

WEEKLY HIGHLIGHTS REPORT SEPTEMBER 18, 2020

City Manager

The new Reverse Osmosis (RO) plant has been providing Punta Gorda water utility customers with blended water from Shell Creek for approximately two months now. One of the benefits of the RO plant is a reduction in hardness levels, but the RO plant provides several multi-faceted primary benefits other than just hardness levels.

- It allows the City to meet not only all primary but also secondary water quality standards of total dissolved solids (TDS) as stipulated by the Florida Department of Environmental Protection.
- The RO plant provides the City with a totally redundant water supply for its customers – Shell Creek surface water and RO Plant groundwater. If there is a problem with one of the supply sources – storm, contamination, etc., then the other source can provide the necessary supply until the problem can be rectified.
- The RO Plant serves as a regional benefit, because it can help supply water to the four counties making up the Peace River Manasota Regional Water Authority through an interconnect, and thereby enabling us to obtain 50% grant funding through the Southwest Florida Water Management District. That certainly impacted our customers in a positive manner.
- Given a cost benefit analysis study from Carollo Engineers, the RO Plant was rated as the most preferred approach as opposed to an offline reservoir.
- The plant building was created at a size large enough to ultimately produce 8 mgd will, when coupled with the City's Shell Creek surface water plant, be able to supply potable water to our utility service area at full build out. A very important factor in future planning.

In addition, and on a secondary basis through the blending of RO water with surface water at an acceptable TDS level, we may see a greater reduction in hardness delivered at the customer's premises. However, that is going to be somewhat a matter of personal preference since softeners can treat water to a level of hardness we will not achieve. 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. On, Sept. 3 hardness was 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.

The blending process was started in late June, and as such staff is working to get acclimated to the nuances of working with both plants, and analyzing the impact of blending levels on plant and distribution system operations. Optimum performance has yet to be finalized, but our goal is to provide the highest quality of water that we are reasonably able to generate for our customer base. You will continue to see more information in the updates provided by the City.

- **City Council Meeting** – City Council will meet on Sept. 23 at 9 a.m. at Historic City Hall. Items of interest include;
 - ✓ A public hearing regarding to changes to Chapter 6 of the Punta Gorda Code, relating to the use of waterways, operation of vessels, construction within waterways, seawalls and canal maintenance to provide clarity and update outdated provisions. A presentation regarding the changes will also be provided at the meeting.
 - ✓ Discussion regarding security cameras in the canal system. Should such an initiative move forward, matters to be addressed will include: enforcement issues and expectations of community, targeted location(s) or canal system wide, selection of a camera system and required infrastructure, if any, placement and security of equipment (public or private property), program administration, costs (implementation, maintenance, etc.) and funding source.
 - ✓ Resolution extending the sunset date of Emergency Ordinance 1944-2020 which requires facial coverings in response to the COVID-19 public health emergency.
 - ✓ The Punta Gorda Police Department is requesting the approval and installation of a new traffic sign on Cooper Street (north) at E. McKenzie Street. The purpose of this sign is to regulate the traffic flow to alleviate congestion due to traffic that backs up during the morning drop off and afternoon pickup times. Additionally this will improve safety for motorists and pedestrians walking to school. The ordinance will prohibit a left turn from Cooper Street north onto E. McKenzie Street from 7:45 a.m. to 8:15 a.m. (student drop off), and 2:45 p.m. to 3:15 p.m. (student pickup).
- **Budget Public Hearing** – The final public hearing on the FY 2021 Annual Budget will be Sept. 23 at 5:01 p.m. at Historic City Hall. City Council will adopt the millage rate (proposed at 3.4337 mills which is the same as the previous year) and overall budget.

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 in 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).

Urban Design

- **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. We greatly appreciate the input!

