



COMMUNITY VISIONING PUTNAM COUNTY

NOVEMBER 5,16,21, 2019

Facilitated by
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INTRODUCTION

Putnam County initiated a strategic planning process on November 5, 2019 with a community visioning workshop in Crescent City. Ms. Marilyn Crotty, consultant from the Florida Institute of Government at the University of Central Florida, designed and facilitated the process.

Putnam County residents, businesses, organizations, and other stakeholders were invited to attend any of three workshops that were held in various locations to share their hopes and dreams for the future of the county. Approximately 50 people attended the first session. The second workshop, held in Palatka had 30 people in attendance, and 20 people participated in the final session in Interlachen.

The attendees were assigned to small groups in which they responded to questions posed by the facilitator. This report is a summary of the ideas that were generated with special attention to the emerging consensus on issues that was apparent at each of the workshops.

This information will be shared with the County Commission prior to their strategic planning session on December 16-17, 2019 and will provide community input to the goals, objectives, and priorities that the Commission establishes for the county.

FIRST COMMUNITY VISIONING WORKSHOP

NOVEMBER 5, 2019

COMMUNITY TREASURES AND VALUES

The participants were asked to identify the treasures and values of Putnam County...the things that they love about the county and want to see continued, protected or improved. These might be physical places or intangibles like community character. There were six small discussion groups with about 8 people in each group. The responses have been grouped into four categories (environmental, qualities/characteristics, community assets, and economic development) with the number in front of the item indicating the number of groups (6 groups total) that included this issue on their lists. A complete list of each small group's comments is included in Appendix A of this report.

PART I – Treasures and Values

What are the treasures and values of Putnam County...the things (whether physical places, or intangibles like community character) you love about the county and want to see continued, protected or improved? What would you want to ensure is preserved as Putnam County plans for the future?

Environmental

- (6) Lakes and waterways, especially the St. Johns River – access to
- (6) Parks
- (3) Trails – William Bartram
- (3) Natural resources – nature, aquatic life
- (2) Wild areas, wildlife

Qualities and Characteristics

- (4) Sense of community, community spirit, caring, benevolence, support
- (4) Controlled, less traffic – country roads, without trash
- (2) Personal safety – police, fire, rescue
- (2) Small town atmosphere, friendliness
- (2) Diversity
- (2) Walkability

Community Assets

- (6) Historic areas – heritage, homes, architecture, statues
- (3) Ft. Gates Ferry
- (1) Arts and culture
- (1) Children/elders
- (1) Trees

- (1) “Keep Putnam Beautiful”

Economic Development

- (1) Small and large businesses
- (1) Education
- (1) Ecotourism
- (1) Transparency in use of Tourist Development Council (TDC) dollars
- (1) Aging in place strategies
- (1) Parking plans
- (1) Development of shopping with character
- (1) Fishing and crab industry

VISION 2030

The second task assigned to the small groups was to discuss Putnam County ten years from now. What will the county be like? What does it look like? What is it like to live here, work here, retire here? What kinds of economic activity take place here? The participants were invited to share their hopes and dreams for the future of the county. The responses have been organized into six categories (appearance/environment, quality of life, economic development, education, government services/operations, and transportation/mobility) combining information from all the groups. The number in front of the item indicates the number of groups at the workshop (total of 6) that included this issue on their lists. A separate listing of the responses from each group is found in Appendix B.

Part 2 – Vision 2030

Appearance/Beautification

- (2) Rehab downtown(s) vacant buildings
 - Grants to rehab businesses
- (2) Sparkling clean river, lakes
 - Monitoring by environmental specialist for river and lake quality
- (1) Community pride
- (1) No littering
- (1) Limit or remove septic tanks
- (1) Eliminate vacant properties

Quality of Life

- (4) High speed internet – fiber optics in every home and business
- (4) Improved access to health care

New stand-alone ER facility, urgent care plus, high tech new hospital, clinic in south county

- (2) Young people and families
 - Things to keep kids here
- (2) Retirement Community – retirement condos
- (2) Arts Center
 - Art and music venue – old church
- (2) Celebrate diversity with events – engage diverse community, inclusion
- (1) Thriving small towns
- (1) Entertainment for young and old
- (1) No longer poorest county and no longer have highest domestic violence rate
- (1) Subdivisions
- (1) Save Pomona Park fitness center
- (1) Focus on healthy behaviors, drug crisis, mental health
 - (1) Racial issues and studies conducted
- (1) Fuel on lake and river
- (1) Affordable housing

Economic Development

- (4) Have good paying jobs – youth focused, living wage
- (2) Plenty of businesses – atmosphere for success
- (1) Full employment
- (1) Ecotourism – forests, trails, waterways
- (1) Clean industry – solar
- (1) Shopping – Target, Trader Joe’s, Publix
- (1) Nice restaurants
- (1) Movie theater
- (1) Skateboard park
- (1) Tourism/hospitality via planning/growth management to preserve our values – business incubator
- (1) High tech companies – mentor/protect internships
- (1) More minority businesses
- (1) Small business loans

Education

- (6) Improved education
 - Vo-tech in high schools, college
 - Schools are a model for rest of state
- (1) Free college and boarding
- (1) Museum of Natural History
- (1) Agriculture classes
- (1) Elks Lodge – college culinary school and feed the homeless

Government Services/Operations

- (2) Infrastructure improvement/maintenance plans – water, sewer, bridges, roads, parks, trails, internet

- (2) Community Center – South Putnam
- (2) Increased fire stations, staff, EMS/medical first responders
 - Over 400 hours training to become certified volunteer firefighter
- (1) Fewer County fees
- (1) Improved services – animal control, elder and youth via community center recreation and wellness
- (1) Zoning boards protect community values - agriculture
- (1) Government works for us
- (1) Good recycling program, statewide bottle deposit program
- (1) Everybody happily pays their “fair share” of taxes
- (1) Codes enforcement for infrastructure, housing, buildings
- (1) Grant writer
- (1) Department of Doing – center for resources
- (1) Improve public safety – substations in every community

