

ATTACHMENT 3. SUMMARY OF COMMENTS RECEIVED BY STAFF

Staff received direct comments regarding the Leaf Blower Study via phone calls and emails. These comments fall into the following general categories:

	In Favor of Restrictions on Leaf Blowers	Opposed to Restrictions on Leaf Blowers	Total
Total	42	6	48

Excerpts from comments received in favor of leaf blower restrictions are listed below:

I support the movement to ban two-cycle leaf blowers from Sunnyvale. They are very noisy and stir up a lot of dust. In the summer one cannot even go out in the morning without hearing the noisy leaf blowers all over the neighborhood. It would be nice to have breakfast outside but it's always accompanied by the noise. Not pleasant.

I would like leaf blowers banned for the following reasons. Air pollution – large amounts of carbon pollution is dumped into our air. Noise pollution in many hours of the day. There is a decibel limit but this is never policed and many blowers are much louder than allowed. Dust! Especially during our drought, the amount of dust stirred up by leaf blowers is very unhealthy. Overall, they degrade our quality of life and are used irresponsibly, as I see gardeners blowing leaves, etc. down the street without raking them up!

I kindly request that you ban leaf blowers. Gardeners all over Sunnyvale blow dirt in my eyes. They caused me to have a scratched cornea. I live on the second floor and my apartment is covered in dirt that is blown in through the windows by workers using leaf blowers.

I support the proposal for the city's ban on gas leaf blowers, and in fact I would like to see all leaf blowers banned for their noise, nuisance of dirt and pollution, besides being quite useless devices that shift leaves which are shifted back by the wind anyways. At a minimum, all pollution creating (non-electric) blowers should be banned.

I would love it if leaf blowers, of all types, would be banned. They are noisy, pollute the air, and blow dust, fumes, and dirt into the eyes and noses of the many people who walk in our neighborhoods. Other cities are banning them. Let's make Sunnyvale leaf blower free.

While walking this morning, I had the non-pleasure of having dust, dirt, and litter sprayed all over me by an unwitting, earphone wearing worker operating a very noisy leaf blower. Leaf blowers are noisy and cause extreme air pollution from both the emission of the two-stroke engine and the particulate matter blown into the air. They create extreme noise pollution. In addition, they are used to direct materials into the sewer drain. I am requesting an ordinance to ban leaf blowing.

Gardeners using leaf blowers blow dirt in my eyes as I use the city streets. In one instance, a gardener intentionally aimed his leaf blower at my eyes and kept it aimed at my eyes as I was riding past in the street on my bicycle.

My neighborhood is the noisiest I've ever lived in. Sick people are more sensitive and more likely to be home when leaf blower use occurs. People who work from home may find it impossible to talk on the phone. Shift workers are often woken. Those without air conditioning may have to choose between a 100 degree room and unbearable noise, dust, and fumes. It's difficult to create citable regulations if you don't ban them completely.

Please ban leaf blowers! They are illegal in Los Angeles. They generate as much carbon dioxide in one hour as a car driven for 100 miles. They produce a noise level of 70 to 90 decibels. What does that mean? Healthy daytime noise levels should not exceed 55 decibels. They kick up dust and whatever is in that debris, and get it into our lungs.

I am strong supporter of a leaf blower ban for the following reasons: 1. They pollute the air we breathe, creating a health hazard. 2. Whether gas or electric, leaf blowers blow particulate matter into the air, so that when I walk or bike past them, I have to close my eyes and nose and ears to avoid getting dust and dirt into them. This is especially hazardous when I'm biking. 3. They are very loud, which disturbs otherwise quiet neighborhoods. 4. They are useless at what they do. Gardeners just blow plant matter and dirt into neighboring properties, leaving the next property owner to deal with it. 5. I can't hang my laundry out to dry because my clothes become dirty and smelly.

Please ban leaf blowers at least on spare the air days. I'm sick of being sick breathing all the filth stirred up into the air by leaf blowers and rude people.

A leaf blower ban is sorely needed. Most of the homes around me hire gardeners who use gas powered leaf blowers. The fumes make it difficult for me to breathe. In a given week I would estimate I am in earshot often of leaf blowers. They run for almost thirty minutes each, and the result is a lot of dust, noise, and gas fumes. Other cities have banned leaf blowers and we should too!

