

WEEKLY HIGHLIGHTS REPORT SEPTEMBER 4, 2020

City Manager

- **Labor Day Holiday** - The City of Punta Gorda government offices will be closed on Sept. 7 in observance of the Labor Day holiday. Residents and commercial customers of the City of Punta Gorda will notice **NO** change in trash, recycling or yardwaste collections.
- **Utility Rate Study and Septic to Sewer Implementation Plan** – Council directed staff to develop an ordinance reflecting an increase in water and sewer rates at 3.75% to be evaluated annually. Impact fee recommendations include a decrease in the water impact fee of \$1,149 (reflecting the new RO plant partially funded by grants) and an increase in sewer impact fees of \$83 (reflecting the future wastewater treatment plant expansion project). Additional scenario models were requested from the consultant Stantec and the results are as follows:
 - **Scenario: Separate rate increases for each system**
 - Water: 2.0% beginning in FY 2021
 - Wastewater: 5.5% beginning in FY 2021
 - **Scenario: Rate indexing plan without Waste Water Treatment Plant expansion and Septic to Sewer**
 - 0% through FY 2023 and 3.5% annually beginning in FY 2024 for both water and wastewater
 - **Scenario: Rate indexing plan if the recommended 4% in FY 2018 was implemented**
 - 3% annually beginning in FY 2021 for both water and wastewater (vs. 3.75% vs. proposed)
- **Recreational Vehicles and Trailer Parking** – City Council will have a discussion regarding the parking of recreational vehicles and boats/trailers in the Neighborhood Residential zoning district. Within the Special Residential Overlay (SRO) zoning district, which includes Punta Gorda Isles, Burnt Store Isles and Burnt Store Meadows, parking of recreational vehicles and boats is strictly limited. Recreational vehicles may be parked overnight with a permit 7 nights in a 30 day period. Boats may be parked overnight with a permit for 2 nights up to 4 times per calendar year. Recreational vehicles and boats may be parked at the property during the day from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. without a permit. The Neighborhood Residential zoning district permits the property owner or tenant to park one recreational vehicle and one watercraft trailer with or without multiple axles, or a non-commercial utility trailer with no more than one axle, or a combination of no more than two trailers on the private residential property of the owner of said vehicle and trailer, unless otherwise prohibited in the Code. This is permitted by right, no special permit is required and there are no time limitations for the parking of these types of vehicles.
- **Action Register** – City Council has requested a quarterly Action Register status report. The Action Register is a listing of ongoing tasks or projects, with target dates for completion and comments, that provide a report on progress. This report is updated weekly and is published to the City's website every Thursday. To view the current Action Register visit <http://www.ci.punta-gorda.fl.us/Home/ShowDocument?id=11450>.

- **COVID-19 Event Update** – With COVID-19 and the State of Emergency, the City suspended issuing event permits from mid-March to present. Staff has approximately 18 event applications to be processed or were previously approved. Staff is requesting approval to begin processing all event permit applications and schedule for DRC review and approval, contingent upon the Governor lifting attendance restrictions before the date of the event. If the restrictions are not lifted, any large events where attendance cannot be restricted or setup cannot be spaced properly, would have to be cancelled or rescheduled. Other events where attendance can be restricted and where setup spacing can be maintained, would be permitted to continue.
- **FY 2021 Budget** – City Council will conduct the first of two public hearings on the proposed FY 2021 annual budget on Sep. 9, 5:01pm in the Council Chambers. The millage rate, total budget plan, Community Redevelopment Area budget, and assessments for lot mowing, Buckley’s Pass, Punta Gorda Isles and Burnt Store Isles canal maintenance.
- **Gilchrist Park Renovation Phase 2** – At the Aug. 21, 2019 City Council meeting Staff presented a bid award for the construction of Harborwalk West area 2a and 2b which included the Harborwalk, parking improvements, site furnishings, and landscaping. The project bid exceeded the budget and staff was directed to delay the bid to allow time for alternatives to be developed. At the Sept. 4, 2019 City Council meeting staff was directed to condense the original Harborwalk West Area 2a and 2b project to the construction only of the Harborwalk portion of the project. At the Dec. 4, 2019 City Council meeting staff presented a project update with the design and construction only of the Harborwalk and was directed to move forward with the design and construction of the Harborwalk only. At the Mar. 18 City Council meeting the construction contract was awarded to complete the Harborwalk only portion of the project. As the construction of the Harborwalk only portion is nearing completion, staff would like direction on the remainder of the project. To complete the project approximately \$956,737 additional funding is necessary. Potential funding source(s) are - 1) 1% Sales Tax - Undesignated Projects; 2) General Fund; 3) Park Impact Fees.