Transportation/Mobility

- (2) Improved crosswalks – on 17 in Crescent City
- (1) Train station
- (1) Second crossing over St. Johns River
- (1) Sidewalks
- (1) Cleaner roadways
- (1) I-20 to Gainesville and additional lanes Hwy 17 to Deltona completed
- (1) Ft. Gates Ferry running, still “historic”, but improved
- (1) Interconnected trails for walking, cycling
- (1) Managed traffic
- (1) Downtown Palatka walkable
- (1) Access increased transportation for rural communities

Each group was asked to select the three most important things they would like to see the city accomplish in the next ten years. The following ideas were identified:

Group 1

- *Improved education (including Vo-Tech)
- * More good paying jobs
- *Young people and families living here

Group 2

- *Services – Animal control, elder and youth via community center - recreation & wellness
- *Economic development – Hospitality/tourism via use of planning/growth management to preserve our values; business incubator; internet
- *Engage our diverse community and education via inclusion and improved education

Group 3

- *Putnam no longer the poorest county (jobs) nor has the highest domestic violence rate
- *Schools are model for rest of state
- *Zoning boards protect community values and agriculture

Group 4

- *Infrastructure improvement/maintenance plans – water, sewer, bridges, roads, parks, fiber optics to every home and business

- *Atmosphere for successful businesses and restaurants – retirement condos
- *Full staff of first responders – emergency room facilities

Group 5

- *Subdivisions – single family homes
- *Top education – more vocational education; high tech companies to mentor/protect; internships
- *Retirement community

Group 6

- *Improve infrastructure – water, sewer, bridges, trails, improve internet
- *Upgrade schools – accountability and more vocational training; lots of exciting, engaging courses, agriculture courses
- *Codes enforcement for derelict houses/buildings and infrastructure/trash

At the end of the workshop, the facilitator asked the participants to share any comments or thoughts about the session. Several people expressed thanks to the County Commission for engaging in this process and particularly for giving citizens the opportunity to participate at the beginning of the project. Others commented on the high degree of consensus that was evident and hoped that the strategic plan will be followed to implement some of the ideas that were generated.

SECOND COMMUNITY VISIONING WORKSHOP

NOVEMBER 16, 2019

The second in this series of community workshops was held on November 16th in Palatka. Approximately 30 people participated in this session using the same format and agenda that had been used in the previous workshop. Ms. Crotty again served as the facilitator.

COMMUNITY TREASURES AND VALUES

The participants were asked to identify the treasures and values of Putnam County...the things that they love about the county and want to see continued, protected or improved. These might be physical places or intangibles like community character. There were six small discussion groups with about 5 people in each group. The responses have been grouped into eight categories (environmental, qualities/characteristics, community assets, economic development, arts and culture, education, history, and governmental services) with the number in front of the item indicating the number of groups (6 groups total) that included this issue on their lists. A complete list of each small group’s comments is included in Appendix A of this report.

PART I – Treasures and Values

What are the treasures and values of Putnam County...the things (whether physical places, or intangibles like community character) you love about the county and want to see continued, protected or improved? What would you want to ensure is preserved as Putnam County plans for the future?

Environmental

- (4) River
- (4) Bartram
- (4) Trails
- (3) Ravine Gardens
- (3) Waterways – access to
- (2) National forest
- (2) Open/green spaces
- (2) Natural resources
- (1) Natural public properties
- (1) Drayton Island
- (1) Scenic Loop
- (1) Parks

Qualities and Characteristics

- (3) Heart for caring; community coming together in times of need
- (3) Small town charm
- (3) Agency partnerships
- (3) Rural environment
- (3) Location – close to larger cities
- (3) Citizen activism; corporations and public engaged – everyone can make a difference
- (2) Weather
- (2) Friendliness of people
- (2) Cultural diversity
- (1) No traffic
- (1) Pace of life
- (1) Convenience
- (1) Current spark of positive momentum (attitude)
- (1) Patriotic
- (1) Low taxes
- (1) Low cost to live here
- (1) Pedestrian/bike friendly

Community Assets

- (2) Churches – food kitchens
- (2) Medical facilities – hospital, cancer center
- (2) Railroad Depot
- (1) Palatka Daily News
- (1) Riverboat – “Pride of Palatka”
- (1) Ft. Gates Ferry
- (1) Riverfront Park
- (1) Clock Tower
- (1) River Center
- (1) Water Management District
- (1) Restaurants – non-chain
- (1) Bed and Breakfasts

- (1) Ag Center
- (1) Civic groups
- (1) Volunteers

Economic Development

- (3) Downtown Palatka
- (2) Agriculture – solar farm
- (1) Eco-tourism
- (1) Good balance – business, industry, recreation

Arts and Culture

- (5) Flo Arts
- (2) Murals
- (2) Larimer
- (2) Tilghman House
- (1) Florida School of the Arts
- (1) River City Players

Education

- (2) St. Johns River State College
- (1) Mentoring program and PAL
- (1) Library system
- (1) STEM
- (1) FFA

History

- (4) Heritage
- (3) Historic homes
- (2) Historic architecture
- (1) Historic neighborhoods

Government Services

- (1) Engaged emergency services
- (1) Low crime

VISION 2030

The second task assigned to the small groups was to discuss Putman County ten years from now. What will the county be like? What does it look like? What is it like to live here, work here, retire here? What kinds of economic activity take place here? The participants were invited to share their hopes and dreams for the future of the county. The responses have been organized into eight categories (infrastructure, quality of life, economic development, education, housing, government services/operations, development/redevelopment, and transportation) combining information from all the groups. The number in front of the item indicates the number of groups at the workshop (total of 6) that included this issue on their lists. A separate listing of the responses from each group is found in Appendix B.

