

# **St. Lawrence County**

# **Public Policy Guide**

**Originally adopted 1995, Modified 2011**

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# St. Lawrence County Public Policy Guide

1995 (Modified 2011)

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## **Preface to the 2011 Public Policy Guide: Connecting Policy and Daily Life**

It has been twenty eight years since the last Comprehensive Plan for St. Lawrence County was written. The intention of the original St. Lawrence County Policy Guide (1995), while different in format, was to serve a similar purpose to the comprehensive plan. The value of such documents is that they offer a big picture approach for addressing change. Oftentimes, such documents are written, and then forgotten. That is unfortunate, especially when discussions bog down, or direction is needed.

The current version of the St. Lawrence County Policy Guide updates the 1995 document, by eliminating out-of-date material and clarifying the wording. The overall structure and design of the original Policy Guide remains intact, and the Introduction has been included as well.

The other change is the addition of specific cases illustrating various policy statements. For example, in-fill is seen as a desirable development strategy and in the current version of the Policy Guide this discussion is accompanied by an instance where in-fill has been implemented and made a positive contribution to the community. Suddenly, policy is no longer wonkish, remote or disconnected, but an integral and useful part of the world in which we live every day.

In the current budget climate, scarce resources and limited staff time would make it hard to complete a new Comprehensive Plan. Fortunately, we have an updated St. Lawrence County Policy Guide that can fulfill a similar role for County Government.

# INTRODUCTION

Increasingly, incidents convince us that the "outside world" has discovered St. Lawrence County: the Amish become part of the fabric of North Country life; the Strategic Air Command proposes to train at 500 feet over a sweeping "race track" across the county; commercial landfill operators propose converting farmland to a waste disposal site and materials from as far away as Boston are dumped illegally in Brasher; Corning builds the world's largest telescope mirror blank and windows for the space shuttle; the US Fish and Wildlife Service proposes creating a 49,000 acre wildlife refuge; our first indoor shopping mall greatly increases sales tax revenue and WALMART builds two megastores; we grow an international champion pumpkin; "recreational" drugs appear; fiber-optic cable connects us; and, the Internet catches our fancy. On the local front fiscal pressures on government result from taxpayer responses to national trends, pressure for home and business development affects the rural road frontage and highway function; large tracts of rural land become idle; beaver nuisance reports increase; the Black Lake and St. Lawrence shores become suburbs of Rochester.

Change happens. It is not the purpose of this Guide to judge change "good" or "bad". Rather, its purpose is to help us, through our elected leadership, to determine the common destiny where that is within our power and ability. The leadership has many occasions to make decisions, minor and major, and some of them must be made again and again. Government needs to anticipate the issues where possible and to study them, seek input from the people, have open discussion, and be fair and consistent in its decisions. Change requires that decisions be made. They should be made well.

The best public decisions will be made where there is a shared vision of the future. If the direction is known, travel on the road toward that future is made much easier. It is the search for that shared vision and for the means to achieve it that gave rise to this St. Lawrence County Public Policy Guide.

This Guide reports the key issues facing St. Lawrence County residents. The issues were identified by the people themselves through surveys, forums and workshops. It recommends workable, responsible policies that can be used county-wide and encourages creative cooperation among governments and their agencies, private organizations, and individual citizens to address the issues that are known and to anticipate those that are not.

All users of this Guide will agree with many of the statements found here. Few will endorse them all, nor was this an expectation of those who prepared it. The County Planning Board conceived of this Guide as a true guide, not as a dictator, for improving the process of making decisions. The Guide is more a statement of philosophy than intent.

Adopting this Guide will not require the Board of Legislators to undertake a program, to fund a position, to make a capital expense, or to make any other decision. Public funding decisions, especially, while considering the need for the service or action, still must be made in light of the financial burden of the taxpayers. Also, adoption will not require that the Guide be consulted for all or even for any decisions. Adoption does mean that the government endorses considered decision-making, open discussion, and an active, rather than reactive approach to solving the problems that confront people and that inhibit them from improving the quality of their lives.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The policies recommended in this **St. Lawrence County Public Policy Guide** were prepared by the St. Lawrence County Planning Board over a period of three years. The **Policy Guide** could not have been undertaken, let alone completed, without the encouragement, enthusiastic cooperation and patience of numerous legislators, private citizens, organizations and advisory boards. The County Planning Board and the Board of Legislators are deeply grateful for this support and cooperation.

The first activity that was completed was a survey of local concerns that was undertaken by individual members of the Board of Legislators, the County Environmental Management Council and the County Planning Board. The Board of Legislators and the Planning Board greatly appreciates the time and care each volunteer took to gather input from several citizens from his/her home area.

The County Planning Board conducted six community forums in the winter of 1992-93, and is indebted to the over 350 people who contributed talent and time as participants, facilitators and recorders and for their ideas, concerns and suggested policies. Thanks go also to the administrators, maintenance staffs, and classroom teachers of Clifton-Fine Central School, Gouverneur High School, Massena High School, Ogdensburg Free Academy and Potsdam Middle School for providing excellent facilities for each of the public forums.

Each forum required a great deal of planning and background work. This was possible only with the full cooperation of people from each locality. Cooperators and sponsors for the Star Lake forum were the Cranberry Lake Chamber of Commerce, Clifton-Fine and Edwards-Knox Lions Clubs, SUNY-ESF Ranger School, Friends United for New Development, Star Lake Ladies' Auxiliary, and Cranberry Lake and Newton Falls Fire Departments. For the Gouverneur forum, local assistance was by the Business Women's Club, Chamber of Commerce, Clericus, Farm Bureau, Kiwanis, Rotary, and Village Board of Trustees. The Massena forum was put on with assistance from the Central Trades and Labor Council (AFL-CIO), Massena Business and Professional Women's Club, Chamber of Commerce, Lions Club, Kiwanis, and Remedial Action Committee, and the Women's College Club. Organizations behind the Ogdensburg forum were the Hammond-Morristown Chamber of Commerce, the Ogdensburg Chamber of Commerce and Knights of Columbus, the Ogdensburg Lions, Rotary and Zonta Clubs, and the Oswegatchie Taxpayers Association. Local assistance for the Potsdam forum was by the American Association of University Women, Canton Chamber of Commerce, Norfolk Lions Club, Potsdam Chamber of Commerce, Food Coop, Humane Society, Rotary and Village Board of Trustees, Raquette Valley Habitat for Humanity, St. Lawrence County League of Women Voters, and Seedcorn. The Tri-Town forum in Brasher Falls was assisted by the Knights of Columbus, St. Lawrence Central School Board and Tri-Town Chamber of Commerce.

The Planning Board conducted six youth forums programs in partnership with Cornell Cooperative Extension and the County Youth Bureau, and especially thanks Tim Davis and Tim Irvine of the respective agencies. The students and staff members of Canton, Clifton-Fine, Gouverneur, Heuvelton, Ogdensburg and St. Lawrence Central Schools deserve a great deal of credit for the success of this project, which took on a life of its own. The results of the youth forum effort are incorporated in many of the nine topical sections of this **Guide**.

The County Planning Board held ten topical workshops that undertook to translate the rough notes from the six forums and the youth program into statements of policy. This was a critical step in the formulation of this **Guide**, with large numbers of participating organizations and individuals. The Board of Legislators and the County Planning Board greatly appreciates the generosity in providing workshop facilities of Community Bank, NA (Housing), Cornell Cooperative Extension (Agriculture, Government Effectiveness, Youth), Potsdam College (Economic Development, Health), the St. Lawrence County Community Development Program (Community Character, Human Services, Infrastructure and Transportation), St. Lawrence University (Environment and Natural Resources).

A special mention is reserved for last. The **Policy Guide** project enabled three wonderfully able young North Country professionals to cut their teeth in public service at the County Planning Office. Canton's Karen Rasmussen's energy and organizational skills ensured the success of the citizen panels, public forums, youth program, and technical workshops over a six month period. Ogdensburg's Kathryn Rhinebold, candidate for a master's degree in social policy at Carleton University, found that the Planning Board's project was perfect for a 900 hour internship that immersed her in public policy formulation. Matt Johnson, from Pulaski, spent a very productive year in a temporary position with the Planning Office in which his new planning degree and creativity were put to the test in several assignments. Among other projects, Matt helped to shape the policy statements and even the basic approach to the final draft of this document to a considerable degree.

# AGRICULTURE

Ask what land use best describes St. Lawrence County's history and its life and landscape today, and odds are that the answer will be agriculture. For nearly 200 years the "cultural landscape" of the area that lies outside the Adirondacks has been dominated to a greater or lesser degree by farmsteads and fields. Indeed, the Adirondack foothills themselves once were farmed, and hunters today clamber over stone walls deep in the forest, walls once separating cattle from crops. Agriculture's historic and contemporary prominence in the landscape has shaped our sense of place, our connection to the land.

Farming today is confronted by many sources of stress, and some of them are beyond the region's influence. The gradual, relative urbanization and suburbanization of a large percentage of our population has made agriculture less immediate to many people. Perhaps as a result, complaints about farming practices are more common every year. As people become further removed from agriculture, children have become less informed and aware about agriculture. The local dairy industry has lost a measure of independence within a national farm product economy: dairy farming here has been affected by federal policy. As pressures from the economy force an increase in the size of local dairy herds, fewer people will be able to assemble the required capital to expand or to acquire a farm. The number of farms is likely to continue to decrease and management styles and modes of operation will change. To have a future, agriculture must acknowledge and confront these several challenges.

Public policy has taken on a considerable importance to the future of agriculture. Local government land use policy can reduce conflicts over odors and water quality, which happen most frequently when farms are encroached upon too closely by residential land owners. Clearly articulated public policy on land acquisition can be of great benefit in responding quickly and consistently to land acquisition proposals by state and federal agencies. Public agencies, working in cooperation with individual landowners and associations, have the potential to reduce water quality problems.

Farming in America has had a long tradition of independence. The farmer's historical struggle was with the forces of nature and the marketplace, and government policy had a minor role. Government policy now is a major player in agriculture, at the federal, state and even local levels. The effect on agriculture must be considered by policy makers when projects are proposed.



# AGRICULTURE

## AGRICULTURE: INFORMATION, EDUCATION AND TRAINING

**AG-1 County and local government will continue to encourage and support programs which increase general public knowledge about agriculture.**

*Cornell Cooperative Extension as an education organization, in combination with private agricultural associations and councils, shall continue its education efforts that are designed to increase community awareness of the importance of agriculture in the region.*

*"Agriculture in the Classroom" and similar educational programs play a critical role in reducing potential conflicts between agriculture and other interests. Such programs increase awareness of the role of agriculture, and encourage young people to consider a career in agriculture or agribusiness.*

*St. Lawrence County should continue to support efforts by Cornell Cooperative Extension, BOCES, County job training efforts, etc., to develop and maintain a trained labor supply for local agriculture and agribusiness.*

*The role of computer technology in modern agriculture, including the use of GIS software utilizing digital data on soils, wetlands, flood zones, etc. continues to develop.*

*A class on horses  
at Cooperative Extension*



*Photo Courtesy of Cornell  
Cooperative Extension of St.  
Lawrence County*

## AGRICULTURE AND THE MARKET

**AG-2 St. Lawrence County supports agriculture as an important economic asset. The County continues to view agriculture as a vehicle for future economic growth. The continued use of public and private resources to achieve agricultural goals regarding market development and diversification is supported.**

*Cornell Cooperative Extension and agricultural development efforts should support and reflect new initiatives in diversification as an important source of revenue.*

*St. Lawrence County supports coordinated county-wide marketing of agricultural lands and products.*

Agriculture and the businesses which provide services to agricultural enterprises is one of the keystones of the county's economy. In 2007, the market value of agricultural products sold by county farms was \$140 million.

*St. Lawrence County should cooperate in the development of a regional and/or multi-county agricultural marketing strategy that makes the connection between producers and consumers complete, including greater utilization of the opportunities afforded them. The County should also provide technical assistance to facilitate cooperative marketing efforts.*

*Within the limits of available fiscal resources, rural infrastructure should be maintained with the needs of the agricultural community in mind. Rural bridges should be maintained to handle sufficient weight loads for normal agriculture uses.*

*The County Industrial Development Agency should support the development of, or reduce impediments to, viable efforts to provide in-county, value-added processing and marketing of local produce, livestock and other farm products.*

The County participates in a multi-county *Come Farm With Us* marketing program that is used to attract prospective farmers who are interested in relocating to the North Country.

**GLOSSARY: Value-Added**

"Value-added" refers to the incremental increase in the value or worth of a product or service through the multiple stages of processing and distribution. At each stage in processing, from raw materials to final sale, value is added to the product. It is to a community's advantage to encourage value-added processing of its raw materials to increase the local economic activity. The export of finished furniture, for example, creates more economic activity than does the export of logs.

There are numerous secondary benefits of in-county processing, including increased employment in agribusiness, heightened local tax benefits, and an increase in the "multiplier effect" - the circulation of money in a local economy before the money is spent out of the local area.

## **AGRICULTURE AND THE ENVIRONMENT**

**AG-3 The County promotes the mutually supportive goals of a productive agricultural sector and the preservation of environmental quality. The County will continue to balance decision making so as to sustain the viability of agriculture and improve environmental quality.**

*The County encourages proper stewardship of agricultural land and water resources in conjunction with the appropriate technology and best management practices.*

*Solid waste officials, in cooperation with other agencies, should make efforts to assist with and facilitate the safe handling and off-site disposal of surplus, hazardous agri-chemicals, and other agri-wastes such as used plastics.*

"Best management practices" result in reduced nutrient loss through run-off and reduced erosion rates and so are doubly beneficial. They have direct economic benefits to farmers and reduce environmental impacts.

*The County opposes changes in the NYS Wetlands Act that would adversely impact agricultural and other rural resource land uses.*

*Towns are encouraged to form Watershed Management Associations and provide for technical assistance to the associations for work on water quality, flood control and drainage issues.*

*To address the threat of non-agricultural development on the best farming land and help reduce the holding costs of farmland, the County should increase public awareness of, and promote participation in the Federal Wetlands Reserve Program.*

The Federal Wetlands Program (WRP) provides eligible landowners the opportunity to restore, protect and enhance wetlands in exchange for retiring marginal lands from agriculture. It is a voluntary program that provides technical and financial assistance to enroll lands in the program through permanent easements, 30-year easements, or restoration cost-share easements.

*St. Lawrence County supports the efforts of the County Water Quality Advisory Committee (WQAC), with input from the Environmental Management Council, to develop and recommend a Water Quality Management Strategy that addresses non-point source water pollution issues. The committee, through the Strategy, will coordinate agency activities and use education and extension efforts to promote a reduction in non-point source pollution. Agricultural interests must be represented on the WQAC.*

*The St. Lawrence County Open Burning Awareness Campaign seeks to inform people about the hazards of burning household waste and agricultural plastics in “backyard” settings. The County should continue its support of this campaign, and support State action to prohibit open burning of trash and agricultural plastics while providing for the burning of leaves, grass, brush, trees from land clearing, crop residues and other natural, combustible materials.*

*The County supports road maintenance and construction efforts designed to facilitate better drainage and to prevent flooding.*

*The County encourages cooperative drainage projects. Agencies with County funding, such as Soil & Water Conservation, and Cooperative Extension etc., will provide information and technical assistance to landowners wishing to participate in cooperative drainage projects.*

The importance of adequate education related to the safe handling, use, storage and disposal of agri-chemicals cannot be stressed enough. Improper management of such materials poses threats both to human health and environmental quality.

In addition to its economic and societal importance, farmland is an important aesthetic resource and has wildlife habitat value. Cultivated fields, grass pasture, woodlands, rock ridges, ponds, rivers, and wetlands are important elements in the county’s rural, open appearance.



Logo Courtesy of the St. Lawrence County Environmental Management Council

## **PRESERVATION OF AGRICULTURAL LANDS AND PRACTICES**

**AG-4** The preservation of prime, active agricultural land should be encouraged for its environmental attributes, along with the importance of prime farmland with respect to the continued viability of the rural economy and of rural lifestyles.

