

THE LEAF BLOWER

- Benefits
- Concerns
- Perceptions
- Facts
- Solutions



PURPOSE & CONTENT OF THIS PRESENTATION:

- INFORM & educate you
- DISCUSS the benefits of the leaf blower
- HIGHLIGHT concerns & misconceptions
- EXPLAIN noise & leaf blower sound levels
- PRESENT technological advances in the industry
- DIFFERENTIATE gas powered leaf blowers from electric
- REVEAL challenges of banning leaf blowers
- REVIEW & AMEND existing City ordinance

LEAF BLOWERS ARE USED TO:

- Gather leaves in piles
- Remove grass clippings
- Dislodge matted grass
- Clean Sidewalks & Pavement
- Remove debris from all types of recreational courts
- Clean parking lots
- Clean arenas and parks
- Dry off pavement



WITHOUT THEM, LABOR WOULD INCREASE **FIVEFOLD** USING RAKES & BROOMS AS AN ALTERNATIVE, reported by California Landscape Contractors Association (CLCA)

LEAF BLOWERS CAN BE USED WITH CARE, reinforced by our City's Existing Ordinance which:

- Requires a Special Permit & Business tax certificate
- Lists guidelines for safe & courteous use, in compliance with Outdoor Power Equipment Institute, OPEI)
 - Blower to have proper muffler
 - Operate at lowest speed possible to minimize dust
 - Limit to short duration
 - Be courteous to pedestrian traffic; don't use within 50 feet
 - All debris to be collected in piles and disposed of properly
 - May not blow debris into streets
- Designates Permissible hours
 - Monday through Friday 8am-6pm; Weekends 9am-5pm

LEAF BLOWERS ARE USED BY:

- PARK MAINTENANCE
- MEDIANS & BIKE PATHS
- ARBORISTS/ STREET TREES
- LANDSCAPE CONTRACTORS

PARKS
DIVISION

COMMERCIAL

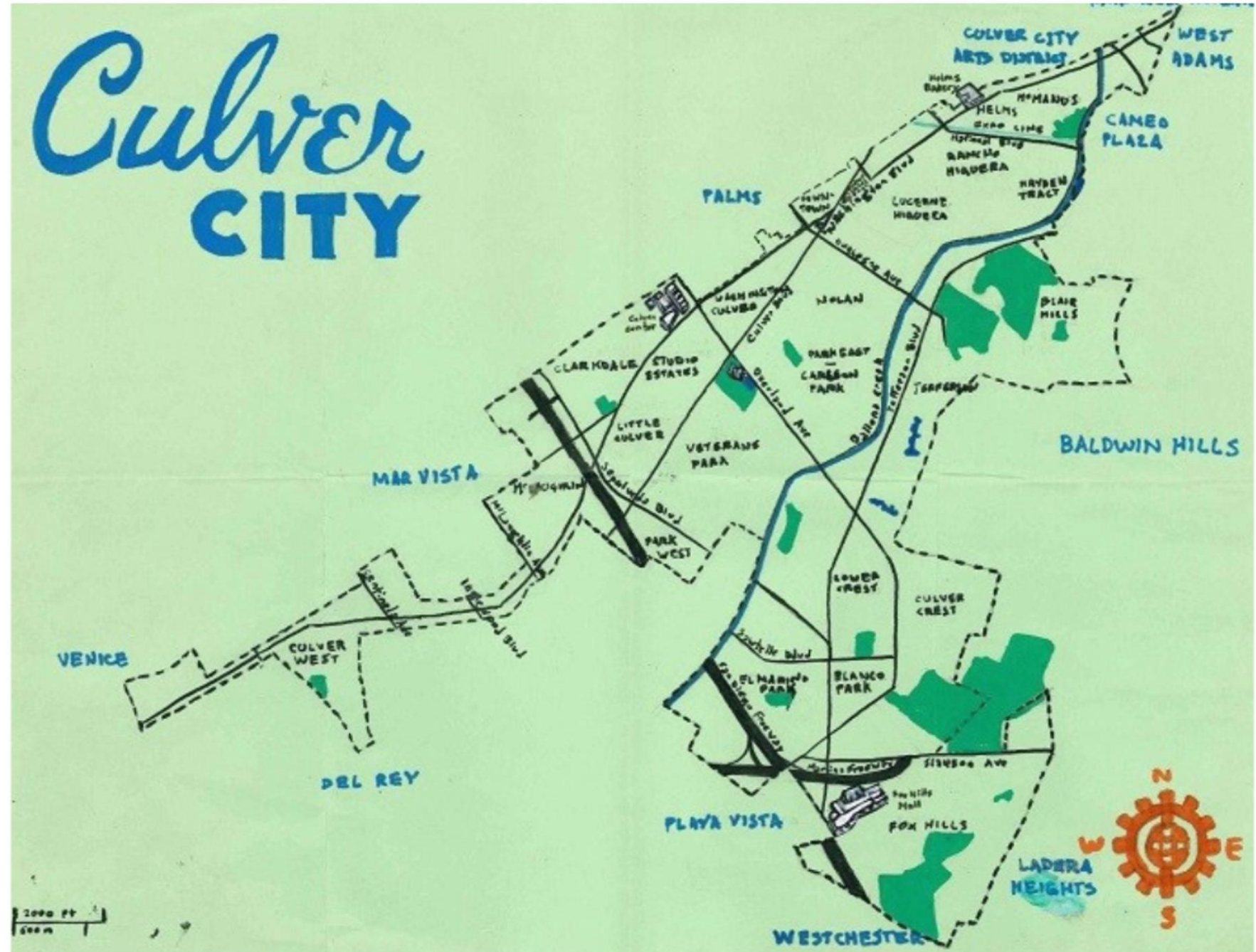
RESIDENTIAL

- GARDENERS
- LANDSCAPE PROFESSIONALS

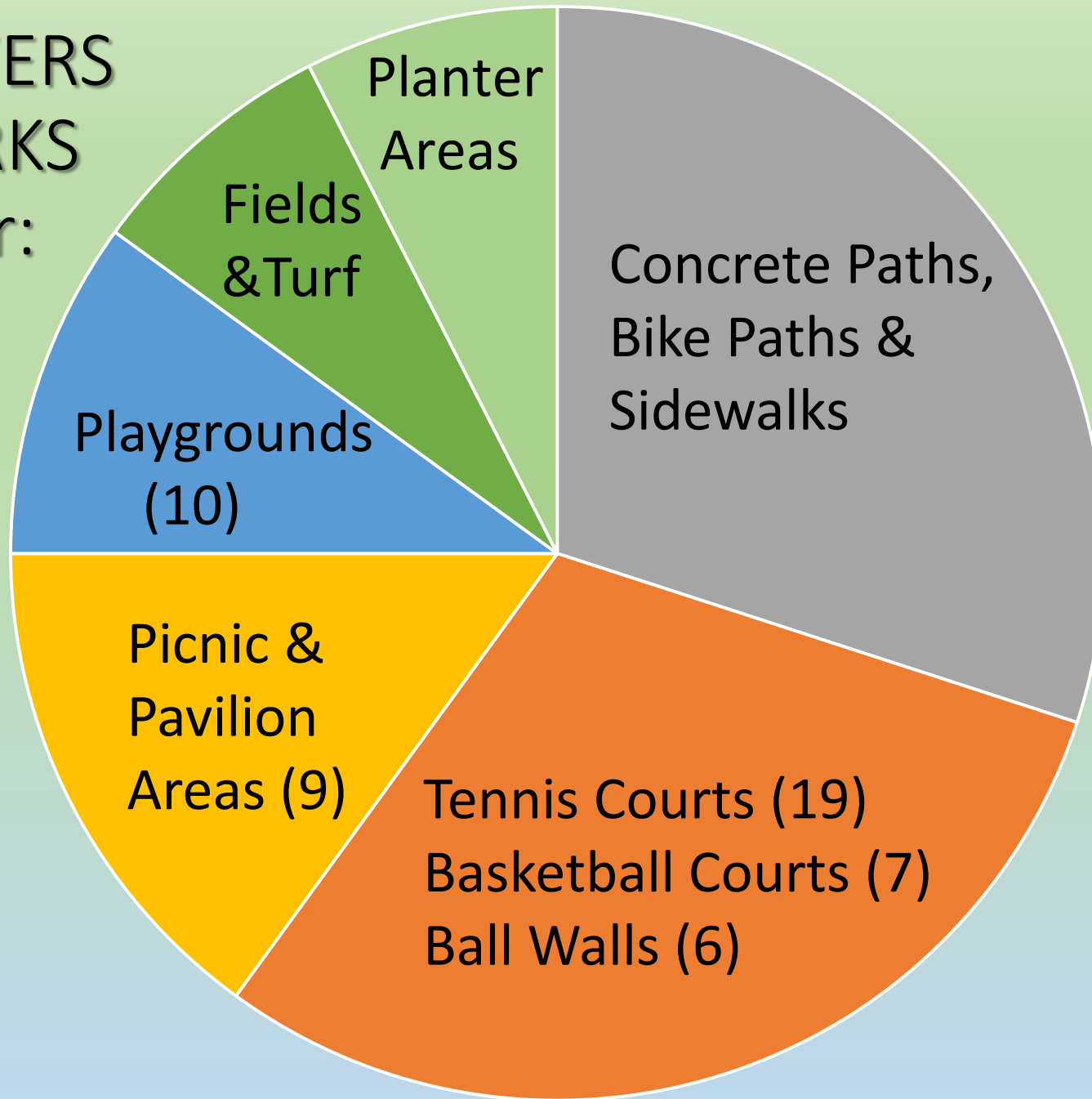
- DOWNTOWN JANITORIAL
- LANDSCAPE PROFESSIONALS
- BLDG. MAINTENANCE
- CONSTRUCTION & DEMO CREWS

I. PARKS DIVISION MAINTAINS:

- 100 Acres of Parks
- 100 Acres of
 - Parkways
 - Medians
 - Public Buildings



LEAF BLOWERS
IN OUR PARKS
are used for:



- Concrete Paths
- Recreational Courts
- Picnic Areas
- Playgrounds
- Ball Fields & Turf Areas
- Planter Areas & Medians

BENEFITS OF THE LEAF BLOWER IN OUR PARKS:

- They keep our parks clean and safe.
- They are thorough, efficient, and increase productivity.
- Cost effective: #1 Labor saving tool
- Standards for clean up would be lowered without them.
- Parks Division uses them in compliance with the City ordinance.
- Generally used during hours when parks are least occupied.
- A ban would increase the City's maintenance costs by 60% minimum.
- Conversion to Electric would increase maintenance costs by 30% minimum.

ANNUAL COST INCREASE FOR PARKS DIVISION

if leaf blowers are banned:

1) <u>Parks Maintenance Staff (Exist. Budget- \$1,028,639)</u>	
• Add 6 employees @ 52,790 Salary + Benefits	\$443,442
• Add 3 Trucks @ \$24,058 Initial Purchase + Overhead	72,174
2) <u>Marina Landscape (Exist. Contract with City= \$308,261)</u>	
• Parks	
• Other Departments (i.e. Public Works)	
• Minimum increase 10,000-12,000/ month	120,000
TOTAL	<u>\$635,616/Year</u>

MILES OF SIDEWALKS &
CONCRETE PATHS run
through the parks.

A good example is
CULVER CITY PARK.

BLOWERS are used to
clear mowing debris
from paths of travel to
KEEP THEM SAFE.



These walks at
FOX HILLS
PARK would
take the entire
Maintenance
Division of 10
all day to
sweep with a
broom.

With a blower
it takes 2 men
4 hours





This ONE MILE stretch of BIKE PATH along the EXPO LINE between Washington Blvd. & Jefferson Blvd. is maintained by the Parks Division.

TASKS ONLY BLOWERS CAN PERFORM:

TENNIS COURTS:

19 Citywide

- Safety Issue
- 20 minutes with leaf blower
- 2 hours plus per court to sweep
- Wet leaves cannot be swept
- Cannot be hosed
- End result: courts are not cleaned as well by broom



TASKS ONLY BLOWERS CAN PERFORM:



Asphalt Basketball Courts



Asphalt Backboard Courts

PICNIC & PAVILION AREAS:

It is not feasible or efficient to keep picnic areas clean with a broom.



Table tops and benches are blown down so eating areas are usable.

PLAYGROUNDS:

Most of our playgrounds have wood fiber for surfacing and are adjacent to concrete paving



TASKS ONLY BLOWERS CAN PERFORM:

Wood fiber playground surfacing cannot be raked or swept





II. COMMERCIAL



DOWNTOWN STOREFRONTS & RESTAURANT ROW:



Leaf Blower used several times per week by:

- Janitorial services hired by Culver City Downtown Business Assoc. (DBA)
- Landscape Contractors hired by the City of Culver City

DOWNTOWN LANDSCAPE



Downtown is lined with continuous hedges.

