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117 Putnam Drive ♦ Eatonton, GA 31024 ♦ Tel: 706-485-1884  
[www.putnamdevelopmentauthority.com](http://www.putnamdevelopmentauthority.com)

## **Agenda**

**Monday, March 12, 2018 ♦ 9:00 AM**

*Putnam County Administration Building – Room 204*

### **Opening**

1. Call to Order

### **Minutes**

2. Approval of Minutes - February 12, 2018

### **Financials**

3. Approval of Financials - February 2018

### **Reports**

4. Economic Development Director Report - March 2018

### **Regular Business**

5. Adopt PDA 2018 Strategic Plan

### **Other Business**

### **Closing**

6. Adjournment

**Backup material for agenda item:**

2. Approval of Minutes - February 12, 2018



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## Minutes

**Monday, February 12, 2018 ♦ 9:00 AM**

*Putnam County Administration Building – Room 204*

The Putnam Development Authority met on Monday, February 12, 2018 at approximately 9:00 AM in the Putnam County Administration Building, 117 Putnam Drive, Room 204, Eatonton, Georgia

### *PRESENT*

Chairman Bill Sharp  
Member Patty Burns  
Member Joshua Daniel  
Member Eugene Smith  
Member Ed Waggoner

### *OTHERS PRESENT*

Economic Development Director Terry Schwindler  
County Clerk Lynn Butterworth

### **Opening**

#### 1. Call to Order

Chairman Sharp called the meeting to order at approximately 9:00 a.m. (Copy of agenda made a part of the minutes.)

### **Minutes**

#### 2. Approval of Minutes - January 8, 2018 Regular Meeting

**Motion made by Member Smith, seconded by Member Burns, to approve the minutes of the January 8, 2018 regular meeting. Motion carried with Members Burns, Daniel, Smith, and Waggoner voting yes.**

### **Financials**

#### 3. Approval of Financials - January 2018

**Motion made by Member Daniel, seconded by Member Waggoner, to approve the January 2018 financials. Motion carried with Members Burns, Daniel, Smith, and Waggoner voting yes.** (Copy of financials made a part of the minutes.)

**Regular Business**

4. Determine who will attend Leadership Putnam's Economic Development Day on March 1<sup>st</sup>  
EDD Schwindler explained that the Georgia Power economic development person, Mr. Matt Forshee, will lead this program for Leadership Putnam, but she usually attends as well. This year's date conflicts with the Pittcon show in Orlando and she is looking for any other members that can attend. Member Smith advised that he could possibly attend and will let her know. No action was taken.

5. Update on Eatonton Cotton Warehouse  
EDD Schwindler advised that Mr. Stewart Aaron has been aggressively promoting the Eatonton Cotton Warehouse. There are lots of festivals and concerts planned throughout the year. She is asking PDA members to help promote and attend the events. No action was taken.

6. Discuss Sidebar Conferences/Development Authority Board Member training  
Chairman Sharp advised that there are four upcoming Sidebar Conferences and that PDA board members are required to attend during the year you are elected and each time you are re-elected. Member Burns is scheduled for the March 7<sup>th</sup> conference and Chairman Sharp will attend the October 10<sup>th</sup> conference. Members Burns and Waggoner are also scheduled to attend the Georgia Economic Development Academy this year. No action was taken.

7. Discuss social media  
EDD Schwindler informed the board that she is working diligently on the board's Facebook and LinkedIn sites. She usually posts teasers on these sites that send people to the main website, helping to keep all the sites active. She has been posting information about CGTC, the schools and useful information for businesses. She is also considering starting Instagram to show available buildings. No action was taken.

8. Sign MGRC website maintenance addendum  
EDD Schwindler explained that the Middle Georgia Regional Commission has prepared an addendum to the original contract for the website. It is for the same amount of money and includes a website redesign every three years. The latest redesign is almost complete at this time. **Motion made by Member Waggoner, seconded by Member Smith, to authorize the Chairman to sign the Addendum to the Memorandum of Agreement between Middle Georgia Regional Commission and Putnam Development Authority. Motion carried with Members Burns, Daniel, Smith, and Waggoner voting yes.** (Copy of agreement made a part of the minutes.)

**Other Business**

Chairman Sharp asked for an update on the South Industrial Park. EDD Schwindler advised that we are waiting on Paul Simonton to get the pre-engineering report for GRAD certification for the 50+ acres, which should be coming this week. She will then send to the MGRC and they will finish the grant application, which is due in early April. Chairman Sharp also inquired about the lift station status. EDD Schwindler will follow up with EPWSA and get an update. No action was taken.

**Reports**

9. Economic Development Director Report - February 2018

EDD Schwindler reported the following: (copy of report made a part of the minutes)

- Website visitor sessions and pages viewed per session
- Website analytics
- Project status - 7 projects added
- Projects by Industry - 5 Commercial/Retail, 1 Agriculture, 1 Healthcare
- Project source – 1 local referral, 6 direct
- Company located – Magnolia Medical Group
- Project update – Harmony Crossing Medical Center
- Business & Industry contacts - 23 MTD, 23 YTD
- Social media - 270 likes on Facebook, 43 followers on LinkedIn
- Events attended and upcoming events
- Georgia Department of Economic Development visit – January 11, 2018
- UFP Job Fair – January 23, 2018
- Interfor Hiring Expo – February 13, 2018

**Closing**

10. Adjournment

**Motion made by Member Smith, seconded by Member Daniel, to adjourn the meeting.**

**Motion carried with Members Burns, Daniel, Smith, and Waggoner voting yes.**

Meeting adjourned at approximately 10:04 a.m.

ATTEST:

Lynn Butterworth  
County Clerk

Bill Sharp  
Chairman

**Backup material for agenda item:**

3. Approval of Financials - February 2018



Putnam County, GA

# Income Statement 7

## Account Summary

For Fiscal: 2018 Period Ending: 02/28/2018

	Original Total Budget	Current Total Budget	MTD Activity	YTD Activity	Budget Remaining	
<b>Fund: 101 - GENERAL FUND</b>						
<b>Expense</b>						
<a href="#">101-75201-511100</a>	Full-time Staff	65412	65412	5031.41	25157.02	40254.98
<a href="#">101-75201-512101</a>	Insurance Benefits	7564	7564	629.82	3149.1	4414.9
<a href="#">101-75201-512201</a>	Social Security	5004	5004	381.84	1909.2	3094.8
<a href="#">101-75201-512401</a>	Retirement Contributions	6845	6845	0	3100	3745
<a href="#">101-75201-512701</a>	Workers Compensation	215	215	0	0	215
<a href="#">101-75201-512901</a>	Payroll Accrual	220	220	0	0	220
<a href="#">101-75201-521203</a>	Legal Services	35000	35000	0	3850	31150
<a href="#">101-75201-521206</a>	Accounting/Auditing	5500	5500	0	100	5400
<a href="#">101-75201-521220</a>	Professional Services	20000	20000	0	0	20000
<a href="#">101-75201-521301</a>	Computer Services	2600	2600	66.75	383.75	2216.25
<a href="#">101-75201-522201</a>	Building & Ground Services	3500	3500	0	0	3500
<a href="#">101-75201-522205</a>	Equipment Services	300	300	23.74	47.73	252.27
<a href="#">101-75201-522321</a>	Rental Expense	350	350	0	0	350
<a href="#">101-75201-523101</a>	General Insurance	6500	6500	0	2345	4155
<a href="#">101-75201-523201</a>	Telecommunications	1200	1200	74.05	370.04	829.96
<a href="#">101-75201-523215</a>	Postage	100	100	0	3.64	96.36
<a href="#">101-75201-523301</a>	Advertising	4500	4500	0	8.12	4491.88
<a href="#">101-75201-523401</a>	Printing & Binding	500	500	0	0	500
<a href="#">101-75201-523501</a>	Travel	6550	6550	0	42.15	6507.85
<a href="#">101-75201-523601</a>	Dues & Fees	2550	2550	0	250	2300
<a href="#">101-75201-523701</a>	Education	2950	2950	0	265	2685
<a href="#">101-75201-523920</a>	Miscellaneous Services	1000	1000	0	0	1000
<a href="#">101-75201-531101</a>	Office & General Supplies	550	550	0	210.95	339.05
<a href="#">101-75201-531110</a>	Building & Ground Supplies	1500	1500	0	0	1500
<a href="#">101-75201-531231</a>	Electricity	550	550	43.23	368.27	181.73
<a href="#">101-75201-531301</a>	Meals For Special Events	1500	1500	0	390.89	1109.11
<a href="#">101-75201-531401</a>	Books & Periodicals	50	50	0	59.95	-9.95
<a href="#">101-75201-531601</a>	Small Equipment	1500	1500	0	766.19	733.81
<b>Expense Total:</b>		<b>184010</b>	<b>184010</b>	<b>6250.84</b>	<b>42777</b>	<b>141,233.00</b>
<b>Fund: 101 - GENERAL FUND Total:</b>		<b>184010</b>	<b>184010</b>	<b>6250.84</b>	<b>42777</b>	<b>141,233.00</b>
<b>Total Surplus (Deficit):</b>		<b>-184010</b>	<b>-184010</b>	<b>-6250.84</b>	<b>-42777</b>	<b>-141,233.00</b>

