

Frequently Asked Questions PEOPLE'S ORDINANCE



Municipal Code §66.0127, also known as the “People’s Ordinance” is irresponsible governance that has tied the hands of the City of San Diego for over 100 years. San Diegans deserve an innovative government that invests in and provides world-class public services for all.

I heard the City wants to repeal the People’s Ordinance.

Council President Elo-Rivera and Councilmember LaCava are proposing to amend the People’s Ordinance, not repeal it. Today, the Ordinance impacts the City’s ability to provide world-class public services; impedes progress toward our Climate Action Plan goals; and provides an exclusive benefit to only a subset of City residents. We can address these negative impacts by allowing the City to recover costs for providing trash and recycling services.

Why does the City want to charge a fee for trash?

The Ordinance prohibits the City from recovering costs from single-family residences for trash collection services it provides, while residents in apartments and condominiums must pay a private company for trash collection. This two-tier system creates a glaring inequity, while the lack of revenue prevents the City from investing in better services for all residents.

I pay property taxes and receive trash services from the City. Why would I have to pay extra for that?

Property taxes go into the “General Fund,” the City’s flexible pool of spending that invests in public safety services, parks and recreation, libraries, and more. There is no designated tax or fee for trash services. According to a 2017 San Diego County Grand Jury report, this makes San Diego one of only three cities in California with a population of more than 7,000 that do not recover costs for trash services. This results in less money for public services that would benefit all residents and limited trash and recycling collection services for those who receive service from the City.

I’m a renter – am I currently being charged for trash pickup?

Most likely! The City provides trash services at no charge to most single-family residences, while residents in most apartments must pay a private company for trash services. Additionally, tenants pay property taxes through their rents, so renters are paying for a City service from which they are excluded.



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I understand why I may have to be charged for trash, but what's in it for me?

With a change to the People's Ordinance, the City will have the opportunity to improve public services in many areas. For example, if cost recovery is implemented for City-provided trash collection, then residents would no longer have to pay a standalone fee for the replacement and delivery of curbside containers. The City will also have the ability to invest in new services, like bulky item pickup and weekly recycling. These improved services would contribute to achieving our Climate Action Plan goals.

Further, with the cost of trash services removed from the General Fund, that frees up funds to invest in public services that benefit all residents, like parks, libraries, and public safety.

What will the trash fee be if the People's Ordinance is amended?

To be clear, the measure does not propose any fees nor will it impose any fees. It would simply make cost recovery allowable. The development and implementation of cost recovery for City-provided trash collection would require further action by the City Council. In their analysis of the People's Ordinance, the City's Independent Budget Analyst includes examples of fees for trash services in other cities in California.

What happens if City Council initiates that fee-setting process?

The process is guided by State-mandated taxpayer protections. They cannot be imposed without robust community engagement, extensive study, and thorough public discussion on the services residents want and need—and that's a discussion we can't have under the Ordinance as written.

Where can I find the language that will be included in the ballot measure?

You can find all material relating to the proposed measure to reform the People's Ordinance on the July 25, 2022 City Council agenda, which can be found on the City's website at www.sandiego.gov.

