

St. Lawrence County Planning Office
STAFF WORK REPORT
MAY 2025



ADVISORY BOARD SUPPORT

County Planning Board (CPB). The CPB met on May 8th in the Conference room on the second floor of the HSC Building. Three full review projects were discussed; a site plan review for the food Co-op in the Village of Potsdam (conditionally approved); a special use permit for a gift shop in the Town of Parishville (denied); and an adaptive reuse permit for an event venue in the Town of Norfolk (returned for local action). Board members also received a training on the NYS DEC jurisdictional determination process.

Environmental Management Council (EMC). The EMC met May 21st in the One Stop Career Center Classroom A on the first floor of the HSC Building. At the meeting the Council passed a resolution supporting tree planting on County property, and encouraging a tree management plan. The Council debriefed combined the meeting with the County Planning Board, discussed pending State anticoagulant rodenticide legislation, green storm water management, and dark sky lighting. DEC updates include Deer River Sewage Fungus might be reappearing, water sampling will continue this summer. US Coast Guard is collaborating with the DEC on training for petroleum spill impacts on the St. Lawrence River. The next meeting will be June 18th at 6 p.m. in the HSC.

Fair Housing Task Force. The quarterly Fair Housing Task Force meeting was held on the 20th and included a presentation by Chelsea John from the NYS Division of Human Rights on how the DHR handles housing complaints. There was also a presentation on the conclusion for the exclusionary zoning story map. Staff are looking for a representative from Vecino Group to present to the board in August on the Midtown Plaza project in the Village of Canton.

BOARD OF LEGISLATORS

Countywide Broadband Assessment. Staff continue to manage ARPA-funded infrastructure projects. To date, \$1,346,969.68 of \$2,955,145 has been expended.

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 waste water projects. Twelve municipalities have been awarded a total of \$2,969,563. To date, disbursements have been made totaling \$2,722,800.14. Ten municipalities have expended all their awarded funds and/or completed their project: Madrid, Ogdensburg, Colton, Brasher, DeKalb, Hermon, Heuvelton, Lisbon, Louisville, and Parishville. The remaining two municipalities have drawn down a portion of their awarded funds and expect completion by the end of 2025.

County Snowmobile Grant. St. Lawrence County Planning Office is the local sponsor for the New York State Office of Parks, Recreation, and Historic Places Snowmobile Grant. The County was awarded \$293,840.00 in snowmobile trail maintenance for the 2024-2025 grant year. Staff submitted phase 3 for the final 30% for the 2024-2025 grant year. Staff also submitted Phase 1 application for the 2025-2026 grant year.

County Budget Preparation. Staff is again assisting with the annual preparation of the County Budget.

COMMUNITY / ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Community Development Block Grants (CDBG). Countywide Housing Rehabilitation Program #5 (CHRP 5) is underway. The Development Authority of North Country (DANC), the sub recipient, and the Planning Office have been meeting regularly to discuss progress. Phase I consisted of five projects for low to moderate income households, and all five projects have been completed. Phase II consists of four more projects which have been completed. Staff and DANC reviewed the waiting list and identified three Phase III projects that have been bid on and contracts signed at the end of April. The planned start date for construction is in June. Two more projects have been identified, income qualified, and are currently working on scope of work.

GRANTS

National Grid Brownfield Redevelopment Program. In April, staff submitted an application to the St. Lawrence River Valley Redevelopment Agency (RVRDA) Community Development and Environmental Improvement Program (CDEIP) for \$20,000 to assist in the demolition of the structure located at 18 South Main Street in the Village of Hammond. In May, the SLCIDA recommended an alternative program for this project: National Grid's Brownfield Redevelopment Program. The IDA facilitated a warm handoff and staff worked with National Grid to prepare and submit this alternate request for funding.

Norfolk Historical Association. Staff met with an ad hoc group from Norfolk on May 15th to discuss historic preservation and other grants and strategies for preserving the lenticular truss parabolic bridge constructed in 1886 over the Raquette River in Raymondville.

Septic Repair Program. All projects completed and funds spent under this program since "Round One" have been combined to align the County's program benchmarks with NYS. To date, 92 systems have been repaired/replaced; \$640,790.87 has been expended; and \$959,209.13 in program funds remain available. Staff from Planning and Public Health have teamed up to manage new applications resulting from the April direct-mail postcard sent to approximately 1600 property owners on eligible waterbodies.

