St. Lawrence County Planning Office
STAFF WORK REPORT
August 2026



Staffing Change: In August Heidi Ames transitioned from her role as Grants Manager to the open Planner 2 position. Congratulations Heidi!

ADVISORY BOARD SUPPORT

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

County Planning Board (CPB). The CPB met on August 13th in the 2nd floor conference room of the Human Services Center and took action on five projects: A use variance to locate an Amish-built shed as a seasonal dwelling in Ogdensburg's Residential-Business mixed use district; Colton's Comprehensive Plan; A special use permit to establish an animal shelter / kennel in the Town of Louisville; a use variance to establish a neighborhood center and food pantry at the former Trinity School in the Village of Massena; and site plan review for a United Helpers community center in the Town of Oswegatchie. The use variance in Ogdensburg was denied; the Comprehensive Plan was returned for local action with recommendations, and the remaining three projects were approved with conditions.

Environmental Management Council (EMC). The EMC did not meet in August. Members of EMC participated in an APIPP event called Lake Protector training for aquatic invasive species identification on Aug 11, 5-7 pm in Cranberry Lake. The Council met beforehand to do a boat tour of Cranberry Lake. The Council wrote a wild parsnip public service announcement on the dangers of the plant that was published in 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. This past month Matilda assisted CNY Fair Housing with reserving the Dobisky Center for two presentations scheduled for October 21st and 22nd. Matilda also prepared a second presentation for the FHTF about the County's Mobile Home Assessment, and reviewed plans to apply for mobile home replacement funds. On the 17th, Matilda attended PJ Herne's funeral service in Akwesasne. PJ served as a member of the Task Force from 2023 to spring 2026. PJ regularly attended Fair Housing trainings and meetings; served as Chair of the Board; and was good at asking staff and presenters tough questions and asking what more could be done.

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. 63% of the addresses proposed for service have broadband access; five of 16 funded "lots" are complete. Staff facilitated one committee meeting in August and continue to track project progress.

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. Staff is working on paperwork for Phase Two submission which is due September 1.

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 preparing an application to NYS HOME for a Mobile and Manufactured Housing Replacement Program. The grant application is due September 17th. Staff plans to work with CDP on for program delivery if the grant is awarded.

GRANTS

NYS Division of Homeland Security and Emergency Services (DHSES)/Federal Emergency Management Agency's (FEMA's) Hazard Mitigation Assistance (HMA) Program. Staff submitted additional information, as requested, to DHSES and FEMA for closeout of HMPG 4480-0085, the SLC Human Services Center Generator Project. The County was reimbursed 90% of cost for this project ($291,684.24).

Septic Repair Program. This program has repaired/replaced 135 septic systems to date; $1,021,024.45 has been expended, $578,975.55 in program funds remain available, and 50 projects are pending. 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 NYS contract is anticipated.

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.

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. Staff created maps of fire districts for Emergency Services and provided Board of Elections the digital files.

Town of Colton Comprehensive Plan. The County Planning Board reviewed Colton's draft Comprehensive Plan at their August meeting and returned the project for local action with comments.

Village of Norwood Comprehensive Plan. Work continues on the preparation of the Plan. Staff has processed survey results and SWOT analysis information to be presented to public on September 23rd.

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 August meeting.

Massena in Motion, the Massena (Village) BOA. Staff is serving on the steering committee for the Massena Brownfield Opportunity Area (BOA) Project.

PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION

County Transit System. During the first half of the month, Passio Technologies was on site to install technology in the eight buses delivered earlier this year, and to mount an external camera on the buses to monitor safe deployment of the wheelchair lift when in use. On the 11th Matilda met with VTC's new Outreach Coordinator Jason Donovan and reviewed; the current Mobility Management contract; this year's scope of work; and draft 2027 operating budgets for bus operations; Mobility Management and First Mile Last Mile. On the 13th, Matilda met with Purchasing and Public Health staff to score VTC's First Mile Last Mile proposal. An interview was held with VTC Executive Director on the 26th. On the 14th, Matilda participated in a monthly virtual meeting with DOT staff to provide updates on current projects. During the week of the 17th, Matilda communicated with Cooperative Extension staff on executing new bus advertising agreements for their SNAP-Ed program. On the 19th, Matilda presented a request to the Town of Massena to install a solar-powered bus shelter at the Massena Public Library. On the 20th, Matilda met with Transportation Operations Manager Angela McNatt to review bus assignments to routes. On the 28th, Matilda and Angela McNatt participated in a virtual meeting with Seifert Graphics to establish a timeline for mounting vinyl graphics on eight buses that were delivered earlier in the year.