In my opinion leaf blowing is a classic example of an externality. The leaf blowing practice is a quick and easy way to redistribute/distribute litter from a private concern to a public one or vice-versa. Leaf blowing litter almost always ends up in the public domain - streets, sewers - which becomes a shared cost. Leaf blowing places ground blown particulate including allergens and pathogens into the air that is public. Leaf blower motors are typically 2-cycle with no emissions controls and serious air polluters. Leaf blowing typically saves time and money for a private property owner, or private interest at community expense. Leaf blowing presents significant noise pollution, disrupting both people and animals and quality of life in general. Actually sweeping up provides a job, is quiet, non-polluting, and can remain a private concern/cost. Sweeping presents an opportunity for the litter to be composted or re-utilized for the potential of private opportunity. Sunnyvale has an opportunity to establish good policy that can be easily replicated to other communities.

Thanks for your efforts to make Sunnyvale a better city! Los Altos, Los Gatos and many other cities have banned the use of leaf blowers.

Since there seems to be no enforcement, I'm wondering what would be accomplished by a change in written rules. Might it be more effective to license gardeners after attending a class or two on noise hazards, most particularly to themselves? In principle I would not object to a ban, but please figure out how to make it work for everyone concerned.

I would like to see gas leaf blowers banned!

I urge the city to please ban the leaf blowers. Our neighbors use a professional gardening service that is quite over-the-top in using leaf blowers. Every week, their gardener blows prodigious amounts of dust directly into our property. The dust covers our lemon tree, our car and even the house itself. This has caused the white trim of our house to turn dark with grime. If we leave the windows open, the dust is blown in through the windows facing their property. I have asked their gardener to be a little more considerate and not blow this dust our way, but this only aggravated the fellow. Now he seems to deliberately do it even more. I believe the dust kicked up from the street also causes allergies. On occasion I have seen these gardeners blowing big clouds of dust just as the kids are walking to Sunnyvale Middle School. If Los Altos can live without the leaf blowers, so can we!

Please ban or at least restrict leaf blowers in Sunnyvale! Commuting to work by bike I must stop several times a week to wait for operators to notice me and shut their devices off, then I have to wait for the dust to settle. This is actually dangerous because I end up waiting in the middle of the road, or have to swerve wide from the curb to avoid the dust storm. If we ban these devices it will be nobody's fault but the operators. They are abused and not minimized in their use. And many of the machines absolutely exceed noise standards. Please empower residents to report any violations so that actionable fines are immediately imposed.

As a homeowner with a fair sized yard, I am absolutely in favor of a proposed ban on gas-powered leaf blowers. Rakes work just fine, but electric blowers are acceptable. I see no justification for the pollution and noise from using a gas-powered device.

My husband and I are senior citizens and have lived in Sunnyvale for many years. We walk several miles around our neighborhood every day to help maintain our health. The use of leaf blowers greatly impacts that effort with the horribly toxic exhaust fumes, noise pollution and allergens constantly floating in the air. They also add a constant cover of dust on everything. We find that rakes and brooms work very effectively for taking care of leaves and natural debris on sidewalks and yards without harming good health. Sunnyvale is a leading City in its constant efforts in public safety and sound management, as often noted even in the national arena. We hope you will continue that effort by banning leaf blowers as many other cities have like Los Altos, Menlo Park and others to help all of your residents live a healthy life.

Please get these gas blowers banned. Very surprised Sunnyvale hasn't already done this. Very bad for our lungs!

We have been Sunnyvale home owners for over fifty years. Now in our mid-eighties, both of us are suffering from respiratory problems which at times make our lives very difficult. One thing we know that is aggravating the problem is the dust, dirt, pollen, and mold blown into our environment by the use of the powerful leaf blowers used by the professional landscapers working all around us. Besides the filth put into the air there is also the matter of noise. It is time to get rid of engine powered leaf blower just as many concerned cities have done.

I am in full support of any increased restrictions or hopefully a full ban on leaf blowers. It's not just the noise I have to endure from my neighbor's gardener on weekends, but the fact that I need to close my windows to avoid the fumes and dust the leaf blower creates. I also do not like the fact that most times the blowers are used to blow debris from the home towards the streets and onto others' property.

Leaf blowers, no matter what power they use, are total nuisance and should have been banned a long, long time ago. Even in less advanced countries than US they use industrial vacuum cleaners (machines) to clean the streets and not blowing it into faces of their inhabitants.

I highly encourage an outright ban on all gas blowers based on the air pollution of two cycle motors, the grating noise pollution, and the unhealthy aerosols of blown dust, debris, spores etc.

I fully support restrictions and even an outright ban on gas leaf blowers, because from my experience, more than half the users simply use it as dispersion cleaning: sending all the leaves and dust into the neighborhood, instead of its intended use as sweeper to collect yard debris.

