

Report of the Task Force on
Vision 2010
Guiding Putnam into the Next Decade

"As for the future, our task is not to foresee but to enable it"

St. Exupery

Foreward

"Where there is no vision the people shall perish"
Proverbs 29.18

In 1999 the Putnam County Legislature and the County Executive formed a **Vision 2010** Steering Committee to begin the process of envisioning Putnam County's future. The genesis of this project was *Blueprint 2000*, a project spearheaded by Legislator Robert Pozzi in 1997, working with the Economic Development Committee of the Putnam County Legislature and the Putnam Alliance. The **Vision 2010** Committee's task was to create a portrait of what Putnam County could and should be in the first decade of the 21st Century.

Members of the Steering Committee included representatives from all facets of the Putnam County community. The Steering Committee was facilitated by Don Smith, former Assistant County Executive. Five subcommittees were formed: Economy, Education, Infrastructure, Government and Well-Being. Steering Committee members were assigned to each subgroup. The subcommittees met independently and reported back to the Steering Committee periodically over the course of the visioning process.

Over a two and one-half year period, these community leaders met to analyze past, current and projected growth trends, gathered community input to determine community values, and interviewed key community leaders to gather local expertise and ascertain goals for the future. Reports of the Subcommittees' findings and recommendations were prepared at various levels of specificity. Materials prepared by the Committees are included in the Appendix to this report, as is a list of Steering Committee members.

The Division of Planning and Development was tasked with reviewing and compiling the Steering Committee report, adding statistical profiles where appropriate, and preparing recommendations to help achieve the vision established for each area. To that end, Planning Director John Lynch and Principal Planner Michelle Powers have prepared this draft visionary document, which brings together the collective research and recommendations of the Steering Committee as well as input from Division of Planning staff. In addition, this document has been reviewed and edited by an Administrative Team appointed by County Executive Bondi. Members of the Administrative Review Team include Frank DelCampo, Theresa Giovanniello, William Carlin, Paul Eldridge, Richard Honeck, Michael Piazza, and John Tully.

The report divides each topic into three sections - a Profile, a Vision and Recommendations to Achieve the Vision. Committee reports were edited for format; gaps in certain areas were researched and written by Division of Planning staff based on their professional knowledge of the topics. Recommendations were designed based on formal recommendations of the individual committees, when available, as well as drawn from minutes of committee meetings and individual recommendations of committee members. Public input from several community forums and from interviews of key stakeholders was incorporated, wherever possible, in the formulation of recommendations.

The resultant report provides a foundation for a continuing dialogue among community leaders and local residents as to the direction Putnam County should travel on its path towards 2010. Questions about this draft report should be directed to John Lynch or Michelle Powers at the Putnam County Division of Planning and Development at 845-878-3480.

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Principles Guiding Vision 2010

The following principles emerged in the course of envisioning Putnam's future. These principles form the thematic framework upon which the vision rests.

BALANCE

RESPECT

PARTNERSHIP

Guiding Principles of Vision 2010:

BALANCE



Balance commercial development with open space preservation.

Balance the delivery of health and human services in locally-based facilities throughout Putnam County.

Balance the needs of our older residents with those of our youth and young families.

Balance new construction with rehabilitation and preservation of historic buildings and landscapes.

Balance our growing affluence with continued recognition of the needs of the most vulnerable in our community.

RESPECT.....



Respect for the home rule authority of Putnam's local municipalities.

Respect for Putnam's growing population diversity.

Respect for Putnam's ecosystem in all decision-making.

Respect for diverse opinions of our residents.

Respect for individual and community values.

Respect for contributions of Putnam residents to our quality of life.

PARTNERSHIP.....



Partnerships among all levels of government, not-for-profit organizations, residents, business leaders and civic organizations will be necessary to achieve our visionary goals for Putnam's future.

Partnerships between the public and private sector in health care, medical services, recreational opportunities and other community goals will result in an improved quality of life for all Putnam residents.

Partnerships between business and environmental organizations will enable both groups to achieve their goals.

Partnerships between Putnam County and individual municipalities will provide cost-effective solutions to community needs.

Putnam Today

Putnam County entered the first decade of the new millennium with a continuation of its premier place as the fastest growing county in New York State (NYS) outside of New York City (NYC). Putnam is a rapidly suburbanizing community but with many areas of the County still exhibiting a rural atmosphere. Census 2000 statistics placed the County's population at 95,745, a 14.1% increase over the 1990 decennial Census population. The demographic composition of the County in the new decade indicates a continuation of past trends. Some of the most significant socioeconomic characteristics of the Putnam population are highlighted below. All statistics are derived from U.S. Bureau of the Census, Census 2000, unless otherwise noted.

Population Characteristics

- 2000 population of Putnam County was 95,745, representing a 14.1% increase since 1990.
- Putnam was the fastest growing county in New York State, outside of New York City, in 2000.
- From April 1, 2000-April 1, 2002, the Putnam population increased by 2.6% to 98,257 (*U.S. Census Bureau Estimate*).
- The Town of Carmel continues to have the largest population in the County at 34,000 persons in 2002. The Village of Nelsonville remains the smallest municipality in the County with a 2002 population of 573.
- The Village of Brewster was the fastest growing municipality in Putnam, with a 2000 population of 2,162 - a 38% increase since 1990.
- The Town of Patterson was the fastest growing town in Putnam in the decade 1990-2000, with a 30.3% growth rate. 2002 population estimate for Patterson was 11,639 persons.
- The Town of Philipstown had the slowest growth rate in the decade with a 1.9% population increase. Philipstown is the smallest Putnam town in population size, with a 2000 population of 9,422. The 2002 population estimate was 9,672.
- The County is almost evenly divided by gender: 47,748 males/47,997 females.

- The County is aging; the median age of residents is 37.4 years, up from 33.7 in 1990.
- Persons under 18 years of age comprise 26.5% of the Putnam population.
- Persons under 5 years of age comprise 6.9% of the Putnam population.
- Putnam's residents aged 45-64 increased 42.2 % in the decade 1990-2000.
This age bracket comprises 26% of the total population.
- Persons 65 and older comprise 9.6% of the Putnam population; 1,900 of these persons live alone.
- There are 6,582 households in Putnam where one person is over the age of 65.
- The population over the age of 85 has increased 41.9% since 1990, with 1,050 residents over age 85 in 2000.

Social Characteristics

Race:

- Putnam's population remains overwhelming white, with 93.9% identifying themselves as white.
- 1.4% of the population, or 1,360 persons, identify themselves as multiracial.
- Asian residents, of one race, comprise just 1.2% of the total population.
- 1,478 residents indicate that they are Asian in combination with one or more other races.
- Black/African-American residents, of one race, comprise 1.6 % of the population; 1,903 residents indicate that they are Black/African-American in combination with one or more other races.
- "American Indian & Alaskan Natives" comprise just 0.1 % of the population, but are 0.5% of the population when combined with one or more other races.

- Just 24 residents identify themselves as "Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander"; 69 identify themselves as "Native Hawaiian" in combination with other races.

Hispanic/Latino Origin:

- Putnam's Hispanic/Latino population has increased 166% in the decade 1990-2000, an increase of 3,730 persons.
- In 1990 the Hispanic population comprised 2.7% of the total population; in 2000 the Hispanic population was reported at 5,976 persons, comprising 6.2% of the total County population.
- The town with the largest Hispanic population is Carmel, with 1,955 persons who have identified themselves as Hispanic/Latino.

Other Social Characteristics:

- The average family size in Putnam is 3.27 persons; average household size is 2.86 persons.
- 77% of the households in Putnam are family households; 65% of those represent married couple households.
- 12,859 persons aged 5+ have a disability that prevents them from working or adversely affects their ability to perform physical and mental tasks.
- 34% of the population age 25+ have a bachelor's degree or higher.
- 8.8% (8,420 persons) of the population is foreign born; Europe was the most common region of birth of the foreign born (56.8%); 27% of the foreign born are from Latin America; 12% from Asia.
- Over 4,000 residents indicate that they speak English "less than well".
- The largest ancestry groups represented in Putnam are Italian, Irish and German.
- 334 grandparents report that they live in households with their own grandchildren and are the primary caregivers.

