

The Inside Scoop

September, 2025

Dear District 3 Resident,

My name is Peter De Hoff, your current City Council Representative for Poway's District 3. This monthly-ish newsletter one way of keeping you informed about some city government activities. My goal is to provide clear, accurate updates on current topics so you can stay engaged and informed.

Let me know if you'd like any further refinements!



Water Rate Setting

The City's 5-year water and sewer rate-setting process begins at the October 7th, 2025 City Council meeting and concludes on December 2nd, with new rates likely taking effect in January 2026. At that same October 7th meeting, the results of the Cost Allocation Study will also be presented. This study is especially important in Poway because our government structure is blended between the City and the Water Agency. It ensures that water fees are not being used to subsidize General Fund services that should instead be covered by taxes.

I've been in several meetings and discussions on these matters and have seen draft versions of the proposals. While I cannot share specifics, I can say that Poway is facing the same upward pressures on rates as other water districts in the region. My focus, as always, is on finding efficiencies to help reduce those pressures. On October 7th we'll review some of the programs, projects, and milestones aimed at keeping costs under control.

Unfortunately, residents are also carrying the burden of what many are calling the "Tony Tax", the extra costs created by District 2 Councilman Blain's behavior. While I had hoped the Cost Allocation Study would provide meaningful relief here, so far it doesn't look that way. It's frustrating that, even though we in District 3 had no say in his election, we're still paying for the fallout.

From October 8th through the start of the December 2nd meeting, residents may submit "Prop 218 Protest" forms. If around 7,000 protests are filed, the proposed new rates would be rejected, leaving the old rates in place. That might sound appealing at first, but it would also likely damage the city's bond rating and create other serious financial consequences. I can't say exactly how bad, but it would not be good. While I fully support every resident's right to make their voice heard, I encourage you to also learn about the real drivers of our water rates before deciding.

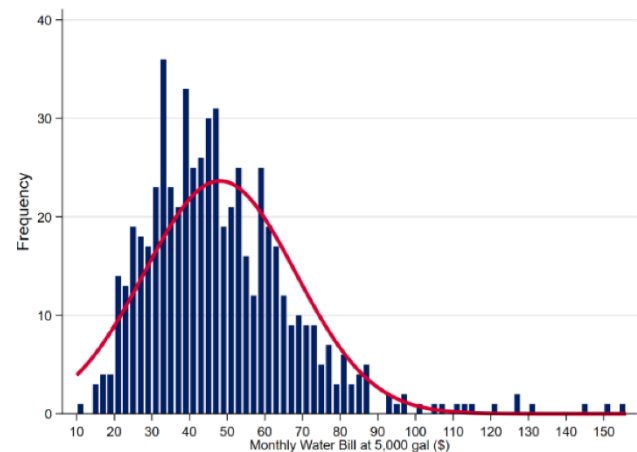


Figure 1: (NOT Poway's Water Rates)

For that, I recommend a presentation put together a few months ago and presented by retired water engineer Cathy Peroni at the request of former District 2 Councilmember Anita Edmondson. It's a highly informative slide deck that explains the cost structure behind our rates. If you'd like a copy, let me know and I can arrange to send it (though it's a bit large for some email systems).

Here's the spoiler: most of our rates are driven by the cost of raw water from the San Diego County Water Authority. What we *can* influence are the internal costs that Poway itself controls, and that's where I am focusing my oversight efforts.

On the wastewater side, I serve as Vice Chair of the Wastewater Joint Powers Authority, where I've consistently raised concerns about San Diego's contracting practices. For years, they relied on sole-source vendors and labor practices that left us with single-bid contracts, skyrocketing costs, and endless change orders—all of which drive our sewer rates higher. Recently, I've made some progress: new contracts are attracting up to seven bidders, and San Diego has committed to moving away from sole-source deals. Still, much more work remains.

And if you have ideas, whether it's ways to cut costs or pitfalls to avoid, I want to hear them. I don't claim to have a monopoly on good ideas.

The Tony Blain Train Wreck— The Next Phase Begins

Good News/Bad News

The Good:

The proponents of the Blain Recall submitted far more signatures than required, 2,953 collected versus 2,425 needed, with an impressive ~96% validity rate. Their effort easily qualified for the ballot, and the recall election (For District 2 Residents) is now scheduled for November 4th, 2025. Because it will coincide with the state election (which includes Proposition 50, a measure on legislative redistricting), the projected cost to Poway is about \$200,000 rather than \$300,000.