*The County supports the New York State Agricultural Districts law and continues to encourage participation by farmers in the local Agricultural District program.*

*The County supports the Agriculture and Farmland Protection Board's efforts to implement the County's Agricultural Development Plan.*

The County's 2001 Agricultural Development Plan provides an in-depth analysis of the contributions the county's farming industry has had on its economy. This analysis includes a review of the county's farming history; and an analysis of soil classifications, watersheds, assessed agricultural lands, and agricultural land constraints. The plan also reviews trends in agricultural sales and farm production; municipal policies that affect farming; and challenges to the county's agricultural industry. The final chapter in the plan reviews six goals and 14 initiatives to advance and improve farming in the county. The entire document is available online at: [www.co.st-lawrence.ny.us/slcpo](http://www.co.st-lawrence.ny.us/slcpo)

*The County encourages the Agricultural and Farmland Protection Board to go beyond its statutory protection activities to identify ways to improve the economic viability of North Country agriculture.*

*Efforts to strengthen the agricultural economy have the additional benefit of preserving the rural landscape and the environmental values inherent in such a landscape.*

*Real property tax incentives should be developed to encourage farms to actively keep workable lands from reverting to brush.*

*Municipalities implementing local land use laws should include provisions to encourage agricultural land uses and discourage land use practices and settlement patterns in rural areas which would hinder the long-term health of agriculture.*

*A Cornfield in the County*



*Photo Courtesy of Cornell Cooperative Extension of St. Lawrence County*

**St. Lawrence County  
2007 Agricultural Districts 1 and 2**



Cluster development (especially for residential subdivisions) has several advantages, including:

- the preservation of larger units of the working landscape (farm and forest lands);
- the consolidation of services, such as septic systems, utilities lines, access roads, etc.

## COMMUNITY CHARACTER

Community character is the distinguishing physical and social quality of a region, town, city, village, or hamlet. This character is shaped by natural, cultural, societal, and economic forces over many years. The early settlers of St. Lawrence County, many from cosmopolitan environments, brought with them traditions of town planning, building and resource utilization as well as economic systems, social establishments and recreational activities. These traditions changed as new immigrant groups arrived in various parts of the county, and were also influenced by the region's unique natural landscape, available resources and climatic conditions. The result of this amalgamation was the creation of the distinct cultural landscapes of St. Lawrence County that have instilled in their residents a "sense of place."

Most residents of St. Lawrence County would agree that while the region has diverse natural landscapes, ranging from the rocky cliffs of the Thousand Islands to the undulating terrain of the St. Lawrence Valley to the mountains and lakes of the Adirondack region, its cultural landscapes can all be characterized as rural -- vast working landscapes of agriculture or forestry interspersed with small villages and hamlets bisected by scenic rivers and streams. Many of these community centers have traditional public greens and striking historic architecture. These are the cultural landscapes that are considered idyllic in American lore.

Most County residents would also agree that rural areas are not without their problems at the beginning of the 21st century. As populations decline and economic opportunity is perceived to dwindle, development is often seen as the answer to all prayers. While development can be very beneficial, it can also, if not carefully planned, destroy aesthetic quality, community character and sense of place. Unplanned development at the fringes of cities and villages can destroy valuable farmland and blur the distinction between community center and countryside. Commercial roadsides can become strips of franchise architecture, distracting signage and parking lots. Historic downtown areas can become blighted and lose their appeal as places for social activity and community life. Pristine scenic and recreational areas can become overdeveloped and inaccessible to the general public.

St. Lawrence County's communities need to take action now to protect and enhance the special physical resources that help to create community character and reinforce a sense of place. Important objectives include: the maintenance of compact cities, villages and hamlets with well-defined boundaries that are vital, thriving centers for community interaction; the conservation of working landscapes and areas of special scenic value, such as rivers, lakes and hillsides; the protection of historic architectural resources; and the enhancement of community and regional recreation opportunities. Many of these objectives can be achieved through the planning and administrative functions of the County and local governments.

It should also be mentioned that communities can also take actions to preserve the less tangible, social qualities that enhance their character. Churches, schools and civic and volunteer organizations can provide social settings in which people can serve, recreate and interrelate. Businesses and chambers of commerce can also promote community vitality and spirit by supporting festivals, street fairs and other forums for socialization. While these actions are generally beyond the scope of government policy, County and local officials are encouraged to send the message that community building is valued.

Finally, individual citizens have the power to protect and enhance the character of their communities. By learning about the natural, cultural, societal and economic landscape they live in, citizens can gain a greater appreciation of the uniqueness of their "place." Individual citizens are encouraged to strengthen their "belonging to place" by involving themselves in the institutions and interactions of community life.

*NOTE: In the following policies, the term COMMUNITY CENTERS refers to "settlements or population centers consisting of residential and commercial land uses (including cities, hamlets and villages). MUNICIPALITIES refers to "local government entities" (including towns, cities, and villages - but excluding the County).*

# COMMUNITY CHARACTER

## COMMUNITY DESIGN

### **GLOSSARY: *Community Design***

The physical, aesthetic, and spatial character of a community center which is the product of building and landscape design and planning.

### **CC-1 The maintenance of compact, consolidated community centers is encouraged.**

*Land use regulations and tax abatements can be used by municipalities to create distinct edges and boundaries.*

*Infill development and adaptive reuse should be promoted by municipalities to encourage the reuse of land and buildings.*

### **GLOSSARY: *Infill Development***

The development of vacant and/or abandoned spaces in community centers with new structures or parks (as opposed to the development of new sites on fringe areas)

*Inter-municipal planning boards (village/town, town/town) are encouraged as they help neighboring municipalities to determine where growth should occur near their common boundaries.*

### **GLOSSARY: *Sprawl Development***

Unplanned, low-density development occurring near the fringes of a community center.

*The negative impacts of commercial roadside development can be tempered by municipalities through the requirements of maximum setbacks for structures and parking lot location at the side*

**BENEFITS OF COMPACT COMMUNITY CENTER DEVELOPMENT** – reduced infrastructure costs (roads, water, sewer); preservation of natural resources and working landscapes; a more pedestrian oriented environment; and a greater sense of community.

Tools that can help maintain compact development include maximum lot size requirements, minimum density requirements, surcharges on border service districts, and capital improvements planning.

*The old Canton Fire Hall has been adaptively reused as office space.*



*Photo Courtesy of the St. Lawrence County Planning Office*

or rear of structures.

*Large scale commercial development should also be developed in a compact manner and built in areas that have existing municipal infrastructure.*

**CC-2 Municipalities are encouraged to maintain and enhance their central business districts.**

**GLOSSARY: Central Business District**

The core area of a community center where government, office and retail activity has traditionally occurred.

*Development that is compatible with the central business district's existing architectural character should be promoted by municipalities.*

*The design integrity of community centers should be maintained by municipalities by supporting the conservation and enhancement of commercial buildings and structures.*

*The renovation of existing sound structures can be encouraged by municipalities through the use of tax incentives and the provision of technical assistance with grant applications (NY Main Street and Restore NY Applications).*

Please refer to "Downtown Revitalization" in the Economic Development Section for additional information.

**CC-3 The preservation and enhancement of quality public spaces is encouraged.**

*Improved and accessible community waterfront access points should be promoted by municipalities and community centers.*

*People spaces, such as village greens and small parks, should be maintained and programmed by municipalities and community centers.*

*Public spaces located at higher education institutions and museums should be promoted.*

The design of new buildings should be sensitive to the formal characteristics of neighboring buildings, including massing, height, roof shapes, window proportions, and building materials.

**COMMUNITIES CAN ADD TO THE ATTRACTIVENESS AND FUNCTIONALITY OF THEIR STREET-SCAPES BY:** promoting attractive signage; providing street trees, sidewalk maintenance and street furniture; providing adequate, landscaped parking (preferably at the side or rear of structures); and promoting pedestrian safety through the enforcement of existing laws

Canton's Heritage Park



Photo Courtesy of Grasse River Heritage



## **SCENIC RESOURCES**

### **GLOSSARY: *Scenic Resources***

Visually appealing natural and cultural landscape elements such as shorelines, pastoral meadows, forested slopes and ridge lines, and historic or architecturally significant buildings and structures.

**CC-4 The maintenance of scenic resources, including working landscapes, is promoted.**

### **GLOSSARY: *Working Landscapes***

Working landscapes include actively maintained agricultural and/or forest lands in contrast to "non-working" landscapes such as idle land. Typically, working landscapes are those that require relatively large, contiguous acreages devoted to particular uses. Land use patterns, such as roadside strip residential development, that encroach upon such large, contiguous acreages gradually reduce their commercial viability and create the conditions for land use incompatibilities.

*Lampson Falls, Clare*



*Photo Courtesy of John Tenbusch*

*Cow Pasture*



*Photo Courtesy of the St. Lawrence County Soil and Water Conservation District*

*Inventories of locally important scenic resources should be included by municipalities in land use plans.*

*Considerations of impacts of proposed development on scenic resources should be incorporated by the County and municipalities into planning decisions and development project reviews.*

*The County's working landscapes of agricultural and forestry can be maintained by municipalities through the "channeling" of new development into existing community centers.*

*Scenic sites, areas and highways can be designated by state agencies with the assistance of municipalities and the County.*

*The natural, open space appearance of undeveloped river corridors could be maintained by municipalities by utilizing setbacks.*

**METHODS OF ASSESSING VISUAL QUALITY:** assessment by landscape architect, community survey, Bureau of Land Management criteria, Forest Service criteria

*Access to scenic areas for tourist activity should be identified and improved by the County and/or municipalities.*

**CC-5 The maintenance and enhancement of aesthetic quality along scenic routes is promoted.**

*Roadside tree planting programs can be undertaken by the County and municipalities.*

*Roadside signage controls can be developed and adopted by municipalities.*

*Property owners, farm owners, and businesses who maintain the appearance of properties along scenic routes should continue to be recognized by the County and/or municipalities.*

*The State needs to be sympathetic to local scenic concerns in maintaining the appearance of its property.*

*County support and the promotion of highway clean up is important to the maintenance of scenic routes.*

*The adoption and enforcement of local junkyard and junk storage regulations by municipalities is encouraged.*

*Stone Valley Trail, Colton*



*Photo Courtesy of Betsy Tisdale, 2004 EMC Earth Day Photo Contest*

The **DAIRY OF DISTINCTION PROGRAM** recognizes dairy farm owners who maintain attractive, well kept farmsteads in an effort to promote a positive dairy industry image.

The Town of Stockholm has implemented a very successful junk car removal program. To date, hundreds of cars have been removed from the community.

**HISTORIC RESOURCES**

**GLOSSARY: *Historic Resources***

Properties significant in American history, architecture, archeology and culture; or objects of state and local importance which possess integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling or association.

**CC-6 The preservation of historic resources of importance in defining the character of communities is promoted.**

*Local historic assets such as neighborhoods/districts, parks, sites, buildings, structures and*

*The Historic Edwards Opera House*



*Photo Courtesy of Brigitte Clark, 2004 EMC Earth Day Photo Contest*

*objects should be inventoried by municipalities.*

*National Park Service criteria for the National Register of Historic places can be used by municipalities to determine the significance of historic resources.*

**GLOSSARY: *National Register of Historic Places***

Provides eligible properties with recognition and a level of protection from the potential adverse effects of projects undertaken by the federal government.

*Local preservation processes can be developed by municipalities with assistance from historic preservation organizations at the local, state, and national level. Assistance is available from the N.Y.S. Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation, the National Trust for Historic Preservation, the National Park Service and the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation.*

*Tools for promoting the protection of historic resources should be selected by municipalities to suit local conditions. Tools include:*

- *seeking State and National Register of Historic Places status*
- *developing historic district overlay zoning*
- *establishing local architectural/historic review procedures*
- *promoting adaptive reuse of buildings*

*Considerations of impacts of proposed development on historic resources should be incorporated by the County and municipalities into planning decisions and development project reviews.*

*Historic resources shall be preserved by the County and municipalities when constructing roads and other public projects.*

**CC-7 The development of educational programs to increase awareness of historic resources is promoted.**

*Interpretive programs at historical sites can be developed by the County historian and municipal historians with assistance from organizations and schools.*

**EVALUATION CRITERIA FOR THE NATIONAL REGISTER**

The quality of significance in American history, architecture, archeology, and culture is present in districts, sites, buildings, structures, and objects that possess integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association, and:

**A.** that are associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history; or

**B.** that are associated with the lives of persons significant in our past, or

**C.** that embody the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction, or that represent the work of a master, or that possess high artistic values, or that represent a significant and distinguishable entity whose components may lack individual distinction; or

**D.** that have yielded, or may be likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

*Walking and driving tours of historic resources can be sponsored by municipalities with assistance from historical organizations and homeowners.*

## **RECREATION**

### **CC-8 The development and maintenance of recreational lands, facilities and programs is encouraged.**

*Parks and recreation plans that address all types of recreation should be prepared by the County and municipalities with the bulk of facility development accomplished locally.*

*Public recreational facilities and programs need to be accessible to persons of all ages, income groups, races, cultural backgrounds, and disabilities.*

*Recreational programs should be coordinated by the County and municipalities and private groups - such as schools, churches and civic organizations.*

*Tax-delinquent property rolls shall continue to be reviewed by the County so that properties having public recreational potential can be identified, such as lots with potential for local playground use.*

*Cooperative recreational planning between the County, municipalities and private businesses and organizations is encouraged.*

*Recreational bikeways, access areas, recreational trails and scenic automotive routes should be indicated by the County on highway maps.*

*The Map for All Seasons should continue to be updated by the County Planning Office*

The N.Y.S. Public Service Commission now requires utility companies to set aside recreation development funds for use by local governments on a matching basis when power lines [or pipelines] are established or renovated.



A larger copy of the map is available at:  
[www.co.st-lawrence.ny.us/Planning/SVM-May2006.pdf](http://www.co.st-lawrence.ny.us/Planning/SVM-May2006.pdf)

The Stone Valley Cooperative Recreational Area, in the towns of Colton and Parishville, was created through the combined efforts of the Adirondack Mountain Club (Laurentian Chapter), Niagara Mohawk, the Town of Colton, St. Lawrence County and NYS DEC.

# ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

The general state of the economy and the need for jobs in particular were the issues people raised most in the surveys and public forums that form the basis for this Guide. It should be no surprise that economic development has emerged as a priority goal of many local governments. Officials believe that unless communities "do something," they face the loss of jobs, firms, and tax revenue to other, more aggressive regions. St. Lawrence County's chronic high unemployment levels, high poverty rate and low incomes give the need to create additional economic opportunity a particular urgency. More than ever, the business of government includes the "business" of economic development.

A distinction should be made between "growth" and "economic development." Growth implies quantity - more firms or jobs entering an economy, without regard to the cost to the community in tradeoffs or to the quality of the jobs created. However, not all growth is equal, and not all growth is good. Economic development efforts by government agencies adds a conscious, planned, qualitative aspect to growth, looking at the types of jobs created (high wage versus low wage) and the integration and diversity of the economic base. Development planning attempts to achieve more employment and consumption options for people within a diverse, geographically balanced economy. A special value of economic development planning on the local government level is in ensuring that the cost of the necessary supporting infrastructure is covered by the benefit resulting from the new growth.

Economic development occurs when there is an increase in exportation of goods and services to other places and when more transfer money is imported. Dairy products, aluminum ingots, forest products and manufactured goods sent from St. Lawrence County to other markets return money to the county's economy. Payments for services, such as college tuition and salaries for state employees, and transfer payments such as pensions for newly resident retirees also contribute importantly to the county economy.

Three general factors, *comparative advantage*, *value added*, and *control of ownership*, determine the level of impact exports have on a region.

In classical economics, a region will export the goods and services for which it enjoys *a comparative advantage*. Climate, soils and low land costs favor St. Lawrence County in dairy production, but not in the growing of wheat or cotton, for example. Proximity to large Canadian markets provides a comparative advantage for certain retail and manufacturing businesses. The county also enjoys a comparative advantage of a special sort: it is a good place to live. The low crime rate and our pleasant, human scale communities are examples of comparative advantages that draw retirees, although the numbers are not large. When planning for economic development it is important to ask the questions, "What can we do more efficiently or effectively than other places?" and "What is there about St. Lawrence County that will attract people to live here?"

The income from exports of goods and services is enhanced when *value is added*. Compare the income potential of exporting logs and dimensional lumber. A community exporting furniture is even better off. Areas that export chiefly unprocessed products are generally poorer than industrial areas that process raw materials into finished goods or component products. This illustrates why the cheese plants that process local milk and the aluminum plants based on local electrical power are so important to our economic future.

Finally, *ownership of the economy* is important in maximizing the value of exports and in achieving economic development. When ownership of the productive resources, such as the land, forests, and factories, is located within the region, decisions may best be made with the interest of the community in mind, the international economy notwithstanding. Fewer profits will leave the community, local suppliers will benefit as firms purchase inputs locally, and the "economic multiplier" can work to its fullest effect. This is not to say that outside investment should be discouraged, for it is essential to any highly capitalized economic development. The statement merely recognizes that the region's investment capital is somewhat limited.

