*St. Lawrence County Planning Office*
STAFF WORK REPORT
February 2022
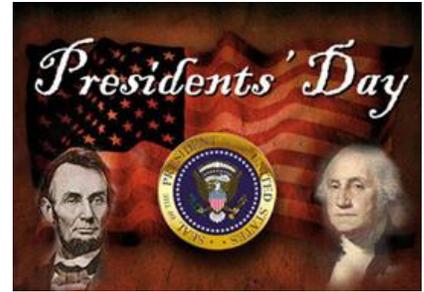
ADVISORY BOARD SUPPORT

Agricultural and Farmland Protection Board. The Agricultural and Farmland Protection Board met on the 3rd via Zoom and adopted criteria for Planning staff to use when processing requests to remove land from an Agricultural District. The Board also suggested candidates Matilda can contact to fill a vacancy on the Board. On the 18th, Matilda participated in a teleconference with Essex County Cooperative Extension staff to discuss how St. Lawrence County conducts its annual agricultural district review process. At the end of the month, Matilda and Lisa finalized and distributed legal notices and maps for the annual review for Agricultural District 1, and the eight-year review for Agricultural District 2 to municipal clerks for posting. A press release announcing the 30-day period to accept requests for modifications was also distributed for publication in local newspapers. On the 28th, Matilda participated in the Department of Agriculture and Markets' Farmland Protection Working Group meeting via WebEx.

County Planning Board (CPB). The CPB met via Zoom on February 10th. Several projects were returned for local action (RFLA). Three full reviews were presented, discussed, and approved or denied with non-binding recommendations and conditions: Town of Madrid, solar array (denied), Town of Louisville, brewery (conditionally approved), and Town of Pierrepont, Battery Energy Storage Systems Law (conditionally approved).
CPB agendas and minutes can be accessed here:
https://www.stlawco.org/Departments/Planning/AdvisoryBoards/CountyPlanningBoard.

Environmental Management Council (EMC). The EMC met on February 16th; instead of a speaker, staff showed a documentary sponsored by NYS DEC: "Uninvited: The Spread of Invasive Species" (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NKh8Lc31rm8).

Staff have created a Facebook page for the EMC. Please check it out at
https://www.facebook.com/St-Lawrence-County-Environmental-Management-Council-105829918672342

Staff are continuing to work with the Black Lake Association with regard to milfoil management at Black Lake. A website for this project is here: https://stlawco.org/node/2777

EAB Task Force. The Emerald Ash Borer Task Force did not meet during February. The next meeting of the EAB Task Force will be held on Friday, April 15th.

Fair Housing Task Force (FHTF). The Fair Housing Task Force met on February 24th. The meeting included discussion about the Emergency Rental Assistance Program (ERAP); the status of eviction proceedings; and the planning of a public event for Fair Housing Month in April.

BOARD OF LEGISLATORS

Countywide Broadband Assessment. Staff continues to work with a BOL committee to develop an implementation plan for the completed broadband study. In February, staff coordinated and participated in two Committee meetings; participated in a broadband webinar; had two working sessions with DANC; prepared letters of support for an application to USDA ReConnect; and prepared comments for the NYS Public Service Commission.

Jones & Laughlin (J&L) Site. There was no scheduled DEC technical conference call in February; DEC has proposed to move from monthly to less frequent calls, but has not yet identified a schedule.

COMMUNITY / ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Community Development Block Grants (CDBG). The Planning Office administers four open grants: the 23rd round of the Direct Homeownership Assistance Program; the third round of its Countywide Housing Rehabilitation Program (CHRP 3); the recently-funded SLC-CARES award to conduct housing rehabilitation for populations vulnerable to COVID-1; and the even more-recently awarded fourth round of the Countywide Housing Rehabilitation program (CHRP 4).

During February, staff held a Public Hearing to inform people about progress made to date with CHRP 3. The Planning Office submitted a Request for Release of Funds to NYS OCR for the SLC-CARES program. Staff submitted the Grant Agreement and associated documents to OCR as part of getting CHRP 4 ready to request a Release of Funds.

Lead Hazard Abatement Program. This $1 million award from the US Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) is providing lead-based paint stabilization, or abatement assistance, to low- and moderate-income households throughout the county. By the end of February, the Planning Office reports that 13 units have been completed, and 5 units are in the construction process, and 9 clients are in an application phase.

Recreation. Staff are actively following a handful of organizations and attending webinars that address developing recreational assets in rural communities.

GEOGRAPHIC INFORMATION SYSTEM

Board of Elections (BOE). Staff assisted the BOE with a project to update election district boundaries to comply with the new legislative districts. Also, this project required geocoding (address finding) registered voter addresses to check their legislative and election district designation.

County Enterprise GIS.
- https://gis.stlawco.org/portal/home/index.html
- GIS Web App: Proposed Solar sites in the County:
  Updated with recent Madrid solar project (Acer Solar).
  https://gis.stlawco.org/portal/apps/View/index.html?appid=6f3d7fb0923448ed90c3385eb0f8a872
- GIS Web Map: 2021 Septic Repair Program Waterbodies with 250' Buffer:
  https://gis.stlawco.org/portal/home/webmap/viewer.html?webmap=d8a8b0c7e637400a9c269323b7670a19

COVID-19 Mapping. Effective the 18th, the daily preparation of new and active COVID19 cases by town and region was discontinued. Planning Office staff continue to assist Public Health with daily confirmation counts.