**Putnam Development Authority**  
**Balance Sheet**  
 As of February 28, 2018

	Feb 28, 18
<b>ASSETS</b>	
<b>Current Assets</b>	
<b>Checking/Savings</b>	
10001 · Checking-FMB	246,761.69
10050 · One Georgia Funds	50.00
10300 · Certificate of Deposit 42072	108,201.26
10600 · Certificate of Deposit-24251	81,890.80
<b>Total Checking/Savings</b>	436,903.75
<b>Other Current Assets</b>	
11700 · CIP	25,357.50
12007 · Prepaid Insurance	3,896.00
<b>Total Other Current Assets</b>	29,253.50
<b>Total Current Assets</b>	466,157.25
<b>Fixed Assets</b>	
11100 · 10 ac. N. Park	200,000.00
11200 · 5 ac. N. Park	100,000.00
11250 · Building-Tech College	1,000,000.00
11300 · Tech. College Property	455,962.60
11350 · Building	660,561.00
11355 · Rock Eagle Rech. Accum Deprecia	-62,386.40
11400 · Mach & Equip (Haband)	350,000.00
11500 · 142 Ac. Indust Blvd	300,000.00
11600 · 130 Ac. RE Tech. Park	1,029,600.00
<b>Total Fixed Assets</b>	4,033,737.20
<b>Other Assets</b>	
12001 · Note Receivable-Lease Purch Aar	-44,766.62
12005 · Note Rec-Aaron	330,083.48
<b>Total Other Assets</b>	285,316.86
<b>TOTAL ASSETS</b>	<b>4,785,211.31</b>
<b>LIABILITIES &amp; EQUITY</b>	
<b>Liabilities</b>	
<b>Current Liabilities</b>	
<b>Other Current Liabilities</b>	
11360 · Accum Depr-Building	352,083.00
11420 · Accum Depr-Mach & Equip	350,000.00
18050 · Accrued Payroll	667.00
<b>Total Other Current Liabilities</b>	702,750.00
<b>Total Current Liabilities</b>	702,750.00
<b>Total Liabilities</b>	702,750.00
<b>Equity</b>	
30000 · Opening Balance Equity	3,367,924.20
32000 · Unrestricted Net Assets	656,245.18
Net Income	58,291.93
<b>Total Equity</b>	4,082,461.31
<b>TOTAL LIABILITIES &amp; EQUITY</b>	<b>4,785,211.31</b>



**Putnam Development Authority**  
**Reconciliation Detail**  
 10001 · Checking-FMB, Period Ending 02/19/2018

Type	Date	Num	Name	Clr	Amount	Balance
<b>Beginning Balance</b>						244,063.08
<b>Cleared Transactions</b>						
<b>Deposits and Credits - 1 item</b>						
Deposit	02/09/2018			X	2,698.61	2,698.61
Total Deposits and Credits					2,698.61	2,698.61
Total Cleared Transactions					2,698.61	2,698.61
Cleared Balance					2,698.61	246,761.69
Register Balance as of 02/19/2018					2,698.61	246,761.69
<b>Ending Balance</b>					<b>2,698.61</b>	<b>246,761.69</b>

**Putnam Development Authority**  
**Deposit Detail**  
 February 2018

Type	Num	Date	Name	Account	Amount
General Journal	cd int	02/05/2018		10600 · Certificate of Deposit-24251	72.03
				45000 · Interest	-72.03
TOTAL					-72.03
Deposit		02/09/2018		10001 · Checking-FMB	2,698.61
				12001 · Note Receivable-Lease Purch...	-1,704.24
				45000 · Interest	-994.37
TOTAL					-2,698.61

# Putnam Development Authority Reconciliation Detail

10050 · One Georgia Funds, Period Ending 02/15/2018

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Type	Date	Num	Name	Clr	Amount	Balance
<b>Beginning Balance</b>						50.00
Cleared Balance						50.00
Register Balance as of 02/15/2018						50.00
<b>Ending Balance</b>						<b>50.00</b>

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**Backup material for agenda item:**

4. Economic Development Director Report - March 2018

# Economic Development Director February Report

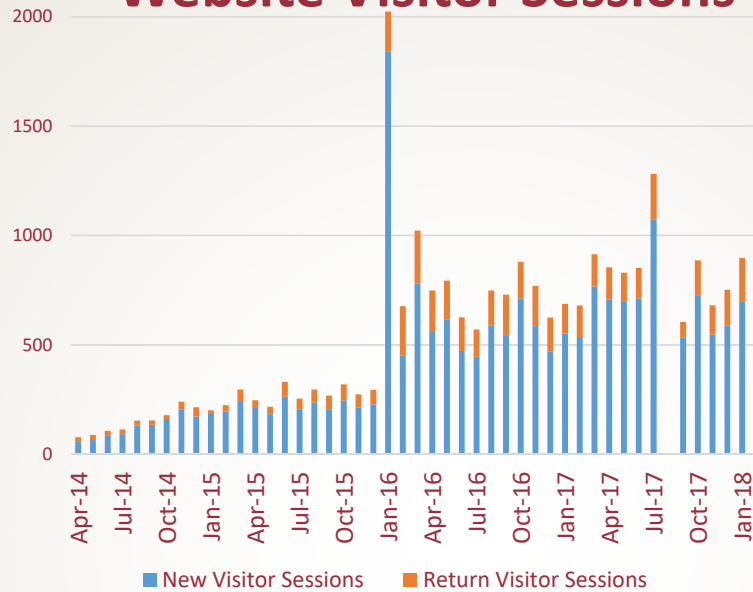
March 12, 2018



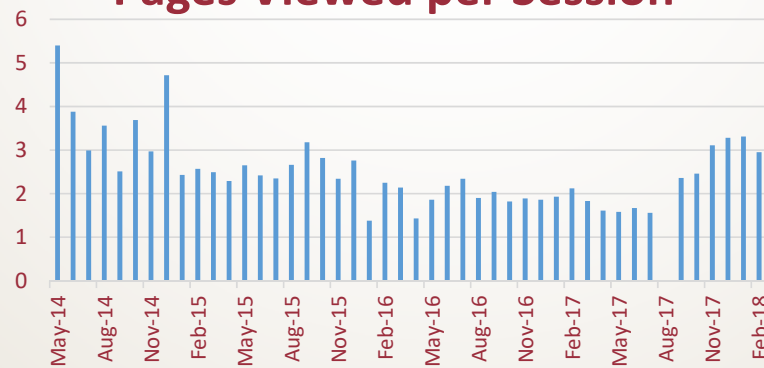
Putnam Development Authority

ideas. development.. growth...