Economic development has been pursued in a variety of ways. Until recently, state and local governments recruited outside industrial firms with incentives or by advertising the area's low wage expectations. Recruitment became more sophisticated with the advent of direct financial assistance through public sector loans, industrial revenue bonds, tax increment financing, tax abatement and other financial measures, requiring local officials to develop the skills of investment bankers.

In recent years a new model for public sector economic development has taken hold, involving assistance intended to retain existing businesses and help them grow and assistance to local entrepreneurs to help develop new businesses. Business incubator centers, business planning assistance and provision of seed capital are examples of methods used by the public sector.

The county's size may have fostered competition rather than cooperation among communities pursuing economic development. It is the interest of each community to consider the benefits of economic development *county-wide*, just as it is in the interest of the county to consider the benefits of economic development for the *entire region*. The creation and retention of permanent, good paying jobs is essential to St. Lawrence County's economic development efforts. County policies should seek to diversify the overall economy and to support both local and regional development efforts.

# ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

## ECONOMIC AND JOB DEVELOPMENT

**ED-1 St. Lawrence County recognizes the value of a diverse economic base, which includes small businesses, industrial production, agriculture, forest products, mining, services, back office, retail, education, tourism and other sectors.**

*The importance of agriculture to the County's economy is recognized by County and local policy makers. Efforts to promote agricultural activity (described in the "Agriculture" Section) will be supported.*

*St. Lawrence County will continue to have an inclusive approach to economic development. Home occupations, back office operations, cottage industries, natural resource development, retail, commercial developments and other options should be considered as "development," along with the traditional activities.*

*The County will support its Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS). The CEDS allows the County enhanced access to grants from the U.S. Department of Commerce, Economic Development Administration.*

*The County encourages efforts to better integrate the county's five colleges and university campuses into the local economy.*

**ED-2 St. Lawrence County and local governments will continue to support economic development through the maintenance and development of appropriate infrastructure.**

*Assess and improve existing industrial park buildings to ensure they can adequately satisfy present needs. Examine the feasibility of establishing an industrial park in the Adirondack portion of the county that is directed at the wood products industry.*

*Speculative shell buildings are a useful economic development tool.*

*St. Lawrence County encourages the development of well-planned telecommunication links as a means of furthering economic development.*

"Back office" refers to employment provided, usually in the insurance and banking industry, which is remote from the central office.

The goals of the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy are:

- Diversify the economy
- Develop & enhance public infrastructure
- Fully utilize colleges and universities
- Assist current employer base
- Promote outside investment
- Capitalize on renewable energy development
- Develop proficiency in assisting local economic development efforts

Shell buildings provide flexible, ready for occupancy space for firms wishing to locate in a community. Shell buildings have been a successful marketing tool used by the Ogdensburg Bridge and Port Authority, and the St. Lawrence County Industrial Development Authority.

*Economic development, transportation and community infrastructure are related concepts which require joint planning efforts on the part of local governments and the county.*

*Appropriate land use planning is encouraged to prevent the deterioration of highway corridor function which may adversely affect economic development efforts.*

*St. Lawrence County will work to ensure an adequate supply of low cost hydroelectric power for local use. Efforts to direct hydro-power downstate at our expense are to be resisted.*

*The development of low-head hydro-electric, waste wood incineration and other alternative forms of electrical power production within the county, where financially and environmentally feasible, is encouraged.*

**ED-3 Sources of job creation include the expansion of existing firms, along with the recruitment of new firms to the area.**

*St. Lawrence County will maximize the use of local and regional revolving loan funds as a means of encouraging job creation and retention.*

*Continue to support the training and education of entrepreneurs and others wishing to start a business. Existing technical resources for small business development should be utilized, along with developing new programs as needed. This effort will require cooperation between government, the colleges and other organizations.*

*The County encourages the use of business assistance programs such as the Small Business Development Center, and CITEC to assist small firms.*

*Develop and implement a regional marketing campaign that attracts and encourages people to relocate back to the county. Potential population targets include college alums; former middle-management employees who worked in the county; former residents who were born and raised in the area; and individuals who seek inexpensive land in a rural setting. Provide incentives and services to returning individuals who intend to establish and operate small businesses in the area.*

The availability of transportation infrastructure, sewer, water, electrical service, and telecommunication systems are some of the more important inputs necessary for industrial and commercial development siting.

The federal Small Business Administration defines a small business as one with 500 or fewer employees; thus, most retention efforts will involve small businesses.



**ED-4 St. Lawrence County will continue to participate actively in efforts to coordinate local and regional economic development efforts and to act as a source of information on economic development programs and opportunities.**

*The County Industrial Development Agency should be the primary source of information on county-wide marketing and business promotion.*

*Coordination of economic development efforts is desirable.*

*St. Lawrence County Industrial Development Agency should conduct an outreach process with local officials, employers, and area colleges to discuss community planning for job creation.*

*The St. Lawrence County Industrial Development Agency's knowledge of the technical resources and expertise available to help new businesses is a valuable asset.*

*The County Industrial Development Agency will continue to function as an "information broker" or clearinghouse for information needed by businesses, particularly relating to governmental matters.*

**ED-5 The marketing of communities for economic development purposes will be done with a realistic view to their resources and potential place in the regional market.**

*Communities should determine what their local market potential is within the regional and global economies, and seek to understand how this will influence development.*

*Communities should seek to exploit opportunities for which they have a comparative advantage over other areas. A comparative advantage may derive from particular resources, location, or market conditions.*

*Economic development benefits the entire county, and efforts should continue to foster cooperation among communities in promoting appropriate development.*

*Communities should use the Internet and other modern communication methods to promote local businesses and the community.*

A hierarchical response to economic development is appropriate, with regional bodies such as the Development Authority of the North Country, the Adirondack-North Country Association, and the North Country Alliance serving the region, the County Industrial Development Agency marketing the county and providing necessary financing, and local agencies also marketing their areas and providing financing and other assistance.

## **JOB TRAINING**

**ED-6 Working as an active partner with other organizations to maximize job training efforts in order to maintain and improve a well trained, highly skilled labor force is a goal of St. Lawrence County.**

*The St. Lawrence County Workforce Investment Board, BOCES, and other training/educational organizations should be active partners in job training and education for employment.*

*The County Industrial Development Agency will continue to assist firms with job training and with the upgrading of employee skills.*

*Programs which focus on the transition from school to the work force are to be emphasized.*

*Educational institutions and related organizations must continually assess the needs of employers and the world of work, and provide education and training in anticipation or response to those needs, within the spirit of New York State's "Compact for Learning."*

*St. Lawrence County will continue to use state and federal funds for youth employment efforts, such as the Summer Youth Employment Training Opportunities and the Youth Conservation Corps.*

*Local institutions of higher education are encouraged to develop relationships with area school districts in order to interest young students in continuing their education.*

*Encourage the continued use of programs and services that link employers to workers.*

*Job Training Participants*



*Photo Courtesy of  
St. Lawrence County One-Stop*

Programs to bring professors into high school classrooms, student tours of industry, campus tours, science/math/computer camps and similar efforts work to inspire young students.

## **DOWNTOWN REVITALIZATION**

**ED-7 Policies and activities which promote healthy and vital downtown commercial districts are encouraged.**

*Communities are encouraged to plan for their futures and to develop the kind of downtown the community wants.*

Tax abatements, credits or other incentives in designated downtown areas, are tools used to encourage building improvements.

*Local land use regulations which encourage the use of available downtown spaces for retail and commercial uses are recommended over encouraging new development on the periphery of developed areas.*

*Care should be exercised in the use of tax abatements for economic development so as not to undermine existing business. Recruitment efforts should focus on businesses which will enhance the existing economic base.*

*Partnerships between downtown merchant/business associations, local governments, and educational institutions are important for revitalization efforts and are encouraged.*

*Periodic review of tax assessments is needed to insure that property assessments are realistic for current real property values.*

*The relationship of code enforcement to economic development and downtowns is recognized. Consistent enforcement of building regulations has a role in preventing the deterioration of structures.*

*Local governments and/or development agencies should keep a current inventory of available space as a step toward marketing vacant or under-utilized buildings.*

*Historic preservation efforts can make contributions to the revitalization of downtown areas.*

Land use regulations may be used to encourage the use of storefronts for commercial uses and encourage office and residential uses on upper stories.

A number of factors add to healthy downtowns: A perception that parking is available; attractive, clean storefronts; pedestrian-friendly streets and sidewalks; and an inviting atmosphere. All of these factors work to bring people downtown.

## **TOURISM DEVELOPMENT**

**ED-8 Tourism is an important economic sector for local economies and should be promoted where appropriate.**

*St. Lawrence County should facilitate the production of a tourism development and marketing plan. Contributions to the tourism plan would be sought from organizations such as the Development Authority of the North Country, the county and local chambers of commerce and others.*

*Multi-season tourism development for year around revenue and employment opportunities should be promoted.*

*The St. Lawrence County Chamber of Commerce, working with local chambers, is the appropriate lead organization for tourism promotion and marketing.*

*Tourism promotion representing the attributes of specific areas of the County, such as the Seaway, Adirondacks, the lakes and rivers, etc., is important given the County's geographic diversity.*

*The quiet, relaxing atmosphere of St. Lawrence County is a prime tourism attribute and should be considered in tourism planning, promotion and development.*

*Fishing on the St. Lawrence River*



*Photo Courtesy of Rena Roach, 2008 EMC Earth Day Photo Contest*

## **NATURAL RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT**

**ED-9 Natural resources, including agricultural lands, forests, clean water and open space are significant economic resources.**

*The County forester should be active in promoting the marketing and development of the local forest products industry.*

*The County Forester should work with regional forest resource organizations that promote the local forest products industry.*

*Agricultural coordination promoting the sale of county produced agricultural products, the coordination of marketing, farmer recruitment, and related activities, would enhance the economic vitality of St. Lawrence County.*

**ED-10 St. Lawrence County should encourage the processing of natural resources within the County in order to increase value-added production, such as wood and mineral processing.**

*The St. Lawrence County Industrial Development Agency and other agencies should undertake activities, including recruitment of firms, to further natural resource development efforts.*

**ED-11 St. Lawrence County should encourage small-scale resource use by individuals and businesses in order to develop and diversify the local economy, for example, through buying local firewood, agricultural production such as vegetables, and sources of alternative energy.**

*Log Landing in County Forest Area #18, Brasher*



*Photo Courtesy of the St. Lawrence County Soil and Water Conservation District*

*Martin's Roadside Stand, Stockholm*



*Photo Courtesy of the St. Lawrence County Planning Office*

## ENVIRONMENT AND NATURAL RESOURCES

Most people who reside in or visit St. Lawrence County would, if asked, enthusiastically agree that the county has a high-quality *natural* environment. St. Lawrence County is blessed with a rich and varied natural environment, from the vast boreal forests of the northwestern Adirondacks, to the riparian environments of the St. Lawrence River and its tributaries, to a landscape replete with forests, farmland, wetlands, ponds and streams. The county is richly endowed with soil, water, mineral, wildlife and aesthetic resources. The quality of the air and water is generally good. The lands and waters support abundant wildlife and provide recreational opportunities that are central to much of the economic activity of the county. Hunting, fishing and trapping opportunities abound, as do non-consumptive wildlife activities such as bird watching and photography. The St. Lawrence River and the county's lakes, ponds and tributaries offer an exceptional variety of water-based recreational choices. Whether one wants the tranquility of the wilderness or the excitement of power-boating on the St. Lawrence River on the Fourth-of-July weekend, it can all be found here.

While other communities in the more densely-populated Northeast struggle to preserve their last open, wild places, the popular perception in St. Lawrence County is that such places here are not under significant threat. Almost 18% of the county's area is protected open space, either through fee ownership or by easements held by New York State. Much of the fee-owned land State Forest Preserve land and easement land lies inside the Adirondack Park, but there are also state-owned reforestation areas and wildlife management areas. In addition, very significant amounts of land that is publically accessible and generally excludes development are held by St. Lawrence County, the New York Power Authority and Brookfield Renewable Power. Although there are private initiatives (often assisted through federal programs, but also privately funded) to protect wetlands and unique habitats, such as the Wetland Reserve Program and the easements and acquisitions of land trusts, occasional proposals by federal or state agencies to acquire additional lands and waters tend to be viewed with great concern. Such major acquisitions are seen as a threat to "local control" and the property tax base. Most of the anticipated future land preservation action is expected to occur inside the Adirondack Park, involving large corporate landowners. New York State pays taxes on their holdings within the Park.

The natural environment defines who we are as a community to a significant degree. Our "ruralness" is as easily gauged by our natural environment as it is by population density. As is typical of rural areas, seasons, weather and other natural events are yearly markers in most peoples' lives.

The natural environment both strongly influences the economy of the county, and has been influenced by it. At various times in its history, much of the county has been logged or farmed. Over the last generation, today's landscape shows an increase in forests, brush land, and wetlands that have resulted from discontinued farm operations. Today, agriculture, forest products and mining are still important sectors of the economy. Some economic activities are extractive, in that they remove logs or minerals and export them from the county with little or no processing. Others, such as agriculture and sawmills, are better integrated into the local economy through processing activity. All are highly dependent on soil, water and other natural resources. The links between a quality environment and a successful economy are clear and direct.

The same people who appreciate the *natural* environment, if asked, are likely to be less enthusiastic about the quality of the *man-made* environment. It is true that the county has areas with well-kept residential neighborhoods and areas with compatible commercial and industrial uses, but it is also true that the aging housing stock is often in a very bad state of repair and the yearning for economic opportunity has

produced many examples of expedient, unaesthetic and poorly-planned strip development.

The quality of the man-made environment is a reflection of the economic well-being of the county. The lack of employment opportunities in a community may lead to short-term decision making that compromises long-term environmental values--either by individuals or the community as a whole.

The County recognizes that individual actions contribute to environmental quality through their use of resources. In efficient use of energy, whether to heat a poorly-insulated home, to power appliances or to provide transportation takes its toll on the environment. Trash containing materials that could be recycled, poor quality septic systems, unmanaged runoff from construction sites or agricultural operations, oil spills large and small, unsustainable logging, movement of invasive species and noise and light pollution are all example of actions under individuals' control. The key to making decisions that sustain and protect the environment is knowledge. Therefore, public awareness is important and should be constantly pursued. This is a task that is and will continue to be shared by government, schools, organizations and businesses.

As a county, St. Lawrence should embrace policies and programs which conserve the environment and natural resources. Such policies will have the added benefit of supporting the local economy and communities. Also, environmental and natural resource issues are involved in a number of policy areas, including transportation, agriculture and economic development. The overall environmental management principles of the County should include the following:

Recognize that the quality of our natural environment is a resource in itself which helps to define the character of our communities and sense of rural place. Environmental conservation is thus closely tied to the conservation of community.

St. Lawrence County should encourage local governments and others to promote good land use planning and management, with the goal of promoting a "working landscape" of well-ordered communities, agriculture, managed forest lands and natural areas.

Economic development and environmental conservation need not be incompatible. Development can occur in a manner that is environmentally sound.

The County government's own practices, from road salt usage to the management of the County forests, should demonstrate environmental sensitivity.

