is we need to get all the companies on board while phasing out these obnoxious machines.

Thanks,
Bruce Baldani
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