Housing Characteristics

- There were 35,000 total housing units in Putnam in 2000; 32,700 units, or 93%, were occupied.
- Of the occupied units, 82.2 % are owner-occupied.
- 80% of the housing units in the County are single-family, detached units.
- The rental vacancy rate in 2000 was 3.2%, down from 5.8% in 1990.
- 16% of the housing stock in the County was built prior to 1939.
- 2 out of 5 homes were built prior to 1960; 1 in 10 were built in the decade 1990-2000.
- In 2000, there were 349 mobile homes/trailers.
- 13 % of housing units are in multi-unit structures.
- In the second quarter 2003, the median home price in Putnam was \$ 355,000 (*Westchester/Putnam Multiple Listing Services, Inc.*).
- 2 out of 5 residents moved into their homes within the period 1995-2000; 25% of County residents have lived in their homes for more than 21 years.
- In 2002, 236 residential building permits were issued countywide.

Economic Characteristics

Income:

(Census 2000 income statistics are based on 1999 annual income)

- Median household money income in 1999 was \$ 72,279.
- Between 1990-2000 there has been an increase in higher income households: 3,700 households in Putnam had incomes of \$ 150,000+ in 1999.
- Putnam's poverty rate has been the lowest in NYS for the past 30 years.

- 4.4% of the population was living in poverty in 1999; of the 667 families living in poverty, 487 families had children under the age of 18.
- The villages of Brewster, Cold Spring and Nelsonville have the highest percentage of Putnam residents living in poverty, with poverty rates of 14%, 5% and 7 %, respectively.
- 635 individuals age 65+ are living in poverty countywide.

Employment:

- Of the 49,000 employed residents of the County over the age of 18, 41% work in management, professional and related occupations; 26% work in sales and office occupations.
- 3.3% of the employed population worked at home in 2000.
- Putnam's unemployment rate in 2002 was 3.0%, the 2nd lowest in NYS.
- The largest employment sectors in Putnam County continue to be in the educational and health services sectors (*NYS Department of Labor*).
- Putnam's largest employer is Putnam Hospital Center, with over 900 employees.
- Small businesses predominate in Putnam. In 2000, Putnam had 2,624 business establishments; 70% employed 4 or less persons (*County Business Patterns, U.S. Census Bureau*).
- 61% of females age 16 or older in Putnam were employed outside the home in 2000.
- 3,000 workers report they are self-employed.
- 13,700 workers report that they live and work in Putnam County.
- 20,000 Putnam residents commute to Westchester County to work.
- 7,000+ Putnam residents commute to the 5 boroughs of NYC to work.

Government



"To labor in the public good is a noble calling."
Edmund Burke

Profile

Putnam County contains six town governments, three village governments, and the County government. State and federal government statutes and regulations control how the local governments operate. The town and village governments include the towns of Carmel, Kent, Patterson, Philipstown, Putnam Valley and Southeast, and the villages of Brewster, Cold Spring and Nelsonville. Municipalities range in size from the largest - the Town of Carmel, with 33,000 residents, to the smallest - the Village of Nelsonville, with 565 residents.

Each entity operates under the limits prescribed to them by various rules and laws of the State of New York. Each government entity has various responsibilities, funding sources, staffing levels, elected positions, and

administrative capacities. All of the various characteristics among the levels of government are recognized and respected. For **Vision 2010**, the focus is on intracounty government processes and intergovernmental relationships.

Vision

Governments conduct business in Putnam in a cooperative manner. The public can easily obtain information on all aspects of government and participate in the decision-making process. Government is efficient and cost-effective. People respect and trust government in Putnam County. Government in Putnam County respects individual concerns and the collective concerns of neighborhoods.

Putnam County government remains fully engaged in partnerships with other government and non-government entities to deliver efficient and cost-effective services to the people of Putnam County. Beyond partnerships, Putnam County government delivers broad-based services that are within the purview of county government. These services are delivered by a well-trained workforce working within a modernized service delivery system. Government workers are selected for employment based on merit and qualifications, not political affiliation or politics.

The spirit of volunteerism continues to flourish throughout the County with membership in all of Putnam's volunteer fire departments and ambulance corps being at an all-time high. Public funding in support of volunteer fire and emergency medical services has continued to keep Putnam's emergency responders trained and ready. The advanced life

support system service contracted by the County in the 1990's has been expanded to serve a growing County, with the best response times for a rural county in New York State.

The Bureau of Emergency Services, established by the County Executive and Legislature in 1999, continues to provide Putnam County with leadership, unity of effort, and mutual aid in cooperating throughout the County. Putnam County's 911 emergency response system has continued to improve under its single Public Service Answering Point (PSAP) system and is meeting the needs throughout the County.

Government's continued partnership with volunteer fire departments and ambulance corps has allowed Putnam County to be at the leading edge of providing emergency services without placing a heavy burden on the taxpayer.

Law enforcement in Putnam County has continued to be responsive, with Putnam County having the lowest crime rate in New York State. Putnam County government agencies are fully prepared to handle terrorist related threats and react quickly and effectively to threats of a local or regional nature.

Recommendations to Achieve the Government Vision

- Seek out professional development activities for County employees to insure essential growth in leadership for top and middle management.
- Create an environment that views government service at all levels as a noble and rewarding profession.

- Insure that government workers receive a competitive compensation and benefits package that ensures that our best and brightest will be willing to seek public service both as elected and appointed officials.
- Work with all levels of government to institute incentive programs that reward and promote high performing individuals.
- Continue regularly scheduled meetings for leaders from all levels of government to provide a vehicle for the sharing of ideas, discussion of common problems, and the development of regional solutions.
- Develop regional quarterly meetings for leaders from our neighboring counties of Dutchess, Rockland, Orange and Westchester to develop regional solutions for such diverse problems as protection of air and water quality and other environmental issues.
- Explore the possibility of discussions with our neighbor counties in Connecticut, on Putnam County's eastern border, regarding issues of mutual interest and concern.
- Continue and expand partnerships among municipalities and the County. Successful partnerships of the past, like sharing of salt storage facilities, land acquisition and equipment sharing, should serve as models for other common goals.
- Utilize partnerships among government, schools, and non-government entities wherever possible. Successful partnerships of the past, like land acquisition and a joint grant application between the County and Putnam Hospital Center for equipment, should be replicated to address common goals.
- Foster a consumer-friendly County government where citizen suggestions and complaints are addressed in a prompt, responsible and courteous manner.
- Investigate production of a more informative tax bill and consider informational meetings to educate the public about government operations.
- Establish a fully integrated Geographic Information System (GIS), linked to all departments and municipal governments.
- Continue to enhance the County's Web site and develop ways for citizens to complete County business online.

- Utilize standby generators for all County buildings, including senior and veterans facilities.
- Partner with schools for appropriate evacuation procedures and shelter during emergency situations.
- Recommend the use of standby generators for all office and medical facilities in Putnam County.
- Establish facilities to provide appropriate medical services on the western side of Putnam County.
- Partner with the Landmarks Preservation Society of Southeast to restore the Walter Brewster House, an important historic site in Putnam County.
- Explore the feasibility of offering “211” and “311” “Helpline” service to County residents.
- Develop a customer service satisfaction survey for the purpose of periodically assessing the effectiveness of County services. County employees would also be surveyed for their input.

Infrastructure



"The excellence of every government is its adaptation to the needs of those to be governed by it."

Thomas Jefferson

Profile

Infrastructure consists of a number of physical components that make a community function. Water and wastewater systems, stormwater systems, transportation systems and government facilities are the nuts and bolts of a community's infrastructure. Putnam County's infrastructure has worked well over the years, but the challenges of population growth and the changing regulatory environment have added new demands on the County's infrastructure.

Water Systems

Putnam County has 114 community water supplies. Many of these systems rely on deep wells. A few systems rely on surface water supplies. All of the community supplies have a distribution system. The vast majority of

County water users, however, obtain their water from deep wells which tap groundwater resources. Problems of water quantity and quality have been noted in some parts of the County.

Wastewater Systems

There are 49 wastewater treatment plants (WWTPs) in the County that discharge effluent to surface waters. All but 7 of the WWTPs are in the New York City Watershed. There are a combination of public and privately owned WWTPs and collection systems. The Town of Carmel has the most public sewer districts. Other public districts are found in the villages of Cold Spring and Brewster, and the Town of Southeast. In addition to the WWTPs and collection systems, many residents and businesses rely upon on-site subsurface septic disposal systems.

All of the WWTPs in the New York City Watershed are being upgraded to microfiltration standards, which will help improve the water quality of receiving streams and improve overall WWTP operation. Aside from the WWTP upgrades, the integrity of the piping in the collection systems must be monitored and maintained. On-site subsurface septic systems have generally functioned as required over the years, but continual monitoring and repair is a necessary part of insuring that these systems remain viable and safe. This is particularly the case in compact land use density areas.

