

WEEKLY HIGHLIGHTS REPORT

AUGUST 7, 2020

City Manager

- **FY2021 Budget Message** – The City’s annual budget addresses financial policies, operational revenues and expenditures, capital improvements projects and serves as a communications device to inform the community about service delivery, economic trends and departmental priorities. This is my sixteenth and final opportunity as City Manager to present residents of Punta Gorda the annual financial plan. Gregory Murray will be assuming sole manager responsibility as of October 2020. I have appreciated the opportunity to serve you and this wonderful community since April 2005. Even in the midst of COVID-19 related economic uncertainty, we continue to make great strides in our service delivery and planning for the future. Some facts to consider as you peruse the annual budget:
 - The Charlotte County Property Appraiser reported that taxable property values increased Citywide by 4.6%, which is the eighth straight year of increasing property values, reversing a previous trend of six straight decreases in overall value.
 - The Community Redevelopment Area (CRA) experienced an 8.9% increase from previous year property values, the sixth straight year of value increases.
 - Increased value from new construction, annexations and other adjustments in the City is \$46.8 million, down from \$54.2 million the previous year.
 - The proposed FY 2021 budget, net of transfers to other funds, ending reserves and internal service funds, is \$75,302,289 is an increase of \$1,661,042 or 2.3% more than FY 2020.
 - The proposed FY 2021 General Fund portion of the budget, net of ending reserve and a \$7.8 million transfer for a line of credit draw for the PGI Canal Maintenance Fund, totals \$24.0 million, which is \$1.0 million or 4.3% more than the original FY 2020 budget. The cumulative increase in the general fund since FY 2008 is 17.0%, which averages to an approximate 1.3% increase per year.
 - State revenue projections for various taxes show decreases of 5-20% for FY 2021. These include such items as gas taxes, communications taxes, local government taxes, and state revenue sharing. The projected decreases are due to adverse fiscal impacts on the economy stemming from COVID-19.
 - The proposed millage rate is 3.4337, same as prior year. The City’s portion of a residential tax bill, excluding non-ad valorem assessments, is generally 20% or less. The majority of ad-valorem taxes paid are for services provided to Charlotte County government and Charlotte County School system.
 - Incorporated in the overall budget is a proposed 4% merit increase for non-bargaining unit employees and increases per contracts for bargaining unit employees. There are 292 employees within the City organization, and this equates to a ratio of 1.4 employees per 100 population, down from a 1.7 ratio in 2008.

- To assist residents of Punta Gorda in measuring our performance, City Council approves an annual Strategic Plan. Action items to be undertaken during FY 2021 as part of the five strategic priority areas identified in the Plan are incorporated into the annual budget and the City’s five-year capital improvements program.
- The change in Consumer Price Index (CPI) as reflected in the State “Save Our Homes” Legislation is 2.3%. This means that no matter how high the market value of a homestead property increases, the assessed value can only rise 2.3%.
- Water and sewer rates reflected in the budget remain unchanged pending results of a utility rate study to be presented to City Council on Aug. 26. If rate increases are recommended, they can be enacted during FY 2021 after public hearings.
- Previous weekly reports highlighted proposed increases to sanitation and lot mowing fees as well as reductions in both Punta Gorda Isles and Burnt Store Isles canal maintenance assessments.

The worldwide coronavirus pandemic has led to definite short-term changes in the economy with the possibility for more long-term economic impacts. Forecasts by national economists show a wide range in how quickly the economy will recover. All level of government agencies, as well as our local community, are facing the challenge of the ability to forecast, plan for, and provide services that meet public needs in these unprecedented times. Along with these challenges comes the additional necessity of prudent and sensible funding for needed services for our City. This proposed budget carefully balances conservative revenue projections and available resources to continue moving the community along the path to an excellent quality of life at a reasonable level of cost. You can review the entire budget message on the City’s website www.cityofpuntagordafl.com by clicking on Latest News.

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 (Magdalena Drive, Via Vento, W Henry Street, Appian Drive, and Columbian Drive).
 - PGI Bird Section (Almar Drive, Albatross drive, Whippoowill Blvd, and Turtle Dove Blvd).

Urban Design

- **Agripreneur Garden** – Summer gardening continues at the Agripreneur Garden on Virginia. Watermelons seem to be growing well in this heat.