Part 2 – Vision 2030

Infrastructure

- (2) Well maintained; increased public works resources
- (1) Septics replaced along river
- (1) Clean water
- (1) Storm Drainage
- (1) Broadband/internet

Quality of Life

- (4) Social services
 - Central hub for social security, food stamps, Medicare, etc.
 - Reclaiming funds that go outside to other counties that could be ours
 - Poverty handled
- (3) Accessible Health care
 - Comprehensive physical and mental health services
 - OBGYN – birth unit at hospital
- (2) Healthy food
 - Community gardens, window gardens
 - Local groceries
 - (2) Farmers market
 - Farm to table, farm to school
- (2) Arts and culture programs
 - Downtown art district
 - Cultural center (old Mt. Tabor Church)
- (1) Stronger code enforcement
- (1) Clean river
- (1) Maintain rural/natural environment
- (1) Centralized community calendar
- (1) Strategic plan carried out with intent – connecting county and cities
- (1) Collaboration between government and ministries
- (1) Alcohol free spaces for youth
- (1) Population changes
 - Attracting who we want to live here
 - Attract activists who improve and protected resources
- (1) Restoration for incarcerated citizens – programs, processes

Economic Development

- (4) Employment opportunities/jobs
 - Trained workforce
- (3) Ecotourism
 - (2) Trails – maintenance, funding, River to Sea Loop completed, trail town
 - (2) Destination – hike, bike, paddle, tours, murals, Associated lodging, food, rentals, tours, etc.
 - Guidelines for ecotourism

- (3) Entertainment
 - Upgrade movie theaters
 - Night life
- (2) Day and night businesses – restaurants, attracting young people, all ages
- (2) Varied shopping opportunities
 - Clothing stores
- (2) Tourist Development Council (TDC)
 - Coordinated festivals and events tied to a TDC plan
- (1) Barge port/ship building
- (1) More diverse businesses
- (1) Shops locally owned
- (1) Historic tours, trolleys, carriage rides

Education

- (3) Improved education – A ratings
- (1) Colleges/ with dormitories
- (1) Preschool readiness
- (1) Culinary program – Elks building
- (1) Better education and Vo-Tech
 - St. Johns River College training
 - Bridge program from High School
- (1) New school structures with technology and open natural areas
- (1) Teach life skills
- (1) Senior population engagement in education, readiness, social skills, health, etc.

Housing

- (2) More affordable, safe housing
 - Housing for seniors
- (1) Downtown apartments/condos
- (1) No more 20k homes on ¼ acre lots
- (1) Facilities for homeless population
- (1) Improved housing – master planned
- (1) New housing developments

Government Services/Operations

- (3) Countywide branding – image promotion
- (1) Grant writers
- (1) Parks and Recreation take over trail maintenance
- (1) User fees for boating/fishing events, river launching areas
- (1) System for countywide projects – support, implementation
- (1) Beautify entrances
- (1) Parks – bring families; get rid of razor wire fences/trash
- (1) Well connected communications for law enforcement and emergency services

Development/redevelopment

- (3) Downtown development (Palatka)

Restored, thriving – keep character

Mixed use – commercial and residential

- (2) Land use master plan
- (2) Controlled, planned growth
- (1) Infill development in N/S historic districts
- (1) Empty structures repurposed with historic integrity
- (1) Regulations for growth and what buildings must look like
- (1) Set limits on what is city (protect nature, zoning) clear boundaries, expectations, maintenance

Transportation

(3) Public transportation

Countywide

Bus to surrounding cities

Link up depot, trails, downtown

- (1) Amtrak station fully functional – luggage, bikes
- (1) More ways to cross the River
- (1) River transportation
- (1) Interconnected trails, sidewalks, bike lanes, crosswalks
- (1) Walkable community
- (1) Bridge toll electronically
- (1) Reid St. destination instead of drive through – pedestrian, bike friendly
- (1) Safe highways, roads

Each group was asked to select the three most important things they would like to see the city accomplish in the next ten years. The following ideas were identified:

Group #1

- Infrastructure*
 - Clean drinking water, septic replaced along river
 - Internet availability
 - One stop/centralized social infrastructure
 - Affordable housing – preserve what we have
- Ecotourism Center/Capital of North Florida-celebrate resources*
 - Stand alone, not part of Chamber
 - Destination – hike, bike, paddle, tours, murals
 - Trail maintenance – preserve historical assets; complete River to Sea Loop
 - Funding
 - Tourist Development Council
 - Place awareness
- Population Changes*
 - Attracting who we want to live here – catchment
 - Improved housing – master planned
 - Attract activists who improve and protect resources
 - Improved education
 - Senior population engagement in education readiness, social skills, health, etc.

Group #2

- More accessible healthcare*
New OBGYN and birthing unit at hospital
- Better education and vo-tech for St John's River State College training*
"Bridge program from high school"
- Infrastructure - Public transportation to services (bus specially to surrounding cities) *

Group #3

- Ample jobs opportunities*
- Strategy for: countywide project *
Support and implementation
- Well-resourced healthcare (including mental health) and wrap-around services*

Group #4

- Set limits on what is city – zoning*
Protect nature
Clear boundaries
Expectations and maintenance
- Beautification and appearance*
Beautify entranceways – all presentable, new signs, artwork
Parks - bring families; get rid of razor wire fencing and trash
All previously empty structures are repurposed with historic integrity
- Education*
Schools are new structures with integrated technology and open natural areas
Children well cared for since birth; educate children about raising children, economics, how to cook, life skills, outside worldview - travel programs
Historic tours, trolleys or carriage rides

Group #5

- Vibrant mixed-use downtown Palatka (commercial/residential) *
- Comprehensive physical and mental health services*
- Developed ecotourism industry with associated lodging, food, rentals, tours, etc.*

Group #6

Several people from this group left the workshop at this time, so the remaining members of the group joined other groups for the visioning discussion.

While the participants in this workshop shared many of the same treasures and values that had been identified in the first session, there was more of an emphasis placed on the provision of social services in the desired future described by many than had been heard before. During the closing comments several people urged the County to work in a collaborative manner with the municipalities, the private, and the nonprofit sectors to address countywide issues. Once again, the attendees were appreciative of the opportunity to have input into the strategic planning process and hoped it will have an impact on the future of the County.

