

*St. Lawrence County Planning Office*  
**STAFF WORK REPORT**  
*July 2020*



**NOTICE:**

**St. Lawrence County shut down normal operations on Wednesday March 18<sup>th</sup>, in order to deal with the State of Emergency caused by the COVID 19 pandemic. On Monday, June 29<sup>th</sup>, the Planning Office resumed operations at 100% staffing capacity, and is open to the public by appointment.**

**ADVISORY BOARD SUPPORT**

*Agricultural and Farmland Protection Board (AFPB).* Throughout the month Matilda forwarded electronic announcements to Board members about COVID19-related services and programs that are available to the farming community and general public.

*County Planning Board (CPB).* The Planning Board met online via Zoom on the 9<sup>th</sup> and heard two full review projects: A seven-lot waterfront subdivision in the Town of Brasher, and zoning text revisions for the Town of Louisville. Both projects were approved with conditions.

*Environmental Management Council (EMC).* The EMC met in July via Zoom. There was no speaker. However, the EMC's four standing committees had each met during the month for the first time since March, and made reports.

In addition, the EMC is continuing to keep its "Earth Day 50" program open. As noted in June's Work Report,

As part of our Earth Day 2020 planning, we would like to invite individuals and environmental groups from around the County / around the region to submit something in writing, photo(s), or audio or video format, about their impressions about Earth Day, or about how they, or their group have developed during this 50-year period since the first Earth Day (accomplishments; goals for the future; challenges that lay ahead; etc.).

Please email your submission to [jtenbusch@stlawco.org](mailto:jtenbusch@stlawco.org) When you email, please have the subject line read "Earth Day 50".

The Emerald Ash Borer Task Force (EABTF) The EAB Task Force met by conference call in July. Task Force members reported on their activities.

*Fair Housing Task Force (FHTF).* The FHTF has suspended planning for its annual training sessions, which are typically held in April, in conjunction with Fair Housing Month. The focus of training in 2020 will be the recently-enacted laws regulating landlords and tenants.

There was not a meeting during July. However, staff and the FHTF Chair investigated a report of discrimination in housing.

## **BOARD OF LEGISLATORS**

***Emergency Response to COVID 19.*** The Planning Office has been assisting with the County's COVID-19 response in several ways. Efforts include helping to staff the Emergency Operations Center (see separate section below) and mapping and locational analysis of COVID cases.

***Census 2020.*** Staff are working with the County's Complete Count Committee. The Committee met once during July.

During July, staff worked with the League of Women Voters to send out Census info for distribution at food distribution sites; compiled a weekly update of Census response rates by towns in SLC; published a weekly series of graphics that can be further distributed by other members of the Complete Count Committee; etc.

Staff worked with the SLC Highway Department and 12 County towns to coordinate placement of two digital message boards for Census promotion. Highway staff will move the message boards on a weekly or bi-weekly basis, depending on the town, from 7/30-10/12.

### ***Jones & Laughlin (J&L) Site.***

- During the June technical (clean-up) conference call with DEC, it was determined that calls will now be held every other month, therefore, the next call will be in August 2020.

***Marine Sanctuary Assessment.*** Staff have been researching the proposed Lake Ontario Marine Sanctuary and provided background to Board of Legislators in July. Additional information will be presented to the Board in August.

***Space Study.*** Staff are assisting with an assessment of County space needs in the City of Ogdensburg. This project is on hold at the present time.

## **COMMUNITY / ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT**

***Community Development Block Grants (CDBG).*** The Planning Office administers three open grants: the Septic Tank Replacement Assistance Program (STRAP); the 23<sup>rd</sup> round of the Direct Homeownership Assistance Program, and the third round of its Countywide Housing Rehabilitation Program (CHRP 3).

In July, the Planning Office prepared Project Status Reports for the open grants; these were submitted to the NYS Office of Community Renewal.

Staff received a Release of Funds (RROF) from OCR for CHRP 3.

The Grant Administration Plan is in progress and staff is compiling required documentation to submit to NYS Office of Community Renewal (OCR) before we request funds. The Plan covers such things as: program summary, program requirements & policies (eligible activities, national objectives, required program policies), and the grant administrative cycle (contract execution & start-up, environmental review, project implementation, compliance files & reporting).

