

**June
2026**



JEFFERSON COUNTY PLANNING & COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

Quarterly

NEWSLETTER



A MESSAGE FROM THE DIRECTOR

The Jefferson County Department of Planning and Community Development has had a busy and productive start to the summer. Across our program areas, staff are advancing several major county and municipal initiatives, including the upcoming launch of Jefferson County's first countywide public transportation system, long-range planning efforts, community development projects, environmental programs, and grant applications supporting communities throughout the county.

The department also recently completed a successful spring training series for municipal officials and continues to represent Jefferson County in regional conversations concerning land use, housing, infrastructure, water quality, and community resilience. The articles that follow provide a closer look at several of these efforts and the partnerships making them possible. --Hartley

DEPARTMENT STAFF

Director - Hartley Bonisteel Schweitzer, AICP

Deputy Director - Alicia M. Dewey

Senior Planner - Andy Nevin

Community Development Coordinators -

Sam Wilson & Aileen Anderson

Secretary - Emerald Macilvennie

FAREWELL SAM

We are saying a bittersweet farewell to Sam Wilson, one of our Community Development Coordinators. He will be leaving the department after 3.5 years of dedicated service. We are incredibly grateful for his hard work, valuable contributions, and the positive impact he has made during his tenure here, not only for the department but local municipalities as well. We wish Sam the very best of luck in his future professional and personal endeavors.



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THE COUNTDOWN IS ON: JEFFERSON COUNTY PUBLIC TRANSIT LAUNCHES JULY 9TH!

Great news for commuters—our highly anticipated, first-ever countywide public bus system is officially ready to hit the road! Following final inspections and route preparations, we are thrilled to announce the official launch dates.

This new network is designed to close the transportation gap for our rural communities, providing a reliable, accessible link to jobs, medical offices, Jefferson Community College, and shopping hubs.

Mark Your Calendars

- Ribbon-Cutting Ceremony: Wednesday, July 8th
- Official Service Begins: Thursday, July 9th

What to Expect

Operated in partnership with The ARC Jefferson–St. Lawrence, the system will run in a convenient hub-and-spoke format centered on Watertown. Four main routes will serve the region:

- Black River Line (Watertown, Carthage, Evans Mills, Sackets Harbor, Henderson)
- Northern Line (Watertown, Gouverneur, Antwerp, Philadelphia, Evans Mills, LeRay, For Drum)
- Seaway Trail Line (Watertown, Depauville, Clayton, LaFargeville, Alex Bay, Cape Vincent)
- South Jeff Line (Watertown, Sandy Creek, Adams, Adams Center, Mannsville)

Plan Your Route Today! Ready to see how the new system connects to your neighborhood? Route maps, schedules, and stop locations are now available online. Head over to jeffcopublictransit.com to map out your next ride.



\$2 One-Way Trip

jeffcopublictransit.com

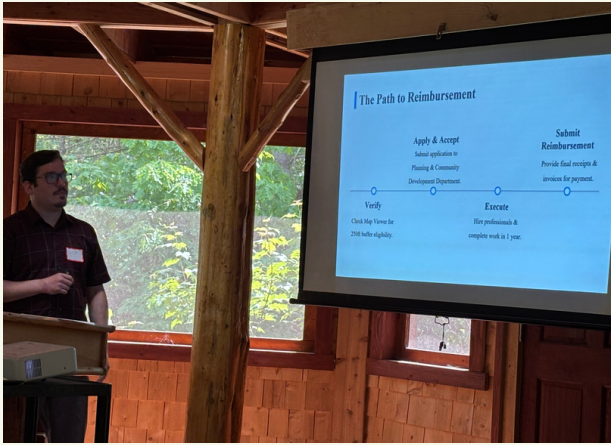
PLANNING FOR THE FUTURE OF LYME AND CHAUMONT!

The Jefferson County Planning and Community Development Department is continually working behind the scenes to support local municipalities in planning for smart growth, economic stability, and resource protection. Currently, county planners Andy Nevin and Aileen Anderson are actively assisting the Town of Lyme and the Village of Chaumont as they collectively update their Joint Comprehensive Plan.

A community's Comprehensive Plan serves as its foundational blueprint for long-term development and land-use regulation. Because the last plan for Lyme and Chaumont was adopted back in 2010, our office is helping a newly assembled local committee navigate the update process through regular monthly meetings.

A plan is only as good as the community feedback behind it. To gather diverse, high-quality public data, we emphasize interactive, station-based community workshops. Our team will be helping facilitate a public input session for the Lyme and Chaumont update on Thursday, August 27, 2026, from 5:00 PM to 7:00 PM at the Chaumont Volunteer Fire Department.

INDIAN RIVER LAKES PRESENTATION



Sam Wilson, Community Development Coordinator presented at the Indian River Lakes Conservancy Conference on Friday, June 5th. He spoke about the NYS Septic Replacement Program that the Department administers for eligible water bodies in Jefferson County.



