Regulation of Gas-Powered Leaf Blower Policy Analysis

FNRC Meeting

Climate Policy Office

October 23, 2025

Jennifer Fioretti

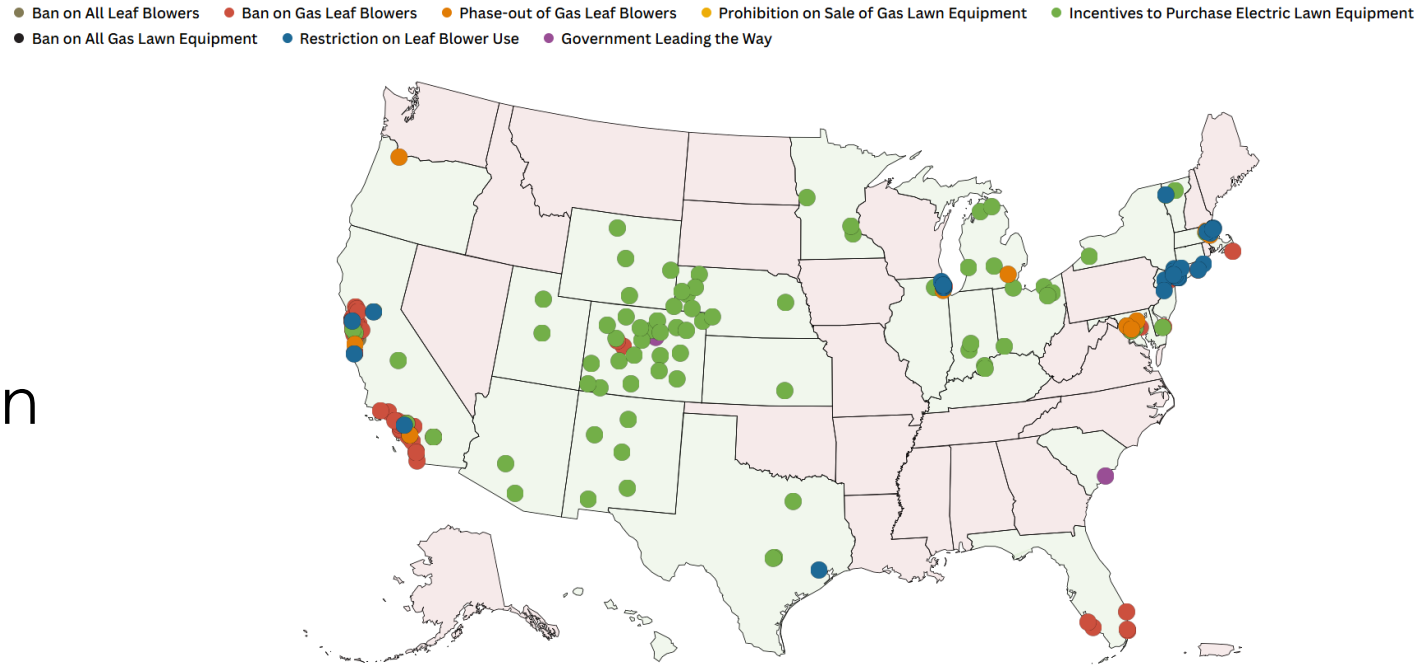
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Agenda

- Background
- Overview
- Potential Policy Changes
- Policy Considerations
- Engagement Opportunities
- Engagement Timeline

Background

- Increasing public interest in exploring the prohibition of the use of gas-powered leaf blowers.
- Communities nationwide and in the DMV region, including the District of Columbia, Montgomery County and the City of Alexandria, have amended their noise ordinances to prohibit the use of gas-powered leaf blowers.



U.S. PIRG Education Fund

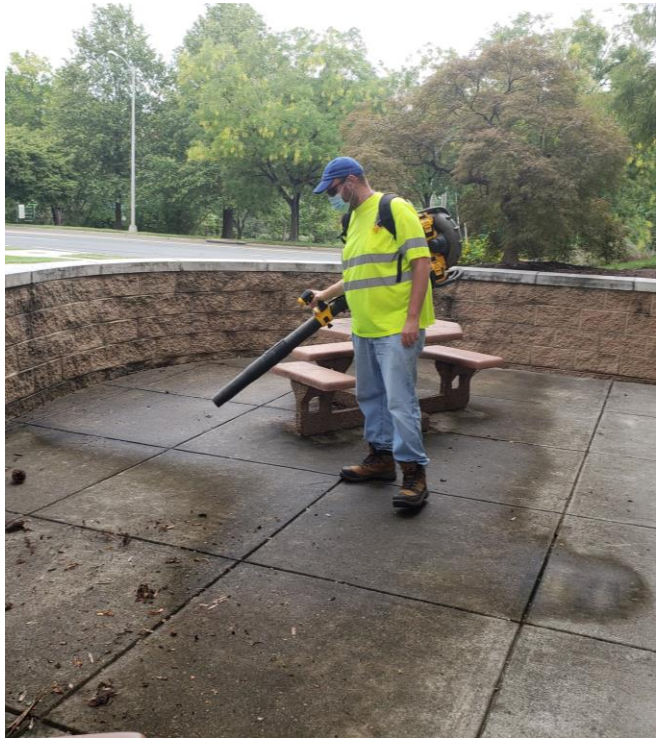
Background



- Arlington County Owned Handheld Landscape Equipment
  - In Fiscal Year 2025, 100% of all Arlington County non-emergency operations use battery powered handheld landscape equipment.
- Arlington mowing and landscape contracts.
  - As contracts expire, the County will update the contracts to require electric leaf blowers.

