

Weekly Highlights Report July 16, 2021

City Manager

- **City Manager Column** – The work of the City of Punta Gorda and the Charlotte County area has been recognized by the Milken Institute. The Milken Institute is a nonprofit, nonpartisan think tank that catalyzes practical, scalable solutions to global challenges. In collaboration with the Center for Regional Economics, the institute has issued the Best-Performing Cities 2021 Foundations for Growth and Recovery report. The report highlights cities driving economic growth nationwide, including those with businesses creating new jobs, and exhibit policy and investment choices that positively influence the community's economic outcomes.



In the 2021 report, the Punta Gorda Metropolitan Statistical Area has improved from a 2020 rank of 39th to a 2021 rank of 11th in tier one small cities. The report cites one-year wage growth, short-term job growth, and a unique positive year-on-year job growth. These results are particularly impressive given that majority of jobs are in the service arena.

While those results are encouraging, the report also cites areas of opportunity. The region has room to grow in the area of high-tech industrial specializations. Although the area was 170th in high-tech gross domestic product (GDP) growth, this is an improving statistic as high tech GDP has grown 58.6 percent over the previous five years. The other area of opportunity noted is housing affordability. Low housing affordability is seen as a liability to the area. The authors noted the age distribution as being more even in Punta Gorda than other small cities from the outside looking in, citing a population of only 56 percent of the population aged 65 and older as a positive. Other positives include the investment in the City's recovery post-Hurricane Charley and the development of the tourist industry. They attribute the high local real estate demand to investments in amenities such as local parks and an improved downtown area due to careful planning.

Preservation of our City's unique assets and improvement in the availability of affordable housing are two large areas of current focus for the City. Progress is being made in affordable housing with the potential expansion of the Verandas III on Airport Road. I have also placed a new internal focus on forecasting the needs of the city departments and divisions to meet the goals and objectives of long-term plans, including maintaining the City's unique assets. This includes developing a clear understanding of operating impact for each Capital Improvement Project, staffing needs, and equipment needs for the City.

Careful planning also continues with the development of form-based codes to produce predictable built results and a high-quality public realm by using physical form (rather than separation of uses) as the organizing principle for the code to continue to preserve our small-town character while promoting diversity, economic development and sustainability. *Readers may reach City Manager Greg Murray at citymgr@cityofpuntagordafl.com or by calling (941) 575-3302.*

- **Comcast** – Comcast completed five more pole wire transfers this week at the following addresses: 2336 Ryan Blvd., 2701 Poinciana Ct., 2311 Shreve St., 200 Pompano Terrace and 515 Tarpon Way. They are almost to the end of the original list of poles they were charged with moving wires from. They have to do a drive around and check with FPL next week to see what other poles are ready for them. 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 and contact phone and email WITH PHOTOS to support your request, and send to lmattthews@cityofpuntagordafl.com. The City Manager and Mayor Matthews are sharing the emails with both companies so all properties get restored.
- **Taskforce for Abandoned African-American Cemeteries** – Councilmember Cummings was just appointed by Secretary of State Laurel Lee to represent local government on the Taskforce for Abandoned African-American Cemeteries. This taskforce was created by the Florida Legislature this session through CS/CS/HB 37. His term begins immediately and will continue until the expiration of the task force in March 2022. He will be attending the inaugural meeting of the Task Force in Tallahassee on July 20.
- **Web Services** – Online Services such as Utility Billing, Building Permits, Code Enforcement and Occupational Licenses will be unavailable July 16 through July 19 for the installation of new software.
- **City Council Meeting** – City Council met at 9 a.m. on July 14. Items of interest included:
 - Peace River Wildlife Center lease amendment request
 - Planned Development Punta Gorda Housing Authority loan approval
 - Adoption of a proposed millage rate of 3.9500 mills and setting of public hearing for FY2022 budget for Wednesday, September 8, 2021, at 5:01 p.m. in the City Council Chambers.
 - 41NB Tamiami Trail Vision Study update

City Council will be on summer break until the August 25 City Council meeting.

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/#>
- October 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
- October 23, Out of the Darkness Suicide Prevention Walk, Laishley Park, 96 Nesbit St., for more information contact, tsullivan@afsp.org.
- November 6, C.A.S.T. for Kids Charlotte Harbor, Laishley Park, 96 Nesbit St., for more information visit, <http://castforkids.org/events/>
- November 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, W. Marion Avenue. Socorro and Coronado Drives.).

PGI (Bal Harbor, and Ryan Boulevards, Deborah and Casey Key Drives and Suzy Street).

Downtown and Historic District (W. Marion, and W. Olympia Avenues, Shreve and Harvey Streets.)

East Side and the area behind Dunkin Donuts (E. Marion and E Olympia Avenues, Narranja, E Henry, and Cooper Streets).

Burnt Store Isles (Monaco and Macedonia Drives, Tripoli Boulevard, Madrid Boulevards)

Burnt Store Meadows (Areas of Tamiami Tr., N. Blue Sage, S. Blue Sage, Royal Poinciana, and Gold Tree).