For Vermin Control, the City Manager, has directed our Landscape Contractor to:

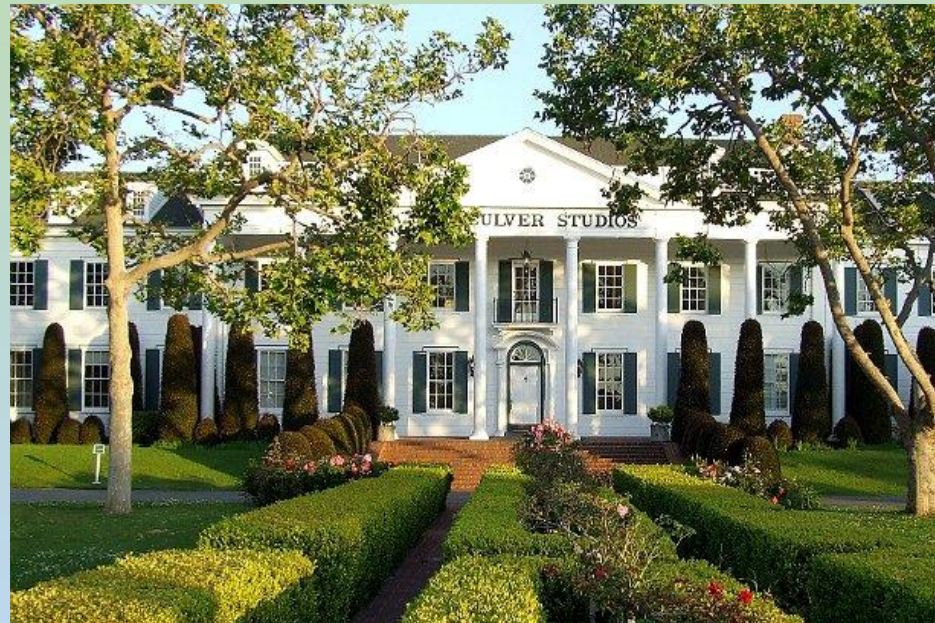
- Trim up low branches of dense hedges and
- Blow underside of debris & leaves to prevent burrowing



Although beautiful, our signature Jacaranda trees create messy leaf litter & sticky flower drop which cannot be swept with a broom



A FEW OF CULVER CITY'S ICONIC BUSINESSES WHICH USE THE LEAF BLOWER TO MAINTAIN THEIR BEAUTIFUL LANDSCAPES



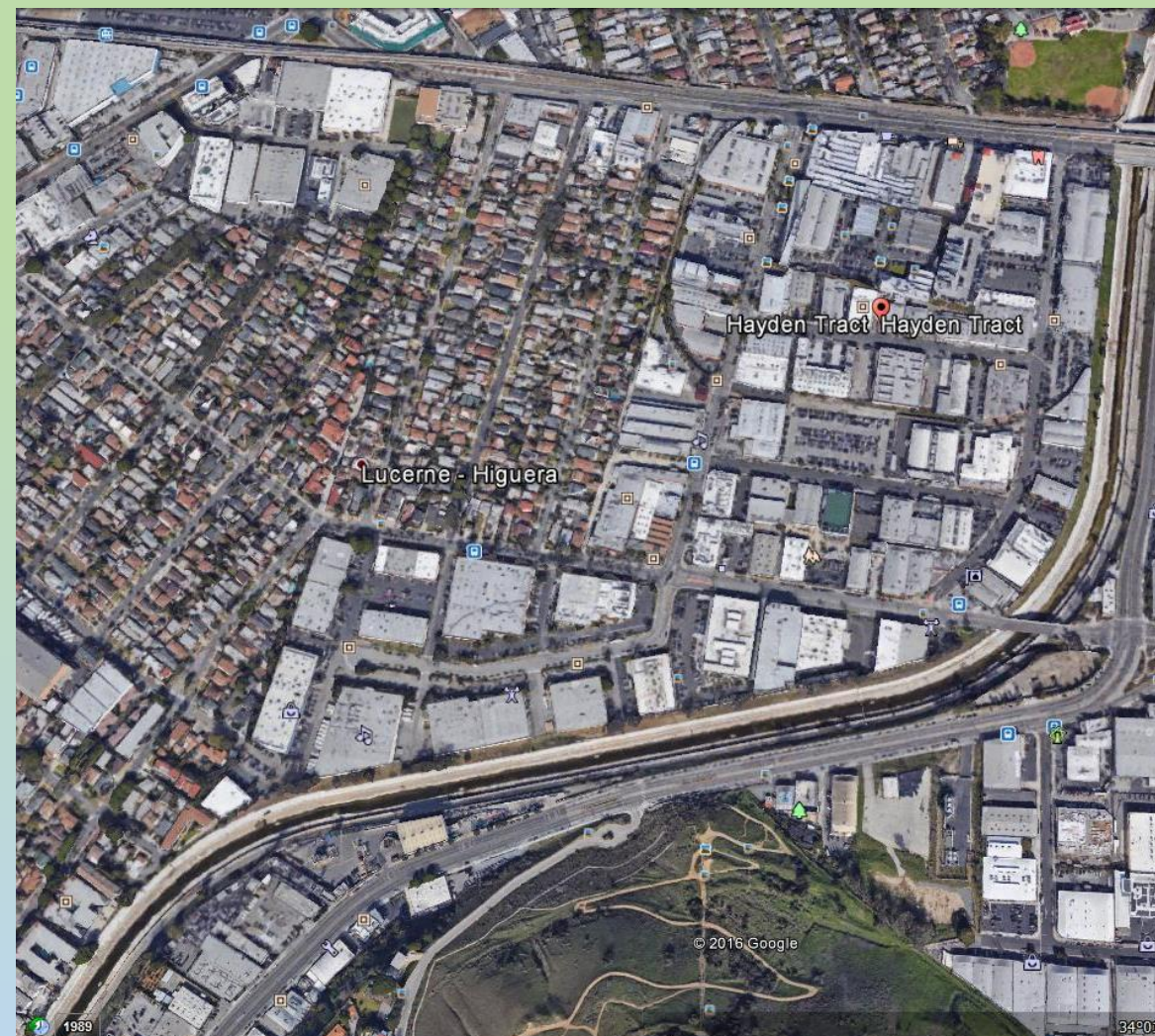


HAYDEN DISTRICT:

- Hayden Film Studios
- Creative Business & Industrial Space
- Densely used
- New Landscaping maintained by Licensed Professionals

HAYDEN DISTRICT:

- Open Space
- Parking Lots



- Mixed Use
- Building Entries
- Landscaped Parking Lots
- Landscaped Parkways



III. RESIDENTIAL



LEAF BLOWERS IN RESIDENTIAL:

- Thorough & efficient
- Save time: 15 -30 minutes for average lot size dependent on the season
- Without them, the typical gardener will increase their costs to the homeowner, 30% minimum
- Conserve water
- Where banned, statistics show gardeners continue to use them anyway.
- A ban is nearly “unenforceable” in residential
 - City Code Enforcement
 - Police Department

LEAF BLOWERS IN RESIDENTIAL:

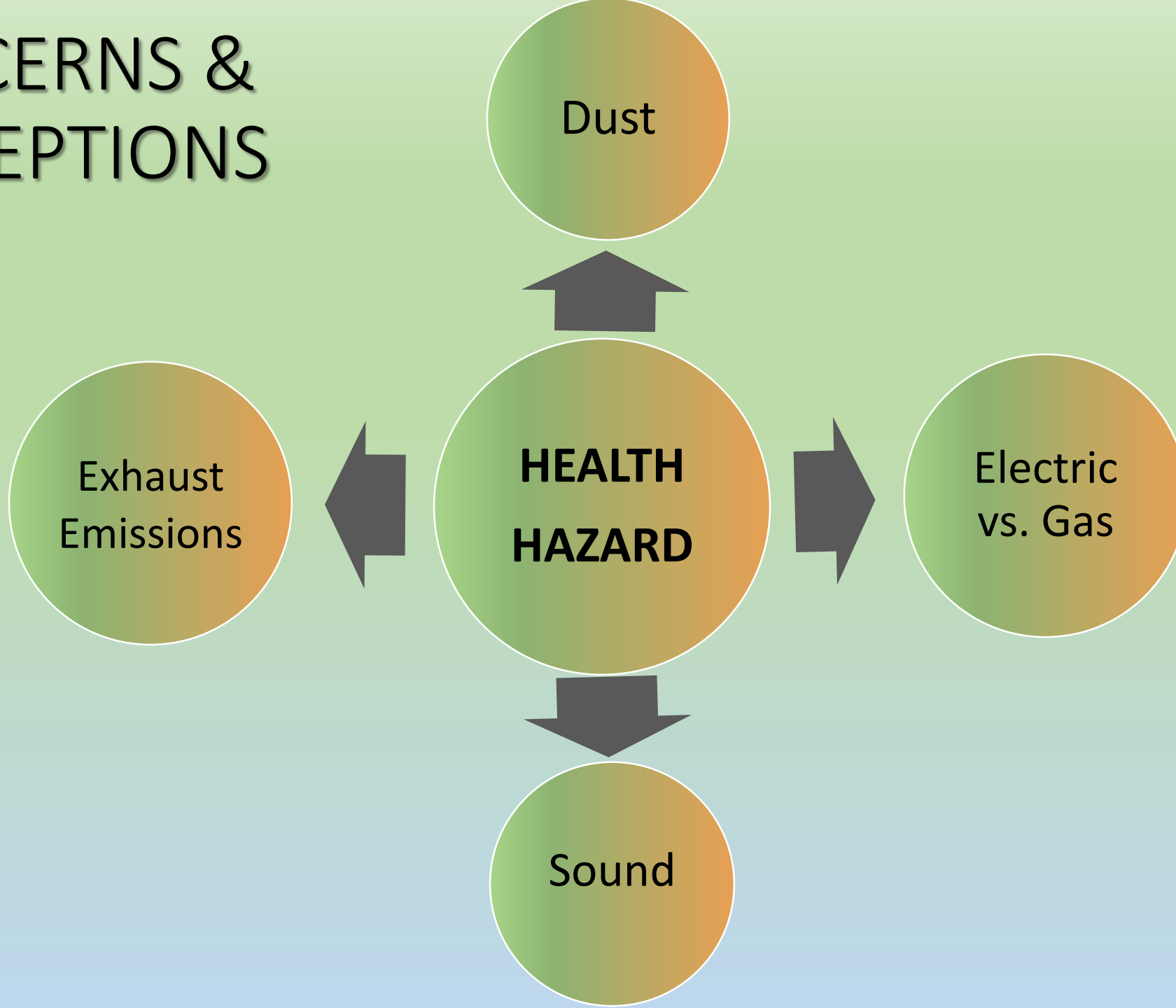


To comply with the current water shortage, many homeowners have replaced their lawns with gravel, pebble, decomposed granite or native soil which cannot be raked to remove leaves.

Washing down paved areas is no longer an option. It's against the law. (AB-1881)



CONCERNS & PERCEPTIONS



PERCEIVED HEALTH HAZARD

FACTS per California Air Resources Board (CARB) Report, 2000

- Health Hazard identified by 3 factors:
 - Exhaust Emissions
 - Dust Emissions
 - Noise Emissions
- RISK can only be based upon estimates of exposure and to date there are no studies to determine those.
- Asked by Legislature to recommend alternatives, if necessary, CARB made none.

TECHNOLOGICAL ADVANCEMENTS

Since 1995, the Industry has worked diligently to reduce:

☐ Exhaust Emissions by:

- Converting some models to Four Stroke Engines
- Reducing emissions to CARB recommendation of 72 grams/HCI

☐ Noise Levels by:

- Requiring Labels that indicate the models' sound level.
Most acceptable is 65 dBA or less.

