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Background

- Rapidly expanding urban areas result in a loss of productive green space, negatively impacting human health, wildlife & the environment
- Sustainable landscapes are good potential solution to this because it lessens environmental fragmentation and requires less maintenance (see Fig. 1)
- Despite its benefits sustainable landscaping has yet to gain widespread acceptance
- Aiming to understand public's perspective on this topic

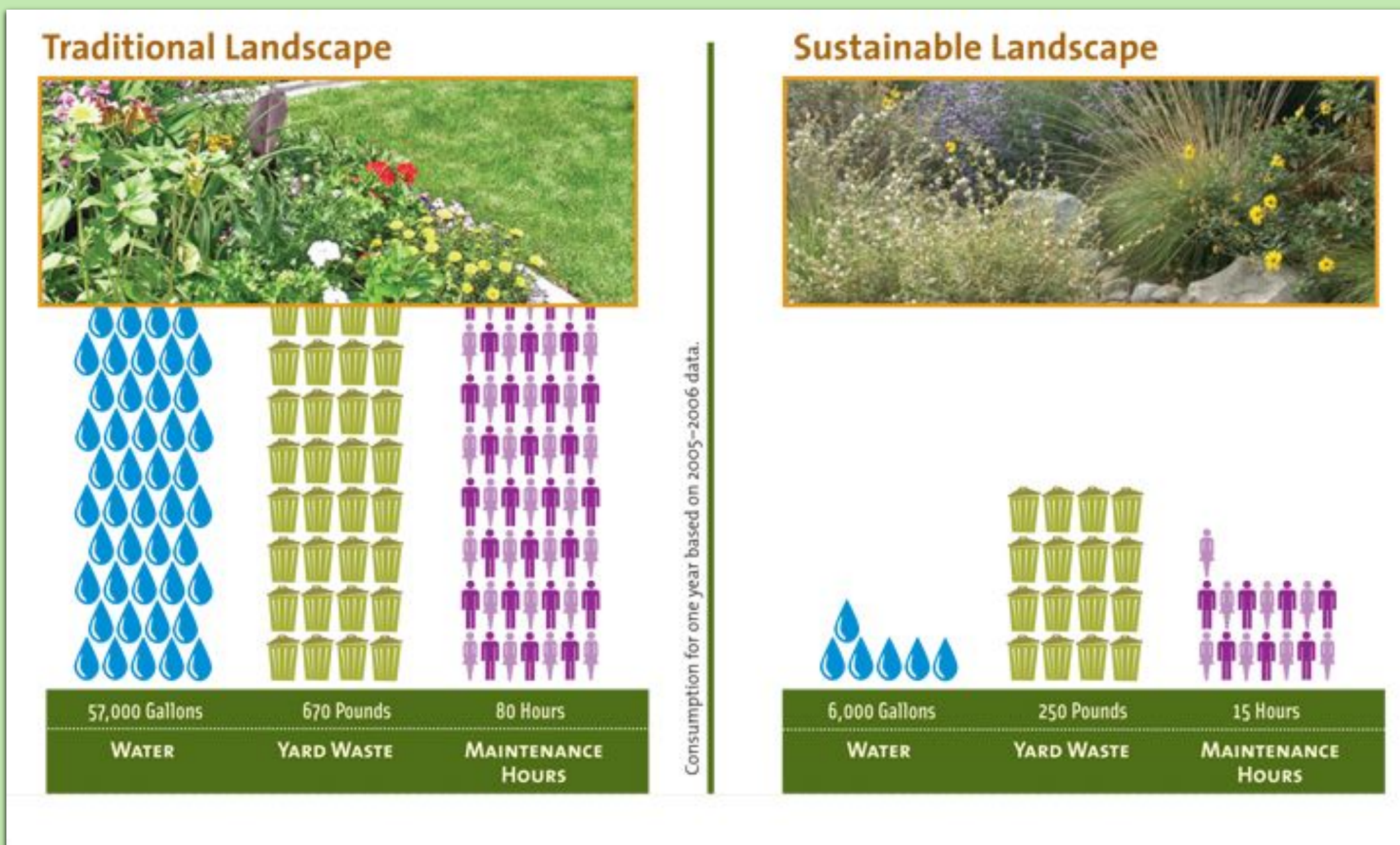


Figure 1. Shown above shows the average that was required by both traditional and sustainable landscapes in Santa Monica over the past 4 years. The sustainable landscapes all around required significantly less water and care to maintain compared to their traditional counterparts. (Photo from City of Santa Monica)

Research Question

What are the limiting factors regarding the spread of residential sustainable landscaping practices and how do we overcome them?