## Website Visitor Sessions



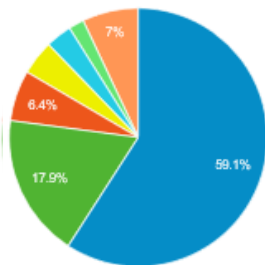
## Pages Viewed per Session



February Summary	
Sessions	881
Users	719
New Visitor Sessions	682
Return Visitor Sessions	199
% New Sessions	87.4%
Page views	2565
US Pages per session	2.95
US Avg Session Duration	1:44
US Bounce Rate	20.7%

# Website Analytics

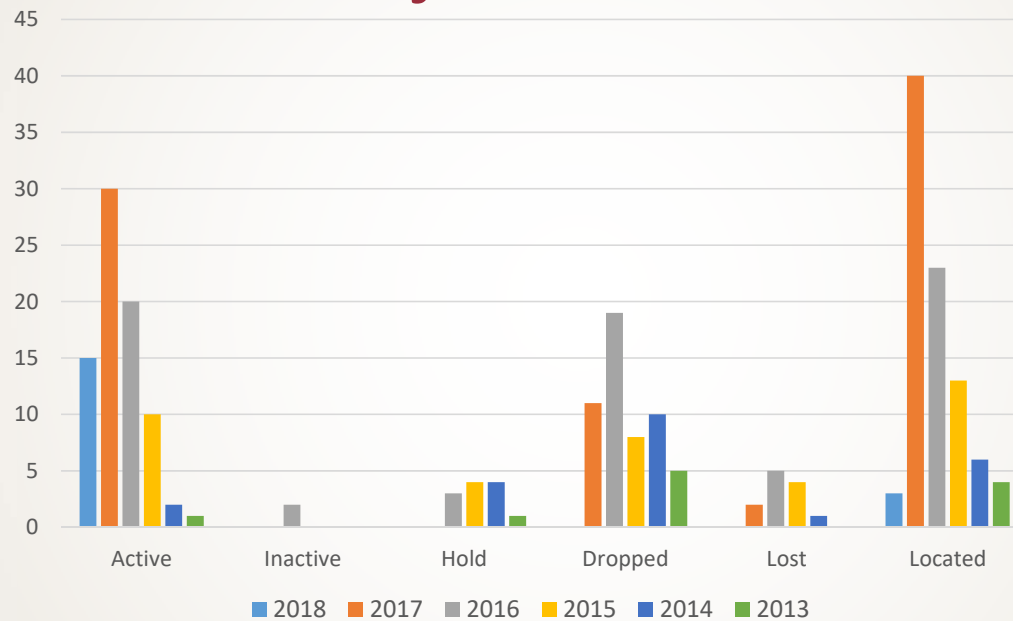
Sessions by Source



Source	Sessions
google	521
(direct)	158
georgiasourcecenter.com	56
m.facebook.com	38
eatonton.com	29
bing	17
news.url.google.com	10
yahoo	8
facebook.com	7
iebms.pittcon.org	7

Page	Pageviews
/home page	240
/index.php/2016/01/14/legacy-housin-g-ltd-now-hiring-employees-in-eatonton-ga/	231
/index.php/2017/02/16/two-movies-ex-pected-to-be-filmed-in-putnam/	101
/index.php/2018/01/30/company-profi-le-ms-stellas-welcomes-soul-food-lover-s/	86
/index.php/employment-opportunities/	79
/index.php/3078-2/	77
/index.php/2017/08/24/cosmo-cabine-ta-leases-property-at-industrial-park/	68
/index.php/2017/08/01/eatonton-resid-ents-on-hgtv-tiny-house-show/	49
/index.php/2018/01/18/interfor-hiring-expo-january-17th-200pm-700pm/	49

## Project Status

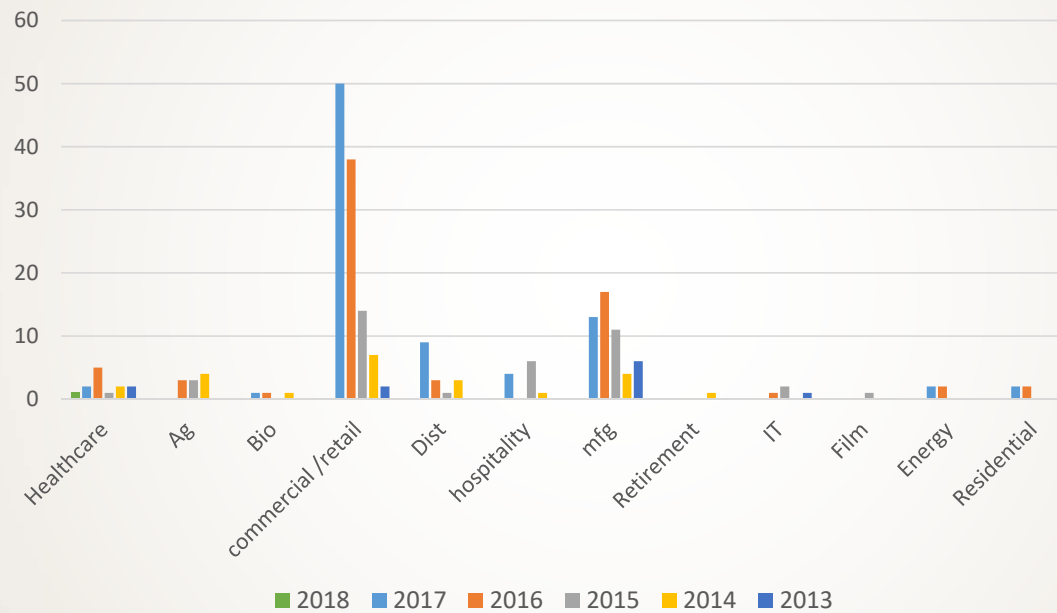


<b>Active</b>	<b>78</b>
<b>Inactive</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Hold</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>Dropped</b>	<b>53</b>
<b>Lost</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>Located</b>	<b>89</b>
<b>Open Projects</b>	<b>92</b>
<b>TOTAL Projects</b>	<b>246</b>

11 Projects Added



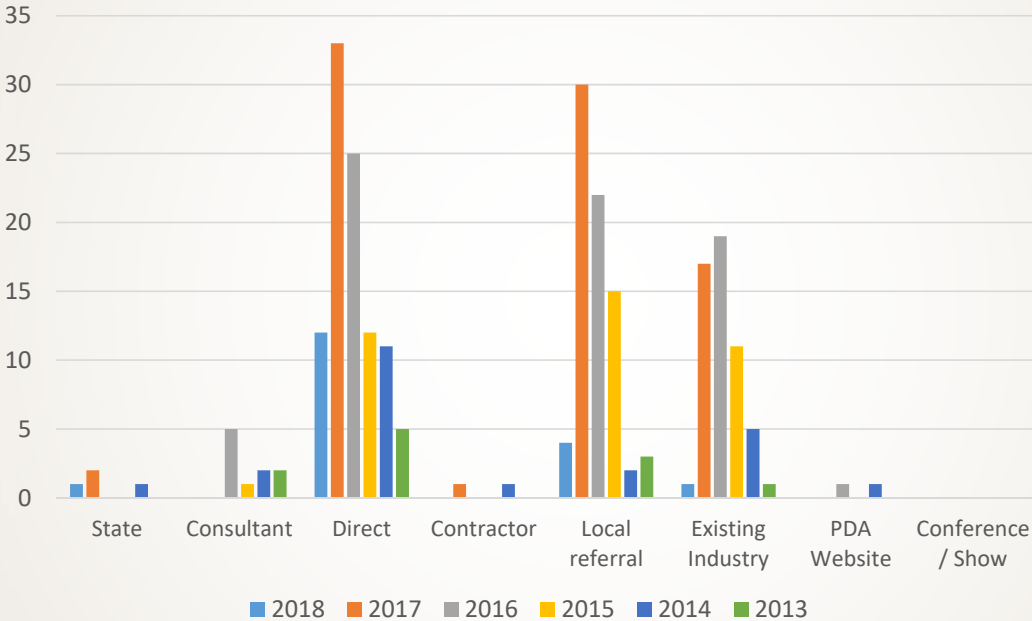
# Projects by Industry



Healthcare	13
Ag	11
Bio	3
Commercial /Retail	123
Dist	18
Hospitality	11
Mfg	51
Retirement	1
IT	4
Film	3
Energy	4
Residential	4
<b>Total</b>	<b>246</b>

New (7 Commercial/Retail, 2 Distribution, 2 Film)

# Project Source



State	4
Consultant	10
Direct	98
Contractor	2
Local referral	76
Existing Industry	54
PDA Website	2
Conference /Trade Show	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>246</b>

New (3 local referral, 6 direct, 1 state, 1 existing industry)