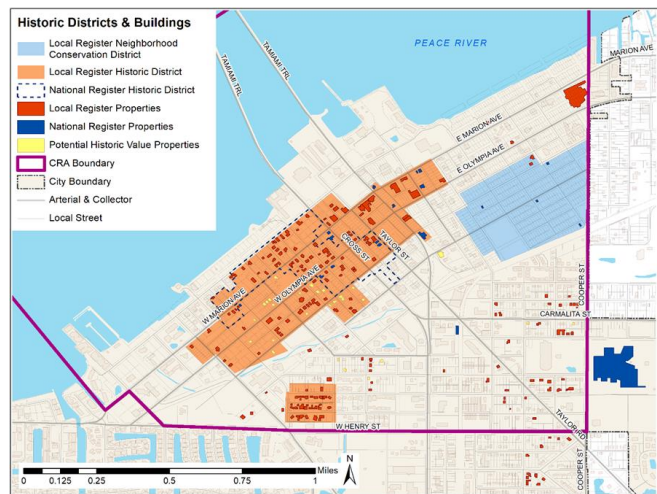
- **National Flood Insurance Program** – The Department of Homeland Security, Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), has determined that the City of Punta Gorda will retain its current rating as a Class five in the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) Community Rating System (CRS). The floodplain management activities implemented by the City of Punta Gorda qualify it for a 25 percent discount on flood insurance premiums for NFIP policies issued or renewed in Special Flood Hazard Areas on or after Oct. 1. This savings is a tangible result of the flood mitigation activities your community implements to protect lives and reduce property damage.
- **The Planning Corner Comprehensive Plan Elements Update** – 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 & environmental resilience
 - **Housing** – Population demographics & housing needs
 - **Transportation** - Safer streets for everyone
 - **Historic** - Preservation of built legacy



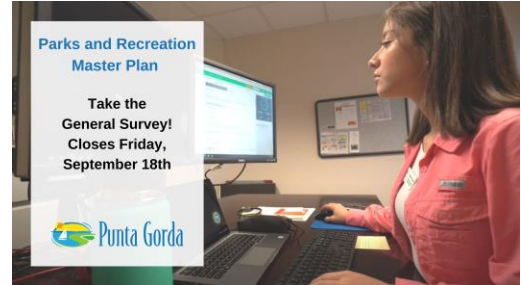
Next week the first drafts of the Coastal Management, Housing, and Historic Elements will be published online to the [Plan Punta Gorda](#) and [City of Punta Gorda](#) websites. This publication will provide the opportunity for the public to read the proposed documents and provide direct input in advance of the presentation of these drafts to Planning Commission and City Council.

Over the last two weeks explanations of the Coastal Management and Housing Elements were featured in the Planning Corner. This week’s feature is the [Historic Element](#) which provides a brief overview of the rich and unique history of the Punta Gorda. This element also provides an overview of the City’s historic resources, area partners, and provides goals, objectives, and policies to guide the City’s preservation efforts.

The update to the Historic Element draws on the work of a Historical Resources Survey update conducted in the mid-2010s. This survey looked at structures citywide that were constructed prior to 1965. This master list of “old stuff” was winnowed down into a proposed Local Register of Historic Places. This proposed local register has been on hold since 2018, pending the results of the [Citywide Master Plan](#). The Master Plan recommended proceeding with the Comprehensive Plan and Land Development Regulations changes necessary to implement a Local Register of Historic Places and update the City’s regulatory Historic Districts to reflect the need to protect identified clusters of historic properties. The map illustrates these properties and proposed districts.



- **The Parks and Recreation Master Plan** – General Survey closes TODAY, Sept. 18! If you haven't done so already, head on over and take the survey before it is too late! To take the general survey, please visit <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/LTXP5X6>. Thank you to everyone who has taken part in the survey. Your input is appreciated as it will help shape the update! For more information on the Parks and Recreation Master Plan, please visit <http://www.ci.punta-gorda.fl.us/visitors/punta-gorda-pathways/park-recreation-master-plan>