Methods/Internship

- Summer internship with Homegrown Organics
 - Shadowed site supervisor through design consultations
 - Helped maintain landscapes with the maintenance team (See Fig. 4)
- Conducted 20 minute interviews with 16 individuals across 4 subject groups regarding their views on sustainable landscaping
 - Those with sustainable landscapes (4 people)
 - Those without sustainable landscapes (4 people)
 - Those who inquired about sustainable landscaping but decided against it (4 people)
 - Those who work with the sustainable landscaping industry (4 people)

Results

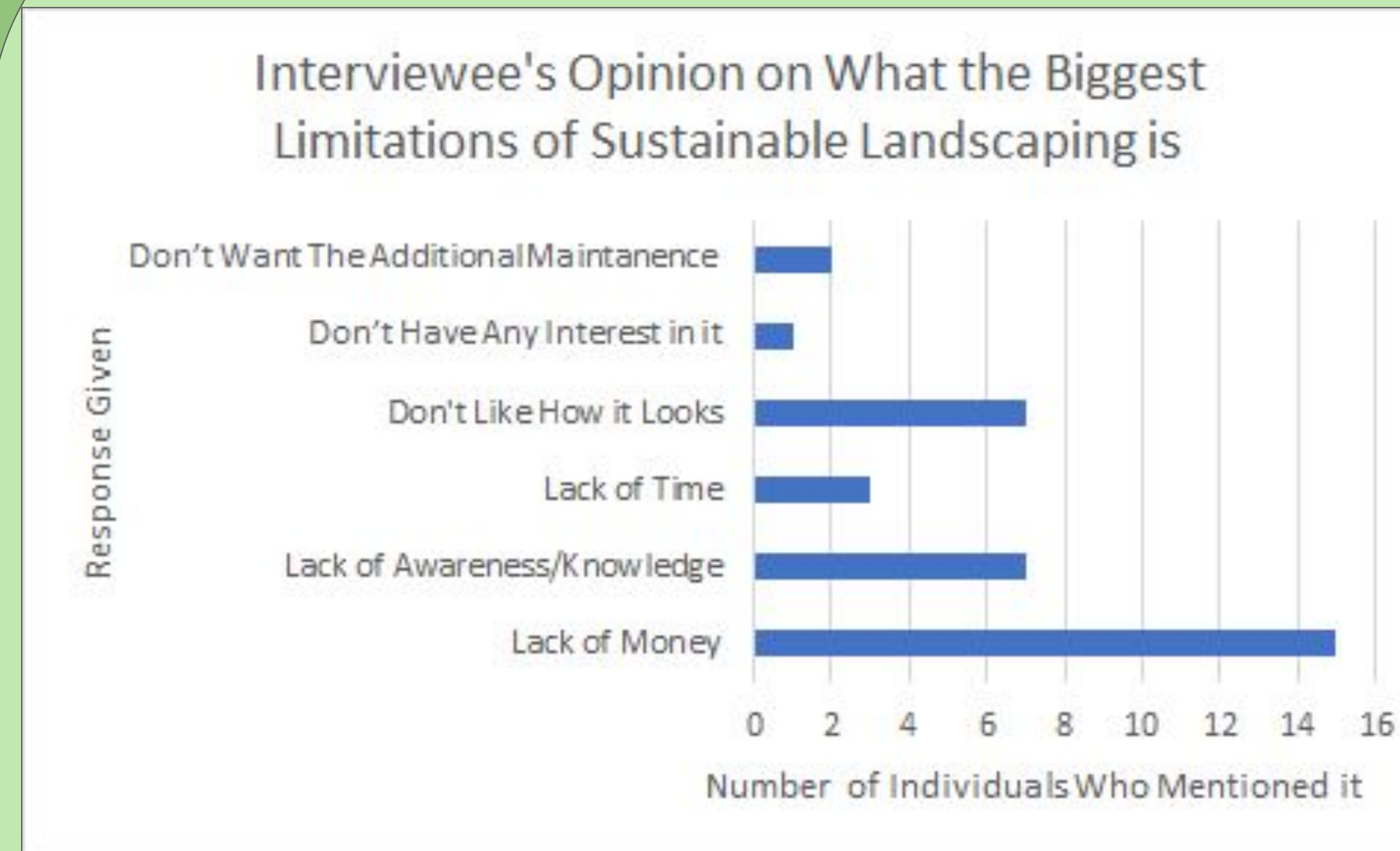


Figure 2. Displays the results of asking each individual interviewed what they thought were the main limitations preventing more people or themselves from switching to a sustainable landscape in their own lawn.

3 main limitations

1) Lack of money



2) Lack of knowledge/awareness about sustainable landscaping

3) Don't like the aesthetic



Potential Solutions

- 1) Economic Incentives (Ex. Rainwise)
 - Improve participants' likelihood of adopting a more sustainable landscape
 - A shortcoming: many sustainable landscaping programs do not adhere to the needs of a lower income family to participate
- 2) Educational Programs or Informational Signage (Ex. See Fig. 3)
 - The more educated or informed an individual is on the matter the more likely they are to adopt those same practices in their own landscape
- 3) Social Marketing
 - As sustainable landscapes become more recognized and normalized people are going to feel more accepting of making the transition.



Figure 3. The photo above illustrates the some of the potential differences between a sustainable landscape and a conventional one, opting out of having the traditional grass lawn and replacing it with several native plant species. This photo also displays how informational signage can be used. (Photo from Santa Clara Valley Water)

Broader Significance

- Proper marketing is required to spread sustainable landscaping
 - Need to diversify our strategies to ensure we include all demographics and appeal to homeowners
 - Needs to be accessible to everyone
- More programs like Rainwise need to be introduced and promoted
- Encouraging more sustainable landscaping will help us move towards a greener future



Figure 4. The photo shown above is one of the landscapes designed and maintained by Homegrown Organics. This client's landscape is just one example of what a sustainable landscape can look like in an urban setting. This client in particular is very fond of plants and was very committed to bringing nature and a more natural look into their own yard.

Acknowledgements

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