# The Inside Scoop



**July, 2026**

**Dear District 3 Resident,**

My name is Peter De Hoff, your City Council Representative for Poway's District 3. This monthly-ish newsletter is one way I keep you posted on what's happening in your city government.

There's a lot in this issue: a budget worth quietly bragging about, the real story behind those two big battery projects, a serious warning if you hike with your dog, a development decision I need your read on, and yes, a small favor at the bottom. Let's dig in.

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**The Budget: On Time, On Target**



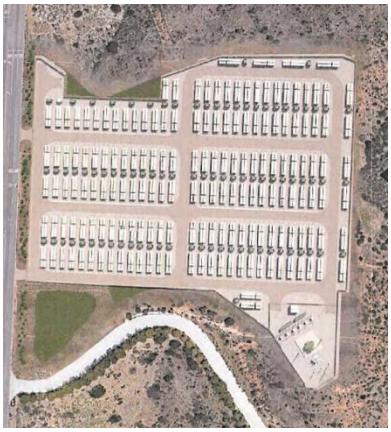

In June, the Council adopted this year's budget — a $72.7M General Fund that's balanced, on schedule, and fully funding our three priorities: public safety, infrastructure, and community services.

Every California city is required to balance its budget. Not every city manages that without cutting into the essentials. Around the region, cities big and small are trimming things as basic as fire protection right now. Poway's success isn't by chance. It's discipline compounded by time. It's the same discipline that lets us add the pickleball courts in the Business Park and fund some real upgrades at Community Park, all without touching core services.

I've been living Poway's budgets for about six years now — a little over three on the Council and three before that on the Budget Review Committee (BRC). What strikes me most is how consistent the focus has been. That same discipline was the norm under Poway's prior leadership and it's still paying dividends today and well into the future.

Speaking of the BRC: they turned in an excellent report this year, with some sharp ideas for making the sources of our costs and revenues clearer. Later this year, three BRC seats will be opening up, with applications typically open in the new year, and appointments are made each March. If you've ever wanted a genuine, hands-on role in how the city runs, this is it — I'd call it the premier volunteer legislative opportunity in Poway. Reach out and I'll walk you through the application.

**Retrospective: The Battery Storage Story**



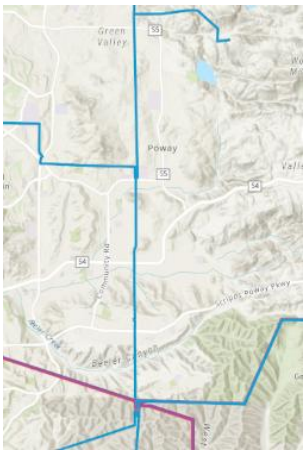
*Special thanks to resident Andrea Temple, who reminded me I'd written this up a while back and then promptly forgot to run it.*

Poway now has two Battery Energy Storage System (BESS) facilities in late-stage construction, both on the south side of the Business Park. The first, Pome BESS, is a 100 MW facility on Danielson Court that ties into the local 69 kV line running north–south through the city. The second, Nighthawk, is a 300 MW facility on Kirkham Way above the old mine north of Beeler Canyon; it connects to the regional 230 kV system, ranks among the larger facilities in California, and — because it sits right at the wildland/urban interface — is the one that's drawn the most concern.

That concern is understandable. Between the recent wildfires and the BESS fire up at Moss Landing, the images on TV are alarming. But here's the part that doesn't make the news: the newer facilities are fundamentally different from the older ones that burn. Comparing Poway's projects to Otay, Escondido, or Moss Landing isn't "apples to oranges" — it's closer to land versus sea.

A few reasons why. Both of ours use the newest LFP chemistry, which pushes the internal fire risk below that of the HVAC units bolted to the container sides and the inverters on the ends. Both were hyper-mitigated to keep any fire — and any toxic gas — from spreading beyond the site, with safety rules we wrote alongside outside fire specialists who do this for a living. The specialists themselves have told me they'd have no problem living right next to it. Poway was a deliberate late adopter here, and we used everyone else's hard lessons to our advantage.

The approval paths are worth knowing, too. Both projects passed unanimously, but they got there very differently. Pome came in first and was essentially approved ministerially — the South Poway Business Park Specific Plan simply didn't flag these facilities for public review at the time. A small agenda item gave us the opening to change that, and we amended the Specific Plan to require a Conditional Use Permit, the mechanism that puts these decisions in front of you. Nighthawk, meanwhile, was large enough to qualify for the state's AB205 process — a fast-track designed to let big BESS projects (over 200 MWh) bypass local control entirely. They could have taken that route. Instead they chose to work with us, and poured the money they'd have spent on the state process into mitigation that actually works. Those measures went on to set a statewide benchmark, and were used as a template by other agencies, including the county.