# Company Located JMA Office Solutions

881 Harmony Road, Suite B



# Company Located RTS Oconee Chauffeured Transportation

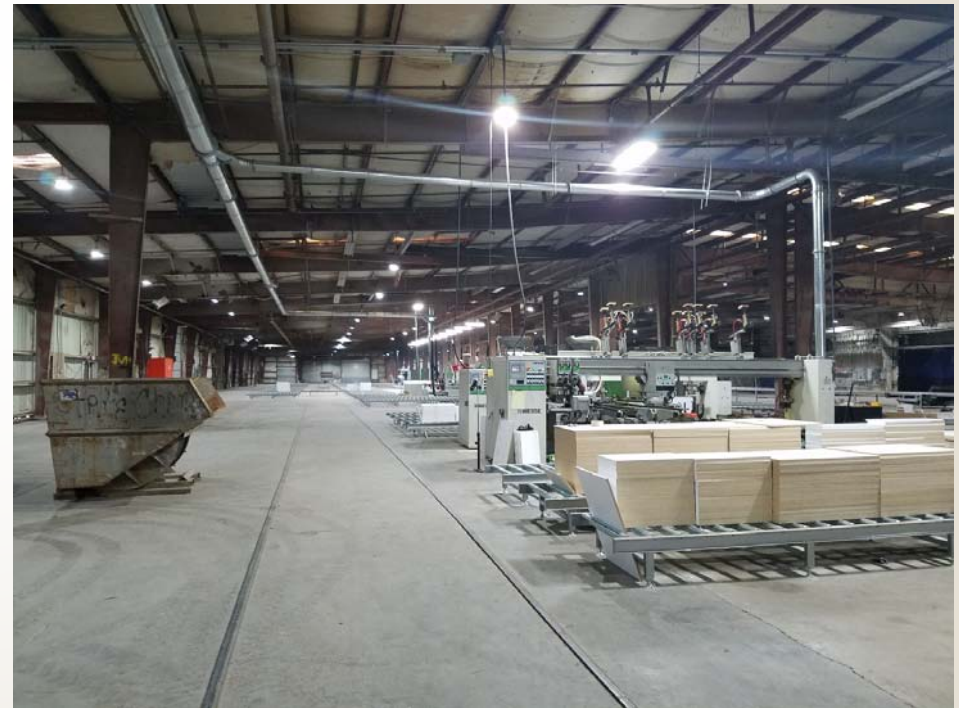
892 Harmony Road



# Project Update Cosmo Cabinets



Grand Opening  
April 11<sup>th</sup> 10:00am  
110 Industrial Blvd





Project Update  
Legacy Housing

Currently at 220 FTE



# Project Update ACE Hardware Building

estimated completion May 2018



# Project Update

## Sidewalk project is complete





## Business & Industry: 18 Company Contacts, 41 YTD

Name	Company	Topic	
Ashley	Holton	UFP	discussed PCHS internships
Don	Schiele	Hy-Tec Machine Shop	discussed project
Terry	Pulliam	Hy-Tec Machine Shop	discussed project
Jerry	Coffey	Lone Star Wheel Components	discussed workforce needs
Barry	Helms	Doors by Mike	discussed workforce
Jon	Finkle	Metro Water Filter International	discussed workforce
Lowell	White III	Lights of Oconee	discussed job change
Greg	Chaimberlin	Stair South	discussed workforce
Michael	Cash	JMA Office Solutions	site visit
James	Pressley	JMA Office Solutions	site visit
Justin	Robuck	Justin's Tire	discussed project
Tina	Ivey	Interfor	hiring expo
Mike	House	Interfor	hiring expo
Virginia	Murphy	Interfor	hiring expo
Roy	Embry	Embry Farm Services	discuss project
Lisa	Carson	Cosmo Cabinets	discuss grand opening
Umaesh	Khaitan	Cosmo Cabinets	discuss grand opening
Tom	Boyda	Cosmo Cabinets	discuss grand opening



## Social Media

- 273 Likes on Facebook
- 44 Followers on Linked-In



## Events Attended

Feb 13	Interfor Hiring Expo
Feb 19	GEDA Consultants Luncheon
Feb 21	EPTAH Meeting
Feb 21	EPWSA Meeting
Feb 26-Mar 1	Pittcon 2018 Conference - Orlando
Mar 6	LOABA Meeting

# Interfor Hiring Expo

February 13<sup>th</sup>  
2:00pm – 7:00pm

170 Job Seekers



# Pittcon 2018 Conference - Orlando

February 26 - March 1

13 leads:

- 5 hot leads
- 4 warm leads
- 4 cool leads

Locations:

- California
- New York
- Canada
- Colorado
- Florida
- Oregon
- Maryland
- Kansas
- China
- Bogota, Columbia
- Cairo, Egypt





## Upcoming Events

Mar 13	UFP Job Fair
Mar 19	GEDA Rock Star Luncheon
Mar 21	EPTAH Meeting
Mar 21	EPSWA Meeting
Apr 3	LOABA Meeting
Apr 6	BOC Meeting
Apr 11	Cosmo Cabinets Grand Opening 10:00 am

# UFP Job Fair

March 13<sup>th</sup>  
3:00pm – 7:00pm



LEARN.  
GROW.  
ACHIEVE.

Universal Forest Products®

*Come on in.  
We're family!*

**TUESDAY, MARCH 23, 2018**

**3:00 PM - 7:00 PM**

**PUTNAM COUNTY ADMINISTRATION BUILDING  
117 Putnam Drive, Eatonton, GA 31024**

## **BUILD YOUR CAREER HERE.**

We'll train you and treat you well. Full-time employees get to share in our success and are eligible to receive a solid benefits package. When we do well and meet our goals, we have a long history of providing rewards and even profit-sharing bonuses.

Full-time employee benefits package can include:

- Medical insurance
- Dental insurance
- Life and disability insurance
- 401k retirement plan
- Paid holidays and vacations
- Educational reimbursement and in-house training programs

So when you consider starting a job at Universal Forest Products, don't just think about today; think about where you want to take your career and how you want to provide for yourself and your family for years to come. And remember: there's opportunity here at the companies of Universal Forest Products. A pre-employment drug test will be conducted for qualified applicants.

**WE ARE CURRENTLY SEEKING:**

**ASSEMBLER I - \$10.00 PER HR. / ASSEMBLER II - \$13.00 PER HR.**



**EMPLOY  
GEORGIA!**

For more details, please submit an email to [SWAT@gdol.ga.gov](mailto:SWAT@gdol.ga.gov) or contact Chantea.Smith@gdol.ga.gov or 404-416-2845

Please visit our website at:  
[www.ufpi.com/careers](http://www.ufpi.com/careers)  
for more information about our current open positions in Eatonton and other locations.

Georgia  
**DOL**  
DEPARTMENT OF LABOR

**Backup material for agenda item:**

5. Adopt PDA 2018 Strategic Plan



# **Putnam Development Authority**

## **2018 Strategic Plan**

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## Background

In late 2017, the Putnam Development Authority (PDA), in accordance with several key partners and the Middle Georgia Regional Commission, met monthly to develop an economic development strategic plan. The strategic plan was a timely endeavor as it comes after a year of goal setting—specifically, the economic development retreat held on January 9, 2017, and the adoption of the comprehensive plan (see **Appendix A: Planning Documents**).

## Purpose

The PDA Economic Development Strategic Plan will serve to inform PDA decision-making efforts in the coming years, especially within the next five years. It is intended to provide guidance to board members, as well as signal to the public the priorities of the PDA.

## Planning Process

Middle Georgia Regional Commission staff met with representatives from the Putnam Development Authority, Putnam County, Eatonton-Putnam Chamber of Commerce, Eatonton-Putnam Water & Sewer Authority, and several other invested entities on a regular basis from October 2017 to January 2018. A list of the steering committee members can be found in the table below.

**Table 1: Stakeholders**

Name	Title	Organization
Bill W. Sharp	Chairman	Putnam Development Authority
Eugene Smith	Member	Putnam Development Authority
Ed Waggoner	Vice Chairman	Putnam Development Authority
Joshua Daniel	Secretary/Treasurer	Putnam Development Authority
Terry Schwindler	Economic Development Director	Putnam Development Authority
Roddie Anne Blackwell	President/CEO	Eatonton-Putnam Chamber of Commerce
Lynn Butterworth	County Clerk	Putnam County Board of Commissioners
Donna Van Haute	Director	Eatonton-Putnam Water & Sewer Authority
Alan Foster	Commissioner	Putnam County
Tommy Cook	Membership Manager & Services	Eatonton-Putnam Chamber of Commerce
Billy Webster	Resident	Putnam County
Jim Stone	CEO	Tytan Pictures
Lynward Lindsey	Resident	Putnam County
Patty Burns	Member	Putnam Development Authority
Roxanne Stone	Owner	Tytan Pictures
Jim Ryan	Resident	Putnam County

**Figure 1: Goal Setting**



## Goals

### Workforce Development

According to corporate decision makers, availability of skilled labor is consistently at the forefront of top location decision factors. Without a labor force to draw from, companies cannot function. Thus, workforce development is a crucial element of economic development growth. The PDA intends to invest in the local workforce to ensure employers—both current and future— have access to the skilled workers they need.

