

Weekly Highlights Report Mar. 18, 2022

City Manager

- **City Manager Column** – The beautiful weather, gorgeous scenery, premier restaurants, unique shops, and friendly community continue to be a strong draw of people to the City of Punta Gorda. Our website analytics show a strong interest in Punta Gorda from people living in Miami, Tampa, Cape Coral, and Orlando in Florida locally. Interest in Punta Gorda is coming from outside the state as well. New York State leads the pack of web visits, followed closely by Ohio, Virginia, Illinois, Michigan, Minnesota, and Georgia.



In addition to the information on the home page of our website, our visitors are drawn to human resource employment opportunities. As I've mentioned before, the city offers career positions in everything from entry-level to director level within various divisions and departments. Great benefits, and a Council and citizenry that value the city's employees make the city an employer of choice.

It will come as no surprise to most that the Building Department page is one of the top-visited areas of the website. All areas of Punta Gorda are seeing building growth, and development of properties. So far this year, 76 Building Permits have been issued. This includes six multifamily, six duplexes, and sixty-four single-family residential permits. The city is currently at 94% built out in areas like PGI, and interest in the available lots remains high.

The City of Punta Gorda Utilities Department provides water and sewer service to customers both inside and outside the City Limits within the Utility Service Area. The Utilities Department is also experiencing an uptick in visits to their webpage. Utility customers can pay their bills through the web portal. Customers can also access utility rates in this area of the website. Change of ownership forms are also available for people wishing to transfer services to a new owner. Water restrictions and conservation measures are highlighted here as well. Twice-per-week watering allows customers additional flexibility for determining when to water. Residents are encouraged to water only if their lawn and landscape needs it and turn off irrigation systems when rain is forecasted. Watering days are determined by the last number of your address and must take place before 10 a.m. or after 4 p.m. The complete schedule is accessible at <https://www.ci.punta-gorda.fl.us/residents/code-compliance/water-restrictions> .

Also likely no surprise is the popularity of the city parks. Ponce Park attracts many visitors seeking information about everything from the boat ramp and dry beach to the boardwalk. Gilchrist Park and the Harborwalk catch the eye of many website explorers. With a playground, pavilions, and sports courts, this park offers something for everyone. Gilchrist is a don't miss stop for visitors and residents alike.

Finally, a quick reminder that the city seeks budget and strategic plan suggestions from our residents through March 31. Please email your comments to citymgr@cityofpuntagordafl.com. If you are new to the area and would like more information about making Florida's Harborside Hometown your new hometown, I encourage you to stop by the City Manager's Office at the City Hall Annex and pick up a Welcome to Punta Gorda brochure. *Readers may reach City Manager Greg Murray at citymgr@cityofpuntagordafl.com or by calling (941) 575-3302.*

- **City Council** – City Council met on Mar. 16 at 9 a.m. at the Historic City Hall. Items of interest included:
 - Approved the first reading of Overnight Parking in the Historic District Ordinance
 - Directed staff to move forward with options for safety signage along the Harborwalk
 - Approved changes to Utility Advisory Board and Burnt Store Isles Canal Advisory Committee bylaws
 - Listening session for resident input regarding FY2023 Budget and Strategic Plan. Residents can send comments to citymgr@cityofpuntagordafl.com.
- **Canal Maintenance Budget Workshops** – The proposed budgets for the fiscal year 2023 will be discussed at the next Canal Advisory Committee meetings. Burnt Store Isles will meet on Apr. 12 at 1:30 pm in City Council Chambers. Punta Gorda Isles will meet on Apr. 18, at 1:30 pm in City Council Chambers. The public is invited and will have an opportunity to speak.
- **FPL/Comcast Update** – FPL reported that there are currently 60 double poles that are ready to be removed now that all wires were transferred off the old poles. Several locations that have been reported to the Mayor are in process, including Baynard Rd., Aqui Esta and Bal Harbor, Palm Tree Dr., LaMancha Ct., St. Croix and a property on Aqui Esta. There is also a location on Ryan Blvd. that has three poles currently, including one with an osprey nest on it, which can only be removed when nesting season is over with. Additionally, another 68 poles still have FPL attachments on them, 96 have Comcast wires on them and 53 others have wires that belong to other utilities. All these wires will need to be moved to new poles before the old poles can be pulled. Comcast has cleaned up messy wires at several locations that were reported to them as well. . 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.