Leaf blowers should at least be banned on spare the air days. They certainly bother my asthma more than fireplaces.

My vote is to ban leaf blowers. I'm aware that banning leaf blowers would create a certain amount of hardship for garden service providers, but I feel I have a right to enjoy my home and yard in peace without having to deal with the noise, fumes and dust from their use. Those who wish to retain garden services would simply have to pay the price for the service sans leaf blowers. Even though individual household may not use a leaf blower frequently, cumulatively, their usage is rather pervasive. I must close the windows completely to prevent the noise, dust and gas fumes from entering my home. One of my favorite activities is gardening. When the leaf blowers are running, I generally have to retreat inside. Both of my children are asthmatic. The gas fumes and dust from the leaf blowers can aggravate their asthma, so I have to make sure they come in if the leaf blowers start up. We ride our bicycles extensively around Sunnyvale to shop, visit the library, farmer's market, exercise, etc. Frequently, when we ride by gardeners using leaf blowers, we get caught in the pollution and dust from the blower.

All leaf blowers should be banned because of their noise, dust, and exhaust fumes. They are also used inappropriately to blow away ground cover and are no more effective than rakes and brooms.

I am in favor of banning leaf blowers. They are very polluting and noisy. For large periods of time every day they can be heard in our neighborhood. Their only virtue is that it saves some time in raking leaves/debris via other methods. Using a rake or brush for slightly longer time, and more effort, achieves acceptable results. If you go elsewhere in the world-they don't use these noisy machines.

I personally do not like the loud noise that they make, so I greatly appreciate any restrictions on the hours in which they may be used. I bike a lot in our city, and find it very difficult to bike through an area where someone is using a leaf blower near the street. Many users of leaf blowers are aware of the debris that they put into the air, and will move away from the street while I bike by but not everyone. Maybe this is just an awareness issue, but it would be nice for those using leaf blowers to be aware of the people around them who are biking and walking nearby.

I agree with stricter regulations on leaf blowers. They are at the present very loud. In the summer when one wants to open windows and doors in the morning, one only hears leaf blowers in the neighborhoods starting at 8 a.m. I would rather hear the singing of birds than the noise of the leaf blowers. The dust is stirred up by the blowers and it is certainly not healthy...as I have read...for the residents. I would favor stricter regulations, i.e. quieter leaf blowers, using them from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. or the outright ban of the blowers.

I with my family & extended family fully support the city's initiative to stop the gas blowers. It is polluting the communities with carbon and noise. It is a health hazard for young and the elderly. We all love Sunnyvale to take the lead to be the greenest city (of course for all good things we all know, we have to pay a little more).

I support a leaf blower ban because of the noise and dust they produce. I am hit by dust multiple times a day while walking, and they are especially noisy and annoying when used in the morning.

Thank you for considering a ban on gas-powered leaf-blowers. These are the reasons I hate leaf-blowers: The pollution they create is ten times worse than cars. The sound is hideous. They will leave the workers deaf. They scare wildlife. They emit CO2.

The city should ban all use of leaf blowers. They are invasive and a nuisance, especially in the early morning. They are also ineffective and unnecessary.

I support the city council in making a decision to ban the gas powered blowers. They are not only creating poor air quality for Sunnyvale, they are causing our street drains to clog because of blowing the leaves into the streets. Also, the noise pollution is a big nuisance.

Almost every day there is a gardener who uses a gas leaf blower in one of our neighbor's yards. The noise the blower produces is extremely loud and to the best of our knowledge by far exceeds the 65W cap set forth by the city. We literally have to shut our windows for the duration of the service to somewhat relieve us from the noise. We like to walk the Sunnyvale streets on a daily basis for about 20-30 minutes. In the past year or so the probability for us to encounter one or more operating gas leaf blowers on our way is almost 100%. It's not just the noise that is disturbing. The dust and smell are really irritating and we often need to wear a mask.

I am in favor of bans or restrictions on leaf blowers in Sunnyvale. This is unpleasant and contrary to life in Sunnyvale on two levels: (1) it is noisy, and (2) the smell from the gas emissions is noxious. I really don't think Sunnyvale has such a high level of leaves on the ground that such a convenience, at the cost of peace in our community, is warranted.

Whatever happened to the old time rake? I think the use of leaf blowers has contributed to the increase in noise level, dust level, and overall increase in emissions. I readily support a ban on leaf blowers!

I dislike the noise pollution of gas leaf blowers as much as the air pollution.

