

St. Lawrence County Planning Office
STAFF WORK REPORT
MARCH 2026



ADVISORY BOARD SUPPORT

Agricultural and Farmland Protection Board (AFPB). The AFPB did not meet in March. Ag District inclusion period will run from March 1st-March 30th. Staff processing applications for an Ag District Report to present to AFPB. The next scheduled meeting is April 2nd at 6 p.m. in the Conference room on the second floor of the Human Services Center. At the next meeting the AFPB will make its recommendation to the BOL on the request for inclusions to the Ag District. Additionally, the Board will review the 2025 Crop Data Layer, and the continued updates to the County Ag Plan.

County Planning Board (CPB). The CPB met on March 12th in the Conference room on the second floor of the Human Services Center. No full review projects were discussed, but board members in attendance received one hour of training on tiny home regulations.

Environmental Management Council (EMC). The EMC met on March 18th, at 6 p.m. in the One Stop Career Center Classroom A on the first floor of the HSC Building. The DEC closed the mud gates on State Land for snowmobile trails; issued a notice of complete application for DeKalb wastewater SPDES permit modification to extend time frame for installation of disinfection equipment; and issued a notice of intent to reroute 500 feet of Wagon Box trail in Aldrich Pond Wild Forest in Town of Fine. The EPA issued max sanctions for failure to submit an approvable State Implementation Plan (SIP) to address the non-attainment area for SO₂ around ALCOA in Massena. The Council's Executive Board was re-elected to continue. The Council received reports on Deer River pre-adjudicatory issues conference from February 25th, and the St. Lawrence Land Trust State of the Rivers on March 10th. The EMC collaborated with Nature Up North and APIPP PRISM to host an HWA monitoring workshop on March 20th. The next EMC meeting will be April 15th at 6 p.m. in the HSC building.

Fair Housing Task Force. At the beginning of the month, Preston scheduled an Exclusionary Zoning Story Map land use training session for the Village of Potsdam Planning Board for April 16th. Preston also reached out to Department of State Local Government Services staff to arrange a virtual presentation at the next Fair Housing Task Force meeting about State legislation passed in 2025 that enables county governments to enact a short-term rental registration system.

BOARD OF LEGISLATORS

Countywide Broadband Assessment. One committee meeting was held in March. Staff continue to manage ARPA- and NBRC-funded infrastructure projects. All ARPA funds obligated to broadband projects (\$2,955,145) have been expended. 56% of the addresses proposed for service have broadband access; five of 16 funded "lots" are complete. Pole applications and permitting have caused delays; 16 of 33 pole applications are in reconciliation and 6 of 9 DOT permits are under review.

County Snowmobile Grant. The St. Lawrence County Planning Office is the local sponsor for the New York State Office of Parks, Recreation, and Historic Places (OPRHP) Snowmobile Grant. The County was awarded \$353,650.00 in snowmobile trail maintenance for the 2025-2026 grant year. Phase 3

submission is due May 31st for the program year of April 1-thru Mach 31. Staff processing submission from the TMEs. Phase 1 submission for 2026-2027 program year with new trail or reroutes applications is due June 1. Staff attended OPRHP webinar on March 12th regarding the 2026-2027 program year.

Multi-Use Trails Steering Committee. Staff participated in the monthly meeting of this committee and contributed feedback on the Colton public meeting held February 26, 2026.

Review of 115KV Line Replacement. Staff have been reviewing plans for the replacement of an 18-mile stretch of a National Grid transmission line that runs from Colton to Lawrence. Work will begin later this spring.

COMMUNITY / ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Community Development Block Grants (CDBG). The County was awarded \$675,000 to continue with its housing rehabilitation program (CHRP 6). Staff is working on grant startup including contract execution, environmental review, and applicant selection.

GRANTS

SUNY Potsdam Law Enforcement Training Institute. Grants Manager met with the Director of the Institute to discuss funding opportunities for an artificial intelligence-driven virtual reality crisis intervention training system. Based upon this discussion, the Institute is working with Assemblyman Scott Gray to include funding for this project in the NYS budget for FY 26-27.

County Infrastructure Grant Program. NYS Empire State Development authorized the County to submit a full application for the City of Ogdensburg's Morrisette Park Improvement Project. This request for \$500,000 was submitted on March 30, 2026.

NYS Office of Victim Services Victims of Crime Act (VOCA) Victim Assistance Grant Program. The Grants Manager worked with the Office of the District Attorney to prepare and submit this application for \$380,129. This amount reflects a one-year budget, however, two years of funding is anticipated if awarded. Announcements are expected in July.

County Department Outreach. In March, the Grants Manager met with two departments to discuss current and future needs related to obtaining and managing grant awards.

Septic Repair Program. The County was notified that a 5th funding round is forthcoming; all details are not yet available. To date, 116 systems have been repaired/replaced; \$848,790.73 has been expended; and \$751,209.27 in program funds remain available. Staff from Planning and Public Health are working together to manage program delivery and administration.

Grants Notice Distribution. The Grants Notice is distributed to County Department Heads, Legislators, Superintendents of Schools, local municipal officials and approximately 350 additional individuals representing organizations throughout the North Country.

PLANNING MATTERS

GIS. Staff has been meeting with Real Property, Emergency Services, IT, and the contractor GeoCove regarding longer term planning and coordination of GIS.

Town of Colton Comprehensive Plan. The Planning Office signed an MOU with the Town of Colton to serve on the Plan's Oversight Committee. A draft plan was reviewed by Staff and comments submitted to the Committee. The first of two public hearings was held on March 30th.

New York State County Planning Directors Association. Jason has been elected as the president of this state-wide association. The group meets the third Friday of the month remotely and at Planning Conferences throughout the year.

PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION

County Transit System. During the first half of the month, Jason, Matilda and Lisa met with staff from the Treasurer's office to discuss annual bus ad revenue contributions to a reserve account; 2026 rollover calculations; and the 2025 5311 Annual Report. On the 3rd, Matilda participated in a Transit Ready NY Notice of Funding Availability webinar, and began drafting a funding proposal for the remainder of the month. On the 5th, Matilda and Jason met with the County Administrator and Deputy County Administrator about the funding notice, and agreed to schedule a presentation about the existing bus facility's constraints at the April 13th Operations Committee meeting. On the 17th, Matilda participated in a virtual meeting with The Arc's IT Department to review recommended equipment for real-time display monitors to be installed at popular Public Transit bus stops. On the 23rd, Matilda attended a meeting with Passio sales representatives at The Arc's dispatch office. On the 26th, Matilda and Sonja staffed a Public Transit Task Force meeting and discussed: A preliminary Transit Ready NY funding proposal for an operation and maintenance facility; 2025 performance metrics; Route 62 schedule revisions; and the launching of Routes 80 and 81. On the 25th, Matilda was informed a Federal and State reimbursement request for the eight Coach buses delivered in January was processed by the Department of Transportation. On the 27th, Matilda reviewed the 2025 5311 Annual Report in a virtual meeting with staff from The Arc and from Volunteer Transportation Center, Inc. Later that day, Matilda submitted a reimbursement request to the DOT for 2024 Federal operating funds.