



Florida's Harborside Hometown

WEEKLY HIGHLIGHTS REPORT NOVEMBER 20, 2020

City Manager

- **Holiday Closure** – City government offices will be closed on Nov. 26 and Nov. 27 in observance of the Thanksgiving holiday. There will be NO CHANGE in residential or commercial sanitation services for City of Punta Gorda customers as a result of the holiday closure.
- **From the Desk of the City Manager Greg Murray** – This past week the City of Punta Gorda was honored to receive second place in the 2020 Digital Cities Survey hosted by the Center for Digital Government for cities up to 75,000 in population. The highest ranking for any Florida city in this category, and up from an eighth place finish in 2019. The survey recognizes cities using technology to tackle social challenges, enhance services, strengthen cybersecurity and more.



At the heart of all of our technology resources is the direct connection to our residents. Citizen engagement is shared across all levels and departments of the city. Each area is empowered to add their own content, develop new strategies to use digital tools to drive citizen engagement and reach their intended audiences. The City Manager's office works closely with the individual departments to help them reach their outreach goals. Examples of this in 2020 included a Virtual Town Hall Webinar held in June. All departments and the City Council participated in using this technology to reach and interact with residents. Another example of technology being utilized in city government are the customized surveys created by the Urban Design Department to fuel the City Wide Master Plan, Comprehensive Plan, Sign Code and Parks and Recreation Master Plan with resident ideas and feedback on proposed enhancements to the community.

Emergency communications regarding the health and safety of our residents was also a key digital focus this year. The creation of a COVID-19 microsite has been very effective for providing residents with up to date credible information regarding COVID-19. Success is reflected in the 45,000 page views of the COVID-19 microsite. The emergency public notification system Alert Punta Gorda was also launched in 2020. It allows the City of Punta Gorda to contact the entire community or to target specific areas in case of an emergency or for urgent situations that require the public's immediate attention such as natural disasters, man-made disasters, search and rescue situations, sexual offender alerts, etc. This is especially valuable in storm situations like what we experienced with Eta this past week. Sign up is available at <https://bit.ly/2U9HYOm>.

We are continuing to innovate and develop new ways to get residents the information needed, and to answer questions as quickly and easily as possible. Watch for an announcement regarding a new tool the city is implementing to communicate with residents that uses a mobile phone's regular messaging service as a way for residents to relay information to the city. This tool will make it easier to report issues, find information and request permits.

Being recognized by the Center for Digital Government is an honor and connects directly to key values of the city for maintaining a culture of community engagement, teamwork, partnerships, transparency, respect, customer service and stewardship. Our goal is to continue making government efficient, effective and responsive. The city is working hard to earn the number one spot in 2021.

Overall, all of this technology is great, but it doesn't replace the value of a real conversation. I have had the pleasure of speaking directly with many residents already and invite you to call me directly with any questions or feedback you wish to share at (941) 575-3302. Your opinion is important and helps provide valuable perspectives to help guide decision making and enhance our community.

- **City Council Meeting** – City Council met on Nov. 18. A few items of interest included:
 - Approved first reading of an ordinance to prevent left turns from Cooper Street onto E. McKenzie during school drop off and pick up times to improve safety for motorists and pedestrians traversing the area.
 - A discussion with City Lobbyist Jerry Paul regarding the Legislative Agenda for 2021. Boca Grande drainage project, assistance with the negotiation of the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission land lease for the Wastewater Treatment Plant, and potential legislative assistance with Septic to Sewer project. Formal agenda will be determined at the Dec. 2 Council meeting.
 - Approved a proposed ordinance to adopt new rates, fee and charges association with provision of water and wastewater services with the Punta Gorda Utility Service Area.
 - Approved a request for in-kind services from First Macedonia Church for maintenance of way during their weekly food distribution.
 - Approved a contract change for Harborwalk Phase II to make the following modifications to previously completed construction documents:
 - ✓ Remove the alteration/reconfiguration of the basketball court (Only item to remain is the replacement of six poles/backboards – court has been resurfaced)
 - ✓ Removal of diagonal parking between Dolly St. and Berry St.
 - ✓ Removal of diagonal parking west of Berry St.
 - ✓ Removal/re-design of parking lot between Chasteen St. and Dolly St. to create additional “green space”
 - ✓ Reconfigure Bayfront Center parking lot entrance to align with Dolly St. intersection

The meeting is available for viewing on the City's YouTube Channel at https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC-Qo-k4PpXWo4IJQah6_Kqw?view_as=subscriber.