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/>.
- The Punta Gorda Historical Society will be hosting a variety of musicians in the Park on the second and fourth Wednesdays of each month, through May 2022 from 4 to 6 p.m. Bring your own chair and beverage of choice, peruse the Food Trucks for your dining pleasure. In lieu of admission fees, the Punta Gorda Historical Society requests your donations for the ongoing maintenance of our four History Park buildings. For more information visit www.puntagordahistory.com.
- Mar. 18-19, Premier Auto Auction, Charlotte Harbor Event and Conference Center, 75 Taylor St. For more information, visit <https://www.premierauctiongroup.com/vehicles>
- Mar. 19-20, Peace River National Art Show, Laishley Park. For more information, visit <https://visualartcenter.org/collections/peace-river-national-art-festival>
- Mar. 22, Punta Gorda Garden Club Flower Show, Isles Yacht Club. For more information visit <https://pggc.org/flower-show/>

- Mar. 26, Pedal and Play in Paradise, Laishley Park. For more information visit <http://pedalandplayinparadise.com/>
- Mar. 27, Punta Gorda Symphony Presents Brass on the Lawn: Renaissance and Classics, 26300 Airport Road, for more information visit <https://www.pgsymphony.org>
- Apr. 1, Port Charlotte Adventist School Walk-A-Thon, Laishley Park., For more information contact mercado@pcadventistschool.com
- April 2, Strongman Competition, Laishley Park Pavilions. For more information visit <https://www.facebook.com/events/2666695273476742/>
- Apr. 9, Loveland Center 5K Run, Laishley Park, 96 Nesbit St., For more information, visit <https://runsignup.com/Race/FL/PuntaGorda/LovelandCenterIncAbility5KRunFamilyWalk>
- Apr. 9-10, Bloom and Art, Art & Craft Show, Gilchrist Park, 400 W Retta Esplanade. For more information contact blueribboneventsllc@gmail.com
- Apr. 17, The Rock Calvary Chapel Easter Outreach, Laishley Park, 96 Nesbit St., For more information contact rich.therockcc@gmail.com
- Apr. 24, Punta Gorda Symphony Celebrates Judy Garland Centennial, 75 Taylor St., for more information visit <https://www.pgsymphony.org>.
- Apr. 30, Charlotte County Heart Walk, Laishley Park, 96 Nesbit St., for additional information, visit https://www2.heart.org/site/TR?fr_id=6422&pg=informational&type=fr_informational&sid=102022 [Charlotte County Heart Walk: Event Master Page - Heart Walk - American Heart Association](#)
- Apr. 30-May 2, Hibiscus Festival, Gilchrist Park, 400 W Retta Esplanade, contact teresadesguin@iheartmedia.com or visit <https://thehibiscusfestival.com/> for more information.

Lot Mowing Program

The City has completed trimming the following areas:

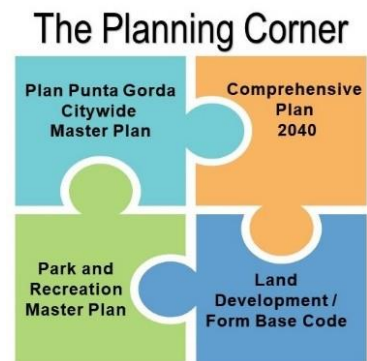
- PGI (Magdalena Drive, Via Veneto, W Henry Street, Appian Drive, and Columbian Drive).
- Burnt Store Isles (Monaco and Macedonia Drives, Tripoli Boulevard, Madrid Boulevard).
- Burnt Store Meadows (Areas of Tamiami Trail, N. Blue Sage, S. Blue Sage, Royal Poinciana, and Gold Tree).
- Downtown and Historic District (W. Marion Avenue, W. Olympia Avenue, Shreve Street, and Harvey Street)
- The Historic District East of 41 and the area behind Dunkin Donuts (E. Marion Avenue, E Olympia Avenue, Narranja Street, E. Henry Street, and Cooper Street).

Building

- **Flood Awareness** – The City of Punta Gorda celebrates Flood Awareness by increasing our citizens' knowledge of flood risks, the availability of flood insurance, flood protection measures, and preparing for emergencies. Did you know that most areas in Punta Gorda are potentially prone to some amount of flooding from excessive rainfall or tidal influences? The City has many flooding hazards, which do not follow a line on a map. The best protection is to know your hazard and be prepared! Everyone lives in an area with some flood risk—it's just a question of whether you live in a low-risk, moderate-risk, or high-risk flood area. A community's flood map indicates the area's flood zones. Each flood zone describes the flood risk for a particular area, and insurance companies then determine the requirements and costs of those flood zones. The City voluntarily participates in the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP), which provides our community with resources that help mitigate flooding effects. The NFIP also provides our residents with the opportunity to purchase flood insurance at reduced premium rates based on the City's floodplain management regulations. Go to the county's flood zone map to know your risk: <https://www.charlottecountyfl.gov/departments/public-safety/emergency-management/flood/> or for more information on flooding in general, go to: <https://www.floodsmart.gov/all-about-flood-maps>