**Goal: Improve available workforce to meet the needs of existing and future industry.**

#### Needs and Opportunities:

##### 1. Provide training opportunities to the existing workforce.

The PDA recognizes the county's existing workforce as a vital resource from which to draw potential employees for both existing and future employers. Much discussion has revolved around developing specific curriculums in conjunction with the Putnam County Charter School System and Central Georgia Technical College. Curriculums focused on skills such as basic construction skills and the construction trades would fill the gap that currently separates the available workforce from current job openings. The PDA also intends to continually assess the certification programs to ensure that the educational opportunities presented to the workforce fulfill the workforce needs of industry.

## **2. Invest in apprenticeship, internship, and work-based learning opportunities.**

Though similar to training opportunities due to the educational component, apprenticeship opportunities provide individuals with on-the-job training which would allow workforce access to the hands-on experience required by many of the existing industries in Putnam County. Apprenticeship, internship, and work-based learning opportunities are a unique opportunity which would require the cooperation of several entities. However, the availability of these opportunities would ultimately rely primarily upon the existing industries and what on-the-job training opportunities they could offer to the workforce.

### **Film**

The entertainment industry in Georgia is booming. In 2016, the “film and television industries in Georgia generated more than \$7 billion<sup>1</sup>.” Furthermore, in early 2017, Georgia was named the top filming location worldwide—surpassing the United Kingdom, Canada, and California<sup>2</sup>. The PDA feels that it is necessary to capitalize on the state’s reputation by building up the existing film industry within the county.

**Goal: Attract the film industry to Putnam County.**

### **Needs and Opportunities:**

#### **1. Capitalize on existing relationships with the film industry.**

Putnam County is incredibly lucky to have an existing relationship with a growing local firm, Tytan Pictures. During the third committee meeting, the steering committee had the opportunity to hear from the CEO and Executive Producer for Tytan Pictures, Jim Stone. What had started out as a normal steering committee meeting quickly turned into a fast-paced brainstorming session resulting in several important connections made and action items identified. Jim shared vital information with the steering committee, including his personal goals for the future of film in Putnam County, particularly that of a vocational school for the Arts. This arts-focused school

<sup>1</sup> <http://www.georgia.org/video/?video-id=23405>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.filmla.com/filmla-a-issues-fourth-annual-feature-film-study-california-in-fourth-place-among-international-competitors-for-feature-film-projects/>

would provide training for crews, craft services, carpenters, painters, and the like. It would also serve as a career pathway program which students could begin early on in their educational careers. Jim noted that a couple of hours a week would not suffice. If there were to be a certification program, students would have to be dedicated to the program. Putnam County is designated as a Camera-Ready community, let us work to ensure that our workforce is Camera-Ready, too.

## Tourism

According to the Georgia Department of Economic Development, “tourism drives significant business growth and increased revenue for companies.” Putnam County is not exempt from having a major driving force in tourism with many cultural, historical, and recreation amenities throughout the county. The table below provides additional details on how tourism funds were collected and supported local jobs from 2010 to 2016.

**Table 2: Historical Impact of Travel for Putnam County from 2010 to 2016**

	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
<b>Expenditures (\$ millions)</b>	12.72	14.38	14.68	15.35	16.85	16.90	17.16
<b>Employment (number of jobs)</b>	144	153	150	154	164	164	165
<b>Payroll Income (\$ millions)</b>	2.63	2.88	2.85	2.98	3.31	3.35	3.55
<b>Taxes</b>							
<b>State (\$ millions)</b>	0.47	0.51	0.52	0.55	0.60	0.66	0.69
<b>Local (\$ millions)</b>	0.38	0.40	0.40	0.42	0.45	0.45	0.45

**Goal: Expand tourism opportunities throughout the community.**

### Needs and Opportunities

- 1. Collaborate with the Board of Commissioners in the expansion of Oconee Springs Park.**

Currently, Oconee Springs Park encompasses 12 acres along Lake Sinclair. The location provides a plethora of outdoor recreational activities, including boating, fishing, paddle boarding, and swimming. Lodging amenities are available at the facility including cabins and camper space for recreational

vehicles. Although, since the weather in the spring, summer, and fall are ample to partake in the main activities available the cabins and camper spaces are filled to capacity. Many of the visitors are only able to visit during the day and are turned away in the evening due to the lack of overnight lodging availability.

The planning committee noticed the need to expand upon the availability of acreage to increase recreational opportunities and rental space for lodging. Expanding would encourage more visitors to enjoy the activities and ultimately increase money spent within Putnam County for lodging, food, and shopping. To expand the park, discussions need to be held with the Putnam County Board of Commissioners to gain their support and possibility of financial assistance.

**2. Collaborate with the Board of Commissioners in the expansion of recreation and sport tournaments.**

Presently, the Putnam County Recreation Department has three fields to host baseball and softball tournaments and one gymnasium for basketball tournaments with all of the amenities needed. Although, an additional field is available to host baseball and softball tournaments only during the day since limiting funding has not made the purchase and installation of lighting possible. Because of the limitation of fields or gymnasium only one age group and sporting event can be held at a time. The Putnam County Recreation Department is working with many statewide partners to host nearly 10 tournaments a year varying from baseball and softball to basketball.

The planning committee has noticed the capability of the Recreation Department and would like to continue the growth of sporting opportunities available in Putnam County. Sporting tournaments can vary from one day to entire weekends and bring players along with parents, grandparents, and siblings. With the paving of a parking lot, addition of restrooms, purchase of additional properties, and expansion of fields the ability to host additional tournaments would greatly impact the economic growth of Putnam County.

### 3. Expand marketing efforts to attract visitors.

Putnam County has many events and facilities to attract visitors to the area, many of which are documented in **Table 3** below. Throughout the year many community events are held, including seasonal activities like Easter Egg Hunts, Christmas Bazaar, golf tournaments, Dairy Festival, and outdoor concerts. Much of the advertising and publications for the events are completed by the Eatonton Chamber of Commerce and Eatonton Main Street.

**Table 3: List of Current Tourism Amenities in Putnam County**

Current Tourism Amenities in Putnam County	
The Plaza Arts Center	The Uncle Remus Museum
Old History Museum	Georgia Writers Museum
Rock Eagle Park & Effigy	Veterans Wall of Honor
Briar Patch Trail Park	Lawrence Shoals Park
Rock Hawk Park & Effigy	Putnam Beach
Oconee Springs Park	Oconee National Forest
Uncle Remus Golf Course	Alice Walker Sites
Boat & jet ski rentals	

The planning committee addressed the need to further publicize local facilities that provide cultural, historical, and recreational opportunities for visitors. Many of the amenities already have pamphlets and websites, but innovative means could be explored to further ensure their visibility and to attract more visitors.

### 4. Attract a new hotel to the community.

Many of the visitors coming to Putnam County are commuting for recreational opportunities and community events. Currently, there is only one hotel in the county for visitors along Lake Oconee. Within the city limits of Eatonton, there are only two motels. There is so much to attract visitors to Putnam County; however, there is very little regarding accommodations to encourage them to stay overnight.

In 2017, the Putnam County Board of Commissioners contracted with Hunden Strategic Partners to conduct a Hotel & Conference Center Market, Demand and Feasibility Study for the entire county. The study included identifying areas for the most reasonable placement of hotels ranging from



those for large events, such as conferences, workshops, and formal gatherings to a simple overnight or weekend stay for community events. Also, the Feasibility Study addresses the need for a large investment to ensure the success of the hotel and ways in which to incentivize the establishment of such hotels. The full Putnam County Hotel & Conference Center Market, Demand, and Financial Feasibility Study can be found in **Appendix C**.

The planning committee addressed the need for the Putnam Development Authority to assist with the search of possible hotels for the area and identify the perfect location for the types of visitors they wish to attract. Much of the work identified by the planning committee to be completed in the next five years revolves around the great need for additional lodging facilities in the community. Special taxing districts could be implemented to assist with recruitment incentives and development funding.

