

Weekly Highlights Report January 15, 2021

City Manager

- **City Manager Column** – This calendar year is off to a productive start in the City of Punta Gorda. The City Council has already started the budget process for FY2022. At the last Council meeting 58 pages of continuing capital improvement projects were reviewed. The sales tax priorities for FY2021 were also discussed by Council, reaffirming the progression of major capital improvements. One notable change was the Henry Street sidewalk project moving up to FY2021. This project includes the installation of sidewalk on Henry Street between Shreve Street and State Road 41 to provide a safe travel route. The Council also approved the process to redraft our Land Development Regulations and Form Based Codes including several citizen engagement milestones. This is a major undertaking that will help insure that our City moves into the future retaining the character that makes it so special. As part of our ongoing citizen engagement efforts the city is also introducing two new programs to serve our residents.

The Punta Gorda Police Department has formed a Veteran Crisis Assistance Team (VCAT). The purpose of the VCAT is to help ensure that the Punta Gorda Police Department has the ability to effectively handle situations involving military veterans experiencing a mental health crisis or who are in need of assistance. The VCAT is made up of sworn Punta Gorda law enforcement officers who have served, or are currently serving, in a branch of the United States Military. These officers engage with community veteran organizations to ensure that veterans in need are connected with appropriate services and assist them in receiving the military benefits to which they are entitled. Members of the VCAT respond to situations involving military veterans in need of assistance, and have received specialized training in de-escalating situations and dealing with the special needs associated with service. The VCAT will also continue to follow-up to insure issues are resolved and to help avoid further crisis.

Communication with residents and visitors remains a priority in 2021. The city has launched a new tool to connect with residents. The service is called Text My Gov and it uses a mobile phone's regular text messaging service to allow people to quickly find links, documents or text that answers their questions. No app download is needed. It allows our residents and visitors to report issues such as code violations or report issues with city infrastructure twenty four hours a day, seven days a week. A picture can also be added when reporting an issue or violation and the service sends the information immediately to city staff to have the issue resolved. To use the service simply text "hi" to (941) 347-0747. Answers to common questions are available 24/7 through website searches and preprogrammed responses. Don't have an immediate answer? The question will go to a designated mailbox to insure you get a timely response.

This is just the beginning of positive enhancements that will occur in the City of Punta Gorda this year. I look forward to keeping you engaged and informed about all the efforts taking place to continue to preserve our small-town character while promoting diversity, economic development and sustainability.

- **Martin Luther King, Jr. Holiday** - The government offices of the City of Punta Gorda will be closed on Jan. 18 for Martin Luther King, Jr. holiday. Residents of the City of Punta Gorda will notice **no change** in their trash, yard waste or recycling collections during this holiday. Commercial customers of the City of Punta Gorda will notice no change in collection service during this holiday. If you have any questions, please contact the Public Works Department at (941) 575-5050 between the business hours of 8 a.m. – 4:30 p.m., Mon. thru Fri.
- **Historic City Hall Renovations** – Staff met to review the design scope this week. Original planning number for cost was an estimate. The planning estimate has been updated, but there is not a contract in place.
- **Upcoming Street Closure** – On Jan. 25 Taylor Road from Marion Avenue to approximately half to Herald Court will be closed the Sunloft building management was approved for a road closure to utilize a crane to remove the A/C unit from the roof and place a new one. They anticipate that this could be completed in four hours or could possibly take all day depending on how smooth it goes. The Sunloft Management will be notifying adjacent businesses so they can notify their customers. All deliveries are directed to utilize Sullivan that day.
- **Government Finance Officers Association (GFOA) Award** – The City has received the GFOA’s Certificate of Achievement for Excellence in Financial Reporting for the 2019 comprehensive annual financial report (CAFR). The Certificate of Achievement is the highest form of recognition in government accounting and financial reporting, and its attainment represents a significant accomplishment by government and its management. The CAFR was judged by an impartial panel to meet the high standards of the program, which includes demonstrating a constructive “spirit of full disclosure” to clearly communicate its financial story and motivate potential users and user groups to read the CAFR.
- **City Council meeting** – City Council will meet on Jan. 20 at 9 a.m. in the Historic City Hall
A few of the items of interest include:
 - An American with Disabilities Act Update and FY2021 Project Allocation
 - America in Bloom Pilot Project Update and Phase II
 - Historic District Parking Plan
 - Seawall Materials and Methods Feasibility Study
 - City Attorney Litigation ReportThe complete agenda will be available at <http://www.ci.punta-gorda.fl.us/government/city-clerk/agendas-minutes> or watch the meeting live on the City’s YouTube Channel at https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC-Qo-k4PpXWo4IJQah6_Kqw
- **Code and Public Works Communication** – Code is not receiving permit requests, code complaints or park rental requests through the website at this time. Public Works is also experiencing similar issues with their online processes. IT is aware of this and has contacted the responsible party with software support at Granicus, our provider, but it has not been resolved at this time. This has been an issue for approximately 2-3 weeks, so if you have not received a response from staff please contact pgcode@CityofPuntaGordaFL.com or call (941) 575-3352. For Public Works requests please contact jdaumann@CityofPuntaGordaFL.com or call (941) 575-5050. Text My Gov can also be used to report issues in the City by texting hi to (941) 347-0747 and following the prompts.

