

Weekly Highlights Report July 2, 2021

City Manager

- **Independence Day Holiday** – The government offices of the City of Punta Gorda will be closed on July 5 in observance of the Independence Day 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 will see **NO CHANGE** in trash collections during this holiday.
- **Traffic Patterns on July 4** – We know that everyone is excited that the Fourth of July celebrations are back this year! To make sure that you can plan a safe and happy holiday, please look at the traffic changes that will be made that evening after the fireworks display. Please remember that thousands of people come into Punta Gorda for the fireworks display, and everyone wants to leave at the same time. These traffic changes are meant to minimize traffic congestion, but there will be substantial traffic delays, so please plan accordingly. Traffic leaving from the areas east of Tamiami Trail (US-41 North), including Laishley Park, will be directed south to East Olympia Avenue (US-17 East) and then east to I-75. Traffic can then go north or south on the interstate. Traffic leaving from this area will not be able to access Tamiami Trail (US-41). Traffic leaving from the regions west of Tamiami Trail (US-41 North), except as specified below, will be directed to Cross Street (US-41 South). Traffic may then continue south toward Fort Myers or will be allowed to turn east onto Carmalita Street, north on Cooper Street, and east on East Olympia Avenue (US-17 East) toward I-75. Traffic can then go north or south on the interstate. Traffic leaving from City Market Place will be directed north onto Tamiami Trail (US-41 North) toward Port Charlotte. Traffic leaving the Herald Court Center parking garage will not be permitted to turn right toward Tamiami Trail (US-41 North). Traffic will need to turn left towards Taylor Street and be directed one of two ways depending on traffic congestion. Traffic may be directed to West Olympia Avenue (US-17 East) toward I-75, where traffic may go north or south on the interstate. Traffic may also be directed to West Marion Avenue (US-17 East) toward Cross Street (US-41 South), where traffic may then continue south toward Fort Myers or will be allowed to turn east onto Carmalita Street, north on Cooper Street, and east on East Olympia Avenue (US-17 East) toward I-75. In addition to the traffic changes, the Laishley boat ramp will be closed beginning 30 minutes before the fireworks display. However, the Ponce Park boat ramp will remain open until 11:00 p.m. to provide boat ramp access to residents and visitors.



- **Non-commercial Fireworks** – The City of Punta Gorda does not have an ordinance prohibiting people from shooting off fireworks on the Fourth of July. Some homeowners associations in the City may have rules prohibiting fireworks. The City would like to remind residents that fireworks are dangerous and should only be used by adults wearing safety glasses, with water or a fire extinguisher readily available, and never point fireworks at another person, animal or home, automobile, or any other object. We also encourage residents to be mindful that pets and persons who have post-traumatic stress disorder may be adversely affected by fireworks.

- **City Manager Column** –

Congratulations are in order for the City of Punta Gorda Building Division. The division prides itself on developing a cooperative spirit with the contractors and the community while enforcing State and City of Punta Gorda mandated codes and ordinances. This year, the Building Division was audited by the Insurance Services Office, Inc. (ISO) using the Building Code Effectiveness Grading Schedule. This information is used by insurance companies to determine risk in a particular area and is utilized for setting insurance rates. This audit is conducted every three years and is used to show the effectiveness of the Building Division to administer and enforce state and local codes as they relate to new and existing construction. ISO performs this service for over 14,000 code enforcement departments across the United States.



In Florida, we have a unique awareness of the profound effect that local building codes can have on the overall outcomes of a hurricane or other major storm event. Municipalities that have well-enforced codes that are up to date help to minimize catastrophic damage during storm events. This has a positive impact on insurance rates.

