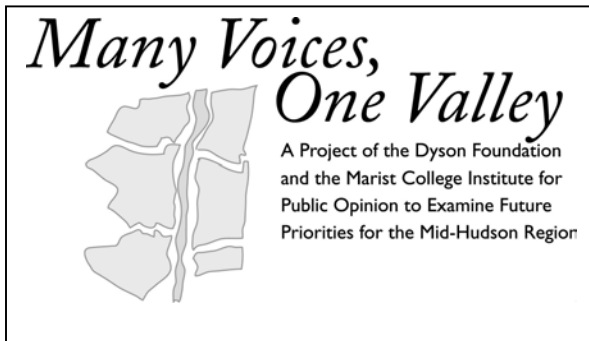

Many Voices, One Valley



A Project of the Dyson Foundation
and the Marist College Institute for
Public Opinion to Examine Future
Priorities for the Mid-Hudson Region

Summary of the Findings
Putnam County
October 2002



SUMMARY: PUTNAM COUNTY

Profile

Putnam County residents are more likely to be between the ages of thirty-one and forty-four than residents of the Hudson Valley as a whole. They are also more likely to be married and to have children.

- 43% of Putnam County residents are between thirty-one and forty-four years of age. This compares with 34% of Hudson Valley residents who are in this age category.
- Residents in Putnam County are more likely to be married than residents in the Hudson Valley as a whole. 67% of Putnam County residents are married compared with 57% of Hudson Valley residents.
- Putnam County households are more likely to have children in them than the average household in the region. 50% of Putnam County households have children compared with 43% of households in the region.
- As a result, Putnam County households are larger than the average household both regionally and nationally. The average household size in Putnam County is 3.1 compared with 2.9 in the region and 2.6 nationally.
- Residents of Putnam County are also more likely to be white, have a higher education, and earn a higher income than the average Hudson Valley resident.
- Putnam County residents are less likely than residents in the region to be without health insurance either currently or within the past year.

| | | Putnam County Residents | Hudson Valley Residents |
|----------------------------------|--|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| | | Row % | Row % |
| Age | 18 to 30 | 13% | 17% |
| | 31 to 44 | 43% | 34% |
| | 45 to 60 | 34% | 33% |
| | Over 60 | 10% | 16% |
| Race | White | 96% | 86% |
| College Education | Less than college | 57% | 63% |
| | College graduate | 43% | 37% |
| Income | Less than \$50,000 | 26% | 45% |
| | \$50,000 or more | 74% | 55% |
| Marital Status | Married | 67% | 57% |
| | Living with a partner | 5% | 6% |
| | Separated | 3% | 3% |
| | Divorced | 8% | 10% |
| | Widowed | 4% | 7% |
| | Never married | 13% | 16% |
| Children in HH | Child(ren) in HH | 50% | 43% |
| | No children in HH | 50% | 57% |
| Current Health Insurance | Adult(s) currently not insured | 5% | 11% |
| | Adult(s) currently insured | 95% | 89% |
| Continuous Health Insurance | Child(ren) not insured now or in past year | 8% | 13% |
| | Child(ren) continuously insured | 92% | 87% |
| Current Health Insurance | HH member(s) currently not insured | 5% | 12% |
| | HH member(s) currently insured | 95% | 88% |
| Continuous Health Insurance | HH member(s) not insured now or in past year | 15% | 24% |
| | HH member(s) continuously insured | 85% | 76% |
| Current Public Assistance | HH member(s) currently receiving public assistance | 3% | 4% |
| | No one in HH currently receiving public assistance | 97% | 96% |
| Public Assistance Over Past Year | HH member(s) receiving public assistance now or in past year | 4% | 5% |
| | No one in HH receiving public assistance now or in past year | 96% | 95% |

| | | | | Mean |
|----------------------------------|-------------------------|----------------|-------------------|------|
| Total number adults and children | Putnam County Residents | | | 3.1 |
| | Putnam County Residents | Children in HH | Child(ren) in HH | 4.1 |
| | | | No children in HH | 2.2 |
| | Hudson Valley Residents | | | 2.9 |

The Quality of Life

Putnam County residents and community leaders feel positively about their community, and most feel they can have an impact on making their community a better place to live.

