

**2014 Council Study Issue**

**ESD 14-01: Ban on the Use of Gas-powered Leaf Blowers**

**Lead Department** Environmental Services Department

**Sponsor(s)** Sustainability Commission

**History** 1 year ago: 2 years ago:

**1. Scope of the Study**

a. What are the key elements of the study?

This study issue would examine banning two-cycle gasoline leaf blowers in the City. While popular among landscape management businesses and professionals, gas blowers are a major source of both air and noise pollution in Sunnyvale.

The California Air Resources Board (CARB) documents that gas leaf blowers emit 500 times the amount of hydrocarbons and 26 times the amount of carbon monoxide compared with newer cars. CARB also found that leaf blowers emit 8-49 times the particulate matter of a light duty vehicle. In addition to pollution from toxic exhaust fumes, gas leaf blowers blow mold, pollen, animal feces, pesticides and fertilizers into the air. Particulate matter remains suspended in the air for hours and is so small that it is easily assimilated into the lungs.

The Bay Area Air Quality Management District recommends nine things the public can do to make clean air choices every day. One of those is to "avoid using gas powered lawn mowers and leaf blowers."

California cities that have banned or restricted gas leaf blowers include Berkeley, Belvedere, Claremont, Del Mar, Indian Wells, Laguna Beach, Lawndale, Los Altos, Menlo Park, Malibu, Mill Valley, Piedmont, Santa Monica, Hermosa Beach, West Hollywood, Palo Alto and Los Angeles. Citizens in other cities such as Orinda and St Helena are working toward banning gas leaf blowers.

b. What precipitated this study?

This study issue was proposed by the Sustainability Commission.

c. Is this a multiple year project? No      Planned Completion Year 2014

**2. Fiscal Impact**

a. Cost to Conduct Study

i. Level of staff effort required (opportunity cost)  
 Major  Moderate  Minor

ii. Amount of funding above current budget required \$  
 Will seek budget supplement  Will seek grant funding

iii. Explanation of Cost:

The cost associated with this study would be the result of staff time to study, craft an ordinance, and conduct outreach to the community. ESD staff would lead the study and coordinate potential ordinance development with Community Development and Office of the City Attorney staff. It is anticipated that the study can be incorporated as part of staff's annual workplan.

b. Costs to Implement Study Results

- No cost to implement.
- Unknown. Study would include assessment of potential costs.
- Some cost to implement. Explanation:

3. **Expected participation in the process**

- Council-approved work plan
- Council Study Session
- Board/Commission Review by the Sustainability Commission

4. **Staff Recommendation**

a. Position: Support

b. Explanation: Staff supports the study to examine the feasibility of banning gas leaf blowers in Sunnyvale. Gas leaf blowers are a prevalent source of greenhouse gas emissions and contribute to overall air pollution as identified in the study scope. Alternatives exist in the marketplace to replace gas leaf blowers. An ordinance banning gas leaf blowers would be a proactive measure for reducing community greenhouse gas emissions and be consistent with goals and actions included in the draft Climate Action Plan. The CAP goal identified as Off-Road Equipment (OR) seeks to minimize emissions from off-road, lawns and garden and construction equipment.

Reviewed By:  10-2-17	Approved By:  10/8/13
Department Director Date	City Manager Date