There's a real upside to getting this right: a safe BESS can actually lower our overall fire risk. These systems stabilize the grid on a millisecond scale, which reduces the need for Public Safety Power Shutoffs, keeps cell towers running longer in an emergency, and cuts the energy released in line-slap events — a genuine wildfire ignition source that tends to spark too far from crews to catch early. For the record, Nighthawk sits more than half a mile from the nearest home in Beeler Canyon.

Both come online later this year. And I'm reliably informed by someone who'd know that the 12-foot perimeter block wall is the straightest concrete he's ever laid eyes on.

**A Serious One: Watch Your Dog at Lake Poway**



We've already had around 30 heat-exhaustion incidents with dogs at Lake Poway this year, and three of them didn't make it. Most of you don't need the reminder, but it bears repeating: dogs don't shed heat the way we do. If you're hiking with yours, carry more water than you think you'll need — for them, not just you. A one-in-ten chance is not a bet worth taking. Please pass this along to friends who don't get this newsletter.



**Fourth of July**

Plenty going on — two fireworks shows (at the Poway High and in the Business Park) and a big weekend gathering at Old Poway Park. Come by for the fun. I'll be in disguise, so you probably won't recognize me. But if you do, don't hesitate to say hi — or to ask a question. Hopefully, an easy question....

**Intracorp Lands on the Docket — July 21**

A little sooner than I expected (see last month's newsletter), Intracorp's mixed-use project is on the docket for July 21st — mark your calendar for that night if you'd like to weigh in.



As I mentioned last month, this choice will be between a Poway Road Specific Plan version or a State Density Bonus Plan version. I'm going to dig deep into this one to get a better understanding of how serious the developer is about their Density Bonus proposal.



**Summoned to the Court**

Thus far, it looks like recalled Poway Councilman Tony Blain is deciding to fight his crimes in court and has not yet pled out on his four felonies and a misdemeanor charge. Since I'm the guy he tried to bribe, I get to find a suit that still fits, head down to court later this month, and testify. The joys of applied ethics never seem to end.

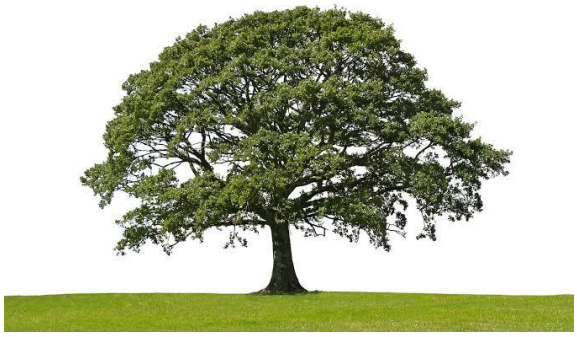
**Around the Corner: Holding the Line on Open Space**



Some of you have noticed an unusual run of closed-session items over the past year about the city buying land. That's by design. I helped change how Poway funds these purchases, opening the door to acquiring land specifically to preserve open space.

When I first ran for City Council, it was on a promise to "Stay the Course," and a big part of that course is protecting Poway's open-space character. That's meant rezoning about 330 acres of city and private land to Open Space, taking it off the building rolls for good; keeping the bar for building-code variances as high as ever; and now, pushing this land-acquisition effort forward. Sacramento, quite frankly, doesn't lose much sleep over our quality of life. To them, just about any parcel, even in the hills, looks better with a multistory apartment complex on it. It's up to us to defend what makes Poway "Poway," with whatever tools we've got. When the resources are there, buying the land and turning it into permanent open space is the right tool to reach for.

**Down the Road: A Small Favor**



Speaking of four-year promises, I'm up for reelection this year, which means I'm stocking up on sunscreen and light clothes, so I don't collapse when I come knocking on your door this summer.

But the first practical part: before any of that, I need to gather signatures to get a spot on the ballot. This time I'm trying to collect from a geographically broad cross-section of the district, so every neighborhood is represented. If you'd like to see me keep doing this work, drop me a line (email or phone) and I'll swing by to collect your John Hancock — probably mid-to-late July. It takes two minutes, and it genuinely matters.

If the last few years of steady, careful stewardship are the kind of thing you want more of, I'd be grateful for both your signature now and your vote in November. Either way, thank you for reading, for caring about this city, and for being the reason Poway stays Poway.

**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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Question or concern regarding governance in Poway? Email me at pdehoff@poway.org

Paid for by Peter De Hoff