One of the areas that the City of Punta Gorda excelled in was having only certified personnel performing commercial inspections in the areas of electrical, building, mechanical and plumbing. This results in valued practices that elevate the quality and consistency of the code enforcement process. ISO evaluates the administrative support for code enforcement within the jurisdiction including the adopted building codes and the modifications of those codes through ordinance, code enforcer qualifications, experience and education, zoning provisions, contractor/builder licensing requirements, public awareness programs, the building department's participation in code development activities, and the administrative policies and procedures. ISO also evaluates the plan review division and gives consideration to determining staffing levels, personnel experience, performance evaluation schedules, and the level of review of construction documents for compliance with the adopted building code of the jurisdiction being graded. The field inspection looks at staffing levels, personnel experience, performance evaluation schedules, and the level of the agency's review of building construction. Overall, the City of Punta Gorda consistently scores at or above other municipalities in all areas.

We are proud of the City of Punta Gorda Building Department's work that establishes that the homes in which the citizens of the community reside, the buildings in which they work, and the buildings in which they dine, shop, and conduct business meet the adopted standards when these buildings are constructed. To further protect consumers it is recommended that you verify that any contractor you are hiring to do any type of building work is actually licensed to perform the requested work. For the City of Punta Gorda contractors please check <https://www.puntagorda-online.com/Click2GovOL3/businesslicensesearch.html>. Charlotte County also has a similar portal that verifies contractor licenses. The Charlotte Desoto Building Industry Association is also an excellent source of contractor information <https://cdbia.com/>. Finally, following up from last week's column, if you are looking for a unique restaurant to try in downtown Punta Gorda this weekend, you can also check out Toula's located at 119 West Marion Avenue.

- **Comcast** – For this week's update, Comcast's construction team completed 16 pole transfers at the following addresses: 2599 and 2421 W. Marion Ave., 1339 Aquí Esta, 509 and 501 Berry St., 808 W. Olympia Ave., 2051 and 2061 W. Marion Ave., 197 Maria Ct., 501 Shreve St., 319 and 399 Durrance St., 351, 359 and 403 Gill St. Charlotte County was doing work in the right of way this past week and accidentally cut five Comcast lines in Punta Gorda. Techs were diverted to fix those as they were outage issues. If you have a more than one pole in your front yard and an old pole that hasn't been taken down, if wires are hanging on the new pole or any other concern about this project, please email Mayor Matthews with your name, address, contact phone and email WITH PHOTOS to support your request, and send to lmattews@cityofpuntafordafl.com. The City Manager and Mayor Matthews are sharing the emails with both companies so all properties get restored.
- **City Council Meeting** – City Council meets at 9 a.m. on July 7 Items of interest include:
 - Fiscal Year 2022 General Fund Budget Update
 - BSI Seawall Emergency Repair
 - BSI and PGI Canal Maintenance Assessments
- **Promote Punta Gorda "Small Business Spotlight"** – City of Punta Gorda business owners are invited to take part in Promote Punta Gorda. This is a small business spotlight to focus on the businesses that are at the heart of Florida's Harborside Hometown. Small business is a critical economic driver for the City. It is only with the partnership with business that the City can fulfill its mission to preserve and enhance Punta Gorda's identity as a vibrant waterfront community, unique in character and history; and as a desirable place to live, work, and visit. Promote Punta Gorda shines the light on the many business owners and their offerings. Small business owners within the City limits of Punta Gorda are eligible to have their business featured on the City's social media channels and in the Weekly Highlights Report. To sign up to be in the spotlight visit <http://www.ci.punta-gorda.fl.us/i-want-to/promote-punta-gorda-business-spotlight> or call (941) 575-3394 for more information.

Upcoming Events

- Charlotte Harbor Event Center, 75 Taylor St. For additional information, visit <https://www.charlotteharborecc.com/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/#>
- July 3, 4, Fisherman's Village Independence Weekend Celebration, 1200 W. Retta Esplanade, for more information contact mkting@fishville.com
- July 4, Fourth-Fest Independence Day Celebration & Fireworks , Laishley Park, 96 Nesbit St., for more information visit www.smugglersevents.com
- Oct. 2, Walk to End Alzheimer's, Laishley Park, 96 Nesbit St., for more information visit https://act.alz.org/site/TR/Walk2021/FL-FloridaGulfCoast?pg=entry&fr_id=14378
- Oct. 23, Out of the Darkness Suicide Prevention Walk, Laishley Park, 96 Nesbit St., for more information contact, tsullivan@afsp.org.
- Nov. 6, C.A.S.T. for Kids Charlotte Harbor, Laishley Park, 96 Nesbit St., for more information visit, <http://castforkids.org/events/>
- Nov. 6, Punta Gorda Elks Lodge 2606 Veteran's Parade, 10 a.m. Taylor Rd. to W. Retta Esplanade for more information contact Charles Moores at cam4fire@yahoo.com