Public Works

Canal Maintenance

- **Dredging Bass and Snook Inlets** – Dredging is completed and the staging sight at the easterly end of Elizabeth Park has been restored. This project has been completed.
- **Seawall Replacement Projects** - The seawall replacement contractor has completed 35 seawall replacement projects in PGI and six seawall replacement projects in BSI. The FY 2019/2020 Seawall Replacement Work Program has been completed.
- **FY 2020/2021 Seawall Replacement Program** – The list of properties scheduled to have their seawalls replaced in fiscal year 2020/2021 has been posted to the Canal Maintenance Website. Notices have already been sent to residents that will have work performed on their seawalls starting in Oct. 2020. Residents can expect to receive a notice in the mail approximately six weeks prior to construction. It is highly recommended that property owners contact the contractor to discuss how to prepare the property for construction. Contact information is provided in the notice.
 - As we begin the next Seawall Replacement Work Program, property owners may be curious about the process and what to expect. There is a series of informational videos on the Public Works - Canal Maintenance website <http://www.ci.punta-gorda.fl.us/government/public-works/canal-maintenance/canal-maintenance-video-series> that will inform you “How to prepare your Property for Seawall Replacement”; “Seawall Replacement Process”; and “Manufacturing of Seawall Panels”. If you have any questions or concerns please contact Cathy Miller, Canal Maintenance Supervisor at 941-575-5050.
 - Crews filled depressions at 28 locations.
 - Crews performed three seawall cap and seam patches (44’ linear ft.).
 - Staff removed a palm tree from the canal and replaced dock boards at Ponce De Leon Park.

Engineering

- **Sullivan Street Renovation to Historic Bricks** - Construction has commenced with milling and removal of the asphalt and unsuitable material to a depth of 11.5". Pending is the placement of base rock the full length of the street to meet compaction density, curb removal and replacement. The Sullivan Street renovation will require this section to be closed to all traffic until Nov. 2020. Travelers are requested to use extreme caution while workers are present in the right of way and allow additional time for travel while work is performed. Temporary delays are to be anticipated.



- **Cooper Street Recreation Center** – The work to install ADA compliant sidewalk connections between the Recreation center, tennis court, pavilion and basketball courts is complete. Installation of the new picnic table, benches and grills will be completed by City staff over the next one to two weeks.
- **Harborwalk (Gilchrist Gazebo to Berry St.)** - Electrical work continues with installation of decorative light poles and bollards. Coordination with FPL is occurring. Grading and sod placement will be scheduled upon completion of the electrical work. The site furniture is installed. Minor concrete repair will be scheduled near the end of the project 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>.
- **Shreve St. MURT Lighting** - Staff has staked out locations of 60 bollard lights and 11 decorator lights along the Shreve St. MURT. Staff has met with concrete and electrical contractors to coordinate work elements of the project between History Park and the Airport/Pompano intersection.
- **ADA Improvements City Hall Annex** – Construction has commenced.

Parks and Grounds

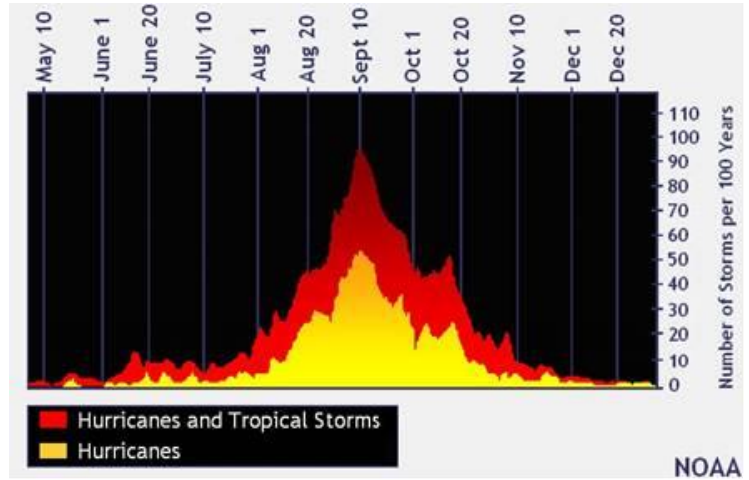
- **Gilchrist Park Pickleball Courts, Gilchrist Park Basketball Courts and Cooper Street Recreational Center Tennis Courts Closed for Resurfacing** – Starting Sept. 18 and continuing for approximately one week the Gilchrist Park Pickleball Courts, Gilchrist Park Basketball Courts and Cooper Street Recreational Center Tennis Courts will be closed for resurfacing. There is to be no play at any times during the closures. A media release will be issued when the courts reopen.

