

Achieving a win-win is a key to success!

In a Team Punta Gorda visioning session last year, participants were instructed to not limit their creativity to what seems possible today. One participant suggested a tramway from one side of the harbor to the other connecting Punta Gorda to Charlotte Harbor. Another suggested the need for an observation tower to view the Harbor and Peace River Basin from high above the palm and tree canopy. What "outside-the-box" ideas are you conjuring up now?

It's the visions from Charlotte County citizens that help move our community forward. The challenge is to figure out how to move from a vision to practical actions. Recently I was



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asked if Team Punta Gorda always gets every idea accepted. How do we compromise to achieve results?

The processes Team uses are an important part of the answer. First, and very importantly, Team Punta Gorda is a nonprofit, all-volunteer advisory organization. We facilitate and educate. We bring groups together to collaborate. We are not a governmental agency nor can we tell our governmental partners

what to do. Our goal is to create a win-win scenario for all involved.

Team's first foray into the planning process yielded the Citizens' Master Plan 2005. This document contains visionary concepts intended to guide us in our decision-making process. More than 90 percent of this document has been implemented or is in the implementation process in the city. Annually, Team updates our strategic plan and adds ideas that continue to come forward. Ideas are prioritized and refined into actionable concepts. This process helps ensure that our volunteer efforts are focused on projects with a higher opportunity to succeed. Committees take over from here and that's where the fun begins.

Our committee members are comprised of many collaborative partner organizations including the city and county. Many project obstacles are identified and resolved during planning activities as each organization determines how their specific interests are addressed. Some projects are short in duration and may only take a few weeks or months. Planning the Laisley Park interactive fountain compass-rose surface design took a matter of a few weeks. The color palette selection process for Herald Court Centre was months in duration.

Long-term projects can require more effort to achieve results. Often conditions change, necessitating the modification of project requirements. The

successful bicycle loaner program launched this year after just over one year of planning. The current South County Gateway Project was five years in the making before getting the approval to proceed. We expect to conclude this project in the fall.

Whether it's a short-term or a long-term project, it's not just the collaborating organizations that win. In the end it's the whole community that wins.

Team Punta Gorda is pleased to have been a community partner for nearly six years. If you're new to the area and want to learn more, check out our website at www.team-puntagorda.org. Sign up to receive our e-newsletter right on our home page. We welcome your participa-

tion on one of our many committees. You may also contact Team at team@team-puntagorda.org or 941-637-TEAM. Team is honored to have been selected as the Punta Gorda Chamber of Commerce 2009 Nonprofit Business of the Year.

Don't forget to purchase the beautiful coffee-table book *Destination Punta Gorda: Pride of the People* featuring Charlotte County from Team Punta Gorda. It's an illustrated tribute to the people who make Charlotte County a wonderful place to live, work, and play. Visit us at the Punta Gorda Chamber of Commerce and get a copy now.

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