

## **ATTACHMENT 2: LEAF BLOWER STUDY ISSUE COMMUNITY OUTREACH MEETING SUMMARIES**

### *Sunnyvale Neighborhood Association Quarterly Meeting at Community Center (November 17, 2014)*

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#### General Comments:

- Suggestion to restrict leaf blower use on Spare the Air days
- Question regarding enforceability of a ban, whether enforcement is feasible, and how successful enforcement has been in other communities
- Suggestion that noise is likely the most common complaint among residents
- Suggestion that the smell of gasoline engines is a concern
- Recommendation to reach out to commercial property owners for inclusion in discussion

### *Leaf Blower Community Outreach Meeting for Residents at Community Center (January 7, 2015)*

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Approximately 31 community members in attendance.

#### Comments in favor of restrictions:

- City should ban gas blowers, which are noisy and unhealthy
- City should ban all leaf blowers
- Bikers and pedestrians are frequently hit by dust and debris from leaf blower operators
- City could place restrictions on the frequency of gardening service to address concerns
- City should lead by example and not use leaf blowers in Parks
- Commercial landscapers always use their leaf blowers at full throttle to hasten service
- Commercial leaf blower operators are most affected by the hazards of leaf blower
- Commercial operators use very old and highly polluting leaf blower models that should be retired from service
- Dust from leaf blowers gets everywhere – indoors, on buildings, on clothes, on plants
- Gasoline is often spilled when gas powered blowers are refueled
- Leaf blowers are constant source of disruptive noise in residential areas; especially disruptive in higher density area such as apartments or townhomes where leaf blowers may be in use throughout the day
- Leaf blowers are especially harmful and a nuisance to people who stay at home during the day including the young, the elderly, and telecommuters
- Leaf blowers are ineffective, and same results could be achieved with rakes and brooms without the harmful effects
- Leaf blowers produce a bad smell
- Leaf blowers produce particulate matter and dust, which is harmful to health
- Leaf blowers should be registered and certified to verify compliance
- Restrict leaf blower use on weekends and/or specific days of the week

Comments opposed to restrictions:

- Ban on leaf blowers will cause increased use of hose and water to clean landscapes
- Ban would constitute government over-reach
- Comparisons between gas blower and on-road vehicle emission rates are deceiving
- Continue to allow use of electric blowers
- Do not ban or restrict leaf blower use
- Electric blowers are not suitable for use on commercial properties, and a ban on gas blowers would be harmful to businesses
- Emissions are small compared to other sources, such as on road vehicles
- Gas blower alternatives are cost prohibitive, especially for large properties and commercial operators
- Individuals should have the right to operate gas-powered leaf blowers
- Noise level is measured at full throttle, but leaf blowers are rarely operated at full throttle
- People should try to resolve their issues by appealing to their neighbor who is operating the leaf blower rather than creating new laws
- There is a very small environmental benefit to placing a ban on leaf blowers

Additional comments:

- If a ban on two-stroke leaf blowers is being evaluated, the City should consider bans on other two-stroke engines in use in Sunnyvale
- Leaf blowers have vacuum mode that is less harmful
- Stronger enforcement and greater awareness of existing ordinances is needed
- Sunnyvale and Silicon Valley should encourage or incentivize technological advancements in leaf blower design through a contest or other means
- The primary issue that should be addressed is education and awareness on the proper use of leaf blowers

*Leaf Blower Community Outreach Meeting for Businesses and Professional Landscapers (January 8, 2015)*

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Three community members in attendance including one landscape professional.

Comments in favor of restrictions:

- Restrictions will incentivize industry to develop leaf blowers that address concerns

Comments opposed to restrictions:

- For commercial landscapers, battery models are insufficient in power and battery life to serve as a replacement for gas blowers
- Gas ban would harm landscaping industry due to high price of replacement equipment and reduced service efficiency
- Residential ban would hurt neighborhood aesthetics, cause leaves to accumulate on lawns and exacerbate storm drain blockage issues

- Risk of electrocution with electric blowers around pools

Additional comments:

- City will have difficulty using electric blowers in the large, open spaces that it maintains
- Disagree with any ban but amenable to enhanced time of use restrictions
- Education programs targeting commercial operators, if used, must be ongoing initiatives in order to be effective
- Instead of a ban of gas-powered blowers, City should encourage use of new, low-noise gas models, which are just as quiet as electric and battery models
- Sunnyvale should offer an exchange program to assist commercial landscapers in covering equipment change costs