



Florida's Harborside Hometown

WEEKLY HIGHLIGHTS REPORT OCTOBER 30, 2020

City Manager

Now that I am finding time to enjoy the community in which I live and work, I am getting very familiar with the amenities that the Punta Gorda has to offer residents and visitors. I am understanding even more from personal experience what a special place this is to be. It sounds cliché but there really is something for everyone to enjoy. I'd like to invite all of you to take the time to be a tourist in your own back yard.



I'll start at the natural draw to the area...the water. As I've mentioned previously, one of the strongest pulls that brought me to the City of Punta Gorda was the water. From actively enjoying a harbor cruise, taking part in a charter fishing trip or renting a boat to do a little exploring on your own, the water offers opportunities to view the over 600 species of birds, fish, and marine wildlife Charlotte Harbor supports. Ponce de Leon Park offers a free public boat landing and kayak launch to access the estuaries, mangrove wetlands, and river, and is the current home to the Peace River Wildlife Center. Laishley Park and Gilchrist Park offer benches and piers to allow for enjoyment of the waterfront, and of course the beautiful recently opened Harborwalk.

If you are a land lubber there is plenty of opportunity for you as well. Punta Gorda offers a network of pedestrian sidewalks links in historic neighborhoods and parks that connect those taking leisurely strolls or jogging with easy access to downtown attractions and the vibrant city center. There are over 18 miles of groomed paths and pet-friendly walking trails in and around the city. Consider bringing your dog to visit Hounds on Henry where they will find a furry friend to visit with and you just might make a friend too. Tennis, basketball, and pickleball courts are featured in Gilchrist Park. Tennis and basketball courts can also be accessed at the Cooper Street Recreation Center as well.

Outdoor shopping and entertainment opportunities are also in abundance here in the city. The Saturday Punta Gorda Farmers Market features fresh fruits, vegetables, fish, meats and other treats to enjoy while listening to live music. On Sunday, the History Park Farmers Market offers another opportunity to purchase fresh local foods. Fishermen's Village and the Downtown Merchants offer stores that you will want to linger in. Also, take the time to find all of the Punta Gorda Historic Mural Society murals featuring the people, places and wildlife that made the community what it is today. Stop by the Military Heritage Museum and Veterans' Park to reflect on the sacrifices so many have made for our country, or the Blanchard House Museum to view some of the City's History and experience a small museum with a big message. I've also heard that Thursday nights the place to be is Gilchrist Park where the Guitar Army gets together to entertain in the evening hours and I look forward to experiencing this myself.

The restaurants are also fabulous. From new arrivals on the restaurant scene to those that have been in the community for decades, I am finding plenty to enjoy and encourage you to try at least one of these great places each week.

With so much to do, there is always something new and exciting to explore in this beautiful City, while we work to remain safe as we responsibly take advantage of what the City has to offer. I look forward to meeting all of you as we work to improve our City even more, and while exploring Punta Gorda.

- **City Council Meeting** – City Council will meet on Nov. 4 at 9 a.m at the Historic City Hall. Some of the items of interest include:
 - City of Punta Gorda Comprehensive Plan update from representatives of Dover, Kohl and Partners. The proposed changes are available for public review <http://www.ci.punta-gorda.fl.us/government/comprehensive-plan/plan-punta-gorda-comprehensive-plan-update>. This presentation is only the starting point for Council discussion on the proposed changes.
 - Conquistadors monument donation for Ponce Park
 - The Community Redevelopment Area report
 - The second reading of an ordinance amending the Planned Development for the property located at 900 West Marion Ave. The proposed amendment will allow for public events to be held at the auditorium.
 - The second reading of an ordinance amendment to permit planters to encroach up to two feet into the required rear yard and would be limited to a maximum of 29 inches lower than the elevation of the adjacent pool deck, patio or structure (home).
 - Election of Mayor and Vice-Mayor and determination of representatives on City Council Service Boards and Committees
 - City Council discussion and consideration of facial coverings in response to Public Health Emergency COVID-19.