Stormwater Systems

Urban stormwater runoff, which often drains into stormwater sewer systems, is a main source of non-point source pollution and can contain sediment, suspended solids, nutrients (phosphorus and nitrogen), heavy metals, pathogens, toxins, oxygen-demanding substances (organic material) and floatables. Due to impervious surfaces, stormwater runoff from urbanized areas is often higher in volume and at higher temperatures than runoff from undeveloped areas. Thus, unabated stormwater sewer system discharges from developed areas are detrimental to water quality and can cause habitat alteration and destruction. Concentrated areas of lawn also cause a problem because of excessive phosphorus and nitrogen runoff. The stormwater systems in the County are varied. They range from open ditches to piped systems with catch basins.

Some specific problem areas regarding stormwater runoff have been identified by the County and its municipalities. More work will need to be done to identify problem areas and generate solutions in order to help achieve water quality of a level that can continue to sustain drinking water supplies and prevent surface water deterioration.

Transportation Systems

Putnam County's transportation system is a blend of rail, bus, automobile, bicycle and walking modes of travel. There are 7 railroad stops in Putnam County, including Brewster Village, Brewster North, Patterson, Cold Spring, Garrison, Breakneck and Manitou. Ridership on the rail service,

operated by Metro North, has increased between 1980 and 2002 from 669,031 to 1,672,123 rides per year. The busiest stations are Brewster Village, Southeast, Cold Spring and Garrison.

Public bus service in Putnam County consists of the County's bus system, Putnam Area Rapid Transit (PART); several Westchester County Bee Line routes that operate in Putnam; and a Housatonic Area Regional Transit (HART) route that operates between Danbury, Connecticut, and Brewster. PART initiated service in July 1981, and by year-end carried 7,260 rides. By 2002, ridership was 157,188 rides per year. PART service is generally concentrated in the eastern part of the County, where service can be provided to more densely populated areas and where linkages can be made to other buses and train services. A complimentary paratransit service is also provided under certain conditions for the PART system as required by the Americans with Disabilities Act.

The Westchester Bee Line provides a commuter service through the Town of Carmel, along Route 6 from the hamlet of Carmel to White Plains, and a Croton Falls commuter run between the Croton Falls train station and the Mahopac area, along Croton Falls Road. The Route 77 bus from the hamlet of Carmel carried 23,697 riders in 2002. This bus started service in late 1996 and carried 16,149 riders. The Route 33 Croton Falls shuttle bus started in October 1998 and carried 894 riders. In 2002, 7,492 riders were recorded.

The HART service began in October 1998 and carried 1,838 riders. In 2002, 41,848 riders were recorded. This bus provides commuter and midday

service. Connections with the Bee Line and HART service are available with the PART service and transfer fees have been arranged. Connections between all bus systems and Metro North train service is possible, and a fee schedule for transfers has also been developed.

The train and bus systems have generally worked well, but improvements in ridership, marketing, scheduling, routing, fees and interconnectivity are always needed. Changes in traveling habits and population growth, as well as changes in population and socioeconomic characteristics of the population continue to put pressure on the public transit systems.

Besides public transit systems, people in Putnam primarily move about by automobile. Interstate 84 and Route 684 provide Putnam with high-speed limited access highways. In addition, people travel on 134 miles of State roads, 118 miles of County roads, 509 miles of Town roads, and 13 miles of Village streets, as well as privately maintained roads in some subdivisions, condominium developments, business parks, and other private developments. In 2001, there were 89,397 motor vehicles registered in Putnam County. The highway systems in the County contain a number of bridges, culverts, and guide rails, all part of the transportation infrastructure. There are also two officially designated "Park and Ride" lots adjacent to Routes 312 and 311.

Most roads and streets in the County have experienced traffic increases as the population has grown in the County and in surrounding

municipalities. Commutation patterns reveal that roughly 70% of Putnam County residents commute out of the County to work. According to Census 2000 Journey-to-Work data, the most popular mode of travel remains the automobile, and the majority of people drove alone. Carpooling was the next most popular mode of travel, followed by mass transit.

Generally, the highway system is in a good state of repair, but continuous repairs and spot improvements will be needed to maintain the system in the coming years. Bridges, culverts, guide rails, signage, intersections and road surfaces need continuing monitoring, maintenance and repair. "Park and Ride" lots also need to play an increasingly larger role in the highway system of the future. Improved parking in hamlet and village areas may also need to be addressed, as well as parking areas near rail stations in order to remove parking along some highways.

In the last decade, Putnam County has advanced a far-reaching bike and pedestrian trail plan. When completed, there will be 31 miles of paved bike/pedestrian trails. By the end of 2003, 7.5 miles will be constructed and ready for use. By the end of 2005, another 15 miles should be completed. The balance of the mileage will take longer to complete.

The bike/pedestrian path offers an opportunity to use a safe, off-road trail system. The trail provides linkages to residential and commercial areas, as well as to PART access points and points of interest. By its very location, the bike/pedestrian trail will serve as an option for an alternate mode of transportation, for recreational purposes, and as an economic development

tool. The bikeway trail will serve to complement the Main Street revitalization efforts in Brewster and Carmel by bringing people to Putnam's village and hamlet centers. The trail is a component of the Hudson River Valley Greenway trail program, which seeks to link regional trails throughout the Hudson Valley and to encourage development of new trail segments.

In the future, the present bike and pedestrian trail plan will need to be completed, and linkages similar to the already completed linkage with the Westchester County North County Trail will need to be completed with Dutchess County and Danbury, Connecticut. Maintenance and policing of the trail system will also need to be accomplished as more trails are built and as the system ages. Collaboration with the Hudson River Valley Greenway Conservancy will continue as New York State moves towards completing the Hudson River Valley Greenway trail vision.

Government Facilities

There are a large number of County facilities housing a variety of functions. Functions include office space, maintenance garages, records storage, stockpiles, Court operations, nutrition sites, parks, conservation areas, equipment storage, recycling, Sheriff's operations, emergency management, and human services. The functions are an indicator of the wide variety of services provided to the public. County facilities are spread throughout the County with the greatest centralization of facilities occurring in the Carmel Hamlet area, in Patterson, where the Department of Highways and Facilities

and the Planning Department/Bus Transportation operations are located, and at the Route 312 area of Southeast.

County buildings have had space problems over the years, which was a reflection of County population growth. In the last decade or more, the County has moved aggressively to address space needs through acquisition of buildings or construction of needed facilities. The BOCES complex on Old Route 6 was acquired, as was the New York State Electric and Gas building in Brewster and the former Adams Building in Carmel. The Putnam County Transit Facility in Patterson was constructed, as was a new stockpile site on Route 6N, a nutrition site in Mahopac, and an addition to the correctional facility. New construction and renovations in progress include an emergency management operations center, the former Adams Building conversion, a family services building and a Senior Services center in Putnam Valley. New Court facilities are in the design phase in Carmel hamlet.

Putnam County's two parks - Veteran's Memorial Park in Kent and the Michael Ciciola Conservation Area in Patterson - provide a variety of recreational opportunities for Putnam residents. Improvements at the County park and conservation areas continue to be made. The Fred Dill Wildlife Sanctuary and Education Center is being designed on 150 acres in Carmel. New opportunities to acquire additional recreational properties for countywide use are currently being investigated. A primary immediate challenge will be to formulate a master plan for the Tilly Foster Conservation Area. To that end, an Advisory Committee for Tilly Foster has been formed.

They are assisted in their deliberations by County professionals in various fields.

In the future, the County will need to continually assess building/operational space and usage needs and usage of lands acquired. Additionally, acquisition of new land and construction of the new Court facilities will be of paramount concern. Overall facilities needs and goals should be revisited periodically to determine consistency of actions with long-term conceptual and financial goals.

Vision

Putnam County's water, wastewater and stormwater systems have been maintained, retrofitted, and/or expanded to meet the challenges of continued County growth and to address past problems created from the growth of previous decades. Both innovative and standard practices to address these infrastructure systems have been put into use.

There are no impediments to the movement of people and goods in Putnam 2010. People can travel on various modes of transportation. Transportation systems are safe, convenient, pleasant and time-efficient, and transfer between transportation modes is easy and commonplace. Transportation systems are compatible with clustered development, and because of clustered development, they are less costly. People can get into a car and easily drive to work, a shopping center, a "Park and Ride" lot, a train station, or other destination. All parking areas are clean, beautifully landscaped, and well lighted with tasteful lighting fixtures. People can use

bus transportation that connects with trains or moves them about to other points in the County. Pedestrians are numerous in Putnam at any time during the day or evening because walking is convenient and safe. Bicyclists are found in large numbers on Putnam's bikeways, as are walkers and joggers. The bikeways are safe. People can easily access hamlet shopping areas and restaurants and adjacent residential areas.

