NEW CASTLE’S PROPOSED LEAF BLOWER ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION LAW

Report by the New Castle Sustainability Advisory Board

Presented at a Town Board Meeting – July 14, 2020
Agenda

• Executive Summary
• Our Neighbors
• Education & Rollout
• Trade-in Programs
• Current Electric Blower Technology
• What our residents are saying
• Next Steps
Executive Summary

• SAB has been conducting research on leaf blowers for three years

• SAB has submitted to the Town a local law to significantly reduce their ill effects

• Many comments from people who thought the law didn’t go far enough and those who thought it went too far

• SAB held listening meetings with a variety of stakeholders

• SAB is proposing a revised solution
  – Fuel-Powered Leaf Blowers (GLBs) October through May
  – Electric Leaf Blowers (ELBs) all year long

• Exemption determined by “public safety concerns”
### Proposed Leaf Blower Environmental Protection Law (Revised Version)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time Period</th>
<th>Restrictions</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>June 1 – September 30</td>
<td>No Fuel-Powered Leaf Blowers (GLBs)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Electric Leaf Blowers are permitted</td>
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<tr>
<td>October 1 – May 31</td>
<td>GLBs and Electric Leaf Blowers are permitted</td>
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#### Noise Levels from Domestic Tools

No restrictions during the hours of:
- 8 AM – 8 PM – Mon – Fri
- 9 AM – 8 PM – Sat
- 9 AM – 5 PM – Sun & Holidays

All other times not to exceed 45 dB(A)

#### Exemptions:
- Chappaqua Central School District’s & Town of New Castle’s recreational fields, tennis courts, country clubs’ tennis courts, homeowner associations’ tennis courts, swim clubs’ tennis courts, golf courses, and cemeteries
- Use of any fuel-powered motorized leaf blower shall be minimized to the maximum extent practicable
- Town Administrator may temporarily permit use where public safety concerns exist

#### Noise Level Restrictions:
- Align with the Town’s noise ordinance for domestic tools
Our Neighbors

The SAB contacted many of the municipalities in Westchester county with existing leaf blower bans.

Although over half of them exempt their Town from the ban, most of them stated that they try to set a good example.

Here are some of their comments:

“We've asked our landscape contractor to switch to electric”

“We've taken to using alternative measures such as mulching and vacuuming where practical”

“Our Town Supervisor...has discouraged their use”
GAS-POWERED LEAF BLOWERS ARE ILLEGAL IN THE TOWN OF MAMARONECK JUNE - JULY - AUGUST - SEPTEMBER

Violations are subject to fine

All leaf blowers harm our health and the environment!

PARTICULATE MATTER

► All leaf blowers propel into the air particulates such as dirt, dust, pollen and fecal matter, as well as dangerous contaminants such as mold, fungus spores, pesticides, herbicides, lead, organic and elemental carbon. A leaf blower can send up about 5 pounds of particulate matter per hour, and it can remain suspended in the air for hours.

► Particulate matter is easily absorbed into the lungs. It can increase the number and severity of asthma attacks, bronchitis, and other lung diseases, and reduce the ability to fight infection.

► Children and frail elderly people are especially vulnerable. Children breathe more air per pound of body weight than adults, and their organs are more sensitive to environmental hazards.

► Leaf blowers also unnecessarily disturb beneficial organisms in the soil and erode valuable topsoil.

AIR POLLUTION

► A gas-powered leaf blower operating for one hour fills the air with much more carbon monoxide, nitrous oxides, and hydrocarbons than a large car traveling for one hour.

► These emissions are more dangerous in warm weather, when they contribute to the formation of ground-level ozone.

► High ground-level ozone concentrations can cause serious respiratory and cardiovascular problems.

NOISE POLLUTION

► Loud noise from leaf blowers is a danger to operators and passers-by, and a disruption for neighbors.

► Workers equipped with sound-blocking gear have only partial protection. Passers-by and neighbors have none.

► There is an increased risk of hearing damage and elevated blood pressure from exposure to loud noise.

PLEASE KEEP OUR TOWN LEAF BLOWER FREE THIS SUMMER!

