

Question Responses

What is your vision for economic development in the City of Punta Gorda?

I will continue studying the City's new Comprehensive Plan and Long-Range Financial Plan, and continue meeting with the City Manager and all Directorates to discuss the details of these plans to ensure I have a thorough understanding of their priorities and challenges, with a focus on improving our water service infrastructure and other health and safety related issues to ensure a strong foundation for economic development in Punta Gorda. I've already met with the City Manager, Police Chief, Fire Chief, Planning Director and Director of Public Works, and will be doing follow-ups for further clarification as well as meeting with the Finance Director and Utilities Director. I will continue engaging with residents throughout our community to listen to their concerns and ideas about the future of our city so that I can accurately represent their interests in council decisions. I will engage with residents through town hall meetings and various communication platforms that enable transparency and open dialogue about matters that will be presented to council for decisions. I will also continue meeting with small business leaders and economic advisors throughout our community to learn their concerns and ideas about the conditions that contribute to their success and viability as the economic engine of our community. I will advance the idea of a Small Business Advisory Board. I will also focus on the needs of our first responders to ensure that they are prepared for future expansion that comes with economic development. I will endeavor to identify conditions that attract more commercial development and bring more input to our tax base. One of the concerns that has been expressed to me repeatedly is the lack of youth programs that attract younger families to our community. I will work with advisors and community leaders on ideas to improve our attractiveness to this demographic.

What is the City of Punta Gorda's greatest need and how do you plan to address it?

Both the Director of Public Works and Utilities Director have cited failing "end-of-life" infrastructure as significant matters, yet most of the current council have somehow decided that a massive and inconsistent addition to the city hall is an immediate priority. Our entire water supply system needs extensive replacement and repairs because much of it is at the end of its useful life. In my study of the City Wide Master Plan, which informs the City's New Comprehensive Plan and Long-Term Financial Plan, I could find little reference to the city's infrastructure nor the need for a \$16-20 million dollar City Taj Mahal. Instead, monies have been taken from other identified needs, such as ADA improvements in the city, to help fund this monstrosity without the consent of the residents and taxpayers.

"Due to our failing infrastructure; aging streets, lighting...our workload has become overwhelming and unmanageable." – Punta Gorda Right of Way Supervisor.

We need to expand the Reverse Osmosis system from 4 million gallons per day to 8 million gallons per day to meet the needs of the upswing of population and new residential development. The surface water system is at high risk because of the many potential sources of contamination present in the assessment area. Two new water tanks are needed for the Shell Creek Surface Water Plant. We need to replace pumps that are at end-of-life. We need a new generator for pumping wastewater and we need to replace the wastewater collection system.

We should prioritize maintenance and operation of the approximately 237 miles of failing water main piping, serving an area of over 38 square miles. In addition, the Utilities Division maintains 2,100 main

valves, 2,003 fire hydrants, and 12,000 water meters. “We are making progress on the water meters, but not enough, more meters are breaking than we are fixing.”- City Manager.

I would redirect our tax money to redress these important infrastructure issues rather than spend them on a massively expensive and incompatible addition to the poorly maintained City Hall.

Why are you the right choice for City Council?

I bring a fresh perspective that is influenced by my military experience and education, and more importantly, by many other members of our community that are also dissatisfied with decisions by most of this current council. My education includes a Master of Strategic Planning from the Army War College which has taught me to analyze complex issues and rationalize expedient and effective courses of action for efficient and effective resolutions. My ability to engage a broader reflection of the entire community in decisions that affect all of us will result in better long-term solutions that will make our community better.

My proficiency in long-term planning, resource allocation, and goal setting is crucial for prioritizing city objectives, developing budgets, and aligning policies with strategic goals.

Effective communication is central to my military background, enabling me to articulate ideas clearly, convey information effectively, and engage diverse audiences. This skill is vital for representing constituents, advocating community needs, and promoting transparency in local governance. Furthermore, my commitment to high ethical standards and public trust, along with adaptability to changing environments and resilience in adversity, positions me well to understand policy implications and implement initiatives beneficial to the community.

My sense of duty and service, ingrained from military experience, drives my commitment to effective public service, prioritizing the well-being and interests of city residents in local governance.

I will focus on:

Fiscal Responsibility – Punta Gorda urgently needs failing infrastructure repaired or replaced. Instead of spending at least \$16 million on renovating the City Hall and other misled budget priorities with constant cost overruns. We should be addressing flooding problems and other infrastructure needs, especially our water supply.

Safety improvements – there are numerous traffic safety hazards along pedestrian pathways around Punta Gorda that are much more urgent than a Taj Mahal or an over-budget splash pad.

Responsible economic development – maintaining the small-town character that attracted most of us to Punta Gorda is the core of the Council’s mission and vision. Most of the current council have strayed off track with the new Comprehensive Plan, with greatly increased density allowances and reduced parking requirements.

Serving the Community – Listening to the voices of the residents of Punta Gorda is essential to guiding the Council in making decisions for the community. Residents feel that most of the current council do not care about what they think.

It’s time to get the train back on the track.