If Councilman Blain is recalled, the District 2 seat will then need to be filled, either by immediate appointment or through a special election in April or June of 2026. A special election would likely cost an additional \$300,000. For context, I understand that Councilman Blain's actions have already resulted in realized costs exceeding \$500,000.

As always, I welcome your input — please feel free to share your thoughts with me at pdehoff@poway.org.

The Bad:

It is with bittersweet emotion that I share the news that Wendy Kasserman, our Assistant City Manager, will be leaving Poway in early October to become the new City Manager of Santee. This is a tremendous opportunity for her and a well-deserved recognition of her abilities.



Over her years of service, Wendy has worn nearly every leadership hat in our city, often simultaneously, stepping in wherever needed to keep things running smoothly. She has that rare blend of compassion, steel, knowledge, and judgement. Her depth of commitment has left a lasting mark on this organization and on our community as a whole. And while no one's well is infinitely deep, I have not yet seen one as deep as hers.

Her departure is a genuine loss for Poway, but it's also a point of pride to see her step forward into this new role. Santee is gaining an extraordinary leader, and while we will all miss Wendy deeply, we also know she will thrive in this next chapter. We thank her for her service, wish her the very best, and acknowledge the lessons her departure leaves behind.



I think that times like these provide to us an opportunity to reflect on the challenges organizations face when a toxic elected leader creates a hostile environment no budget can fully capture. Those costs aren't only measured in dollars; they show up in succession planning, in retention and, sometimes, in the departure of the very talented people who help make Poway the great place that it is to live.

In that sense, while all will rightly view Wendy's departure and promotion as Santee's big win, for some it may also serve as a reminder for us of what we risk when the climate inside government is less than it should be.

If this Council chooses to fill the District 2 seat through an election (which I support), the decision of those voters will directly influence the caliber of candidates who apply for the role of Assistant City Manager.

Councilman Blain's behavior has tarnished Poway's reputation for steady, professional local governance, and that damage influences who is willing to work here. At nearly every regional meeting I attend, Councilman Blain's antics are the first thing other elected officials and staff mention. The question may soon be whether District 2 residents will choose someone with a proven record of relevant experience, or someone driven by a personal agenda. As always, that choice is made by the voters. And as always, elections carry real consequences.

Looking Ahead

E-Bikes on the Agenda

At the September 16th Council meeting, the Sheriff will give a presentation on e-bikes—the laws that apply, current enforcement efforts, and what’s needed to keep riders and the community safe.

There’s been a lot of discussion (and some confusion) around e-bikes, so this should be a good opportunity to clarify the rules. I’m looking forward to learning more, and I suspect many of you will too.

Some have joked(?) about whether “Draconian De Hoff” is plotting to ban e-bikes outright—fines, tasers, etc. Rest assured, nothing that extreme is on the horizon. But it should still be an interesting conversation. Come join us and see where it leads.



The Prospective Retrospective The Poway Paseo Project (formerly “The Outpost”)

The Background

Originally approved in 2018, the Outpost was designed as a 53-unit, mixed-use project on 1.58 acres at 13249–13253 Poway Road. It aligned with the newly adopted Poway Road Specific Plan (PRSP), which envisioned a town center corridor with a mix of housing and commercial uses.



After construction of the superstructure began, the developer faced financial difficulties and filed for bankruptcy. To make the project more viable, they modified the design under California’s Density Bonus laws, increasing the housing count to 72 units while reducing commercial space to 15,871 sq. ft.

The Future

In 2024, a new team purchased the stalled project, rebranding it as The Poway Paseo. The updated plan retains the 72 housing units, a signature restaurant space, and additional commercial units. The new developers have contracted with T.B. Penick, a respected construction company, to complete the build, which is currently expected in October 2026.

The Higher Level

The PRSP Planning Commission’s vision was to transform the Poway Road Corridor into a vibrant, mixed-use hub. A balance of residential growth with commercial vitality. While the General Plan once envisioned 2,000 housing units along this corridor, the “City” in the “City in the Country”, the PRSP charted a more modest course of about 1,200 units, emphasizing smart, lower-density growth.

As a councilmember, I've supported this vision and look forward to seeing the Poway Paseo completed. My hope is that it enhances the look, feel, and quality of the corridor while providing new housing and community space in line with Poway's "City in the Country" character.

Your Feedback Matters

I want to hear from you about what interests you most for future newsletters.
Your input will help shape future updates.

Thank you for taking the time to stay informed and engaged. Together, we can continue making Poway a great place to live.

Sincerely,

Peter De Hoff

Poway District 3 City Council Representative

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If you have a question or concern regarding governance in Poway, please email me at pdehoff@poway.org

Paid for by De Hoff for Poway City Council District 3, 2026

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