☐ Sound Quality by:

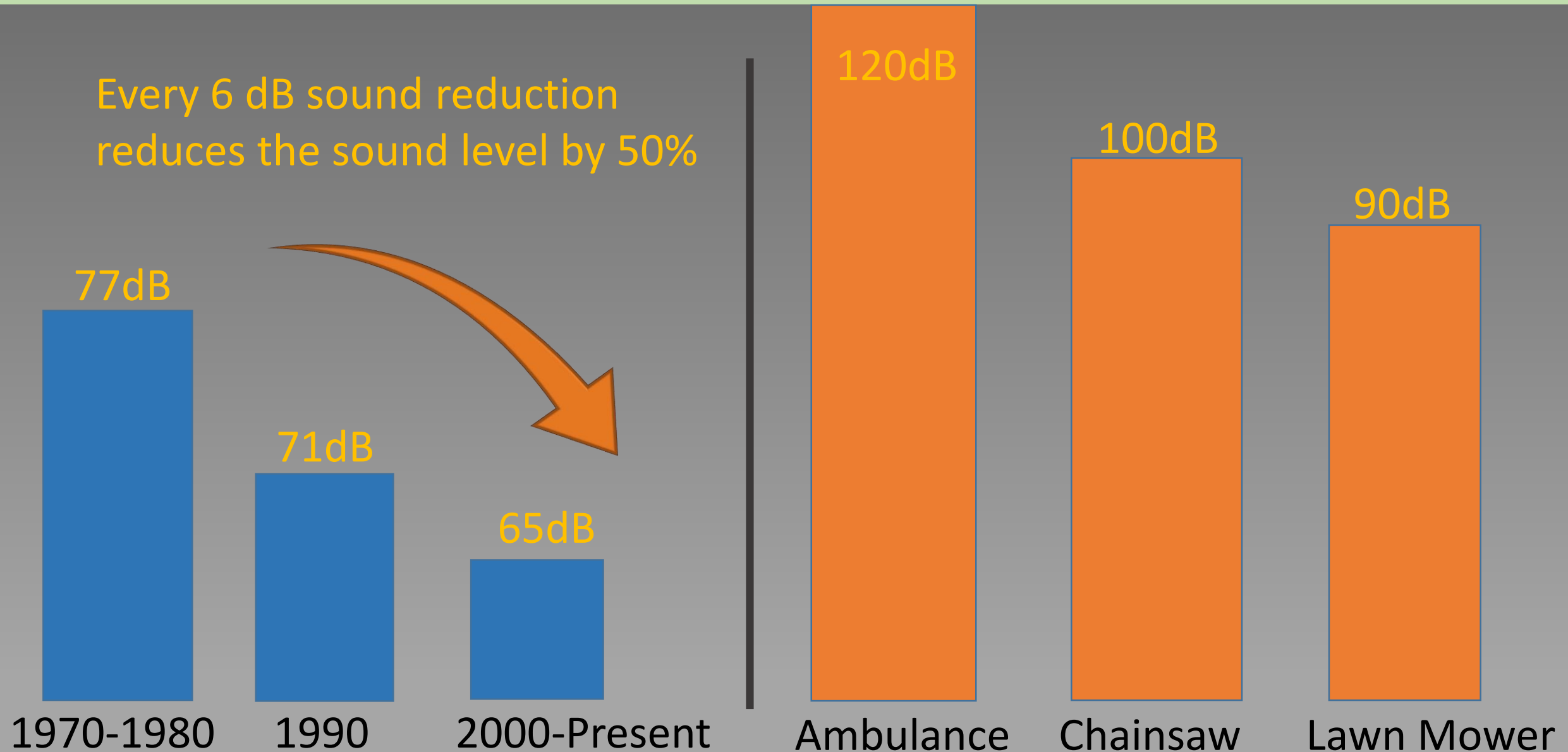
- Lowering high pitch frequency by altering design fan blades

SOUND DECIBEL LABEL:

All new gas & electric blowers in California are required to be certified and to display a sound decibel label