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>
- Military Heritage Museum events can be accessed at <https://freedomisntfree.org/#>
- Jan. 16-17, Sullivan Street Arts & Craft Festival, Sullivan Street between W Retta Esplanade and W Virginia Avenue. For additional information, visit <https://puntagordachamber.com/calendar-events/>
- Jan. 16-17, Winter Home & Garden Show, Charlotte Harbor Event & Conference Center, 75 Taylor St. For additional information, visit <https://www.charlotteharborecc.com/events>
- Jan. 23, Rumble on the River Boxing Event, Marketplace property, 115 Tamiami Tr. For additional information, visit [http://www.smuggersevents.com./](http://www.smuggersevents.com/)
- Jan. 23, Church of the Good Shepherd 125th Anniversary Celebration, 401 W Henry St. For additional information, visit <https://goodshepherdpuntagorda.dioswfl.org/>
- Jan. 30, Smuggler's Chili, Beer & Blues Festival, Marketplace property, 115 Tamiami Tr. For additional information, visit <http://www.smuggersevents.com./>
- Feb. 6, Punta Gorda Chamber City Wide Garage Sale, 1133 Bal Harbor Blvd. For additional information, visit <https://puntagordachamber.com/calendar-events/>
- Feb. 6 and 7, The Invitational at Punta Gorda Arts & Craft Show, Gilchrist Park, 400 W Retta Esplanade. For additional information, visit <https://daniellesblueribbonevents.com/>
- Feb. 7, Local Ladies Social Network Vendor Craft Fair, Laishley Park, 96 Nesbit St. For additional information visit, <https://www.ilsnevents.com/>
- Feb. 12-14, Big Boy Toyz Expo, Charlotte Harbor Event & Conference Center, 75 Taylor St. For additional information, visit <https://www.charlotteharborecc.com/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).
 - PGI (Magdalena Drive, Via Vento, W Henry Street, Appian Drive, and Columbian Drive).
 - PGI Bird Section (Almar Drive, Albatross drive, Whippoorwill Blvd, and Turtle Dove Blvd).

Code

- **Pet Waste Cleanup** – Staff would like to remind our residents and visitors to be good and responsible neighbors and canine owners and pick up after your canine from any street, sidewalk, swale, bike path, park area or any other public property or private property not owned by the canine owner/handler. The City's entire Pooper Scooper Code can be viewed at <http://www.ci.punta-gorda.fl.us/home/showpublisheddocument?id=1409>, Sec. 5-2. Pooper Scooper.
- **Signs in the Residential Zoning Districts** – At the Jan. 6 City Council meeting, Council reaffirmed that there will be no enforcement of the sign regulations for signs on residential lots in the Right of Way or otherwise until such time as the sign ordinance is amended and adopted. This includes political signs/flags.

Urban Design

- **The Planning Corner – The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)**

In 1990 the Federal Government enacted the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). This act guaranteed that, “no entity shall discriminate against an individual with a disability in connection with the provision of public services.” In order to fulfill the promise of this Federal law, it is vital that Federal, State, and local governments ensure that all facilities, programs, and services that they provide eliminate barriers to access. In order to ensure that the City of Punta Gorda is in compliance with the ADA and stays eligible for Federal grant funds an ADA transition plan is required to be implemented.



