

Stakeholder Input



Stakeholder meetings were arranged with a variety of local organizations, businesses, and community partners to derive usability objectives from a business perspective and to gain commitment from the community.

The following pages contain the information collected from the stakeholders about their perception of the purpose of the Park System.

Stakeholder Findings



Park Opportunities

Parks & recreational open spaces provide opportunities for both active recreation, such as organized and informal sports, and passive recreation. Despite the relatively small quantity of parkland in the City of Punta Gorda, a wide range of outdoor recreation opportunity exists. Those stakeholders polled through stakeholder meetings, the survey and the charrette identified areas where the City could purchase and develop parklands. Each area reflects the characteristics of development patterns, neighborhood types and landscape ranges. These areas range from vacant lands located at the south and west end of the City near Burnt Store & Burnt Store Meadows to vacant waterfront opportunities in the north and east end of the City.

- Park in the area of Burnt Store Meadows to be available for future school
- No pools for schools but would like to be able to use the facility for swim teams
- Park in connection with Fire Station 2
- Park over by Alligator Creek on Taylor Rd.
- Gateway Feature at Environmental Park Area along Burnt Store Rd Boardwalk
- Beach Area on Environmental Lands (annexed property) (City southwest side)
- Community Park Green space @ north end of Colony Point
- Existing Dog Park: Berm between large & small dogs
- Neighborhood Play Area between the two 41's
- Develop a boater friendly beach along the City's southwest annexed environmental lands



Cultural / Events

There was a strong focus on cultural arts center which could create a visible and deliberate image for Punta Gorda that embraces the performing, visual, & cultural arts. It was noted that several groups and organizations share a common hope. This hope is to see Punta Gorda integrate the performing, cultural and visual arts into the fabric of the city and to express an interest in placing arts and culture on the main stage of our city's marketing strategy.

- Triathlon Uses
- Commercial Cultural Arts Center @ Bayshore Bldg

Revenue Sources

At this time the City's main funding sources for parks and recreation are impact fees, ad valorem and grant funds. It would be great to be able to apply for more funding through a series of grants or the development of another revenue source. The ability to have additional funding would assist the City in completing the vision that this Master Plan expresses.

- Special Events GREAT
 - Allow night time gatherings
- Pay for Parking
- User Fees

Business

The City would greatly benefit from exploring marketing strategies that join/link/connect other industries together. This could be done in a variety of ways from zoning amendments which allow for retail and dining opportunities to land use changes which promote preservation of natural areas. The implementation of marketing strategies would allow Punta Gorda to market itself as a boater's destination and enhance its viable economies such as traditional fishing, tourism and sports fishing. In addition, a successful marketing strategy would enable Punta Gorda to enhance its visibility as a boater's destination and attract cruising boaters on the intra-coastal waterway.

- Improve zoning and LDR's Retail & dining opportunities
- Preserve areas to maintain good fishing to attract tourists



Park Activities / Needs

The City had never done a needs analysis study on park activities for Punta Gorda. The February Parks & Recreation Charrette provided numerous input from residents and businesses alike as to what people were interested in doing during their leisure time.

- Borrow-A-Bike Program
- Maybe try Yoga/Karaoke
- Band Shell for Concert Opportunities Community Arts, Performing Arts Center for Children, Arts Park
- Need beach areas along Gilchrist and Best Western
- Teens need venues (Teen Clubs)
- Bocci, Croquet, Disc Golf
- Fitness stations at Gilchrist, Ponce & Laishley
- Water Sports Activity Center



Design Standards

In order to distinguish between private and public parks, the City should have design standards to identify City parks. Residents were interested in establishing standard guidelines for facilities, sites, furnishings, equipment, and systems to be included in projects. These design standards would provide the guidelines that represent the minimum acceptable standards to be used in all City Parks. They should not be used as technical specifications, but they should allow for creative flexible design which will enhance development of any of the City parks.

- District Color Coding (sidewalks or use different material)
- "In" sidewalk create a "wayfinding emblem" by inserting a bronzed medallion, pavers/stamped concrete (hibiscus symbol?) into the concrete
- wider sidewalks to
 - create a more friendly atmosphere & enlarge gathering space
 - add planters
 - street furniture & Bike Racks needed
 - allow more outdoor dining
- Better design @ intersection
- Harbor Walk -May need some sort of signage in certain areas
- Kiosk points create City standard

Maintenance / Safety

As with any project, maintenance of the completed facility and the safety of that facility need to be incorporated early on in the development process. The general appearance & maintenance of several areas was mentioned as an issue to be addressed. The desire was to see a "cleaned up area" especially around Nature Park so as to improve/increase the use of the park as well as improve the overall appearance and value of the surrounding properties.

