

WEEKLY HIGHLIGHTS REPORT JUNE 2, 2023

City Manager

- The month of June brings with it the official start of the rainy season in Punta Gorda. While this is a positive development for our Shell Creek Reservoir, it also brings new challenges to our residents. Large amounts of rainwater can cause flooding and drainage problems and provide mosquitoes the perfect breeding ground.

With low property elevations and the high water tables over much of our area, flooding is likely to occur during summer showers and thunderstorms. Residents must take precautions in advance of rain events. Please secure outdoor furniture and remove or secure items on docks. For city crews, this includes storm drain cleaning. City crews perform storm drain cleanouts to catch basins and drainage lines at least once a year using a specialized truck. Drainage work also includes the reconstruction of swales, outfalls, and roadway culvert repairs or replacements to mitigate flooding. The Right of Way Maintenance Division works to keep 121 miles of improved streets and over 230 miles of stormwater drainage systems flowing smoothly. Every effort is made to close streets and limit access to flooded areas when a rain event takes place, but ultimately, situational awareness is critical. Do not attempt to drive over a flooded road when flood waters are present. Turn around so you don't drown.

Swales are shallow grass areas along the road which collect and convey runoff so that our homes and roads are not flooded. Much of our community utilizes roadside swales to convey excess stormwater to the nearest body of water. Swales function much differently than an underground pipe system, which many residents are usually more familiar with. Besides conveying water, swales also act to filter and absorb water, resulting in cleaner canals and aquifers. A swale is expected to retain small amounts of water after rainfall. Unless the swale retains water for more than 72 hours since the last rainfall, it is considered to be functioning properly. It is not uncommon for a swale to be wet for weeks at a time during the rainy season.

Public Works is responsible for maintaining common drainage areas of the city, including roadside swales in residential neighborhoods. Crews regularly clear blockages at inlets and remove sediment from inlet basins and pipes to allow water to flow freely. Drainage swales are inspected each year. GPS-enabled cameras are deployed across the entire city on appropriate days. From those videos, we can identify work areas for the following year. If you have questions about the drainage program, contact Public Work at (941) 575-5050.

Residents have been expressing concerns about mosquitoes in their neighborhoods. Charlotte County handles mosquito control services using a ground spraying and aerial strategy. To learn more and see when your neighborhood is scheduled for spraying, please



visit <https://www.charlottecountyfl.gov/departments/public-works/mosquito-aquatic-weed/mosquito-aquatic-weed-treatment.stml>. Individual homeowners can assist in these efforts by draining accumulated water from items that are stored outside and emptying and cleaning birdbaths and outside pet bowls at least once or twice a week.

The rainy season can be a beautiful and enjoyable time of the year; with efforts from city staff and residents, we can have a safe and pleasant summer. *Readers may reach City Manager Greg Murray at citymgr@cityofpuntagordafl.com or the general office line at (941) 575-3302.*

- **Sales Tax Holiday** – The first 2023 Disaster Preparedness Sales Tax Holiday begins on May 27 and ends on June 9. A second Disaster Preparedness Holiday begins on Aug. 26 and ends on Sept. 8. During these sales tax holiday periods, tax is not due on the retail sale of eligible items related to disaster preparedness. A complete list of items included is available at https://floridarevenue.com/taxes/tips/Documents/TIP_23A01-02.pdf.
- **City Council** – City Council will meet on June 7 at 9 a.m. at the Military Heritage Museum. A few of the items of interest include:
 - Formal resolution naming Bayfront Center Committee members, charter of committee and responsibilities
 - North Loop Community Development District
 - CRA update and budget update
 - Sanitation fund budget update

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 Upcoming Events – Military Heritage Museum
- Punta Gorda Isles Civic Association, 2001 Shreve Street; for all community events and class information, visit <https://pgica.org/>.
- The Visual Arts Center events can be accessed at [Welcome to the Visual Arts Center of Punta Gorda, FL \(visualartcenter.org\)](https://www.visualartcenter.org/)
- July 4, Fishermen's Village Independence Day Celebration, 1200 W. Retta Esplanade, For more information please contact kburnam@fishermensvillage.com

