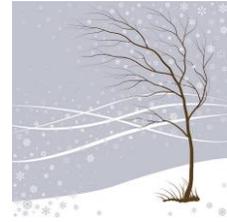


St. Lawrence County Planning Office
STAFF WORK REPORT
JANUARY 2026



ADVISORY BOARD SUPPORT

Agricultural and Farmland Protection Board (AFPB). The AFPB last met on December 4th and did not meet in January. The next meeting is scheduled for February 5, at 6 p.m. in the Conference room on the second floor of the Human Services Center. The Board will discuss updates to the St. Lawrence County Agriculture Development Plan from 2016, review a letter to the Governor from three large dairy cooperatives, and staff will present an overview of NYS Independent Systems Operators.

County Planning Board (CPB). The CPB met on January 8th in the Conference room on the second floor of the Human Services Center. Three full review projects were discussed, a public utility variance for a 2MW utility-scale photovoltaic system in the Town of Madrid (denied), a site plan review for an animal shelter in the Town of Oswegatchie (conditionally approved), and a site plan review for an apartment complex in the Town of Lawrence (conditionally approved).

Environmental Management Council (EMC). The EMC met on January 21, at 6 p.m. in the One Stop Career Center Classroom A on the first floor of the HSC Building. The DEC has made available more than \$5 million in funds in the Regenerate NY Forestry Cost Share Grant Program, supporting tree planting, forest restoration, and improved forest health on private land. Eligible landowners can apply for grants ranging from \$10 thousand to \$1 million applications accepted through August 27th submitted through the State's Financial System (SFS). Projects must be 5 acres or more and guided by a DEC forester or Natural Resources professional. The Village of Norwood wastewater is under a full SPDES permit review and changed the effluent from non-toxic to toxic due to positive detection presence of PFOA and PFOS. The Village is required to conduct further tests for 20+ PFAS chemicals and evaluate sources of contamination. The waste treatment plant does not include storm water, and the drinking water annual report indicates cleanliness and no detection of PFAS. Questions are arising for where did the contaminants originate from, is the Village responsible to identify the source, and is the Village liable to clean it. In October, the DEC issued a Notice to Modify the SPDES permit for North Country Dairy (NCD). In November, NCD objected to the Issuance of the Permit, and requested a hearing to challenge the terms of the modifications. The hearing will be held in the Town of Brasher's town hall on February 9th at 6 p.m. and includes a public comment period. The EPA announced rule changes regarding applying substances with PFAS to crops grown for human consumption and question regarding NYS's response for mitigation. PFAS can potentially accumulate in fertility products derived from waste treatment plants. The Council discussed events for the year 2026, the APIP report, and the HWA monitoring workshop. The Workshop is planned for Mid-March with potential collaboration with Nature Up North and APIP. The Chair reviewed the iMap data for which invasive species have been recording in St. Lawrence County. The next EMC meeting will be February 18th at 6 p.m. in the HSC building.

Fair Housing Task Force. Preston contacted the Canton Planning Board to arrange a land use training session on the Exclusionary Zoning Story Map. Preston also communicated and met with St. Lawrence University students and staff to discuss the Good Cause Eviction Law.

BOARD OF LEGISLATORS

Countywide Broadband Assessment. One committee meeting was held in January. Staff continue to manage ARPA-funded infrastructure projects, which are well underway. To date, \$2,668,896 of \$2,955,145 has been expended, with the balance to be paid in February; 56% of the addresses proposed for service have broadband access; five of 16 funded “lots” are complete.

OCF Repurpose Committee. Staff have been assigned to the County’s Ogdensburg Correctional Facility Repurpose Committee. The group last met in March.

SLC Water/Waste Water Infrastructure American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) Funding Initiative. The BOL allocated \$3 million for municipal water and wastewater projects. Twelve municipalities were awarded a total of \$2,969,563. All projects are complete and funds have been disbursed, totaling \$2,967,410 (one project came in under budget).

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

Multi-Use Trails Steering Committee. Staff participated in the monthly meeting of this committee. A public meeting is planned for February.

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

COMMUNITY / ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Community Development Block Grants (CDBG). Countywide Housing Rehabilitation Program #5 (CHRP 5) is complete and the final APR has been submitted. The County was awarded \$675,000 to continue with its housing rehabilitation program (CHRP 6) and staff is beginning start up paperwork.

GRANTS

County Department Outreach. The Grants Manager has met with a number of departments to discuss current and future needs related to obtaining and managing grant awards.

U.S. DOT FY 2026 Better Utilizing Investments to Leverage Development (BUILD) Grant. The Grants Manager has been working with the Highway Department and their consultant to evaluate this potential opportunity.

NYS Office of Victim Services Victims of Crime Act (VOCA) Victim Assistance Grant Program. The Grants Manager is working with the Office of the District Attorney to prepare an application for this program; deadline is March 23, 2026.

Septic Repair Program. The County was notified that a 5th funding round is forthcoming; all details are not yet available. To date, 115 systems have been repaired/replaced; \$838,790.73 has been expended; and \$761,209.27 in program funds remain available. Staff from Planning and Public Health are working together to manage program delivery and administration.

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

PLANNING MATTERS

GIS. Staff has been meeting with Real Property, Emergency Services, IT, and the contractor GeoCove regarding longer term planning and coordination of GIS. Staff reviewed the process with Real Property in their tax mapping process and the transition to GIS dataset, as well as responsibilities with Emergency Services dispatch address system. Planning Office has agreed to help GeoCove clean and standardize the address point dataset that can then be used to feed both the State's SAM system and internal Emergency Services dispatch. Staff helped map animal bites and scratches for Public Health, and demonstrated how to jitter address points for anonymity while still getting the benefits for geographic analysis.

Town of Colton Comprehensive Plan. The Planning Office signed an MOU with the Town of Colton to serve on the Plan's Oversight Committee. The Steering meet virtually on the 26th and a draft copy of the new Comprehensive Plan was presented for review.

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

PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION

County Transit System. During the first two weeks of January, Matilda reviewed December operating expenses for bus operations; a December First Mile Last Mile invoice; and a 4th quarter 2025 Mobility Management invoice to calculate year end expenses. On the 10th the County's Mobility Manager was notified by Village of Gouverneur Police that the bus shelter on Church Street was destroyed due to high winds. During the week of the 19th Matilda coordinated with the County Highway Department to have it removed and disposed. On the 16th Matilda presented a Year End overview of public transportation services at a Public Transit Task Force meeting. St. Lawrence County Public Transit achieved a new ridership record in 2025. The system provided 174,891 one-way trips, a 10% increase from the prior year. Total miles traveled was 946,396, a decrease of 4% from 2024. First Mile Last Mile provided 6,174 trips to persons, a 21% increase from 2024. During the 2nd half of the month, Matilda prepared a resolution to modify the 2026 budget to accept a Federal capital award to order a bus shelter for the Massena Public Library, and to order eight, 16-passenger capacity buses. On the 28th, Matilda presented an overview of 2025 operating expenses and revenues to partners at The Arc, Volunteer Transportation Center, Inc. and the County Treasurer's Office.