THIRD COMMUNITY VISIONING WORKSHOP

NOVEMBER 21, 2019

The third in this series of community workshops was held on November 21st in Interlachen. Approximately 20 people participated in this session using the same format and agenda that had been used in the previous workshops. Ms. Crotty again served as the facilitator.

COMMUNITY TREASURES AND VALUES

The participants were asked to identify the treasures and values of Putnam County...the things that they love about the county and want to see continued, protected or improved. These might be physical places or intangibles like community character. There were three small discussion groups with about 7 people in each group. The responses have been grouped into six categories (environmental, qualities/characteristics, community assets, economic development, education, and governmental services) with the number in front of the item indicating the number of groups (3 groups total) that included this issue on their lists. A complete list of each small group's comments is included in Appendix A of this report.

PART I – Treasures and Values

What are the treasures and values of Putnam County...the things (whether physical places, or intangibles like community character) you love about the county and want to see continued, protected or improved? What would you want to ensure is preserved as Putnam County plans for the future?

Environment

- (3) Lakes, river, waterways
- (2) Nature trails
- (1) Green spaces

Qualities/Characteristics

- (3) Rural atmosphere, life style
- (3) Family friendly atmosphere, especially to strangers; southern hospitality; neighborliness
- (3) Historical preservation – buildings, history
- (2) Giving attitude; volunteering/charity
- (1) Unique municipal characteristics – Welaka, Pomona Park, Interlachen
- (1) Low density land use/population

Community Assets

- (2) Community events – parades, festivals
- (1) Community spaces – parks, Interlachen Caboose, Palatka riverfront
- (1) Community leaders

Economic Development

- (2) Agriculture

- (1) Small businesses – restaurants

Education

- (1) AP and AICE programs

Government Services and Operations

- (1) Calculated planning based on needs and desire to maintain the integrity of the community
- (1) Controlled growth, diversification
- (1) Approachable county government

VISION 2030

The second task assigned to the small groups was to discuss Putman County ten years from now. What will the county be like? What does it look like? What is it like to live here, work here, retire here? What kinds of economic activity take place here? The participants were invited to share their hopes and dreams for the future of the county. The responses have been organized into six categories (environment, quality of life, economic development, education, government services/operations, and development/redevelopment) combining information from all the groups. The number in front of the item indicates the number of groups at the workshop (total of 3) that included this issue on their lists. A separate listing of the responses from each group is found in Appendix B.

Part 2 – Vision 2030

Environment

- (2) Maintain river; clean waterways
- (1) Completion of trails
- (1) Restore Ocklawaha – keep the dam
- (1) Growth of community gardens

Quality of Life

- (2) Reduce substance abuse
- (2) More activities for youth
 - Skate park – park for older kids
- (1) Community Senior/pediatric daycare
- (1) More mental health counselors, specifically licensed
- (1) Decreased crime rate
- (1) More festivals, crafts – marketing of festivals
 - (1) Greater acceptance of others of different backgrounds, races, religions, sexualities
- (1) Lower poverty rate
- (1) YMCA
- (1) Music festivals
- (1) Swap meets
- (1) Farmers market
- (1) Rodeos/pow wows

Economic Development

- (1) More small businesses
- (1) More fishing/boating tournaments
- (1) More restaurants – especially in Interlachen
- (1) Fully utilized Palatka Mall
- (1) More movie theaters
- (1) More tourism – ecotourism
 - Historical homes, antiques, restaurants/breweries, trails
- (1) Local business supported by local incentives
- (1) Manufacturing jobs with benefits
- (1) Agriculture economic development

Education

- (2) Return of technical training; trade school
- (1) Emotional education
- (1) Substance abuse education for children
- (1) Attract/keep well trained teachers
- (1) Increase the graduation rate
- (1) Better sex education in schools

Government Services and Operations

- (2) Animal shelters, fully staffed
 - Lower stray cat and dog population
- (1) Four-wheel drive vehicles for 1st responders – fire dept., law enforcement
- (1) Equipment up to date – modernized
 - More efficient
 - Faster repairs
- (1) Clean up abandoned properties
- (1) More recreational activities
- (1) Staffed community center
- (1) Domestic violence prevention services
- (1) Recycling services
- (1) Leader in sustainable living

Development/Redevelopment

- (1) Controlled growth – retain rural feel
- (1) More developers that respect preservation and rural feel
- (1) Waterfront development – hotels, restaurants
- (1) More \$250k houses
- (1) Market apartments
- (1) No interstate

(1) Use of already developed areas (PRC, airport, mall, marine store)

Each group was asked to select the three most important things they would like to see the city accomplish in the next ten years. The following ideas were identified:

Group #1

- Controlled growth*
Rural feel
Meet our community needs
- Develop trade school*
- River maintained*

Group #2

- Animal shelters fully staffed*
- Waterfront development (hotel, restaurants, etc.) *
- Clean up abandoned property*

Group #3

- Use of already developed areas (PRC, airport, mall, marine store) *
- More tourism – historical homes, antiques, restaurants/brewery, ecotourism, trails*
- Local business supported by local incentives*

While this workshop had the fewest number of attendees, the participants enthusiastically discussed the issues that are of importance to them. This was the only session that had a teenager participating, thus specific issues about school programs were identified. Like the other two workshops, the attendees listed many of the same treasures and values. Their priorities for the future were also in line with those from the first two sessions. Participants expressed a hope that the county will share the results of these workshops with the municipalities.

CONCLUSIONS

The community visioning workshops were fairly well attended (approximately 100 people) with a mix of participants. The diversity of the county was reflected in various dimensions: ethnicity, race, length of residency, etc. Because the sessions were held in different parts of the county, the specific interests of the South County, versus Palatka, versus Interlachen were clearly articulated. However, one common characteristic was evident and that was the love the residents of Putnam County have for the county and their optimism to see it continue as a wonderful place to live in the future.