County facilities meet space requirements and operational needs in 2010. Buildings and sites are well planned and maintained. There is an on-going assessment in place to address future space requirements and operational needs. The public, as the customer, is treated with respect in all County facilities, as they are staffed by friendly and well-trained personnel. Facilities are easily accessible, properly identified and located, and in sufficient numbers to meet the needs of the population.

Recommendations to Achieve the Infrastructure Vision

Water Systems

- Complete and implement the Groundwater Protection and Utilization Plan.
- Continue program to identify and correct well drinking water quality issues.
- Access the New York City aqueduct as a source for future County and Town water supply as per the 1908 NYC agreement.
- Cultivate expanded partnerships among the County, New York City Department of Environmental Protection, municipalities, and State and federal agencies to maximize financial and technical assistance for protecting water quality and quantity.
- Develop and install improved water conservation measures.

- Encourage towns to initiate long-term public water supply and distribution system studies.

Wastewater Systems

- Upgrade, in partnership with NYC, all wastewater treatment plants (WWTPs) in the New York City Watershed portion of Putnam County to meet microfiltration standards.
- Expand public/private centralized collection systems where needed to address failing or likely-to-fail septic systems.
- Develop a program for wastewater management in densely populated areas of the County where there may be problems with on-site subsurface septic disposal systems.
- Consider the establishment of septic maintenance districts, installation of alternate treatment units, septic repair programs, mandatory pump-outs at regular intervals, or installation of centralized sewer systems, as appropriate.
- Conduct focused environmental studies of potential problem areas that rely on on-site subsurface septic disposal systems.

Stormwater Systems

- Continue to utilize the state of the art Vac-All trucks purchased by the County.
- Facilitate the requirements of the United States Environmental Protection Agency and the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation's Phase II Stormwater Management Program, as required by the Clean Water Act.
- Correct stormwater problem areas as identified in the *Comprehensive Croton System Water Quality Protection Plan* and other plans/studies.
- Improve sand/salt storage facilities where needed and where they have not been improved to date.

- Retrofit existing stormwater collection systems as needed and use state of the art catch basins and manholes that remove sediment, oils and grease from the collection stream.
- Construct detention and retention basins as needed.
- Create stormwater districts where feasible.
- Use pervious paving materials as appropriate.
- Conduct Best Management Practices in addressing stormwater runoff.
- Create wetlands where practical.
- Reduce the use of fertilizers containing high amounts of phosphorus.

Transportation Systems

- Complete the *Strategic Regional Transit Study* that is in progress to assess the transit mobility needs of Putnam County.
- Continue to work with Metro North to improve service and expand ridership through projects related to signalization, rolling stock, stations, track, walkways, parking and beautification.
- Continue to participate in the New York Metropolitan Transportation Council (NYMTC), which serves as the regional metropolitan planning organization.
- Continue to upgrade the County highway system through yearly reconstruction and improvement projects involving bridges, culverts, pavement, safety enhancement projects and improved signage.
- Retain and expand the litter patrol program to help beautify the County.
- Encourage increased participation in the Metro Pool car/van-pooling program.
- Work with the NYS Department of Transportation (DOT) to complete the *Route 6/6N Corridor Study* and the *Route 22 Corridor Study*.

- Complete the “Park and Ride” lot project that is designed to enhance multi-modal connectivity and car/vanpooling.
- Complete the construction of the Putnam County Bikeway.
- Update the bike/pedestrian master plan for the County and work to achieve integration with the New York Metropolitan Transportation Council’s regional bike/pedestrian plan.
- Continue to help improve pedestrian pathways throughout the County.
- Continue to emphasize a multi-modal transportation system.
- Encourage municipalities to develop ordinances, land use plans, and site plan requirements that limit sprawl development.
- Continue to replace all equipment on a scheduled basis.

Government Facilities

- Complete construction of the Emergency Operations and Training Facility.*
- Initiate and complete construction of the new County Court facility to blend with the newly renovated County Clerk Annex.
- Continue to renovate existing County facilities as needed to keep them well maintained.
- Develop a system of park and open space lands throughout the County that provides diverse types of activities that enhance and complement recreational activities available from other providers.
- Complete a master plan for the Tilly Foster Conservation Area, with input from the Tilly Foster Advisory Board.
- Complete the 1816 Route 6 Building for County use.*
- Complete Cornerstone Park to provide a County Welcome Center.

* *Projected completion: 2004.*

- Complete the Putnam Valley Senior Center to provide comprehensive services to the elderly in the southwestern area of the County.
- Recommend that all municipalities review their vehicle fleet for more cost-effective operations and to insure safe transport of passengers.
- Seek out and assess new land acquisition opportunities that support County operational needs and objectives and public desires.
- Continue to upgrade County park facilities and manage County conservation areas.
- Assist in the development of the Hudson River Valley trail vision.
- Reassess long-term County office space requirements and operational goals as needed.
- Continue to emphasize facility ownership over leasing of space.
- Establish a committee composed of County, Town and Village officials to meet with the NYS DOT on a quarterly basis to prioritize State road "main street" issues relative to crosswalks, widening, light synchronization, turning lanes, catch basin maintenance and drainage.

Economy



"...this geographically diminutive county looms large in the Empire State not because of the square miles it possesses but because of its persistent prosperity; the political and economic stewards of Putnam have been extremely successful in positioning the county as a well-run, business-friendly locale...."

Mark Goloven
Chief Economist, J.P. Morgan Chase & Co.

Profile

Putnam County, the fastest growing county in New York State (NYS), outside of New York City (NYC), has one of the most stable economies in New York State. Despite national and regional recessions, Putnam County's small- and medium-sized service-producing businesses have remained strong. The County's unemployment rate has historically been among the lowest in New York State. In 2002, Putnam's rate of 3.4% unemployment was almost half the statewide annual average.

In the period 1995-2000, the number of jobs in Putnam County increased by 18% - double the statewide increase. In 2001 and 2002, this trend continued with a job growth rate of 5%.

The Putnam economy is dominated by the services sector, which accounts for over 20,000 jobs, or 84 % of local job opportunities. Services, government and retail trade predominate. Small businesses are the backbone of the Putnam economy. A total of 2,624 business establishments were operating in Putnam County in 2002. 86% of those employed less than 9 people; 69% employed 4 or less persons.

Putnam Hospital Center, with over 900 employees, is the largest employer in Putnam County, followed by the Carmel and Mahopac School Districts and Putnam County government, all three of which employ over 700 employees each. A small manufacturing sector is present in the County, with Watson Pharmaceuticals, Inc. (formerly Schein Pharmaceuticals) being the leading manufacturer.

The Putnam workforce of 57,000 persons is highly educated, with 34% of the population over age 25 possessing a college degree or higher. Two-thirds of Putnam's residents travel outside the County to work each day, mostly to Westchester County, NYC and Fairfield County, Connecticut. 41% of Putnam's workforce works in managerial, professional, sales and office occupations.

Unfortunately, employment opportunities within the County often do not match the skills of the existing labor force. The labor demand currently in the County is for entry level, semi-skilled and unskilled labor for the retail and services sector. The County is experiencing a demographic shift, however, with an emerging immigrant population that, with appropriate training, is

beginning to fill service sector and laborer jobs. In some areas of the County, for example, the Hispanic population, primarily composed of recent arrivals to the United States, has increased by over 160%. An Eastern European immigrant population is also present in Putnam, with over 800 persons relocating to Putnam County within the last 5 years from Poland and other Eastern European countries.

Mark Goloven, Chief Economist for J.P. Morgan Chase & Co., characterized Putnam County as an "eagerly sought-after location to live and work". He did point out, however, what he describes as the "Putnam Paradox" - retail sales per person lie far below the potential for an affluent community such as Putnam. The exceptional affluence of Putnam coincides with a subpar level of retail sales within the County because residents are shopping elsewhere. The County launched a "Shop Putnam Today" program in 2003 to help stem the drain of retail dollars to neighboring counties by raising residents' awareness of the goods and services available to them locally.

Tourism continues to be a growing sector of the Putnam County economy, especially since the County professionalized its tourism promotion through the creation of the Putnam Visitors Bureau. Currently, Philipstown, particularly the Village of Cold Spring, is the tourism focus in Putnam County. The mix of historic sights, antique and specialty stores, restaurants, scenic vistas, nearby hiking trails and the majestic Hudson River contribute to the attraction for residents and visitors. Other areas of the County hold potential

for tourism development as well, particularly in the areas of heritage and eco-tourism. Hiking, fishing, skiing, boating, birding and antiquing are available in locations throughout the County. The lack of a tourism infrastructure, particularly lodging choices, does hamper the development of tourism, however.

