

# OPINION

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## Team Punta Gorda promotes collaboration

Time and time again it's been proven that if successful revitalization of communities is going to occur, the private sector must play a role. A quick search on the Internet will yield a myriad of examples. Some of you reading this may have come from such a community. We also have a real-time example of this being played out in our own area.

When Team Punta Gorda first began, it was a citizen-based group that was strictly focused on the creation of a vision, now known as the Citizens' Master Plan. The plan was then gifted to the City of Punta Gorda in 2005. What makes Punta Gorda special is that the partnership didn't stop there. This determined group of citizens kept the organization focused on helping implement the vision.

Today Team Punta Gorda's mission is to serve as a collaborative resource

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uniting our citizens in accelerating revitalization to achieve the potential of our unique waterfront community. We do this in two ways. First, Team Punta Gorda works with existing organizations to support their missions, avoid duplication of efforts, and maximize the results.

For example, Team Punta Gorda members play a role on Main Street Punta Gorda's committees and board. Main Street's mission is to promote the growth and prosperity of Punta Gorda's downtown area. Team Punta Gorda is on the board of Enterprise

Punta Gorda, whose mission is business and community development of all of Punta Gorda. Team also serves on the advisory boards of many local organizations. Team's own advisory council is comprised of nearly 30 business and community leaders who help guide Team's direction. Team's volunteers also assist in many community events and projects. We'll be helping lay brick pavers in the Hector House Park soon.

The second way Team Punta Gorda implements the vision is through bringing groups and citizens together on our projects. Team's own Rails-to-Trails initiative continues to attract people throughout Charlotte County. Members include city growth management and urban design staff members, County Health Department staff members, a well-known bicycle shop owner, and many biking and walking

enthusiasts. This committee is promoting Bike Week, June 9-14, and three different bike rides on June 14 in conjunction with the Hibiscus Festival.

Team's Artisan's Village project members include representatives from the Visual Arts Center, Arts & Humanities Council, Punta Gorda Historic Mural Society, art galleries, and artists, architects, and art-loving citizens. Bringing such an outstanding group together to collaborate on increasing the presence of arts in our community is very exciting.

There are lots more projects under way. Don't miss out on all of the fun. This is your chance to personally have an impact on our community's rebirth. Become a Team Punta Gorda volunteer. Your contributions are also welcome. To learn more, go to our Web site at [www.teampuntagorda.org](http://www.teampuntagorda.org) or call us at 941-637-8326.