- Putnam County residents feel more positive about the community where they live than the residents of any of the other five counties in the Hudson Valley. 95% of Putnam County residents rate their community as an excellent, very good, or good place to live. 100% of community leaders in the county rate their community positively. This compares with 88% of Hudson Valley residents and 96% of community leaders in the region who feel positively about their community.
- 60% of Putnam County residents have lived in their community for more than 10 years. Like the Hudson Valley as a whole, 24% of residents in Putnam County have moved to their community within the past five years.
- Most Putnam County residents (80%) believe they can have at least a moderate impact on making their community a better place to live. 76% of Hudson Valley residents and 77% of Americans feel the same way.
- 52% of residents and 46% of community leaders in Putnam County think the best way to make a difference in their community is to volunteer. 49% of Hudson Valley residents, 47% of community leaders in the region, and 41% of Americans believe in volunteerism, as well.
- 58% of Putnam County residents and 86% of community leaders report regularly volunteering or participating in civic organizations, churches, or clubs. 57% of Hudson Valley residents, 87% of community leaders in the region, and 52% of Americans are active in local organizations.

Staying in Touch?

A majority of community leaders in Putnam County feels community decision-makers see things mostly the way the public does, although Putnam County residents divide on this question.

- 54% of Putnam County community leaders believe decision-makers do see things the way the public does, and 32% believe decision-makers see things differently. 14% of community leaders in the county are unsure.
- In contrast, 48% of Putnam County residents feel that the individuals who make decisions in their community mostly see things differently from the way the public does. 47% of residents in Putnam County feel decision-makers in their community see things mostly the way the public does. 5% of Putnam County residents are unsure.

Most Putnam County residents and community leaders think the public’s views on issues count at least a fair amount in decisions that are made in their community.

- 71% of residents and 77% of community leaders in Putnam County think the public’s views do count a great deal or a fair amount in decisions that are made in their community. Similarly, in the Hudson Valley, 68% of residents and 76% of community leaders feel the same way.
- 73% of Putnam County residents feel their views are represented in the decisions that are made in their community almost always or sometimes. 25% of residents in Putnam County feel their interests are represented only seldom or never. This compares with 82% of Putnam County community leaders and 68% of Hudson Valley residents who feel their views are represented almost always or sometimes.

Issues: The Priorities

Like many Hudson Valley residents, Putnam County residents rank the economy and the public schools as their top two priorities. However, unlike other residents of the Hudson Valley, residents of Putnam County rank reducing taxes third and protecting open space fourth.

- Only 4/10ths of a point separate the top six priorities of Putnam County residents. These issues include keeping businesses in the area, improving the public schools, reducing taxes, protecting open space, providing services for seniors, and providing more after-school activities for children and teens.

Putnam County Residents

| | Mean |
|--|------|
| Keeping businesses in the area | 7.8 |
| Improving the quality of the public schools | 7.6 |
| Reducing taxes | 7.6 |
| Protecting open space | 7.5 |
| Providing services for senior citizens | 7.4 |
| Providing more after-school activities | 7.4 |
| Making health care more affordable | 7.3 |
| Creating more jobs | 7.1 |
| Making health insurance easier to get | 6.9 |
| Improving relations between different racial & ethnic groups | 6.8 |
| Making your community safer | 6.8 |
| Providing more affordable, quality child care | 6.6 |
| Supporting the arts and providing more cultural events | 6.5 |
| Increasing the number of public areas | 6.4 |
| Slowing growth and development | 6.2 |
| Improving the quality of the water | 6.1 |
| Increasing the amount of affordable housing | 6.0 |
| Increasing or improving public transportation | 5.8 |
| Reducing homelessness | 5.2 |

Putnam County’s community leaders rank providing after school activities for children and teenagers as their number one priority followed closely by keeping businesses in the area.