Putnam County's current economic development goals have been shaped for the most part by forces from outside Putnam County. Putnam's location within the New York City Watershed places constraints upon development, which impact the County's ability to attract larger employers due to restrictions on building new sewerage treatment plants within the boundaries of the Watershed area in Putnam. This unique situation has resulted in the County adopting an economic strategy which focuses on "growing" our existing industries and small businesses, as the creation of new employers is exceedingly limited by physical conditions and statutory regulations. Putnam County, therefore, has pursued a close supportive relationship with its existing businesses. The County is committed to assisting its traditional employers to expand their employment base and market area.

Vision

Putnam's economy is among the strongest in New York State. Unemployment is low and median income is high. Small- to medium- sized businesses flourish in Putnam, as does the entrepreneurial spirit. Putnam's beauty and historical heritage make tourism a strong contributor to the County's economic engine. Putnam's main streets are vibrant; they are

places where people want to be. They have been revitalized and contribute greatly to Putnam's economy. Putnam's commercial nodes provide a variety of retail opportunities and are convenient to neighborhoods. Putnam's strong economy helps make the County the best place in the metropolitan region to live, raise a family and conduct business.

Opportunities to expand individual careers exist within the County as local employment opportunities are diverse. Putnam's well-educated workforce is able to find well paying jobs within the County. Putnam's commercial centers provide a mix of land uses and provide locations for social, recreational and civic activities. Infrastructure upgrades on our main streets and in our existing commercial corridors create a vibrant ambience that fosters new economic investment.

Putnam's economy benefits from careful and wise government spending. Plans and programs are in place to assist communities and business leaders in making wise management decisions concerning operational and expansion issues. Grants will be sought to help achieve and maintain Putnam's strong economic position. Economic growth will remain strong because of the benefits realized from carefully crafted, balanced land use policies that support appropriate business investment.

Putnam will be recognized as a tourism destination that embraces a broad range of family-oriented, "four-season" tourist attractions centered on our unique resources. Visitors will come to our communities to experience

these attractions and in turn will help contribute to the County's economic vitality and growth.

Recommendations to Achieve the Economic Vision

- Develop targeted economic development recruitment strategies through partnerships between each local municipality and the Putnam County Economic Development Corporation (PCEDC) that respect community preferences, are consistent with community comprehensive plans, and reflect individual communities' infrastructure capabilities and environmental resources.
- Foster economic development opportunities that match new jobs to Putnam's well-educated workforce, thereby enabling more Putnam residents to work locally.
- Support the expanded "Shop Putnam" program that is designed to create awareness of the variety of goods and services available locally.
- Educate residents that shopping in Putnam County keeps their sales tax dollars working for them.
- Continue to partner with other municipalities to decrease government reliance on property taxes.
- Assist local businesses to keep their workforce trained in state of the art skills, so that these businesses can keep pace in an ever-changing labor market.
- Continue to renew Putnam's "Main Streets" and established commercial core areas with projects that focus attention on each community's physical attributes, such as historic buildings, landscape features, transportation amenities and "small town" ambience.
- Build on the success of model innovative "cornerstone park" projects, such as those in Carmel hamlet, Mahopac and Nelsonville, by identifying and promoting similar collaborative opportunities in key locations in hamlets throughout Putnam County to create an inviting atmosphere in Putnam's community centers.
- Facilitate increased local involvement in the Hudson River Valley Greenway program, which provides grants for Main Street

redevelopment planning, historic preservation, and economic development that is compatible with natural resource protection.

- Expand Putnam's commercial base by encouraging home-based business opportunities and the development of the technical infrastructure and business support services that create an environment conducive to individual entrepreneurs and E-commerce initiatives.
- Partner with local Chambers of Commerce and business organizations to identify potential cost sharing programs suitable for Putnam's small businesses - the backbone of our local economy.
- Support Putnam's agricultural economy by providing enhanced technical assistance in areas of environmental best management practices, farm business management assistance, and improved access to local and regional markets.
- Engage the professional expertise found in Putnam's major employers through the creation of a business council that will maintain an ongoing dialogue with the Putnam County government, PCEDC, Chambers of Commerce and small businesses, through regularly scheduled meetings, seminars or other vehicles to promote the exchange of ideas.
- Create greater predictability for the business community by promoting clearly articulated local land use plans that focus economic development activities in realistic locations, at a scale and quality that are consistent with community values.
- Expand heritage and tourism opportunities and support the growth of tourism-compatible businesses in appropriate locations throughout Putnam.
- Collaborate with local municipalities, tourist sites, and tourism-related businesses to provide the necessary infrastructure in support of tourism, such as public restrooms, convenient parking facilities, and tourism-friendly signage.
- Support the development of a hotel/conference center in an appropriate location to enhance our commercial base.
- Work with other municipalities, including State and federal governments, to relieve local government of costly mandates that are outpacing our ability to pay for them.

Environment



"What is the use of a house if you don't have a decent planet to put it on?"
Henry David Thoreau

Profile

Putnam County's environment consists of the built and natural landscape. A profile of this environment may begin by painting a picture of the County's geographical setting and topography. These factors have clearly had an impact on Putnam's landscape and on growth patterns.

Putnam County is located in the Mid-Hudson Region of New York State (NYS). The County is approximately 50 miles north of New York City (NYC) and is on the outer ring of the city's metropolitan area. Putnam is bordered on the west by the Hudson River, on the north by Dutchess County, on the east by the State of Connecticut, and on the south by Westchester County.

Six towns and three small villages comprise Putnam County. These municipalities include the villages of Cold Spring, Nelsonville, and Brewster and the towns of Carmel, Kent, Patterson, Southeast, Putnam Valley and Philipstown. Approximately three-quarters of Putnam County lies within the

New York City Watershed, including all or portions of five towns and the Village of Brewster. Only the Town of Philipstown and the villages of Cold Spring and Nelsonville are completely outside the Watershed. Of the towns within the Watershed, four are almost entirely or entirely within the Watershed: Patterson, 100%; Southeast, 99%; Carmel, 91%; and Kent, 84%. The Village of Brewster is entirely within the Watershed, and the Town of Putnam Valley has 9% of its land within the Watershed.

The Croton System normally supplies approximately 10% of New York City's drinking water, although it can produce as much as 25%-30% during drought conditions. The Croton System, which includes the Croton River, its three main branches and other tributaries, is comprised of ten reservoirs and three controlled lakes. The ten reservoirs are: Cross River, Titicus, Bog Brook, Middle Branch, Croton Falls, East Branch, Diverting, Muscoot, New Croton and Amawalk. The three controlled lakes are Gleneida, Kirk and Gilead. Seven of the reservoirs and all three controlled lakes are located wholly or partially in Putnam County. Water from the Croton System generally flows from north to south through the reservoir system, terminating at the Croton Reservoir in Westchester County, the site of the New York City intake. It should be noted that two other reservoirs in Putnam County – Boyds Corners and the West Branch – are not operated as part of the Croton System but as part of the Catskill/Delaware System. Water from these two reservoirs is transported via the Delaware Aqueduct to the Kensico Reservoir.

Putnam County also contains an estimated 90% of the City of Peekskill's watershed. An estimated 70% of this watershed lies in the Town of Putnam Valley. The balance lies in the Town of Kent. Additionally, the City of Beacon has a reservoir located in the northern part of the Town of Philipstown.

Due in large part to its geographic location, Putnam County has been a magnet for growth, particularly since the 1970s. Putnam County has had the distinction of having among the top 3 fastest growth rates for all counties in New York State in the last three decades. Contributing to growth pressures is the fact that Putnam is easily accessible by major transportation highway corridors and the Metro North commuter railroad, which serves western and eastern Putnam County.

Interstate 84 and Route 684 provide Putnam with excellent high-speed, limited access highways. State Routes 9, 22, 6 and the Taconic State Parkway also function as major highway corridors. These transportation corridors have simultaneously contributed to the growth of the County and growth within the New York City and City of Peekskill's watersheds, as most of the corridors lie in these watershed areas. Improved service on Metro North in the last few decades has also contributed to growth in the same geographical areas.

