

May 6, 2021

To: Mayor and Council Members City of London
From: Tony DiGiovanni Executive Director Landscape Ontario
Re: Proposed Leaf Blower Ban

Dear Mayor and Council Members,

Leaf Blowers are a very important labour saving tool not only for the landscape profession but for homeowners, the construction industry and the parks and works departments. In fact the Parks Department is the largest user of leaf blowers in the London area.

Much can be done to reduce the negative impacts based on education and courteous use. It is the inappropriate use of leaf blowers that cause the problem. Landscape Ontario along with a London based company called “Greenius” has produced a training video to help professionals understand how to use leaf blowers properly. You can find the video here:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4sljqQq5cU0>

You may also be interested to know that Echo and Stihl, the two largest manufacturers of leaf blowers reside in London. You may want to reach out to them as well. Both companies keep producing blowers that are a lot quieter and cleaner. Both offer battery powered blowers that significantly reduce the amount of noise. I predict that the issue will be solved within the next 5 years because manufacturers are continually improving their products.

Landscape Ontario members are in the service industry and take pride in promoting professional practices. We will take responsibility for dealing with complaints through education and direct intervention. If the company is a member of Landscape Ontario we will provide them access to the training module. Usually through communication and empathy complaints can be resolved.

Council may also consider encouraging the leaf blower users to upgrade their blowers to the newer, quieter models or battery operated units. Landscape Ontario is pleased to work with the City in any effort to resolve this issue.

I hope this information helps. Below you will find some notes on the financial implications of a Leaf Blower Ban

The Financial Impact of the Leaf Blower Ban

The financial consequences of a leaf blower ban would affect many diverse constituents. The following is a brief summary of those who would be negatively impacted.

1. The Horticultural Industry

The Horticulture industry utilizes leaf blowers as a labour saving and useful tool for their grounds maintenance operations. Industry estimates suggest that landscape firms can save up to 30% of their labour costs by using leaf blowers in their routine maintenance.

2. The Paving Industry

The paving industry uses leaf blowers to prepare worn asphalt surfaces before application of new asphalt. It is a useful and effective tool that is far more efficient than sweeping. Considering the amount of asphalt renovation and sealing that goes on both on municipal roads and private properties, the impact on the paving industry could far exceed the financial impact on the horticultural industry.

3.

4. Municipal and Nonprofit Institutions

Municipalities, cemeteries, parks systems, Ontario Hydro, School Boards and all public institutions use leaf blowers as a labour saving tool. The cost of maintaining these large-scale properties without the use of leaf blowers is astronomical. Your own city staff can estimate the financial impact for the Parks & Works Department.

5. Homeowner's Utilizing Grounds Maintenance Services

More homeowners utilize grounds maintenance services and therefore approve the use of leaf blowers on their property than the vocal minority attempting to ban their use. A leaf blower ban would mean higher maintenance costs.

6. Homeowners Who Own Their Own Leaf Blower

The leaf blower has increased in popularity with the do-it-yourself homeowner. Millions of dollars worth of leaf blowers are purchased each year. The financial impact on this group is the cost of the leaf blowers and the increase in labour.

7. Manufacturers, Their Employees and Distributors

The design, manufacture, sales and distribution of leaf blowers contribute millions of dollars to Canada's economy. A ban on leaf blowers would affect the entire production chain and would impact other communities in Ontario and Canada. Again we are dealing with millions of dollars not to mention loss of livelihood for many families.

8. The Taxpayer

Leaf blowers save the taxpayer thousands of dollars in reduced municipal labour costs. The city would be in the best position to estimate the increased labour costs for their parks and works departments.

This brief summary is a conservative and incomplete estimate on the financial impact of a leaf blower ban and does not consider the astronomical cost of enforcing a leaf blower ban.

Leaf blowers are a noisy but legal power tool. No one enjoys the noise generated by leaf blowers. However with increased education, consideration and the introduction of newer, quieter technologies the problem of leaf blower noise can be minimized without considering a drastic, expensive and unenforceable leaf blower ban.

Yours sincerely,



Tony DiGiovanni
Executive Director
Landscape Ontario