There was no shortage of ideas generated and as the County Commission plans for the future, it is important that the Commission keeps in mind the identified treasures and values that the residents would like to see continued or improved upon. There was broad agreement upon the following:

- The natural environment including the river, trails, forests, and open space;
- The small town, rural nature of the county;
- The rich history of the area reflected in its homes, buildings, and heritage;

- Economic development efforts that have been made especially support of small businesses;
- Arts and culture.

Numerous suggestions were made for projects and programs to be initiated that will create the desired future for the county. There was a high degree of consensus on what that should consist of. The following issues were supported by most of the people in attendance at the workshops:

- Clean, well maintained natural and physical environment;
- Provision of quality health care and social services;
- Economic development that focuses on jobs, ecotourism, increased shopping and entertainment options;
- Improved education at all levels and an emphasis on the provision of vocational and technical training;
- Government services that provide improved infrastructure, public safety, and transportation alternatives;
- Controlled growth to maintain the quality of life as a rural community

While some of the suggestions for services and improvements are not the responsibility of the county, there was a hope that the county will take the lead in encouraging cooperation and collaboration among all sectors of the community to achieve positive results.

Putnam County is poised to embrace a future that maintains the qualities that have drawn people to the community in the past and that will ensure it is a county that provides new opportunities for the people who choose to call this home.

APPENDIX A

*The treasures and values identified by participants who attended the Community Visioning workshop held on **November 5, 2019**:*

Group #1

Treasures and Values

- Lakes and waterways esp. St. Johns River
- Trails, open spaces, river parks, natural resources,
- Small local communities
- Historic areas, homes and people and architecture, ex. Ft Gates Ferry
- Clean(er) rivers
- Not much traffic here (except Palatka) compared to Orange Park, St. Johns County and Jacksonville
- Community spirit - neighbors help each other
- Personal safety (no violent crime)

Group #2

Treasures and Values

- Lakes/waterways (Dunns Creek)
- Natural Resources (Parks, neighborhood view)
- Wild areas/wildlife
- Peace and quiet enjoyment
- River running through it
- Sense of “Community”
- “Country” Roads
- Bridges/ Statues/ History Heritage
- Diversity
- Keep community commitment, caring, values
- Children/Elders
- Ferry/ River Boat
- William Bartram Trail

Group #3

Treasures and Values

- Water – Lakes and River, aquifer
 - Access – quality (Georgetown - had to walk ½ mile from park)
 - Control Development of waterfront
- Community - maintain small town atmosphere
 - Encourage Development
 - Honor diversity
- Safety – Keep it so
 - Police – fire – rescue units
 - Restore volunteers
- Parks – our treasure

Recreation opportunity, activities

- Roads without trash!
- Protect/ Develop historic locations (people are going to come when they find out what we have (this is good so protect people and water)

Group #4

Treasures and Values

- Lakes/ River
- Wildlife, nature
- Historic homes
- Parks and playgrounds
- Small town feel, friendliness
- Benevolence, outreach
- Walkability

Group #5

Treasures and Values

- Parks; protection of forest areas; paved bike trails
- History - fishing and crab industry; river and lakes
- Improve community support
- Manage growth; infrastructure
- Resources – small and large businesses
- Education for communities

Group #6

Treasures and Values

- The river/ lakes
- Parks
- History and historic buildings
- Landmarks (i.e. Ft Gates Ferry)
- Small town atmosphere
- Trees (large oaks)
- Bike and hike/ kayak trails – outdoor recreation
- Bartram Trail
- Tourism/ “Eco”
- Nature – aquatic life
- Cleaning up properties
- “Keep Putnam Beautiful”
- Transparency in use of Tourist Development Council dollars
- Keeping traffic “controlled”
- Parking – plans
- “Aging in place” strategies
- Walking – walkable community
- Trails –increase and maintain “close the gap” – connect to neighborhoods

- Development of shopping with character
- Walking and lit trail to North Park (Harry Banks Park)
- Emphasis on “family” park(s) - safe, lit, cleaned up
- Georgetown River Park developed
- Arts and culture

*The treasures and values identified by participants who attended the Community Visioning workshop held on **November 16, 2019**:*

Group #1

Treasures and Values

- Community coming together at times of need/ joy (Hurricane Irma) - EOC
- The River/ Nature – selling point it is who/ what we are
- History/ Heritage/ Arts
- Old buildings
- Cultural diversity
- Natural public property (more than any other county)
- Ecotourism Resources
- Downtown comeback/ revitalization
- Agriculture and solar farms
 - State designated Tri- County Agri Area
- Waterways and trails
 - Bartram
 - Trail Town - State designation
- Florida School of the Arts
- Ravine Gardens
- National Forest/ Scenic Trails
- All maintained by volunteers and government
 - River City
 - Palatka Water Works
 - Bronson Mulholland House
- Access to resources
 - LOGIC
 - Blueways; trails
 - River to Sea Loop
- Churches; community support
 - Food Kitchens/ soup kitchen that stepped up when Meals on Wheels went away
- Businesses and individuals support
 - Backpacks
 - Food drives
- Palatka Daily News
 - 5 days per week and engaged
- St. Johns River State College – Flo Arts

- Hospital/ High rated Cancer Center
- 56 miles of shared use non-motorized trails
- 80 + miles paddling routes/ trails - St. Johns River/ Blueways
- Fish Camps
 - GA Boys Trail Boss
 - Renegades
 - Crystal Cove
 - Welaka Landing
- Larimer/ River City players
- Bass Tournaments
- Parks
 - Welaka State Forest
 - Dunn's Creek
- St James Hotel
- Downtown murals
- Walkable downtown
- Beautiful riverfront
- Blue Crab Festival
- Bartram Festival
- Downtown lodging/ B&B's and community hotels
- Two of the last remaining public ferries
- Government attention at State level
- Beginning infrastructure replacement and improvement
- River - Centric Business – uses
 - Young Outfitters
 - P.Y.P. Blue Crab/ movies/ food truck
 - Putnam Blueways and trails
 - Florahome - Comm Soc
 - Bartram Trail Society of Florida
- Potential for downtown revitalization
 - Organizations - Agriculture Center
- Rotary Park/ city community buildings
- Master Gardener Program
- Parades
 - Veterans
 - Christmas
 - Homecoming
- P.A.L.
- Mt. Royal site
- Boo on the Avenue
- Mall Halloween
- Amtrak Station
- Airport
- Public Services trash pick up
- St Johns River Water Management District