More than nine-tenths of Putnam's land area is part of the Hudson Highlands. Geologically speaking, the Hudson Highlands extend from the northern Housatonic Valley of Connecticut into New Jersey and Pennsylvania. The remainder of the County consists of a geological

formation known as the Manhattan Prong. This area is found in the northeast and southeast corners of the County. These characterizations are significant because of topography, regional planning work being conducted by the U.S. Forest Service in the Hudson Highlands, and their influence on development. Generally, development has been prevented in the more rugged parts of the County and has turned to the lands more conducive for development, which is also New York City's watershed and, and to a lesser extent, the City of Peekskill's watershed.

In terms of topography, most of Putnam's highest elevations are in the Town of Philipstown. The towns of Philipstown and Putnam Valley and the western part of the Town of Kent have the most rugged terrain, with many high peaks having elevations of 1,000 feet or more. There are several ranges in these towns which are significant because they form a natural east-west barrier. These ranges, situated primarily in Putnam Valley, are separated by Peekskill Hollow Creek. The first range is known as Granite Mountain and is located west of the creek. Moving northward, the elevations increase up to 1,100 feet above sea level.

The northern border of Putnam is similar to the west because of the number of high peaks. These peaks range from Mount Nimham in Kent, with an elevation of 1,270 feet above sea level, to Birch Hill in Patterson, reaching 1,260 above sea level.

The towns of Carmel, Southeast, and Patterson, and the eastern part of the town of Kent, while retaining still relatively high peaks and variable relief,

maintain more of a consistent terrain characterized by a greater number of more level parcels.

In addition to Putnam's rugged terrain, another environmental feature - wetlands - has a dramatic influence on Putnam's past growth patterns, potential future growth opportunities and water quality concerns. Throughout Putnam County, wetland features dot the landscape. New York State delineated wetlands of 12.4 acres or more are found in all municipalities. Smaller local wetland areas have been regulated in all municipalities, at varying degrees, through the wetland permit process that is incorporated into town/village land use regulations. The most significant wetland in Putnam County is the Great Swamp, a 4,200-acre wetland (as delineated by the NYS Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC)) located in a 62,300-acre watershed which covers portions of both New York and Connecticut. The Great Swamp has received special recognition as an ecological treasure by many levels of government. The Putnam County and Dutchess County Legislatures have declared the Great Swamp a *Critical Environmental Area*; NYS DEC has characterized the Swamp as a *Class I Wetland*; the NYS Open Space Plan has listed the Swamp as a *Priority Conservation Project*; and the Swamp was nominated in 1982 as a *National Natural Landmark* by the U.S. Department of Interior. Cooperative efforts to protect the Swamp and its watershed are ongoing, with leadership from Friends of the Great Swamp in partnership with Putnam and Dutchess

counties and a variety of federal and State agencies and environmental organizations.

In addition to the geographical setting and topography, a general review of land use patterns in the County helps to profile the County's environment. The last countywide detailed land use analysis was completed in 1993. This study, conducted by the Putnam County Division of Planning and Development in conjunction with Cornell Laboratory for Environmental Applications of Remote Sensing (CLEARS), updated a study done in 1968. As part of the study, data from 1968 and 1991 were compared. Generally, the County as a whole experienced a large reduction in agricultural land use, undeveloped land, and forested land. Residential use increased significantly and commercial land use increased moderately. Although no detailed analysis has been done at a County level since 1993, it is expected that such an analysis would yield similar results. The suburbanization of Putnam County continues to occur.

Despite the historical trend in development, the most dominant land uses in the County continue to be forested land, wetlands, undeveloped vacant land, and water bodies. Residential land use would be the next largest land use. Generally speaking, residential land use occurs throughout the County on large lot subdivisions or in rural areas. Residential uses are typically represented by single-family detached homes. More concentrated areas of residential development occur in the County's three villages, lake communities, and several condominium complexes. Forested land,

wetlands, vacant land and water bodies are found throughout the County, but large blocks of forested and vacant land are generally found in the west and northwest portions of the County, while major lakes and reservoirs are found in the eastern portion of the County.

Commercial/industrial uses are found in and around the villages and along State Routes 6, 9, 22, and 52. Commercial uses are also found at the intersections of Interstate 84 and Route 312 and Interstate 84 and Ludingtonville Road.

Institutional uses are scattered throughout the County and include the hospital, government buildings, non-profit affiliated facilities, and schools. Significant blocks of land occupied by institutional uses are found in the towns of Philipstown, Patterson, Kent, Putnam Valley and Carmel.

The challenge in the coming decades will be to continue to balance the protection of the non-built environment with the need to have some development of the built environment. Both the built and non-built environments contribute to the quality of life, so one must not be sacrificed for the other.

Also of significance in Putnam's environmental setting are historic properties and historic landscape features that contribute to our identity and link Putnam with its past. Forty-five buildings in Putnam County are listed on the National and NYS Registers of Historic Places; many others are eligible for listing. In addition, three historic districts, all in the Town of Philipstown, have been recognized at the State and national levels for the contribution their

buildings make to the historic fabric of the nation and region. Important historic landscape features, such as stone walls and stone chambers, as well as historic tree specimens, also contribute to Putnam's environment. The Putnam County Historic Preservation Advisory Commission is working to preserve these important features wherever possible throughout the County.

Vision

Putnam's landscape is recognized as the "Jewel in the Crown" of the Hudson River Valley. The beauty and small town atmosphere that historically attracted many residents have been preserved and continue to be enjoyed by Putnam residents and envied by non-residents. Putnam enjoys a reputation as the most attractive place to live in the Hudson Valley. Suburban sprawl has been stopped in Putnam. Development is clustered and tastefully integrated into the natural environment in a manner that enhances Putnam's panoramic views of the Hudson River, lakes, and hillsides. The County's steep slopes, farmlands, lakes, woodlands, wetlands, streams and Hudson River shoreline have been preserved. Putnam people enjoy clean air and water. Fish and wildlife remain abundant in Putnam and endangered species and vegetation have been protected.

The built environment in Putnam preserves historic assets. The environment is healthy and sustains a high quality of life. Within this setting, people are active because Putnam affords many opportunities for hiking, hunting, jogging, walking, golf, tennis, cultural events and many other forms

of individual and organized recreational activities. A healthy, family-oriented lifestyle exists in Putnam, "where the country begins".

Recommendations to Achieve the Environmental Vision

- Support plans that present balanced growth policies where development is appropriately sited, housing is affordable, watersheds are respected, historical assets are valued, natural resources and open space are protected, and recreational and cultural opportunities are diverse and numerous.
- Provide technical advice to Putnam municipalities to implement land use control mechanisms that respect property rights, protect the general public, health, safety and welfare, and utilize both traditional and innovative methods of land use regulation.
- Encourage policies that respect home rule rights yet incorporate a countywide and regional perspective of balanced growth in decision-making.
- Create harmony between the built and non-built environment through innovative land use policies.
- Inventory streams to identify stream channel erosion and begin remediation activities.
- Adopt the *Comprehensive Croton Water Quality Protection Plan (Croton Plan)*, in cooperation with New York City, Westchester County and Putnam's municipalities, to achieve balance between growth and environmental protection and improvement.
- Work cooperatively with local municipalities, New York State, local land trusts and other environmental entities to protect wetlands, slopes, trees, scenic vistas, scenic roads, vegetation and wildlife through improved regulatory ordinances and Best Management Practices.
- Develop signage to educate the public on environmentally sensitive features and to promote safety and protection of natural resources.
- Take steps to patrol and protect County open space, parks and conservation areas.

- Continue to acquire lands for open space through collaborative partnerships with other municipalities, agencies and land trusts.
- Continue to grant conservation easements to the New York City Department of Environmental Protection on appropriate County-owned lands.
- Continue to provide safe, healthy public environments through enhanced programs and enforcement of New York State and County Health Department regulations.
- Explore the use of hybrid vehicles in the County fleet to lessen carbon monoxide emissions.
- Develop, in partnership with the New York State Department of Transportation, appropriate "intelligent transportation systems" technology to improve traffic flow and improved air quality.
- Link open spaces when and where possible, creating and protecting wildlife corridors and creating interconnecting blocks of open space.
- Follow Best Management Practices forestry management on private and public lands.
- Continue implementation of the Agricultural District designation and development of a countywide Agricultural Protection Plan in cooperation with local municipalities.
- Work closely with local and regional land trusts and conservation organizations to educate decision-makers, landowners and the general public about land protection techniques, particularly conservation easements and other strategies, which do not require public management of land.
- Research additional designations of Critical Environmental Areas within the County.
- Continue to enhance the County Lake Management Program through educational programs.
- Continue household hazardous waste clean-up program.
- Investigate ways to control the use of fertilizers, pesticides, and herbicides on lawns, trees, gardens, and shrubbery.

