



Long-Range Plan 2023-2027

Prepared by:

The Putnam Public Library Long Range Plan Committee
January 2023

This document was approved on January 23, 2023 by the following members of the Putnam Public Library Board of Trustees.

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LONG-RANGE PLANNING DOCUMENT

PUTNAM PUBLIC LIBRARY

The Planning Committee of the Putnam Public Library is pleased to present the following Long-Range Plan for the years 2023-2027 to the Library Board of Directors, the Town of Putnam Board of Selectmen, the Town of Putnam Board of Finance, and the Friends of the Putnam Public Library. This document is the product of several months of review and analysis of the current conditions which exist in the Putnam Public Library and the community which it serves.

The members of the Planning Committee were:

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Background

The Putnam Public Library Long-Range Plan is based on accurate and timely information that is taken in context for decision-making. Information about the community has been drawn from research into recent and current demographics, socio-economic, budgetary and historical information. The statistics were taken from the 2020 Census. The results of a patron use survey in November 2022 were compiled to create data for this plan. The survey was placed in the library, Town Hall and on the library website. Analysis of this information provided the basis for the decisions that followed.

Planning Committee meetings were held between October 2022 and January 2023.

Mission Statement

The Putnam Public Library serves the needs of the community by providing free access to a diversity of ideas, information and experiences with the goal of promoting the love of reading, the joy of lifelong learning and engagement with the arts, sciences and humanities.

Library Service Roles/Responses

The Planning Committee has defined the services which the Putnam Public Library will provide in the community over the next several years. They are prioritized in terms of the utilization of library staff and resources. The major roles of the library are identified with the appropriate library service responses as follows:

Role One: The Putnam Public Library serves all the citizens of Putnam by providing a quality general library collection, including materials in print and also materials in a variety of other formats. Programs for citizens of all ages that are appropriate to the role of the library are provided.

- Current topics and titles
- Basic Literacy
- Cultural awareness
- Formal learning support
- Information literacy
- Lifelong learning
- Community interaction

Role Two: The Putnam Public Library supports the information needs of the community through a quality nonfiction collection in a variety of formats, and by providing resources of other institutions through electronic access or interlibrary loan.

- Business and career information
- Community referral
- Consumer Information
- General Information
- Government Information
- Local History and genealogy

Role Three: The Putnam Public Library offers technological support/facilities to address the needs of the community.

- Internet Stations
- Lifelong learning
- Community resource center

Role Four: The Putnam Public Library provides for the administrative functions necessary to support all the programs and services.

The Town of Putnam

Putnam is situated on the Quinebaug River and covers an area of 20.3 square miles. It is located in the northeastern corner of Connecticut and named for Revolutionary War hero Israel Putnam. Although originally settled in the early 1700's, it was not incorporated as a town until 1855. An important center in the emergence of the textile industry and later as a railroad hub, the center section of Putnam was decimated in the Flood of 1955.

An elected Board of Selectmen and Mayor govern the town and appoint the Town Administrator. An elected Library Board of Trustees of 9 members oversee the library. Proud of Putnam's heritage and looking forward to the future, citizens have been engaged throughout the years in providing facilities and services for the residents. The town has replaced and renovated its schools through the years, most recently in 2017 when the Putnam High School was renovated as new.

In Putnam there is a mix of single and multi-family dwellings, condominium complexes, elderly housing and low-income housing projects. There is a full service acute care hospital, group homes and a nursing home. The 2020 census figures show that the median household income of Putnam was \$64,320 compared with the state median household income of \$79,855. Roughly one-quarter of the households in Putnam are single parent households, 918 out of 3,967 households.

There are three public schools in town; an elementary Pre-K through grade 4, a middle school grades 5 –8, and a high school. The Family Resource Center is located within the Elementary School and is an integral part of the school. There are licensed child care programs and providers for children under 5 years of age in the community as well as a private science academy. The school district has been identified as an Alliance district in Connecticut, as it is one of the 33 lowest performing school districts in the state. Putnam is in Educational Reference Group G (third from the lowest in socio-economic parameters).

Recreational opportunities exist for the residents. In addition to the fields and gyms at the schools, there is a town-owned park with fields for soccer, football, baseball and softball as well as a skateboarding park and tennis courts. The Putnam River Trail is a multi-purpose pathway on the Quinebaug River which includes parks and picnic areas, scenic overlooks, a story walk, and historic exhibits. A Farmer's Market pavilion was built in 2009, which makes local produce available to consumers. A well-used bandstand was added to the Rotary Park area in 2005 for the town's 150th anniversary. River Fires accompanied by concerts and shows have been added to the town's annual recreational offerings. An area-wide YMCA has been built in Putnam and a community garden benefits residents interested in health and wellness.