In Oct. of 2017 the City of Punta Gorda adopted the “Americans with Disabilities Act Transition Plan”. The ADA transition plan, produced by consultants Tindale Oliver, was based on an extensive data collection and analysis process that identified barriers to accessibility in various City operations, facilities, parks, and portions of the Punta Gorda Pathways system of trails. The plan serves as a roadmap for making improvements in these operations and facilities to reduce barriers to access, more fully comply with the provisions of the Americans with Disabilities Act, and provide better service to our community.

The importance of accessibility to the residents, visitors, and businesses, the City has made a commitment of \$125,000 per year for FY 2021 thru 2023 in its Capital Improvement Program (CIP) utilizing 1% sales tax funding to implement the plan. In Nov. 2020 the Charlotte County voters elected to continue with the 1% sales tax funding and as a result the ADA transition plan will continue to have \$125,000 annually through FY 2029. At the Jan. 20 City Council Meeting the Urban Design Division will provide an updated to Council that highlights the City’s action and progress for the previous year (FY 2020) and presents the proposed projects for the upcoming year (FY 2021). To learn more about the City’s accessibility efforts visit <http://www.ci.punta-gorda.fl.us/about/accessibility>

Public Works

Administration

- **Citizens’ Academy Administration Session** - The City of Punta Gorda 2021 Citizens Academy officially kicked off with the Administrative Session. Due to social distancing guidelines this year’s class is limited to 15 participants. Presentations on the overview of our City government including the roles and functions of City Council, City Manager, Legal Department, City Communications Manager, Human Resources and City Clerk were provided.



Canal Maintenance

- **Canal Odor** – Almost every year, as cooler weather moves into Southwest Florida the canal water ‘flips’ or ‘turns’. This means that the bottom (including silt, decomposing plant material and miscellaneous debris) comes to the surface bringing with it a smell of stagnant water and debris, while the surface water goes to the bottom. This is a natural occurrence and typically happens in dead end canals. This occurrence is expected to only last approximately two weeks then returns to normal.
- **Seawall Assessment** – City staff continues the Annual Seawall Assessment during low tide periods until Feb. 2021. City staff will be inspecting seawalls from the waterside while traversing canals in a boat. Residents may see city staff in a boat close to their seawalls while inspecting the condition of seawalls.
- **Seawall Replacement Projects** – The seawall replacement contractor has five projects under construction and three projects completed in Punta Gorda Isles. There are 26 seawall replacement projects scheduled for Punta Gorda Isles. There are three seawall replacement projects currently under construction and one project completed in Burnt Store Isles. Four seawall replacement projects are scheduled for Burnt Store Isles this fiscal year. A seawall project is not considered complete until the sod has been placed.
 - Crews filled depressions at 16 locations.
 - Crews manufactured 40 (10’ ft. each) seawall panels.
 - Crews removed one large deck board from the canal.
 - Crews patched 17’ linear feet of seawall cap.

Engineering

- **Evening Paving Street Resurfacing** – Due to the weather conditions, evening milling and pavement resurfacing has been revised to begin Jan. 14 through Jan. 16 on the following roadways: Bal Harbor Boulevard - Right turn lane (South East quadrant at Aqui Esta Drive), Maud Street (West Marion to Merrill Lynch Drive), Airport Road (US41 North Bound to west of Rail Road tracks), East Retta Esplanade (US41 South Bound to Nesbit Street). **The roads will be open to local traffic only. Detours and impact to traffic are to be anticipated. Hours of operation will be between 7 p.m. and 5 a.m.**
- **Gilchrist Park Pier Deck Replacement** – Construction is anticipated to commence on Jan. 19 through Feb. 12 (weather permitting).
- **Palm Ave. and Chasteen St. Intersection to McGregor St. Road Closure** - The street bricks removal are complete. Utility staff and equipment have mobilized and begun curb removal and prep for well point dewatering prior to excavation and removal of existing lines. Upon completion of Utility upgrades and award, the curb replacements, ADA ramps, road base, asphalt, sand and re-placement of historic street bricks are to commence. The project is tentatively scheduled thru Apr. 2021. For information [Engineering | City of Punta Gorda, FL \(punta-gorda.fl.us\)](https://www.punta-gorda.fl.us/Engineering) or contact Linda Sposito, Sr. Project Manager, Public Works Department at (941)575-5050 between the business hours of 8 a.m. – 4:30 p.m., Mon. thru Fri.
- **City Wide Drainage Swale Regrading** – Work on the swale regrading program with JRL Underground Inc. is set to resume on Jan. 18 in Burnt Store Isles subdivision.
- **Ponce De Leon Park Seawall Repairs** – Backfilling of the seawall and rip rap placement at the north end of the project is complete. Clean up of the construction debris and rough grading of the beach should be complete by Jan. 15. The project is on track to be completed by mid Feb.



