

St. Lawrence County Planning Office
STAFF WORK REPORT
July 2021



ADVISORY BOARD SUPPORT

County Planning Board (CPB). The Planning Board met in person on July 8th. Several projects were returned for local action (RFLA). There was further discussion on two site plan approvals in the Village of Massena and a food pantry in the Town of Colton. Three full reviews were presented, discussed, and returned with recommendations: Town of Pitcairn (Subdivision), Town of Morristown (Site plan (Dollar General)), and Village of Potsdam (Sign permit (Clarkson)). During the State of the County Roundtable there was discussion on the proposed large scale solar projects (Rich Road Solar and North Side Energy Center) and a pending lawsuit, in regards to large scale solar, against the Office of Renewable Energy Siting (ORES).

Environmental Management Council (EMC). The EMC met on July 21st. The speaker at the meeting was Dr. Susan Powers, the Spence Professor of Sustainable Environmental Systems, and the Director of the Institute for a Sustainable Environment, at Clarkson University. She discussed her project to “increase community awareness and stakeholder engagement in order to develop a plan for a community-scale food waste management program in Potsdam.”

Staff are working with the Black Lake Association with regard to milfoil management at Black Lake. After meeting in May with Michelle Gallagher and Mike Kotash of BLA, the EMC’s Invasive Species and Watershed Management Committees met together in July to determine next steps. A letter was drafted and sent to Mr. Joe Lightfoot and Mr. James Reagen; it stated that the EMC supported a request for funds from the Black Lake Association to pursue milfoil remediation. The letter also committed the EMC to work with local governments and stakeholder groups in the Black Lake area to update the 13-year-old Milfoil Management Plan, and to develop a Watershed Management Plan for Black Lake.

Fair Housing Task Force (FHTF). On the 26th, Matilda forwarded an alleged Fair Housing violation to CNY Fair Housing. On the 27th, Matilda referred an individual to Legal Aid Society of Northeastern NY for an alleged lease violation.

BOARD OF LEGISLATORS

Countywide Broadband Assessment. Staff are working with DANC and a consultant to assess the deficiencies throughout the County. The assessment has been completed and a final report is pending. Staff is actively evaluating opportunities for infrastructure funding and in discussion with internet service providers and neighboring Counties regarding buildout strategies.

COVID Response. Mapping of COVID cases continues on a twice weekly basis (see below).

Jones & Laughlin (J&L) Site. The regular technical conference call with DEC for July was cancelled; calls will resume in August.

COMMUNITY / ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Community Development Block Grants (CDBG). The Planning Office administers three open grants: the Septic Tank Replacement Assistance Program (STRAP); the 23rd round of the Direct Homeownership Assistance Program, and the third round of its Countywide Housing Rehabilitation Program (CHRP 3). During July, the Planning Office learned that its application for FY 2020 CDBG funding was not successful.

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. In July, the Planning Office is pleased to announce that 7 units have been completed, and 8 units are in process.

GEOGRAPHIC INFORMATION SYSTEM

County Enterprise GIS.

- <https://gis.stlawco.org/portal/home/index.html>

COVID-19 Mapping. Since March 31, 2020, Dakota and Matilda have prepared daily maps for the County's Public Health Department to track positive, active, and regional cases of COVID-19. Effective July 1st, these maps are now prepared twice a week on Mondays and Thursdays.

Emergency Management Services. Staff continue to provide GIS assistance to this department as their GIS workflows evolve.

Licensing. Staff is investigating options for enhanced GIS tools and extensions for future use.

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. Staff participated in a project meeting on July 8th.

Septic Repair Program. The County has been awarded \$340,000 to repair or replace deficient septic tanks along specified waterbodies in the County. In June, the subrecipient agreement was signed; the fully executed NYS contract was received on June 22nd, and an outreach plan was developed.

2021 Consolidated Funding Application (CFA). Staff worked with County Highway to prepare and submit two applications for culvert repair/replacement projects to the NYSDEC's Water Quality Improvement Program (WQIP), one on County Route 24 in Pierrepont and another on County Route 27 in Russell.

Other. Staff assisted Cornell Cooperative Extension of St. Lawrence County in the submission of second round application materials to the Mother Cabrini Health Foundation. Funds are requested to support the Fruit and Vegetable Prescription (FVRx) program and Farm to Community Produce Distribution (F2C) program.

PLANNING MATTERS

CLEAR. Staff participated in the Coastal Lakeshore Ecological and Resiliency (CLEAR) initiative Steering Committee meeting on July 28th. The goal of this initiative is to help municipalities along the St. Lawrence River shoreline be better prepared to manage high and low water levels.

Large Scale Solar.

- **Rich Road Solar:** Staff is collecting publically available informational resources for this project to better understand its impacts.
- **North Side Energy Solar Project.** The application process is proceeding for this project.

Town of Fowler Solar Law Update. Staff assisted the planning board chair with understanding a preliminary review and a subdivision determination.

Town of Hammond Land Use Regulations Revisions. Staff presented the land use regulations options at the first public informational meeting on July 13th. Soon thereafter, Staff updated the draft dual district land use regulations to share with the public. A public hearing is scheduled for August 11th during the monthly Town Board meeting. Also, Staff assisted with the public hearing notice and completion of SEQR documentation.

Town of Pierrepoint. Staff assisted the planning board chair with adapting changes, from CPB review and their attorney, to their solar law.

Town of Potsdam. Staff assisted the code enforcement officer with: SEQR documentation for zoning map change, map creation from the DANC IMA, and project review preparation/submission.

Village of Waddington. Staff attended the Village's Board meeting on July 6th to present a proposal for revision to the Village Zoning Code. A MOU was left with the Village for review and approval.

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

- Updates were made for events, meetings and content on some pages.
- Staff participated in a training for the County's new intranet digital space.

PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION

County Transit System. On the 6th, St. Lawrence University Public Interest Corps Summer Intern Aubrey Ahern, Matilda, Mobility Manager Frank Doldo and Transit Manager Rena Ryan met to review and revise bus schedules for posting online. On the 12th, Matilda and Aubrey conducted a virtual STOA

check of The Arc's June mileage and trip numbers. Matilda also met with Frank on the 12th to review how Route 70A and 70B's schedules would be adjusted due to a driver shortage. On the 13th, Matilda provided a five-hour training session to Oswego County's Mobility Manager and Planning Staff on the administration of public transit programs. On the 14th, Aubrey presented transit survey results to Matilda and Frank. On the 15th, Aubrey rode Route 67 and discussed the order of stops with the driver to see how the schedule could be improved. On the 16th, Matilda and Lisa reviewed year to date bus wrap revenue collection. That same day, Matilda informed the DOT about the suspension of Routes 71 and 72 due to a driver shortage, and reducing the schedule for Routes 70A and 70B effective August 1st. On the 20th, Aubrey, Matilda and Frank held a work session to prepare a 2022 operating budget for public transit. On the 21st, the State Department of Transportation awarded the County funds to purchase up to five Lot G buses, bus equipment, shop equipment, and to install a bus shelter in front of the Harold B. Smith Building. Since then, Matilda has been working with DOT staff and County Purchasing Office staff to satisfy procurement requirements to secure Purchase Orders for the buses. On the 26th and 27th, Matilda and Aubrey participated in interviews with VTC's Mobility Management candidates. On the 28th, Matilda and Frank held a virtual meeting with College Connector partners to discuss resuming service for Routes 67, 68 and 69 on Monday, August 2nd. Also on the 28th, Matilda and Aubrey reviewed the final GTFS product to upload Public Transit's current routes to Google Maps.