Upcoming Events

- Fishermen’s Village Events – available at <https://www.fishville.com/events/>
- Military Heritage Museum Events – available at <https://freedomisntfree.org/upcoming-events/>.
- Punta Gorda Chamber of Commerce Events – available at <https://puntagordachamber.com/calendar-events/>
- Charlotte County Chamber of Commerce Events – available at <https://business.charlottecountychamber.org/events>

Lot Mowing Program

- The City has completed mowing the following areas:
 - Colony Point (Colony Point Dr., W. Marion Ave., Socorro Dr., and Coronado Dr.).
 - PGI (Bal Harbor Blvd, Deborah Drive, Ryan Blvd, Suzi Street, and Casey Key Drive).
 - PGI (Magdalina Drive, Via Vento, W Henry Street, Appian Drive, and Columbian Drive).
 - PGI Bird Section (Almar Drive, Albatross Drive, Whippoorwill, and Turtle Dove Blvd).

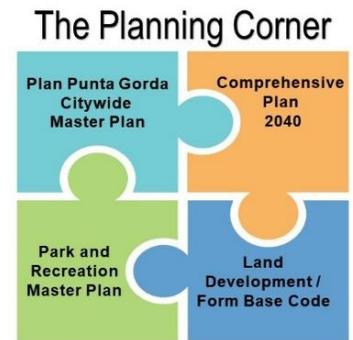
Urban Design

- **The Parks and Recreation Master Plan General Survey**
– The survey closes on Sept. 18. Don’t forget to make your voice count! To take the survey, please visit <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/LTXP5X6>. For more information about the Parks and Recreation Master Plan Update, visit <http://www.ci.punta-gorda.fl.us/visitors/punta-gorda-pathways/park-recreation-master-plan>



- **Sign Code Survey** – City staff has been working to re-write the sign code in order to more fully comply with recent US Supreme Court and US District Court decisions regarding regulations on commercial speech and to ensure the sign code remains content-neutral. The following is a link to the sign code survey <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/7FGGS3M>. Staff would like to emphasize that the sign photos shown on the survey are **only examples** of current or previous signs within the City. Signs are currently regulated by content, such as real estate, political, incidental, commercial, non-commercial, which is the very reason the sign code is being re-written. It is the intent to have the sign code be **content neutral** and the proposed re-write of the sign code regulate signs by number, location and size only, not by content. The sign survey has been updated to include the option under each question for OTHER (please specify), including a freeform section for comments under each question. As of yesterday, we have received 319 responses to the survey. We greatly appreciate the input!
- **The Planning Corner – Comprehensive Plan Elements Update Coastal Management** – During the [Aug. 26 City Council meeting](#), City staff provided an update to the Council on the progress of the Comprehensive Plan project. A brief overview was given of major items for revision in each of the following five elements:

- **Future Land Use** - Broadly sets development expectations
- **Coastal Management** - Water dependent uses and environmental resilience
- **Housing** – Population demographics and housing needs
- **Transportation** - Safer streets for everyone
- **Historic** - Preservation of built legacy



The [Coastal Management Element](#) recognizes the risks associated with the development of the City in its unique coastal location and the rewards associated with the beautiful setting along the southern shore of Charlotte Harbor. Updates to this Element that recognize and plan for the risk of our coastal location rely heavily on the guidance contained in the update to the City’s 2009 Climate Adaptation Plan.

