

St. Lawrence County Planning Office
STAFF WORK REPORT
JULY 2025



ADVISORY BOARD SUPPORT

Agricultural and Farmland Protection Board (AFPB). Staff is planning the Agricultural Tour for the Board of Legislators scheduled on August 15, 2025 9 a.m. - 2p.m. The planned tour includes Greenwood Dairy, Canton Apples, Bourdeau Brothers, and CCE. Invitations have been sent out and bus reservation has been confirmed. Staff is working on arranging catering and an informational packet. For the annual ag district report, staff is working on the environmental assessment. The next AFPB meeting is scheduled for 6 p.m. on Oct 2nd in the conference room on the second floor of the Human Services Center (HSC) building.

County Planning Board (CPB). The CPB met on June 10th in the Conference room on the second floor of the HSC Building. Two full review projects were discussed; a two-lot subdivision in the Town of Waddington (conditionally approved); and a two-lot subdivision in the Town of Macomb (returned for local action). Board members also received training on data centers and subdivision review considerations.

Environmental Management Council (EMC). The EMC met July 16th in the One Stop Career Center Classroom A on the first floor of the HSC Building. At the meeting the Council discussed logistics for the Wanakena meeting at the Ranger School which was rescheduled for the September meeting. The DEC gave an update on the status of the Deer River situation. The Notice of Complete Application for the draft SPDES permit was published in the Environmental News Bulletin. North Country Dairy has begun to dredge and dewater sludge from the waste lagoons that has accumulated. The dried sludge will be tested for contaminants which will determine how they are to dispose of it. Two clear cuts on State Forest land that will result in less than 30% basal area of tree canopy is planned in Town of Edwards, a 16 acre lot and an 18 acre lot. The planned cut is to remove stressed Scotch pine and blow downs with plantings to encourage regeneration with monitoring at one, three, and five years. The Town of Oswegatchie has an approved pesticide application to apply "clearcast" herbicide targeting water chestnut along 17 acres of the Oswegatchie River and 9 acres along Lisbon Creek. The Council discussed a wetland regulations public service announcement, Invasive Species Management Plan, and PFAS primer. The next meeting will be September 17th at 6 p.m. at the Ranger School in Wanakena.

Fair Housing Task Force. On the 9th, Preston met with Matilda, Jason and Heidi to review the first draft of his conclusion for Inclusionary Zoning Story Map that he is scheduled to finalize this fall.

BOARD OF LEGISLATORS

Countywide Broadband Assessment. A project meeting with SLIC and one committee meeting was held in July. Staff continue to manage ARPA-funded infrastructure projects. To date, \$1,406,758.20 of \$2,955,145 has been expended, and 53% of the addresses proposed for service have broadband access. Staff also responded to a request from NYS ConnectALL regarding cellular coverage in the County.

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 were 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 (OPRHP) Snowmobile Grant. The County was awarded \$293,840.00 in snowmobile trail maintenance for the 2024-2025 grant year. The OPRHP approved phase 3. Staff submitted vouchers to pay the remaining 30% to the trail maintenance entities (TME). Staff is working on Phase 2 of the 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 1 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. Three more households were identified for phase III, with one complete and two expected completions by first week of August. Two more projects for phase IV have been identified, income qualified, and written scopes of work developed. The bids were opened on July 31st and contracts will be signed soon. Staff have begun the application process for CHRP 6 with a due date of September 19th.

GRANTS

NYS Empire State Development County Infrastructure Grant Program. The County was notified of an award of \$500,000 for a stormwater management project. \$50,000 for hardening of the Courthouse Complex, and \$450,000 for the Village of Canton's \$6.2+ million stormwater infrastructure project.

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, 95 systems have been repaired/replaced; \$684,615.87 has been expended; and \$915,384.13 in program funds remain available. Staff from Planning and Public Health are working together to manage program delivery and administration. To increase awareness and promote participation in the program, staff delivered brief overviews of funding availability at town board meetings in: Gouverneur, Hermon, Lisbon, Morristown, Canton, Fine, Hammond, Louisville, Rossie, Fowler, and Waddington.

NY SWIMS Lifeguard Grant Program. Subrecipient agreements with the nine participating municipalities are fully executed; the County awaits receipt of the fully executed NYS contract. Once the NYS contract is received, participating municipalities may request reimbursement for eligible 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. Emergency Services reached out for a large print out map identifying railroad crossings throughout the County. NY State and County funded, 2024 Orthographic Aerial Photography at 6 inch resolution was received. Staff created a geodatabase that housed the imagery as well as created pyramids, tiles, and calculated statistics that allows fast and efficient loading and viewing of the imagery. Because the resulting file was so large (1.65 TB), staff worked with IT and placed it on a special server where it will be available to multiple departments.

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 August.

PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION

County Transit System. Throughout the month, Matilda worked with the County Attorney and the Purchasing Office to finalize Requests for Proposals for bus operations, and for Mobility Management services. Since June, Matilda partnered with the bus operator and Mobility Manager Sonja Jensen to update Public Transit's Passenger Code of Conduct; the revised code went into effect on the 14th. On the 15th, Matilda submitted the 2nd quarter State Transportation Operating Aid (STOA) report which reported the transit system traveled 230,574 miles and provided 38,579 trips from April to June.

On the 17th, Matilda, Sonja and Transportation Supervisor Mark Ladison visited bus facilities at Madrid Waddington Central School, Norwood Norfolk Central School and Salmon River Central School. On the 21st, Matilda and Sonja virtually met with staff from the St. Regis Mohawk Tribe about planned revisions to Routes 70A and 70B which provide service between Massena and Akwesasne. On the 23rd, vendor Passio was on site to install and troubleshoot equipment on six buses. On the 24th, Matilda, bus operations staff, and Sonja held a virtual meeting with representatives from SUNY Canton, SUNY Potsdam and Clarkson University to discuss the restart of Routes 67, 68 and 69 on August 1st; dates of bus service during the academic year; and minor changes to bus schedules. At the end of the month, Matilda worked with the County Attorney to draft and finalize one-year contract extensions for bus service with SUNY Canton and Clarkson. Matilda also prepared and submitted a 4th draw request for funds related to the installation of the bus shelter at the Human Services Center. On the 25th, Matilda participated in a virtual meeting with an architectural and engineering firm to discuss plans to apply for State funds to construct a transportation center.