An aggressive revitalization to the downtown and riverfront areas began in 2005 and continues to the present time. This area is now a cultural destination with antique

shops, restaurants, and art galleries. Large retail stores are located to the east of the town center along Route 44. Adjacent to Interstate 395, the 171 acre Putnam Industrial Park was developed in the 1970s and the Quinebaug Regional Technology Park is in development. The 83-apartment Cargill Falls Mill was repurposed and opened in 2020, and the 30,000 square foot Municipal Complex housing the town hall, library, historical center and community rooms was completed in 2021.

Statistical Profile

Below is a thumbnail sketch of Putnam taken from the United States Census Bureau QuickFacts.

Population	9,227
Land Area	20.3 square miles
Households	3,756
Median household income	\$67,070
% Adults with HS diploma	86.4%
% K-12 students eligible for Free/reduced Priced meals	51% (Putnam Board of Ed)
Age distribution	
Under 5	5.1%
5 – 18	15.4%
18-65	62.4%
65 and over	17.1%

History of the Putnam Public Library

The Putnam Public Library is a far cry from the original handful of books from which it has evolved. Its present position in the community is a tribute to all who have made it possible, including community members who have served on Library Boards of Directors, building committees, town leaders and those who have served as staff.

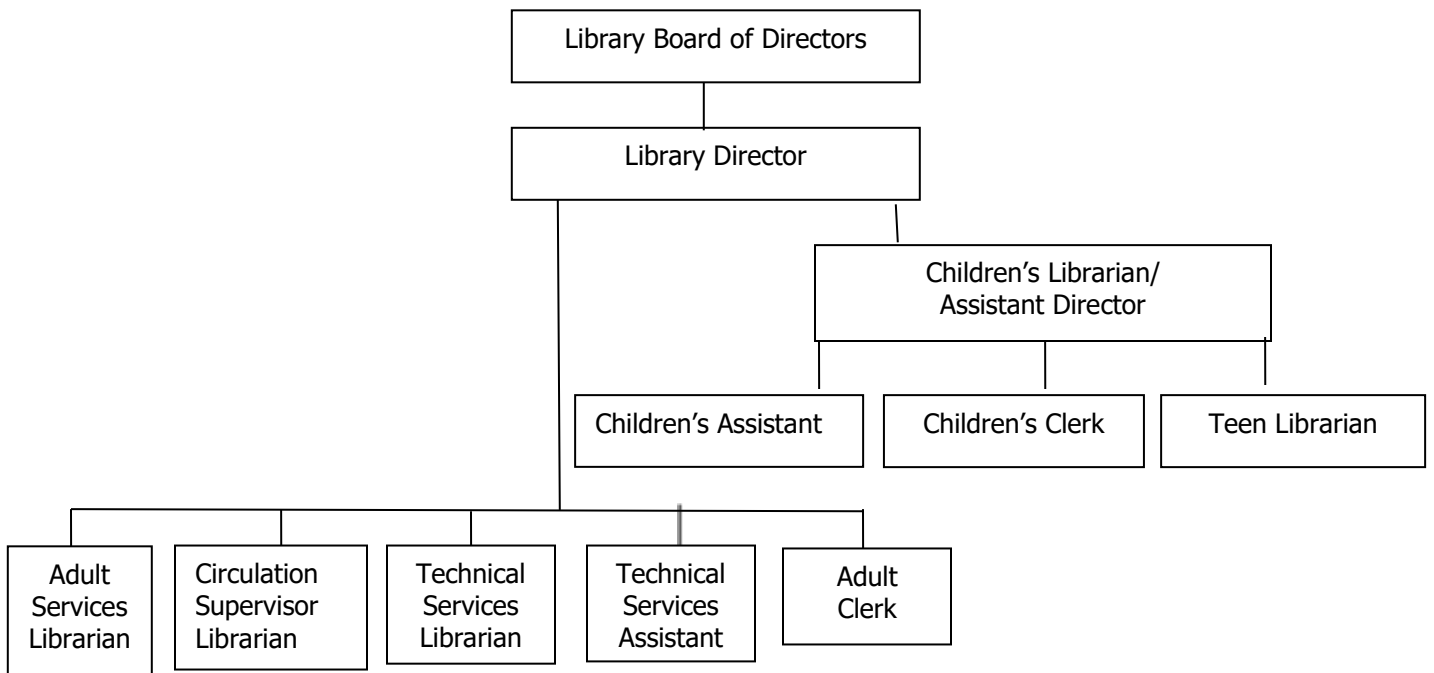
The Library had its beginnings in March 1884, and was duly constituted at a meeting held April 16, 1884. Formally opened on April 25, the library had 270 books, 147 members and one part-time librarian, Mr. S. M. Hewitt.

Later, Mr. Wright, in whose jewelry store the Library was located, and Mr. W. B. Ferguson served as librarians until 1886, when Mr. J. R. Cogswell took the position for one year. With the number of volumes increased to 500, the Library was removed to the Women's Christian Temperance Union's Room in Union Block, where Miss Alice Johnson served as librarian until Miss Emma J. Kinney assumed the position in 1898. A new and larger location in the Court House Block was secured in June 1903.