- **Parks and Recreation Masterplan** – The City is currently in the process of updating the 2009 Parks and Recreation Master Plan the plan is a requirement under the Recreation and Open Space Element of the City’s Comprehensive Plan. The update will review the City’s current and future delivery of recreation services as it relates to the City’s growing population and as a vital component of the continued economic sustainability of the City. As part of the review, the Urban Design Department has released a [Parks and Recreation Master Plan General Survey](#). The 30 question survey that takes approximately nine minutes (or less) to complete and we are encouraging everyone to let their voices be heard!
- **Comprehensive Plan Elements Update Future Land Use Element Terms and Terminology** – Planning and zoning can be highly confusing and complex; however, the underlying concepts are fairly simple. A governing body (the City) enacts laws to create districts within its jurisdiction and regulations to govern the uses and structures inside those districts. The creation of these districts and regulations are designed to serve the jurisdiction’s general welfare by promoting growth and development in accordance with the body’s planning policies. To accomplish this, the City regulates the types of uses permitted, the design or layout of developments, and the design of structures within each district. While the concept is straightforward, the terms used in the planning and zoning to describe the uses and types of buildings permitted numerous.



The Planning Corner



Land Use

The land use is how land is being used by different kinds of activities (for example, residential or commercial). It also lays out a plan for the future, showing how land will be used for different activities. The land use component of a plan not only looks into what areas of the community are most suitable for future development or need to be conserved, but also helps a community establish zoning codes and other land use regulations to guide future development.

The most common type of land use include:

- **Residential** use is any land on which the primary use is dwelling units. This category is further broken down into subcategories representing the primary dwelling types. Examples Single Family, Mobile Home, and Multi-Family.
- **Commercial** use is any land on which the primary use is commercial uses including office and retail.
- **Mixed Use** is any land on which a variety of commercial and residential uses can occur in a coherent often walkable way, like in a historic downtown or neighborhood.
- **Industrial** use is any land on which the primary use is industrial in nature including manufacturing facilities, warehouses, or open storage.
- **Recreational** use is any land on which the primary use is recreational in nature. It is further broken down into Public use - land held by federal, state or local government and Private use for which land is developed for recreational use
- **Vacant Land** use is any land not containing an existing structure but is otherwise developable.

Density

The amount of development per acre permitted on a parcel under the applicable zoning. Density may be defined by ratios such as the number of units per given area of land. Existing City density types include:

- **Low-Density** permits residential structures other than mobile homes at densities up to 5.0 units per acre.
- **Medium Density** permits residential structures other than mobile homes at densities up to 10.0 units per acre.
- **High Density** permits residential structures other than mobile homes at densities up to 15.0 units per acre.
- **Mobile Home** permits residential structures and mobile homes at densities of up to 6.0 units per acre.

These existing density types are a legacy of the joint City-County Comprehensive Plan first created in the 1980's. These density types did not really account for existing development within the downtown and traditional neighborhoods of Punta Gorda.

Mixed-Use Development

A type of development that residential, commercial, cultural, institutional and entertainment uses; especially where those functions are physically and functionally integrated in a way that provides pedestrian connections. While there are many forms of mixed-use development, it can be categorized three ways:

- Vertical Mixed-Use Development combines different uses within the same building.
- Horizontal Mixed-Use Development consist of single-use buildings on a parcel
- Mixed-Use Walkable Areas combines both vertical and horizontal mix uses in an area, usually within walking distance to core activities.

Currently the City offers four (4) mixed use land use categories that permit horizontally and vertically mixed-uses of both commercial intensity and residential density:

- **Urban Village** traditional commercial core of the City permits residential density up to 3.5 units per acre.
- **Highway Commercial Corridor** allow residential density in areas where residential uses will promote affordable housing or compact and contiguous development at densities up to 3.5 units per acre.
- **Professional Office Lands** primarily intended for office, professional, medical and institutional uses permits residential density up to 3.5 units per acre.
- **Light Industrial Lands** are intended for activities predominantly connected with manufacturing, assembly, processing, distribution, or storage of material goods. Residential uses may be permitted where found to be compatible.



Site Area:	12 acres
Net Area:	8 acres (less roads)
Units:	240 units
Density:	$240 \text{ units} / 8 \text{ acres} =$ 30 du/ac

Public Works

Canal Maintenance

- **Seawall Replacement Projects** - The seawall replacement contractor has completed 24 seawall replacement projects in PGI and there are 11 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 17 locations.
 - Crews performed 8 seawall cap and seam patches (76' linear ft.).
 - The Burnt Store Isles lock and Sancho Panza Point was mowed and trees were trimmed.
 - Staff performed a sonar reading for the Bass and Snook Inlet to determine if maintenance dredging is required.

Engineering

- **City wide Drainage Swale regrading** – During the week of August 3, work is complete between 403-408 W. Ann St. To date the contractor has completed work at 788 properties totaling 599,200 square feet of grading and sodding. Work next week will include locations along Colony Point Dr. and Rio Largo Ct.
- **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>.
- **Harborwalk (Gilchrist Gazebo to Berry St.)** - Concrete work is near completion. Pipe and drainage structures are complete. The retention pond construction has commenced. Irrigation and electrical work continues. Tree trimming is complete. Grade and site work continues. Landscape trees and materials have begun to be received, planted and watered. Pedestrians and cyclists are restricted from the work area during construction.

