

St. Lawrence County Planning Office
STAFF WORK REPORT
FEBRUARY 2026



ADVISORY BOARD SUPPORT

Agricultural and Farmland Protection Board (AFPB). The AFPB met on February 5th in the Conference room on the second floor of the Human Service Center. The Board reviewed a letter from three large dairy cooperatives on protecting prime soils from solar development and wrote a support letter to send to the NYS Governor. The Board provided a letter of support for CCE's grant application for its Farm to School Program. Staff presented on NYS ISO and power trends report and discussed updates to the Ag Plan goals matrix. Staff attended CCE's Ag and Food System Programming Advisory Committee on Feb 19th to discuss the goals matrix with some area producers and advertise the Ag District inclusion period. A meeting on February 27th with SWCD, CCE, and Planning staff on current programming in connection with the Ag Plan. The Ag District inclusion period will run from March 1st-March 30th. The next meeting is scheduled for April 2nd at 6 p.m. in the Conference room on the second floor of the Human Services Center, staff will review applications to the Ag District.

County Planning Board (CPB). The CPB met on February 12th in the Conference room on the second floor of the Human Services Center. Five full review projects were discussed, site plan review for an office building and event space in the Village of Canton (conditionally approved), a draft data center local law in the Town of Massena (conditionally approved), a draft sign law in the Town of Stockholm (conditionally approved), a special use permit for a 12-unit apartment complex in the Town of Brasher (conditionally approved), and a site plan review for a self-storage facility in the Town of Morristown (denied).

Environmental Management Council (EMC). The EMC met on February 21, at 6 p.m. in the One Stop Career Center Classroom A on the first floor of the HSC Building. SLC Deputy Director of Solid Waste reviewed with the Council on status of waste in the County, including paint recycling, the three landfills the County monitors, water quality, the low price of plastics which makes recycling difficult, infrastructure needs with machinery, and labor challenges. The DEC held a public comment hearing on February 9th regarding North Country Dairy's objection to the issuance of the SPDES permit, and on February 25, a pre-adjudicatory issues conference at the Brasher Town Hall. The Council continued to work on the PFAS primer and the HWA monitoring workshop with a scheduled date of March 20th. The next EMC meeting will be March 18th at 6 p.m. in the HSC building.

Fair Housing Task Force. At a FHTF meeting on the 24th, St. Lawrence University senior Cameron Kennedy presented a proposal for the county's population centers to opt into the State's Good Cause Eviction Law. At the end of the month, Preston drafted and submitted a resolution for the County Legislature to proclaim April as Fair Housing month and scheduled an Exclusionary Zoning Story Map land use training session with the Canton Planning Board on March 3rd.

BOARD OF LEGISLATORS

Countywide Broadband Assessment. The next committee meeting will be March 4, 2026. Staff continue to manage ARPA- and NBRC-funded infrastructure projects. All ARPA funds obligated to broadband projects (\$2,955,145) have been expended. 56% of the addresses proposed for service have broadband

access; five of 16 funded “lots” are complete. Pole applications and permitting have caused delays; 16 of 33 pole applications are in reconciliation and 6 of 9 DOT permits are under review.

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 and contributed comments on the draft public survey. A public meeting was held in Colton on February 26, 2026.

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

COMMUNITY / ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Community Development Block Grants (CDBG). The County was awarded \$675,000 to continue with its housing rehabilitation program (CHRP 6). DANC and the County signed the sub-recipient agreement, and the contract with OCR is currently in process. Staff is reviewing the waiting list, to begin application process.

GRANTS

County Infrastructure Grant Program. Staff developed a competitive process whereby municipalities could submit proposals for small and moderate-scale priority infrastructure projects that directly or indirectly support economic development, support the creation of housing, contribute to placemaking, or encourage tourism. One project proposal meeting all program criteria was received and the letter of intent was submitted to NYS Empire State Development.

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.

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, 116 systems have been repaired/replaced; \$848,790.73 has been expended; and \$751,209.27 in program funds remain available. Staff from Planning and Public Health are working

together to manage program delivery and administration.

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

PLANNING MATTERS

GIS. Staff has been meeting with Real Property, Emergency Services, IT, and the contractor GeoCove regarding longer term planning and coordination of GIS. 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. The 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. Additionally, staff released the land use regulations in SLC map tool on the county website. This tool highlights municipalities that have specific land use regulations and provides links to the formally adopted regulations, local planning and zoning board websites, and municipal contact information. Staff also plan an update of the Solar Development Mapping Tool.

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

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. Throughout the month, Jason, Matilda and Lisa participated in on-going discussions with the County Treasurer's Office to identify how much bus advertising revenue should be placed annually into the advertising reserve account. On the 5th, Matilda and Lisa conducted a preliminary review of Public Transit's 2026 rollover calculations. A similar meeting was held with the County Treasurer's Office on the 10th to discuss Public Transit's accounts. On the 6th, Matilda attended a monthly meeting with the bus operator and Mobility Manager to discuss the creation of new bus routes. On the 19th, Matilda presented a draft 2025 5311 Annual Report to DOT representatives. Later that day, Matilda participated in a virtual work session with The Arc's IT staff to discuss desired specifications for "plug in and play" display monitors to be installed at the dispatch office, and in select locations throughout the county. On the 19th and 24th, Matilda participated in virtual meetings with Mobility Manager Sonja Jensen to draft the next set of contract budgets to provide transit service to Clarkson University, SUNY Canton, and SUNY Potsdam. On the 23rd, Matilda delivered an overview of the 2025 operating budget to newly hired Public Transit drivers, dispatch staff and newly hired Driver Supervisor at The Arc. On the 24th, Matilda provided an overview of Public Transit's bus advertising program to Jefferson County's Deputy Planning Director. Throughout the second half of the month, Matilda began drafting a Transit Ready project proposal and budget to construct a Public Transit operations and maintenance facility.