- Continue County and municipal recycling programs.
- Foster creative ways to attract environmentally friendly businesses through new programs of the County's Economic Development Corporation and other business associations.
- Identify, respect and protect important historical assets in the County, both in the built and natural environment, through renewed collaborations with the County Historian's Office, local museums and historical societies, the NYS Preservation League and the NYS Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation.
- Create a culture of environmental stewardship among all County residents through education and participatory programs, consistent with creation of a sustainable, livable community.
- Utilize existing environmental organizations as vehicles to promote the "stewardship ethic" among County residents via Lake Associations, Land Trusts, the County Environmental Management Council, Friends of the Great Swamp, and other environmental advocacy groups.
- Expand opportunities for environmental education that are meaningful to residents' own interests, such as water quality, septic repair and maintenance, and recreational opportunities through open space protection.
- Continue to assess threats to environmental resources and undertake feasibility studies in cooperation with towns and environmental agencies to remediate or eliminate such threats.
- Maintain and revitalize threatened habitats of native flora and fauna on County/Town properties, with assistance from Cornell Cooperative Extension specialists.
- Request that the Putnam County Environmental Management Council (EMC) complete a Natural Resources Inventory of Putnam County.
- Advise municipalities about techniques to incorporate protection strategies into their zoning ordinances and subdivision regulations to preserve stone walls and stone structures in strategic locations throughout the County.

- Insure that interested residents have access to environmental education and land use resource materials and historic preservation techniques, through cooperative programs with Putnam's libraries, government agencies and school districts, to promote widespread understanding of "smart growth" policies.

Education



"Education is not the filling of a bucket but the starting of a fire."
W.B. Yeats

Profile

There are six public school districts in Putnam County - Brewster, Carmel, Garrison, Haldane, Mahopac and Putnam Valley. Enrollment in these district schools totaled 16,815 students during the 2002-2003 school year. Within these districts, there are four parochial elementary schools. Additionally, there are several regional private high schools, a number of nursery and daycare facilities, and several facilities to accommodate special needs education. There are also seven libraries in the County that enhance education, as well as youth development programs such as 4-H, Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts.

The educational environment in Putnam County has many assets and strengths. In the library system, there is networking among libraries and access to the entire Mid-Hudson Library System's resources. Libraries provide adult and children's programming, excellent public accessibility, and affiliations with

other organizations, such as Literacy Volunteers. In youth development, there is a broad range of public and not-for-profit programs and well organized and community based programs.

The public school system is strong and a high number of students attend college. Putnam has a highly educated population with 34% of the population aged 25 and older possessing a college or graduate degree. In early childhood education, home daycare providers receive good support from the Putnam Child Care Council, and residents can access local intervention programs. In the area of degree programs and continuing education, there is access to many quality four-year regional colleges. Dutchess and Westchester Community Colleges offer extension programs at Carmel and Mahopac High Schools. High schools and BOCES have good continuing education programs, and there are increased opportunities for distance learning through the Internet. Organizations such as Cornell Cooperative Extension offer learning opportunities on a variety of topics and interests for all ages.

Also, in the area of continuing and professional education for government related activities, employees often attend seminars, forums, workshops and training sessions relevant to their fields of work. Government agencies also routinely conduct public education and training sessions on numerous topics for their employees and for the general public.

Along with the assets and strengths of the educational environment, there are areas of concern. In the library system, inadequate facilities,

funding, telecommunications infrastructure, and variation in government financial support are continuing concerns. In youth development, public awareness of opportunities, transportation for youth to activities, and inter-agency coordination are areas of concern. Ongoing issues within the school system include the cost of State mandates, infrastructure needs, curriculum challenges to meet changing needs and student attitudes, teacher training, retirements of experienced teachers and administrators, and length of school year. In the early childhood education area, more community and government support for daycare centers and the cost of State mandates are concerns. Finally, in the degree and continuing education area, the lack of local access to a college or business school that is located in the County is perceived by some as a problem. Insufficient local access to satellite technology is also a concern.

Vision

Education in the 21st Century, specifically between now and 2010, in Putnam County will encompass not just the traditional student, which we've come generally to regard as being between 5 and 24, but from toddler through late retirement years. The educational environment in Putnam will provide a lifelong continuum of quality, cost-effective, formal and non-traditional educational opportunities available to residents locally, provided by public, private and not-for-profit educational institutions. Because of this change in philosophy, courses and curriculum will need to combine

academics and practical application as well as to address learning styles, student attitudes, and more innovative teaching methods and strategies.

Our public educational institutions will provide affordable, high-quality education for our youth with academic and fiscal accountability to students, parents and taxpayers.

Professionals in their given disciplines and fields will find themselves having to be recertified at periodic intervals to keep both their certifications and licenses valid and current. This will result in a highly skilled and educated workforce to fulfill the needs of local and regional employers. The Putnam workforce will possess the skill level, knowledge, and ability/commitment to meet competitive levels with technological advances and to remain competitive in a global marketplace.

Quality and effectiveness of the educational process will be measured in the future by an individual's ability to adapt to changes in the work environment and maneuver through a number of career changes in a given work lifetime. Putnam residents will have access to institutions that meet the specialized needs of a changing economy.

Recommendations to Achieve the Education Vision

- Continue to evaluate the feasibility of a community college in Putnam County.
- Identify ways to achieve greater public access to library resources through improved technology.
- Create better interagency coordination among youth development service providers.

- Increase public awareness of youth development opportunities.
- Identify transportation alternatives and transportation funding sources for youth development activities.
- Define ways to enhance daycare options.
- Lobby the State and federal governments to financially support all education mandates.
- Identify ways to enhance advanced degree and continuing education opportunities locally.
- Continue to provide wellness, computer training and recreational programs at Office for the Aging Welcome Centers.
- Conduct educational seminars and workshops to make the public and professionals aware of government programs and regulations.
- Encourage government employees to pursue advanced degrees and professional development programs and certifications through incentive programs.
- Continue to train the government work force through in-house training programs, such as the yearly management training sessions and through external training programs, such as those at the John F. Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University and the National FBI Academy.
- Design a plan to guide the use and growth of telecommunications/data services to support business, educational and other community needs.
- Develop appropriate resource materials that can be used to educate the public on various issues such as the environment, economic development, fertilizer and pesticide usage, etc.
- Utilize available time for public access on local cable networks to spotlight issues of concern to Putnam residents.
- Establish a liaison between the business community and the school community to discuss employers' skill needs leading to the establishment of an internship program that would match the local school with a local business. This would help to identify those areas of employment that are appropriate for those not planning on

attending college or for those who do not attain a high school diploma.

- Educate community volunteers to the many service areas throughout the County that are available for volunteer opportunities, especially with schools and not-for-profit organizations.
- Encourage a media sponsored radio station, preferably from current daily newsprint, to broadcast pertinent daily information to Putnam County residents.

Well-Being



"A quality community is a safe family environment; it's a vitality and community pride with the residents; it is community involvement with a strong rapport with local officials. It is growth in accordance with local plans and policies; it is concern for the environment and our fellow man. It's protection for the character of our communities. It's a place we call home".

excerpt from NYS Quality Community Task Force Report

Profile

Putnam County enjoys an enviable position in New York State. With one of the highest income levels, lowest poverty rate, low unemployment rate, high job growth rate and one of the lowest crime rates in New York State (NYS), Putnam is the ideal community in which to live, work and raise a family.

Within Putnam, residents enjoy a diverse mix of recreational, cultural, social and civic opportunities sponsored by the County, local governments, local youth and community organizations and private providers. Popular interest in the arts and cultural pursuits is part of the fiber of Putnam County life. The County, like its neighbors in the beautiful Hudson Valley, has inspired artistic expression for centuries. Renowned writers, painters, photographers,

actors and musicians have been enriched by Putnam's bucolic setting. Artistic pursuits continue today throughout Putnam.

Putnam County's individuals and families are among the most affluent in New York State. 31.4% of the Putnam population earned more than \$100,000 in 1999, as reported in Census 2000 results. The median family income in Putnam County is \$ 82,197, as compared to the statewide median family income of \$ 51,691. Personal income per person in Putnam County was \$ 37,400 in 2000, 8 % above the statewide average and 130% of the national average. Putnam's poverty rate of 4.4% in 2000 compares favorably to the statewide rate of 14.6%, continuing Putnam's 4-decade trend of the lowest poverty rate in New York State. Putnam's 2002 unemployment rate of 3.0 was 50% lower than New York State's rate and was the second lowest in the State.