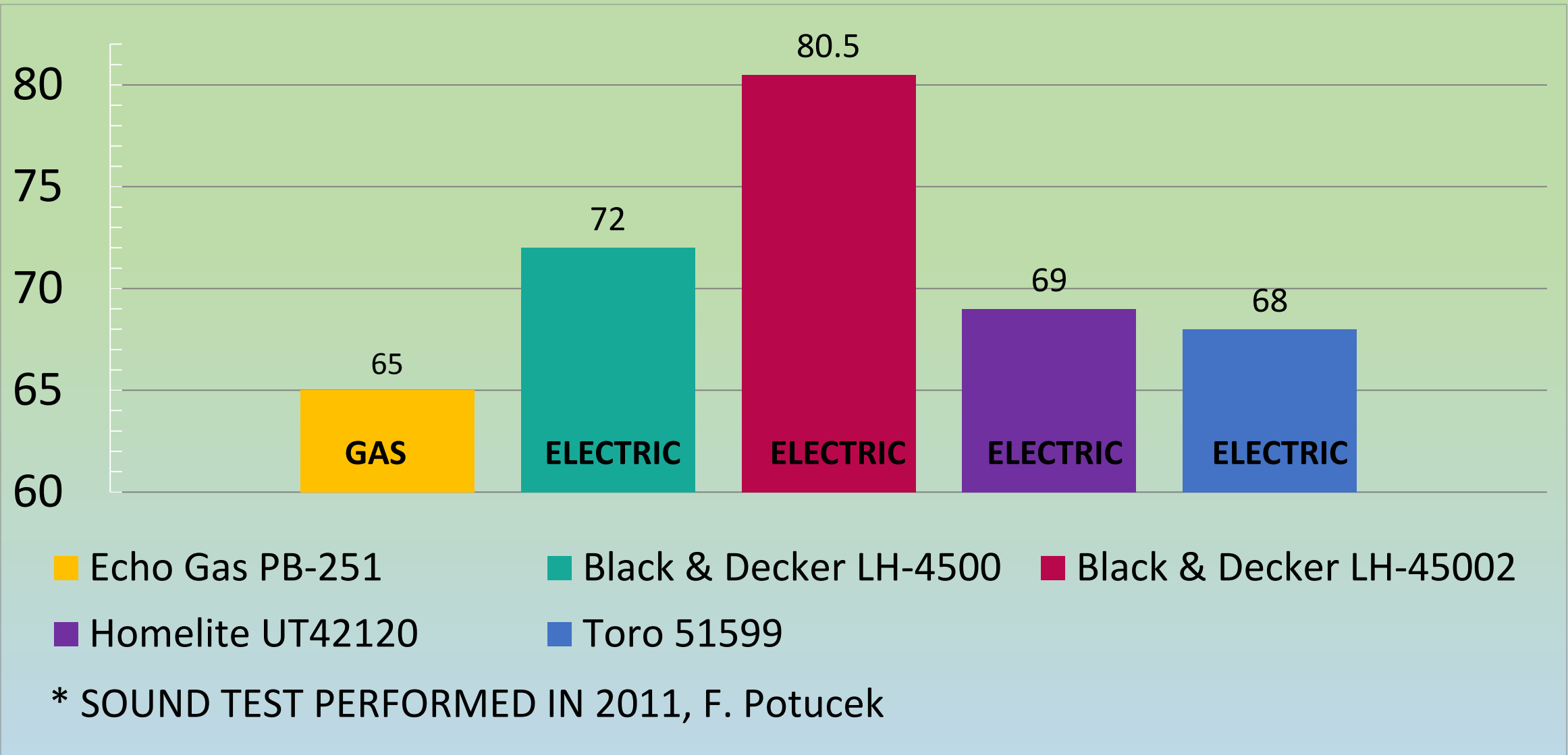
LEAF BLOWER SOUND LEVELS ARE GOING DOWN



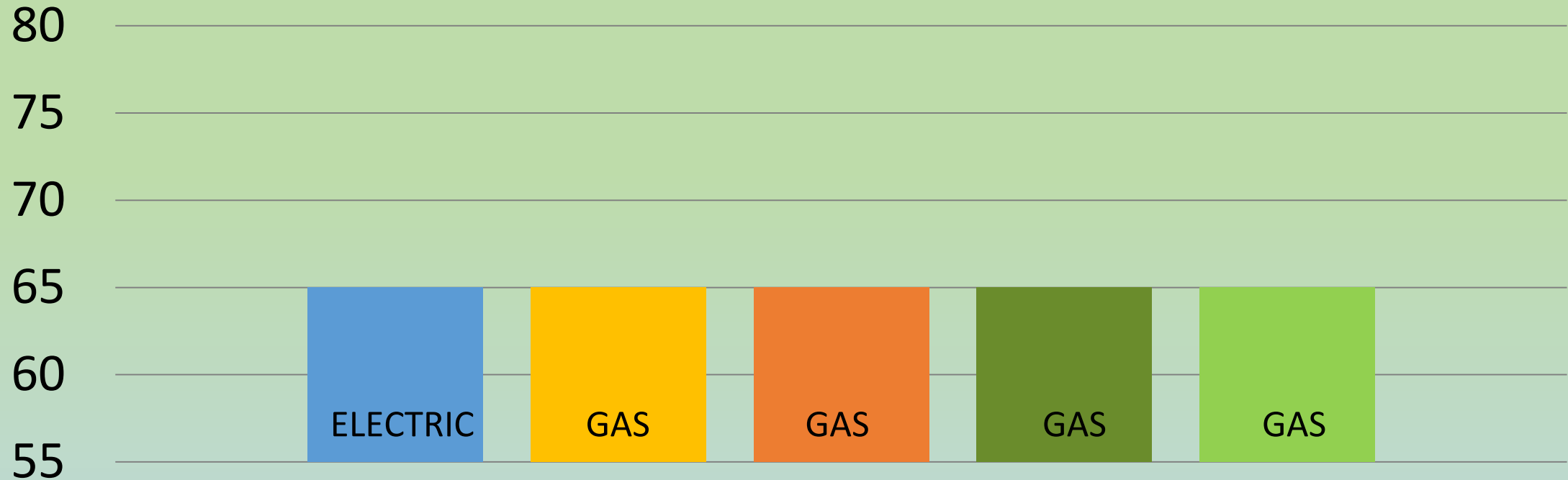
ELECTRIC AS A SOLUTION?

- Electric is not necessarily quieter than gas and can be just as loud or even louder
- Efficiency & performance reduced by 30% -50% with Electric
- Batteries must be changed every 25 minutes, if used efficiently
- Extended use causes fatigue in hands
- Lack of endurance of equipment
- Converting to Electric will create significant costs for the City
 - Initial Equipment purchases
 - Training Staff

SOUND COMPARISON, MEASURED FROM 50 FT AWAY



QUIETEST & BEST PERFORMING LEAF BLOWERS, Consumer Reports (2014): 4 out of 5 are Gas