- Use of bollards w/numbers (mile marker)
- Limited visibility problem along Patty Ave area and harbor walk (CPTED input)
- Implement CPTED principles in planning park system (Lighting & proper vegetation)
- Improve park maintenance
- Improve crosswalks & signalization across US 41
- Multi use recreational path or bridge across Alligator Creek area
- Provide signage



Improvements

There are so many projects going on in the City that there are improvements necessary to create a complete and connected City Park System. Whether it be connections necessary from the downtown business areas to the waterfront, or sidewalks to get kids to parks or the development or redevelopment of an area park to increase its use, the park system is in need of a change. Updated amenities, development of standards for City Parks, increased shade in existing parks.

- Wide feeling w/connection to waterfront
- Sidewalks along Carmalita: Need to get kids to parks
- Cross use of facilities
- Urban Park , Plazas Performance Areas along Gilchrist side
- Better Signage & Shade @ Nature Park
- Add benches to beach and mangrove areas. Improve pavilions
- Allow dogs w/sanitary stations

Connection

A common theme of a need for interconnectivity appeared from the information and data collected at the Charrette. Although there are a variety of parks, neighborhoods commercial centers and waterfront parks, there exists a lack of connection between the residential neighborhoods and business communities. The general consensus among the residents and business owners seemed to be to make better/safer connections using sidewalk completion, logical signalization @ appropriate locations, between the variety of neighborhoods, businesses, and venues to the parks and waterfront.

- Some connection of path from Burnt Store Rd to CHEC and across US41 through Old Burnt Store Rd to Taylor, across Taylor through private property to Airport Rd., across Airport Rd through Edison Campus to Florida Street can break left onto Myrtle and continue to US 17 or Riverside Dr. Utilize existing bus or trolley for transportation to Park System
- Need to connect School Campus to the Charlotte County Park System @ Carmalita Park (need to include bridge to cross over drainage swale)
- Connect Linear paths thru City (Taylor preferred by group do to connectivity to Harbor Walk)
- Include Nesbit in connection to waterfront
- Access improvements for bikes, paths
 - along US 41S to Cecil Webb Management Area
 - along Aqui Esta
- @ Adrienne create campus connection
- Trail Head @ Depot area for Rails to Trails
 - Connect South to Ft. Myers
 - Connect north to Arcadia



Joint Ventures

By engaging in joint ventures the City allows for opportunities to develop and provide a variety of recreational activities which might not be able to be completed through normal budgeting processes.

- More partnerships: Baker Academy: A success Story
- IFAS (Master Gardeners) source of free/low cost landscaping & installation help
- Edison Campus: Student Appreciation Activities are well attended (Hula Hoop Contest)

Park Type Concepts



Environmental Park (Nature Park) Ideas

- Create Nature Map: include: nesting areas/environmental aspects/scavenger ID
 - Educational pamphlets (id H2O Monitoring Areas, flora & fauna species)
- Signage: id environmental aspects, flora & fauna, distance markers & orientation
- Add ADA restrooms/water fountains/parking areas/pavilion/picnic/bike racks/benches (w/ & w/out shade)/Sundial/ Play Area/interactive fountain
- Dog friendly leashed w/doggie bag stations
- Install native plant butterfly garden
- Concerned with protection of environment especially around Vivante
- Develop a nature trail through the environmental lands to Ponce de Leon



Gateway Park Ideas

- Design & install fitness trail in green space north of Patty (Actual Vacant land)
- Connect Harborwalk along Patty
- Maybe develop a Historic Center (SE corner on US 41)
- Make available a kayak access point (NW Corner, Extension of Booth)
- Install traffic calming and across from hospital



Waterfront Park Ideas

- Make the waterfront more dog friendly. Add new dog park @ Sculpture Park
- Provide teen sailing (include parking)
- Incorporate mangroves to preserve the area so as to maintain our economy of good fishing
- Provide more tennis courts
- Complete mooring field plans
- Provide tree shade cover along Harborwalk
- Park Accessible in new development where PW campus is now
- West past that develop a dog friendly area
- Further west connect meandering sidewalk into the existing bridge, enlarge bridge if necessary
- Include covered observation platform & boardwalk over the water along mangroves
- Include boardwalk east to a second observation/fishing pier
- Further east along the water, build a wide water pool surrounded by a wood deck w/shelters on the northern corners
- At the entrance to the tide water pool, restroom facilities?
- Further east, put in the kayak area behind the mangroves
- Just east of this are should be a parking area w/restrooms?
- Sidewalk/path should start from the parking area creating an internal path which will connect to the existing meandering path along Retta
- Where Shreve St. runs into Retta, design and improve storm water treatment