Lot Mowing Program

- All mowing and trimming from last mowing cycle is complete and has been inspected. New markings are continuing to be done in needed areas. Next mowing cycle is tentatively scheduled to begin sometime next week.
- All Areas Completed in Last Cycle:
- PGI (Bal Harbor Boulevard, Deborah Drive, Ryan Boulevard, Suzi Street, and Casey Key Drive).
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- 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).
- PGI (Magdalena Drive, Via Vento, W Henry Street, Appian Drive, and Columbian Drive).
- 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)

- **Planning Corner – Recreation and Open Spaces Element**

– Urban Design staff has posted a draft copy of the updated *Recreation and Open Spaces Element* on the City’s website. The purpose of the Recreation and Open Spaces Element is to provide for a system of public and private recreation and open space sites. Punta Gorda’s long-term goals regarding recreation and open space are to coordinate public and private resources to meet demand; provide public parks that are appropriately located near the population they are intended to serve; coordinate the City facilities with those of other governments; and acquire important open-space systems



that protect property from storm-surge events and/or preserve important habitats. Additions to the element, included in the draft copy, are information and policies that support the development of open space in the city. Open space development has numerous environmental and community benefits, including the following:

- Reduces the impervious cover in a development. Impervious cover contributes to degradation of water resources by increasing the volume of surface runoff and preventing infiltration into the soil surface.
- Reduces rainfall pollutant loads to streams and other water resources.
- Reduces potential pressure to encroach on resource buffer areas (such as aquatic buffers).
- Reduces soil erosion potential by reducing the amount of clearing and grading on the site.
- Preserves green space and space for recreation.
- Reduces the cost of stormwater management by concentrating runoff in one area and reducing runoff volumes.
- Reduces the cost of future public services needed by the development.
- Can increase future property values.
- Creates urban wildlife habitat "islands."
- Creates a sense of community and pedestrian movement.

Goals, objectives, and policies taken from the Parks and Recreation Master Plan Survey in 2019 were also added. To view the proposed element please visit: <https://www.ci.punta-gorda.fl.us/government/comprehensive-plan>

Building

- **Reminder of Closure** – Until further notice, the Building Division lobby will be closed **each Wed. at 2 p.m.** This applies to both public access and incoming phone calls. The Building Division will stop accepting customer walk-ins at **1:30 p.m.** The changes are being implemented to allow staff more time to process applications and to decrease wait times for permits. The amount of permit applications significantly increased in the aftermath of Hurricane Ian. The Building Division continues to make process improvements to expedite all permits.

Public Works

- **Channel Marker Replacements** – Channel Marker signs have been received and the contract to install new channel markers is currently being advertised.
- **Canal Maintenance Production** – Canal Maintenance crews filled depressions at 16 locations and manufactured 50 seawall panels.
- **Dockside Dredging** – Property owners that are listed on the Hurricane Ian Seawall Damage list will not be allowed to have dockside dredging performed adjacent to the seawall until the seawall has been repaired. Any dredging along the damaged seawall may cause damage.
- **Stabilizing Erosion** – Just a friendly reminder for property owners to regularly check the condition of their tarps or plastic that is protecting the eroded areas. Tarps and plastic tend to become brittle in the sun and may start falling apart. Our area is still experiencing rain events and plastic will help keep the soil in place preventing further erosion.
- **Canal Maintenance Seawall Failure Update** – Construction schedules are posted on the Canal Maintenance website. All contractors have started work in each zone. Staging sites are getting set up, equipment is being mobilized and work has started on damaged seawalls.
- **Canal Debris Cleanup** – The debris contractor hired by the State of Florida to clean the Punta Gorda canals, still has crews in Charlotte County. The team plans to use sonar to do another sweep through the canal system to identify any debris that has not already been collected below the water level. They are expecting to be completed by June 10 - weather permitting.
- **FEMA Update** – The City continues to work with FEMA to develop a schedule for inspection. Property owners that have damaged seawalls as a result of Hurricane Ian can expect to see City representatives along with FEMA inspectors walking through their yards to inspect and collect data for the damaged infrastructure.
- **Dock Match Program** – The Punta Gorda and Charlotte Harbor Boaters Alliance has created a program that connects boat owners that need a temporary relocation of their boats with owners that have available dock space. This information can be found at [Punta Gorda Boaters Alliance \(boat2puntagorda.org\)](http://PuntaGordaBoatersAlliance(boat2puntagorda.org)) click on the Dock Match button for information.
- **Vessel Speeds** – Canal Maintenance is asking people to be mindful of the current situation in the canals with seawalls being damaged. City code states that the operation of vessels in the canals shall be Slow Speed Minimum Wake in the waterways within the City limits. The speed and operation in the Ponce Inlet, Pompano Inlet, Bass, and Snook Inlet are Idle Speed and No Wake. Wakes from watercraft can cause additional erosion and damage to seawalls already compromised.