The [Climate Adaptation Plan update](#), produced in 2018, more clearly identifies coastal flooding risks from tropical storm activity and sea-level rise anticipated over the next 50 to 100 years. In addition to risk identification, this plan outlines a menu to potential adaptation strategies, including the creation and enhancement of existing living shorelines – using nature to protect the City. On the reward side, the Coastal Management Element update includes key ideas from Plan Punta Gorda 2019 Citywide Master Plan. Plan Punta Gorda’s recommendations were built on information from previous plans and studies, including the Boaters Alliance Harbor Master Plan, and studies from the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC) and the Florida Sea Grant (FSG) program. Recommendations include increasing boating access, events that celebrate the Harbor, and promotion of water-related activities.



Figure 2: 1.5 foot Sea Level Rise Map of the Community Redevelopment Area (CRA)

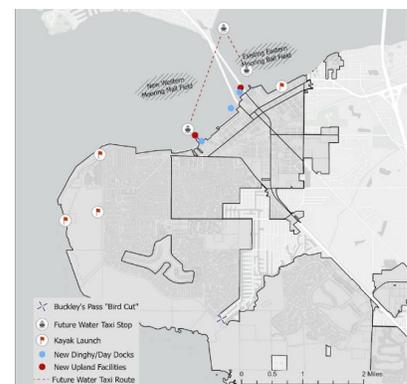


Figure 1: Draft map of proposed waterfront and boating amenities

Public Works

Canal Maintenance

- **Dredging Bass and Snook Inlets** – Dredging has started along the Bass and Snook Inlets, construction is expected to be completed by Sept. 18 (weather and equipment operation permitting). The contractor will off load dredge material at the easterly end of Elizabeth Park and then the material will be transported to another location by dump trucks. Boaters are asked to please use caution in this area during construction. For additional information on this project, <http://www.ci.punta-gorda.fl.us/home/showdocument?id=11424> or contact Canal Maintenance Supervisor, Cathy Miller, Punta Gorda Public Works Department at (941) 575-5050 between the business hours of 7:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m., Monday thru Friday.
- **Seawall Replacement Projects** - The seawall replacement contractor has completed 32 seawall replacement projects in PGI and there are three projects under construction. Six seawall replacement projects have been completed in BSI and the work program for this fiscal year has been completed. A seawall replacement project is not considered complete until the sod has been placed.
 - Crews filled depressions at 22 locations.
 - Crews performed two seawall cap and seam patches (13' linear ft.).

Engineering

- **City wide Drainage Swale regrading** – Approximately 500 lineal feet of grading and sodding was completed along the south side of Ryan Blvd. near the intersection of Crooked Island Dr. Approximately 550 lineal feet of grading and sodding was completed along the west side of Crooked Island south of Ryan Blvd. To date, the contractor has completed work at 803 properties totaling 612,700 square feet of grading and sodding. This completes the 2020 work program. Work on the swale regrading program with JRL Underground Inc. will resume after Oct. 1 and funding is available in FY 2021.
- **Harborwalk (Gilchrist Gazebo to Berry St.)** - Irrigation and landscaping are approximately 98% complete. Work continues to install decorative light poles and bollards. Grading and sod placement also continues. Concrete removal and replacement is occurring on a couple of deficient areas. The project is scheduled to complete this fall. Pedestrians and cyclists are restricted from the work area during construction.