Despite the affluence of Putnam's families, the cost of living, particularly of escalating housing costs, has made homeownership a greater challenge for individuals than in past years. The median cost of a single-family home in Putnam County in the second quarter of 2003 topped \$ 355,000 - a 24% increase over 2002 prices and an all-time high for Putnam. Condominium prices in Putnam escalated to \$ 242,500 in the second quarter - up 27% from 2002. In the past, Putnam often offered a more affordable alternative to the housing in Westchester and Rockland counties. That distinction, however, is fading as Putnam sees costs of both existing and new construction skyrocket.

Rental housing in the County is scarce. Most rentals are found in one- and two-family units, as there are few rental complexes in the County. Of Putnam's 33,000 occupied housing units, 17.8% are renter occupied. The vacancy rate for rental housing is 3.2%, representing a very tight rental market. The median rent in 2000 was \$ 913, as reported by Census 2000.

The not-for-profit Putnam County Housing Corporation (PCHC) offers housing assistance in the County, particularly for the elderly, the physically disabled, first-time homebuyers, and low-income renters. The PCHC builds, owns and maintains subsidized rental housing for the low income elderly, operates the federal Section 8 Housing Voucher Program for low and moderate income renters, provides a home repair program for low and moderate income homeowners and provides a variety of housing counseling services. Services for the homeless are provided by the Putnam County Department of Social Services in conjunction with other social services organizations.

Putnam County provides a plethora of services to assist County residents in meeting the needs of their daily lives. County-provided services include planning and development assistance, health and social services, recreation, highway maintenance and construction, youth services, consumer protection, history and archival services, mental health services, legal aid, fire coordination, police protection, recycling, bus transportation, employment services and services for the elderly. Public health care services for children and adults include preventive medicine, home health care,

medical and mental health clinics and case management. Coordination with State, private and not-for-profit providers is offered to address specific problem areas.

Demands for services for the elderly in our County are growing in response to changing family needs. Putnam's population is aging. Residents aged 45-64 increased 42% in the decade 1990-2000 in Putnam, far above the statewide increase of only 19 % for the same period. Currently in Putnam, over 9,000 persons are over the age of 65. Of those over the age of 65, 1,000 persons are over the age of 85, and 635 of the persons over the age of 65 in Putnam County are living in poverty. Services for these most vulnerable members of our community are being addressed through a full range of programs for Putnam's elderly, including a daily nutrition program and wellness and socialization opportunities provided by the County Office for the Aging. Expansion of these programs is ongoing. With the successful completion of the William Kohler Senior Center in Mahopac, other similar community based facilities are being planned, based on this model of providing comprehensive services in a neighborhood setting. Adult daycare programs throughout the County offer a complete range of structured activities, lunch and transportation for the frail elderly in need of supervision.

Services for children, particularly those living in lower income families, are addressed by a variety of County and not-for-profit agencies including the County Department of Social Services, the County Health Department, the Youth Bureau, collaborative programs between the County and local

Putnam County School Districts, the Putnam Community Action Program, PARC and others. 487 families with children under age 18 live in poverty in Putnam County.

Services for the newest members of our community, particularly newly arrived immigrants of Latino and Eastern European origin, are handled through the County's Coordinator of Community Affairs and through organizations such as Literacy Volunteers and local church groups. Over 8,000 residents of Putnam are foreign born; 2,500 of the foreign born have entered the U.S. since 1990. Four thousand (4,000) residents indicated in the 2000 Census that they speak English "less than well". These individuals often require assistance in areas of housing, health care, employment and cultural assimilation.

Public safety in the County is maintained by the Putnam County Sheriff's Department, town police forces in Carmel and Kent and the NYS Police. These professionals work closely with Putnam County's Probation Department and the Putnam County District Attorney's Office to insure the continued safety of Putnam residents.

Fire protection and emergency medical services are sustained countywide by over 1,000 volunteer members of the County's 13 volunteer fire departments and four independent ambulance corps. Working with Putnam's Bureau of Emergency Services, these locally based units provide Putnam residents with protection and emergency care at a fraction of the cost of paid fire and ambulance services.

Vision

People in Putnam County enjoy a high standard of well-being. Putnam is a county of strong families and involved citizens. All residents have a sense of pride, confidence and optimism that demonstrates respect for each other and a commitment to our collective future.

Putnam is the safest and most attractive place in New York State to live and raise a family. People live in interdependent, cooperative neighborhoods that are economically healthy and free of violence, public health and environmental concerns. They move about in the County without fear or concern. Those who need assistance receive quality service from highly skilled, responsive professionals. Our human service programs are supportive of family and neighborhood priorities, are coordinated and integrated, easily accessible, culturally sensitive and neighborhood based.

Emergency services, police and fire protection are second to none. Putnam's uniquely consolidated emergency services dispatch center, with its up-to date technology, contributes to Putnam's distinction of having the lowest crime rate in the region and to be considered the safest county in New York State. Our paid and volunteer forces are highly trained and well respected by our residents.

People of all ages in Putnam have access to quality and affordable health care that is provided in a coordinated manner by County, private and not-for-profit agencies. Expanded services at Putnam Hospital and other regional medical institutions provide state of the art medical care.

Individuals have a choice in selecting the health care option best suited to their situation. Health and social services are provided to our elderly residents to allow them to remain in their homes, if that is their choice. Our Health Department provides health care information and assistance to children and adults in a variety of programs and clinical settings.

Putnam's neighborhoods are vital and interdependent. They provide affordable, attractive and economically viable housing for people of all ages, races, income levels and for families of all sizes. A variety of housing options exist for all; homeowners and renters alike are assured a clean, safe, suitable and non-discriminatory living environment. The elderly and others in need of supportive living arrangements have access to locally based housing options.

Putnam's residents have access to a comprehensive park, recreation and an open space system of natural areas, historic sites, trails, athletic fields, community centers and neighborhood playgrounds that are strategically based throughout the County. The parks and recreation system provides a wide variety of opportunities for recreation, education and contemplation while enhancing, preserving and linking our unique cultural and natural amenities.

Putnam's arts and cultural events, activities and institutions are an integral part of each Putnam community. They provide an important component of our well-being, enhance our living experience, broaden our perspectives, and bridge the gap between diverse groups of people.

Recommendations to Achieve Well-Being Vision

- Embrace a value system which considers the social, economic and environmental consequences in all decision-making processes so that Putnam County residents will have an opportunity to achieve independence.
- Strengthen relationships with local housing advocacy organizations, such as the Putnam County Housing Corporation and Habitat for Humanity, to create increased opportunities for expanded affordable housing options for Putnam's young singles, families, the elderly and the disabled.
- Maintain surveillance of potential environmental threats to the well-being of our residents.
- Refine strategies to address the threat of terrorism to secure safety of Putnam residents.
- Pursue creative partnerships to bring health care services to areas of the County currently underserved.
- Insure coordination of public safety operations among County and town agencies to address threats to personal safety.
- Build upon successful programs of local police and criminal justice agencies that contribute to Putnam's low crime rate.
- Lobby State and federal agencies to implement strategies to reduce Medicaid expenses.
- Refine strategies to address home health care needs.
- Expand and support recreational and leisure time activities through on-going collaboration with local arts, cultural and recreation organizations throughout Putnam County.
- Identify opportunities to acquire or retrofit existing recreational buildings and/or recreational properties to meet emerging countywide recreational needs, including more properties for active recreational pursuits.
- Continue to provide and upgrade County facilities to enable all of our citizens, including those with disabilities, to fully participate in all available services and opportunities.

- Provide more opportunities for quality leisure time activities for families and other residents, including a County owned golf course and a County owned and operated outdoor pool.
- Work towards the development of a County Cultural Center and Performing Arts venue.
- Expand multi-modal transportation systems in the County to provide increased mobility options, to preserve air quality, and to meet the diverse transportation needs of all segments of the population.
- Monitor the changing demographics of Putnam's population to tailor human services programs and assistance to the needs of a changing population mix.
- Continue to support and expand the skills training programs that enable all persons to participate in the private and public sector workforce, regardless of disability.
- Monitor and improve, where necessary, service delivery programs related to the underprivileged, youth, the disabled and senior citizens.
- Involve local municipalities and community organizations in designing and sponsoring programs and events that highlight Putnam's growing cultural diversity.
- Beautify and maintain Putnam's landscapes, streetscapes and highway networks to retain and enhance the County's bucolic setting.
- Continue to support the development of housing opportunities that will enable people with disabilities to live independently within our communities.
- Pursue partnership options to help address the needs of the Putnam County Humane Society in their effort to care for stray animals.

Report of the Task Force on
Vision 2010

Appendix

*Vision 2010 Committee Members
Subcommittee Reports*