- **Paving Program Street Resurfacing** - The contractor continues milling and resurfacing streets. Work is anticipated to complete by Jan. 22 (weather and equipment operations permitting). For complete list of streets [Paving Program January 2021](#). For information contact Linda Sposito, Sr. Project Manager, City of Punta Gorda Public Works Department at (941)575-5060 between the business hours of 8 a.m. – 4:30 p.m., Mon. thru Fri.

Parks and Grounds

- **Christmas Tree Removal** - 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 remove Christmas tree. Parking spaces along Marion Avenue and Taylor Street will be opened up in the evening and on the weekends. Crews will begin removal of the Christmas decorations on Jan. 19. Please take special care when driving in the City to be aware of Public Works employees removing holiday decorations.



Police

- **Outstanding Command Officer Award** – Earlier this week Captain Jason Ciaschini was recognized with the Outstanding Command Officer of the Year award from the Florida Police Chief’s Association at their Mid-Winter Conference in Orlando. Chief Davis nominated Captain Ciaschini for his exceptional leadership and dedication to the success of our department and our community. Congratulations Captain Ciaschini!



- **Florida Police Chief’s Association** – Chief Davis, Captain Ciaschini, and Lieutenant Renz attended the Florida Police Chief’s Association (FPCA) Mid-Winter Conference in Orlando. Speakers included Governor DeSantis and Attorney General Moody and training topics focused on media relations, public information, transformational leadership, and police recruitment, selection, training, and retention. The FPCA is the third largest police chiefs association in the United States and is composed of more than 900 of the state’s top law enforcement executives. The association’s purpose is to provide better communication, education, and training for police executives and their departments as well as to promote legislation that would enhance public security by providing superior police protection to our residents and visitors.



- **Marine Enforcement** – The Marine Unit will be conducting extra enforcement on our waterways focusing on illegal netting, anchor light violations, and safety checks. We encourage people to get out on the water safely!
- **Help Prevent Crime** – Nearly all vehicle burglaries and thefts that have occurred in Punta Gorda over the last few years have involved unlocked vehicles. Please help prevent crime in our city by removing valuables and locking your vehicles at night!
- **VIP Program** – The Volunteers in Policing (VIP) program contributed a total of 475 hours of volunteer time to the City of Punta Gorda during the month of Dec. 2020. Our volunteers are an absolutely vital part of this police department and we appreciate them greatly! Members of the community interested in volunteering are encouraged to contact the Volunteer Staff Coordinator at (941) 575-5536 or by emailing vip@pgorda.us.
- **Police Officer Testing** – The police department is currently accepting applications for the position of Police Officer. Testing will be held on Apr. 19 with oral board interviews scheduled on Apr. 20 and Apr. 21. Currently we are only accepting applications from candidates who are currently certified, Equivalency of Training (EOT) eligible, current law enforcement academy students, or those with prior experience in a law enforcement related field.
- **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 Apr. 26.
- **Internship Program** – The police department is currently accepting internship applications for the summer and 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.pgdjobs.com (941) 575-5571 or employeedevelopment@pgorda.us for additional information or to have an application package sent.