- **FDOT - US 41 Carmalita Street to Marion Ave. within City of Punta Gorda** - The Florida Department of Transportation's contractor, Highway Safety Devices, continues work to install new signals on US 41 from Carmalita St. to Marion Ave. The construction will take place Monday through Friday during daytime and nighttime/overnight hours, weather permitting. Lane closures may occur during daytime hours from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. For complete details, contact information and map <http://www.ci.punta-gorda.fl.us/government/public-works/engineering>.

- **ADA Improvements City Hall Annex** - Staff has signed the Award Memorandum. Pre-construction meeting will be forthcoming.
- **Cooper Street Recreation Center** – The ADA sidewalk connections between the Recreation center, tennis court, pavilion and basketball courts are complete. Backfill and grading was substantially completed and sod installation is scheduled to be completed this week.
- **Sullivan Street Renovation to Historic Bricks** - The Purchase Order has been issued to the selected contractor. A Pre-Construction Meeting has been scheduled. Work is scheduled to start mid-Sept. through Nov. 2020. A Media Advisory will be prepared prior to the closure of Sullivan St. between Retta Esplanade and Olympia Avenues.

Police Department

- **Community Presentation and Discussion** – The Punta Gorda Police Department has partnered with the NAACP to bring the training course The Cost of Bias and its Impact on Policing/Community to our officers. This training will be conducted by Dr. David Thomas, a professor at Florida Gulf Coast University and renowned author of The State of American Policing: Ethics, Implicit Bias, and Credibility. As part of this process Dr. Thomas will be conducting a community presentation and discussion prior to the officer training in order to answer questions community members have regarding why officers use force, officer and agency accountability, biased policing, internal affairs complaints, and police/minority relations and how these issues relate to the Punta Gorda Police Department and our community. The community presentation and discussion will be held at the Charlotte Harbor Event and Conference Center on Sept. 9 from 6 p.m. until 8 p.m. Due to social distancing requirements seating will be limited, the event will be open only to Charlotte County residents, and advanced tickets are required for admission. Tickets will be available at no cost starting by visiting www.eventbrite.com and will be provided on a first come, first serve basis. This training is being provided through the George and Mary Chapoutot Trust / Punta Gorda Police Department Endowment Fund in cooperation with the Charlotte Community Foundation and Charlotte State Bank. Register for this event at <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/the-cost-of-bias-and-its-impact-on-policingcommunity-tickets-115345804406?aff=ebdssbdestsearch>



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- **Police Officer Testing** – The Punta Gorda Police Dept. is currently accepting applications for the position of Police Officer. Testing will be held on Jan. 11 with oral board interviews scheduled on Jan. 12 and Jan. 13. Currently we are only accepting applications from candidates who are currently certified, Equivalency of Training (EOT) eligible, or law enforcement academy students.
- **Public Safety Dispatcher Testing** – The Punta Gorda Police Department is currently accepting applications for the position of Public Safety Dispatcher.



Testing will be held on Sept. 21.

- **Internship Program** – The police department is currently accepting internship applications for the Spring Semester of 2021. Our internship program is open to college students and high school seniors interested in gaining educational experience in law enforcement, criminal justice, and small government administration. To apply for any of these positions or for more information please visit www.pgdjobs.com (941) 575-5571 or employeedevelopment@pgorda.us for additional information or to have an application package sent.

Fire Department

- **Search and Rescue Training** – The fire department performed search and rescue training this week for the departments newest employee. The training focused on search patterns while trying to find different objects while blind folded which simulates a zero visibility atmosphere. This exercise helps to prepare firefighters to perform primary and secondary searches of a residence or business where occupants may still be trapped inside.