The full agenda will be available by 4:30 pm. Oct. 30 at <http://www.ci.punta-gorda.fl.us/government/city-clerk/agendas-minutes>.

- **Golf Carts vs. Low Speed Vehicles (LSV)** – Golf carts are not currently allowed on City streets, with the exception of the golf carts operated by Fishermen's Village, who have clearance to operate on the tidal creek bridge between the village and 900 West Marion Ave. buildings. LSV's are different from golf carts and defined as by Florida Statute as "any four-wheeled vehicle whose top speed is greater than 20 miles per hour, but not greater than 25 miles per hour." LSV's may be operated on City streets with a posted speed limit of 35 miles per hour or less in the City of Punta Gorda. Any person operating an LSV must have a valid driver license in their immediate possession. The LSV must have headlamps, front and rear turn signals, trail lamps, reflex reflectors that are red and one on each side and one on the rear, exterior mirror on the driver side and an interior rear-view mirror or exterior mirror on passenger side, parking brake, windshield, seatbelt for each designated seat and a vehicle identification number. LSVs must be registered, titled and insured with personal injury protection and property damage liability insurance. Learn more at <https://www.flhsmv.gov/pdf/mv/low-speed-vehicles.pdf>.



Upcoming Events

- Oct. 31, Military Heritage Museum Car Show, 900 W Marion Ave. For additional information, visit www.freedomisntfree.org
- Oct. 31, First Baptist Church Drive-thru Trick or Treat, 459 Gill St. For additional information, contact (941) 639-3857
- Nov. 7, Punta Gorda Isles Civic Association Arts and Craft Fair, 2001 Shreve St. For additional information visit, <https://pgica.org/>.
- Nov. 14 and 14, MY Promotions Arts and Craft Show, City Marketplace Property. For additional information, visit www.mypromotions.com
- Nov. 28 and 29, Sullivan Street Craft Fair, Sullivan Street downtown Punta Gorda. For additional information, visit www.puntagordachamber.com

Building Department

- A foundation only permit has been approved for the Hampton Manor assisted living facility located at 10211 Tamiami Trail.

Lot Mowing Program

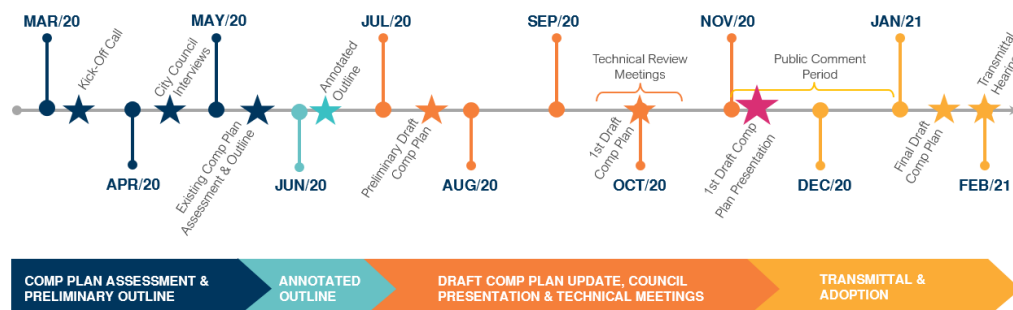
- The City will begin the next lot mowing cycle on Nov. 2.

Urban Design

- **The Planning Corner – Comprehensive Plan Elements Update** – At the Nov. 4 City Council meeting the representatives from Dover Kohl and Partners will make a presentation outlining the proposed updates to the City’s Comprehensive Plan. The proposed updates are the result of the substantial public input received during the development of [Plan Punta Gorda 2019 Citywide Master Plan](#). As required by [Florida Statue](#), the City maintains a Comprehensive Plan. The Comprehensive Plan is a broad policy document used to manage growth. The plan deals will all aspects of the City from Land Use and Transportation to Infrastructure and Intergovernmental Coordination. While the Comprehensive Plan is a critical policy document for guiding the general location and nature of private development and public infrastructure investments, it does not contain specific development standards or guidelines. The specific rules which govern development within the City are contained within [Land Development Regulations](#) (PDF file). The proposed revisions to the Comprehensive Plan recommend changes to the Land Development Regulations including the development of a [Form Based Code](#) within the historic areas of the City. The proposed updates are available for review and comment online at the [Plan Punta Gorda](#) website or on the [City](#) website. Below is a timeline of the ongoing Comprehensive Plan update timeline:



Comprehensive Plan Timeline



Note: Following the Transmittal Hearing in February, the State will have a 60-day comment period to review the documents, putting the final Adoption Hearing sometime in April 2021, at the latest

Public Works

Canal Maintenance

- **Seawall Replacement Projects** – The seawall replacement contractor has two projects under construction in Punta Gorda Isles. There are 26 seawall replacement projects scheduled for Punta Gorda Isles. There are no seawall replacement projects currently underway in Burnt Store Isles. Four seawall replacement projects scheduled for Burnt Store Isles later this fiscal year.
- **Mangrove Trimming on Ponce Inlet** – The contractor has completed the mangrove trimming at Sancho Panza Point and is almost complete with the Ponce De Leon Inlet. The work is expected to be completed by the end of Oct.
 - Crews filled depressions at 10 locations.
 - Crews removed one piling from the canal.
 - Crews manufactured 33 (10' ft. each) and 16 (12.5' ft. each) seawall panels.

Engineering

- **Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Improvements City Hall Annex** – Construction continues on the kitchen break room and third floor restroom. The project is scheduled to be completed in Nov.
- **Florida Department of Transportation(FDOT) – US 41 Carmalita Street to Marion Ave. within City of Punta Gorda** - FDOT 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>.
- **Gilchrist Park Pier Replacement** – The Purchase Order has been issued to the contractor. A pre-construction date is to be determined upon delivery schedule.
- **Laisley Park Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Ramp** – Installation of the railing is now set to begin Nov. 3 and should be substantially completed by Nov. 6.
- **Sullivan St. Renovation to Historic Bricks** – Project is half complete. A walkthrough is scheduled the first week of Nov. with anticipated completion date of mid Nov. For details on the Sullivan Street project, visit the City website. <http://www.ci.punta-gorda.fl.us/Home/Components/News/News/3231/17>.
- **Ponce De Leon Park Seawall Repairs** - Construction is set to begin Nov. 2. During construction the beach area as well as the seawall between the beach and fishing pier will be closed. The contractor will accommodate the public by leaving sections of the beach area open when possible. Construction is anticipated to be completed in March 2021.



Parks and Grounds:

- **Christmas Wreaths and Tree Installation:** The areas outlined in red (*see picture*) at the intersection of Marion Avenue and Taylor Street will be blocked off to allow access for City crews and equipment to install the Christmas tree during the week of Nov. 4. Parking spaces along Marion Ave. and Taylor St. will be opened up in the evening and on the weekends.



Police Department

- **Enjoy Halloween Responsibly** – If you plan on going out on Halloween be sure to designate a sober driver, plan on taking a ride share or taxi, or spend the night within walking distance of the party. The police department will be conducting extra patrols to make sure that everyone has a fun, safe, and happy Halloween!
- **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 employeeedevlopment@pgorda.us for additional information or to have an application package sent.