Overview

- Gas-powered leaf blowers and other motorized lawn equipment are regulated through Arlington County Code Chapter 15-6(Noise Ordinance). Restricts private use of “motorized leaf-blowing devices” in any “R” zoning district during the Nighttime.
- $250 for first time violation, and $500 for subsequent violations of noise ordinance.



Potential Policy Changes

- A year-round prohibition of the use of gas-powered handheld, backpack, and walk-behind leaf removal equipment.
- A phase-out period of up to three years for equipment covered by the proposed rules.
  - A phase-out temporarily permits the use of gas-powered leaf blowers to provide time for residents and businesses to adjust to the new regulation before enforcement of the ordinance begins.

Potential Policy Considerations



Noise: Gas leaf blowers can reach 115 decibels, which can be as loud as a car horn. Quieter tools help protect hearing and reduce stress for people and animals.



Health: These blowers burn gas and oil, releasing dirty air that can harm your heart, lungs, and brain.



Emissions: Using a gas leaf blower for one hour pollutes as much as driving from DC to Miami.



Spills: Fuel often spills when refilling these machines, which can soak into the ground and pollute water.

Potential Policy Considerations

Economic: Small businesses and homeowners may face financial strain from upfront equipment costs.

Technology: Electric leaf blowers may have battery limitations that affect business operations. The current supply of electric-powered services may not meet demand if a prohibition is enacted immediately.

Environmental: Lithium-ion batteries, commonly used in electric leaf blowers, can pose environmental and safety risks, requiring proper disposal and recycling. Alternatively, electric leaf blowers can promote healthier soil and reduce the need for synthetic fertilizers.

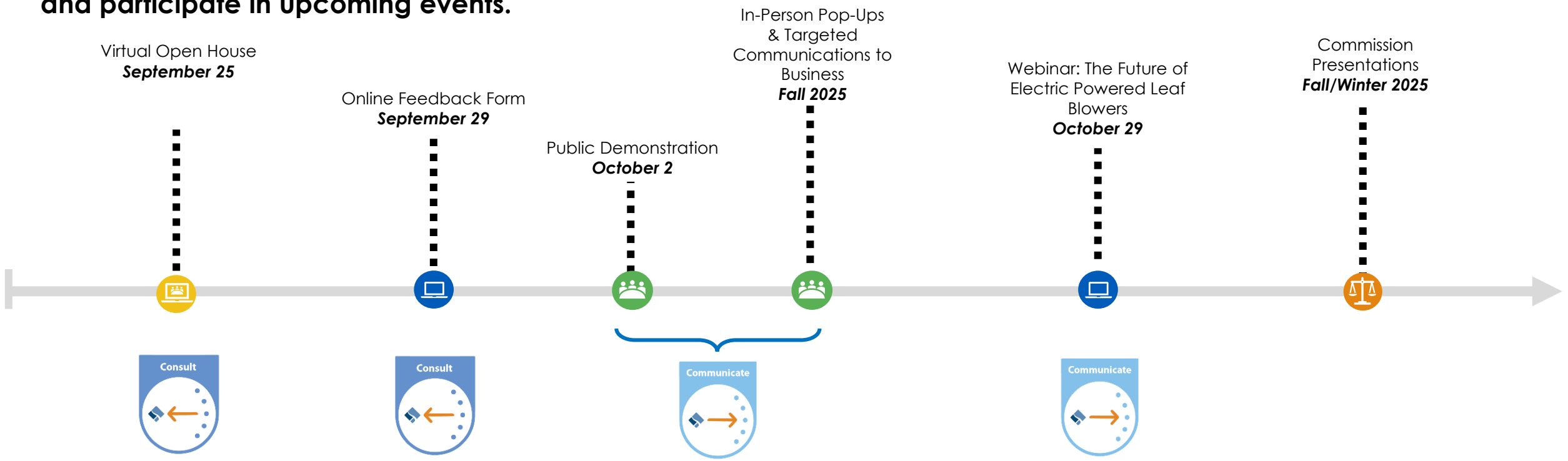
Gas-Powered Leaf Blower Engagement Plan

Origin:

Funding:

Staff Contact: Jennifer Fioretti
jfioretti@arlingtonva.us

Visit the project page to stay informed on the project and participate in upcoming events.



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Online Feedback (e.g, questionnaire, feedback form, etc.)

In-Person Engagement and Pop-Ups (e.g, community meeting, roundtable, tabling, walking/bus tour, deliberative dialogue, etc.)

Virtual Meeting (e.g., TEAMS, TEAMS live, Zoom, etc.)

County Board Engagement (e.g, public hearing, Board work session, open door Monday, commission meeting, etc.)

Key Milestone

Outstanding Engagement Opportunities

- Feedback Form – Closes **October 29**
  - Gas-Powered Leaf Blowers in Arlington County - PublicInput
- **October 29 –** Electric Leaf-Blower Webinar
- Community Pop-Up Events across the County
- Ongoing direct contact with garden and lawn companies registered in Arlington
- Project Website
  - www.arlingtonva.us, search “leaf blowers”

Thank you