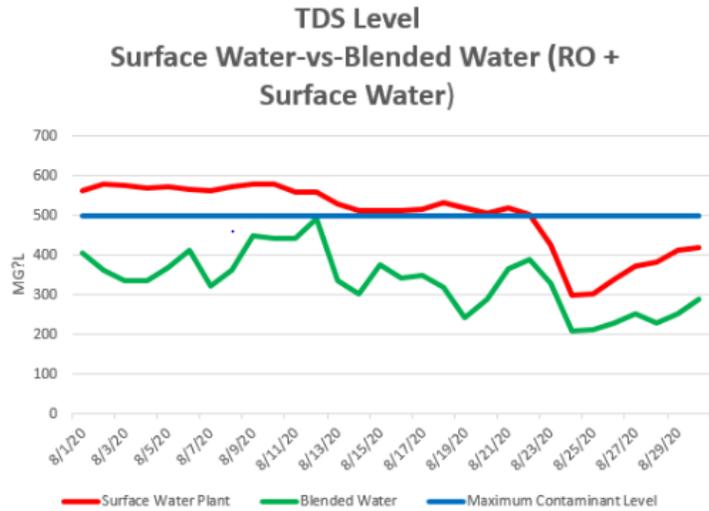
Utilities Department

Utilities Administration

- The City flushes fire hydrants throughout the service area when required for the following:
 - Routine maintenance and testing
 - Adhere to strict regulations from regulatory agencies.
 - Help find weaknesses in the water system
 - Improvement of water quality
 - Taste and Odor issues
 - Water Sampling

The time involved in flushing can vary from a few minutes to several hours depending on the circumstances.

- **Ground Water RO Update** – Several weeks ago on July 24, (after just starting up the new RO plant in late June) hardness was at 188 parts per million, then 88 on Aug. 24. This week, Sept. 3 hardness is at 86 ppm. Total Dissolved Solids (TDS) on those same dates was 396, 210, and now is at 246. While the numbers fluctuate with prevailing conditions, staff will continue to optimize the system as we move forward.



Water Treatment Plant Operations

- 46.1 MG delivered to the distribution system with a 6.6 MG daily average
- Peace River Manasota Regional Water Supply Authority Emergency Interconnect – Sending water at a rate of two million gallons per day, started July 13.
- Rainfall in Aug. 2019 8.26” Aug. 2020 7.00” Sept. 2019 0.08”, Sept. 2020 0.00”
- Hardness is a measurement of calcium and magnesium ions naturally occurring in the raw water. Current Condition “hard” – Grains of Hardness 5 ppm – Total hardness 86 ppm
- TDS for Sept. 3 – Current 246 ppm, Low 199 ppm, High 407 ppm, 12 Year Avg. 296 ppm
- Reservoir Sept. 3 – Current 5.56’, Record Low 5.08’, Record High 7.53’, 55 Year Avg. 5.65’

City Clerk

Current Board and Committee Vacancies ([Volunteer Appointment Information Form](#))

- **Board of Zoning Appeals** – (One alternate) Meets the 4th Tuesday at 4 p.m. in City Council Chambers. City residency required. Seven member board with two alternate members. Three year terms - maximum of three terms. Financial disclosure required. Makes recommendations to City Council on variances to City Code.
- **Building Board** – (One alternate) Meets the 4th Tuesday at 9 a.m. in City Council Chambers – City residency not required. Seven member board with two alternate members. Three year terms – maximum of three terms. Four members must be involved with the building industry and three members must be consumer advocates who are not, nor ever have been, involved with building industry. Makes recommendations to City Council on the minimum qualifying requirements for obtaining Certificates of Competency in the various construction trades and the fees for same. Periodically reviews and holds public hearings on all building, electrical, plumbing, housing, gas, fire prevention and other related codes. Reviews enforcement of all codes relating to construction standards and acts as condemnation board in matters of violation of minimum standards. Hears alleged complaints against contractors.

New Businesses

- All persons, firms or corporations engaging in business or occupation within the City of Punta Gorda are required to obtain a Local Business Tax (LBT) Receipt in accordance with Chapter 12 of the Punta Gorda City Code. As part of our effort to promote economic development and vitality in our area, we offer the following list of new or transferred business within our community this week:
 - Peoples Choice Storage Punta Gorda, 150 Rio Villa Drive