■ Stihl BGE 61-E

■ Echo PB-250LN - G

■ Stihl BG66L- G

■ Husqvarna 356BT -G

■ Troy-Bilt TB672-G

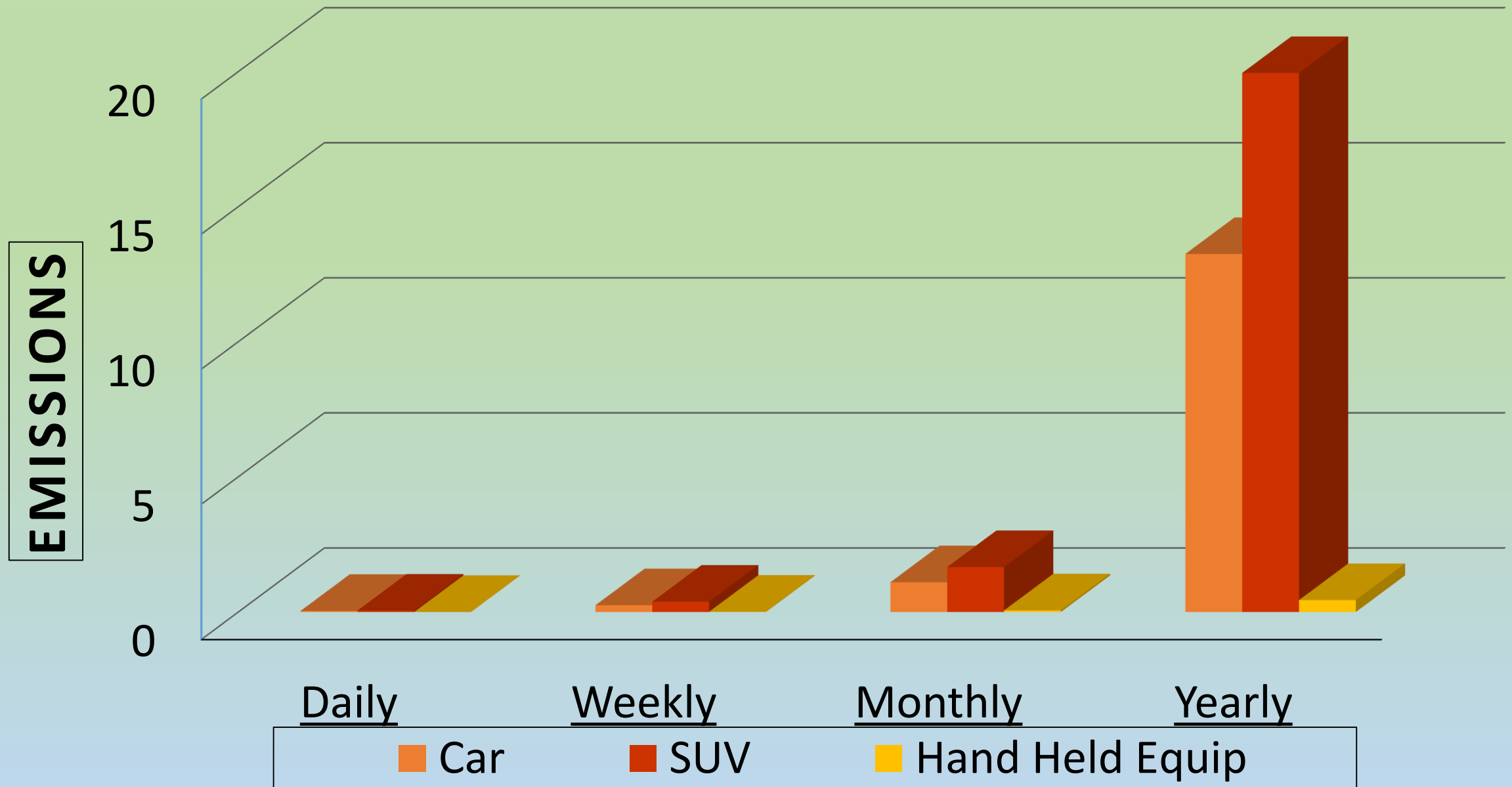
FACTS: RESEARCH DATA ON EMISSIONS

- Emission rates are regulated by the EPA, not cities or states.
- Per the EPA, emission rates for leaf blowers have never been quantitatively measured as there are no representative factors for this source.
- Sweeping with a broom on concrete creates significant particulate matter emissions, and in some studies were equivalent. *

*Dennis Fitz, Environmental Researcher,

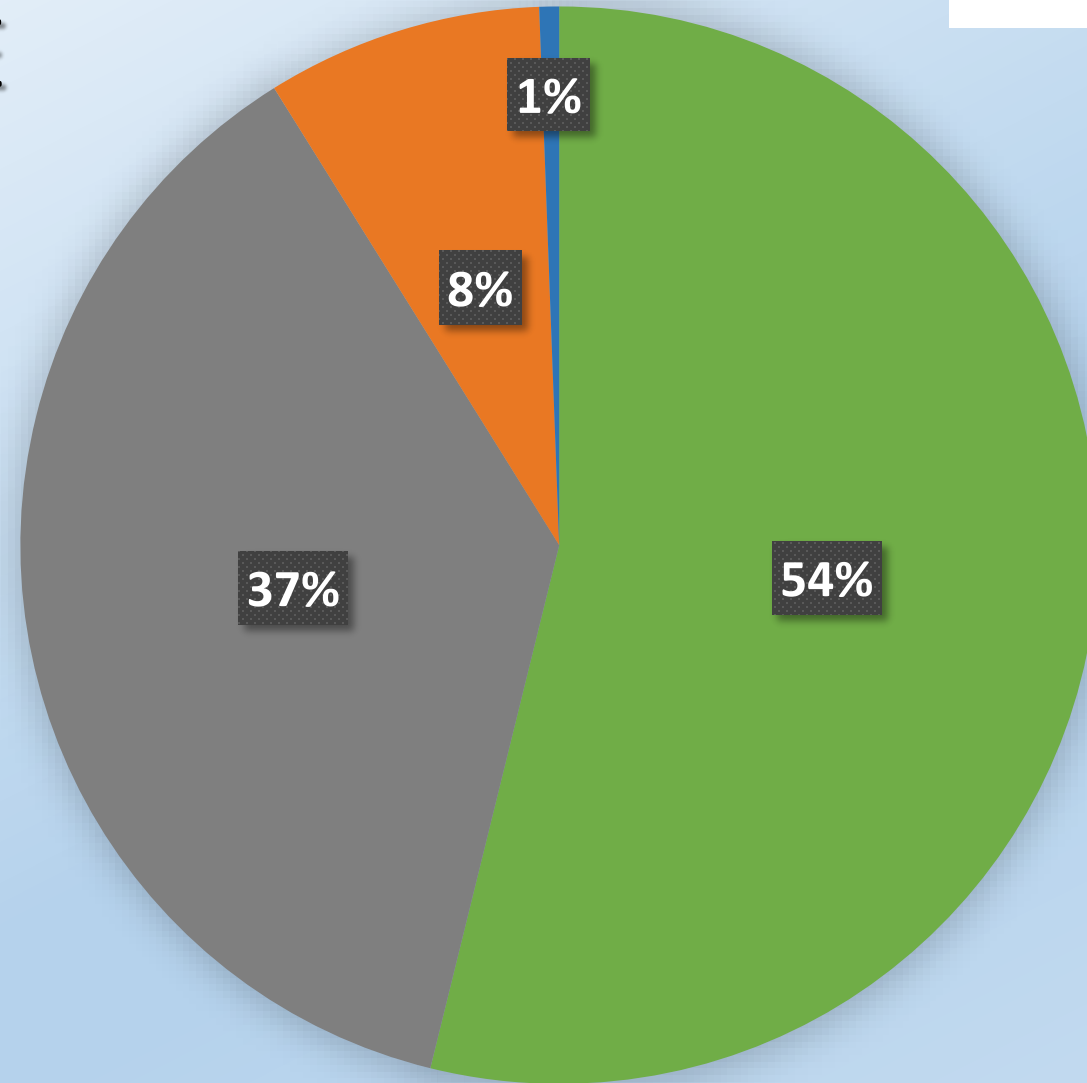
~Center for Environmental Research & Technology, UC Riverside~

One week's worth of driving an automobile to work is 30x worse than a week's worth of leaf blower use for 15 minutes/day.