# ENVIRONMENT AND NATURAL RESOURCES

## ENVIRONMENT AND DEVELOPMENT

**EN-1 Decision makers should consider a wide range of environmental impacts when considering policies and projects. These impacts should include potential impacts on the human environment.**

*Resource management practices such as forestry, water resources management and agriculture should minimize potential negative impacts on other natural resources and the environment.*

*The procedure for systematically analyzing potential environmental impacts found in the State Environmental Quality Review Act (SEQRA) has proven to be a useful tool. SEQRA should be used when making project and policy decisions.*

**EN-2 Economic development and environmental protection are essential for St. Lawrence County's future. Decision makers will work to find solutions which support both; when this is not possible, a reasonable balance must be found.**

*Long-term development goals set by county and local governments will consider the associated long-term environmental consequences.*

*St. Lawrence County considers the high quality of its environment, including our abundant water, forest, agricultural soils and other resources, as an economic as well as a natural resource, and promotes economic development compatible with environmental quality.*

**EN-3 Project design and siting decisions will maximize environmental compatibility by using the following stepwise process:**

- a. *Identify sensitive environmental areas or conditions and the risks involved with development;*
- b. *Promote development which preserves sensitive areas and avoids risks;*
- c. *Consider all alternatives, but if not possible to avoid development in high risk areas then design the project with the least possible environmental impacts.*

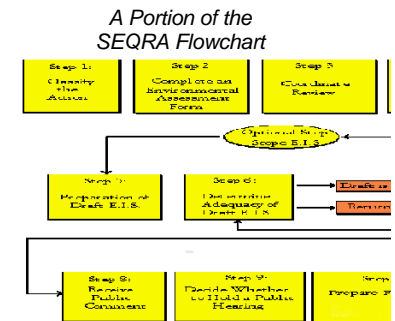


Chart Taken from the Department of Environmental Conservation, [www.dec.ny.gov/permits/32521.html](http://www.dec.ny.gov/permits/32521.html)

Examples of environmentally sensitive areas:

- wetlands and riparian habitats
- steep slopes
- habitats for rare, threatened or endangered species
- wellhead protection areas
- special habitats or geomorphological features (i.e. bogs, eskers, alpine zones)

**EN-4** In permitting situations where a balance between environmental protection and development must be achieved by decision makers (such as planning and zoning board members), decision makers should consider the following factors:

- a. *Whether the development will cause an acceptable change in the character or will be a detriment to neighboring land uses or to the environment in general or over the long term;*
- b. *Whether the benefit sought by the developer can be achieved in a feasible way that preserves environmental quality.*
- c. *Whether the developer should be required to set aside funds to remediate the property once the land use has ceased.*

Maple Ridge Wind Farm,  
Martinsburg



Photo Courtesy of the St. Lawrence  
County Environmental Management  
Council

## **LAND USE POLICIES**

**EN-5** Open spaces and beautiful landscapes in the county are vulnerable to being lost without adequate land use planning and regulations. Comprehensive planning is encouraged for all communities, even those that do not anticipate adoption of land use regulations.

*Environmental considerations should be included as part of the comprehensive planning process, including the identification of those resources that a community considers important to its future.*

*The St. Lawrence County Planning Office, Planning Board, and Environmental Management Council will continue to provide technical assistance to communities undertaking comprehensive planning.*

*Managing the uses and interests of multiple outdoor recreational activities (skiing, hiking, snowmobiling, boating and ATVs) on County land should be balanced.*

**EN-6** Mechanisms for joint municipal planning efforts and for the coordination of land use policies are encouraged.

*Joint municipal planning boards are encouraged, especially involving towns and villages. Town/village planning boards may be better able to plan for development of areas on their joint borders.*

*Intermunicipal cooperation for watershed planning is encouraged. Watersheds usually overlap*

The Town of Clifton and the Town of Fine have developed a Waterfront Revitalization Plan that examines their waterways and natural landscapes, and how they may be preserved and used for appropriate economic growth.

Edwards (V) and Edwards (T), Hammond (V) and Hammond (T), and Richville (V) and Dekalb (T) currently have joint planning boards.

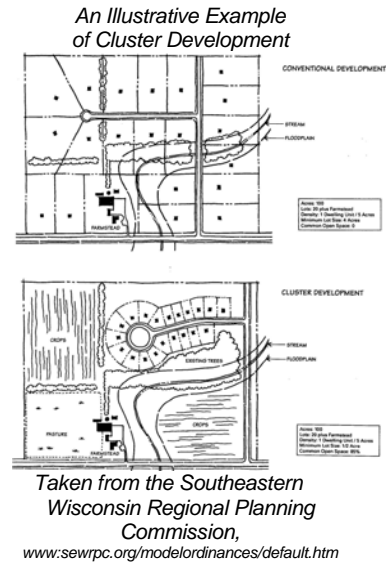


*town lines, and inappropriate practices in one town may have a detrimental impact on downstream residents.*

**EN-7 The County and local government planning boards should encourage land use patterns that maintain the "working landscape."**

**GLOSSARY: Working Landscape**

Working landscapes include actively managed agricultural and/or forest land, in contrast to "non-working" land that is simply lying idle. Typically, working landscapes are those that require relatively large, contiguous acreage devoted to particular uses. Land use patterns, such as roadside strip residential development, that encroach upon such large, contiguous acreage gradually reduce their economic viability and create the conditions for land use incompatibility.



*Land use patterns should be planned so as to favor long-term benefits over long-term costs to the community or to the environment.*

*Local land use laws should allow for cluster development, as enabled in State Law.*

*Large lot zoning (i.e. two acre or more zoning) is discouraged except in situations where physical conditions warrant otherwise.*

*The preservation and rehabilitation of historic resources and properties for adaptive reuse is encouraged over the establishment of new land uses outside the built environment.*

*New development is encouraged within or adjacent to already developed areas.*

*In large residential subdivision developments, "clustering" is the preferred form of development. With clustering, special provisions can be made for setbacks and privacy screening in order to limit visual impacts while providing for adequate sewerage capacity.*

Large-lot zoning is generally consumptive of land and it discourages more progressive patterns for land use such as cluster development.

**EN-8 St. Lawrence County will continue its involvement with regional land use issues.**

*Military Training Routes (MTRs) and Military Operation Areas (MOAs) should be allocated*

*equitably throughout the airspace of this state and the Northeastern portion of the nation so as not to cause a disproportionate impact on any one county.*

*The County should strengthen its role in policy making decisions for the Adirondack Park, and is encouraged to nominate a county resident for Adirondack Park Agency Commissioner as vacancies arise.*

## **WATER RESOURCE POLICIES**

### **EN-9 The preservation and enhancement of water quality is of great importance and is a shared responsibility of the government and private citizens.**

*The County Water Quality Advisory Committee and the Environmental Management Council will continue public information efforts on water quality issues.*

*The County encourages the formation of lake and watershed associations and supports their activities for water quality protection.*

*The County encourages the use of educational programs and technical assistance to achieve proper installation of new water wells.*

### **EN-10 There should be consistent enforcement county-wide of the proper installation of on-site sewage and water supply systems.**

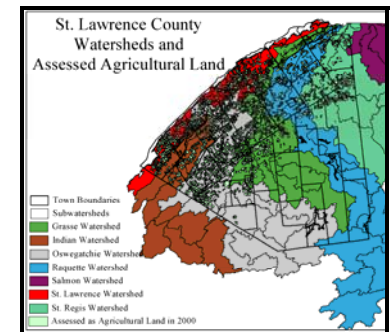
### **EN-11 St. Lawrence County and local governments should encourage practices which reduce or eliminate non-point source pollution.**

*Efforts to alleviate non-point source pollution should concentrate on the most important sources.*

*The County, through Extension and Soil and Water Conservation District efforts, will continue to urge the use of best management practices in agriculture.*

*Lake and watershed associations should provide technical assistance to shoreline landowners in performing voluntary septic system inspections and should advise against timber cutting down to the water's edge to ensure good water quality.*

*The use of alternative on-site sanitation systems in situations where traditional septic tank and leach field methods are ineffective is encouraged.*



*Map Courtesy of the St. Lawrence County Planning Office*



*Photo Courtesy of the St. Lawrence County Soil and Water Conservation District*

*The County Planning Office will continue to provide technical and grant writing assistance to communities seeking to install or upgrade wastewater treatment systems.*

**EN-12 The County Supports the efforts of the St. Lawrence County Water Quality Advisory Committee and will review its recommended Water Quality Strategy prior to adoption.**

*The Water Quality Advisory Committee, through the Strategy, should emphasize non-regulatory efforts such as public information and technical assistance to cause the reduction of non-point source pollution.*

**EN-13 Local environmental concerns will be addressed by participating in the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission relicensing process for hydroelectric projects.**

*Minimal flow release levels from hydro projects to protect fish propagation and habitat are advocated.*

*The County advocates stable water levels to enhance recreational use of impoundments on the St. Lawrence and Raquette Rivers.*

*Environmentally compatible recreational facilities are encouraged through the hydroelectric facility relicensing process.*

**EN-14 Increase public access to water bodies.**

*The EMC, in cooperation with local governments, will work to develop, where needed and environmentally appropriate, additional boat, fishing and swimming access sites in order to alleviate the concentration of water activities that occurs around existing access points.*

*Fishing locations accessible to persons with disabilities are encouraged.*

The St. Lawrence County Water Quality Strategy contains specific goals and objectives concerning public information, ongoing water quality assessment and verification, watershed-specific and county-wide issues, overall program evaluation, securing funding and increasing membership.

*Emeryville Boat Launch, Fowler*



*Photo Courtesy of St. Lawrence County Planning Office*

*Coles Creek State Park, Waddington and Louisville*



*Photo Courtesy of John Tenbusch*

## **ENVIRONMENTAL POLLUTION AND SOLID WASTE POLICIES**

**EN-15 St. Lawrence County should maintain a comprehensive approach to solid waste management which includes both education and enforcement activities.**

*Consumers will be encouraged to avoid excess packaging by purchasing materials in recyclable containers in order to reduce the waste stream.*

*Enforcement of existing county-wide solid waste laws is essential to proper functioning of the solid waste management system.*

*General access to waste management facilities shall be maintained for the convenience of the public.*

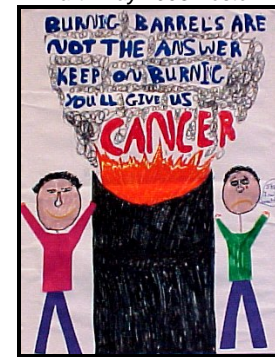
*Periodic collection programs for household hazardous waste are a beneficial component of the overall solid waste management system and should be implemented whenever feasible.*

*A local useable goods exchange program should be encouraged in order to reduce the amount of waste entering the solid waste system.*

*Industries which manufacture products using recycled post-consumer wastes are encouraged.*



*Earth Day 2003 Poster*



*Courtesy of the St. Lawrence County Environmental Management Council*

**EN-16 St. Lawrence County agencies will undertake environmental audits of properties that they intend to acquire in order to avoid potential liability issues in the event of contamination.**

**EN-17 When remediation is found necessary, funding should be secured from both public and private sources for the restoration for reuse of contaminated industrial sites.**

**EN-18 County and town highway departments should use the minimum amount of salt necessary for highway deicing consistent with maintaining safe driving conditions.**

*Highway departments should ensure that salt piles are not causing groundwater contamination.*

*Willow Island Remediation, Canton*



*Photo Courtesy of St. Lawrence County Planning Office*

**EN-19 The County and local governments should maintain up-to-date plans for hazardous materials accidents.**

*The County will continue to offer training to local fire departments in spill responses.*

*The County should be in compliance with the Superfund Amendments Reauthorization Act (SARA Title III) Emergency Preparedness Process by requiring periodic responses from the Local Emergency Planning Committee and by conducting an outreach effort to small businesses to help them comply with SARA.*

**EN-20 The use of energy resources that have the least environmental impact is promoted.**

Please refer to "Energy and Telecommunications Infrastructure"  
in the Transportation and Infrastructure Section.

**EN-21 The County will make responsible use of pesticides.**

## **FOREST RESOURCE POLICIES**

**EN-22 The County forest system has value in terms of fiber production, wildlife, recreation, environmental education, watershed protection and other natural resource values; however, it is not necessary that every forest unit be managed for all of the listed uses.**

*Ecologically sensitive areas in the County forests should not be managed for fiber/timber production.*

*The County forests should be used to demonstrate environmentally sound silvicultural techniques.*

*Written management plans should be prepared and certified for each unit of the County forest system, and the plans should be revised when necessary.*

*The management of County forests should be done with the recognition that income from timber sales will not always cover the cost of forest management.*

*The continued use of capital funds to achieve long-term timber stand improvement is encouraged, including the replanting of trees for future use.*

County Forest Area #4,  
Hopkinton



Photo Courtesy of the St. Lawrence  
County Soil and Water Conservation  
District

Examples of environmentally sound resource management techniques:

- non-logged buffer strip between logging activity and streams
- leaving large "wolf" trees for wildlife habitat
- bridging streams with culverts and fill instead of driving through stream
- adequate re-planting in harvested areas if natural revegetation is insufficient

*Continued support for a forester to assist with the conservation, management and development of privately-owned forest resources is encouraged.*

## **WILDLIFE POLICIES**

**EN-23 The wildlife of the County is an extremely valuable resource whose conservation and management is the shared responsibility of both government and private individuals.**

*Both consumptive and non-consumptive uses of wildlife are important to people's enjoyment and to the economy of the County.*

*The key to conserving wildlife is conserving habitat. Where the County owns habitat, it will be consciously managed in a manner compatible with species' requirements, with particular concern for rare, threatened or endangered species. The County should use its forests to show that wildlife considerations need not mean substantially reduced yields from healthy forest stands.*

*Cooperative efforts between private land owners and wildlife conservation agencies such as extension activities, fish stocking, etc. is encouraged.*

*Environmental education and extension efforts should foster an ethic which appreciates the many values of wildlife.*

*St. Lawrence County encourages the implementation of programs for the management of nuisance wildlife.*

## **ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION POLICIES**

**EN-24 Environmental education is an important factor in natural resource management and should be available to all citizens.**

*Public education is an essential part of any regulatory process intended for environmental or natural resource management.*

*The St. Lawrence County Environmental Management Council should include a focus on environmental education in its annual work program.*

*White Tailed Deer*



*Photo Taken from the Department of Environmental Conservation, [www.dec.ny.gov/animals/56069.html](http://www.dec.ny.gov/animals/56069.html)*

*Snapping Turtle*



*Photo Taken from the Department of Environmental Conservation, [www.dec.ny.gov/animals/55703.html](http://www.dec.ny.gov/animals/55703.html)*

*School boards and administrators should encourage the integration of environmental education components into school curricula.*

*Environmental education should be expanded to include topics such as forest health and pest infestation, wetland identification and wetland values, best management practices in agriculture, energy/water conservation, environmental ethics, identification and protection of ecologically-sensitive lands and other topics. Increasing public awareness to prevent the introduction of invasive species to the county is specifically encouraged.*

*Burn Barrel Booth at the Annual Sustainable Energy Fair*



*Photo Courtesy of the St. Lawrence County Environmental Management Council*

## GOVERNMENT EFFECTIVENESS

Administering St. Lawrence County's government has become increasingly more complex and costly. The role of a county government "merely" maintaining roads and running the courts, a jail and a poor farm has changed dramatically. The scope of County operations now ranges from A-to-Z, from alcohol treatment programs to zoning technical advice to developers and local governments. New or expanded county services often are provided in response to public demand or to provide a needed service, but they also can be the result of mandates. Past growth in the scope and cost of County government absolutely requires every effort to ensure that services are appropriate and efficient without compromising the quality and timeliness of its services.

Through governments, society protects our democratic process through open and honest elections, and undertakes activities that serve common purposes, such as building bridges, enforcing standards of behavior, meeting basic human needs, and educating young people. Government services, within reason, must be available to all. It is therefore difficult to exclude, as private firms may, those for whom providing services costs more. For example, those who live in areas outside commercially feasible cable television service must still receive public services like mail, road maintenance, and police protection. Some government services can be expensive, difficult to quantify and yet easy to take for granted. In providing for the common good, government must anticipate or deal with dysfunction, as when regulating pollution, upholding public health standards, and controlling criminal behavior. The costs and resource requirements of these types of services are extremely difficult to anticipate.

Effectiveness is not enough. Accountability is essential if government is to retain the public trust. There is a great deal of concern by the public that public resources be used appropriately. Appropriate use of funds is not always the same as efficient use, however, as in the above examples. Beyond financial correctness, accountability includes viewing citizens as valued consumers of public services, and responding accordingly.

It is important to work consciously at increasing governmental effectiveness and efficiency. As in business, a more rational use of public resources will be achieved by establishing program and spending priorities through a formal process. Capital improvement planning is important at every level of government. In an example from local government, coordinated infrastructure and land use planning decisions can encourage new, private development to locate in areas where services and infrastructure are already available, thus avoiding the great cost of extending water and sewer lines, roads, and other services.

A policy of planning means that decisions will be made with a view toward avoiding problems or addressing them before they get out of hand. Long term cost savings are often the motivation. Preventive maintenance of capital facilities, for example, generally is cheaper than major rehabilitation, and the prevention of alcohol and substance abuse is far less costly than treatment. Prevention services should be seen as a form of efficiency.

The public involvement in governing that is so essential in a democratic system is especially important in a time of allocating limited resources. The public perception that government programs and policies are complex and difficult to access can discourage involvement. It is important that governments encourage public involvement in a meaningful and accessible manner. Citizens also have a responsibility to hold officials accountable: over time, a community that is not involved in governance may get a government that does not serve its needs.



There can be such a thing as "too much government," usually taken to mean that government is too much in our lives. While it is legitimate to ask how much is too much in St. Lawrence County, it also must be asked whether there are too many, for there are forty-six towns and incorporated villages. As with school districts, local governments need to consider consolidation, dissolution and the sharing of services as means of reducing costs. County government can encourage this by providing technical assistance, for a fee, when appropriate.

