



**2025**

**Annual Report**

**Planning & Community  
Development**

# Mission Statement

The Planning and Community Development Department is dedicated to enhancing the quality of life in Lewis County. We actively support a diverse range of initiatives, including expanding broadband access, preserving agricultural land, and developing effective policies to empower our municipalities and residents.

We maintain strong collaborative relationships with key partners, including the Department of Recreation, Forestry and Parks, Department of Buildings & Codes, Lewis County Highway Department, Naturally Lewis, Tug Hill Commission, and Lewis County Soil & Water District. As detailed in the following report, we actively engage with a diverse range of stakeholders and are committed to assisting any organization that seeks our support.

## Department Staff

**Casandra Buell**, Director  
**Susan Kulzer**, Senior Keyboard Specialist  
**Megan Krokowski**, Community Development Specialist  
**Lauryn Tabolt**, Community Development Specialist  
**Tiffanie Sadowski**, Community Development Program Specialist  
**Grace Metzler**, Grant Coordinator

## Finance & Rules

### Legislative Committee

**Thomas Osborne**, Chair  
**Jeff Nellenback**, Vice Chair  
**Herb Frost**  
**Vincent Nortz**  
**Barry Lyndaker**

## Lewis County Planning Board

**Tim Petersen**, Chair  
**John Lehman**, Vice Chair  
**Donald Cook**  
**Sarah Metott**  
**Thomas Osborne**, Finance & Rules Committee Chair\*  
**Eric Virkler**, County Treasurer\*  
**John Reed**, Highway Superintendent\*  
**Lawrence Dolhof**, BOL Chairman\*  
(Non-Voting)  
*\*Ex-Officio Member*

## 2025 Department Goals

This year, we set our goals high to implement key projects necessary for comprehensive community development. The 2025 initiatives below were included in our annual department budget, and we have made effective progress in each area.

### Launch Comprehensive Plan Update

**Description:** Thanks to NYS DOS Smart Growth Community Planning funding, we will advance the update of the 2009 Lewis County Comprehensive Plan.

**Success Measures:**

01. Executed the NYS DOS Smart Growth Grant Contract
02. Issued the RFP and awarded the contract to LaBella Associates in Q3-Q4
03. Drafted the Comprehensive Plan Steering Committee

### Infrastructure Improvements & Coordinated Projects

**Description:** We will develop an infrastructure plan outlining a five-year roadmap to invest in infrastructure to stabilize roadways, enhance water districts, and incorporate Complete Streets principles.

**Success Measures:**

01. Worked with municipalities and Highway Superintendent to identify and outline several coordinated infrastructure projects and established a five-year implementation plan.
02. Applied for and received \$500,000 in Round 1 NYS ESD County Infrastructure Program funding to offset County costs for Constableville roadway and complete streets project.
03. Worked with Barton & Loguidice to complete the 30% designs for the Port Leyden roadway and complete streets projects. Identified and began coordinating additional grant applications for submission in Q1 2026.

### Housing Policies and Projects

**Description:** Continue to collaborate with community partners to tackle the housing shortage, exploring innovative solutions to expand housing options across the County.

**Success Measures:**

01. Completed a comprehensive Lewis County Housing Needs Survey
02. Assisted with the final sale of two (2) decommissioned school buildings that will yield 84 new housing units.
03. Continued to work with municipalities to become Pro-Housing Certified and prepared the Fair Housing Task Force for additional responsibilities to address housing needs.

## Launch a Micro-Transit Pilot Program

**Description:** Pursue funding to launch a micro-transit pilot program to offer more flexible, on-demand transportation options, improving access and convenience for residents, especially in the most underserved areas.

**Success Measures:**

01. Developed a Micro-Transit Plan with the assistance of Stantec, funded by NYSERDA
02. Applied for implementation funding to implement Micro-Transit Plan
03. Received \$2,560,007 in NYSERDA funding to launch Micro-Transit Program in 2026

## Expand Dial-A-Ride Services

**Description:** Expanding dial-a-ride services will ensure our residents, no matter where they live, have reliable access to the transportation they need — whether it's for work, errands, or a visit to the doctor.

**Success Measures:**

01. Applied for and received funding to purchase a wheelchair van for expanded services.
02. By utilizing route deviations, we worked with the Jefferson County Department of Social Services to provide transportation for their clients on our JCC Connector Route. Jefferson County DSS purchased 1,000 one-way bus tickets in 2025.
03. Coordinated with Lewis County OFA to provide free transportation for their clients through their partnership with GoGo Grandparent, which utilizes LCPT dial-a-ride services.

## Expand Fort Drum Circuit Route

**Description:** Collaborate with our partners to expand the Fort Drum circuit route to strengthen connectivity for service members and their families, ensuring they have easier access to the resources and opportunities they need on and off base.

**Success Measures:**

01. In September 2025, Lewis County successfully launched the Alpine Express, an on-base shuttle service for soldiers and their families, completely funded by Fort Drum.
02. Expanded the Fort Drum Circuit Route to include additional bus stops in Evans Mills and Watertown.
03. Applied for and received funding, with the assistance of Assemblyman Blankenbush, to purchase a new bus for the Alpine Express.

# 2025 Grant Summary

Final 2025 | Lewis County Planning & Community Development

Total Funds Awarded to Lewis County Recipients in 2025

## \$8,107,760.32

**Awarded**



20

**Submitted**



45

Assisted

Requests Totaling:  
\$24,494,810.14

## Highlights

1. **Empire State Development Local Government Efficiency Grant for Lewis County Equipment:** \$1,053,070 in funding for the purchase of equipment identified in the 2023 County-wide Shared Services Plan, including a Grapplesaw truck, loader-mounted snowblower, and H-vac truck for shared use between Lewis County and partner municipalities.
2. **NYS BOND Act DOS Inland Flooding and Local Waterfront Revitalization Implementation Program for Mill Creek Streambank Stabilization:** \$304,126.32 in funding for streambank restoration at Mill Creek in the Village of Lowville, protecting village and county-owned public infrastructure as well as private assets, and enhancing downstream water quality.

Year	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
# of Grants Submitted	2	12	11	33	23	45