Urban Design

- **Veterans' Park** – After many years of behind the scenes planning, volunteers worked with staff and a contractor to complete the paver installation at Veterans Park. The completed section lies in front of the Punta Gorda Army Air Field mural and are laid according to the branches of service.



- **Planning Corner – New Law** — As of July 1, Florida Statute Chapter 162 no longer permits anonymous violation complaints.

You must give your name and address before we can accept your complaint.

Florida Statute Chapter 162, 162.06 (1) (b); and 162.21 (3) (b): A Code Enforcement Officer may not initiate

enforcement proceedings for a potential violation of a duly enacted code or ordinance by way of an anonymous complaint. A person who reports a potential violation of a code or an ordinance must provide his or her name and address to the respective local government before an enforcement proceeding may occur.



If a complainant states that he or she has a substantial fear of retaliation or of status-based legal jeopardy; **which must be expressed by the complainant**, then: The complainant **must be advised** that if the claim is a false claim of fear of retaliation or of status-based legal jeopardy, then they are liable for all costs incurred by the City of Punta Gorda in investigating the claim of violation, including costs of personnel, equipment, testing, and reasonable costs and attorney fees if the City of Punta Gorda brings an action to prosecute the complainant or to collect amounts made payable.

Public Works

Canal Maintenance

- **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>.
- **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 43 locations.
 - Crews patched/repared (four linear feet) of seawall cap/seam.
 - Crews conducted sonar depth reading for the Burnt Store Isles.

Engineering

- **Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Sidewalk Ramp Improvements** – The contractor continues with demolition, construction and updates for (ADA) sidewalk ramps
- **Adrienne Street Pier** – The contractor is tentatively scheduled to complete pile jacket installations this week, weather permitting. Work is also being completed on the decking and hand rails.
- **Boca Grande Drainage Improvements** – Bi-weekly design project update meetings continue. The design is in process, with 60% to 90% plans complete.
- **City Wide Drainage Swale Regrading** – The contractor has indicated that they will begin work on the punch list next week. A new swale contractor has been selected. Swale regrading will begin once everything has been finalized to commence work.
- **Henry Street Sidewalk** – All surveying information has been received and the design will continue. We will begin coordination with FDOT on work within their drainage easement and the sidewalk connection at US41.

Police

- **New Bicycle Laws** – Governor DeSantis signed into law a bill designed to improve bicycle safety. The Punta Gorda Police Department Volunteer Bike Unit will be out ensuring that the community is educated on these changes. The following changes went into effect on July 1,:
 - Vehicles who drive left of center in order to overtake a bicycle may do so even in a no-passing zone as long as the vehicle is able to provide the bicyclist three feet of clearance. If the vehicle cannot provide three feet of clearance they must wait until they can safely pass.
 - A vehicle turning right while passing a bicyclist can do so only if the bicyclist is at least 20 feet from the intersection and at a safe distance from the vehicle.
 - Bicyclists riding in groups must come to a complete stop at stop signs, but then may proceed through the intersection in groups of 10 or fewer. Motorists are required to let the group pass before proceeding through the intersection.
 - Bicyclists may temporarily ride two abreast on roadways with substandard-width lanes (the majority of roadways in Florida) to avoid hazards in the roadway or to overtake another bicyclist.
 - This bill also includes requirements for an educational and awareness campaign and requires that the State of Florida add bicycle safety questions to the bank of questions for driver's license exams.
- **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 August 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 August 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.

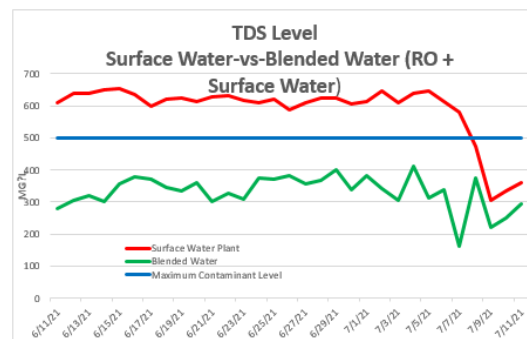
Fire

- **Boys and Girls Club Visit** – City Fire and Police Departments hosted several (daily) groups from the Charlotte County Boys and Girls Club. The tours include interactive questions and answer sessions as well as hands on education.



Utilities

Groundwater R.O. update



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 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 July 2020 2.40" July 2021 9.55"
- Hardness is a measurement of calcium and magnesium ions naturally occurring in the raw water. Currently "moderately hard" – Grains of Hardness 8 ppm –Total hardness 136 ppm
- TDS for July15 – Current 306 ppm, Low 247 ppm, High 519 ppm, 12 Year Avg. 379 ppm
- Reservoir July 15– Current 5.72', Record Low 5.04', Record High 6.36', 55 Year Avg. 5.49'

City Clerk

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

- **Board of Zoning Appeals** – (three regular and two alternates) Meets the fourth Tuesday at 4 p.m. in City Council Chambers. City residency is 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** – (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.

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:
 - Athletic Solutions, 1844 Tamiami Trail, #A
 - Tanner Vacation, 809 Kings Court