- In a county where half the households have children, two of the top five issues among community leaders in Putnam County are child centered. Providing more after-school activities is first, and improving the public schools ranks third. Interestingly, the sixth issue of importance is affordable, quality, child care.

Putnam County Community Leaders

| | Mean |
|--|------|
| Providing more after-school activities | 8.0 |
| Keeping businesses in the area | 7.9 |
| Improving the quality of the public schools | 7.9 |
| Protecting open space | 7.8 |
| Making health care more affordable | 7.8 |
| Providing more affordable, quality child care | 7.5 |
| Providing services for senior citizens | 7.5 |
| Increasing or improving public transportation | 7.3 |
| Creating more jobs | 7.2 |
| Reducing taxes | 7.2 |
| Improving relations between different racial & ethnic groups | 7.2 |
| Supporting the arts and providing more cultural events | 7.0 |
| Making health insurance easier to get | 7.0 |
| Increasing the amount of affordable housing | 6.9 |
| Slowing growth and development | 6.8 |
| Improving the quality of the water | 6.8 |
| Increasing the number of public areas | 6.5 |
| Making your community safer | 5.7 |
| Reducing homelessness | 5.6 |

The Top Five Issues: Services for Children

Child centered issues such as improving the quality of the public schools and providing after-school activities are important priorities for Putnam County residents and community leaders.

- Both residents and community leaders of Putnam County rate the quality of their public schools higher than their Hudson Valley counterparts rate the public schools in their community.
- 80% of Putnam County residents rate their public schools positively, and 18% of county residents rate the public schools as fair or poor. This compares with 70% of Hudson Valley residents who feel positively about their public schools, and 26% of residents in the region who rate them as fair or poor.

- Similarly, 82% of community leaders in Putnam County rate the public schools positively, and 14% of community leaders in the county rate the public schools as fair or poor. 67% of community leaders in the Hudson Valley feel positively about their public schools, and 30% of the region's community leaders rate the public schools as fair or poor.
- 58% of Putnam County residents and 50% of community leaders in the county feel spending on the public schools is about right. 21% of residents and 23% of community leaders in Putnam County think there is too little spending on the public schools in their community. 18% of both residents and community leaders in the county believe spending on the public schools in their community has been too much.
- When assessing the recreational activities available for children and teenagers in their community, 55% of Putnam County residents rate them positively. 42% of county residents rate the recreational activities in the area as fair or poor, and 3% of residents are unsure. Putnam County is the only county in the region where a majority of residents rate the activities available for children and teenagers positively.
- Community leaders in the county are not as positive as county residents about the recreational activities available for children and teenagers in their community. 41% of Putnam County's community leaders rate the recreational activities available for children and teenagers positively and 46% rate them as fair or poor. 13% of community leaders are unsure.
- 44% of Putnam County residents believe too little is spent on recreational activities for children and teenagers compared with 59% of the county's community leaders who believe too little money is spent on these activities. 48% of residents in the county believe spending is about right, and 27% of Putnam County's community leaders feel the same way. 5% of Putnam County residents, and 14% of community leaders are unsure.

Issues: The Economy

Residents and community leaders in Putnam County rank keeping businesses in the area as a major priority for the county. In addition, residents in the county are concerned about taxes.

- Keeping businesses in the area is the number one issue for residents and the number two issue for community leaders in Putnam County.
- Hudson Valley residents are generally more likely to rate reducing taxes higher than community leaders in the region. However, only among Putnam County residents does this issue rank among the top five priorities. Residents in Putnam County place the issue of reducing taxes third on their list of priorities for their community.

Issues: Open Space

Protecting open space is a major priority for both residents and community leaders of Putnam County.

- In Putnam County, protecting open space ranks fourth among priorities for their community for both residents and community leaders.
- Although Putnam County residents and community leaders feel protecting open space is a major issue, slowing growth and development ranks near the bottom of their list of priorities.
- Residents in Putnam County divide over the amount of growth in their community. 42% of Putnam County residents feel growth has been about right, and 43% of residents in the county believe there has been too much growth and development.
- 55% of community leaders in Putnam County believe growth in the area has been about right although 36% of community leaders in Putnam County believe there has been too much.

