

St. Lawrence County Planning Office
STAFF WORK REPORT
SEPTEMBER 2025



ADVISORY BOARD SUPPORT

Agricultural and Farmland Protection Board (AFPB). The AFBP did not meet in September. The Annual Ag District Review has been submitted to NYS Ag and Markets. The next AFBP 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. The AFBP will review carbon credits available to farmers, current drought conditions, Farm Credit East 2024 Northeast Dairy Farm Summary and 2025 mid-year outlook, BOL Ag Tour debrief, and updates on solar development.

County Planning Board (CPB). The CPB met on September 11th in the Conference room on the second floor of the HSC Building. Three full review projects were discussed; a site plan review in the Town of Canton (conditionally approved); a BESS Local Law for the Town of Madrid (conditionally approved); and a site plan review in the Town of Hammond (returned for local action). The board also received training on the SLC Exclusionary Zoning Story Map, which the Board unanimously endorsed.

Environmental Management Council (EMC). The EMC met on September 17th in Wanakena at the Ranger School. The council received public comments from the area regarding environmental issues impacting that region of the County. The largest concern was regarding an unauthorized boat launch in the hamlet of Wanakena with illegal parking and aquatic invasive species (AIS). There is no close boat wash station and the boat launch is at the headwaters of Cranberry Lake and so a critical point to prevent AIS into Cranberry Lake. The Council recommended that Cranberry Lake Association participates in New York State Federation of Lake Associations program Citizens Statewide Lake Assessment Program (CSLAP), a citizen science lake monitoring program. The DEC gave an update on Deer River, water chestnut removal from Tibbets creek, and work done on revising the Title 5 permit for Alcoa to address sulfur dioxide emissions in the attainment area around Massena for national air quality standards. The Council reviewed a report on inactive landfill mapping connected with PFAS, and an invasive species management plan. A proposed citizen science monitoring program for specific invasive species that are not already present in our County was also discussed.

Fair Housing Task Force. The Fair Housing Task Force met on September 9th in the One Stop Career Center Classroom A. Mr. Rob Holzman from Vecino Group discussed affordable housing considerations and the Village of Canton Midtown Plaza project; Heather Patton with the Department of Social Services Adult Protective Services Unit discussed emergency housing and the upcoming Code Blue season; Preston discussed the final draft of the SLC Exclusionary Zoning Story Map, which the Task Force unanimously endorsed. The Story Map can be viewed on the [Fair Housing Task Force webpage](#). Sally Santangelo also discussed upcoming Fair Housing training sessions in Massena on October 23rd. These trainings will be open to all and are tentatively scheduled for 1:30 p.m. and 5:30 p.m.

BOARD OF LEGISLATORS

Countywide Broadband Assessment. One committee meeting was held in September. Staff continue to manage ARPA-funded infrastructure projects, which are well underway. To date, \$2,033,458 of \$2,955,145 has been expended, and 53% of the addresses proposed for service have broadband access.

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 \$2,898,327.14. Eleven municipalities have completed their project, and the remaining municipality has 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. Staff submitted Phase 2 of the application for the 2025-2026 grant year on September 1.

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 subrecipient, and the Planning Office have been meeting regularly to discuss progress. Phases I, II, and III, consisting of twelve projects for low to moderate income households, have all been completed. Phase IV is underway, which consists of two more projects. Phase IV will finish out CHRP 5 funds. Staff submitted the application for CHRP 6 on September 17th. On September 23, staff performed on site monitoring of the subrecipient's progress.

GRANTS

National Grid Brownfield Redevelopment Program. Staff submitted a revised proposal to National Grid, with a request for \$28,311 for the demolition of the structure located at 18 South Main Street in the Village of Hammond. A Phase 2 environmental assessment conducted in 2022 identified petroleum contamination on this tax-delinquent property; NYSDEC has advised that the structure come down prior to soil remediation.

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. 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.

NYS Empire State Development County Infrastructure Grant Program. Staff facilitated a project kick-off project with Empire State Development, the Village and the County for this \$500,000 stormwater management project. \$50,000 is for hardening of the Courthouse Complex, and \$450,000 for the Village of Canton's \$6.2+ million stormwater infrastructure project.

Septic Repair Program. To date, 102 systems have been repaired/replaced; \$733,649.73 has been expended; and \$866,350.27 in program funds remain available. Staff from Planning and Public Health are working together to manage program delivery and administration.

NY SWIMS Lifeguard Grant Program. The fully executed NYS contract was received and reimbursement requests from participating municipalities are being collected and processed.

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. The solar development mapping tool is undergoing an update.

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 last meet with the Committee on August 26th and will meet again on October 28th.

PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION

County Transit System. At the beginning of the Month, Matilda, Lisa and Ellen participated in a two-day virtual training session on "Introduction to Government Accounting" by the NYS Office of State Comptroller. Also, during the first week of September, Matilda and Ellen interviewed agencies that submitted proposals to provide Mobility Management services to the County. On the 5th, Matilda and staff from The Arc participated in a virtual meeting with consultant Lenzy Williams to prepare for a day-long Public Transit driver safety training that was delivered at the end of the month. Approximately 30 drivers participated in the event and learned about the dangers of distracted driving, driving while impaired or tired, proper seat belt use and proper securement of wheelchairs and mobility devices of persons with disabilities. On the 12th, Matilda participated in a virtual meeting with Volunteer Transportation Center staff to discuss essential and ideal features of AVL, GPS and GTFS software services for public transit operations. On the 15th, Matilda and Ellen met with The Arc's STOA clerk and accounting staff to review standard procedures for recording daily farebox deposits. Throughout the month, Matilda and Transportation Operations Manager Mark Ladison participated in virtual and in-person information sessions with architectural and engineering firms about plans to construct a new transportation facility that would house Public Transit, First Mile Last Mile and Mobility Management. On the 18th, Matilda, Ellen and Sonja coordinated the Public Transit Task Force meeting where Sonja presented an overview of proposed revisions to Routes 70A and 70B. During the week of the 23rd, Matilda, Mark and Mobility Manager Sonja Jensen toured bus facilities at Sandy Creek, Solvay, Waterloo, Livonia, Albion and Hannibal to identify essential and desirable features to include in a new transportation facility. On the 29th, Matilda and Sonja attended Clarkson University Student Association meeting to review the existing contract budget for Route 68, and recent survey results from the Route's ridership.