Make sure that gas-powered leaf blowers are not used on your property.
Minimize use of electric models.
Notify your landscaper and lawn crew about the gas-powered leaf blower ban.
Report violations in progress to Town of Mamaroneck Police at 914-381.6100
Direct questions and comments to the Town’s Sustainability Collaborative
c/o sodiema@townofmamaroneckny.org

Yonkers' Leaf Blower Ban

Yonkers Gas-Powered Leaf Blower Ban

What is it?
The City Code bans the use of gas-powered leaf blowers to help protect the public health during the summer months.

When is the ban in effect?
June 1 - September 30

How can I report violations?
During regular business hours, please call Code Enforcement at (914) 377-6669.
After hours, please call YPD at (914) 377-7900.
www.yonkersny.gov/leafblower

In 2007, the City of Yonkers enacted a Leaf Blower Ban which is in effect each year from June 1 through September 30th.
The use of gas-powered leaf blowers is a violation of the Yonkers City Code Section 91-31 and is intended to protect the public health by reducing air pollution.
Failure to comply with the ban is punishable as a Class II offense with fines ranging from $250 to $5,000. To report violations during weekday hours of 8:30 a.m. - 4:30 p.m., call Yonkers Code Enforcement at (914) 377-6669. To report violations on evenings and weekends, call the Yonkers Police Department at (914) 377-7900.
The Town of Bedford's New Leaf Blower Law Summary and Frequently Asked Questions

The Town Board of the Town of Bedford adopted a new leaf blower law on June 19, 2018. This law includes a 6:00 AM to 9:00 PM curfew on weekends and holidays, and a ban on the use of leaf blowers in hamlet zones. The law also extends to adjacent hamlet zones and hamlets. The law is intended to reduce noise pollution and improve air quality.

Why did the Town Board enact the leaf blower law?

The Town Board enacted the leaf blower law to address concerns about noise pollution and air quality. The law aims to reduce the use of leaf blowers during peak hours, which is expected to improve the quality of life for residents in the area.

What is the impact of the leaf blower law on residents?

The leaf blower law is expected to have a positive impact on residents by reducing noise pollution and improving air quality. The law will require residents to follow the curfew and restrictions on the use of leaf blowers, which will help to maintain a more peaceful and healthy environment.

How will the Town of Bedford enforce the leaf blower law?

The Town of Bedford will enforce the leaf blower law through monitoring and compliance checks. The Town will be able to issue fines to residents who violate the law. The Town will also provide resources and assistance to help residents comply with the law.

Why did the Town Board not just use the Leave Leaves Initiative to reduce leaf blower use?

The Town Board did not use the Leave Leaves Initiative to reduce leaf blower use because it was not effective in achieving the desired results. The Initiative did not provide enough resources or support to residents to encourage them to comply with the law.

What is the process for filing a complaint about the use of leaf blowers?

The process for filing a complaint about the use of leaf blowers is straightforward. Residents can contact the Town of Bedford to report violations of the leaf blower law. The Town will investigate the complaint and take appropriate action.

Will the cost of electric leaf blowers be offset by the savings from reduced fuel consumption and the elimination of exhaust emissions?

Electric leaf blowers may initially cost more than traditional gas-powered leaf blowers. However, the cost savings from reduced fuel consumption and the elimination of exhaust emissions can offset the initial cost. The Town of Bedford is providing resources and support to help residents purchase electric leaf blowers.

What is the fine for violating the leaf blower law?

The fine for violating the leaf blower law is $500 per violation. The Town of Bedford is committed to enforcing the law to ensure compliance and the protection of the environment.

Why did the Town Board not use the Leave Leaves Initiative as an alternative to reducing leaf blower use?