Fire Department

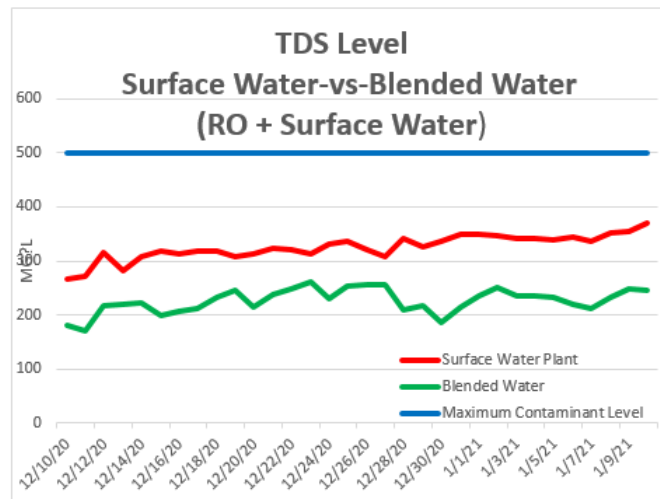
- **COVID-19 Vaccine Q & A** – This is a very fluid situation that could change at any time, but here are some answers that apply at time of print.
Why don't we have vaccine being offered in Punta Gorda and will we in the future? At this point the challenge has been supply of the vaccine. When adequate supply of the vaccine is available sites will be set up to administer the vaccine throughout Charlotte County including Punta Gorda. Emergency Management personnel and logistics are in place to support the distribution.
Will the City of Punta Gorda be offering the vaccine or setting up a registration website? No, the City of Punta Gorda is not setting up a website or vaccine distribution center. We do not have our own health department or source of the vaccine. The City is partnering with the Florida Department of Health Charlotte County and we have representatives on the Charlotte County Emergency Management team. Preparation for administering the vaccine started months ago and is still ongoing.
How do I find out when vaccine appointments are available?
The CharCoCares text system has been providing local updates related to COVID-19 and resources as they become available. The system is also be used to share updates and announcements about vaccine availability via text message. To opt-in simply text CHARCO CARES to 888-777. The service is free; message and data rates may apply. Charlotte County will continue to announce vaccine availability through their website and social media channels as well as through the CharCoCares text message system.

- **Geriatric Trauma** – The fire department’s medical director, Dr. O’Leary, hosted a geriatric trauma lecture which focuses on how traumatic injuries affect the elderly whether it be from vehicle accidents or a slip and fall. Dr. O’Leary also spent time on the Quality Assurance process of report writing to ensure the documentation process is done correctly and efficiently. The department is constantly training to ensure they are ready to respond to any emergency and provide the gold standard of care for our residents.



Utilities

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



Water Treatment Plant Operations

- 48.9 MG delivered to the distribution system with a 7.0 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 Jan. 2020 .90” Jan. 2021 0.01”
- 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 116 ppm
- TDS for Jan. 14– Current 225 ppm, Low 225 ppm, High 598 ppm, 12 Year Avg. 470 ppm
- Reservoir Jan. 14 – Current 5.14’, Record Low 4.92’, Record High 5.82, 55 Year Avg. 5.17’

Wastewater Collection

- Pretreatment Coordinator and UT Project Manager assisted in overseeing Harpoon Harry’s (Fisherman’s Village) underground installation of a new GGI-750 Shier grease interceptor installed by Environmental Underground.



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.
- **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.
- **Code Enforcement Board** – Meets the fourth Wednesday at 9:00 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.
- **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.
- **Punta Gorda Isles Canal Advisory Committee** – (Two regular) Meets the third Monday at 1:30 p.m. in City Council Chambers. Must be a resident of Punta Gorda Isles. Seven member board. Three year terms – maximum of three terms. Makes recommendations to City Council on effective maintenance of existing canals, waterways and navigable channels within the district, together with the maintenance and reconstruction of seawalls. Holds public hearings and makes final decision on petitions for special permit to the provisions of Section 6-6(c) of the City Code.
- **Historic Preservation Advisory Board** – Meets the fourth Thursday at 9:00 a.m. in City Council Chambers. Must be City resident. Seven member board with two alternate members. Two members must reside within the Historic District. Three year terms, maximum of three terms. Identifies for the City Council historically significant structures and sites that should be considered for designation as a “Local Historic Landmark” or be nominated for listing on the Florida Master Site File and the National Register of Historic Places. Makes recommendations of the policies for the protection of historically significant structures and sites. Makes recommendations to staff with regard to certificates of appropriateness for any demolition, variance, sign or relocation of structures. Promotes public awareness of historic preservation.
- **Punta Gorda Isles Canal Advisory Committee** – Meets the third Monday at 1:30 p.m. in City Council Chambers. Must be a resident of Punta Gorda Isles. Seven member board. Three year terms, maximum of three terms. Makes recommendations to City Council on effective maintenance of existing canals, waterways and navigable channels within the district, together with the maintenance and reconstruction of seawalls. Holds public hearings and makes final decision on petitions for special permit to the provisions of Section 6-6(c) of the City Code.