Planning Corner

- **March is Florida Bicycle Month!** Florida Bicycle Month is a time to encourage bicycling and recognize its important role in providing transportation and recreation to millions of Florida's residents and visitors annually. Punta Gorda is a wonderful place to ride a bicycle year-round with great neighborhoods, parks, shopping districts, historic downtown, and the Punta Gorda Pathways linking them all together. To ensure that everyone can have a great time enjoying our beautiful city it is important to take safety into consideration.



On the street:

- Obey traffic signals and signs
- Bicycles must ride with the flow of traffic
- If a travel lane is not wide enough for the safe passage of both a motor vehicle and a bicycle the bicycle rider has the right to occupy the travel lane
- The driver of a motor vehicle must give a minimum of three feet of clearance to a person riding a bicycle
- On the sidewalk or shared use path:
- Bicycle rider or pedestrian must yield the right-of-way to motor vehicles when crossing a street
- Florida law requires motorists to stop anytime someone is actively crossing at an intersection, regardless of whether the crosswalk is marked or unmarked.
- Bicycle riders must yield to pedestrians and other slower users
- Bicycle riders must signal by ringing a bell or calling out "Passing on your left [or right]" when passing

Everywhere:

- Bicycle riders are required to have both a white front light and red rear light from dusk until dawn or when raining
- All bicycle riders under the age of 16 are required to wear helmets
- For more information on bicycle and pedestrian safety, please visit the City website at [Bicycling in Punta Gorda](#) or view a fun [Bicycle Safety Video](#) on the City's YouTube channel.

Public Works

Administration

- Citizens' Academy Urban Design Department Session – Urban Design hosted the Citizen's Academy on Tuesday, March 15, with an overview of the services provided by Urban Design Division; Planning Division, Zoning and Code Compliance Division, Building Division, and Coastal and Heartland National Estuary Partnership. Joan LeBeau Urban Design Directors team provided an in-depth informational session surrounding growth, land use, harbor preservation, and infrastructure. Lisa Hannon Zoning Official discussed the process and rules of Zoning and Code Compliance. Mitchell Austin Principle Planner shared with the group the process of the Citywide Master Plan along with a land development regulations update. Kathleen Croteau the Building Departments Acting Chief Building Official provided the group with the process of submitting plans from start to finish. Julie Ryan Sr. Project Manager shared a number of Capital Improvement projects happening throughout the City. The group will be hosted by the Public Works Department on Mar. 29.



Canal Maintenance

- Seawall Replacement Projects** - Punta Gorda Isles has 44 seawall replacement projects scheduled for fiscal year 2021/2022 and the seawall replacement contractor has 10 projects under construction and has completed eight projects. Burnt Store Isles has eight seawall replacement projects scheduled for fiscal year 2021/2022 and the seawall replacement contractor has four projects under construction at this time and has completed one project. 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 10 locations.
 - Crews manufactured (45) 10' ft., panels.
 - Crews completed the (40) Storm Boom drains filter replacement in the BSI community.
- 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).
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Engineering

- Railroad Crossings McKenzie Street** – The railroad has completed its upgrades to the crossing. The City continues to perform work on the roadway, storm sewer system, and sidewalk. Relining of storm drain pipes and inlet modifications are underway. Installation of flowable fill has been completed. Road and sidewalk base preparation continues with paving and pouring of sidewalks to follow.



- **Boca Grande Drainage Improvements** – Bi-weekly design project update meetings continue. The revised 90% plans have been received by staff for review and comment. The second round of the 2023 Cooperative Funding Initiative meeting is scheduled for Apr. 7, for the Southern region.
- **Harborwalk 2B parking and upland improvement project** – Site survey and layout are scheduled for the first two weeks in April. Coordination with FPL for pole relocations continues. Submittals for review and approval also continue to be received and reviewed for approval.
- **Wayfinding Signage** – Concrete foundations continue to cure. A tentative schedule has been provided by the contractor for installation the first week in May. Coordination continues with FDOT staff until the permit and project are closed.
- **City Wide Drainage Swale Regrading** – Work will begin on Parisian Ct., to excavate the swales on Mar. 21. Work on the swale regrading program has continued on Padre Island with the gathering of the pipe/box culvert inverts and setting of grade stakes in the Right of Way for the contractor to grade the swale.