Through a conscious, on-going process St. Lawrence County's governments can remain responsive to the needs of citizens while growing in effectiveness and efficiency.

## GOVERNMENT ACCESSIBILITY TO THE PUBLIC

### **GE-1 Governments must be open and accessible to the public in order to facilitate public input into decision making.**

*Government must be accessible to the people. Public input, while fundamental to the democratic process, is especially necessary in a time of stagnant or declining resources when difficult decisions must be made about public sector priorities. Citizens must feel involved in the decision making process.*

*Local officials should conduct regular community forums in order to keep open a dialogue for decision making.*

*Discussions between citizens and officials about public issues should not wait until the public hearing stage, but should be done in a manner in which public input can be meaningful before the decision making stage.*

*The County supports the State Open Meetings Law.*

*Decision making in a transparent, public manner which instills confidence in public decision making is encouraged.*

*Information on public affairs should be made readily available to the public and be presented in a manner which is easily understandable to the general public and which avoids technical jargon. Examples of information would include background papers, environmental reviews, and other background documents.*

### **GE-2 Public servants should see the public as valued customers for public services.**

*Customer surveys, toll free numbers, directories of county services, schedules which keep offices open to the public for longer hours, and other activities to improve service to the public are encouraged.*

*Public officials should treat their colleagues and the public with respect, courtesy, fairness, and professional consideration.*

2006 Earth Day Symposium



Photo Courtesy of the  
St. Lawrence County  
Environmental Management Council

The Open Meetings Law requires timely public notice and public access to meetings of government boards. Meetings by law must be open to the public except under very limited circumstances.

The means to foster public input into decision making include citizen advisory committees, community based advisory boards, and civic and neighborhood associations.

**GE-3 Public officials, both elected and civil service, should maintain high standards of professional behavior and socially responsible conduct in the execution of their public duties.**

*Public officials occupy positions of great responsibility and are obligated to earn the public's trust.*

*All County officers and employees must avoid conflicts of interest or potential conflicts of interest.*

*The code of ethics includes provisions on prohibited activities and disclosure of interests.*

*Ethics codes or laws will be developed in a manner which both serves the public interest and respects the integrity and legitimate privacy of officials, especially those serving in voluntary positions.*

**GOVERNMENT EFFECTIVENESS**

**GE-4 Policies and practices which promote efficient public sector operations are encouraged. Public officials must think in new, entrepreneurial ways about methods to increase efficiency and effectiveness in providing public services.**

*As practical as possible, both public information and online services should be made available on the County's website.*

**GE-5 County government departments will work constantly to become performance oriented.**

*The roles and responsibilities of elected and appointed officials, committees, boards and departments should be clearly defined.*

*Each department of County government in consultation with the Legislature or its designated representative will define the fundamental goals of the department.*

*County departments will review administrative procedures in order to eliminate policies, procedures and paperwork that do not serve the purpose for which they were originally intended or that work to deter the mission of the department.*

*County employees and managers are encouraged to work together in a spirit that promotes service to the public.*

A code of ethics should obligate public officials to:

- hold responsibility and accountability to the public paramount.
- maintain high standards of personal conduct and integrity
- obey and implement all laws
- serve the public interest above personal interests.

(Local Law No. 1 of 2009 requires annual disclosure of interest, and mandated ethics training for County officers, employees, and appointed officials.)

**GE-6 Local governments and the County should investigate joint measures for cost reduction.**

*The County should take the lead in organizing joint services where feasible.*

*Equipment should be standardized among municipalities to the extent possible in order to allow for bulk purchasing of replacement parts.*

*Cooperative agreements for the sharing of equipment, Civil Service personnel services, safety program services, and expertise between local governments should be encouraged and expanded.*

*Intergovernmental agreements for shared services and programs are encouraged, such as joint planning boards, code enforcement officers, and assessors.*

*St. Lawrence County promotes cooperative service ventures with and between local governments, school districts, and health care providers. The County Planning Office, Highway Department and the Central Services Department can provide technical resources to facilitate assistance between units of government, for a fee, when appropriate.*

*Expanded use of "Smart Cards" and/or Electronic Benefit Transfer systems (EBTs) should be encouraged. This technology can be used to:*

- *streamline data processing and bookkeeping,*
- *provide automatic transfer of subsidy and benefit funds,*
- *eliminate extensive mailings, and*
- *reduce the potential for fraud.*

**GE-7 Public employees should be involved in efforts to reduce costs.**

*Quality circles, suggestion boxes, incentive awards, competitions, and other measures are encouraged as useful means of using the job experience of public employees in order to increase efficiency.*

**GE-8 The privatization of public service delivery should be considered when privatization could increase the possibility of cost containment or actual savings.**

Town	Population		% Change
	2000	2010	
Brasher	2,337	2,512	7.5%
Canton	10,334	10,995	6.4%
Clare	112	105	-6.3%
Clifton	791	751	-5.1%
Colton	1,453	1,451	-0.1%
DeKalb	2,213	2,434	10.0%
DePeyster	936	998	6.6%
Edwards	1,148	1,156	0.7%
Fine	1,622	1,512	-6.8%
Fowler	2,179	2,202	1.1%
Gouverneur	7,419	7,085	-4.5%
Hammond	1,209	1,191	-1.5%
Hermon	1,069	1,108	3.6%
Hopkinton	1,020	1,077	5.6%
Lawrence	1,545	1,826	18.2%
Lisbon	4,047	4,102	1.4%
Louisville	3,195	3,145	-1.6%
Macomb	846	906	7.1%
Madrid	1,828	1,735	-5.1%
Massena	13,121	12,883	-1.8%
Morristown	2,050	1,974	-3.7%
Norfolk	4,565	4,668	2.3%
Oswegatchie	4,370	4,397	0.6%
Parishville	2,049	2,153	5.1%
Piercefield	305	310	1.6%
Pierrepont	2,674	2,589	-3.2%
Pitcairn	783	846	8.0%
Potsdam	15,945	16,041	0.6%
Rossie	785	877	11.7%
Russell	1,801	1,856	3.1%
Stockholm	3,592	3,665	2.0%
Waddington	2,212	2,266	2.4%

Villages and Larger Hamlets	Population		% Change
	2000	2010	
Canton	5,954	6,314	6.0%
Edwards	465	439	-5.6%
Gouverneur	4,267	3,949	-7.5%
Hammond	302	280	-7.3%
Hermon	402	422	5.0%
Heuvelton	804	714	-11.2%
Massena	11,209	10,936	-2.4%
Morristown	456	395	-13.4%
Norfolk	1,334	1,327	-0.5%
Norwood	1,685	1,657	-1.7%
Ogdensburg	12,364	11,128	-10.0%
Potsdam	9,378	9,428	0.5%
Rensselaer Falls	337	332	-1.5%
Richville	274	323	17.9%
Star Lake	860	809	-5.9%
Waddington	923	972	5.3%

Villages/hamlets included in town populations

*Privatization of service delivery should be done in a manner that does not exclude any sector of the community from access to the service, or in a manner which requires the public sector to provide services to higher unit cost consumers, such as for rural residents.*

## **GOVERNMENTAL STRUCTURE**

### **GE-9 Consolidation of governments should be considered as a means for reducing costs.**

*St. Lawrence County government will provide technical assistance to local governments interested in consolidation.*

### **GE-10 The structure of St. Lawrence County government and of local governments should be reviewed and re-organized as necessary to provide for greater efficiency and effectiveness.**

*The legislature-county administrator form of government should be compared from time to time with a Charter form of county government.*

In 2007, according to the New York State Office Real Property Services, 40.1% of total assessed property value in St. Lawrence County was classified as tax-exempt, the fourth highest percentage in the state.

## **COMPREHENSIVE PLANNING**

### **GE-11 Public policy makers should adopt long-term, comprehensive planning strategies that develop community visions.**

*Comprehensive planning and visioning must involve the public at every stage in order to be effective.*

*Public policy can direct development into areas where public services may be provided most efficiently, with savings for rate payers.*

Planning reduces the reliance on short term decision making, which can lead to increased savings in the long run.

One way of assessing the impact of growth on a community is to ask whether the net increase in tax revenue will meet the net increase in the costs of public services which will be required.

## **GOVERNMENT FISCAL POLICIES**

### **GE-12 Capital planning and budgeting provides for a multiple year perspective on infrastructure and is endorsed as an important step in providing efficient services.**

*An economic analysis of the County, the services needed, and the ability of the citizenry to pay for these services is encouraged for the formulation and implementation of sound fiscal policies.*

*County departments and local governments responsible for infrastructure should undertake capital planning and budgeting efforts.*

*Refinancing of long term debt to take advantage of lower interest rates is encouraged when appropriate.*

*When practical, the County should utilize locally based financial institutions for financial services, with selection of institutions considering, among other factors, the willingness of the institutions to invest in the economy of St. Lawrence County.*

*Planning boards should consider the fiscal impacts of growth on a community and evaluate what sorts of growth are appropriate and affordable.*

*Long-term preventive maintenance budget planning should be instituted and followed.*

*The several government fiscal cycles should be understood and coordinated when possible.*

**GE-13 The County will investigate various ways in which to generate needed revenues.**

*Where appropriate, user fees for public services should be implemented. User fees should be set at a level that does not act to exclude (by the use and amount of the fee) a part of the population from access to a service.*

*The true impact of tax exempt properties on government finance should be determined.*

*The County will continue to seek ways to reduce the amount of tax-exempt property, such as is being done through the New York Power Authority Surplus Lands Project.*

*Tax exempt entities should be encouraged to pay use fees or Payments in Lieu of Taxes (PILOT) for local services they receive.*

*Alternatives to a purely real property tax base should be evaluated. Options might include:*

- *revising property tax systems,*
- *creating municipal service districts,*

In an era of hard choices, capital planning and budgeting can provide a rational, equitable means of setting priorities for public sector resources. Capital budgeting requires flexibility, but it also requires discipline.

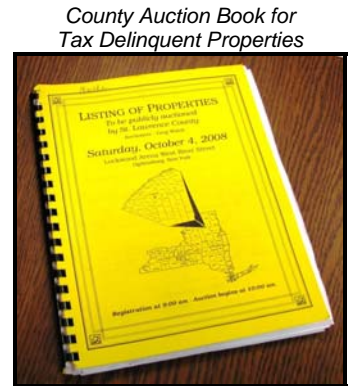
User fees are sources of revenue paid for the direct use of a service, such as for library membership. User fees work best when the service benefits the user, when those who don't pay can be excluded from the use of the service, and when fees can be collected efficiently.

Special districts can be created to operate water, sewer, street lighting, and other municipal services without the requirement of an incorporated village.

- *increasing sales taxes, and*
- *instituting or readjusting sources such as the bed tax, user fees and licenses paid principally by tourists and temporary residents.*

*County departments that are capable of generating revenue through user fees, fees for services, grant administration or other sources are encouraged to do so.*

*St. Lawrence County will aggressively market tax delinquent properties, with the goal of immediate resale in order to reduce the amount of local taxes paid by the County and to regain a share of the real property tax.*



*Photo Courtesy of the St. Lawrence County Planning Office*

## **REAL PROPERTY TAX POLICIES**

### **GE-14 St. Lawrence County supports a consistent, rational approach to real property assessment.**

*The St. Lawrence County Real Property Tax Office will continue to provide technical assistance to local governments, through cooperative agreements and other means.*

*Each taxing entity should use full market value to determine real property assessment.*

*The County will continue efforts to computerize the real property tax record system to increase efficiency.*

*Local governments are encouraged to share the services of a single assessor or to consolidate and form single assessment districts, as means of cost efficiency, as allowed by State Law.*

*Local governments should negotiate collectively on PILOTs (payments in lieu of taxes) with the relevant school district and the County.*

The St. Lawrence County Industrial Development Agency apportions on a pro rata basis to all taxing jurisdictions revenue from its PILOT agreements.

## **GOVERNMENT TECHNICAL SERVICES**

### **GE-15 Government technical assistance should be provided, for a fee, where appropriate, to local governments, groups, and individuals in a professional manner.**

*St. Lawrence County should continue to provide assistance with the interpretation of government*

*policies, regulations, and mandates.*

*St. Lawrence County should provide to local governments:*

- *consulting, research, audit, review, and back-up funding assistance,*
- *notice of grant opportunities,*
- *grant application assistance,*
- *demographic data for use in decision making regarding program provision and investment, and*
- *environmental impact assessment assistance for proposed major projects.*

*Any fees charged for the above should be on a cost-recovery basis.*

## **PUBLIC SECTOR TRAINING**

**GE-16 Public servants should have qualifications appropriate to their positions and additional opportunities should be provided to enhance them.**

*Orientation for all public officials should be encouraged.*

*Continuous self-improvement should be a characteristic of all officials and staff at all levels of government.*

*A responsible person or agency to develop professional staff should be identified.*

*Continuing education and refresher courses are strongly encouraged.*

*Each department and agency should provide appropriate and timely training to ensure uniform and consistent service delivery.*

*Education and training in local government and government practices for appointed/elected officials and interested community members that utilize skill-building techniques in shared-decision making and consensus building should be provided regionally.*

*A St. Lawrence County Leadership Institute designed to provide training with the purpose of building local leadership capacity should be continued.*

*The development of a strong civics curriculum in every school district and encouragement of*

The County presently provides some personnel, assessment and data processing services for local governments, and enters into contracts with towns for snow plowing.

*A Training Session by the Fair Housing Task Force*



*Photo Courtesy of the St. Lawrence County Planning Office*

*A Training Session by the St. Lawrence Leadership Institute*



*Photo taken from www.slli.org*



*participation open to all students in school sponsored civics projects such as "Government Day," should be supported.*

## **REGULATION AND ENFORCEMENT**

**GE-17 Public policy makers should promote the development and enhancement of cooperative relationships among regulatory and law enforcement agencies from all levels of government and jurisdictions to foster the exchange of data and provide protective services and enforcement.**

*A willingness to share data and records within the bounds of confidentiality among law enforcement agencies and all levels of government should be encouraged.*

*A compatible system for the exchange of data should be established.*

*Once adopted, local laws and codes should be enforced.*

*The principles of reasonableness and impartiality should guide discretionary law enforcement.*

*Fines should be no less than the cost of enforcement.*

*Alternatives to incarceration for non-violent convicted criminals should be encouraged as means of cost reduction.*



## HEALTH CARE

Current government health care policy in the United States, whether nationally or locally, has been developed around the concepts of accessibility and quality. Accessible and quality health care in St. Lawrence County has largely been provided by a loose system of private providers, health care institutions, third party payers, not-for-profit agencies, school districts, and local, county and state governments. Coordination of services sometimes is an issue under this condition.

Policy decisions regarding the accessibility of health care have been responsible for the breadth and depth of coverage available today to populations that are especially difficult to serve, including the poor and the residents of underserved rural areas. Government has attempted to ensure or provide health care coverage to most citizens. This has been difficult and expensive, to say the least, and consequently is under discussion and review almost continually.

Its enormous expense to St. Lawrence County--Medical assistance alone accounts for one-third of the County funds in the overall budget and is on a rising curve--places health care access at center stage in terms of policy, and yet the County is in a weak position to reduce the level of local cost. Health care expenditures, while heavily subsidized by the state, are among the most onerous of mandates.

The tragedy of this burden is, of course, that it is far, far more than fiscal. The County must provide access to services and bear costs at these levels because the need is great and many residents just do not have the ability to pay a full share. Policy decisions commonly must be made in situations of this kind: great need, limited resources.

Government policy decisions concerning the quality of care are essentially regulatory in nature. Almost all aspects of the health care system are highly regulated by the state. The County does not regulate health care, but is itself a major provider of public health, home health, and mental health care services. The County's Department of Social Services, Public Health Department and Community Services Department (especially its mental health and chemical dependency clinics) provide or coordinate services ranging from home health care to epidemic control to health insurance. The County itself provides a broad range of self-insurance coverage to its large workforce.

