

Our Community Strives to be Bicycle Friendly

Punta Gorda is different. In addition to the young families who live here, it includes many healthy aging seniors who are adding years to their life by staying active.

As you move around our streets, you'll find bicycling is a big part of a healthy lifestyle for many. TEAM Punta Gorda has long advocated for improving conditions that would make Punta Gorda and the surrounding areas of Charlotte County a bicycle friendly community.

This has not been easy. We are a small town with narrow roadways and a lack of funds to



tackle the problem. Our roadways are not conducive to adding bike lanes. Despite our messaging of "share the lane," there are people who object to sharing the roadway. Certain roadways have green street markings called "Sharrows." These let motorists know that bicycles are present, and lets bicyclists know they are permitted to use the full lane. TEAM Punta Gorda, in partnership with the city, continues to provide bicycle friendly activities that facilitate a healthy lifestyle.

The TEAM Punta Gorda Bicycle Loaner Program is a signature program. The free program allows residents and visitors to sign out one of the 40 yellow bikes from four

locations to ride for the day. You've probably noticed the yellow bikes all over town. Funded by donations and sponsorships, the program has been a great success. Our valiant group of volunteers has managed to keep the wheels rolling despite problems obtaining parts and replacement bikes. This valuable program, in partnership with the city, draws over 6,000 riders each year.

TEAM Punta Gorda also hosts Pedal and Play in Paradise each spring. Riders come from all over the state and beyond to attend this premiere cycling event. Pedal & Play draws over 500 riders which promotes cycling in the region. The 2022 event will be held on March 26 featuring four separate length rides to accommodate riders of all skill levels, including the always popular 10 mile "Mystery Ride." Also featured will be live music, yoga, massage, and other fun activities. There is something for everyone. Registration is open at www.pedalandplayinparadise.com.

We hope the region's cyclists will come to Punta Gorda, stay in Punta Gorda, and ride in Punta Gorda. We may not be able to do much at this time about further developing a bicycle friendly infrastructure, but we can be a community friendly to bicyclists.

We are grateful to our generous volunteers and can always use more. Give us a call at 941-637-8326, email team@teampuntagorda.org, or check our website, www.teampuntagorda.com. There you will find a host of programs and initiatives of interest.

Nancy Johnson, CEO