Issues: Services for Senior Citizens

Providing services for senior citizens is an important priority in Putnam County.

- Providing services for seniors ranks fifth among the priorities for Putnam County residents.
- 54% of Putnam County residents rate the services available for senior citizens in their community positively. 32% of county residents rate these services as fair or poor, and 14% are unsure how to rate them. This compares with 49% of Hudson Valley residents who feel positively about the services available for senior citizens, and 36% of residents in the region who rate them as fair or poor.
- 54% of community leaders in Putnam County feel positively about the services for senior citizens available in the county, and 37% rate these services as fair or poor. 9% are unsure.
- A majority of both Putnam County residents (50%) and community leaders in the county (54%) think spending on services for senior citizens is about right. 32% of Putnam County residents and community leaders in the county think too little money is spent on providing services to senior citizens.

Issues: Health Care

Making health care more affordable is an important priority in Putnam County.

- Making health care more affordable ranks fifth among the priorities for Putnam County community leaders.

- As previously noted, among the six counties of the Hudson Valley, residents of Putnam County are most likely to have had continuous health care coverage in the past year. Residents in Putnam County are also least likely to have a member of their household currently without health insurance.
- 62% of Putnam County residents rate the health care services available to them in their community positively. 31% of residents in the county rate the services as fair or poor. This compares with 55% of Hudson Valley residents who feel positively about the health care services available to them, and 39% of residents in the region who rate these services as fair or poor.
- 55% of community leaders in Putnam County rate the health care services as excellent, very good, or good. 41% of community leaders in the county rate the health care services available in their community as fair or poor.
- 54% of Putnam County residents think that the right amount of money is spent on health care services in their community. 32% of residents in the county feel too few resources in their community are allocated to health care services. Only 2% of Putnam County residents believe too much is being spent on these services.
- 45% of community leaders in Putnam County feel that spending on health care services in their community is about right, and 41% of community leaders in the county believe too little money is spent on these services. None of the community leaders in Putnam County felt too many resources are being spent on health care services in the community.

Community Connections

Among the six counties of the Hudson Valley, Putnam County residents are most likely to have access to the Internet.

- 77% of Putnam County residents have access to the Internet. This compares with 70% of Hudson Valley residents and 54% of Americans who are online.¹ 72% of Putnam County residents have access to the Internet at home.
- 51% of Putnam County residents have Internet access at work compared with 46% of residents in the Hudson Valley and 41.7% of Americans.
- 83% of Putnam County households have some type of personal computer at home.
- 82% of community leaders in Putnam County have access to the Internet. 73% of community leaders in the county have access to the Internet at home, and 82% have access at work.

Most Putnam County residents are employed at least part-time. Residents in Putnam County are more likely to be employed at least part-time than residents in the other counties in the region.

¹ "A Nation Online: How Americans Are Expanding Their Use of the Internet," U.S. Department of Commerce and the U.S. Census Bureau. Findings are based on the September 2001 U.S. Census Bureau's Current Population Survey of approximately 57,000 households in all 50 states and the District of Columbia.

- 77% of Putnam County residents are employed either full-time or part-time. 9% are retired, and 14% are not currently employed. This compares with 69% of Hudson Valley residents and 67% of Americans who are employed. 15% of Hudson Valley residents are retired, and 16% are not employed.
- Putnam County has the highest proportion of dual income households in the region. 49% of Putnam County households have more than one adult who works either full-time or part-time. 40% of Putnam County households have two full-time wage earners.
- 84% of Putnam County workers commute to work by car by themselves, 8% car pool, 7% use public transportation, and 1% walk to work.
- The average time spent commuting one way for Putnam County workers is 36 minutes. This compares with the Hudson Valley average of 28 minutes.
- 46% of Putnam County workers travel for more than 30 minutes to get to work. 12% travel an hour or more.

Putnam County residents stay informed by listening to the radio.