The Town Board did not use the Leave Leaves Initiative as an alternative to reducing leaf blower use because it was not effective in achieving the desired results. The Initiative did not provide enough resources or support to residents to encourage them to use other methods of clearing leaves.
Education and Rollout - Goals

- Inform residents and landscapers (about the law)
- Raise awareness (noise, health and other issues)
- Educate (Leaf blower impact and alternative solutions)
Education and Rollout - Actions

• Residential Mailing & Follow-up –
  - information for homeowners and landscapers (bi-lingual)
• Town e-newsletter
• Town signs
• Provide (small) yard signs
  - (e.g. no Gas leaf blower, for yard, gates at owner’s discretion, etc.)
• Seminars/Programs on healthy yard practices -
  - Partner with
    - Healthy Yards
    - Pollinator Pathways
    - TNC Conservation Board
    - New York State Turf & Landscape Association
• Equipment demonstrations
• Maintain online resources
  - Town website (Law, FAQs)
  - Additional resources via SAB website and Facebook page
Education and Rollout

- Examples from other towns
Trade-in Programs

• American Green Zone Alliance
  – AGZA (Dan Mabe) In conjunction with local merchants and support from the Town can develop a trade-in program

• Sustainable Westchester
  – Will work to explore a countywide trade-in program
# Current Electric Blower Technology

## Electric Leaf Blower as of July / 2020

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Model</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Toro 51585 Power Sweep Electric Leaf Blower</strong></td>
<td>Electric plug in 155 CFM/160 mph Approx. $33-50 on Amazon</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Greenworks 40V 150 MPH Variable Speed Cordless Blower</strong></td>
<td>Battery lasts approximately 35 minutes Adjustable air flow/maximum speed - 150 mph Blower and battery - approx. $100 on Amazon</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>EGO Power+ 480 CFM 3-Speed Turbo 56-Volt Lithium-Ion Cordless Electric Blower</strong></td>
<td>Battery lasts approximately 1 hour (depending on setting) 250 CFM (385 CFM to 480 CFM)/maximum speed 92 MPH Recharges in 40 minutes Blower - approx. $180 on Amazon (battery not included)</td>
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## BLACK+DECKER LSW36 Lithium Sweeper
- Battery lasts approximately 15-30 minutes 90 CFM/ up to 120 mph 40 volt battery Recharge in 25 minutes Blower and battery - approx. $130 on Amazon

## Greenworks 40V Cordless String Trimmer & Blower Combo Pack STBA40B210
- Battery lasts approximately 45 minutes 890 CFM/ up to 110 mph Recharge in about 60 minutes Blower and battery - approx. $170 on Amazon

## Worx WG545.4 Cordless Hi-Capacity Blower
- Battery lasts approximately 30 minutes 80 CFM/ up to 120 mph 20 volt battery Blower and battery - approx. $180 on Amazon

## DEWALT DCBL720P1 20V MAX 5.0 Ah Lithium-Ion XR Brushless Blower
- Battery lasts 20 minutes full speed; longer with variable speed 400 cfm/ up to 90 mph Blower and battery - approx. $200 on Amazon
Current Electric Blower Technology

Greenworks GBL80300 2400102 Cordless Blower
- Battery lasts up to 70 minutes
- 500 CFM air flow up to 125 mph
- Recharge in 30 minutes
- Approx. $250 on Amazon

Greenworks PRO 80V 125 MPH – 500 CFM Cordless Blower
- Battery lasts up to 70 minutes
- 500 CFM air flow up to 125 mph
- 80 volt battery
- Recharge in 30 minutes
- Blower and battery - approx. $250 on Amazon

Greenworks 40V 185 MPH Variable Speed Cordless Leaf Blower/Vacuum, 4.0Ah Battery and Charger
- Battery lasts up to 60 minutes (depending on setting)
- 340 cfm/ up to 185 mph
- 40 volt battery
- Blower and battery - approx. $250 on Amazon
What our residents are saying

• Emails received by the town in response to this public hearing have been in support of passing the current version of the legislation.
  – 6 in favor
  – 3 opposed
  – 1 neutral

• Residents who have switched to landscapers that do not use motorized blowers in the summer for cleanup after mowing have found no visual difference in their property appearance.

• Residents who have switched to landscapers that use electric equipment in the summer have experienced a slight increase in cost over previous years.
Next Steps

• Approve legislation
• Organize trade-in program with town support
• Develop and present educational seminars for residents, landcapers and commercial property owners