NY SWIMS Lifeguard Grant Program. Staff received the NYS contract for this program; the application was submitted in early August 2024. Eight of nine subrecipient agreements sent to participating municipalities have been returned; each will be reimbursed either \$5,555 or \$5,556 for eligible lifeguard recruitment expenses for the 2024 and 2025 summer seasons.

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. New, NY State and County funded, 2024 Orthographic Aerial Photography at 6 inch resolution was received. Staff is working to make the data available to the County and general public. The Overdose Dashboard, a collaboration with Public Health, launched to the public in mid-November. Staff update the OD Dashboard as new data comes in. The Office participated in discussions with IT, Real Property, Emergency Services, Highway, and a GIS consultant from GeoCove regarding the County Enterprise upgrade. Staff reviewed and processed recently released 2024 National Agriculture Imagery Program NAIP, 60 cm, 4 band resolution taken of the County during summer of 2024. Staff created a public facing interactive web map, identifying property owners that are eligible to participate in the Septic Repair Program, accessible on our website.

Town of Colton Comprehensive Plan. The Planning Office signed an MOU with the Town of Colton to participate on the Plan's Oversight Committee. Staff will meet with Colton again in June.

Local Planning and Zoning Board Training May 29th. Staff hosted a training for local planning and zoning officials on Thursday, May 29th from 6:30 p.m. – 8:30 p.m. in the HSC second-floor conference room. The agenda included a presentation on the new NYS DEC freshwater wetland regulations and planning and zoning decisions.

PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION

County Transit System. Throughout the month, Matilda coordinated with Joe Prashaw in the Buildings and Grounds Department and Ryan Herron with the County Highway Department to finalize the installation of the bus shelter at the Human Services Center. Bus service began at the shelter on Wednesday, May 14th and a ribbon cutting was held on the 19th.



Left to Right: Joe Prashaw, Director of Government Services; Don Chambers, Highway Superintendent; Tom Nichols, Republican Elections Commissioner; Lynn Pietroski, The Arc Chief Executive Officer; Matilda Larson, Planner III; Sonja Jensen, Mobility Manager; Joe Lightfoot, District 3; John Gennett, District 13; Larry Denesha, Vice-Chair; Rick Perkins, District 7; Dan Fay, District 9; Lisa Woodard, Deputy Clerk; Ruth Doyle, County Administrator; Mark Ladison, The Arc Transportation Supervisor

Also throughout the month, Matilda held virtual meetings with The Arc Transportation Supervisor, STOA Clerk and the County Mobility Manager to receive updates on public transit drivers' transition to digital recordkeeping using mobile data terminals. The transition is anticipated to be complete by Monday, June 2nd. To assist with the transition, Matilda met with drivers to review the current year operating budget and to understand how trip and miles records are used to prepare STOA reports, which is the largest source of revenue to pay for bus operations. On the 7th, Matilda and Ellen met with The Arc's STOA Clerk to review the daily protocol for recording farebox revenue. On the 8th,

Matilda held a virtual meeting with the Transportation Supervisor, Garage Supervisor and Mobility Manager to schedule visits to school district transportation facilities in the county this summer, and to schedule tours of facilities elsewhere in the state in September. On the 8th, Matilda and Ellen began calculating 2026 revenues and expenses for public transportation services. Matilda presented these draft figures to DOT staff on the 23rd. On the 13th, Matilda, the Transportation Supervisor and Mobility Manager reviewed and verified the number of buses available, and current driver roster for route planning purposes. On the 14th, Matilda, Mark and Sonja presented a draft budget to Clarkson University for summer bus service. On the 20th, Matilda met with VTC staff to review the current Mobility Management contract and to discuss items for consideration in future contracts. On the 21st, Matilda met with VTC's Jefferson County staff to discuss their draft RFP for bus operations, and identified how to project bus operating expenses and revenues. On the 22nd, Matilda and Ellen attended the Public Transit Task Force meeting, which focused on finalizing revisions to a draft survey questionnaire that the Mobility Manager will distribute to the public in June. On the 27th, Matilda participated in a virtual meeting with Saratoga Springs staff to prepare an outline for a presentation scheduled for June 10th in Malta.