Group #2

Treasures and Values

- Waterways and waterway parks
- Trails - “Hub” - Trail town!
- Small town community
- “Country” aspect
- Architecture - Historic homes
- Mentoring program and PAL
- Diversity
 - Cultural
 - Age
- “Intact” downtown with historic homes/neighborhoods
- History of Putnam County
- Ft. Gates ferry, scenic loop, and Drayton Island
- Riverboat “Pride of Palatka”
- River Center
- Ravine Gardens - Dunns Creek Park
- Waterways (especially river)
 - Clean (Not polluted) for quality of fishing, crabbing, shrimping
- Art – murals- downtown outside; and art galleries (Larimer); Tilghman House
- Riverfront Park and Clock Tower
- Affordable housing and lovely rural land
- No traffic compared to adjacent counties
- Amtrak and accessibility to transportation - (I-75, I-95, 3 airports within 1 ½ hrs)
- National Bartram Recreation Trail
- Flo Arts and Palatka High School Drama Department

Group #3

Treasures and Values

- River, open space
- Natural resources
- Agency partnerships
 - County – Law Enforcement
 - Mental health – substance abuse
 - LOGIC
- Citizen activism
- Long history
- Desire for change, openness to change
- Friendliness of people
- Roots/heritage of citizenry
- Rural nature
- Heart for caring
- Cooperative spirit between/among churches and agencies

Group #4

Treasures and Values

- Nature – fishing; being out; St Johns River; state parks; state forests; trails - water, bike, hiking, equestrian; agriculture
- Awareness - Ravine Gardens; River Center; Water Works; Forest Therapy; Water Management; County Fair
- People: Network of support; service organizations; churches; friendliness
- History: Bartram Travels; restoring old homes, cemeteries
- Pace of life - convenience
- Education - library system, STEM, FFA
- Proximity - Orlando, St. Augustine, Gainesville, Jacksonville, Daytona
- Arts - Larimer, High School (Pignato), Flo Arts, Arts Council, Tilghman Home ,

Group #5

Treasures and Values

- Public access to waterways
- Non chain restaurants
- B&B's/lodging
- History - historic architecture
- Local newspapers/media
- Rural low population
- Nearness to larger cities (not St. Augustine)
- Green space (parks)/ natural environment / waterways, trails
- Airport/ skydiving
- Caring community
- Small town charm (you want to go where everybody knows your name)
- Downtown Palatka (good bones)
- Current spark of positive momentum (attitude)
- Good balance of business, industry, recreation
- Railroad depot, train, rail connection to Winter Park, etc.
- Arts – murals, school and community theater, statuary, art festivals
- St Johns River State College - Flo Arts
- Specialized medical facilities and treatments
- Trail town designation; heritage tour – center of rails, trails project (hub)
- Developing AGRI - Business
- AG Center
- Civic groups,
- Palatka ped/cycle friendly
- Partnerships
- Weather
- Corporations and public engaged
- Larger nonprofits - volunteers
- Emergency services.

Group #6

Treasures and Values

- River
- Caring community
- Trails
- Forests
- Friendly people
- Small town
- Everyone can make a difference
- Parks
- Rural areas
- Nature
- Cute downtown Palatka
- Boat and kayak launches
- Flo Arts
- Tilghman House
- Larimer
- River City Players
- Church outreach
- Patriotic
- Weather
- Low taxes
- Train station/ stop
- Location: Hub/ Trails
 - Close to big cities
 - Close to beach
- Low crime
- Low cost to live here
- History/ Bartram

*The treasures and values identified by participants who attended the Community Visioning workshop held on **November 21, 2019**:*

Group #1

Treasures and Values

- Rural atmosphere
- Giving attitude
- Historical preservation
- Lakes/water/nature trails
- Calculated planning based on needs and desire to maintain integrity of community
- Unique municipality characters
 - Welaka, Pomona park, Interlachen, etc.
- Family/friendly atmosphere even/especially to strangers

Group #2

Treasures and Values

- Rural roots (want to stay rural)
- Small businesses (especially restaurants)
- Agriculture
- Parades, festivals, and other community events
- Preservation (especially old buildings and history)
- AP and AICE programs in schools
- Controlled growth/diversification
- Community spaces (parks, Interlachen Caboose, Palatka river front)
- Lakes and rivers - waterfront properties
- Southern hospitality (friendliness)

Group #3

Treasures and Values

- The beauty of nature
Trails and waterways
- Agriculture – green spaces
- Volunteering/charity
- Community centers
- Keep low density land use – stable population
- Rural lifestyle
- Approachableness of Putnam County Government
- Friendliness/neighborliness
- Hospital
- Festivals and events
- History; historical houses

APPENDIX B

VISION 2030

Vision for Putnam County in 2030 as described by the small discussion groups on November 5, 2019. Items highlighted with an asterisk in front of them are the priorities each group designated for the future.

