

St. Lawrence County Planning Office
STAFF WORK REPORT
July 2024



ADVISORY BOARD SUPPORT

Agricultural and Farmland Protection Board. The AFPB last met on April 4. Sam performed an analysis for the eight-year and annual review for Agricultural District 1 and 2 respectively. The AFPB is proposing to consolidate the two Ag Districts into one, reducing the number of eight-year reviews from two to one. The Board of Legislators approved the consolidated District on July 1st. Sam is organizing and preparing the report to be submitted to NYS Ag and Markets.

County Planning Board (CPB). The CPB met on July 11th in the Conference room on the second floor of the HSC Building. No full review projects were discussed, but Staff did offer training on the Rich Road solar energy center final siting permit application and NYSERDA's funding for joint solar/agriculture projects.

Environmental Management Council (EMC). The EMC met on July 17th at 6 p.m. in the One Stop Career Center Classroom A. The Council debriefed the iMap Invasive workshop held on June 29th that was a collaborative effort with SLELO PRISM, Nicandri Nature Center, and the EMC. Twelve participants learned how to report invasive species, which will allow citizen scientists to help monitor for new and emerging invasive species. Eradication of invasives is more cost effective before they become established. The Council continued to receive updates regarding the pollution at the Deer River, and will monitor the situation. Members expressed concerns regarding PFAS in drinking water, based on emerging research and policy updates. Sam arranged a meeting scheduled for August 7th, with professors at Clarkson University regarding the current status of PFAS within the County. The Council is currently reviewing a NYS strategy to implement 30x30, an initiative to conserve thirty percent of NYS land by 2030.

Fair Housing Task Force. Staff have begun preliminary work on an exclusionary zoning analysis for St. Lawrence County population centers. This analysis attempts to find a correlation between poverty levels in zoning districts and permitted uses in those zones. Staff have conducted a GIS zoning analysis and plan to put together an ArcGIS Story Map to illustrate their findings. Staff will present their initial findings to the Task Force at the next meeting on Tuesday, August 27th.

BOARD OF LEGISLATORS

Countywide Broadband Assessment. Staff participated in a WebEx with NYS regarding its pending ConnectALL County Partnerships Program application; awards are anticipated in the near future. In addition, staff facilitated one committee meeting, and met with a legislator to review mapping.

OCF Repurpose Committee. Staff have been assigned to the County's Ogdensburg Correctional Facility Repurpose Committee. An announcement was made in July identifying two prisons that would be closed, one in Washington County and one in Sullivan County.

Raquette River Advisory Council / West Branch St. Regis River Advisory Council. The RRAC and SRRAC met on Thursday, May 30th to discuss initiatives for each river. The RRAC discussed reports on funded projects such as the Stone Valley Maintenance Project by the ADK Mountain club to repair parts of the trail and install new interpretive signs. The board voted to approve funding for this project. The SRRAC discussed a report on a park nature trail in the Town of Parishville for which the council provided funding. The next meetings for these councils will be in the Fall.

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 have been awarded a total of \$2,969,563. To date, disbursements have been made totaling \$1,448,991.64. Five municipalities have expended all their awarded funds: DeKalb, Hermon, Heuvelton, Lisbon, and Louisville. Six other municipalities have drawn down a portion of their awarded funds.

County Snowmobile Grant. St. Lawrence County Planning Office is the local sponsor for the New York State Office of Parks, Recreation, and Historic Places Snowmobile Grant. The County was awarded \$224,568.00 in snowmobile trail maintenance for the 2023-2024 grant year. OPRHP approved the phase 3 submission, and the County received the remaining 30% award that was paid out to the TMEs.

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 (CHRP5) is underway. The Development Authority of North Country (DANC), the subrecipient, and the Planning Office have been meeting regularly to discuss progress. Phase 1 consists of five projects for low to moderate income households. The properties were tested for lead, asbestos, and radon and results have been incorporated into the project scopes. The contracts and legal papers were signed and notarized on July 15th with the contractors, home owners, and DANC. The contractors are scheduled to begin work the last week of July, with work scheduled to be completed by September. We have begun Phase II based on already submitted applications, which involves site visits to assess work requirements.