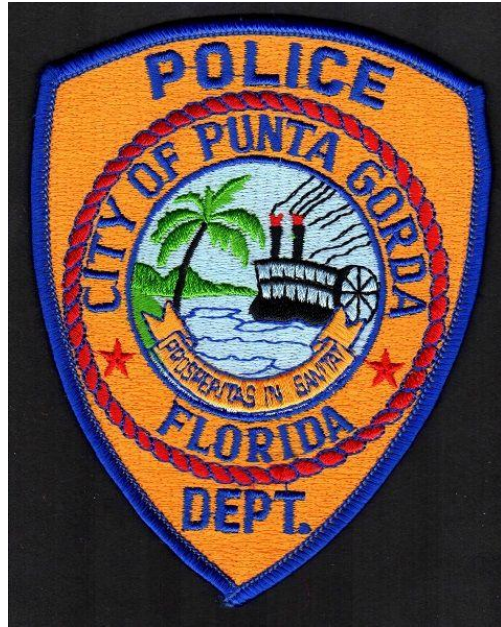


Right-of-Way

- **Curb Painting** - City crews have been painting curbs yellow along W. Olympia Ave. from Goldstein St. to Berry St. in areas which are within 30' ft. of a stop sign. The yellow paint is used to prevent motor vehicles from parking within 30' ft. of a stop sign.

Police Department

- **Uniform Crime Report** – Upon reviewing the comprehensive 2019 UCR data for the City of Punta Gorda, highlights of the report include:
 - Punta Gorda’s overall crime rate decreased 15.3%.
 - When compared to municipal police departments throughout Florida with a service population between 15,000 and 20,000, Punta Gorda was ranked fifth in overall crime rate, even with the largest population of these twenty-two (22) agencies.
 - Among the eleven municipal law enforcement agencies in the Southwest Florida region (regardless of size or population), the crime rate in Punta Gorda ranks sixth behind Marco Island, Sanibel, Cape Coral, Venice, and North Port.
 - Punta Gorda experienced an increase in violent crimes. There were eleven (11) violent crimes in 2018 compared to eighteen (18) violent crimes in 2019. It should be noted that there had been sixteen (16) violent crimes in 2017.
 - Non-violent crime decreased 15.8% in 2019 with 278 non-violent crimes reported, as compared to 330 in 2018.
 - No forcible sex offense were reported in 2019.
 - No murders occurred in 2019.
 - Total Arrests decreased with 426 in 2019 compared to 644 in 2018.
 - DUI Arrests increased from fifty-nine (59) in 2018 to sixty-five (65) in 2019.
 - Drug Arrests decreased substantially from 295 in 2018 to 152 in 2019. This decrease can primarily be attributed to changes in the law regarding marijuana and hemp possession.
 - Domestic violence offenses decreased. In 2018 there were thirty-six (36) domestic violence offenses reported and forty-two (42) arrests made. In 2019 there were twenty-eight (28) domestic violence offences reported and twenty-two (22) arrests made.
- **Punta Gorda Police Department and Social Justice** – In response to the concerns that have been brought forth over the past several weeks by various organizations, the Punta Gorda Police Department has created an article to summarize the answers to important questions. Please click on the link to read the article <https://wp.me/pbaAFE-wQ>.
- **Police Officer Testing** – The Punta Gorda Police Dept. is currently accepting applications for the position of Police Officer. Testing will be held on Sept. 14 with oral board interviews scheduled on Sept. 15 and Sept. 16.
- **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 Set. 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.pgjobs.com (941) 575-5571 or employeevelopment@pgorda.us for additional information or to have an application package sent.



- **Detective Lieutenant Terry Cochran Award** – Detective Lieutenant Terry Cochran received the 20th Judicial Circuit State Attorney’s Office Officer of the Quarter award, which was presented to him by State Attorney Amira Fox and Deputy Chief Assistant State Attorney Shannon Doolity.



Fire Department

Severe Weather Safety Tips

- Develop a disaster plan for you and your family for home, work, school, and when outdoors www.redcross.org has more planning tips on how to put together disaster supply kits.
- Identify a safe place to take shelter or to evacuate.
- Keep a highway map with you in the event you must evacuate, and cell service fails.
- Have a NOAA Weather Radio All Hazards receiver unit with a warning alarm tone and extra batteries for back-up to receive warning bulletins.
- Know the county you live in or visit and what part you are located in. Also know your zone and know what that means. Click link and type in your address for Charlotte County residents to find your zone. <https://www.charlottecountyfl.gov/services/emergencymgmt/Pages/Know-Your-Zone.aspx>.
- Watch for signs of approaching storms.
- If severe weather threatens, check on people who are elderly, very young, or disabled. Don't forget about pets and farm animals.



