

# OPINION

## Team Punta Gorda expands its focus

With significant development occurring in downtown Punta Gorda, is there still a need for a group like Team Punta Gorda? It's a good question and one that is important to ask. The respondents in our annual survey resoundingly stated that the Team's work is not done, that the Team is still needed to:

- Be an advocate for the citizens in working with our governmental partners
  - Continue representing the principles in the citizens' master plan
  - Continue beautification projects
  - Support economic development
  - Support Main Street Punta Gorda
  - Support the development of Punta Gorda's waterfront
- We take this input seriously and agree that the Team's work is indeed not finished. The citizens' master plan encompasses greater Punta Gorda, including

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*For more information, visit our Web site or call 941-637-TEAM (8326).*



Charlotte County where it is adjacent to the city, not just the downtown area.

Let me provide some examples of why there is much more we can accomplish. We can start with a brief driving tour. As visitors from Lee County drive north on U.S. 41 the first "Punta Gorda Welcomes You" sign is at Burnt Store Meadows. As they continue northward, there is no way for them to know that the city lies mostly on the left and Charlotte County on the

right almost all the way to Aquí Esta. They don't know that billboard signs are in the county and not the city or that new buildings that do not conform to the citizens' master plan or the city's land development regulations are in the county. LDRs govern the development and use of all land and structures. A hint: City street signs are blue, the county's are green.

We're all excited about the daily arrival of new visitors to Punta Gorda on Skybus Airlines. New destinations like the Charlotte Harbor Event and Conference Center and hotels in downtown Punta Gorda will help draw more visitors to our city. But as they drive from the Charlotte County Airport, there is no "Punta Gorda Welcomes You" signage or attractive landscaping that signifies entry into this new city gateway.

Annexation of county property into the city will help address the differences where annexation makes sense and is an appropriate solution. We know Punta Gorda's physical shape will change dramatically in the next couple of years as city boundaries grow to encompass areas that seek to become a part of Punta Gorda proper.

As greater Punta Gorda changes, Team Punta Gorda will be here supporting the transformation along with governmental partners and other civic organizations. We're excited about the potential.

Would you like to join us in this effort? Team Punta Gorda's very active committees can always use another enthusiastic member. Sign up on our Web site at [www.teampuntagorda.org](http://www.teampuntagorda.org) or call our office at 941-637-8326. We'll be happy to help you find the perfect way for you to lend a hand.