

St. Lawrence County Planning Office
STAFF WORK REPORT
September 2021



ADVISORY BOARD SUPPORT

County Planning Board (CPB). The Planning Board met in person and via Zoom on September 9th. Several projects were returned for local action (RFLA). One full review was presented, discussed, and approved with conditions: The Town and Village of Hammond Land Use Regulation Law. The new Law designates two districts (zones), residential-agriculture and shoreline, compiles all of the community's land use regulations into one document, regulates non-residential uses via special permit, and establishes a board of appeals. Large-scale solar projects in Brasher/Massena/Norfolk and Clifton were discussed.

Environmental Management Council (EMC). The EMC met on September 15th for its monthly meeting. The scheduled speaker was Dr. Glenn Johnson, Professor of Biology at SUNY Potsdam, who talked about Blandings Turtles, a locally-endangered and environmentally-significant species. Staff are working with the Black Lake Association with regard to milfoil management at Black Lake. In September, staff made a presentation to the Board of Legislators regarding their efforts to date. In addition, in response to comments from County legislators, the EMC will develop a comprehensive plan for management of invasive species across the County.

EAB Task Force. The Emerald Ash Borer Task Force met during September. Among reports given was one that indicated that EABs have been found in the Town of Potsdam, immediately to the north of the Village.

Fair Housing Task Force (FHTF). The Fair Housing Task Force met on Thursday September 9th. Among reports heard was one that indicated that over 400 applications have been filed for Emergency Rental Assistance Program (ERAP) assistance; by the time of the report, only 3 applications had been accepted by NYS officials.

BOARD OF LEGISLATORS

Census Data / Redistricting. Staff are a part of the BOL redistricting committee. The group has met a few times to discuss the redistricting process/procedures and, more recently, to examine the first draft of adjusted legislator districts based on 2020 Census data. With 15 legislators, we divide the total County population, adjusted to remove prisoners (106,864) by 15 and adjust the boundaries of the districts to reach 7,124 persons per district. Most towns in the County cannot be split, therefore legislator districts mostly follow town and village boundaries. There is a variance up to 5%, above or below, 7,124, which we are permitted to follow.

Countywide Broadband Assessment. Staff attended the Board of Legislators' Finance Committee meeting on September 27th. DANC presented the findings from the final report. The Board is forming a committee to further discuss and develop a plan of action.

Jones & Laughlin (J&L) Site. Staff participated in the DEC technical conference call on September 30th.

County Budget. Jason participated on the County Budget team this year. Multiple meetings were held in September to finalize the County's 2022 budget.

COMMUNITY / ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Community Development Block Grants (CDBG). The Planning Office administers two open grants: the 23rd round of the Direct Homeownership Assistance Program, and the third round of its Countywide Housing Rehabilitation Program (CHRP 3).

During September, Planning staff worked on an application under the CDBG-CARES program for funding to do additional housing rehabilitation activity, directed at populations most vulnerable to COVID-19.

Also in September, staff began to work on an application for NYS CDBG funds to support the next round of CHRP housing rehabilitation funds.

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 September, the Planning Office reports that 8 units have been completed, and 7 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 September 9th, facilitated County-level review of draft mitigation actions and provided feedback to the consulting team.

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 is continuing to monitor incoming information regarding 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 participated in the Public Input session on September 21st. The consultant is working toward a water level management strategic plan. An interesting mapping interface was shared that shows shoreline assets along Lake Ontario and the St. Lawrence River in Jefferson and St. Lawrence Counties. CLEAR stands for Coastal Lakeshore Ecological and Resiliency. A final input session will be held on November 9th.

Jefferson Community College Center for Community Studies Advisory Board. Matilda virtually attended the Center for Community Studies' Advisory Board meeting on the 23rd and received an update about current and upcoming projects.

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/>

NYS Data Center. John and Dakota attended several on-line sessions offered by the NYS Data Center as part of its virtual Annual Meeting. Subject matter was mostly-Census-related.

Town of Hammond Land Use Regulations Revisions. Staff has completed the final draft land use regulations, with edits and conditions from County Planning Board review, and shared this with the Town and Village. Draft legal notices and a resolution were shared with the Town and Village before their planned adoption on October 6th (Village) and October 13th (Town). Also, SEQR was

completed, signed, and filed with the project.

Town of Rossie. Staff continues to assist the Town’s planning board chair with guidance on updating their land use regulations.

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. During the week of the 6th, Matilda finalized and submitted a monthly COVID19 impact report to the Department of Transportation. On the 7th, Matilda and County Mobility Manager Frank Doldo participated in a conference call with NYSERDA consultants to discuss the advantages and limitations of programs and services available to public transit operators. Also on the 7th, Matilda and Frank spoke with coordinators of the University World Games to discuss spectator and player transportation logistics for January 2023. On the 8th, Matilda and Lisa reviewed YTD bus wrap advertising revenue and 2021 pass thru amounts with Deb Frary from The Arc’s Accounting Office. On the 15th and 16th, Matilda traveled to Albany to attend the first day of a two-day “Transit 101” training session delivered by the New York Public Transit Association (NYPTA). During the week of the 20th and the 27th, Matilda updated route maps for Routes 65, 66 and 69, and began preparing text files to upload bus route information to Google Maps. On the 23rd, Heidi attended the FTA’s Notice of Funding Opportunities webinar for American Rescue Plan funds that are available to public transportation services. On the 24th, Matilda and Frank participated in a virtual meeting with Cornell Cooperative Extension staff to discuss bus wrap advertising contracts for SNAP-Ed. On the 27th, Matilda conducted a remote review of randomly selected daily trip sheets and vehicle inspection reports provided by the bus operator for the month of August. On the 29th, Matilda and Frank met to strategize next steps to establish a CDL training program with passenger endorsement for public transit.