

Weekly Highlights Report Dec. 17, 2021

City Manager

- **City Manager Column** – One of the most significant advantages of living in Southwest Florida is the weather. While our friends in the north are dealing with the challenges of plowing snow and shoveling sidewalks, we are fortunate to enjoy the great outdoors without the fear of frostbite. With our abundant sunshine and numerous parks, once you have applied your sunscreen and filled your water bottle, there are many free ways to spend time in Punta Gorda.



Each of the park settings in the city offers unique amenities. If you use website hits to measure park popularity, coming in first is Ponce Park. Located on the western edge of the city at 3400 Ponce de Leon Parkway, Ponce de Leon Park overlooks the vast expanse of Charlotte Harbor. The park's amenities include a boat ramp, fishing piers, a mangrove boardwalk, a small playground, an open-air chapel, and a picnic pavilion. The park also has a sandy beach area that is popular for watching the sunset and the boats cruising in and out of the channel into the Punta Gorda Isles canal system. Pets are not allowed in Ponce Park.

Laishley Park comes in second for the number of website views this week. Located at 120 Laishley Court, Laishley Park is a pet-friendly park. The park contains 17 acres with amenities including a 400-foot fishing pier, parking facilities, interactive fountain, concert area, event lawn, Veterans Memorial Garden, and walking paths along Punta Gorda Pathways. Harborwalk waterfront restaurants and retail services are also available in the park at the Laishley Crab House Centre.

Gilchrist Park also tops the list of popular places to enjoy the outdoors. Located at 400 W. Retta Esplanade in historic Punta Gorda, Gilchrist Park contains 11 acres stretched along the waterfront between the downtown and Fishermen's Village. Gilchrist Park provides sweeping views of the Charlotte Harbor. Park amenities include a large playground; basketball, tennis, pickleball courts; fishing pier, gazebo, picnic pavilions, and lots of open green space. Smaller events, including weddings, craft shows, and impromptu concerts, are also held in the park. Restrooms are available in the park with a doggie water fountain (dogs allowed on the Harborwalk).

A crown jewel of Punta Gorda is the Harborwalk. This waterfront walk is two and a half miles along the beautiful Charlotte Harbor shoreline. There is always something to see and do along this vibrant pathway with Mangrove forests, sweeping vistas, shops, waterfront dining, historical sites, and Laishley and Gilchrist Parks. The Harborwalk continues into Linear Park that is built on a historic railroad bed abandoned in the late 1890s. This portion of the shared-use path runs along a tidal canal that gently sweeps through the historic neighborhoods of Punta Gorda. It runs from the southern end of the city center to Fishermen's Village, and passes along the History Park and Punta Gorda Library. Along the path there are several fitness zones where you can enhance your walk with some exercise stations.

These are just a few of the places that make Punta Gorda what so many of its residents have spent a lifetime seeking. It is a place that truly is a "harbor", offering safety, comfort, and a place to set forth on more of life's great adventures. *Readers may reach City Manager Greg Murray at citymgr@cityofpuntagordafl.com or by calling (941) 575-3302.*

- **Happy Holidays** – The government offices of the City of Punta Gorda will be closed on Dec. 23, and Dec. 24, for the Christmas holiday; and Dec. 31, for the New Year’s holiday. These closures will affect residential collection services for Friday and Saturday customers only. **There will be no changes to residential recycling services.** All residential services including household trash and yard waste normally collected on Fridays will be collected on the preceding Thursday. Please refer to schedule below:

- Residential services normally handled on Friday, December 24 will be collected on Thursday, December 23.
- Residential services normally handled on Friday, December 31 will be collected on Thursday, December 30.
- Residential services normally handled on Saturday, December 25, will be collected on Friday, December 24.
- Residential services normally handled on Saturday, January 1 will be collected on Friday, December 31.

Commercial customers of the City of Punta Gorda will notice NO CHANGE in collection service during this holiday. For the disposal of real Christmas trees, place the tree at the curb for collection on your regular yard waste day. All decorations and lights must be removed before placing the tree out for collection. Artificial trees will be collected on your regular household trash day. As collection times may vary, based on the amount of trash placed out to be collected, residents are reminded to have all materials out at the curb NO LATER than 6 a.m. on the day of collection. If you have any questions, please call the City of Punta Gorda Public Works Department at (941)575-5050 Mon. – Fri., between the hours of 8 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.