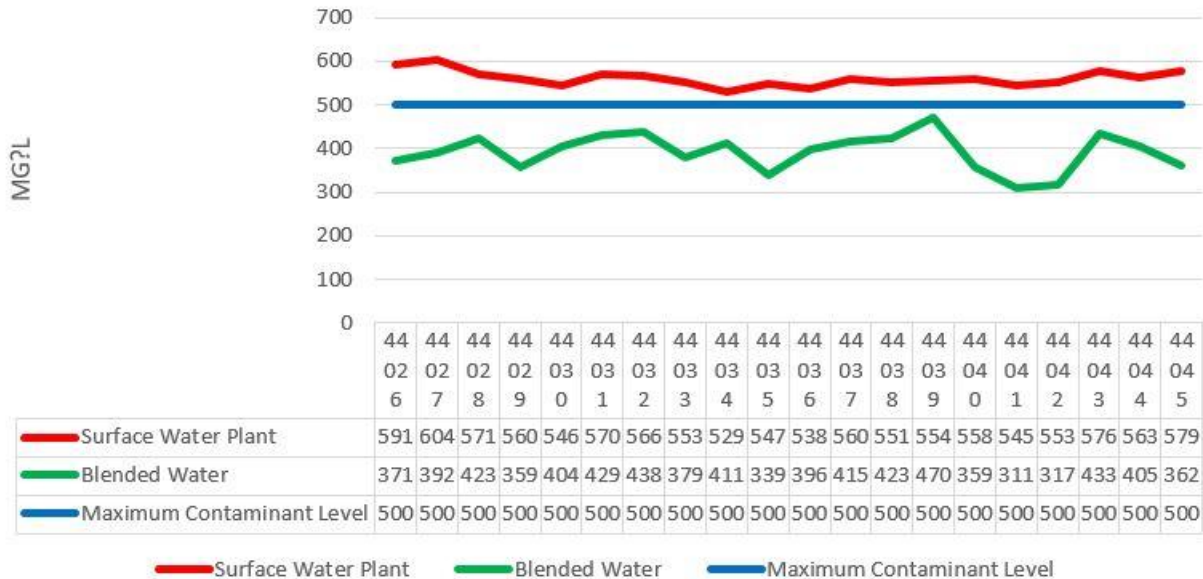
The following sites will also provide further safety related tips for specific types of weather events: Tornado - <http://www.spc.noaa.gov/faq/tornado/index.html>
Lightening - <http://www.lightningsafety.noaa.gov>
Hurricane Storm Surge - https://www.weather.gov/media/owlie/surge_intro.pdf

Utilities Department

Utilities Administration

- **Ground Water RO Update**

**TDS Level
Surface Water-vs-Blended Water (RO + Surface
Water)**



500 is the maximum contaminant level allowable by law.

Water Treatment Plant Operations

- 48.2 MG delivered to the distribution system with a 6.9 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 July 2019 9.20” July 2020 2.40” Aug. 2019 8.26” Aug. .10”
- Hardness is a measurement of calcium and magnesium ions naturally occurring in the raw water. Current Condition “hard” – Grains of Hardness 8 ppm – Total hardness 137 ppm
- TDS for Aug. 6 – Current 413 ppm, Low 264 ppm, High 465 ppm, 12 Year Avg. 370 ppm
- Reservoir Aug. 6 – Current 5.29’, Record Low 5.08’, Record High 6.24’, 55 Year Avg. 5.51’

Waste Water Treatment Plant

- **New Force Main** – Team members traced the entire length of the new force main with assistance from the utilities engineering dept. and collections dept. after one of the Plant’s Operators noticed a divergence in the meter readings from the Booster Pumping Facility when compared to the Plant’s influent meter. A leak was discovered at one of the air relieve valves along the force main. The force main was isolated and the collections dept. made the repair. After repairs were made, plant staff tried to re-open the 20” isolation valves on the force main. One of the valve actuators broke and was unable to be opened. Again collections dept. excavated the valve and made the repairs to the actuator. The new force main has been returned to service.

City Clerk

Business Tax Receipt Renewal Notices

On Aug. 3 the City Clerk's Office emailed Business Tax Receipt Renewal Notices to all City businesses for the upcoming 2020/2021 Fiscal Year. Payment can be made using a credit over the phone by calling (941) 575-3369 or by check mailed to 326 West Marion Avenue, Punta Gorda FL 33950. Deadline for payment submission is Sept. 30. If your business is currently active but did not receive a Renewal Notice, please contact the City Clerk's office.

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 consumer advocate) 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:
 - The Beauty Boutique LLC, 1105 Taylor Road, Studio 8
 - The Suites at Fisherman's Village, 1200 W Retta Esplanade