Upcoming Events

- Fishermen's Village events can be accessed at <https://www.fishville.com/events/>
- Punta Gorda Chamber of Commerce events can be accessed at <https://puntagordachamber.com/calendar-events/>
- Charlotte County Chamber of Commerce events can be accessed at <https://business.charlottecountychamber.org/events/calendar>
- Each Tuesday, First Macedonia Food Distribution, 411 E Charlotte Ave., 8 a.m. to 3 p.m., For additional information, contact, firstmacedonia@gmail.com
- Nov. 21 Virtual Kid's Fishing Clinic hosted by Coastal and Heartland National Estuary Partnership. The clinic will take place from 9:30 a.m. until 10:30 a.m. via Zoom. For more information visit <https://myemail.constantcontact.com/CHNEP-November-Volunteer-Events.html?soid=1120876307235&aid=VtDJXXYAMG4>

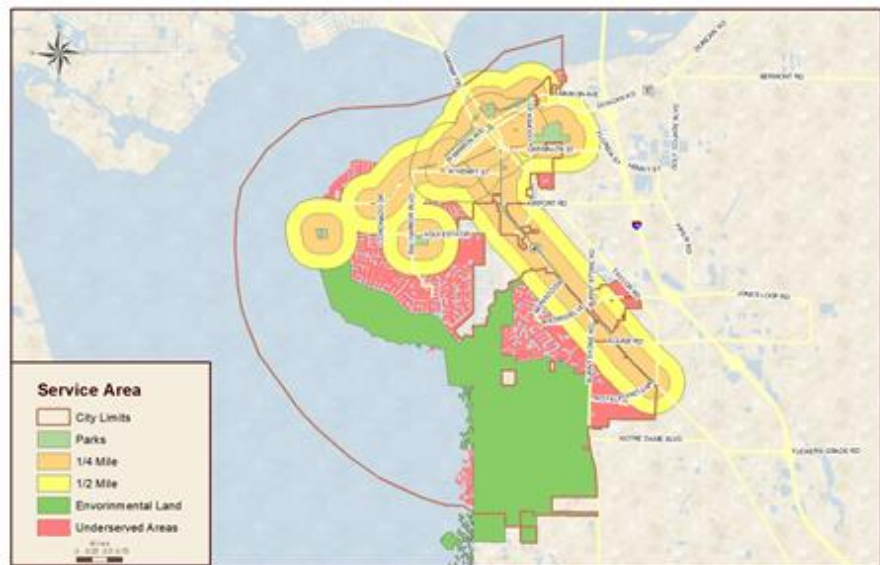
- Nov. 28 and 29, Sullivan Street Craft Fair, Sullivan Street downtown Punta Gorda. For additional information, visit www.puntagordachamber.com
- Dec. 3, Classic Movie Drive-in, Bal Harbor Plaza, 1133 Bal Harbor Blvd. For additional information, visit <https://puntagordachamber.com/calendar-events/>
- Dec. 4 and 5, Premier Auto Auction, Charlotte Harbor Event and Conference Center, 75 Taylor St. For additional information, visit <https://www.premierauctiongroup.com/auction-calendar>
- Dec. 5 and 6, Peace River National Art Festival, Laishley Park. For additional information, visit <https://visualartcenter.org/pages/peace-river-national-art-festival-prnaf>
- Dec. 5, City Wide Garage Sale, Bal Harbor Plaza, 1133 Bal Harbor Blvd. For additional information, visit <https://puntagordachamber.com/calendar-events/>
- Dec. 12 and 13, Holly Jolly Market, Gilchrist Park, 400 W Retta Esplanade. For additional information, visit <https://daniellesblueribbonevents.com/>
- Dec. 24, Deep Creek Christmas Eve Service and Music Event, Laishley Park, 96 Nesbit St. For additional information, visit <https://deepcreekcommunitychurch.com/christmaseveinfo>
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- Dec. 24, First United Methodist Church Live Nativity and Christmas Eve Service, Gilchrist Park, 400 W Retta Esplanade. For additional information, visit <https://www.whatis1st.com/>

Lot Mowing Program

- The City has completed the trim in all zones and the Nov. 2 mow is underway.

Urban Design

- **Code Corner** – As the City of Punta Gorda continues the drainage improvements throughout the City, it is important that property owners and contractors are aware that a Right-of-Way (ROW) permit is required prior to restoring or re-sodding any right-of-way, for all properties, developed or vacant. The ROW permit will initiate a line and grade inspection to ensure that proper drainage is maintained as the property is restored.
- **The Planning Corner – Level of Service** – The Urban Design staff continues working on the updates to Punta Gorda's Place to Play: Park and Recreation Master Plan Update. After a successful survey where 354 stakeholders responded, staff will be using this information to update the Plan. This week's the topic is Level of Service. A Level of Service is (LOS) is a measure of the minimum amount of public facility which must be provided to meet the community's basic needs and expectations. To analyze the existing Park System, a LOS must be established. The State of Florida requires that municipalities set and maintain a minimum LOS standard for provision of parks.