- **Punta Gorda Chamber of Commerce Clydesdale Visit** – An estimated 3,000 people filled the downtown Punta Gorda City Marketplace on Thursday afternoon to watch the world-renowned Budweiser Clydesdales.



- **FPL Update** – FPL released a partial update to us this week with regard to the duplicate poles throughout the City. Two additional duplicate poles were removed, which brings the total to 412 poles completed. There are a number of duplicate poles that were also removed from Aqui Esta, Magdalena, Coronado and Bal Harbor Blvd., however those are not included yet in their report. There are 88 additional poles ready to be pulled, as well as 93 poles that still have wires/attachments on them. The 93 poles need utility companies to relocate the attachments to the new poles before they can be removed. The schedule has been somewhat disrupted due to the holiday and vacation schedules of their crews. More updated information will be reported in January. Additionally, Comcast repaired wires reported on Lido Drive in PGI.

Urban Design

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/#>
- [Punta Gorda Isles Civic Association, 2001 Shreve Street, for all community event and class information visit https://pgica.org/.](https://pgica.org/)
- Dec. 17, AMH Christmas Sing-along In the Park, Laishley Park. For more information contact Bruce (941) 676-2615.
- Dec. 18, Annual Saturday before Christmas Eve Boat Parade. For more information, visit <http://puntagordaboatparade.com/>
- Dec. 18, CHNEP Audubon Christmas Bird Count Volunteer Event, 9 a.m. at Ponce de Leon Park. <https://www.chnep.org/monthly-volunteer-events>.
- Dec. 24, Christmas Eve Services, Laishley Park. For more information, visit <https://deepcreekcommunitychurch.com/>
- Dec. 31, Punta Gorda Isles Civic Association, New Year's Eve Gala, 8:30 p.m., 2001 Shreve Street, sponsorship opportunities available. For more information or tickets visit <https://pgica.org/>.
- Dec. 31, New Year's Eve Celebration, Fishermen's Village. For more information, visit <https://www.fishville.com/events/>.
- Jan. 22, Fiesta Family 5K, Charlotte High School. For more information contact Teresa (941)575-5450 x 7031.
- Jan. 24, The Tribute Company concert at Burnt Store Presbyterian Church buy tickets and learn more at <http://www.bspconline.org>.
- Feb. 14, The Boys of D63 concert at Burnt Store Presbyterian Church buy tickets and learn more at <http://www.bspconline.org>.
- March 14, Everly Set concert at Burnt Store Presbyterian Church buy tickets and learn more at <http://www.bspconline.org>.

Lot Mowing Program

- The City has completed mowing the following areas:
 - PGI (Magdalena Drive, Via Veneto, W Henry Street, Appian Drive, and Columbian Drive).
 - PGI (Bal Harbor Boulevard, Deborah Drive, Ryan Boulevard, Suzi Street, and Casey Key Drive).
 - PGI Bird Section (Almar Drive, Albatross Drive, Whippoorwill Boulevard, and Turtle Dove Boulevard).
 - Colony Point (Colony Point Drive, West Marion Avenue, Socorro Drive, and Coronado Drive).

- **The Planning Corner Historic Preservation** – Encourages the protection of historic and archaeological resources that are associated with important past events, themes, and people; that are representative of periods and types of architecture; possess high artistic value; or that are likely to yield valuable information about the past.



Today, we primarily associate historic preservation with buildings, but it is a broader effort that began mainly in museums. Now, any item, place or building of historical, architectural or cultural significance can fall under the protection of a historic preservationist. The actual job of preservation is much more complex. It is important not only to know how to preserve and protect historic buildings, but we need to be able to research, determine what’s worthy of historic designation and navigate local, state and national regulations.

Benefits of historic preservation are diverse: it serves to maintain and celebrate the beauty and pride of a community and foster an appreciation of local and national history and heritage. At a time when urban sprawl and cookie cutter developments are prolific, and result in neighborhoods in which everything looks the same, it becomes even more important for communities to hold on to their identities through historic preservation efforts.