### **Business Development**

Business Development provides a framework for the future of business and industry within the community. It can include items that can be fulfilled within a year or two, or progress over the course of 10 years depending on the level of complexity. The Development Authority intends to be forward-thinking to address the future expectations of businesses.

**Goal: Ensure properties are equipped for future development.**

### **Needs and Opportunities**

#### **1. Obtain Georgia Ready for Accelerated Development (GRAD) Certification.**

The goal of the Georgia Ready for Accelerated Development Program (GRAD) is to establish a pool of pre-qualified industrial sites for which the due diligence has been completed prior to a company's visit. The Georgia Department of Economic Development oversees the process and awards communities the certification. In order to submit an application for the certification, data must be provided regarding 12 aspects of the site, including a site's topographical, geotechnical, wetlands, and environmental conditions. GRAD certification verifies that sites are at an advanced state of readiness for the rapid construction of a new industrial facility.

Specifically, the planning committee believes it best to pursue GRAD certification for Eatonton-Putnam County South Industrial Park. There is currently 120 acres within the park that would be excellent sites for new industry or the expansion of existing industry. The certification would not only present the property as more marketable for industry, it will also be placed at the forefront of countless properties being considered.

**2. Further the progression of the South Industrial Park and Rock Eagle Technology Park for future plans.**

The Eatonton-Putnam County South Industrial Park has 120 acres of available property for development and is zoned heavy industrial, which presents numerous opportunities for future businesses and industries. These properties present very few limitations if any. There are two planned phases of improvements for the South Industrial Park. Phase I includes GRAD certification of 50+ acres. Phase II includes GRAD certification of the remaining acreage and improvements to water and sewer facilities. All needed enhancements require extensive funding to implement.

The Rock Eagle Technology Park has 100+ acres of available property for upscale commercial development for technology based and bio-technology companies. Work to be completed at Rock Eagle Technology Park includes the creation of pad-ready sites and the extension of infrastructure to the rear of the park.

The planning committee also addressed the need to identify areas for future development and property acquisition.

Figure 1: Conceptual Drawing of the Rock Eagle Technology Park

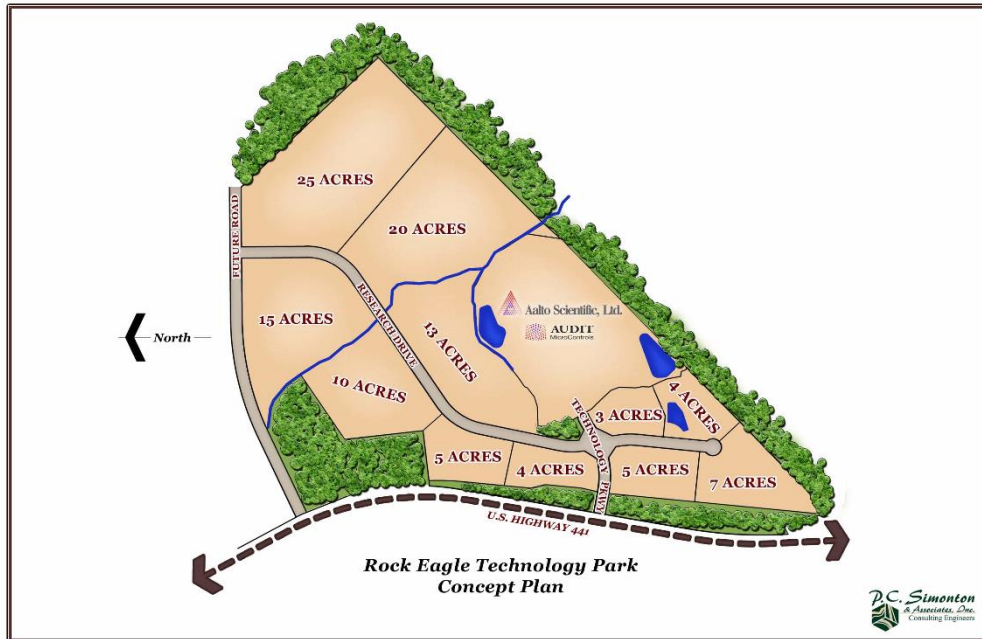
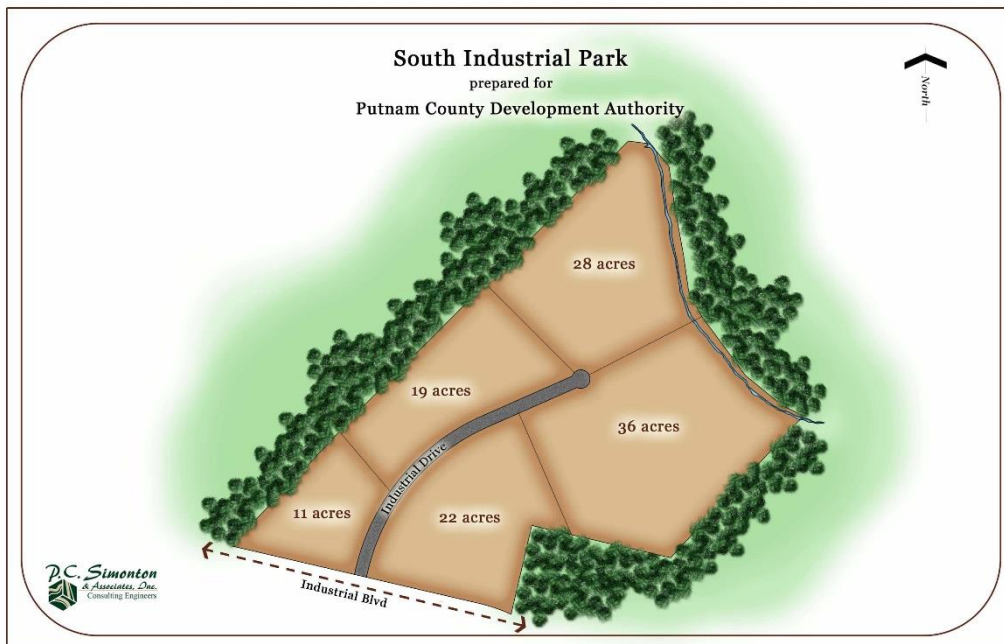


Figure 2: Conceptual Drawing of the South Eatonton-Putnam County Industrial Park



**Existing Industry Support**

Once an industry locates within the community, it is essential to create an environment that encourages the continuation and expansion of their operation. The support provided could include workforce recruitment assistance and company promotion via the PDA website and social media.

**Goal: Support the growth and expansion of existing businesses.**

**Needs and Opportunities**

- 1. Ensure existing industries have their needs met to continue operation and expansion of the company.**

Putnam County currently has an abundance of existing industry, including mobile home manufacturing, forest products manufacturing, software development, and bio-technology. A listing identifying Putnam County’s Largest Employers can be found below. These fields require very specific support to effectively operate.

**Table 4: Putnam County’s Largest Employers**

Employer	Address	Full-Time Employees	Product	Industry
<b>Putnam County Charter School System</b>	300 War Eagle Drive	460	K-12 Education	Education
<b>Bluestem Brand (Haband)</b>	148 Industrial Boulevard	281	Clothing & Accessories	Distribution/Warehousing
<b>Legacy Housing, Ltd.</b>	184 Industrial Boulevard	220	Mobile Homes	Manufacturing
<b>Putnam County Government</b>	117 Putnam Drive	160	Government	Public
<b>Interfor</b>	370 Dennis Station Road	109	Forest Products	Manufacturing
<b>Aalto Scientific/AUDIT MicroControls</b>	230 Technology Parkway	101	Private label/OEM control & calibrator sera, purified human proteins, bulk processed human & animal sera	Manufacturing

<b>Rose Acre Farms</b>	864 Reids Road NW	90	Egg Farm	Agriculture
<b>Putnam General Hospital</b>	101 Lake Oconee Parkway	88	Hospital	Healthcare
<b>OceanLink/Gemi Trucking</b>	939 Madison Road	86	Warehousing & Trucking	Distribution/Warehousing
<b>Walmart Associates, Inc.</b>	201 Walmart Drive	79	Retail Store	Retail

The role of the Putnam Development Authority is to attract business to the community and to ensure existing industries needs are being met. The planning committee addressed the need for improved infrastructure, including water, sewer, gas, broadband, and roads. They also noted that the community needs to offer incentives that are competitive with other communities.