# HEALTH CARE

## ACCESS

### **HC-1 Access to health care providers should be available within a coordinated human services transportation system.**

*The County should continue to play a coordinating role in the provision of transportation options for Medicaid recipients without reliable means of transportation who seek health care services, with a particular emphasis of a transportation option that should be promoted.*

*The Department of Social Services will continue to map the location of Medicaid recipients for transportation planning purposes.*

*Agencies and school districts currently have vehicles that are wheelchair-accessible and should use them to maximum advantage under a coordinated program.*

*Existing volunteer driver programs should be supported and recognized in a formal way.*

*Taxis and volunteer drivers should continue to be apprised that they are eligible for Medicaid reimbursement when they transport Medicaid patients.*

### **HC-2 Opportunities for decentralized primary health care should be strongly supported.**

*Hamlet area clinics should be operated on a regularly-scheduled basis. Mobile units are also a possibility, should funding become available.*

*The use of physician's assistants and nurse clinicians/practitioners should be expanded.*

*The Reachout Desk Reference and the NY Connects directory should be regularly updated and made available to all health care providers for the purpose of identifying referral resources in the County.*

*The means should be sought to make family planning, sexually-transmitted disease treatment, prenatal care and mental health counseling services available in rural communities.*

St. Lawrence County Bus



Photo Courtesy of St. Lawrence County Public Transportation

The **Reachout Desk Reference** is a listing of human services agencies, hotlines and self-help organizations that serve the residents of St. Lawrence County. A copy of this directory can be obtained by calling (315) 265-2422. **NY Connects: Choices for Long Term Care**, is an online directory of long term care services in the county, and is available at: [www.peerplace.com/nyportal/?county=st.lawrence](http://www.peerplace.com/nyportal/?county=st.lawrence)

## **INSURANCE COVERAGE**

### **HC-3 Partial health care insurance coverage should be available for all citizens of the County.**

*The County should maintain and continue to promote its Medical and Prescription Drug Discount Card Program.*

*The County should amend its medical scholarship requirements to require returning practitioners to accept assignment of third-party insurance, Medicaid and Medicare fees as payment for their services.*

*The County should petition Congressional representatives to include Masters of Social Work who work independently among those health care providers to be eligible to receive Medicaid reimbursements.*

## **AVAILABILITY OF SERVICES**

### **HC-4 Provider recruitment is a shared community responsibility.**

*Communities should offer recruitment incentives that hospitals are not allowed to offer.*

*A health care recruitment task force should be set up to promote the quality of rural life in St. Lawrence County to health care providers. Group recruitment should be explored.*

### **HC-5 The delivery of health care should be studied by a health care coordinating committee which represents the health concerns of the County's populace.**

*The County Public Health Office, the Department of Social Services and the Central N.Y. Health Systems Agency should cooperate with local hospitals and the NYS Department of Health to determine the viability of a Rural Health Network.*

*The County should establish a data base through the Public Health Office, Office for the Aging, and the Department of Social Services to identify service needs.*

*Cooperation among hospitals should be continued and supported in all areas of recruitment, facilities and services.*

**RECRUITMENT      INCENTIVES**  
include the provision of facilities (rent subsidization), equipment and general monetary support.

Managed care coordination and oversight is a responsibility of the St. Lawrence County Managed Care Advisory Council, which advises the County Department of Social Services.

## **EDUCATION**

### **HC-6 The concept of "wellness" should be promoted.**

**GLOSSARY: Wellness**

The philosophy that leading a healthy lifestyle (proper diet, exercise, moderation and a positive mental attitude) will help prevent many future health problems.

*The cost-effectiveness of the prevention of medical problems should be repeatedly stressed to the public.*

*The County should continue to promote wellness among its employees by sponsoring clinics on cancer screening, smoking cessation, cholesterol testing, diabetes testing and nutrition.*

*The County Public Health Office and local hospitals should run Wellness Clinics at events such as the County Fair and Firemens' Field Days and locations such as malls and neighborhood centers in order to serve rural families and provide information on WIC (Nutrition), housing, Medicaid, etc.*

### **HC-7 Government health education efforts are a cost-effective use of public funds.**

*Health education programs are needed. The health and well-being of area residents is threatened by smoking, alcohol and substance abuse, AIDS, parenting deficiencies, and nutritional problems, among others.*

*Special educational program needs include women's health education, education on preventive health practices, workplace health and safety education, self esteem counseling, and health education in the schools.*

*Health education themes should be more widely publicized, and parents and children should be shown the benefits of health education.*

*The County Public Health Office, Office for the Aging, and the Department of Social Services should provide more health education for the general public as resources permit.*

*A Flu Clinic at the County Public Health Department*



*Photo Courtesy of St. Lawrence County Public Health Department*

## **CITIZEN SAFETY**

**HC-8 The County should exert every effort in enforcing existing laws regarding health and safety.**

*Examples include:*

*Laws prohibiting underage drinking and alcohol and tobacco purchase.*

*Laws prohibiting use and distribution of illegal drugs.*

*New York State's mandatory seat belt law.*

*The County Safety Program should continue to promote on-the-job safety.*

# HOUSING

Decent, safe, affordable housing is vitally important to every person's well-being. Moreover, the condition of a community's housing stock is a strong indicator of the overall health of a community. Most housing in this county is satisfactory or better, but a significant minority of the county's housing stock is in poor condition, and the relatively low income of many county residents is a major obstacle to reaching the goal of decent housing for all.

Field surveys have shown that at least 15% of the county housing stock is "substandard," i.e., in need of significant rehabilitation. In some communities the percentage is much higher. One factor is the age of the housing stock. According to the American Community Survey 2005-2009 36% of our housing was built prior to 1939. Older housing tends to have more structural problems and systems failure than newer housing.

The correlation between low income and substandard housing is high, and is based on both federal census and County survey data. St. Lawrence County's low per capita income (third lowest in New York State) and high level of poverty (over 16% of the population, per 2005-2009 ACS Data) makes housing costs a concern for many. Subsidized units, especially for families, have very low vacancy rates. For example, it is not uncommon for qualified households to wait over a year to receive federal Section 8 rental assistance. Even non-subsidized rental housing vacancy rates are generally low, especially for affordable units or units in certain communities, such as the college towns, where the condition of rental housing is a continuing problem.

Substandard housing is not simply a rental property problem. Ownership of a single family home has long been the American dream, but in St. Lawrence County a large number of owner-occupied houses are in poor condition. In St. Lawrence County 71.9% of occupied housing units were owner-occupied (2005-2009 ACS data). Approximately 12% of the St. Lawrence County housing stock is mobile homes, that number is 3% for the State.

Demographic change has affected the housing market. As is common in rural areas in most of the country, our population is aging and household size is shrinking. The aging of our population has increased the demand for different types of housing. One example, enriched housing (rental housing with associated housekeeping, cooking and other services) is in greater demand for the elderly than before. Where this service is provided there is a reduction in the demand for the much more expensive care available in health related and skilled nursing facilities. The increasingly smaller family size, in which the aging of the population is a major factor, has reduced the demand for large, older homes. Local zoning regulations sometimes make the division of larger structures into apartments problematic.

St. Lawrence County government's role in housing, though limited, is still significant in its scope. The County does not manage low income housing, nor are County appropriated funds directly used to develop or rehabilitate housing. The County has a small housing revolving loan fund that was established with federal funds. The County's chief role in housing is in providing income support for Public Assistance recipients and in the administration of federal and state housing development and rehabilitation grants. The County is a founding member of the North Country HOME Consortium, a three county entity which has received a large, multi-year commitment of federal housing funds. Agencies such as the Community Development Program administer the Section 8 rental subsidy program and a weatherization program under contract to the County.

Code enforcement, an important factor in determining the quality of new construction and major renovation, also aids in controlling the deterioration of housing stock. Enforcement of Uniform Fire Prevention and Building Code standards is retained as a local government function in St. Lawrence County, although the County is enabled to enforce the Uniform Code if it wishes.

The principles behind this Guide's policies for housing are that:

- Every person should have access to safe, decent, affordable primary housing;
- Land use and infrastructure decisions by local governments should include consideration of impacts on housing;
- The needs of the most vulnerable, including those with special housing needs and the homeless, should be addressed through a network of service providers; and
- Partnerships including the County, local governments, the private sector, and not-for-profit organizations are a necessary means of developing a variety of housing options.



# HOUSING

## HOUSING CONDITIONS

### **HO-1 Code enforcement is an important tool in furthering the goal of safe, adequate housing and in the preservation of the county's housing stock.**

*Equitable and comprehensive enforcement of building and housing codes is needed.*

*Public awareness of the purpose of code enforcement and of the role of code enforcement officers should be increased.*

*Revenues from building permit fees should help support the cost of code enforcement.*

*Regional training and technical assistance must be available to support code enforcement efforts. New York State should provide this support.*

*Adequate compensation and training of code enforcement officers is necessary for the most effective code enforcement.*

*Civil service status for code enforcement officers acts to limit political interference in their work.*

### **HO-2 Government efforts to improve the condition of housing should continue.**

*The St. Lawrence County Planning Office should continue to apply to federal and state agencies for housing and community development grants in support of the policy and to provide technical and grant writing assistance, for a fee, to help local communities upgrade substandard housing conditions.*

*St. Lawrence County will use resources available through its membership in the three county North County HOME Consortium and other sources to address housing rehabilitation needs.*

*St. Lawrence County will continue to use available housing resources to address substandard conditions for both owner-occupied and rental housing.*

According to the 2000 Census, there are 50,561 housing units in the county. Thirty-six percent (18,423 units) of these homes were built in or before 1939, and 11.1% (5,611) are mobile homes.

Jefferson and Lewis Counties have county administered code enforcement in an effort to provide consistent enforcement. Local governments may choose to opt-out of those county-wide systems.



Photo Courtesy of the St. Lawrence County Planning Office

## **AFFORDABLE HOUSING DEVELOPMENT**

### **HO-3 Government has an important role in increasing the supply of affordable housing available to county residents.**

#### **GLOSSARY: *Affordable Housing***

Rental housing is considered affordable if total shelter costs do not exceed 30% of gross monthly household income.

*St. Lawrence County should continue to provide technical assistance to Community-Based Housing Organizations in their efforts to undertake affordable housing development /rehabilitation projects.*

*St. Lawrence County encourages the development of public-private partnerships for affordable housing development/rehab projects. Such partnerships include cooperation between financial institutions, Community-Based Housing Organizations, and others to undertake joint projects.*

*The County encourages the use by private investors of Federal tax credit provisions for low income housing. The Development Authority of the North Country is the local tax credit administrator.*

### **HO-4 St. Lawrence County can help to increase the supply of affordable housing by evaluating the need for affordable housing and coordinating among providers in meeting the need.**

*Better coordination of public and not-for-profit housing efforts is desirable. The County will take the lead in improving coordination and communication, perhaps through periodic meetings between public housing agencies, rural preservation companies and others.*

### **HO-5 Subsidized housing units, such as public housing, provide an important source of affordable rental housing.**

*Additional subsidized housing units should be built only in locations where there is an identified need for the units, while trying to avoid the over-concentration of units in a few communities.*

There are three Community-Based Housing Organizations that offer their services in St. Lawrence County: the St. Lawrence County Housing Council, with county-wide responsibilities, Mohawk Indian Housing operating in Rooseveltown, and North Country Affordable Housing, Inc. which services the Fort Drum Impact Area of Jefferson, St. Lawrence and Lewis counties.

Tax abatements, tax credits, payments in lieu of taxes (PILOT's) and other financial incentives are tools available to encourage private sector development of affordable housing.

*Affordable Housing Complex  
in Canton*



*Photo Courtesy of St. Lawrence  
County Planning Office*

*New, subsidized rental housing units should be sited in communities that have adequate infrastructure and offer basic services which support residential development (such as a grocery store, post office, etc.) as well as accessibility to services and employment opportunities.*

*Over-saturation of housing markets with subsidized housing developments, especially for senior citizens, can be avoided through careful planning and on-going market analysis.*

*Where there is a need for public housing, single-family units are preferred to multi-family housing. Where subsidized housing is deemed necessary, efforts should be made to minimize red tape and administrative costs.*



*Kilkarney Courts, Fowler*  
Photo Courtesy of the St. Lawrence County Housing Council, Inc.

## **HOUSING AND LAND USE POLICIES**

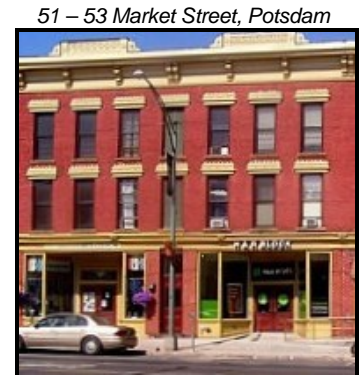
### **HO-6 Local land use regulations (zoning and subdivisions laws) must provide opportunities for affordable housing.**

*Large lot zoning requiring more than two acre lot sizes should be discouraged, unless site-specific reasons would prevent adequate on-site water and sanitation. Larger minimum lots increase the cost of home ownership.*

*Local land use laws should be reviewed to ensure that adequate land area in a community is available for multi-family housing unit development and for mobile home parks.*

*Local governments should ensure that land use regulations provide for adequate opportunities for transitional and special needs housing, such as homeless shelters, housing for persons with mental health problems, etc.*

*Land use regulations should encourage the use for residential purposes of downtown commercial properties, particularly of upper stories.*



*51 – 53 Market Street, Potsdam*  
Photo Courtesy of the St. Lawrence County Housing Council, Inc.

### **HO-7 It is important to consider housing development goals in the planning and development of municipal water and sewer lines and streets.**

*Planning of infrastructure capacity to meet the expected needs of the community is a desirable practice. Communities may later expand the system capacity when constraints on development occur.*



*Heuvelton Wastewater Treatment Plant*  
Photo Courtesy of the St. Lawrence County Planning Office

*The County Planning Office provides technical assistance, generally for a fee, to communities seeking to develop water and sewer projects.*

## **HOUSING FOR THE ELDERLY**

**HO-8 The planning, development and retention of housing to meet the needs of the growing elderly population will continue to be an activity of local and county groups.**

*There is a need for additional enriched housing for the elderly in St. Lawrence County. Local governments and the County should support agencies attempting to meet this need.*

**GLOSSARY: *Enriched Housing***

Enriched housing provides supportive services to the elderly (cooking, housekeeping), but is not as intensive as nursing home care.

*Planning and coordination is needed to determine the future need for elderly housing units in order to meet the expected demand without unnecessary over building.*

## **HOUSING FOR THE HOMELESS AND SPECIAL NEEDS HOUSING**

**HO-9 Meeting the housing needs of the homeless and those with special needs is an important community goal.**

*Housing for the homeless and those with special needs (such as transitional housing) is primarily the role of not-for-profit organizations, with the County providing a supportive role when appropriate.*

*The County will assist in formalizing coordination of the emergency housing referral system.*

*A list of available licensed boarding homes will continue to be maintained by the Department of Social Services.*

*Local governments should recognize that all communities have a responsibility to assist in the*

*Attwater Senior Housing Complex,  
Russell*



*Photo Courtesy of the St. Lawrence  
County Planning Office*

*A Single-Room Occupancy  
Complex in Canton*



*Photo Courtesy of St. Lawrence  
County Planning Office*

*siting and development of special needs housing.*

*Siting of special needs housing should be done fairly to avoid over-concentration in one community or neighborhood.*

*St. Lawrence County will provide technical assistance on issues of accessible housing. Accessible housing for persons with disabilities should also be ensured through the enforcement of existing codes on accessibility.*



Photo Courtesy of the St. Lawrence County Planning Office

## **FAIR HOUSING POLICIES**

### **HO-10 St. Lawrence County will continue to support fair housing policies affirmatively.**

*Federal and State laws on fair housing make it illegal to discriminate in the sale or rental of housing on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, disability, familial status, or national origin. A County Fair Housing Law, while redundant, would reaffirm County support for fair housing.*

*St. Lawrence County will provide technical assistance to local governments on fair housing matters.*



## **HOUSING AND ENERGY CONSERVATION**

### **HO-11 Energy efficiency and conservation can reduce household shelter costs.**

*Code enforcement officers should enforce the State Energy Code.*

*The County should promote and encourage new home builders and buyers to construct Energy Star Homes, and existing homeowners to conduct home energy audits. Home builders should be encouraged to use locally-produced building products as much as possible.*

*The County should encourage commercial investment in affordable housing by preparing and distributing a plan that identifies market areas, available resources, and development requirements.*

According to the New York State Energy Research and Development Authority (NYSERDA), New York Energy Star homes use approximately 30% less energy than conventionally built homes.

## HUMAN SERVICES

The provision of human services is a major component of County operations, primarily due to state and federal mandates, involving about 60% of the overall County budget and still growing. Human services include a wide range of activities, including income support, alcohol and substance abuse prevention and treatment, services for the developmentally disabled, family counseling, probation services, foster care, services for young people and the elderly, and others. County departments and contract agencies involved in the provision of human services include the Department of Social Services, the Department of Veterans Services, the Probation Department, the Public Health Department, the Office for the Aging, the Youth Bureau, Community Services and Cornell Cooperative Extension. Numerous not-for-profit organizations are also involved in the provision of services, some of them in association with county government.