Police Department

- **Vehicle Burglaries** – Did you know that nearly every vehicle burglary that occurred in Punta Gorda in the last year involved an unlocked vehicle? Most criminals that come into our city to commit vehicle burglaries ignore locked vehicles. The best way you can avoid becoming a victim is to make sure your vehicle doors are locked and valuables are removed from your vehicle.
- **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 Jan. 19.
- **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.

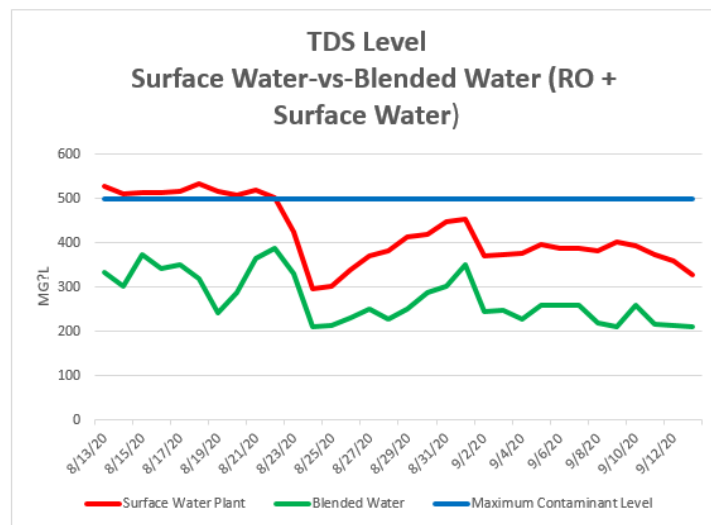
Fire Department

- **Tropics Update** – As the panhandle continues to realize the impact from Hurricane Sally the tropics continue to be extremely active. Tropical depression 22 in the western Gulf of Mexico looks to become the next named storm. The graph, at right, depicts the historical activity level during hurricane season. Though we are past the statistical height of hurricane season, we cannot let our guard down. Since 1851 Florida has had more landfalling tropical storms or hurricanes in the month of October than any other month.



Utilities Department

Ground Water RO Update – Maximum total dissolved solids (TDS) allowable is 500 without a waiver.



Water Treatment Plant Operations

- 41.6 MG delivered to the distribution system with a 5.9 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 Sept. 2019 0.08” Sept. 2020 4.10”
- Hardness is a measurement of calcium and magnesium ions naturally occurring in the raw water. Current Condition “slightly hard” – Grains of Hardness 5 ppm – Total hardness 86 ppm
- TDS for Sept. 17 – Current 306 ppm, Low 171 ppm, High 372 ppm, 12 Year Avg. 298 ppm
- Reservoir Sept. 17 – Current 5.80’, Record Low 5.10’, Record High 7.18’, 55 Year Avg. 5.63’

City Clerk

- **Business Tax Receipt Renewal Deadline Approaching** – Business Tax Receipt Renewal Notices have been emailed to all City businesses for the upcoming 2020/2021 Fiscal Year. Sept. 30 is the last day payment can be made without a late penalty. Payment can be made over the phone with a credit card by calling (941) 575-3369 or by mailing a check to 326 West Marion Avenue, Punta Gorda FL 33950. If your business is currently active but did not receive a Renewal Notice, please contact the City Clerk's office at pturner@cityofpuntagordafl.us. If your business is no longer operating in the City, please let us know so that we can inactivate your tax receipt.

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

- **Board of Zoning Appeals** – (Two alternates) 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.
- **Code Enforcement Board** – Meets the 4th Wednesday at 9 a.m. in City Council Chambers. Must be City resident. Seven member board with two alternate members. Three year terms – maximum of three terms. Hears and decides alleged violations of the City Code of Ordinances.
- **General Employees Pension Board** – Meets quarterly and as called in Council Chambers. Five members – two City residents, two general employees and one at-large as appointed by the Board. Four year terms – no maximum. Financial disclosure required. Charged with management of the General Employees' Pension Fund.

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:
 - Karen Morales, 1105 Taylor Road, Studio 6
 - PGI Market, 1133 Bal Harbor Blvd, #1153
 - Punta Gorda Mercantile, 117 W Marion Avenue