## Policies

Actions items were developed during the planning process that addresses general policies for the Putnam Development Authority to carry out in the years to come. These items do not have firm completion dates and are based on their priority for the county.

- Collaborate with the Putnam County Charter School System and Central Georgia Technical College to ensure curriculum is updated on a regular basis to accurately fulfill the workforce needs of existing industry.
- Partner with Putnam County Charter School System and Central Georgia Technical College to provide soft-skills training for potential workforce.
- Take advantage of the Camera-Ready designation by encouraging landowners to list their properties with the state film office.

## Update Process

This strategic plan will undergo an annual review every February. The Report of Accomplishments will be updated. Goals will be assessed for relevancy and action items will either be added, renewed, or deleted. Major revisions of the plan will take place at the discretion of the Putnam Development Authority Board.

## Appendix A Planning Documents

- Retreat Summary
- Comprehensive Plan Excerpt

Summary of Putnam Economic Development Retreat  
January 9, 2017

**Purpose of Retreat**

To learn about economic development tools, discuss economic development priorities and the future of Putnam Development Authority.

**Attendees**

Representatives of Putnam Development Authority, Putnam County Board of Commissioners, City of Eatonton, Eatonton Putnam Water – Sewer Authority

**Materials**

A copy of the PowerPoint slides used during the retreat are attached.

**SWOT Analysis**

<p><b>STRENGTHS</b> K-12 School System CGTC Quality of Life (lakes) Transportation (US441 – 4-lane freight corridor) Low cost of doing business Low property taxes Improved intergovernmental relations</p>	<p><b>OPPORTUNITIES</b> Expand Oconee Springs Park South Industrial Park site Rock Eagle Technology Park CID for SR44/Harmony Tier 2/LDCT Job Tax Credits Mobile home park at OSP Agribusiness Film Industry Logistics – trucking Warehousing Tourism Recreation Senior housing/services</p>
<p><b>WEAKNESSES</b> Non-development where water is already available Lack of sewer in unincorporated areas Repairs (cost of repairs) of water and sewer in incorporated areas Blight – substandard housing Roads, Bridges Sewer Treatment Plants capacity Unqualified workforce Lack of available sites and buildings Broadband access</p>	<p><b>THREATS</b> Inability to support local retail No water or sewer Duplication of services Lack of workforce/skilled workforce Lack of sites and buildings Environmental issues – be proactive in protecting our natural resources Surrounding counties</p>

## Consensus on Target Priorities for Putnam County Development Authority

1. Existing Industry Support
2. Small Business Development/Commercial Development
3. Tourism/Film

### Ranking of Specific Tasks

Prior to the retreat, attendees were asked to provide a few items that they believed the Development Authority should address over the next 12 months. During the retreat, attendees voted anonymously on what activities they would support. The results are below.

Activity	Support	Oppose
Move forward with the movie industry.	8	2
Expand existing industry (manufactured homes, Forest-related products, Alto Scientific).	11	
Develop the South Eatonton Industrial Park site into a GRAD-ready site.	7	2
Complete a pad-ready site in the South Park.	9	2
Work with Legacy to bring additional companies to the area to lease their surplus space.	11	
Work with the Water Authority to expand water lines in the area.	11	
Improve infrastructure (water, sewer, gas, Internet).	11	
Partnering with EPWSA to determine how and location of growth.	9	
Identify additional infrastructure requirements.	10	1
Water to north end of county.	9	2
Continue to market the Rock Eagle Technology Park to locate next company.	9	2
Recruit some tenants into Technology Park.	9	2
Finish Rock Eagle Technology Park.	6	5
Promote our vacant industrial buildings around the county.	10	1
Developing a partnership with the Putnam County Commissioners to develop a strategic plan.	10	
Hotel feasibility study-Attract Hotel	8	3

Based on this exercise, the top activities were discussed: Expand infrastructure, supporting existing industry and Rock Eagle Technology Park.

Expand Infrastructure includes water, sewer, and roads. Need to inventory and prioritize. Rock Eagle Technology Park – need to restructure deal; on hold pending action by owner.



# Putnam County and the City of Eatonton Joint Comprehensive Plan



***“A family-oriented community built on a robust agricultural past, a rich literary history, and incredible natural resources.”***

**October 2017**

## Economic Development

### Goals

1. Create new job opportunities.
2. Further develop entertainment options.

### Needs and Opportunities

#### 1. Attract new development.

Putnam County and the City of Eatonton continue to grapple with the negative economic impact of the closing of Georgia Power Company's Plant Branch on April 15, 2015. With over 450 people employed at the plant, Plant Branch had long been an economic driver in the region and a large source of tax revenue in the county. The closure of the plant resulted in an estimated \$7.4 million in tax revenue leaving the county annually. That estimate does not include the loss of individual property tax revenue, which further contributes to these losses.

While the effects of the closure of Plant Branch continue to influence the health of the economy, other factors also contribute to the need for new development. According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, in 2015, the county experienced an annual average rate of 8 percent unemployment. Almost one in six individuals—16.4 percent—are living below the poverty level. Current employment data indicates that the provision of services comprises the greatest percentage of the economy—50.2 percent—with retail trade (13.2 percent) and accommodation and food services (10.7 percent) employing a large proportion of the population. Manufacturing and Construction follow close behind, employing 9.1 percent and 7.7 percent of the population, respectively. As of 2017, some of the top employers in the county include Putnam County Charter School System, Haband Company Inc./Bluestem Brands, Inc., Putnam County Government, Legacy Housing Ltd., Interfor, and the Putnam General Hospital.

Space is available throughout the county for new development ventures, particularly in the four industrial and technology parks: Eatonton-Putnam County South Industrial Park, North Eatonton Industrial Park, Sammons Industrial Park, and Rock Eagle Technology Park. The Development Authority maintains a list of tools and resources to assist both existing and potential industries and businesses.

It is imperative that the county and city focus on attracting new development which will allow for a greater mix of complementary industries and businesses to support job creation and a larger tax base.

## 2. Expand educational opportunities available within the community.

Individuals between the ages of 25 and 64 constitute 5.3 percent of this total rate. Those who either graduated high school, completed some college, or have an Associate’s degree comprise the largest subcategories of the unemployed (see **Table 3** below).

**Table 3: Educational Attainment**

Subject	Total Estimate
<b>Population 25 to 64 years</b>	11,319
<b>Less than high school graduate</b>	1,520
<b>High school graduate (includes equivalency)</b>	4,731
<b>Some college or associate’s degree</b>	3,184
<b>Bachelor’s degree or higher</b>	1,884

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2011-2015 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

The county recognizes the need for a well-trained workforce. Putnam County and the City of Eatonton intend to collaborate with the high school and Central Georgia Technical College to ensure courses support the cultivation of an educated workforce that meshes well with the current job market and allows for growth to support future developments.

## 3. Encourage existing businesses to create internship and apprenticeship programs.

Internship and apprenticeship programs offer individuals the opportunity to gain valuable experience and firsthand knowledge of a field in which they may want to pursue a career. Putnam County will coordinate with local businesses to provide individuals with these opportunities because such programs urge businesses to invest in the local workforce. These programs further bolster ongoing efforts to prepare individuals for successful entry into long-term careers and can keep the younger population in the county. Internship and apprenticeship programs also signal to new industry and businesses that local talent is and can be molded to fit their workforce needs.

## 4. Enhance availability of entertainment for young adults.

Putnam County has limited entertainment options geared toward young adults. An expansion of available entertainment activities encourages young adults to patronize local establishments, which positively impacts the economy, keeps the younger population engaged, and attracts young adults to the county. The county already has a solid foundation of entertainment options—the lakes, golf course, and outdoor activities are just a few; however, an expansion of these options would enhance entertainment opportunities for young adults.