Engineering

- **Ponce de Leon** – The contractor has been working diligently to install the new pilings for the new boardwalk. They have installed (16) 25-foot-long pilings and (100) 20-foot-long pilings. They have completed all the pilings on the East side of the boardwalk and have moved their operation to the West side of the boardwalk. They have demoed/disposed of approximately 380 feet of old boardwalk. Please take extra caution while driving thru the park due to construction personnel and equipment.
- **Swale Regrading** – The swale contractor has completed the swales on North Plum Tree, Scarlet Sage, Panarea Dr., Madrid Blvd, Tripoli, and South Crete Ct. They will be watering the sod on South Crete Ct. for the next 30 days. They have excavated approximately 25,350 SF of material and re-sodded all areas with sod. The contractor will start to re-grade Narranja St. on June 5 and they will be excavating approximately 3100 SF of material and re-sodding these areas at the proper elevations. Once Narranja is completed the next location will be on Virginia Ave.



Sanitation

- **Pre-Storm Preparation** – Hurricane season began yesterday and the City of Punta Gorda Sanitation Department would like to remind residents of the storm debris preparation and collection guidelines. A Press Release will be issued and the website will be updated accordingly in case of an impending storm [City of Punta Gorda, FL | Home \(punta-gorda.fl.us\)](http://City of Punta Gorda, FL | Home (punta-gorda.fl.us))
 - Please secure all trash, recycling, and yard waste receptacles inside an enclosed location or garage.
 - Trimming around your home should be well before any storm warnings or watches are issued. Placing yard waste out at this time could block storm drains and cause flooding or allow the materials to become dangerous projectiles.
 - DO NOT cut down trees or vegetation or do any major yard work. Mass cutting places a tremendous burden on the normal yard waste collection process, and collecting this debris a few days before the storm's landfall is NOT guaranteed.
 - During a Watch or Warning, DO NOT place materials at the curb. Public Works may suspend services, and facilities may close early to prepare for the storm.

If you have any questions, please get in touch with the Public Works Department at (941)575-5050 during the hours of 8 a.m. – 4:30 p.m., Mon. through Fri.

- **Bagged Garbage** – Trash must be bagged inside the cart to prevent any wind-blown litter during the collection process, or any leakage from wet garbage. It can also help keep animals out of your garbage. As a friendly reminder, please place any pet waste and pet hair securely inside a bag to prevent the debris from blowing onto the sanitation workers.
- **Whole House Clean-outs** – As a friendly reminder, whole house clean-outs are NOT included with your regular trash services. The property owner is responsible for the clean-up and removal of debris. The City does not rent dumpsters and the use of a dumpster may require a permit through Zoning and Code Compliance (941) 575-3352.

Police

- **Public Service Announcements** – Chief Davis and Sheriff Prummell recorded a public service announcement to remind citizens of the importance of being diligent when it comes to scams. These public service announcements will be played on local radio stations in the coming weeks. Here are some of the tips they provided:
 - Refrain from sharing sensitive information like your name, address, social security number, and bank account details.
 - Never click on unknown links in emails or text messages. This is how malware spreads.
 - Always utilize strong passwords and two-factor authentication for online accounts.
 - Keep yourself informed on common scams and methods used by scammers.
 - Don't answer unknown numbers. If it's truly important they will leave a message.
 - Remember always trust your instincts. If you sense anything suspicious or too good to be true, it probably is.
- **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 June 26. The written exam will be completed online anytime between June 30 and July 7, with virtual oral board exams conducted via Zoom on July 24. We are currently only accepting applications from candidates who are currently law enforcement certified or Equivalency of Training (EOT) eligible. **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.**

