St. Lawrence County Planning Office
STAFF WORK REPORT
APRIL 2026



ADVISORY BOARD SUPPORT

Agricultural and Farmland Protection Board (AFPB). The AFPB met on April 2nd at 6 p.m. in the Conference room on the second floor of the Human Services Center. Annual Ag District inclusion period ran from March 1st-March 30th with four properties requested inclusion to the Ag District. The AFPB recommends BOL adding the four parcels totaling 132 acres to the Ag District. Additionally, the Board reviewed the 2025 Crop Data Layer.

County Planning Board (CPB). The CPB met on April 9th in the Conference room on the second floor of the Human Services Center. Two full review projects were discussed; a special use permit for a small rural business in the Town of Stockholm (conditionally approved) and an adaptive reuse permit for a multi-family dwelling in the Town of Norfolk (conditionally approved).

Environmental Management Council (EMC). The EMC met on April 15th, at 6 p.m. in the One Stop Career Center Classroom A on the first floor of the HSC Building. Members of the public spoke in opposition to development of nuclear power in St. Lawrence County. The DEC discussed the court ruling which annulled recent changes to wetland regulations and ramifications. The DEC also discussed the Great Lakes St. Lawrence River Action Agenda and the sub-basin working group. The Council discussed the Hemlock Woolly Adelgid workshop and upcoming PRISM partnership activities. Member gave an update on the FOIL request regarding PFAS testing data on the State's Inactive Landfill Program. Nine of the 10 inactive landfills that have been tested for PFAS exceed Federal and State limits for PFAS in the drinking water. The County has 63 inactive landfills. The next EMC meeting will be May 20th at 6 p.m. in the Nicandri Nature Center Massena.

Fair Housing Task Force. On the 16th, Preston and Matilda presented an Exclusionary Zoning Story Map land use training session to the Village of Potsdam Planning Board. Seven persons participated in the training, including the Village Planning Board, the Village Board, and the Village Code Enforcement Officer. At the end of the month, Matilda and Preston arranged for a guest presentation by Rick Pominville with The Resolution Center at the next Fair Housing Task Force meeting scheduled for May 19th at 10 am.

BOARD OF LEGISLATORS

Countywide Broadband Assessment. One committee meeting was held in April. 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, but there has been significant progress in the last 4-6 weeks.

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

submission is due May 31st for the program year of April 1-thru Mach 31. Staff processing submission from the TMEs. Phase 1 submission for 2026-2027 program year with new trail or reroutes applications is due June 1.

Multi-Use Trails Steering Committee. Staff participated in the monthly meeting of this committee and began planning for the next public meeting, anticipated in June.

COMMUNITY / ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

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

GRANTS

NYS Division of Homeland Security and Emergency Services (DHSES)/Federal Emergency Management Agency's (FEMA's) Hazard Mitigation Assistance (HMA) Program. In April, staff prepared the reimbursement request and closeout reporting for HMPG 4480-0085, the SLC Human Services Center Generator Project. The County was reimbursed 90% of cost for this project ($291,684.24). The project closeout letter is anticipated from FEMA in the near future.

NYS Grant Professionals Consortium. The Grants Manager coordinated an introductory video conference for grant-specific professionals employed by counties in NYS. Seven counties participated in the initial meeting, which was well received. The group is making plans to continue meeting on a monthly basis.

County Department Outreach. In April, the Grants Manager met with one department to discuss current and future needs related to obtaining and managing grant awards. A number of departments have been unresponsive to inquiries.

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. Spring weather has spurred an uptick in new applications.

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

PLANNING MATTERS

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

Town of Colton Comprehensive Plan. The Planning Office signed an MOU with the Town of Colton to serve on the Plan's Oversight Committee. A draft plan was reviewed by Staff and comments submitted to the Committee. The next meeting will be held on May 18th.

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.

New York State Planning Federation Conference. Preston and Jason attended the annual NYPF conference in Cooperstown NY in April. There was much discussion about the wetland regulation annulment and the SEQR review process.

PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION

County Transit System. On the 3rd, Matilda attended a monthly meeting with Public Transit supervisors and the Mobility Manager. During the first half of the month, Matilda participated in virtual work sessions with Mobility Manager Sonja Jensen to draft the next set of college bus service contracts. Contract budgets were presented to SUNY Canton and Clarkson University, and draft contracts for each university were finalized in consultation with the County Attorney. On the 13th, Matilda submitted the 1st quarter STOA report to the Department of Transportation, which indicated a 50% decrease in ridership among Clarkson students compared to the 1st quarter of 2025. Matilda learned that after the fall 2025 term concluded, about 100 international graduate students were unable to return to the US due to a Federal travel ban that is in effect, and approximately 30 international students remain on campus. On the 13th The Arc's Transportation Operations Manager Mark Ladison and Chief Communications Officer Michelle Quinell delivered a presentation at the Board of Legislators' Operations Committee meeting about the constraints of the existing bus garage and dispatch office, and the fiscal impacts to Public Transit's annual operating budget. Later that month, Jason and Matilda presented a resolution authorizing the Chair to sign a Transit Ready NY application to construct a new operation and maintenance facility. During the final week of the month, Matilda arranged to meet with the Town of Massena Highway Superintendent and the Executive Director of the Massena Public Library in May to discuss the installation of a bus shelter in spring 2027.