Group #1

Vision 2030

- Improved education (including Vo-tech) *
- More good paying jobs*
- Young people and families living here*
- More eco-tourism – preserved trails, forests, waterways
- Train stations
- Fewer county fees

- “Clean” industry ex. Solar
- Second crossing of St. Johns River
- Crosswalks on 17 in Crescent City and sidewalks
- More shopping ex. Target, Trader Joes, Publix,
- More nice restaurants
- Thriving small towns
- Museum of natural history
- Cleaner roadways
- Vocational education in high school and college, satellite location in Crescent City
- Community pride – no littering
- Movie theaters, skateboard
- Entertainment (for young and old): bowling, laser tag, motocross/BMX, softball league

Group #2

Vision 2030

- **Services***
 - Animal
 - Elder and youth via community center - recreation and wellness
- **Economic Development***
 - Hospitality/ Tourism via use of planning/growth management to preserve our values
 - Business incubator
 - Internet
- **Engage our Diverse community and education via inclusion and improved education***

Group #3

Vision 2030

- **Putnam county no longer the: the poorest county (jobs) nor have the highest domestic violence rate***
- **Schools are a model for the rest of the state***
- **Zoning boards protect community values and agriculture ***
- I-20 to Gainesville complete Highway 17, 4-lane to Deltona
- Fort Gates Ferry running - still “historic” but improved
- “Sparkling clean” river, lake, water
 - Aquifer without problems
 - Boats on the waters, trailers parked without fights f
- Growth for children who have a place to work at “living wage” (so kids don’t have to move to get a job)
- Plenty of businesses/ jobs - self generated
- Having a government that works for us
- Good recycling program - statewide bottle deposit program
- A move to limit or eliminate septic tanks
- High speed internet
- Over 400 hours training to be certified volunteer firemen

As needs/ threats increased - fire stations, fire staff, EMS/ medical

- Next to Winn Dixie was a satellite of hospital for X ray without drive to Palatka
- New stand-alone emergency facility - urgent care plus
- Everybody (happily) pays their “fair share” of taxes
- Full employment!

Group #4

Vision 2030

- **Infrastructure improvement/maintenance plans***
 - Water, sewer, bridges, roads, parks
 - Fiber optics to every home and business
- **Atmosphere for successful businesses and restaurants***
 - Retirement condos
- **Full staff of first responders***
 - Local emergency room facilities (enabling ageing in place)
- Community center
- Transportation services (i.e. Uber)
- Arts Center

Group #5

Vision 2030

- **Subdivisions – single family homes***
- **Top education - more vocational education***
 - High tech companies to mentor/protect, internship
- **Retirement community***
- Internet infrastructure
- New high-tech medical hospital

Group #6

Vision 2030

- **Improve infrastructure – water sewer, bridges, trails; improve internet***
- **Upgrade schools – accountability and more vocational training lots of exciting, engaging courses; agriculture classes***
- **Codes enforcement for derelict houses/buildings and infrastructure/trash***
- Interconnected system of trails for walking and cycling
- Managed “traffic” – “car-free downtown Palatka (walkable community)
- Grant writer for county
- “Department of doing” - center for resources
- Save Pomona Park fitness center
- Community center for South Putnam
- Youth focus – jobs, better pay
- Vocational training
- Focus on healthy behaviors, drug crisis, mental health
- Art and music venue at old church
- Elks Lodge for college to have culinary school and feed the homeless

- Jobs with livable wages
- Appreciate/celebrate diversity with events
- Racial issues studies conducted
- Eliminate vacant properties
- Crosswalk improvements
- Vocational schools and training
- Free college and boarding
- Fuel on lake; also on river
- Rehab downtown(s) – vacant buildings
- Grants available to rehab homes and buildings (assistance in applying for grant)
- More minority businesses – support through small business loans
- Things to keep kids here
- Affordable housing
- Improve public safety – substations in every community
- Improved health care services – access to services
- Clinic in south part of county
- Increased transportation for rural communities
- Monitoring by environmental specialist for river and lake water quality

*Vision for Putnam County in 2030 as described by the small discussion groups on **November 16, 2019**. Items highlighted with an asterisk in front of them are the priorities each group designated for the future.*

Group #1

Vision 2030

- **Infrastructure***
 - Clean drinking water, septic replaced along river
 - Internet availability
 - One stop/centralized social infrastructure
 - Affordable housing – preserve what we have
- **Ecotourism Center/Capital of North Florida - celebrate resources***
 - Stand alone, not part of Chamber
 - Destination – hike, bike, paddle, tours, murals
 - Trail maintenance – preserve historical assets; complete River to Sea Loop
 - Funding
 - Tourist Development Council
 - Place awareness
- **Population Changes***
 - Attracting who we want to live here – catchment
 - Improved housing – master planned
 - Attract activists who improve and protect resources
 - Improved education
 - Senior population engagement in education readiness, social skills, health, etc.
- Improved immediate access to healthy food
 - Community gardens

- Window gardens
- Locally owned groceries
- Development of central hub for resources
 - Medicaid, Social Security, veterans, etc. inside Putnam County
 - Reclaiming funds that go outside to other counties that could be ours
- Public transportation
- County roads paved
- Improved storm drainage
- New housing developments
- Barge Port/ Ship builders
- Colleges/schools
 - Dormitories
 - Improved school ratings
 - Preschool readiness
- Increased public works resources
- Land use Master Plan
 - Downtown development
 - Controlled/planned growth
- Collaboration between ministries and government
- Downtown revitalized
 - Following master plan
 - All buildings occupied
 - Employment opportunities
 - Day and night businesses - restaurants
 - Downtown apartments/condos
 - Riverfront – old Mt. Tabor Church
 - Arts/music programs
 - Cultural Center (old Mt. Tabor Church)
 - Culinary programs – old Elks building
- Centralized community calendar – website
- Government/municipalities
 - Grant writers/programs
 - Countywide branding – image promotion
 - Parks & Rec takes over trail maintenance
- Guidelines for ecotourism
 - Make sure tourists know: “who we are”, what are our natural resources, what makes Putnam County a great place to live, who do we want to attract

Group #2

Vision 2030

- More accessible healthcare*
 - New OBGYN and birthing unit at hospital
- Better education and Vo-tech for St John’s State College training*
 - “Bridge program from high school”
- Infrastructure - Public transportation to services (bus specially to surrounding cities) *