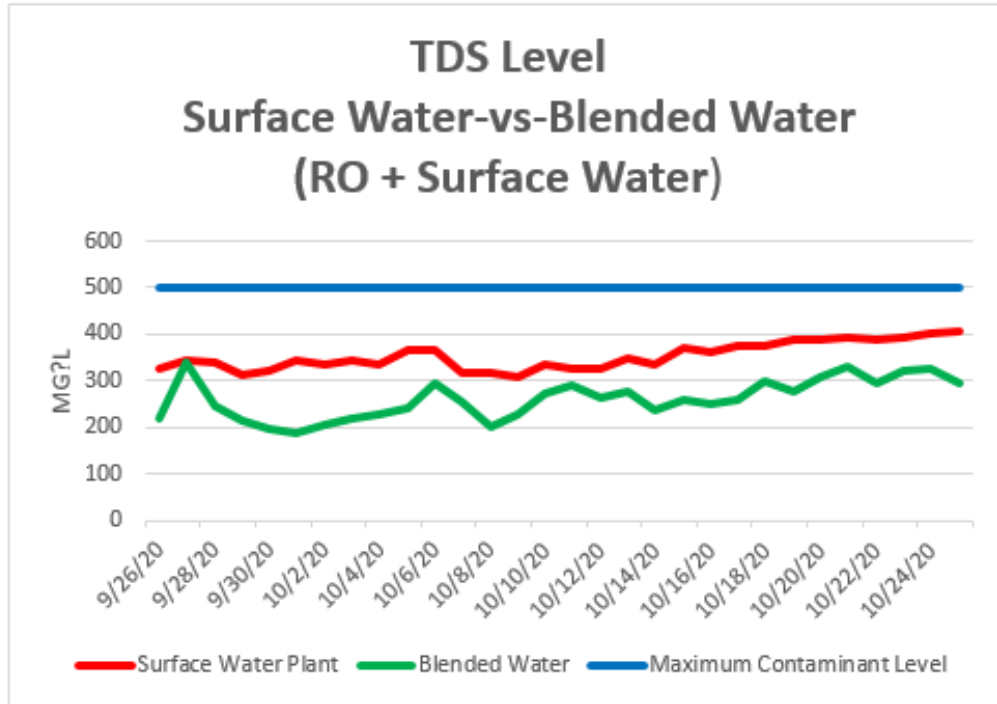
Fire Department



- **Halloween Safety Tips** – Top five Halloween fire safety tips from <https://www.nfpa.org/halloween>
 - Use a battery-operated candle or glow stick in jack-o-lanterns
 - When choosing costumes, stay away from long trailing fabric
 - Teach children to stay away from open flames, including jack-o-lanterns with candles in them.
 - Dried flowers, cornstalks, and crepe paper catch fire easily. Keep all decorations away from open flames and other heat sources like light bulbs and heaters
 - Provide children with flashlights to carry for lighting or glow sticks as part of their costume.
 - Remember to keep exits clear of decorations so nothing blocks escape routes. Make sure all smoke alarms are working.

Utilities Department

- **Ground Water RO Update** – Maximum total dissolved solids (TDS) allowable is 500.



Water Treatment Plant Operations

- 38.2 MG delivered to the distribution system with a 5.5 MG daily average
- Peace River Manasota Regional Water Supply Authority Emergency Interconnect – Receiving 450 gallons per minute from the new Interconnect (Phase 1 Pipeline). Sending 550 gallons per minute from the tank on 17 (Phase 1A Pipeline).
- Rainfall in Oct. 2019 5.02” Oct. 2020 1.10”
- Hardness is a measurement of calcium and magnesium ions naturally occurring in the raw water. Current Condition “moderately hard” – Grains of Hardness 7 ppm – Total hardness 112 ppm
- TDS for Oct. 29 – Current 301 ppm, Low 301 ppm, High 470 ppm, 12 Year Avg. 373 ppm
- Reservoir Oct. 29 – Current 5.43’, Record Low 5.00’, Record High 5.75’, 55 Year Avg. 5.24’

City Clerk

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

- **Board of Zoning Appeals** – (Two alternates) Meets the fourth 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.
- **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.

- **Building Board** – (One alternate) Meets the fourth 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.
- **Utility Advisory Board** – Meets the fourth Monday at 9 a.m. in City Council Chambers. Must be City resident. Seven-member board. Three-year terms – maximum of two terms. Makes recommendations to City Council with regard to, but not limited to, revisions to the utility construction standards, alleged billing discrepancies and review of utility specifications.

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:
 - Trulieve, 10175 Tamiami Trail, #1160