

St. Lawrence County Planning Office
STAFF WORK REPORT
November 2022



ADVISORY BROAD SUPPORT

County Planning Board (CPB). The CPB met in person and via Zoom on November 10th. Three full review projects were presented: a storage facility at the Massena Centre Mall; a 20 MW solar array in the Town of Clifton; and a 5 MW solar array in the Town of Oswegatchie. Due to the lack of a quorum no action was taken on the projects. Staff returned all for local action with the Staff/Board recommendations.

Environmental Management Council (EMC). The EMC met on November 16th for the last time in 2022 (the EMC is required to hold 10 meetings per year). The scheduled speaker was unable to present; instead, those in attendance discussed how the EMC may be able to operate with reduced staffing from the Planning Office. (The EMC has had 2 planning Office staff supporting its work. One staffer has left for another job; the other staff will retire in mid-2023. To date, in spite of recruiting efforts, the Planning Office has not been able to replace the staffer who left. It is an open question how reduced staffing will affect the work of the EMC.)

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>

EAB Task Force. The Emerald Ash Borer Task Force did not meet in November. The next meeting of the Task Forces will be on January 20, 2023.

Fair Housing Task Force. The Task Force met virtually and in person on the 17th. Larson and Tenbusch delivered a summary of the Fair Housing stakeholders sessions held in October, and the Task Force heard a presentation on services that are available through the State Attorney General's Office in Watertown. Tenbusch summarized his presentation at a NNY Landlord Association meeting on October 25th, and his attendance at a homelessness meeting at the Dobisky Center on October 27th. Larson presented an overview of 3rd quarter housing statistics published by the NYS Association of Realtors. The Task Force also agreed to meeting dates for 2023.

BOARD OF LEGISLATORS

SLC Water/Waste Water Infrastructure American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) Funding Initiative. In November, 15 applications from 14 municipalities were received for this program. \$3 million in funding has been allocated by the BOL; requests totaled \$6.9 million. Staff participated in the scoring and review process, along with other County staff. Funding recommendations are anticipated to be forwarded to the ARPA Committee in December.

Countywide Broadband Assessment. Staff continue to work with a BOL committee to develop an implementation plan for the completed broadband study. In November, staff conducted four working group sessions, one ISP discussion, facilitated two broadband committee meeting and participated in

NACo's Broadband Bootcamp (a three-part, six-hour webinar series). A great deal of effort has refined the list of unserved addresses in the County to under 1500.

Jones & Laughlin (J&L) Site. No DEC technical conference calls have been held since March 24th 2022.

COMMUNITY / ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Community Development Block Grants (CDBG).

The Planning Office currently operates two awards that address housing rehabilitation needs:

- SLC-CARES award to conduct housing rehabilitation for populations vulnerable to COVID-19. During October, the Planning Office requested, and was granted, a six-month extension until mid-March 2023 in order to complete the grant.
- The fourth round of the Countywide Housing Rehabilitation program (CHRP 4).

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 November, the Planning Office reports that 19 units have been completed, no units are under construction, and 14 clients are in an application phase.

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 November, the plan was approved by FEMA; a resolution detailing County approval will be adopted in December.

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) and the Little River (Towns of Clifton and Fine). To date, 19 projects have been completed.

PLANNING MATTERS

Large Scale Solar. Staff are monitoring two projects in the County: [Rich Road Solar and Storage](#) and [North Side Energy Center](#). Representatives from the Rich Road Project gave a presentation to the County Administrator, a County Legislator and Planning Staff on the 17th.

Town of Colton. On the 15th Matilda and Jason met with Colton Planning Board member Kirke Perry to review the County Planning Board's conditions of approval to the Town's Solar Energy Facilities regulations.

Town of Rossie. Staff attended a public hearing for the Town of Rossie's comprehensive revision of its land use regulations on November 3rd. The Town Board formally adopted the document on that same night. A final version of the document was approved the same night.

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

PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION

County Transit System. On the 1st, Matilda reviewed 5311 funding application budgets with project partners from The Arc and Volunteer Transportation Center, Inc. On the 2nd, Matilda and Regional Mobility Manager Frank Doldo virtually reviewed the application budgets with the County's DOT representative. On the 4th, the application was delivered to the County Board Office for the Chair's signature and electronically submitted to the DOT on the 11th. On the 7th, Matilda reviewed the application budgets with Jason and Lisa, and with The Arc's Fiscal Officer on the 18th. On the 9th, Matilda met with the County Treasurer and Deputy Treasurer to review a revised 5311 annual report for 2021 to accept ARPA and CRRSSA funds for eligible operating expenses. On the 16th, Matilda virtually met with Clinton County Planning staff to discuss St. Lawrence County's Mobility Management contract with Volunteer Transportation Center, Inc., and reviewed how the office maintains a spreadsheet of public transit operating expenses with the fiscal office at The Arc. On the 16th the DOT awarded the County \$309,792 of Accelerated Transit Capital funding. Jason prepared a resolution to accept the award and modify the County's 2022 budget. On the 17th, Matilda participated in the monthly Public Transit Task Force Meeting. On the 18th, Matilda and the Mobility Management team participated in a virtual meeting to discuss transportation needs for athletes and spectators of the World University Games. On the 23rd, Matilda met with the DSS Commissioner, County Highway Engineer, Buildings and Grounds Director, and Village of Canton Superintendent to review the proposed installation of a bus shelter in front of the Harold B. Smith Building on Judson Street.