GRANTS

Bridge NY. Staff was notified of two awards totaling \$7,587,000 from the applications submitted in January 2024. Funds awarded were \$5,796,000 for BIN 3341940, CR 49 over East Branch St. Regis River in the Town of Stockholm; and \$1,791,000 for BIN 3342040, CR 36 over the Grasse River in the Towns of Louisville/Waddington/Madrid.

Community Services. Staff assisted Community Services on two grant applications submitted in early July: one to NYS OASAS RFA #SUPP1018 for Electronic Records (EMR) Statewide Implementation for \$230,000, and one to the U.S. DOJ Bureau of Justice Assistance FY24 Comprehensive Opioid, Stimulant, and Substance Use Site-Based Program (COSSUP) for \$1 million.

NYS SWIMS Lifeguard Grant Program. \$50,000 is available to St. Lawrence County under this program. Nine municipalities responded to the County's inquiry regarding participation. An application is being

prepared and is due August 9, 2024.

Septic Repair Program. The new contract with NYS Environmental Facilities Corporation (EFC) with an expanded list of eligible waterbodies is now in place. In addition, staff have worked with Public Health to transition program delivery from the North Country Housing Council. Pending projects are being advanced; to date, 38 projects have been completed.

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. Sam has been working with the SLC Public Health Department on a public facing GIS dashboard displaying Overdose data. Sam attended a work session to review and provide feedback for the A2A mapping program that identifies wildlife corridors to connect the Adirondack Park and the Algonquin Park in Canada. Sam plans to incorporate this information into the Solar Development Mapping Tool.

Village of Heuvelton Comprehensive Plan. Staff facilitated a public meeting at the Heuvelton Central School cafeteria on Wednesday, July 17th. New participants attended to give their thoughts on future goals for the Village and written sections of the Comprehensive Plan. Staff will continue to put sections of the plan together and will present them at the final public meeting scheduled for Wednesday, September 4th at Pickens Hall.

Town of Hammond Comprehensive Plan Update. Staff is reviewing and updating base components of the 2013 Joint Comprehensive Plan.

Town of Morristown Comprehensive Plan Review. Heidi attended the July 9th Town meeting to provide background information on the method and purpose of updating the goals and actions matrix from the Town's 2019 Comprehensive Plan. The Town Board adopted the updated matrix as an addendum to the 2019 Plan.

PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION

County Transit System. In preparation for a 5311 audit in September, Matilda continues to hold weekly virtual work sessions to complete a 131-page questionnaire for the program auditors. Throughout July, Matilda communicated with representatives from SUNY Canton and SUNY Potsdam on the design and mounting of new advertisements for newly delivered buses 635 and 636. During the first half of the month, Matilda coordinated with Matthews Bus for the delivery of buses 634 and 637 to install mobile wifi equipment by Kajeet, which took place from the 17th to the 19th. Throughout the month, Matilda coordinated with transit consultant Lenzy Williams to prepare for his site visit and the delivery of supervisor training for The Arc's Transportation Supervisor and Transportation Superintendent on the 25th and 26th. On the 10th and 22nd, Matilda participated in virtual meetings with college representatives, Mobility Manager Sonja Jensen and Transportation Supervisor Rena Ryan to discuss bus schedule revisions and route maps in time for the restart of Routes 67, 68 and 69 on August

1st. On the 23rd, Matilda held a virtual meeting with staff from The Arc and VTC about the preparation of a funding application to design and implement microtransit service in the county. On the 25th, Matilda participated in a virtual meeting with National Renewable Energy Lab representative Mike Jones to discuss the type of technical assistance they can provide to transit operations with fleet transition planning. Lastly, throughout the month Matilda prepared four resolutions for the County Board of Legislators' consideration: Signing a DOT contract for operating funds; signing a contract for capital funds; authorizing the Chair to sign a microtransit funding application; and modifying the 2024 budget to account for increased STOA, Federal 5311, and Mobility Management funding awarded to the County.