

OPINION

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Team Punta Gorda seeks 'bike-friendly' designation for city

Nancy Prafke

Prafke is CEO of Team Punta Gorda is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization. For more information call 941-637-8326.



breakfast snacks from participating merchants. Bring your helmet. Children over 12 years of age welcome when accompanied by a parent. In conjunction with the Hibiscus Festival, four bike tours are scheduled on June 14: a 62-mile tour, a 30-mile trip, the "City Manager's Ride" which will be led by city manager Howard Kunk, and a six-mile Secret Hibiscus Garden self-paced family tour.

More ride information and registration forms are available at www.teampuntagorda.org.

The long-range plan is to provide safer access to bicyclists throughout the city and extending beyond our community including the Harbor

• Expand the Harbor

encompasses its vision. The short-range focus is to increase public awareness of biking. Look for:

• "Bike Week" from June 7-14 whose theme is to "Save Money, Reduce Pollution and Save Gas."

Citizens will be asked to "Bike to Work, Shop and Play."

• Proclamations by both the Punta Gorda City Council and Charlotte County Commission supporting "Bike Week."

• Police department safety lectures, inspections and tips on courtesy as well as the law for motorists, bicyclists, the handicapped and pedestrians. Safety literature will be distributed along with free bike helmets for kids.

• The "Brunch and Bikes" casual, no-spandex ride around Punta Gorda on Saturday. Enjoy free

our area. National data shows the return on public fund investment is around 10-to-1.

If becoming involved in the RTT project interests you, go to our Web site at www.teampuntagorda.org or call us at 941-637-8326.

This is your chance to personally have an impact on our community. Your contributions are also welcome.

Walk from Fishermen's Village east along the river to the trail near the hospital to accommodate both bikers and walkers.

• Expand the planned Linear Park (Fishermen's Village to Olympia) to eventually connect to sidewalks east of U.S. 41 as well as to paths that will lead to The Great Loop.

• Develop a trail on railroad property to Arcadia and south to Fort Myers with Punta Gorda as a hub.

• Include a trail north through the county connecting to the new Sarasota bike trail.

As word spreads about our bike-friendly city/county it will have a significant impact on our economy, bringing more tourists and improving the economic diversity of

our area. National data shows the return on public fund investment is around 10-to-1.

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