Lot Mowing

The City has completed mowing the following areas:

Colony Point (Colony Point Drive, W. Marion Avenue., Socorro and Coronado Drives.).
PGI (Bal Harbor and Ryan Boulevards, Deborah and Casey Key Drives, and Suzi St).

Urban Design

- **July 14 City Council Meeting Presentation** – The project team will provide an update on the Northbound Tamiami Trail (US 41) Vision Study. This study project is a cooperative partnership between the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) District One and local governments to explore enhancements to an roadway resurfacing project scheduled to occur in 2024 along Tamiami Trail (US 41 NB) from W William Street to the Barron Collier Bridge through the heart of historic downtown Punta Gorda. The project update will include a brief summary of the public and stakeholder input to date; technical analysis including crash history and travel demand projections; and conceptual design alternatives. The primary focus of this planning project is identifying ways to meet the travel demands of our growing community and region while maximizing the safety of all roadway users in the downtown area. More information on this planning project visit the Florida Department of Transportation project website at: <http://www.swflroads.com/us41/tamiami-trail-vision-study> .


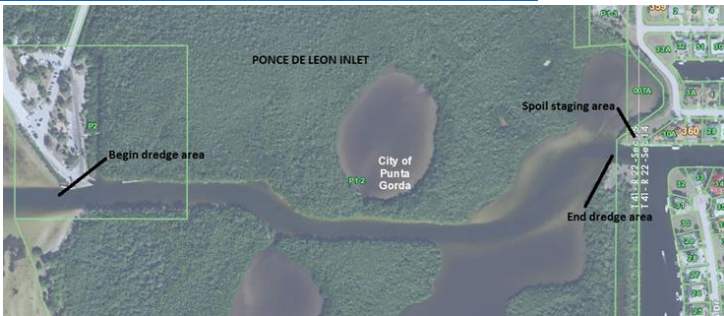
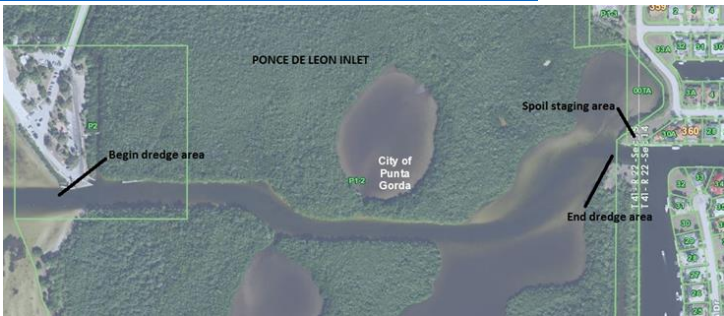
- Planning Corner – Form-Base Code: Code Workshop Summary**
 - In the first video, City staff and the consultants summarized the updates being made to the City's Comprehensive Plan and Land Development Regulations – specifically the addition of form-based codes. In the second installment, City staff summarized the Code Workshop and the consultants explained the results from the surveys! To watch the video, click here: <https://youtu.be/3ef2XyM0flg>.



For more information, please visit <https://www.puntagordamasterplan.com/>.

Public Works

Canal Maintenance

- Bass and Snook Inlet Dredging** – The dredging operation at the Bass and Snook Inlet is complete, however the contractor still needs to restore Elizabeth Park which was used as a staging area. For additional 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., Monday through Friday.
 
