

YEAR-BY-YEAR IMPLEMENTATION ROADMAP

(2027-2031)

This roadmap translates the full Tourism Strategic Plan into a clear implementation schedule, helping stakeholders understand what priorities will be addressed each year and how progress will be measured. The plan remains organized around the four core strategic key initiatives:



1. Build the Brand

2. Build a Community Culture of Hospitality

3. Build Tourism Experiences

4. Grow the Tourism Economy



YEAR 1: BUILD THE FOUNDATION

(2027)

STRATEGIC FOCUS - Launch the new Visit St. Johns River tourism brand, establish organizational systems, and create the tools needed for long-term success.

MAJOR DELIVERABLES

Build the Brand

- Complete brand integration across all tourism communications. (Examples: industry newsletter, consumer newsletter, press releases, letterhead, business cards, signage/banners, collateral/brochures, etc.)
- Launch branded website (www.VisitStJohnsRiver.com) and social media platforms (Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, etc.)
- Develop and distribute a Brand Standards Adoption Toolkit for local businesses, event planners, and influencers to use.
- Begin destination photography and video asset collection.
- Conduct branding workshops for stakeholders and tourism partners.
- Launch advertising campaigns targeting markets using various data points (geo-location, visitor spend, lift, seasonality, etc.) to build marketing strategy

Build a Community Culture of Hospitality

- Establish regular tourism stakeholder meetings for tourism related businesses in various locations throughout the County, and various business sectors like overnight accommodations, restaurants, retailers, outdoor adventure providers, etc.
- Launch stakeholder communications platforms and newsletters (Facebook Group for Putnam County businesses and events, tourism industry newsletter, etc.).

Build Tourism Experiences

- Develop initial outdoor recreation itineraries and trail concepts.
- Begin downtown activation support in Interlachen, Welaka, Crescent City, and Palatka.

Grow the Tourism Economy

- Continue overnight-stay marketing campaigns.
- Focus advertising on close-to-home drive markets (within 3-5 hour drive).
- Develop efforts to convert pass-through visitors into overnight guests.
- Share ongoing tourism research, reporting, and dashboard tracking.

Success Indicators

- New tourism brand visible across all platforms.
- Strong stakeholder engagement.
- Measurable increases in website traffic, media coverage, and visitor inquiries.
- Baseline tourism dashboard established.

YEAR 2: BUILD COMMUNITY BUY-IN

(2028)

STRATEGIC FOCUS – Increase local understanding of tourism’s value while expanding visitor experiences and strengthening tourism development programs.

MAJOR DELIVERABLES – Maintain Year One Deliverables plus:

Build the Brand

- Expand destination content and storytelling assets.

Build a Community Culture of Hospitality

- Launch county-wide Tourism Education Campaign.
- Present tourism impact reports to elected officials, civic groups, schools, and community organizations.
- Strengthen stakeholder communication and maintain transparency.

Build Tourism Experiences

- Develop tourism grant and product-development programs.
- Introduce performance-based event support criteria.
- Expand outdoor recreation packaging and themed itineraries.

Grow the Tourism Economy

- Continue overnight stay and drive-market campaigns.
- Begin exploring niche group travel opportunities:
 - Fishing groups
 - RV clubs
 - Heritage travelers
 - Birding and eco-tour segments

Success Indicators

- Improved community understanding of tourism.
- Increased participation in tourism programs.
- Growth in overnight visitation and visitor spending.



YEAR 3: EXPAND PARTICIPATION AND EXPERIENCES

(2029)

STRATEGIC FOCUS – Broaden industry engagement, strengthen hospitality standards, and increase packageable visitor experiences.

MAJOR DELIVERABLES – Maintain Year One and Two Deliverables plus:

Build the Brand

- Conduct second brand and stakeholder engagement workshop.
- Launch Co-op Marketing Program for tourism partners.
- Continue content creation and media outreach.
- Initiate ongoing PR and media outreach with out of market news stations, travel media/magazines, etc.