- More restaurants and entertainment - upgrade movie theaters
- Affordable housing and safe
- More and higher paying jobs
- Increased opportunities for revenue/ jobs
- Bring back govt entities and Social Security advising; DCF (food stamps, Medicaid)
- Land use development plans with sea level rise in mind
- Clean River and highways/byways
- Interconnected systems of trails, sidewalks, bike lanes and crosswalks; walkable community
- Stronger “Code Enforcement” for abandoned and degraded buildings and houses
- More ways to cross the river, more river transportation
- Amtrak station fully functional - luggage, bikes
- Infill development in N/S historic districts (more taxes and people)
- Farmers market(s) and more locally grown food for restaurants and schools, hospital, prison
- “Farm-to-table; farm-to-school”
- Bridge toll-electronically (Not supported by the group)
- User fees for boating/ fishing events to help maintain tournaments, river launching areas
- More diverse system of business come in

Group #3

Vision 2030

- Ample jobs opportunities*
- Strategy for: countywide project *
Support and implementation
- Well-resourced healthcare (including mental health) and wrap-around services*
- A-rated schools
- Entertainment
- Trained workforce (specific to job opportunities)
- Affordable housing (for seniors too)
- Mass transit county-wide
- Restored thriving downtown (keep character)
- Walkable downtown
- Varied shopping opportunities
- Attractive image “People want to live here”
- Restoration for incarcerated citizens (programs, processes)
- Magnet for outdoor enthusiasts
- Continuing path toward controlled growth

This group was strongly supportive of collaboration on countywide projects as demonstrated in a drawing they presented to the rest of the participants. It showed projects as being like plants that by “watering” with management, intentionality, and governance can flourish. They further described a process of collaboration of the nonprofit, business, governmental, faith-based, and public sectors working together on specific projects. It entailed monthly meetings of a Safety Net group of social service providers, quarterly meetings of the local government coalition (LOGIC),

and semi-annual town hall meetings for the public to learn about and provide input to the projects. All of this activity would be overseen by a project manager.

Group #4

Vision 2030

- **Set limits on what is city – zoning***
 - Protect nature
 - Clear boundaries
 - Expectations and maintenance
- **Beautification and appearance***
 - Beautify entranceways – all presentable, new signs, artwork
 - Parks - bring families; get rid of razor wire fencing and trash
 - All previously empty structures are repurposed with historic integrity
- **Education***
 - Schools are new structures with integrated technology and open natural areas
 - Children well cared for since birth; educate children about raising children, economics, how to cook, life skills, outside worldview - travel programs
 - Historic tours, trolleys or carriage rides
- Poverty is handled - no more 20K homes on ¼ acre (zoning); public housing to privately owned to increase tax base
- Shops locally owned, clothing stores
- Regulations for growth and what buildings must look like

Group #5

Vision 2030

- **Vibrant mixed-use downtown Palatka (commercial/residential) ***
- **Comprehensive physical and mental health services***
- **Developed ecotourism industry with associated lodging, food, rentals, tours, etc.***
- Reid St. is a destination instead of a drive through - more pedestrian/ bike friendly
- Vibrant, active trail hub
- Really good school system
- Artisan community in destination downtown (art district)
- More integrated community farmer's market
- Coordinated festivals and events tied to a Tourist Development Council plan.
- Lots of young people and all ages downtown day/ night
- Reciprocal destination dynamic with Winter Park (with bike carrier)
- Public transport link-ups with depot, trail heads, downtown, etc.
- An active strategic plan that is being carried out with intent (connecting county and cities)
- Active nightlife opportunities/ venues
- Maintained rural/ natural environment
- Positive image of county - both local and visitors
- Infrastructure well maintained

- Alcohol free spaces where young can gather
- Well-connected communications for Law Enforcement & Emergency Services
- Facilities for homeless population
- Safe highways/ roadways
- Broadband internet

Group #6

Several people from this group left the workshop at this time, so the remaining members of the group joined other groups for visioning discussion.

*Vision for Putnam County in 2030 as described by the small discussion groups on **November 21, 2019**. Items highlighted with an asterisk in front of them are the priorities each group designated for the future.*

Group #1

Vision 2030

- **Controlled growth***
 - Rural feel
 - Meet our community needs
- **Develop trade school***
- **River maintained***
- Emotional education
- Be competitive in job market for youth
- More small businesses
- Community senior/pediatric daycare
- More developers that respect preservation and rural feel
- More mental health counselors specifically licensed
- Four-wheel drive vehicles/better roads for first responders (fire department, law enforcement)
- More efficient equipment
 - Up to date
 - Faster repairs
- Modernization of equipment – but don't overdo it
- Substance education for children
- Substance abuse decreased
- Crime rate decreased
- More festivals, crafts
- More marketing of festivals
- Attract/keep well trained teachers
- More fishing/boating tournaments
- More recreational activity

Group #2

Vision 2030

- Animal shelters fully staffed*
- Waterfront development (hotel, restaurants, etc.) *
- Clean up abandoned property*
- Clean waterways
- Staffed community center
- More activities for youth
- Greater acceptance for others of different backgrounds (race, religion, sexualities)
- More restaurants (especially in Interlachen)
- Lower stray cat and dog population
- Decreasing local drug addiction
- Increasing graduation rates
- Domestic violence prevention services
- More \$250,000 houses
- Lower poverty rate
- Better sex education in schools
- Recycling services
- Larger department stores
- Fully utilized Palatka Mall
- Market apartments
- More movie theatres
- No interstate

Group #3

Vision 2030

- Use of already developed areas (PRC, airport, mall, marine store) *
- More tourism – historical homes, antiques, restaurants/brewery, ecotourism, trails*
- Local business supported by local incentives*
- Completion of the trails
- Development of ecotourism
- Return of technical training
- Restore Ocklawaha
- Keep the dam
- Leader in sustainable living
- Manufacturing jobs with benefits
- Growth of community gardens
- Economic development in the agricultural area
- Affordable housing; less section 8
- More habitat homes
- YMCA
- Skate park/park for older kids
- Music festivals
- Swap meets

- Farmers market
- Rodeos/pow-wows
- Animal services/shelters