The 2009 Parks and Recreation Master Plan changed LOS for parks from acre(s) per thousand of population basis, to a proximity measurement. This was done based on research that has shown there are personal, environmental, social, and economic benefits associated by being within ¼ - ½ miles radius of a park which provides numerous benefits to the community. As such, proximity to a park is a good quality of life indicator for a community.



Similar to the establishment of the LOS for the Parks System, a LOS must also be established for park maintenance. It is vital to determine maintenance tasks and task frequencies in order to develop realistic and achievable community goals that help maintain the City's current infrastructure. To achieve this, City staff needs to develop a ranked system based on the amenities provided within each park. The ranking would range from low level maintenance to high level maintenance. A low level maintenance park would be a pocket park where there would only be a few benches, some trash bins, and possibly a dog station. This would be considered low as the most maintenance the park requires would be that of emptying trash receptacles and low frequency mowing. A high level maintenance park would be one with a playground as there may be restrooms, trash receptacles, lighting, and infrastructure that requires more time to maintain the amenities. In addition, inspections must be done daily, the area may be irrigated and fertilized, and repairs and cleaning must be done often. While working on the plan update, staff will be analyzing any changes or updates that need to be made to both LOS'. Staff invites all stakeholders to provide their input. For more information on Punta Gorda's Place to Play updates, please visit <http://www.ci.punta-gorda.fl.us/visitors/punta-gorda-pathways/park-recreation-master-plan>

Public Works

Administration

- **Citizens' Academy** - Applications are now being accepted for the upcoming Citizens Academy 2021 Session <http://www.ci.punta-gorda.fl.us/i-want-to-register-for/citizens-academy>. This academy is a free, eight session course of interactive classes designed to provide insight into City government and to develop future leaders through well informed and civically engaged residents. The Academy is limited to 15 participants who reside or own a business within the City of Punta Gorda. The deadline for registration is 4:30 p.m. on Dec. 28. For more information, please contact Public Works Senior Executive Assistant, Jennifer Daumann at (941) 575-5002 or jdaumann@cityofpuntagordafl.com.

Canal Maintenance

- **Dredging Ponce Inlet** – The week of Nov. 16 thru Nov. 30 (weather and equipment operation permitting), the Ponce De Leon Inlet is scheduled to be dredged. The contractor will off load dredge material at the vacant lot at the southerly end of Colony Point; then the material will be transported to another location by dump trucks. For information on this project, please 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., Mon. thru Fri. For more information [Ponce Inlet Dredging Press Release](#).

- **Spoil Site Hauling** - Beginning Mon., Nov. 16 a contractor will be hauling fill material from the City Spoil site located on Colony Point Dr. Dump trucks will be hauling material to Placida, Charlotte County. The trucking route will be traveling along Colony Point Dr. to W. Marion Ave. to U.S. 41 (Tamiami Tr.). Hauling is expected to be completed by Dec. 11. There will be no truck traffic on weekends or the Thanksgiving holiday. If you have any questions or concerns please contact Catherine Miller, Canal Maintenance Supervisor at (941)575-5050.
- **Seawall Replacement Projects** – The seawall replacement contractor has three projects under construction in Punta Gorda Isles. There are 26 seawall replacement projects scheduled for Punta Gorda Isles. There is one seawall replacement project currently underway in Burnt Store Isles. Four seawall replacement projects are scheduled for Burnt Store Isles later this fiscal year.
 - Crews filled depressions at 11 locations.
 - Crews removed debris from waterway (three pilings, one storage bin, buoy and one dock box).
 - Crews manufactured 20 (10' ft. each) seawall panels and 18 (12.5' ft. each) seawall panels.

Engineering

- **Americans with Disabilities Act Improvements City Hall Annex** – Construction is near completion. The project is scheduled to be completed the first week in Dec.
- **Gilchrist Park Pier Deck Replacement** – The Purchase Order has been issued to the contractor. A pre-construction date is to be determined upon delivery schedule.
- **Lashley Park Americans with Disabilities Act Ramp** – Handrail installation commenced.
- **Sullivan St. Renovation to Historic Bricks** – Work is complete and the street is re-opened.
- **Ponce De Leon Park Seawall Repairs** – Spall repairs on the seawall cap are complete. The contractor will begin work on the tie back repairs and epoxy coating of the seawall cap. 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 Mar. 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 through the week of Dec. 4. Parking spaces along Marion Ave. and Taylor St. will be opened up in the evening and on the weekends.