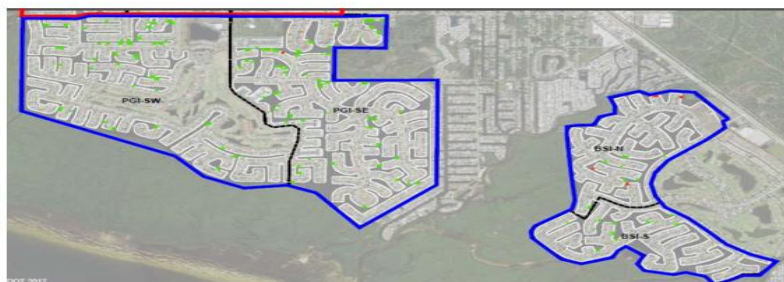
Having the structural frame or the “skin” of a building in place that can be upgraded or repaired to meet current codes often constitutes a substantial savings when compared with the cost of demolition, transportation of debris to landfills, mining raw materials for manufacture into new building components, transportation to the jobsite, and installation. This type of adaptive re-use is not only cost effective, but sustainable on various levels. It is sustainable from an environmental perspective as previously illustrated, but it is also sustainable economically by spending money locally on repair and reconstruction rather than on new materials manufactured at distant facilities.

By retaining much of the original architectural fabric and historical character of the building, these adaptive re-use projects support cultural sustainability as well. When considered in this light, historic preservation can be a powerful tool used to strengthen local economies and stabilize property values.

Public Works

Canal Maintenance

- **Seawall Assessment** – City staff is currently performing the Annual Seawall Assessment during low tide periods through March. City staff will be inspecting an estimated 303,868 lineal feet of seawalls in the southerly half of Punta Gorda Isles and all of Burnt Store Isles (blue zone) 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. To date staff has collected 923 points of data covering 54,648 lineal feet.



- **Seawall Replacement Projects** - Punta Gorda Isles has 42 seawall replacement projects scheduled for this fiscal year and the seawall replacement contractor has four projects under construction and four projects completed. Burnt Store Isles has seven seawall replacement projects scheduled for this fiscal year and at this time none are under construction. A seawall replacement project can consist of multiple properties. A seawall project is not considered complete until the sod has been placed.
 - Crews filled depressions at 30 locations.
 - Crews patched and repaired (112' linear feet) of seawall cap/seam.
 - Crews manufactured (20)10' foot seawall panels.
- **Seawall Replacement Schedule** - The annual Seawall Replacement Work Program can be found on the City of Punta Gorda website under Canal Maintenance <https://www.ci.punta-gorda.fl.us/home/showpublisheddocument/12550/637643718591830000>. Every year the City replaces approximately 12,000 linear 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).

Engineering

- **Boca Grande Drainage Improvements** – The engineering consultant has received additional survey data for the project and is incorporating it into the project. The engineer of record anticipates submitting the Environmental Resource Permit application to the Southwest Florida Water Management District in early January.
- **Henry Street Sidewalk** - Final construction plan revisions and drainage calculations are being completed. Coordination will continue with FDOT on work within their drainage easement and the sidewalk connection at US41.
- **Paving Program Street Resurfacing** – Fiscal year 2022 paving program mill and resurface on 5.6 miles of city roadway is complete with the exception of placement of the pavement striping to be installed by the end of the month. The paving program can be found on the City of Punta Gorda website under Engineering [Paving Program | City of Punta Gorda, FL \(punta-gorda.fl.us\)](https://www.ci.punta-gorda.fl.us/home/showpublisheddocument/12550/637643718591830000). For additional information please contact Linda Sposito, Sr. Project Manager, Punta Gorda Public Works at (941)575-5060.
- **Harbor Walk West End Lighting** – The installation of five additional decorative lights street between Shreve Street and the tidal bridge at the west end of Retta Esplanade is nearing completion. The lights have been installed and are operational. Final grading and sodding remain to be completed.

Sanitation

- **Harbor Walk West End Lighting** – The installation of five additional decorative lights street between Shreve Street and the tidal bridge at the west end of Retta Esplanade is nearing completion. The lights have been installed and are operational. Final site cleanup will be completed by early next week.