- 62% of Putnam County residents listen to news on the radio everyday, and 85% of residents in the county get their news from the radio at least once a week.
- 39% of residents in Putnam County read a local newspaper everyday. 77% of county residents read a local daily newspaper at least once a week.
- 41% of residents in Putnam County watch local television news everyday, and 69% watch local television news at least once in an average week.
- 33% of Putnam County residents have read all of the last four issues of their weekly community newspaper, and 63% have read at least one issue in the past month.
- 25% of Putnam County residents read a national newspaper each day. Putnam County is the only county in the region where the majority of residents (58%) read a national daily newspaper at least once a week.
- 21% of Putnam County residents with access to the Internet go online everyday for news. 21% of the 77% of Putnam County residents who have access to the Internet or an online service means that 16% of residents in the county access the Internet each day for news.
- Most Putnam County community leaders get their news each day from radio (91%), a national newspaper (73%), or a local daily newspaper (54%). 91% of community leaders in the county read each issue of their weekly community newspaper, as well.

Study Design

The study is a joint project of the Dyson Foundation and the Marist College Institute for Public Opinion. It was conducted to better understand residents' perceptions about the present and future direction of the Hudson Valley. The goals were to assess the needs and priorities for the Hudson Valley through the opinions of both its residents and its community leaders, and to identify areas of shared and divergent perspectives. The results can be used as a tool to inform the public and those who help guide the region's future about the interests, concerns, and needs of the area. The results may also be a resource for other organizations and agencies within the region to identify and quantify community need in specific areas. Such documentation provides a value to the region and to those groups and individuals that work to make their community a better place to live and work.

Two surveys were conducted. The first survey interviewed 3,882 residents in the six counties that define the Hudson Valley region. The counties included Columbia, Dutchess, Greene, Orange, Putnam, and Ulster. The survey was designed to collect information about the Hudson Valley as a region and to allow for county level analysis, as well. Representative samples were drawn from each county based on the population distribution within that county. 503 residents in Putnam County were interviewed. In order to analyze the opinions of residents of the Hudson Valley the six county samples were combined and weighted to reflect the population distribution of the entire region. Interviews of Hudson Valley residents were administered by telephone from October 5th through December 10th, 2001. Residents had a choice to complete the survey in English or Spanish.

A second companion survey was conducted with 245 community leaders within the same six counties. This scientifically selected sample of community leaders included influentials and decision-makers who have a role in how community priorities are identified and realized, and how resources, goods, and services are distributed in their community. Included in the sample were government and elected officials, heads of major institutions, prominent members of the media, and business executives. As in the survey of residents, the design takes into account an interest in understanding the opinions of community leaders from throughout the Hudson Valley and from within each county. Interviews of Hudson Valley community leaders were conducted by telephone from November 15th through December 19th, 2001.

| | US Census Population 2000 | Residents | Community Leaders |
|-----------------|---------------------------------|-----------|----------------------|
| | Column % | Column % | Column % |
| Columbia County | 6% | 6% | 6% |
| Dutchess County | 28% | 28% | 28% |
| Greene County | 5% | 5% | 5% |
| Orange County | 34% | 34% | 34% |
| Putnam County | 9% | 9% | 9% |
| Ulster County | 18% | 18% | 18% |

The sampling error for the results of the survey of Hudson Valley residents, 3,882 interviews, is $\pm 2\%$, and for the results of Putnam County residents, 503 interviews, is

$\pm 4.4\%$. The sampling error for the results of the survey of Hudson Valley community leaders, 245 interviews, is $\pm 6.5\%$. When assessing the results for community leaders at the county level, the findings should be considered as a cross-section of those views.

The complete results for the study are available on the Internet at <http://www.dyson.org/manyvoices.html>. It can also be accessed from the Dyson Foundation website (<http://www.dysonfoundation.org>) or the Marist College Institute for Public Opinion website (<http://www.maristpoll.marist.edu>). The full report along with summaries for Columbia, Dutchess, Greene, Orange, Putnam, and Ulster counties are available. Copies on CD-ROM are also available from the Foundation's offices by calling 845.677.0644.