- How to Find out If Your Seawall Is Scheduled for Replacement** – Residents have been asking how they know when their seawall is scheduled for replacement and how the process works. Every year the City replaces approximately 7,000 lineal feet of seawall. By utilizing the Seawall Assessment Data, the seawall replacement program is planned a year in advance (unexpected seawall failures or seawalls that are inspected and found to be at extreme risk of failure are given top priority and may bump planned projects to the following year). The annual list of seawall replacements can be found on the Canal Maintenance website. To see if your seawall is scheduled for replacement: <https://www.ci.punta-gorda.fl.us/home/showpublisheddocument/11454/637352343548330000>.
 
- Ponce Inlet Dredging** – The dredging operation at Ponce Inlet is complete, however the contractor still needs to restore the vacant lot at the southerly end of Colony Point Drive which was used as a staging area. For additional 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.
 

- **Seawall Replacement Projects** - The seawall replacement contractor has nine projects under construction and 18 projects completed in Punta Gorda Isles. There are 26 seawall replacement projects scheduled for Punta Gorda Isles. All seawall replacement projects are completed for Burnt Store Isles this fiscal year. A seawall project is not considered complete until the sod has been placed.
 - Crews filled depressions at 5 locations.
 - Crews removed one large piling from one location and removed two large pieces of wood board from another location.
 - Crews manufactured (30) 12.5' foot seawall panels.

Engineering

- **Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Sidewalk Ramp Improvements** – Five ramps have been updated within the last two weeks. Additional work is pending the contractor's schedule.
- **Adrienne Street Pier** – The contractor received the pile jackets and materials that were backordered and work has commenced with pile jacket replacements. The pier will remain closed to the public for additional work.
- **Boca Grande Drainage Improvements** – Bi-weekly design project update meetings continue. Design work continues for the 60% to 90% plans and permit modifications.
- **City Wide Drainage Swale Regrading** – City staff and the contractor have reviewed all work completed in 2021 by JRL Underground Utilities. A punch list was created and the contractor has indicated that they will begin work on the punch list after July 4.
- **Taylor Street and West Charlotte Avenue Stop Sign** – This intersection is now a four way stop. Drivers and pedestrians are requested to use extreme caution while drivers become aware of the new traffic control devices. For additional information on this project, please contact City of Punta Gorda Public Works Department at (941) 575-5050 between the business hours of 8 a.m. - 4:30 p.m., Mon. through Fri.

Police

- **Police Officer Testing** – The police department conducts new hire testing continually in order to be prepared for future openings. We are currently accepting applications for the position of Police Officer. Testing will be held on Aug. 23 and oral board interviews scheduled on Aug. 24 and 25. 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 Aug. 30.
- **Internship Program** – The police department is currently accepting internship applications for the Fall Semester of 2021 and Spring Semester 2022. 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. Spots fill up quickly so we encourage potential interns to apply today! To apply for any of these positions or for more information please visit www.pgjobs.com (941) 575-5571 or employeedevelopment@pgorda.us for more information.

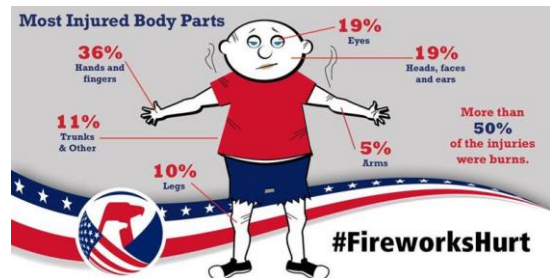
- **Volunteers in Policing (VIP) Program** – The police department has an active and diverse volunteer program including vehicle patrol, bike patrol, marine patrol, community services, and more. We are always looking for dedication volunteers. Members of the community interested in volunteering are encouraged to contact the Volunteer Staff Coordinator at (941) 575-5536.

Fire

- **Visit from New Operation Cooper Street** – Students from the New Operation Cooper Street Summer Camp visited Punta Gorda Fire Station One on June 26. The group of 20 students learned what life is like at the fire-house, toured Punta Gorda Truck-One, and met the on-duty crew. Battalion Chief John Briggs, Lieutenant Alex Davenport, Firefighter Josh Roebuck, Fire Marshal Jennifer Molnar, and Fire Inspector TJ Smith did an excellent job teaching the students about fire prevention, fire safety, and water safety. At the end of the tour each student received a goody bag with fun activities, a fire helmet, and information on fire safety to take home.