Police Department

- **Holiday Safety Tips** – When you are out shopping this holiday season remember to do the following to stay safe:
 - Stay alert and be aware of your surroundings;
 - Park in well-lit areas making sure that gifts and valuables are out of sight and your vehicle doors are locked;
 - If shopping with children make sure they have been taught to seek out a store clerk, security guard, or police officer should they become separated from you;
 - Avoid carrying large amounts of cash when shopping. Pay with credit or debit cards when possible.

- **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 current 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 Summer & Fall Semesters 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 employeedevelopment@pgorda.us for additional information or to have an application package sent.



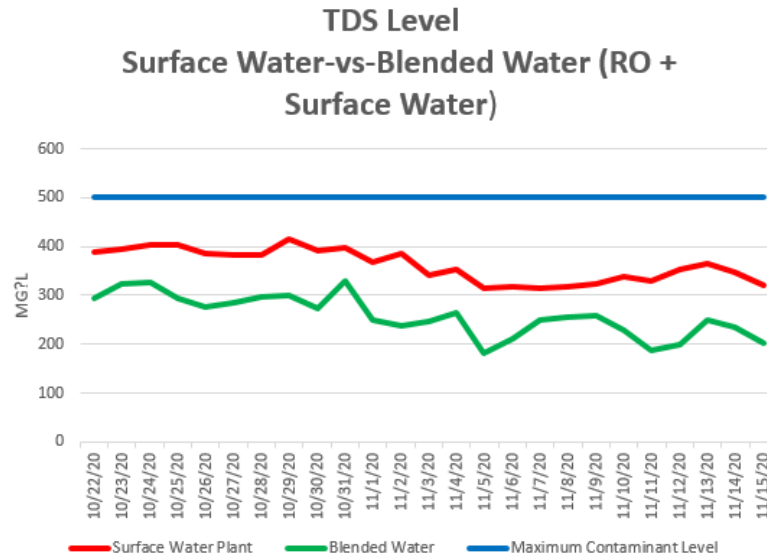
Fire Department

- **Deep Frying a Turkey** – When it comes to deep frying turkey, you want to take every precaution to keep your family and your home safe. Fried turkeys are delicious, but they come with a slew of safety issues. Thousands of fires as well as many injuries happen each year due to turkey fryer fires. The Punta Gorda Fire Department advises against using a turkey fryer. If you decide to do it anyway, these precautions should be followed;
 - Fryers should always be used outdoors, on a solid level surface a safe distance from buildings and flammable materials.
 - Do not overfill the fryer.
 - Never use a fryer on a wooden deck, under a patio cover, in a garage or enclosed space.
 - Never leave the fryer unattended.
 - Never let children or pets near the fryer when in use or after use as the oil can remain hot for hours.
 - Use well-insulated potholders or oven mitts and wear long sleeves and safety goggles to protect from splatter.
 - Make sure the turkey is completely thawed before it is placed in a fryer.
 - Keep all-purpose fire extinguishers nearby.
 - If a turkey fryer fire occurs, call 911 immediately.
- **Emergency Vehicle Operations Course (EVOC)** – The fire department completed all EVOC testing this week. EVOC is required for all personnel to drive emergency response apparatus and the Punta Gorda Fire Department conducts EVOC annually to ensure all of our staff is confident in driving the fire trucks. The EVOC course consists of several obstacles that may be presented out on the road and teaches personnel how to best overcome each of the obstacles.



Utilities Department

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



Water Treatment Plant Operations

- 39.2 MG delivered to the distribution system with a 5.6 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 Nov. 2019 .80” Nov. 2020 4.70”
- Hardness is a measurement of calcium and magnesium ions naturally occurring in the raw water. Current Condition “moderately hard” – Grains of Hardness 4 ppm – Total hardness 60 ppm
- TDS for Nov. 19 – Current 171 ppm, Low 171 ppm, High 517 ppm, 12 Year Avg. 420 ppm
- Reservoir Nov. 19 – Current 5.36’, Record Low 4.94’, Record High 6.58’, 55 Year Avg. 5.20’

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. 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.
- **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.

- **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.

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:
 - Altrus Investment Services, 150 West McKenzie Street, Suite 116
 - Art Studio by Design, 210 Taylor Street, Suite 116
 - Jersey Mikes, 1001 Tamiami Trail, Unit 113
 - Joseph Convertino, Optometrist, 5001 Taylor Road
 - Nino's Bakery, 3078 Cooper Street, Unit 52
 - Sazon Jibarito LLC, 127 Carmalita Street, Unit 111
 - Sunshine Learning Academy, 272 East Virginia Avenue
 - T-Mobile Financial LLC, 2310 Tamiami Trail, Unit 1101
 - T-Mobile Leasing LLC, 2310 Tamiami Trail, Unit 1101
 - T-Mobile Retail Sales, 2310 Tamiami Trail, Unit 1101