***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 up to 52 households throughout the county. In July, the Planning Office, in consultation with its partners, the North Country Housing Council and the SLC Public Health Dept, continued to re-open its Lead Hazard Abatement program while adhering to rules put forward by Gov. Cuomo for construction work during the COVID19 pandemic.

***Village of Potsdam Downtown Revitalization Initiative (DRI).*** The Planning Office is participating as a project partner on the Local Planning Committee (LPC) for the Potsdam DRI. This project is currently on hold but a restart is scheduled for August. The project website is: <https://potsdamdri.com/>.

### **EMERGENCY OPERATIONS CENTER (EOC)**

***Daily Activity.*** Staff, on a rotating basis, share in the daily EOC duties from their respective offices in Public Safety Complex. EOC operation consists of answering phones and logging and distributing COVID-19 resources requests, completing daily operations records, and mapping (see below).

### **GEOGRAPHIC INFORMATION SYSTEM**

***COVID19 Mapping.*** Since March 31<sup>st</sup>, Dakota has prepared daily maps for the County's Public Health Department to track positive, active, and regional cases of COVID-19.

***Public Transportation Bus Routes.*** To date, Dakota and Matilda drafted and finalized maps for all existing routes, and are scheduled to be posted on the transit website. Maps for new Routes 71, 72, 73 and 74 were also completed, and will be posted online once the routes go into effect.

***County Mapping Upgrades.*** Installation of ESRI's Enterprise GIS software began at the end of July and should be up and operational during the first week of August. The initial focus is to have Emergency Services Enterprise GIS needs established first and then Real Property and Planning will come next.

***BOL Find My Legislator IMA (Internet Mapping Application):*** Planning staff created an IMA for use on the County website to better show district geographic boundaries and supporting information. This is live and viewable at: <https://www.stlawco.org/Departments/BoardofLegislators/FindMyLegislator/LegislatorList>

### **GRANTS MANAGER**

***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.

***Community Services.*** Staff assisted Community Services' Substance Abuse Clinic on an application to a NYS OASAS for the Targeted Mobile Treatment Vehicle to Increase Access to Treatment for Opioid Use Disorder (OUD) program. This program allows requests up to \$225,000 for the purchase of a mobile treatment clinic vehicle that will accommodate outpatient services, including telepractice.

***Hazard Mitigation Plan, 5-Year Update.*** Staff is assisting Emergency Services with the required five-year update of the SLC Multi-Jurisdictional All-Hazard Mitigation Plan. In July, staff facilitated the

consultant selection process and participated in Zoom discussions with final candidates. A recommendation is expected for the August Operations Committee meeting.

## **PLANNING MATTERS**

***St. Lawrence River Watershed Revitalization Plan.*** This planning project encompasses the entire St. Lawrence River watershed in New York, including some or all of eight counties. The St. Lawrence River Watershed Revitalization Plan (WRP), is scheduled for completion in 2020.

***Parks & Trails New York (PTNY).*** Staff, Dakota, is working on submitting GIS data to PTNY that highlights recreation trail infrastructure in the County.

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

## **PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION**

***County Transit System.*** Near the beginning of the month, Matilda and Mobility Manager Frank Doldo delivered an update on transit operations to the County Finance Committee. Matilda and Frank also presented resolutions to the Committee authorizing the Chair to sign an amended contract with the bus operator, and to sign contracts for the College Connector system in Canton and Potsdam. Throughout the month Matilda and Lisa reviewed and processed the 2<sup>nd</sup> quarter STOA and Mobility Management reports, and processed June invoices for First Mile Last Mile. Matilda and Frank met with university representatives by phone on the 27<sup>th</sup> to review the parameters to restart the College Connector system under the COVID19 pandemic. On the 22<sup>nd</sup>, Matilda and Frank participated in a teleconference with a vendor about automated fare collection equipment and its tracking system. On the 23<sup>rd</sup>, Matilda and Dakota held a work session with The Arc staff and Frank Doldo to discuss how existing bus routes can be revised to reduce travel time and increase passenger counts. During the last week of July, Matilda finalized and submitted the first draw request for CARES Act monies for both The Arc and VTC who serve as the County's public transportation providers. Dakota and Matilda have initiated the process to draft Requests for Proposals for Bus Operations and Mobility Management services for contracts that will go into effect in 2021, and Matilda is in the process of revising DOT reimbursement requests for two buses that were delivered this past winter.