While the provision of human services consumes a significant portion of County government resources, the County has little ability to affect policies regarding those services due to federal and state constraints. Changes in public assistance policies, for example, generally must come from Albany and Washington, even though the County is often required to pay a share of the costs. Supporting the local share of mandated programs is an increasing challenge to a county with the third lowest per capita income in New York State.

The human service network is a web of agencies and programs, including government, not-for-profit agencies, schools, businesses and other groups which interact with each other and with those in need of services. The network is governed by a layer of rules, regulations, mandates and funding sources which sometimes direct and sometimes constrain the ability of agencies to deliver services. Coordination is an on-going issue.

The socio-economic characteristics of the county contribute to the high level of demand for human services. In 2006, the Census Bureau estimated that St. Lawrence County had 14.5% of persons in poverty, compared to 10.9% for New York. Unemployment tends to be high in St. Lawrence County, with rates higher than the state and national averages. Changes in the structure of the family, including a 14% increase in female-headed households between 1990 and 2000, also contribute to the demand for services, as does an aging population. The fastest growing segment of the county population (by percentage) is persons who are middle-aged and nearing retirement, those who are between 45 to 59 years old.

Some perceive that the provision of human services is aimed solely at those in poverty. Many programs, however, serve a broad spectrum of people. Alcohol and substance abuse can affect the lives of people of any income level, as can domestic violence, mental health problems, and delinquency.

The Policy Guide emphasizes dealing with the sources of problems through prevention. Preventing the onset of alcohol and substance abuse, teenage pregnancy, juvenile delinquency and other problems is nearly always less costly, in both human and financial terms, than dealing with the consequences. Prevention is especially important in dealing with matters which can become inter-generational, such as domestic violence and child abuse. Prevention programs have demonstrated their success: teenage pregnancy rates in St. Lawrence County are lower than in neighboring counties, and DWI fatalities among young people have been reduced.

The human service policies advocated in this Guide are based on four principles:

1. The prevention of social problems is more effective, in both human and financial terms, than is dealing with their effects.
2. Policies are to be supportive of families, especially those with young children.
3. Human service policies should, to the extent feasible, encourage individuals to be self-sufficient and responsible for their own well-being.
4. The provision and promotion of basic human services is a function involving county government in partnership with other organizations (state and federal governments, not-for-profit agencies, private businesses, churches, etc.).

# HUMAN SERVICES

## OVERALL HUMAN SERVICE POLICIES

**HS-1 St. Lawrence County recognizes that not all basic human service needs are able to be nor should be met by government programs and acknowledges and supports the contributions made by not-for-profit organizations, religious organizations, private businesses and individuals in addressing human service needs. However, St. Lawrence County does have a role in the maintenance and delivery of basic human services for those unable to provide for themselves.**

**HS-2 Human service policies are encouraged to place a priority on prevention efforts. The prevention of social problems is nearly always less costly, both in human terms and in financial outlays, than remediation.**

*Agencies should attempt to address, to the extent feasible, the causes of social problems and to direct resources toward the causes or behaviors which lead to social problems.*

*Policies and programs which seek to break generational cycles of poverty and social problems are encouraged.*

*St. Lawrence County will support efforts to confront the sources of social problems, with the intention of reducing the strain on the human service system.*

**HS-3 Policies and programs which support the family, especially those families with young children, are to be encouraged.**

*Family structure is changing, with the increase in single parent households a significant trend. Policies should be developed with consideration to the changing nature of the family. Programs should support single parent households by assisting the parent in accessing schooling or employment.*

*Policies and programs (including those in areas not directly related to human services) will be assessed by agencies prior to implementation to consider the potential impact on the family.*

*St. Lawrence County will continue to participate in efforts to increase awareness of domestic violence and family abuse issues and develop strategies to prevent abuses.*

Basic human services for those unable to provide for themselves include access to shelter, education, health and mental health care and some income support. Other human services include alcohol/substance abuse prevention/treatment, services for the developmentally disabled, family intake services, family counseling, foster care, programs to foster economic self-sufficiency, and other programs.

According to the Census, between 1990 and 2000, there was an increase of 14% in the number of female-headed, single-parent households in St. Lawrence County, from 3,663 to 4,176. Studies show a high correlation between female-headed, single-parent households and poverty levels of income.



## **HUMAN SERVICE AGENCIES**

### **HS-4 Public policy makers should enable the County human services departments to achieve more effective coordination, integration and cost containment of services.**

*Human service agencies such as the Department of Social Services, the Department of Veterans Services, Community Services, the Office for the Aging, Youth Bureau, Public Health, Employment and Training, Probation and others should continue to network as part of a comprehensive human services system.*

*Monthly meetings of human service department agency heads should continue to identify and maximize the effective use of resources and the distribution of services.*

*Collaborative efforts with/between local school systems, including BOCES, and not-for-profit sector human service agencies are to be encouraged.*

### **HS-5 Human services staff training is important in enhancing the availability of and access to human services.**

*Training and continuing education programs for human service employees will be continued as methods for professional development.*

*Continued efforts at sensitivity training for human service workers is encouraged, especially where employees do not have degrees or credentials in a Human Services field. Training in customer relations, especially for customers with disabilities, should be continued.*

### **HS-6 Human services programs need to be readily accessible to people in need of assistance.**

*A central telephone number to accommodate requests for information regarding human services programs should continue to be available.*

*The continued maintenance of a human services resource guide as a reference tool for human service agencies is important.*

*School systems should be a source of information and referral on human service programs. Counseling services, substance abuse and alcoholism services, at risk programs and other programs are examples of services for which information and referrals are needed.*

**Lewis and St. Lawrence County BOCES** (Board of Cooperative Educational Services) operate programs in six service categories: career and technical education; special education; itinerant services; general education; instructional support and non-instructional support. These services are available at Adult Education Centers located in Massena, Ogdensburg, Norwood, Gouverneur, and Canton. Visit: [www.sllboces.org](http://www.sllboces.org)

**REACHOUT** maintains a 24-hour crisis intervention and referral hotline [(315) 265-2422] and publishes a comprehensive human services reference book for purchase.

*Written materials need to be geared to consumers with limited reading capacity. Non-print media has an important role in reaching much of the County's population.*

*Transportation of consumers to human service providers should be accessible, coordinated between transportation providers, and administered in a cost-effective manner.*

*County agencies will cooperate in an inventory of existing human service programs with an effort to identify and fill possible gaps in the system.*

## **ISSUES AFFECTING YOUNG PEOPLE**

### **HS-7 Children's services, such as adoption and foster care coordination and assistance should continue to be provided or promoted by the County.**

*The Department of Social Services should continue to provide counseling services for adoption applicants and children eligible for adoption.*

*The Department of Social Services should continue to provide counseling for foster parents and children as well as foster home recruitment and training services.*

*Day care programs should be encouraged.*

### **HS-8 St. Lawrence County supports youth development programs which assist young people to become responsible, productive citizens and which will act to prevent behavioral problems later as youths become adults.**

*Youth activity programs, such as 4-H, youth organizations, youth employment, such as through the Youth Conservation Corps, and other groups are encouraged, as is leadership development through the Youth Advisory Council.*

*Communities and parents are encouraged to provide youth activities as a means of occupying young people in positive ways.*

*The County encourages programs which prevent teenage delinquency, which frequently leads to adult criminal behavior.*

### **HS-9 St. Lawrence County recognizes the short and long term impacts of teenage pregnancy on**

"It takes a whole village to raise a child." – West African proverb.

*Youth Bureau Participants Working at the Massena Nightengale School*



*Photo Courtesy of the St. Lawrence County Youth Bureau*

*Youth Bureau Participants Repairing the Colton Cemetery Fence*



*Photo Courtesy of the St. Lawrence County Youth Bureau*

**the lives of individuals and on the human service system, and encourages efforts to address the problem of teenage pregnancy.**

*School districts and human service agencies have an important role in reducing the number of teenage pregnancies and should continue to collaborate on efforts to implement teen pregnancy prevention programs. Parenting classes, peer education such as the "Teens and Teens" program with Planned Parenthood, self-esteem building efforts, education programs and other efforts by groups such as Birthright and Catholic Charities are encouraged.*

**HS-10 Continued efforts are needed to support young people who are at risk of being adversely affected by social or family problems.**

*Public policies and programs will be developed with an appreciation of the needs of children.*

*School districts are encouraged to utilize social workers in dealing with the complex issues involving their students.*

*County human service providers are encouraged to continue efforts to collaborate with school districts, community and religious groups and other agencies to foster attitudes in young people which foster self and mutual respect in an effort to discourage abusive behaviors.*

According to New York Department of Health, in 2007 there were 33.4 pregnancies per thousand females aged 15 to 19 in St. Lawrence County. This figure is less than the state average of 58.4 pregnancies for the same cohort. Teen pregnancies may lead younger women to leave school and/or become dependent on the human service system.

**HS-11 County agencies, private industry, school districts and others should work in partnership to implement strategies to encourage students to complete their education and to prepare for productive, responsible lives as citizens and as members of the workforce.**

*Human service agencies should continue to pursue policies which encourage students to stay in school and/or pursue vocational training.*

"Employment" programs involve efforts to integrate public assistance (PA) recipients into the workforce. Recipients are counseled through an employability plan and are then referred into job training programs (such as through JTPA) or put into positions with agencies (such as the County Highway Department) as preparation for non-supported employment. Participants receive their PA benefits in lieu of a paycheck. About half of all PA recipients are enrolled in employment programs.

**SELF-SUFFICIENCY**

**HS-12 A primary goal of the human service system is to encourage participating individuals to become more independent and capable of being responsible for themselves and their dependents.**

*The County human service system will continue, through employment and other programs, to foster independence from the human service system, and to develop individual strategies to*

*remove barriers to employment.*

*The County needs to be aware that basic human service needs transcend age, mental health and socio-economic status. Examples include delayed stress and other problems faced by military veterans, and depression in all age and economic groups.*

*Policies and programs should encourage individuals to be productively employed or to be in training for employment, to the extent possible.*

*Programs are encouraged which support persons who are working but who need continued or additional services to make a gradual transition out of the human services system.*

*Continued efforts to promote adult literacy in St. Lawrence County are encouraged.*

According to the National Center for Education Statistics, 13% of the County's population of persons 16 years and older in 2003 (83,449) lacked basic prose literacy skills (BPLS). The literacy of adults who lack BPLS ranges from being unable to read and understand any written information in English, to being able to locate easily identifiable information in short, commonplace prose text, but nothing more advanced.

## **POLICIES AND SERVICES FOR SENIOR CITIZENS**

### **HS-13 St. Lawrence County supports programs and policies which encourage senior citizens to live as independently and as meaningfully as possible.**

*A continuum of programs and services are encouraged which allow senior citizens to remain as independent as possible and in their homes.*

*The County supports efforts to develop additional enriched housing for the elderly (see also the Housing Section).*

*Land use regulations should be reviewed to allow for accessory housing units on existing built lots in residential areas, so as to allow the elderly independent housing units (including manufactured housing) associated with their children's homes. The Planning Office will provide technical assistance, for a fee.*

*Activity programs for senior citizens, particularly for older senior citizens, are encouraged through community centers, schools, and other organizations.*

*Human service agency programs should be implemented in ways which are sensitive to the needs of seniors, such as providing decentralized services to deal with mobility constraints.*

Long-term care services for seniors includes legal and tax services, volunteer drivers, personal care aides, meals, weatherization, wellness programs and adult day care.

## **SUBSTANCE/ALCOHOL ABUSE**

**HS-14 Alcohol/ substance abuse is recognized as a county-wide issue affecting all age groups and socio-economic groups.**

*Continued collaborative efforts are encouraged between school districts and human service agencies for the provision of alcohol/substance abuse counseling/education, such as through school curriculums, in order to meet the needs of substance abusers in facilitating their rehabilitation.*

*Alcohol/substance abuse prevention and treatment services should be provided to citizens at accessible locations (such as schools, employment and community centers, etc.).*

*Alcohol/substance abuse policies should provide appropriate, quality care to county residents in the least restrictive, yet most cost effective, manner possible.*

*St. Lawrence County policy requires a "Drug Free Workplace." County employees with substance abuse problems strongly are encouraged to utilize the Employee Assistance Program.*

**HS-15 Activities and alternatives to substance/alcohol abuse are needed and encouraged for people of all ages, especially young people.**

**HS-16 Substance/ alcohol abuse prevention programs, such as D.A.R.E. (Drug Abuse Resistance Education) or MASK, are encouraged. Programs geared toward drunk driving prevention, such as Students Against Drunk Driving, are also encouraged.**

## **HUMAN SERVICES AND THE MENTAL HEALTH SYSTEM**

**HS-17 St. Lawrence County needs to plan for and develop a continuum of adequate services to support the rehabilitation needs of persons of all ages with mental illness.**

The New York Department of Health's County Health Indicator Profiles report that in 2007, Cirrhosis of the Liver accounted for 14.6 deaths per 100,000 persons in the county, up from 10.7 deaths per 100,000 persons in 2003.

County employees can access counseling referral services by dialing a confidential phone line: (315) 386-3439.

D.A.R.E. is a police officer-led series of classroom lessons to teach children from kindergarten through 12th grade how to resist peer pressure and live productive, drug and violence-free lives.

**GLOSSARY: *Psychiatric Rehabilitation***

Psychiatric rehabilitation involves psychiatric treatment, but also allows clients to "choose, get and keep" the resources they need to meet their needs.

The mission statement of the St. Lawrence County Mental Health System is "to develop a flexible and responsive system of services to ensure that persons with mental disabilities can live, work, socialize and otherwise be treated as human beings in the environment of their choice, with the most amount of independence possible."

*The County supports the efforts of the Community Services Department, its Board, and its Mental Health Subcommittee and the Mental Health Management Council along with other agencies in their efforts to identify unmet needs and establish a collaborative approach among mental health system providers.*

*The County will promote the rehabilitation of persons with mental illness through its affirmative action policy and the Americans with Disabilities Act.*

*The County supports the implementation of the Mental Health Resources Bill although more resources should be directed to community based programs in our county.*

The Mental Health Resources Bill was passed by the State in 1994. Money saved from the downsizing or closure of State psychiatric centers is to be allocated to community mental health programs.

**HUMAN SERVICES AND THE CRIMINAL/JUVENILE JUSTICE SYSTEM**

**HS-18 The County will continue to support efforts to reduce crime and to assist the victims of crime.**

*The County encourages efforts to coordinate the delivery of criminal justice services, through the St. Lawrence County Criminal Justice Coordinating Committee.*

*Community-based solutions to crime prevention are encouraged, such as the formation of "Neighborhood Watch" Programs.*

*Continued efforts at sensitivity training for judges, justices, law enforcement officials and others regarding human service issues (including domestic violence, child abuse, sexual abuse and other issues) are encouraged.*

*The County will continue to refer victims of crime to appropriate support agencies (such as CAVA-Citizens Against Violent Crimes, and Renewal House, which both receive state funds to assist victims) and to encourage restitution by criminals.*

*Alternatives to incarceration for non-violent criminals, such as electronic monitoring and community service, are encouraged as a cost effective method for administering justice.*

*The County supports efforts to reduce the level of repeat offenses. Increased probation supervision and specialized case loads are two approaches to reducing recidivism.*

**Renewal House** (tel: 379-9845, [www.slvrenewalhouse.org](http://www.slvrenewalhouse.org)) provides services to victims of domestic violence.

**HS-19 The County supports efforts to protect young people from becoming involved with crime (including as a victim) and to prevent the occurrence of juvenile delinquency.**

*Prevention programs in the juvenile justice system are necessary in order to break the pattern of behaviors which lead to adult criminal activity.*

*St. Lawrence County supports efforts to confront the issue of child abuse and child sexual abuse.*

*Some criminal behavior, such as domestic violence, child abuse and sexual abuse, may lead to dysfunctional behavior on the part of the victims. Sensitivity is needed by the criminal justice system to these issues as a means of reducing both the human costs and the financial expense to the human service system.*

Child abuse can be cyclical. Many perpetrators of child abuse were themselves abused as children. Part of the answer to this problem is in breaking the cycle of being abused and abusing. Mental health professionals should be willing to treat sex offenders and able to accept Medicaid.

## TRANSPORTATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE

Roads and bridges are for most people perhaps the most tangible evidence of government. People who require few other government-provided services still require roads and bridges. Meeting the expense of maintaining them is a perennial challenge and the subject of considerable public opinion. Development patterns are dictated by the placement of roads. The aesthetic quality of the County is primarily judged from the vantage point of people traveling the road rights-of-ways. Municipal land-use planning decisions are both affected by the location, size and condition of roadways and cause traffic and aesthetic effects to roadways. Road rights-of-ways also serve as the corridors for many public facilities, such as water, sewer, electrical, gas and telecommunications systems. These public facilities collectively are known as infrastructure. Due to the profound effect that roadways have on development, land-use and aesthetics, it is extremely important that the County and its municipalities adopt policies that will preserve the vital road and bridge system that exists, contain the costs of maintenance and support sound land use regulation that is in functional and aesthetic harmony with the system.

This Policy Guide takes it as a given that few, if any new roads or bridges will be built by St. Lawrence County or its municipalities within the next decade or two. The main challenge for the County will be to maintain the roads that we have and replace the bridges that are substandard. There is not enough money to devote to these needs; therefore, it has become essential to rank projects in order of priority. Long-range capital planning and annual assessment of maintenance needs are the tools to achieve this goal. In addition, municipalities will be forced to become as innovative and cooperative as possible in order to save money on highway-related expenses. Such innovation and cooperation should be planned in advance as a matter of policy, not after rising costs force it to occur.

Land-use planning is directly related to the ability of roads to perform their functions of moving people and goods and as rights-of-ways for public facilities. Strip development will slowly erode a road's ability to move traffic as more and more vehicles slow to make turns while exiting or accelerate while entering the roadway. There is also the matter of aesthetics. People view communities from public rights-of-way and form their initial opinions about community character from this vantage point. Unregulated development presents a chaotic landscape that is lacking in aesthetic quality. Appropriately regulated development will, over time, result in more visually-attractive landscapes as like uses are grouped, as the edges of population centers are better defined and as screening and setbacks disguise unattractive activities. Regulated development can also minimize the expense of providing water and sewer service by channeling development into areas within or immediately adjacent to those already served by such systems. Land-use regulation should follow land-use planning. Land-use planning should be driven by the articulation of policies in land-use plans.

Water and sewer systems are expensive to construct and maintain, but are necessary in densely-populated areas. Most population centers in the County have community water and/or sewer systems; however, some of the smaller villages and hamlets do not. It is generally cost-prohibitive to build such systems without substantial state or federal grant and loan assistance. Competition for grant funds is keen. One of the primary sources of funding, the Rural Development Administration's Water and Waste Disposal Systems for Rural Communities, is greatly over-subscribed. Another highly-competitive source of grant funds is the Department of Housing and Urban Development's Community Development Block Grant Program administered by NYSOCR. Due to the high costs per user for small systems, it is normal for applications to be made to more than one funding source. This approach is a slow, inefficient and uncertain one due to the multiple agency reviews.



Due to the difficulty small communities face in applying for and obtaining the necessary funding for water and waste systems, the County's policy should be to provide them with as much technical assistance as possible; however, communities receiving technical assistance should be willing to reimburse costs incurred by county staff.

Well-developed electrical and telecommunications infrastructure is vital for continued economic development. Although government typically does not provide electrical infrastructure (except in the case of municipal power corporations), government can nevertheless play a role by adopting policies concerning such things as promoting conservation, lobbying for continuation of low-cost hydroelectric power from the New York Power Authority and participating in the process for siting utility rights-of-way extensions. Telecommunications are undergoing a major evolution and offer the opportunity to save energy and time by eliminating the need to physically deliver messages or convey people to group meetings. Major funding has been secured to create a fiber optic network as well as advance broadband coverage throughout the county. St. Lawrence County is often perceived as being isolated. Advanced telecommunications will mitigate against this perception.

# TRANSPORTATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE

## TRANSPORTATION

### **TI-1 Safe travel is a primary consideration in transportation decision-making.**

*Service roads and shared access roads are the preferred means of providing access to new development adjacent to major highways in order to promote safety.*

*Reconstruction of highways and service roads in agricultural areas should allow for the construction and maintenance of wide enough shoulders to accommodate farm machinery and equipment, to ensure safe passing.*

*Highway reconstruction design should accommodate pedestrian and bicycle safety where feasible on designated routes.*

*Regularly painted lines on roadways enhance safety.*

### **TI-2 Transportation efficiency is a critical planning consideration that will be maximized.**

*The County has designated a Critical Highway Network of roads of especially greater than local significance.*

*Awareness of the identified Critical Highway Network should help preserve efficient traffic movement on roads of special county-wide or regional significance.*

*Local land use regulations should protect the function of the Critical Highway Network by controlling strip and/or other sprawl development outside of incorporated areas.*

### **TI-3 Capital improvement planning and budgeting, using a minimum of a 10-year horizon, is necessary to ensure that major transportation funding decisions provide for the most efficient use of limited resources.**

*The Capital Improvements Plan should evaluate, both short- and long-term, the maintenance needs of the County, including the utility of maintaining marginal roads and bridges.*

A Pedestrian Crosswalk on Park Street, Canton

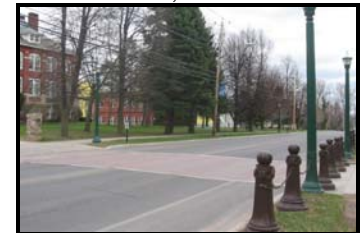


Photo Courtesy of Matilda Larson

Roads and bridges included in the Critical Highway Network deserve the highest priority in the Capital Improvements Plan.

**GLOSSARY: Capital Improvements Plan**

A capital improvements plan sets forth the principles that will be followed when deciding how, when and where to spend monies, examines and projects the needs in light of these principles, assigns priorities to the identified needs, determines from where funds will come, allocates funds to specific capital projects and provides for contingencies.

**TI-4 Within the framework of the Capital Improvements Plan, the County will perform standardized annual evaluations of highway infrastructure.**

*A dedicated fund should be created for a preventative maintenance program.*

*Written standards will be developed between the County and the towns and villages to determine the amount of cost-sharing, if any, regarding bridge repair and/or replacement. The Capital Improvements Plan shall include a preference factor for town bridges that have a substantial local cost share.*

**TI-5 Cooperation among municipalities regarding transportation issues, needs and management is encouraged to better utilize available resources.**

*Cost-sharing between or among municipalities should be incorporated into the planning, design, maintenance and financing of transportation system improvements whenever possible.*

*Highway maintenance zones formed along logical lines and regions instead of along municipal boundaries are preferred.*

**Glossary: Highway Maintenance Zone**

A network of roads whose segments, for the purposes of maintenance, end at intersections instead of municipal boundaries.

*Pouring a New Deck on the Boyden Road Bridge, Canton*



*Photo Courtesy of the St. Lawrence County Highway Department*

The St. Lawrence County Highway Department uses a standard cost-benefit analysis developed by the New York State Department of Transportation for determining bridge maintenance priorities. Annual roadway maintenance evaluations will be performed using computer software that has been developed for this purpose.

*Local and county governments should undertake group purchasing using State and County contracts to reduce costs through economies of scale.*

*Consolidation and sharing of services, either formally or informally, is appropriate and encouraged between municipalities when savings of labor and/or equipment can be achieved. Reducing duplication in services or fleets heightens cost-effectiveness.*

**TI-6 Innovative technologies should be used to reduce road maintenance costs.**

*Where there are options, the preference is for simpler construction and maintenance solutions, such as pavement recycling, culverts wooden bridges for short spans and bridges that have a low painting requirement.*

*Life-cycle cost, not lowest first cost, should be the standard planning tool.*

**GLOSSARY: Life Cycle Cost**  
The sum of the capital, debt service and annual operation and maintenance costs over the life of the project.

*While cost effectiveness remains a concern, alternative deicing methods may be preferred to the use of sodium and calcium chloride salts, particularly in areas where salts damage metal and concrete structures and impact sensitive vegetation. One of the most promising alternative de-icing chemicals is calcium magnesium acetate (CMA), which currently is more costly than sodium/calcium chloride salts, but may be cost-effective if selectively applied to structures or areas that are vulnerable to salts.*

*Highway de-icing chemicals will be applied minimally for the anticipated conditions.*

*Signage should alert motorists to areas with minimal de-icing controls.*

*Road or bridge reconstruction projects should include prevention of non-point source pollution from construction-related soil erosion.*

In addition to traditional sources of funding, a variety of funding options including a progressive income tax, proportional use of sales tax and dedicated funds from gasoline taxes for road and bridge repairs should be identified and considered.

*County Highway Department  
Snow Plow*



*Photo Courtesy of the St. Lawrence  
County Highway Department*

Innovative technologies are those that are cost-effective because they reduce time, labor, maintenance, materials and/or save money when compared to more conventional technologies.

*Covering salt piles to prevent saline run-off or infiltration should be standard practice throughout the County.*

**TI-7 Year-round navigation on the St. Lawrence Seaway is not in the best interests of the County.**

*Winter navigation could produce potentially serious impacts on the river environment and will not result in any significant economic benefit to the County.*

**TI-8 Transportation planning should include the development of recreational infrastructure.**

*County maps should indicate bicycle and snowmobile touring routes.*

*Reconstruction/resurfacing designs should include adequate shoulders for pedestrian and bicyclist use, according to the Manual of Uniform Traffic Control Devices.*

*Abandoned rail corridors could be developed for recreational purposes when deemed appropriate for such development.*

**TRANSPORTATION AND AESTHETICS**

**TI-9 Boards reviewing land use proposals should consider the impacts of their decisions on highway aesthetics, along with traffic flow, safety and other concerns when they review projects.**

*Technical assistance will be provided by the County to help communities maintain visual attractiveness along scenic routes.*

*Towns and villages should adopt and enforce performance standards along the Critical Highway Network that address the following considerations:*

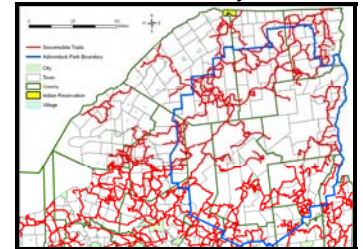
- *buffer width and vegetation*
- *signage*
- *aesthetics*
- *noise/glare*
- *road access*
- *minimum lot size*
- *setbacks*

County Highway  
Department Salt Barn



Photo Courtesy of the St. Lawrence  
County Highway Department

State Snowmobile Trails in the  
North Country



Map Prepared by the St. Lawrence  
County Planning Office

- *sight distance*
- *adequacy of parking*
- *protection of good farmland*

**TI-10 Scenic roads and vistas are valuable resources, and efforts to identify and protect them are integral to the transportation planning process.**

*The County will collaborate with local governments and the Department of Environmental Conservation to identify scenic routes and vistas and seek scenic designations.*

*A map of scenic routes and designations should accompany all descriptive county literature and be promoted to commercial map makers.*

*Roadside trees should be protected by transportation agencies. Trees should be replanted, where appropriate within safety constraints, along roadsides.*

*County and municipal agencies and departments should work with utility companies to incorporate/develop aesthetic design/performance standards such as:*

- *placing transmission and telecommunication lines below ground where practicable*
- *minimizing the visual impact of poles, lines and service connections*
- *coordinating tree planting with an eye to minimal pruning*
- *creating parks and trails on lands owned by utility companies, providing safety concerns are met*

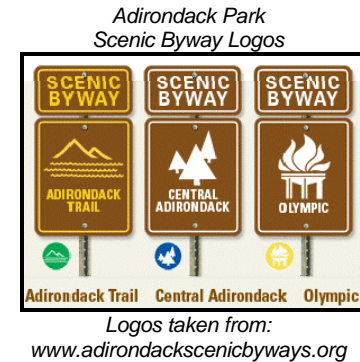
**TRANSPORTATION SERVICES**

**TI-11 Coordinated public transportation is needed to increase mobility and efficiency.**

**GLOSSARY: *Public Transportation***

Vehicles or other forms of public conveyance, excluding private vehicles for the sole use of an individual, business or household.

*A long-term planning group would determine the purpose and function of the different agencies that provide public transportation; examine the allocation of services according to efficiency, quality, need and service; to determine available funding, priority development and funding alternatives. Ridership can be*



*St. Lawrence County Bus Logo*



*Bus Logo Courtesy of St. Lawrence County Public Transportation*

*increased by better coordination among agencies and private providers, adjustment of schedules and attention to vehicle routing.*

*Mass transit systems should be developed to serve population centers wherever ridership is most likely to support such systems.*

*Vehicle use, using existing fleets, should be shared among agencies.*

*Wheelchair-accessible vans should be available to serve the entire county.*

**TI-12 The County's various mass transportation connections to other regions should be developed and protected to the maximum practical extent.**

*The importance of federal subsidies for bus and air service is recognized.*

**ENERGY DEVELOPMENT AND CONSERVATION**

**TI-13 Energy conservation will be incorporated in transportation planning and development whenever possible.**

*Coordinated public transportation has the potential to save energy. The use of private and public transportation carriers is encouraged as an alternative to owner-driven vehicles.*

*Energy conservation measures such as car-pooling and park-and-ride are encouraged and a campaign should be developed to increase rider awareness about energy conservation.*

*Park-and-ride areas should be designated, maintained and patrolled.*

*The use of alternative fuels, such as compressed natural gas, for fleet vehicles should be considered where shown to be cost effective.*

**TI-14 The County supports energy conservation and the development and use of renewable energy resources.**

*Leadership can be demonstrated by using energy-efficient lighting fixtures and equipment wherever possible.*

*Publicly-subsidized housing should be designed to take full advantage of energy-efficient*



*Switchgrass Grown for Pelletizing*



*Photo Courtesy of Cornell Cooperative Extension of St. Lawrence County*

*materials and systems.*

*The use of alternative energy systems should be encouraged through education, and technical assistance referrals.*

*Promote the use of **low-grade** wood as fuel for environmentally-acceptable, energy-producing facilities.*

*Small-scale hydro generation is encouraged.*

## **TELECOMMUNICATIONS**

**TI-15 The fiber-optic, satellite up-link/down-link, radio and computer networking systems that exist in the County should be developed for general use.**

*The importance of a well-developed telecommunications system as an economic development tool is that it helps overcome the factor of physical distance from markets, suppliers, customers, etc. The County will be an advocate for expanded access to computer information networks at reasonable cost to users.*

*Government and the educational institutions play a key role in the utilization of advanced communications technologies.*

*Increased cellular telephone capability is a desirable addition to the telecommunication options.*

*The County will keep abreast of new developments in the telecommunications field.*

## **PUBLIC FACILITIES AND SERVICES**

**TI-16 Development should be promoted only in areas which are easily accessed by essential services such as fire and rescue squad protection, sewage collection and electrical and telecommunication utilities.**

*The designation through land use regulations of linear highway development zones in the absence of appropriate infrastructure is an invitation to incur future costs when infrastructure is*

Forested lands in St. Lawrence County have an abundant supply of low-grade fuel wood that is in great need of selective cutting. This indigenous, renewable resource is currently important for residential and commercial space heating. The resource is large enough to support both current and anticipated residential, commercial and future industrial demands.

Public facilities are the buildings and physical infrastructure that support public services. The costs of providing and maintaining public facilities and services are borne by taxpayers and/or ratepayers. Areas of scattered-site development are generally more difficult and costly to provide with public services than areas with relatively high development densities.



*eventually demanded. These costs can be held at a minimum if development is promoted within or close to areas with existing infrastructure.*

**TI-17 Preventive maintenance, physical and financial planning regarding existing and future sewer and water projects is encouraged.**

*The County, through the Planning Office, should continue to provide technical assistance to those municipalities seeking to install or upgrade water and sewer systems.*

*A County survey of municipalities could determine the number and types of maintenance needs each has and identify potential opportunities for cooperative maintenance.*

*Specialized maintenance equipment, such as that used for exercising and checking valves, should be shared among communities.*

*Communities should conduct annual maintenance on existing systems and upgrade existing systems as necessary.*

*Financial planning practices such as dedicated funds and set-asides are recommended to fund upgrades and extensions of sewer and water systems.*

*Extensions of sewer and water systems should be made in such a way that rates are equitable for existing rate payers.*

*Communities should consider potentially cost-saving innovative and alternative wastewater systems during project feasibility study phases. Additional financial assistance may be available for such systems.*

*Non-governmental environmental advocacy organizations, such as Save the River or local watershed associations, can be effective in providing motivation, guidance and information to owners of on-site sewage treatment systems such as alternative designs for sites with severe soil limitations.*

*The inspection of all on-site septic systems by code enforcement officers during installation should be done as required in the NYS Uniform Fire Prevention and Building Code.*

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