



CITY OF ALEXANDRIA

Discussion Regarding Options for the Regulation of Leaf Blowers

**City Council Legislative Meeting
January 28, 2025**



Agenda



- **Summary**
- **Background**
- **Legislative History**
- **Potential Considerations**
- **Options**
- **Proposed Outreach Plan**
- **Discussion / City Council Direction**



Summary

Request:

- Seeking guidance on more strict regulation of gas-powered leaf blowers.

Council Action:

- City Council Direction.

Key Elements of the Discussion:

- Adopt a Total ban of gas-powered leaf blowers.
- Include a multi-year phase-out period.
- Implement community outreach.
- Propose ordinance change.



Background

- December 2021, the City's noise code was updated.
- Currently, lawn and garden equipment including leaf blowers are regulated by hours of operation.

Activity	Allowable Hours
Power Lawn and Garden Equipment	M-F: 7 AM- 9 PM Weekends/Major Holidays: 9 AM- 9 PM * The 75 dB(A) standard was deleted during the last Noise Codes update, Dec 2021.

Section 11-5-2 Definition of Power Lawn Equipment; Section 11-5-4(16) Allowable Hours Power and Lawn Equipment; and *City Holidays, as listed in Sec. 11-5-5.



Legislative History

- In 2024, the General Assembly considered two bills that would have given localities express authority to prohibit or regulate the use of gas-powered leaf blowers. SB305 was continued to 2025 and the HB644 did not make it out of Committee.
- In August 2024, the Virginia Attorney General opined that the City's Charter in Sec. 2.04 provides sufficient authority to ban leaf blowers. While Attorney General opinions do not have the force of law, they are considered by the courts to be persuasive authority in the event of a legal challenge.
- Currently, the City has expressed support of SB305 in its Legislative Package.



Potential Considerations

- **Reduce Noise Levels in the City**
 - Quality of life issue.
 - Excessive noise is also a health issue.
- **Reduce Air Pollution**
 - Gas-powered engine are a significant source of air pollutants, particularly 2-cycle engines.
- **Cost Implications**
 - Public and Private.



Options

- **Make No changes**
- **Stricter regulation of gas-powered leaf blowers, if yes:**
- **Total ban of the use of gas-powered leaf blowers**
 - Easier to enforce, as compared to decibel or other restrictions.
- **Incorporate a multi-year phase-out period**
 - Both D.C. and Montgomery County have incorporated a phase-out period in their bans.
- **City to lead by example**
 - City government accelerates transition to battery-powered leaf blowers in FY 2026, will have budget implications.



Timeline

Q2 FY2025

Gather background research.

- Fiscal impacts, costs, emissions data, etc.

Early 2025

Brief City Council on this topic during City Manager Oral Report.

- Share with City Council initial staff suggestions on this topic.
- Request feedback and comment from City Council to solidify a plan forward for late Spring 2025.

Early 2025

Develop draft language working with City Attorney's Office.

Spring 2025

Develop and implement outreach plan.

- Community meetings, targeted meetings with lawn and garden groups in the City.

Late Spring 2025

Present to City Council for consideration and approval.



Proposed Outreach Plan

- **Focus of Outreach**

- Notify Alexandria businesses & residents on proposed regulation/ban of gas-powered leaf blowers.
- Receive feedback & comments on City proposed changes.

- **Two Hybrid Meetings anticipated in March 2025**

- 1st meeting: Resident Focused.
- 2nd meeting: Landscaping Companies & Larger Property Owners.



CITY OF ALEXANDRIA

City Council Direction

