

St. Lawrence County Planning Office
STAFF WORK REPORT
August 2021



ADVISORY BOARD SUPPORT

Agricultural and Farmland Protection Board (AFPB). On the 23rd, Matilda forwarded electronic correspondence from NYSEDA to the Real Property Tax Office announcing the creation of a draft appraisal model for wind energy systems greater than one megawatt. On the 26th, the Planning Office was in receipt of a Ruling Adopting a Protective Order concerning the North Side Energy Center solar energy project proposed for Brasher, Massena and Norfolk. This correspondence was forwarded to the County Attorney's Office.

County Planning Board (CPB). The Planning Board met in person on August 12th. Several projects were returned for local action (RFLA). One full review was presented, discussed, and approved with conditions: Town of Potsdam, 5MW solar array, bordering the Village boundary along US 11. During the State of the County Roundtable there was further discussion on large scale solar projects. Going forward, the Board would like an update on the status of solar projects in the Country at the monthly meeting. Staff updates an inventory of CPB reviewed solar projects and has shared this with the Board and County stakeholders. George Blatchley, a Board member from Macomb, recently resigned, and was recognized for his service. The Board is expecting to review new/updated land use regulations from the Town and Village of Hammond and the Village of Waddington.

Environmental Management Council (EMC). The EMC met in Waddington on August 18th for its monthly meeting and annual picnic. There was no scheduled speaker; however, County Legislator Joe Lightfoot spoke about recent BOL discussions concerning Eurasian watermilfoil on Black Lake, and other problematic invasive species across the County.

Staff are working with the Black Lake Association with regard to milfoil management at Black Lake. The EMC supported a request for funds from the Black Lake Association to pursue milfoil remediation. At their monthly meeting on August 2nd, the BOL approved funds to support milfoil management on Black Lake for 2021.

The EMC has agreed 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. In addition, in response to comments from County legislators, the EMC will develop a comprehensive plan for management of invasive species across the County.

Fair Housing Task Force (FHTF). During the month, Planning staff began to prepare for a training session on how zoning and other land-use regulations can impact discrimination in housing. This will be presented in the fall.

BOARD OF LEGISLATORS

Census Data / Redistricting. On August 12th, the Census Bureau released data about population for states, counties, towns, villages and cities. This release was part of the PL94-171 data to be used for redistricting purposes. Planning Office staff were able to compile a table showing population data for the County, the City, towns, villages, and Census Designated Places for 2020; they applied population data from 2010, and computed change over time. Population in the County was shown to have decreased by 3.07%, from 111,944 persons in 2010 to 108,505 persons in 2020. For a copy of the table, please contact the Planning Office.

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 will be presented to the Board of Legislators in September. Staff is actively evaluating opportunities for infrastructure funding and in discussion with internet service providers and neighboring Counties regarding buildout strategies.

Staff attended a virtual meeting, hosted by DANC and the consultant ([ECC Technologies](#)), on August 19th to discuss the recently completed countywide broadband assessment results.

Jones & Laughlin (J&L) Site. Staff participated in the DEC technical conference call on August 26th.

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 August, the Planning Office replied to a monitoring letter from NYS OCR regarding its Septic Tank Replacement Program (STRAP). This grant is complete and will be closed out shortly.

Also during August, Planning staff worked on an application under the CDBG-CARES program for funding to do additional housing rehabilitation activity.

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 August, the Planning Office reports that 7 units have been completed, and 8 units are in process.

GEOGRAPHIC INFORMATION SYSTEM

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. Between July 1st and August 20th, 2021 these maps were published twice a week. The County has since resumed the publication of these maps on a daily basis effective August 23, 2021.

County Enterprise GIS.

- <https://gis.stlawco.org/portal/home/index.html>
- GIS Web App: Proposed Solar sites in the County:
<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>

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

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 August 12th and has reached out to those municipalities who have not responded to the consulting team's solicitation for participation.

Septic Repair Program. The County has been awarded \$340,000 to repair or replace deficient septic tanks along specified waterbodies in the County. The program is currently taking in prospective participants.

Other. Staff participated in several Economic Development Administration (EDA) webinars about American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) programs.

PLANNING MATTERS

Chamber of Commerce. In response to a request from the SLC Chamber of Commerce, Planning staff put together a discussion session on the health of fisheries in the St. Lawrence River.

CLEAR. Staff were not able to participate in the Coastal Lakeshore Ecological and Resiliency (CLEAR) Initiative Steering Committee meeting on August 25th. Staff will review CLEAR's "Jefferson – St. Lawrence Community Profile" document, in preparation for a public session to be held in September.

Large Scale Solar.

- **Rich Road Solar:** Staff is collecting publically available informational resources for this project to better understand its impacts.
 - <https://www.edf-re.com/project/rich-road-solar/>
- **North Side Energy Solar Project.** The application process is proceeding for this project.
 - <https://www.northsideenergycenter.com/>

Town of Hammond Land Use Regulations Revisions. Staff attended the first public hearing on the draft dual district land use regulations on August 11th. Also, Staff submitted the draft to the County Planning Board for a full review at the September meeting.

Town of Rossie. Staff assisted the planning board chair with a review of their updated land use regulations (a single townwide zone) and with “next steps” in the process of adopting zoning for the first time.

Village of Waddington. Staff await a response from the Village Board regarding a revision to the Village Zoning Code.

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. Since receipt of a State DOT contract to purchase up to nine Lot K on the 16th, Matilda began working on the Department’s procurement requirements to order for four Lot K buses for delivery in 2022, and an additional 5 Lot K buses to be delivered in 2023. During the week of the 23rd, Matilda worked with The Arc’s Transit Manager to complete paperwork to upload digital files of bus routes to Google Maps, and connected The Arc’s Communications staff with the State’s 511 web developer to embed digital route information on to Public Transit’s webpage. On the 25th, Matilda conducted her monthly visit to The Arc’s Public Transit Office to review a random sample of trip sheets and vehicle inspection forms. Also on the 25th, Matilda and The Arc’s Transit Manager Rena Ryan participated in a teleconference with a Shephard Brothers Bus sales representative to review and finalize the County’s order sheet for six Lot G buses. On the 30th and 31st, Matilda participated in interviews with Mobility Manager candidates at VTC’s Canton based office. Also on the 30th, Matilda, Lisa and Jason participated in a phone conference with the Deputy Treasurer to finalize the County’s Public Transit 2022 budget.