DUST & PARTICULATE MATTER

Daily Air Dust-up Tons per day

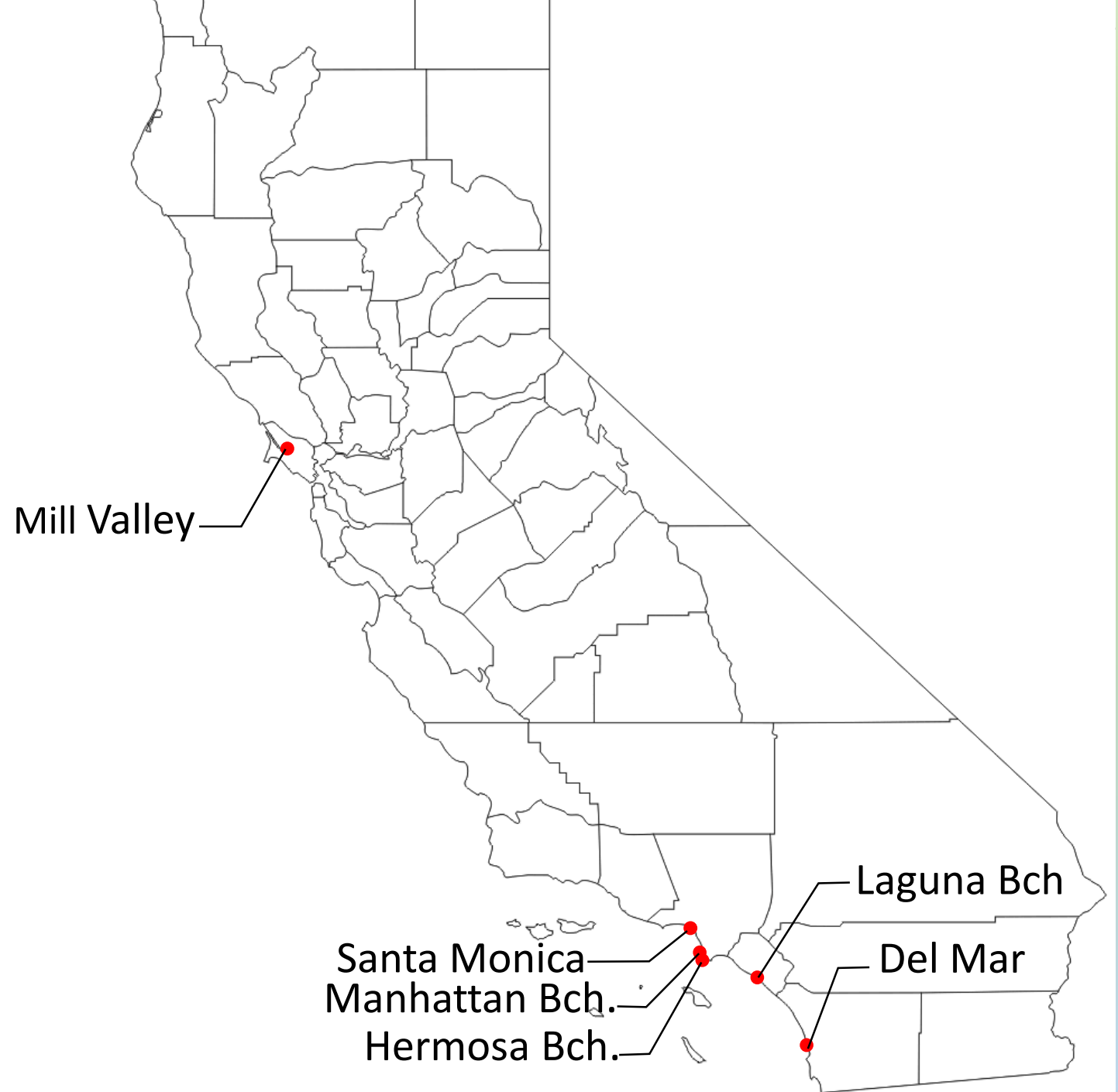


- Agriculture
- Paved Roads
- Construction
- Leaf Blowers

California Air Resources Board Study (2006):

FACT:

Only 6 California cities
have outright banned
both Electric & Gas
Powered leaf blowers.



FACTS: LEAF BLOWER BANS

- Two local cities that have banned both, Santa Monica & Manhattan Beach, admit that enforcement in the private sector is a big challenge.
- Manhattan Beach is able to use reclaimed water while Santa Monica has lowered their standards for clean up by over 30%.
- Beverly Hills, which has banned only gas, reports that they are not able to enforce in the private sector while the parks are forced to use electric.
- The City of South Pasadena, which uses all electric power tools in the public sector, estimates a 30% cost increase. Maintenance on prototype models still being developed, is extremely high. Gas is still allowed in the private sector.

LEAF BLOWER BANS:

- “There’s a very small window of opportunity to observe an actual violation in progress”, Parks Supervisor, Santa Monica
- “Not enforceable in the private sector.” Landscape Supervisor, Dept. of Parks & Recreation, Beverly Hills
- “As many houses are behind gates or are in gated communities, it is not enforceable in the private sector. Even commercial contractors use them.” The only ones following the ban is the City”, Parks Supervisor & Facility Maintenance, Malibu

FACTS: ENFORCEMENT OF A BAN

Using the City of Santa Monica as a model, a ban would require:

- An Office of Sustainability & Environment or equivalent
- Special Task Force, i.e. at least one dedicated officer
- 6 YEARS of due diligence
- Annual costs for the City for additional Staffing
 - 2011-2016 Santa Monica has generated 458 citations out of 3474 logged incidents.
 - Generated revenue does not offset City costs of ban

FACT:

On the other hand, Culver City has received a total of **14** leaf blower complaints in the last 5 years*:

2017- 0

2016 - 1

2015 - 2

2014 - 1

2013 - 4

2012 - 6

* Per our Code Enforcement Office

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ENHANCED ENFORCEMENT:

Cities like Menlo Park and Portland, Oregon have successfully implemented a Municipal code that has been enforceable:

- Certified Leaf Blower Model (65 dBA Labels)
- Educated Operator
- Limitations on Use

Likewise, Culver City can improve what we already have in place.

AUGMENTED REGULATORY MODEL FOR CULVER CITY

- REQUIRE Leaf Blower models with sound level not to exceed 65 dBA :
City & Private Sector to retool over 3 years time
- CITY TO INSPECT Equipment on a regular basis
- INCREASE awareness for use in the private and public sectors that is environmentally safe
- PUBLICIZE Leaf Blower program & Educate homeowners with mailers
- POST updates on City Website
- WORK with Landscape Professionals contracted by the City

SUMMARY

- Benefits of the Leaf Blower outweigh health concerns
- They keep our City CLEAN
- When used properly there are no real risks to the public or homeowner
- A ban is not PRACTICAL & complete enforcement would be difficult and costly.
- A ban in the parks & commercial sectors will dramatically lower standards and increase costs