Police

- **VIP Program** – The Volunteers In Policing (VIP) program contributed a total of 869 hours of volunteer time to the City of Punta Gorda during the month of November 2021. 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.



- **Shop with a Cop** – Officers participated alongside the Charlotte County Sheriff’s Office in Shop with a Cop. This is an amazing program and we are honored to be a part of it and enjoyed shopping with the kids.

OPEN POSITIONS

- **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. We will be holding a virtual testing process in January. Applications must be received by Jan. 5. The written exam will be completed online anytime between Jan.7, and Jan. 13, with virtual oral board exams conducted via Zoom on Jan. 24, and Jan. 25. We are currently only accepting applications from candidates who are currently law enforcement certified or Equivalency of Training (EOT) eligible.
- **Public Safety Dispatcher 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 Public Safety Dispatcher. Testing will be held on Jan. 31.
- **Internship Program** –The police department is currently accepting internship applications for the Summer Semester and Fall Semester of 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 and the selection process can be competitive, so we encourage potential interns to apply today! The deadline to apply for the Summer Semester of 2022 is March 15.
- **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 dedicated volunteers. 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.

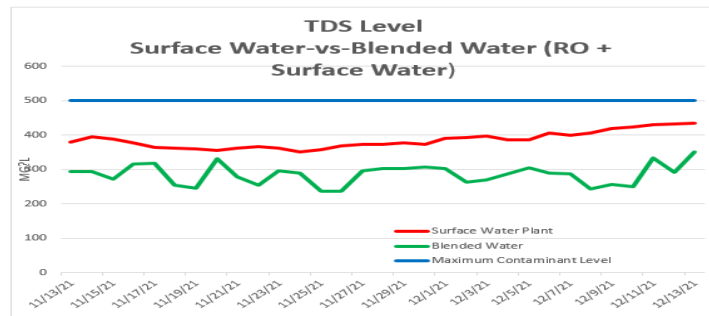
Fire

- **Christmas Cheer** – Under the leadership of Fire Marshal Jen Molnar and with generous donations from local residents and businesses students at the Baker Center were treated to holiday gifts. The smiles on the children’s faces were heartwarming. Special thanks to all those that made this happen again this year.



Utilities

Groundwater R.O Update



Water Treatment Plant Operations

- 49.7 MG delivered to the distribution system with a 7.1 MG daily average
- Peace River Manasota Regional Water Supply Authority Emergency Interconnect – Receiving 750 gallons per minute from the new Interconnect (Phase 1 Pipeline). Sending 750 gallons per minute from the tank on 17 (Phase 1A Pipeline).
- Rainfall Nov. 2020 4.70” Nov. 2021 3.95” “Dec. 2020 2.80” “Dec. 2021 0.00”
- Hardness is a measurement of calcium and magnesium ions naturally occurring in the raw water. Currently "moderately hard" – Grains of Hardness 7 ppm –Total hardness 128 ppm
- TDS Dec. 16 – Current 264 ppm, Low 206 ppm, High 580 ppm, 12 Year Avg. 426 ppm
- Reservoir Dec. 16 – Current 5.13', Record Low 4.80', Record High, 6.69' 56 Year Average 5.17'.

Wastewater Treatment

- **Maintenance** – Team members have started mowing fields one, three, and five. The contracted vendor has finished removing the old interior coating from the North tank at the Master Pumping Facility and has started to repair the deterioration on the walls. Our maintenance staff removed the old tank to tank overflow pipe which will be replaced with a new unit. Team members were able to haul and inject 357000 gallons of bio-solids to field two this week. Staff continues to work on the Filter Press project and have wired power to the cake pump and ordered prefabricated catwalk sections. Work has also been done to build a cover for the sludge pump.
- **Operations** – The average daily flow for the past week was 2.44 million gallons for a total of 17.05 million gallons of wastewater being treated this week.

City Clerk

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

- **Board of Zoning Appeals** – (one regular and two alternate) Meet 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 or partial term plus two more terms. Financial disclosure required. Makes recommendations to City Council on variances to City Code.
- **Code Enforcement** – (two alternate) 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.

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:

- Megan MacDonald, Salon Artworks, 210 Taylor Street