I would welcome any ordinance that would prevent the operation of any leaf blower, regardless of how it is powered, that do not meet specific noise and air pollution controls. I have a young daughter that I don't like taking to play in the yard during the hour or so that my neighbor's gardener works because of both the noise and air pollution that his leaf blower emits.

I think the city should outlaw the gas leaf blowers like Palo Alto, but would not complain if electric blowers are also banned. I also think the city should create a Garden Cleanup guidance document instructing gardeners and property owners on how to balance the workload without gas blowers. We are unnecessarily over-gardening.

I have been a long time "silent" supporter of a ban on leaf blowers in Sunnyvale. They produce a constant noise around my home, as well as harmful dust.

I support a ban on all leaf blower use in Sunnyvale. It is a quality of life issue. They are a nuisance, especially when multiple blowers are used concurrently. I get covered in dust when I walk outside.

Excerpts from comments received opposed to leaf blower restrictions are listed below:

If we are to consider all devices that stir up dust as illegal, we will not be allowed to collect leaves, which create quite a fire hazard. I suggest that those wishing to get away from areas where neighbors might stir up dust consider relocating to a concrete jungle.

As the manager of commercial and multi-housing residential properties exceeding 10 acres in the City of Sunnyvale, I am opposed to any proposal to ban fuel-driven leaf blowers in the City of Sunnyvale. Electric-driven leaf blowers, especially battery operated, are too weak to do the job adequately and efficiently; electric-driven leaf blowers are a hazard to operate on long extension cords; electric battery operated leaf blowers are an environmental hazards because you have to periodically replace and dispose of the batteries; and there are no other viable, economical, or practical alternatives to fuel-driven leaf blowers. Because manual labor takes much longer, we will be only able to afford to do that once per month, or every five or six weeks, but not weekly. Large commercial and multi-housing properties will become more hazardous and unsightly. Is that the vision that you have for the City of Sunnyvale?

Current electric leaf blowers (corded or battery powered) lack comparable performance, therefore are not an appropriate tool for larger maintenance tasks. Electric blowers are not necessarily that much quieter than modern gas-powered versions. Responsible and courteous use will go a long way to resolving many concerns. It is not necessary for a city to endeavor to create their own separate environment - which has been shown to be generally ignored and ineffective. Any attempts to overly regulate can be seen as overreaching. This is an education issue. Education will be a much more effective tool to encourage positive improvements.

I am stunned at the number of people that would rather ban, restrict, spend hundreds of thousands of city dollars on enforcement, and so on, rather than just talking with their neighbors or the landscape company owners and appeal to them for help. I have done the latter several times with good results. "What if I'm too shy?" is simply no excuse to put everyone else through a regulatory wringer.

Just because some of the "high rent" districts in the Bay Area have adopted restrictions on the use of leaf blowers doesn't mean that Sunnyvale should. We live in Sunnyvale, not Atherton, so let's not put restrictions on leaf blowers like they have done in some of the cities that are supposed to be elite. The working people of Sunnyvale do not want to pay more money to their gardener (or take more time to rake leaves themselves) because someone objects to the noise created by a leaf blower. Most people now have double pane windows and are not bothered by the occasional noise by someone using a leaf blower. I think the city has much better things to do with their time than have hearings about restricting leaf blowers.

I am against a ban on leaf blowers. They have capabilities, such as blowing in between rocks, which other types of equipment don't offer. Disallowing leaf blowers may lead to increased costs for property owners.

The City become increasingly involved in the decisions of private property owners—which appears to be happening again with leaf blowers. There is hysteria on a variety of levels that has led to blower bans in the most liberal cities in California. Much of this is based on information that simply can't be true, such as CO and CO2 emission from these tools vs. cars, for instance. The assertions are ridiculous. Let every property owner make his or her own decisions about leaf blowers, and let others not try to tell them what to do.

This is racist. Do you know how much this will effect the poor illegal immigrant community?

I'm so pleased Sunnyvale has time to consider such "issues". That must mean that all important city safety and financial concerns have been addressed in our improving economy. So, I would propose that a ban on leaf blowers be immediately instituted and that the following item be proposed to accommodate such a ban: city funding should be made available to sweep all sidewalks and gutters adjoining residential property on a weekly basis. Given the global warming that most can agree is really happening, it makes more sense to eliminate all water-guzzling lawns for less water-intensive natural landscaping. Also, if a ban on cleaning up ones property in an efficient way is deemed necessary, perhaps the city would more carefully consider the type of street trees being planted.