## Appendix B Action Items

<b>Workforce</b>		
<b>Action Item</b>	<b>Responsible Parties</b>	<b>Notes</b>
1. Implement construction curriculum with Putnam County Charter School System.	PDA, PCCSS, Existing Industry	Set to be implemented in Summer 2018
2. Implement construction curriculum with Central Georgia Technical College.	PDA, CGTC, Existing Industry	
3. Identify a taskforce to develop on-the-job training, internships, and work-based learning.	PDA, DOL, Existing Industry, PCCSS, Middle GA Consortium	
<b>Film</b>		
<b>Action Item</b>	<b>Responsible Parties</b>	<b>Notes</b>
1. Partner with Tytan Pictures to identify and attract supporting companies to the film industry.	PDA, Tytan Pictures, Putnam County, City of Eatonton, Chamber	Currently, setting up meetings to identify areas that need addressing.
2. Develop a vocational school for the arts.	PDA, PCCSS, CGTC, Tytan Pictures, Briar Patch Arts Council, The Plaza Art Center	PCCSS is currently updating their stages and implementing training opportunities for students.
<b>Tourism</b>		
<b>Action Item</b>	<b>Responsible Parties</b>	<b>Notes</b>
1. Identify areas for expansion at Oconee Springs Park.	PDA, BOC, Oconee Springs Park Staff	Example areas include RV hookups, parking, and outdoor activities
2. Evaluate terms for long-term and short-term rentals.	PDA, BOC, Oconee Springs Park Staff	Placement of long-term renters and cost of services
3. Invest in amenities at the Putnam County Recreation Department to meet the needs of players and spectators.	PDA, BOC, Putnam County Recreation Department	
4. Identify marketing needs to support tournaments.	PDA, BOC, Chamber of Commerce, Main Street	i.e. parking, additional fields, additional land
5. Utilize the hotel feasibility study to promote the county to potential hotels.	PDA, BOC, Chamber of Commerce, Main Street	Consider hotels with adjoining conference center option
6. Work with tourism partners to produce grants for tourism product development and marketing.	Commerce, Main Street, DDA, Briar Patch Arts Council	
<b>Existing Industry Support</b>		
<b>Action Item</b>	<b>Responsible Parties</b>	<b>Notes</b>
1. Hold annual roundtable discussions with existing industry to better understand their needs.	CGTC, DOL, PCCSS, Middle GA Consortium	Make sure all local representatives are available that could impact the industries
2. Apply for grants to meet infrastructure demands.	PDA, BOC, Existing Industry, AT&T, City of Eatonton, EPWSA	Water, sewer, and gas services, technology requirements, and roadway infrastructure

<b>Business Development</b>		
<b>Action Item</b>	<b>Responsible Parties</b>	<b>Notes</b>
1. Complete GRAD Certification requirements to submit an application for Rock Eagle Technology Park.	PDA, Fall Line Properties	Pad-ready sites, topography study, Phase I Environmental, Endangered Species evaluation
2. Phase I improvements to South Industrial Park. i.e. extend gas lines and fiber optic cable.	City of Eatonton, AT&T, PDA	
3. Phase II improvements to South Industrial Park. i.e. water and sewer	City of Eatonton, EPWSA, PDA	

Appendix C  
Putnam County Hotel & Conference Center  
Feasibility Study



FINAL REPORT

Putnam County Hotel & Conference Center  
Market, Demand and Financial Feasibility Study

August 28, 2017



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- Executive Summary
- Chapter 1: Purpose of the Analysis
- Chapter 2: Economic, Demographic, and Tourism Analysis
- Chapter 3: Local and Regional Meetings & Event Facility Analysis
- Chapter 4: Hotel Market Analysis
- Chapter 5: Relevant Facility Analysis
- Chapter 6: Site Analysis and Recommendations
- Chapter 7: Demand and Financial Projections
- Chapter 8: Economic, Employment, and Fiscal Impact

## Key Questions

What is the feasibility for an event center and/or hotel development in Putnam County?

What sites are available for a hotel and/or event center development?

What is the competitive supply of event facilities, both locally and regionally? Do gaps exist?

Who are potential user groups of an event center? Where are these user groups currently going?

What demand exists for meetings, conferences and other events in Putnam County?

How is the hotel market performing? What hotel package and supporting amenities are necessary to the success of an event center?

Are there examples of comparable facilities throughout the country? What can be learned from those situations?

What is recommended for Putnam County?

## Headlines

- Most event types are unable to host in Putnam County due to lack of exhibition/flex space, arena-type seating and only small ballrooms and limited break out rooms.
- Although there is market support for an event / conference center in Putnam County, the financial viability of the proposed project may be difficult; however, the financial viability of the two proposed hotel projects is more attractive.
- Larger branded hotel room blocks are needed to accommodate groups.
- Local event demand is starving for larger, quality spaces for meetings, sports, banquets, public events and conferences.
- State and regional demand is still unproven. Few groups have utilized facilities in Putnam County due to lack of facilities and, therefore, Putnam County lacks the reputation for holding such events.
- User groups and event organizers want high quality hotels and facilities. Without these amenities, it will be difficult to compete regionally.
- Currently, there is a large gap in the hotel market for size and quality between the Ritz-Carlton and upper midscale options in Milledgeville.
- No perfect site has been identified yet, though strong options are available and/or being considered.
- A stand-alone hotel is fairly viable for Putnam County, but a hotel connected to a meetings and event center will perform better.
- On the other hand, a meeting facility cannot be stand-alone. A hotel must accompany a meetings facility by being located either adjacent or attached to the facility.

## Key Findings

Putnam County is a rural county in Georgia with some outstanding attributes that make it a fascinating candidate for hotel and event facilities. While small in terms of total permanent population, the county is a popular second home market, due to its two major lakes, Lake Oconee and Lake Sinclair. These draw thousands of visitors and vacationers annually and the setting has been compelling enough that a major Ritz Carlton resort is successfully operating on the water and commands rates of over \$300 per night.

Despite these natural attractions, the County has not been the site of investment for hotel or major event facilities. All newer, nicer and branded properties are located outside the County, leaving it without the opportunity to host events and groups for sports, conferences and other events. Even small events that find a suitable location have to leave the County to find a block of hotel rooms to accommodate them. Downtown Eatonton is a quaint and growing town center with two event facilities that struggle to host events that need a nearby hotel, as none exists. The newly-opened Cotton Warehouse is adding to the pressure and opportunity for a small hotel.

In its research, HSP identified unaccommodated demand for sports, conferences, meetings and other types of events in Putnam County. This situation results in a economic leakage to surrounding counties. In order to recapture that spending and impact, as well as host events that absolutely want to be in Putnam County, HSP has identified two projects for ultimate development.

HSP recommends two sets of facilities. The first and smallest is a small hotel in downtown Eatonton to help support group event activity in the facilities downtown as well as support office, residential, tourism and other economic growth. There is an economic feasibility gap for the project, but one that is worthy of investment for the community in order to recapture and keep economic activity in the community and County.

The more compelling and robust development proposed is a hotel-event facility combination near Lake Oconee, discussed on the next page.

## Key Findings

Putnam County has an opportunity to host a wide variety of event types that want to be in the County, yet have no place to go or hotel to be hosted in. The Ritz Carlton has proven that the area is attractive enough for high-cost and high-quality events and facility amenities. At the other end of the scale, there are more woody developments for certain types of visitors. However, the area and Putnam County are missing an event and hotel facility that is able to attract and accommodate wide variety of mid-priced events that want to find a place in the County. These include youth sports tournaments, mid-priced conferences seeking accommodations outside the hustle and bustle of Atlanta, meetings, trainings and other events that simply want a focused, getaway location that is attractive, in nature and yet close enough to the major population centers of the region, especially Atlanta.

Lake Oconee is well-known among the population of the region, especially wealthier and connected Atlantans, who appreciate the nearby ability to escape, but need the proximity to Atlanta for their day-to-day business activities. The ability to host events and groups in the area would be a boon for the local tourism and economic development industry and help create a more year-round economy in the area.

Any public event facility is a major investment for a community and is not to be taken lightly. These facilities do not often break even and mostly operate at fairly significant deficits (between \$500k - \$1million annually). However, the rationale for investment is based on the new economic activity brought to the County via hotel stays, restaurant visits, retail spending and new demand for permanent residents, new businesses and other economic activity.

HSP has experience with many combination event facilities with attached hotels and there are a number of business and financing plan examples of how these can be executed with as much focus on minimizing public risk as possible, while maximizing private investment and incentivizing efficient operations. These can be investigated more deeply in a next phase. This phase determined the proof of concept and validated that there is a market for events and hotel stays that is currently leaking out of the County and should, over time, be recaptured by a smart hospitality and event facility development.