In 1912, the Library was removed to the Municipal Building on Church Street. Miss Kinney continued as librarian, retiring in 1932. Miss Abbie F. Scott was then appointed, and during her tenure a new, specifically designed library building, centrally located on Main Street, was completed. The completion of the building occurred in 1955 which was the 100th anniversary of the incorporation of Putnam as a town. Fortunately, neither the books nor equipment had been moved to the new building when it suffered severe damage in the ruinous floods in August 1955. The dedication was delayed until December 2, 1956 when over four thousand people registered as patrons. The advent of the attractive, state-of-the-art building greatly increased circulation and usership. Miss Scott resigned her position in September 1962 and Mrs. Millicent Beausoleil was appointed to succeed her.

When built, the library had a capacity of 18,000 volumes and by 1973 it held 25,000 volumes. For every new book acquired, one had to be discarded. After much planning and many delays, the addition of the Children's Wing began. The new wing was dedicated on December 2, 1979, exactly 23 years after the main library building had been dedicated. It was named in honor of Anne M. Hogan, chair of the Library Board of Directors for over thirty years, "for a life dedicated to the enrichment of lives of children through her service as a teacher and member of the Library Board." When Mrs. Beausoleil retired in 1979, Mrs. Mary C. Brumbaugh was appointed Head Librarian, a position she held until 2006 when Priscilla Colwell took over the direction of the Library after Mrs. Brumbaugh retired. In 2021 the library moved into the Putnam Municipal Complex after years of planning and preparation. At its inception the Library was recognized as a powerful agent for fostering the development of an enlightened social, civic and industrial life. Today, it strives to serve citizens at every stage of life by providing service to all.

Putnam Public Library Organizational Chart



The Putnam Public Library conducted a user survey from November 8 until November 23, 2022. The library distributed paper surveys to Town Hall departments and at the Library as well as promoting an online version using SurveyMonkey on Facebook, Instagram and on the website. The Library collected 77 responses (60 electronic, 17 paper). Below is a summary of the survey's results.

Question 1: What have you used the library for?

The majority of respondents use the library to borrow print materials (87%) and DVD/audios (40%). 40% said that they used the library to attend programs, while 26% take advantage of the Library's subscription to Overdrive/Libby (ebooks, eaudios, emagazines). 52% of the respondents indicated that they had used the interlibrary loan service to receive materials from other libraries in our consortium. Electronic resources such as the website/online catalog/databases were used by 28% of our surveyed patrons with 32% using the library computers and printers.

Question 2: Age categories

147 patrons were represented on the 77 returned surveys. The largest percentage of respondents was the 60+ group with 19%. The rest of the pool was well distributed with 41-60 (15%), 26-40 (14%), 6-12 (13%), 0-5 (8%), 13-18 and 19-26 (both 6%).

Question 3: How do you typically find out about what is happening at the library?

The majority of respondents follow the library's social media (70%), with flyers in the library (39%), library staff (39%) and WINY radio (40%). A suggestion in the comments to email the newsletter to those who wish to receive it will be taken under consideration in the near future.

Question 4: On average, how often do you visit the library?

53% of respondents visit the library once a month or every 3 weeks, 39% weekly and only 2 people daily.

Question 5: Do you have a library card?

The majority of the respondents have a library card (73) with only 4 in the negative.

Question 6: Please tell us the zip code where you live.

79% of the people who took the survey are from Putnam, with the other approximately 20% from neighboring communities of Woodstock, Pomfret, Killingly, Moosup and Thompson.

Question 7: What would you like to tell us that we have not already asked?

The thirty-two responses varied with a large percentage appreciating the library facility and staff. The shelving of audios, book selection issues and larger program announcements were some of the comments requiring further deliberation.

Goals and Objectives

The goals and objectives developed by the Planning Committee are based upon the Mission Statement, Roles and Service Responses, and information gleaned from data collected. They are intended to be meaningful and realistic statements of the purpose and activity to be pursued in the next several years. As a result of analysis of the data collected, the following Goals and Objectives for the Putnam Public Library for next five years were determined.

Goal One: Community Hub

The Putnam Public Library engages our community by providing a place and services that connect people, provides gathering spaces and helps bridge divides.

- Provide a safe, secure and comfortable environment.
- Reflect the cultural, economic and gender diversity of the community.
- Continue partnerships with local organizations.
- Create an engaging and positive atmosphere for library patrons and staff.

Goal Two: Access and Innovation

The Putnam Public Library connects all patrons to services, resources and technology that are relevant, diverse, current and accessible.

- Increase digital access for our community (reduce the digital divide)
- Raise public awareness of the library's resources and services
- Provide vibrant collections for all

Goal Three: Continue to offer programming and/or services for all age groups

- Create opportunities for intergenerational interactions.
- Actively engage with the community to increase access to and awareness of collections, programs and services available to children, teens and their families.
- Continue to provide and increase resources for community members of various abilities.

Evaluation

The Library Board of Trustees will stay focused on planning to meet the above goals. In 2027 a new Long Range Planning Committee will be appointed.