Build a Community Culture of Hospitality

- Create annual tourism summit and partner roundtable structure and cadence for engagement.

Build Tourism Experiences

- Add additional themed trails and itineraries.
- Increase downtown activation partnerships.
- Expand tourism business development grant opportunities.

Grow the Tourism Economy

- Further promote packageable experiences.
- Expand niche group travel outreach.
- Continue research and performance monitoring.

Success Indicators

- Higher stakeholder participation.
- Expanded tourism product offerings.
- Increased visitor length of stay.
- More businesses actively promoting the St. Johns River brand.



YEAR 4: STRENGTHEN DESTINATION DEVELOPMENT

(2030)

STRATEGIC FOCUS – Focus on visitor infrastructure, tourism product growth, and investment attraction.

MAJOR DELIVERABLES – Maintain Year One Through Three Deliverables plus:

Build the Brand

- Continue destination storytelling and promotional campaigns.

Build a Community Culture of Hospitality

- Continue hospitality training and stakeholder engagement programs.

Build Tourism Experiences

- Begin emphasis on visitor amenities expansion:
 - Recreation access improvements
 - Paddlecraft facilities
 - Trail enhancements
 - Visitor comfort amenities
- Support infrastructure projects through advocacy and grant coordination.

Grow the Tourism Economy

- Identify opportunities for tourism investment, product development, and product recruitment.
- Promote opportunities for:
 - Boutique lodging
 - Glamping
 - Campgrounds
 - Riverfront dining
 - Outdoor recreation businesses

Success Indicators

- New tourism products or amenities developed.
- Increased tourism-related investment activity.
- Growth in overnight capacity and visitor spending.



YEAR 5: ELEVATE THE DESTINATION

(2031)

STRATEGIC FOCUS – Complete major destination-building initiatives and position Putnam County for sustained long-term tourism growth.

MAJOR DELIVERABLES – Maintain Year One Through Four Deliverables plus:

Build the Brand

- Conduct major brand refresh workshop.
- Offer Co-op Marketing Programs to local businesses (Purchase a two-page spread in a magazine and offer local businesses space in that two-page spread at a discounted rate).
- Launch placemaking initiatives using pole banners and gateway billboard programs.

Build a Community Culture of Hospitality

- Fully mature hospitality training and communications programs and evaluate staffing to continue growing the program to meet industry demands.
- Continue stakeholder summits and tourism leadership initiatives.

Build Tourism Experiences

- Evaluate tourism grant programs.
- Continue visitor amenities improvements.

Grow the Tourism Economy

- Mature niche group travel programs.
- Continue investment recruitment efforts.
- Evaluate five-year tourism performance and prepare next strategic plan cycle.

Success Indicators

- Recognized and consistent destination identity.
- Expanded visitor amenities and experiences.
- Strong stakeholder support.
- Increased visitor spending, overnight stays, and tourism investment.



EXPECTED OUTCOMES BY 2031

Destination Branding

- St. Johns River becomes the primary tourism identity for Putnam County.
- Strong stakeholder adoption of brand standards and messaging.

Community Engagement

- Tourism is widely understood and supported as an economic driver.
- Hospitality culture embedded across the county.

Tourism Product Development

- Multiple packageable trails, itineraries, and visitor experiences operating county-wide.
- Enhanced downtown activation and outdoor recreation offerings.

Economic Impact

- Growth in overnight visitation.
- Increased visitor spending and tax revenue.
- Expanded lodging and tourism business investment.
- Stronger year-round visitor economy anchored by the St. Johns River and authentic Old Florida experiences.



FUTURE PROJECTS

- Launch Hospitality Training Program to train frontline employees, tourism ambassadors, and visitor-facing businesses.
- Expand Tourism Champion recognition efforts.
- Continue destination visual asset development.
- Refresh photography and video libraries.
- Complete county-wide Wayfinding and Signage Plan.
- Launch Local-Visitor Sustainability Program promoting stewardship and conservation.