Andy Nevin, Senior Planner, also presented at the Indian River Lakes Conservancy Conference on Friday, June 5th. He spoke about Zoning and Water Quality identifying Strategies for Protecting the Indian River Lakes Watershed. He also discussed examples of zoning regulations along other lake shorelines in the Adirondacks and the Finger Lakes region as local regulations in effect in the Towns of Alexandria, Theresa, and Antwerp.

SPRING TRAINING SUCCESS

This past spring, the Jefferson County Planning & Community Development department hosted two highly successful collaborative training workshops designed to support our local officials, municipal boards, and community stakeholders. We had a fantastic turnout at both events and want to extend a huge thank you to everyone who attended, engaged, and contributed to these vital conversations! Here is a quick look back at the valuable topics covered this season:

Site Plan Review Workshop

Held on Wednesday, May 13, 2026, this session offered a comprehensive guide for planning and zoning boards to help navigate local development projects. Hosted by the Department of State, the workshop provided an overview of the statutory authority of local governments to review site plans, the scope and content involved, and how to coordinate reviews with special use permits.



Short-Term Rental Toolkit

In early June, local leaders gathered to address one of the fastest-growing trends across our urban, suburban, and rural landscapes: short-term rentals (STRs). Hosted by Jamie Konkoski, AICP, Senior Planner at LaBella Associates, the session focused on navigating the balancing act between fostering local tourism and economic growth while protecting neighborhood character and affordable housing supply. Participants moved beyond the debate to learn best practices for drafting or amending ordinances that are protective of municipal safety, equitable for income-seeking residents, and balanced for the community.

Looking Ahead: We Want to Hear From You!

Following the great momentum from our spring series, we are already hard at work planning several additional workshops for the fall.

To make sure these upcoming sessions deliver the most value possible, we want your input. Is there a specific planning topic, zoning challenge, or regulatory hurdle your municipality is facing? Please reach out and let us know what training topics would be most helpful to you and your board!

Get in Touch: Share your suggestions or questions with the Planning Department team by emailing us directly at planning@jeffersoncountyny.gov



AGRICULTURAL INCLUSIONS

Do you have land actively used for farming, or acreage highly suitable for future agricultural production? This is your final reminder that the annual 30-day open enrollment window to include eligible parcels in a New York State Certified Agricultural District in Jefferson County closes at the end of this month – **June 30, 2026**.

Under NYS Agricultural and Markets, landowners can only request to add land to an existing district once a year during this designated timeframe.

Why Enroll Your Land?

- Right-to-Farm Protections: Safeguards accepted, sound ag practices against private nuisance lawsuits.
- Zoning Protections: Limits local municipalities from enacting laws or ordinances that unreasonably restrict standard farming operations.
- Operational Incentives: Modifies certain state agency policies, eminent domain procedures, and benefit assessments (like water or sewer fees) to favor agricultural stability.

Who is Eligible?

To qualify for inclusion, your parcel must consist of predominantly viable agricultural land. This means 51% of the acreage must be actively farmed or highly suitable for agricultural production (including idle or non-farm acreage that supports the farm's viability). Once a parcel is officially included, it cannot be removed until the district's formal eight-year review.

For more information on Agricultural Inclusions go to www.jeffersoncountyny.gov/departments/planning/ag-inclsions

WHAT TO SEND

Each referral must include a “full statement” of the action being reviewed. That means everything your local board has received as part of the application, such as:

- A completed Environmental Assessment Form (EAF)
- Site plans drawn to scale, showing existing and proposed features
- Project descriptions, reports, or studies (traffic, drain age, lighting)
- The Proposed zoning text or local law if it involves a code amendment

Submitting a complete package ensures both the local and County boards can make timely, informed recommendations.

REFERRAL FORM UPDATES

Local municipal clerks, zoning officers, planning board and zoning board of appeals chairs please note our [new referral form](#) should now be utilized. This is a fillable form on our Department website for ease of use, under County Planning Board Information. Please note we added lines for site address and email addresses of both applicants and municipal representatives.

This will allow us to immediately communicate when meetings may be canceled (weather related) as well as email response letters to the municipality in a more timely manner than mailing them alone. Enjoy!

Early referral submission is encouraged!

Municipalities are strongly encouraged to submit 239-m referrals as early as possible, as opposed to waiting until the submission deadline. As a reminder, projects will not be accepted after submission deadlines.

Submission Deadline	CPB Meeting Date
Thursday, January 15	Tuesday, January 27
Thursday, February 12	Tuesday, February 24
Thursday, March 19	Tuesday, March 31
Thursday, April 16	Tuesday, April 28
Thursday, May 14	Tuesday, May 26
Thursday, June 18	Tuesday, June 30
Thursday, July 16	Tuesday, July 28
Thursday, August 13	Tuesday, August 25
Thursday, September 17	Tuesday, September 29
Thursday, October 15	Tuesday, October 27
Thursday, November 12	Tuesday, November 24
Thursday, December 17	Tuesday, December 29