Fire

- **Southwest Florida Honor Flight** – The Punta Gorda Fire Department has partnered with the Southwest Florida Honor Flight and Charlotte Harbor Parrothead club to assist with flying local Veterans to Washington D.C. in May. The plane will depart Punta Gorda early in the morning on May 14 and will go to Washington D.C. and return to Punta Gorda late that evening. Once in D.C. the veterans and their guardians will tour the war memorials then after a long day return to the plane for the trip back to Punta Gorda. The fire department personnel will assist with transporting as well as any basic medical needs encountered during the trip. A special thank you to the Charlotte Harbor Parrothead club for covering the expenses of the fire department personnel to provide medical stand by for the trip.



Police

- **Statewide Regional K9 Trials** – Chief Davis, Lieutenant Davoult, and the departments K9 handlers and K9s attended the Statewide Regional K9 Trials in Gulf Breeze, Florida.

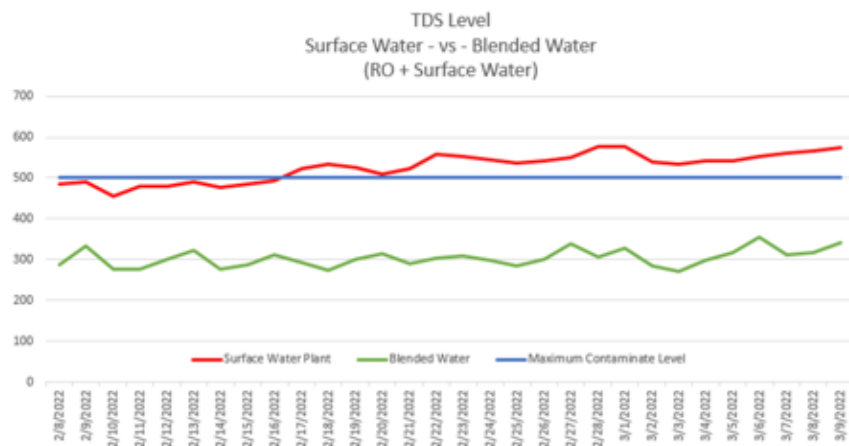
Open Positions

- **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 June. Applications must be received by May. The written exam will be completed online anytime between June 1, and June 9, with virtual oral board exams conducted via Zoom on June 20, and June 21. 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.
 - **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 Mar. 4.
 - **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.
- To apply for employment or for more information, please visit www.pgpdjobs.com or contact our Employee Development Coordinator at (941) 575-5571 or by email at employeedevelopment@pgorda.us.**

Utilities

- **R.O. Plant**



Water Treatment Plant Operations

- 56.5 MG delivered to the distribution system with a 8.1 MG daily average
- Peace River Manasota Regional Water Supply Authority Emergency Interconnect – Receiving 1600 gallons per minute from the new Interconnect (Phase 1 Pipeline). Sending 1250 gallons per minute from the tank on 17 (Phase 1A Pipeline).
- Rainfall Mar. 2021 .30” Mar. 2022 0.50”
- 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 144 ppm
- TDS Mar. 17 – Current 305 ppm, Low 279 ppm, High 665 ppm, 12 Year Avg. 475 ppm
- Reservoir Mar. 17 – Current 5.07', Record Low 4.88', Record High, 6.65' 57 Year Average 5.22'.

Wastewater Treatment

- **Maintenance** – Team members were able to haul and inject 133,000 gallons of bio-solids to field seven this week.
- **Operations** – The average daily flow for the past week was 2.74 million gallons for a total of 19.02 million gallons of wastewater being treated this week.

City Clerk

Current Board and Committee Vacancies (Volunteer Appointment Information Form)

- **Board of Zoning Appeals** – (two alternate) Meets monthly on 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 Board** – (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.
- **Historic Preservation Advisory Board** – (one alternate) Meets monthly on the fourth Thursday at 9 a.m. in City Council Chambers. City residency required. Seven-member board with two alternate members. Two members must reside within the Historic District. Three year terms, maximum of three terms OR partial term plus two more 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 archaeological preservation and its community benefits.
- **Police Officers’ Pension Board** – (one City resident member). Meets quarterly and as called in City Council Chambers. Five members – two City residents at-large, two general employees and one member appointed by the Board. Four-year terms, no maximum. Financial disclosure required. Charged with management of the General Employees’ Pension Fund.

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:
 - Old Town Convenience & Deli – (reopened) 311 W. Marion Ave
 - Froman Vacation Rental – 3518 Marsala Ct.
 - Scudder Vacation Rental – 320 W. Grace St.
 - Sorenson Vacation Rental – 390 Belaire Ct.