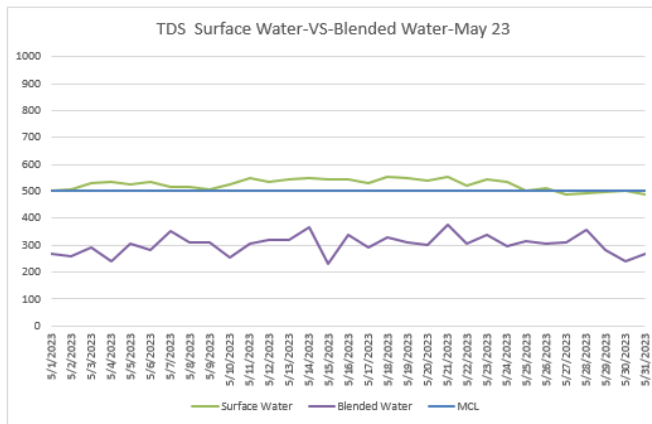
Fire

- **Brush Fires** – The Punta Gorda Fire Department has recently responded to several brush fires in and around the City. Just a friendly reminder that Hurricane Ian created a substantial amount of additional fire fuel in the form of downed trees and brush. The Punta Gorda Fire Department recommends the following to protect your home against brush fires:
 - Clear away all dense brush at least 30 feet from your home
 - Remove any dried or dead vegetation from your property.
 - Prune trees and tree limbs to keep lowest branches six to ten feet from the ground
 - Clean gutters, eaves and roof debris
 - Keep flammable liquids in a safe location.
 - Have a plan to evacuate in case of a brush fire
 - Learn neighborhood evacuation routes



Utilities

➤ R.O. Plant



Water Treatment Plant Operations

- 62.2 MG delivered to the distribution system with a 8.9 MG daily average
- Peace River Manasota Regional Water Supply Authority Emergency Interconnect – Receiving 800 gallons per minute from the new Interconnect (Phase 1 Pipeline). Sending 800 gallons per minute from the tank on 17 (Phase 1A Pipeline).
- Rainfall May 2022 7.67” May 2023 6.13” June 2022 10.6” June 2023 0.00”
- Hardness is a measurement of calcium and magnesium ions naturally occurring in the raw water. Currently "hard" – Grains of Hardness 8 –Total hardness 137 ppm
- TDS June 1 – Current 270 ppm, Low 270 ppm, High 617 ppm
- Reservoir June 1 – Current 5.26', Record Low 4.48, Record High, 6.11' 58 Year Average 5.14'

City Clerk

- **Candidate Packets Now Available** – Candidate packets for the 2023 City General Election are now available for pick up at the City Clerk's Office, currently located at 117 Herald Court Centre, Unit 112. Candidate forms can also be obtained online from the City's website at <https://www.ci.punta-gorda.fl.us> as well as from the Division of Elections website at <https://dos.myflorida.com/elections>. The 2023 General Election will take place on Nov. 7 and will include City Council Districts three and five. Councilmembers serve a two (2) year term and are elected at-large. Only opposed candidate races will appear on the ballot. If more than two candidates seek election for any one district seat, a primary election must be held on Aug. 22 (11 weeks prior to the General Election). Qualifying for the 2023 General Election cycle begins Jun. 12 at noon and ends on Jun. 16 at noon. For information or questions regarding qualifying, please contact Karen Smith, City Clerk, at (941) 575-3369 or email pgclerk@cityofpuntafordafl.com. Questions regarding voter registration, vote-by-mail ballots or precinct and polling information should be directed to the Charlotte County Supervisor of Elections Office at (941) 833-5400.

- **Current Board and Committee Vacancies**

If you are interested in serving on a board or committee, please visit our online portal to complete an online application at <https://www.ci.punta-gorda.fl.us/government/boards-committees>.

- **Code Enforcement Board** – (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.
- **Historic Preservation Advisory Board** – (two alternates) Meets the fourth Thursday at 9 a.m. in City Council Chambers. Must be City resident. Seven-member board with two alternate members. 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 archaeological preservation and its community benefits.
- **Utilities Advisory Board** – (one regular) Meets monthly on the fourth Monday at 9 a.m. in City Council Chambers. City residency required. 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 drawings and specifications.
- **Planning Commission** – (one regular) 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.

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:
 - Jetride, 1200 West Retta Esplanade
 - SFC Services Corp, 203 Wood Street
 - Shore Point Health Punta Gorda, 809 East Marion Avenue