



## THE CITY OF KEY WEST

Post Office Box 1409 Key West, FL 33041-1409 (305) 809-3700

MEMORANDUM

**TO:** Jim Scholl, City Manager  
**FROM:** Alison Higgins, Sustainability Coordinator  
**VIA:** Jim Bouquet, Engineering Director  
**DATE:** February 21, 2017  
**SUBJECT: Request for Increased Regulation on Leaf Blowers**

### **ACTION STATEMENT:**

Direct the City Manager to convene an interdepartmental committee to draft a comprehensive ordinance regulating the use of leaf blowers within Key West city limits and present to City Commission for approval.

### **BACKGROUND:**

Local governments are increasingly regulating leaf blowers to address associated air quality, water quality, health and noise impacts. The attached *Leaf Blower Research* report reviews leaf blower related issues and actions by local governments to mitigate identified impacts.

Potential actions include, but may not be limited to:

- Phase out gas powered leaf blowers for residential use.
- Phase out 2-stroke engine leaf blowers for commercial use and replace with 4-stroke.
- Phase in industry stamped "Quiet" leaf blowers (ANSI Standard, B-175.2:  $\leq 70$  dBA)
- Establish air volume limits.
- Require leaf blower training for commercial operators.
- Codify the City noise ordinance to establish operational hours for leaf blower use in residential areas.

During a Special Meeting on February 18, 2017, the City of Key West Sustainability Advisory Board voted unanimously to direct the City Manager to

convene an interdepartmental committee to draft a comprehensive ordinance regulating the use of leaf blowers within Key West city limits and present to City Commission for approval.

## **PURPOSE AND JUSTIFICATION:**

Further regulation of Leaf Blowers meets many goals, including:

- Reduction of greenhouse gases
- Decrease in nonpoint stormwater pollution
- Decrease in airborne particulate matter with a corresponding increase in air quality
- Decrease in unnecessary noise
- Increase in quality of life for residents and visitors and workers

Increased regulation of leaf blowers and leaf blower operation is consistent with the following City of Key West initiatives:

### **Strategic Plan 2011—**

- Environment Goal #1: A Natural Environment that enhances the “Key West Experience” for residents and visitors alike.
- Environment Goal #4: City leads by example utilizing sustainable practices in City operations.

### **Comprehensive Plan 2013—**

- Future Land Use Element. Manage and Coordinate Future Land Use Decisions. Policy 1-1.9.2: Comprehensive Plan Implementation and Land Development Regulations. The Land Development Regulations shall continue to include a regulatory framework to ... 8. Ensure Progress toward community greenhouse gas emissions reduction goals.
- Conservation Element. Protect Air Quality Objective. Policy 6-1.1.1: Combat Erosion and Generation of Dust Particles. Policy 6-1.1.3: Reduction of greenhouse gasses.

## **FINANCIAL IMPACT:**

A yet undetermined longer term financial impact would be the need for to upgrade to an allowable leaf blower. This cost could be mitigated by implementing a reasonable timeline for compliance, rather than an immediate ban.

To lead by example, the City should include the purchase of compliant leaf blowers in the FY2017-18 budget.

## **RECOMMENDATION:**

The Sustainability Advisory Board recommends directing the City Manager to convene an interdepartmental committee to draft a comprehensive ordinance regulating the use of leaf blowers within Key West city limits and present to City Commission for approval.