St. Lawrence County Planning Office
STAFF WORK REPORT
JULY 2026



Staff Change: Preston Santimaw left service with the Planning Office at the end of July. Preston was a wonderful staff member for more than 3 years and he will be greatly missed. Staff wish Preston all the best with his future as he relocates to Colorado.

ADVISORY BOARD SUPPORT

Agricultural and Farmland Protection Board (AFPB). The AFPB did not meet in July.

County Planning Board (CPB). The CPB met on July 9th in the Conference room on the second floor of the Human Services Center. Two full review projects were discussed; a use variance for a home occupation in the Town of Louisville (returned for local action) and a site plan review for a cell tower in the Town of Lisbon (returned for local action). The board also received a training on determining project application completeness in which board members in attendance received 1 hour of training credits.

Environmental Management Council (EMC). The EMC met on July 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 discussed the Star Lake Protectors Association. The DEC reported a captive deer escape in Lisbon, Empire State Mines submitted application for graphite mine at their Fowler location. Regarding the issue with Deer River the DEC have sampled 22 miles of Deer River and Saint Regis River waiting on results, conference with parties scheduled for July 19th. Council member expressed concern about EMS responding to an accidental SOS from iPhone on High Rock in the Forest Preserve, driving up the trail. Member expressed need for Emergency Service to communicate with DEC Forest Rangers for Emergency calls in the Park. Department of Public Service announced proposed clean energy zones to expediate clean energy development with host community benefits packages. Member reported on MUT public input session. An APIPP event called Lake Protectors in-person training for aquatic invasive species identification is scheduled for Aug 11, 5-7 pm in Cranberry Lake. Council plans to combine that event with the EMC picnic. The Council discussed a wild parsnip public service announcement on the dangers of the plant to be submitted to local newspapers. The next EMC meeting will be September 16th at 6 p.m. in the Human Services Center in Canton.

Fair Housing Task Force. Preston drafted and distributed a press release announcing a vacancy on the advisory board after James Galasinski announced he was moving out of the area. An interested candidate contracted the office and submitted a Biodata sheet for the County Board of Legislators' consideration. Matilda assisted a tenant in obtaining the name and contact information of a property management group in order to file a complaint about experiencing harassment from a neighboring tenant, and retaliatory action by the building manager.

BOARD OF LEGISLATORS

Countywide Broadband Assessment. 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. Staff

facilitated one committee meeting, attended one ConnectALL webinar and continued to track permitting issues (NYSDOT, National Grid, Verizon) in July. The next committee meeting will be August 26, 2026.

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. Received approval from the State on Phase Three, 30% award of $106,095 paid to the Trail Maintenance Entities, with an additional $13,735 paid to County for administration, and an additional $1,866 for the Pilot GPS Tracker Program.

Multi-Use Trails Steering Committee. Staff participated in the monthly meeting of this committee.

Home Consortium Board. Staff, along with 2 members of the public have a seat on the Home Consortium Administrative Board. The Board meet recently to discuss a major change in how the program would be administered. The group determined that revisions were necessary and agreed to undertake an administrative shift from DANC to Jefferson County, on a trial basis. The intent of the shift is to make the funding more equitable across the three-county consortium service area.

COMMUNITY / ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Community Development Block Grants (CDBG). The County was awarded $675,000 to continue with its housing rehabilitation program (CHRP 6). Six houses were inspected as part of Phase 1, with two houses deemed ineligible for the grant. Four of the houses are moving forward with environmental review and development of scopes of work. Phase 2 applications have been sent to eligible households on the waiting list, waiting for return submission.

NYS HOME Program. Staff is exploring a possible application to NYS HOME for a Mobile and Manufactured Housing Replacement Program.

GRANTS

NYS Division of Criminal Justice Services STOP (Services, Training, Officers, and Prosecutors) Violence Against Women Formula Grant Program. Staff worked with the Office of the District Attorney to prepare and submit an application requesting $75,000 to this program.

U.S. DOJ Office on Violence Against Women: FY 2026 Rural Domestic Violence, Dating Violence, Sexual Assault, and Stalking Grant Program (Rural Grant Program). Staff worked with the Office of the District Attorney to prepare and submit an application requesting $700,000 to this program.

NYS Office of Victim Services Victims of Crime Act (VOCA) Victim Assistance Grant Program. The Grants Manager worked with the Office of the District Attorney to prepare and submit this application in March. In July, the Office was notified of a two-year award totaling $503,091.

Septic Repair Program. This program has repaired/replaced 132 septic systems to date; $993,884.68 has been expended, and $606,115.32 in program funds remain available. Staff from Planning and Public Health are working together to manage program delivery and administration. The award letter for $400,000 in Round 5 funds was received in July; a contract is anticipated in the near future.

NYS Grant Professionals Consortium. This is an informal monthly meeting of grant-specific professionals employed by counties in NYS. Its purpose is to share information and discuss emerging issues related to State and Federal funding. In July, discussion centered around uncertainty in Federal and State funding.

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 have 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. County Planning Board review of the Plan will be undertaken in August.

Village of Norwood Comprehensive Plan. Work continues on the preparation of the Plan.

New York State County Planning Directors Association. Jason serves 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. County comprehensive plans were discussed at the July meeting.

Massena in Motion, the Massena (Village) BOA. Staff is serving on the steering committee for the Massena Brownfield Opportunity Area (BOA) Project; staff attended one meeting in July.

FEMA Flood Insurance Rate Maps (FIRM). On the 22nd, staff attended an overview and consultation session at the County Legislative Chambers on FEMA's updated Flood Rate Insurance Maps for St. Lawrence County. Later that afternoon, Matilda attended FEMA's open house at the Lisbon Town Hall.

PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION

County Transit System. During the first half of the month Matilda participated in a handful of virtual meetings with vendors and consultants who were interested in learning more about the County's recent microtransit award. On the 7th, Matilda, Jason and Lisa presented a draft 2027 operating budget that was accepted by the County Budget committee. Matilda reviewed this budget with staff from The Arc and VTC on the 23rd. On the 9th, Matilda participated in a virtual work session with public transit staff and Passio representatives to prepare for the on-site installation of technology in eight buses that were delivered earlier this year, and to troubleshoot equipment in bus 624. On the 11th, Lenzy Williams presented a day-long driver safety training to 22 persons in attendance. On the 13th, Matilda communicated with Kajeet to obtain a quote to equip seven buses with mobile wifi. Matilda also provided photos of bus 634 to provide to Seifert Graphics to finalize a branding proof, and to obtain quotes to mount vinyl graphics on three diesel buses.

On the 14th, Matilda submitted the 2nd quarter STOA report to the DOT. From April to June, Public Transit provided 29,515 one-way trips and traveled 228,179 miles. Ridership during the 2nd quarter

decreased by 9,064 trips compared to 2nd quarter 2025. The decline in ridership primarily occurred among Clarkson students. Last year, 16,305 Clarkson students rode Public Transit. This spring, their ridership decreased to 6,827 trips. Clarkson's administration informed the office that most international graduate students were unable to return to the US to continue their studies for the spring 2026 term. On the 24th, Matilda met with bus operations staff and the Mobility Manager to review the restart of the college routes on August 3rd; prepare for Passio's installation date; scheduling bus 632 for wrapping and DOT inspection; and tracking driver overtime.