Emergency Management Services. Staff continue to provide GIS assistance to this department as their GIS workflows evolve. In partnership with SLC Real Property, Staff is assisting with the publication of an address dataset that will be frequently updated and easily accessible for County GIS users.

SLC IDA. Staff is assisting with a project to move and process GIS data from a consultant to the IDA.

GRANTS

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.

Hazard Mitigation Plan, 5-Year Update. Staff are assisting Emergency Services with the required five-year update of the SLC Multi-Jurisdictional All-Hazard Mitigation Plan. In February, staff participated in public meetings to share the draft HMP and gather public input.

Septic Repair Program. The County has funds from the NYS Environmental Facilities Corporation (EFC) to repair or replace deficient septic tanks within 250 feet of the St. Lawrence River in communities west of Ogdensburg, and along the lower portion of the Raquette River (from Norfolk through Massena).

PLANNING MATTERS

Large Scale Solar. Staff is monitoring two projects in the County: [Rich Road Solar and Storage](#) and [North Side Energy Center](#).

Town of Hammond. Staff is assisting with text and dimension updates to their land use regulations.

Town of Potsdam. Staff made changes to the Town's zoning map to reflect a recent zoning change.

Town of Rossie. Staff prepared a draft Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) to revise the Town's existing site plan and subdivision regulations. Over a projected nine month timeline, Staff will assist the Town in all of the needed steps to reach full state land use regulation compliance.

Town of Stockholm. On the 23rd, Matilda participated in a virtual meeting with Town of Stockholm's Supervisor, Assessor, Code Enforcement Office, Planning Board member and land owner to examine a zoning map revision, or text amendments to accommodate additional commercial uses in the Rural District in and around County Routes 49 and 54. Matilda collected and provided satellite, wetland, and soils information for the surrounding area, as well as sample definitions and land use regulations used elsewhere in the county to accommodate agribusinesses, sawmills and billboards.

Website. Lisa and Dakota, with staff input, continue to work on updating/editing the Planning Office page on the County's new website.

- Updates continue to be made for events, meetings and content on some pages.

PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION

County Transit System. On the 4th, Matilda met with Mobility Manager Sonja Jensen and Regional Mobility Manager Frank Doldo to set a meeting agenda for the Public Transit Task Force, which met virtually on the 17th. At that meeting, Matilda reviewed annual and trip counts for the transit system from 2009 to 2021. Between 2017 and 2021, Public Transit's annual trip count grew by 136% and provided 68,576 trips. Last year's total trip count is at 91% of pre-pandemic trips recorded for 2019. In 2022, the system is anticipated to return to its prior level of service and provide 75,000 trips. Also between 2017 and 2021, the total number of miles driven grew by 115% to 975,966 miles.
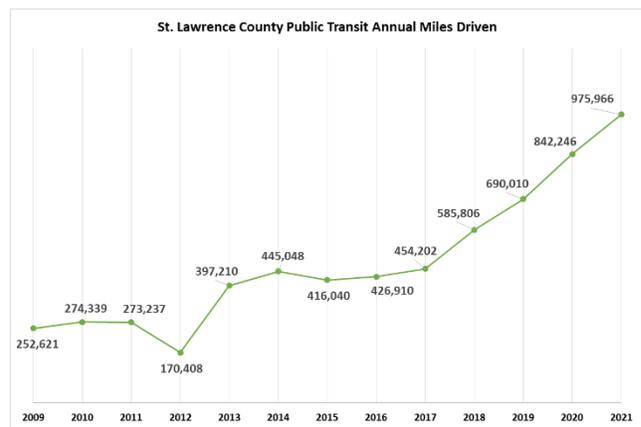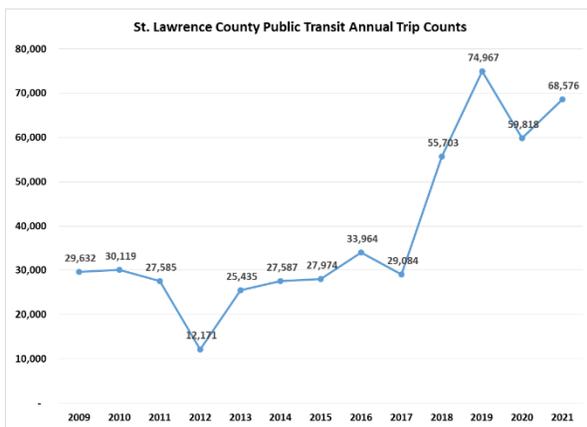
On the 8th, Matilda met with The Arc's financial office by phone to discuss Public Transit's year to date operating expenses for 2021, which will be used when preparing the annual report that is filed with the Department of Transportation. On the 14th, Matilda conducted a monthly review of STOA records at The Arc's Dispatch Office. On the 16th, Matilda, Frank, Sonja, Transit Manager Rena Ryan and senior staff Tim Welpe virtually met with Patrick Massaro from SUNY Canton CREST to discuss how to fill the University's vacancy for a CDL Class C instructor, and how training candidates can satisfy the behind the wheel training requirement. During the last week of the month, Matilda began preparing a Request for Proposals to outfit the Public Transit bus fleet with automatic vehicle location system, security cameras, mobile wifi and automatic voice announcement system.