- **July 4 Safety Tips** – In 2018 approximately 19,500 fires started by fireworks were reported in the United States. When celebrating with fireworks, practice the following safety precautions:
 - Store fireworks in a cool, dry place away from children and pets
 - Never give fireworks to small children, and do not point a firework toward people, animals, vehicles or flammable materials. Always follow the instructions on the packaging.
 - Light fireworks in an open area, away from others. The person lighting fireworks should wear proper eye protection.
 - Light only one firework at a time, and never attempt to relight a “dud.”
 - Keep a supply of water close by as a precaution. However, if an emergency occurs do not delay calling for emergency services.

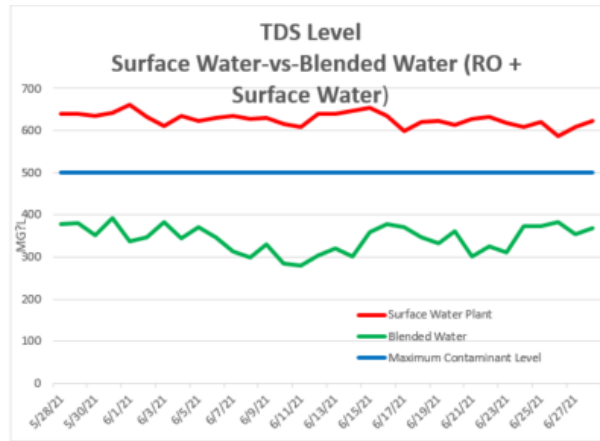


Grill fires account for approximately 10,000 house fires a year in the United States. Use the following practices to avoid a grill fire:

- Never leave a grill unattended while in use.
- Never grill indoors—always ensure you are grilling in an open location, away from anything that could catch fire (don’t forget to look up for trees or other fire hazards).
- Keep pets and small children away from the grill.
- Use long-handed tools that are made for cooking on the grill.
- Be sure to turn off propane when finished. If using a charcoal grill, ensure that coals are disposed of properly, only when completely cooled.

Utilities

Groundwater R.O. update



Water Treatment Plant Operations

- 38.5 MG delivered to the distribution system with a 5.5 MG daily average
- Peace River Manasota Regional Water Supply Authority Emergency Interconnect – Receiving 950 gallons per minute from the new Interconnect (Phase 1 Pipeline). Sending 1,111 gallons per minute from the tank on 17 (Phase 1A Pipeline).
- Rainfall June 2020 13.10" June 2021 8.50" July 2020 2.40" July 2021 0.00"
- Hardness is a measurement of calcium and magnesium ions naturally occurring in the raw water. Currently "moderately hard" – Grains of Hardness 10 ppm –Total hardness 172 ppm
- TDS for July 1 – Current 383 ppm, Low 277 ppm, High 595 ppm, 12 Year Avg. 426 ppm
- Reservoir July 1– Current 5.25', Record Low 5.00', Record High 6.93', 55 Year Avg. 5.53'

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.
- **Code Enforcement** – (three regular and two alternates) Meets monthly on the fourth Wednesday at 9 a.m. in City Council Chambers. City residency required. Seven-member board with two alternate members. Three-year terms. Maximum of three terms OR partial term plus two more terms. Financial disclosure required. Makes recommendations to City Council on variances.
- **Planning Commission** – Meets the fourth Monday at 2 p.m. in City Council Chambers. Must be City resident. Seven member board with two alternate members. Three year terms – maximum of three terms. Makes recommendations to City Council with regard to amending, extending or adding to the comprehensive plan for the physical development of the City, platting or subdividing land within the City and adopting and amending a zoning ordinance.

- **Building Board** – (one contractor) Meets monthly on 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 OR partial term plus two more 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.