



*Educate.
Advocate.
Act.*

Sustainable Saratoga

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September 17, 2019

Dear Candidate,

Sustainable Saratoga is a not-for-profit organization that promotes sustainable practices and the protection of natural resources through education, advocacy and action, for the benefit of current and future generations in the Saratoga Springs area. The November 5, 2019 election offers an opportunity to raise and discuss pressing issues relating to sustainability in this region.

Our supporters are interested in knowing your plans for addressing key sustainability issues confronting our community. We would like you to respond to the questions below by October 8, 2019. Please email your answers back to us at info@sustainablesaratoga.org in digital form. If you have any questions, please email us or call us at 518-620-6139.

As a 501(c)(3) organization we do not, and will not, endorse any particular candidate for an elected office. Your responses and those of other candidates will be posted on our website and Facebook page and emailed to our members and friends verbatim and without any comments.

Thank you in advance for your participation and responses.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Art Holmberg".

Art Holmberg

Chair of Sustainable Saratoga



The Comprehensive Plan of the City of Saratoga Springs, adopted in 2015, is a unified set of policies that will guide the future development of the city. The Plan consists of nearly 250 recommended actions and a Future Land Use map that indicates the desired location, uses, and intensity of development. Key elements of the vision of the Comprehensive Plan include the “City in the Country” concept, and the importance of sustainability in all aspects of city management and development.

1. What steps will you take toward achieving sustainable economic development in the City, including diverse and affordable housing (both rental and ownership)?

Developers have already started working on affordable housing projects in the city and I’ve been supportive at the council table of their efforts. In situations where grant funding, and available funding sources that required council action, I voted in favor of these projects and will continue to do so.

2. The City Council recently adopted a resolution with a unanimous vote to support policies consistent with the Paris Climate Change Agreement. What policies and programs will you implement to improve the environmental health and resiliency of our community, including any policies to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, consistent with this resolution?

I’ve been supportive of City efforts to reduce reliance on greenhouse gas emissions by promoting multimodal transportation through complete streets, increased trails, and climate smart cities. As Commissioner of Public Works, responsible for city buildings, I’ve implemented LED light conversions at the City Garage, included conversions in the City Hall renovation project, and have a planned project for the City Ice Rinks. We’ve also purchased electric zamboni’s at the ice rinks, and installed electric car charging stations at the Woodlawn Avenue and Spring Street parking garages.

In addition, the GPS fleet management program was installed in 2018 and it includes an idle time monitor and alert system that DPW is currently benchmarking to reduce idle times for city vehicles.

3. In 2016 the City Council adopted a recommendation that calls for the creation of a unified and efficient parking management plan and policy for downtown. What steps do you think should be taken to implement or amend that plan, and what are the other major transportation and mobility issues you think should be addressed?

The promotion of multimodal forms of transportation such as safe trails, pedestrian, and bike lanes, is necessary to reduce congestion downtown. I’ve supported every trail that has come before the council including Railroad Run, Spring Run, the Greenbelt Trail, and the Geyser Road trail to reduce the reliance on vehicular transportation throughout our city.



Parking management requires improved identification of available spaces, such as through better signage and/or the utilization of mobile apps that provide information on open parking spaces. Because of the city's growing needs, an engineering firm should be engaged to conduct a comprehensive parking management study, and then make recommendations on current and future parking needs. Of significant importance is the financial impact, maintenance requirements, and the future parking needs in consideration of the potential for a reduced reliance on cars as the primary transportation mode.

4. The Greenbelt is the outlying rural area around the City's urban core.
 - Do you support adjustments to the Comprehensive Plan that would change allowable uses or increase or decrease allowable densities in the Greenbelt?

I do not support any adjustments to increase densities in the Greenbelt.

- What kind of actions, if any, do you think the City should take to protect the watershed and Saratoga Lake from the deleterious effects of development?

The city should partner with the Saratoga Lake Improvement and Protection District (SLIPD) to monitor and identify any harmful development activity around Saratoga Lake. While the City only has a small portion of the watershed of the lake, the land use boards should be aware of any potential deleterious development projects. This information should also be shared with surrounding municipalities and everyone should adhere to watershed regulations.

5. The Comprehensive Plan calls for action on key sustainability issues facing our community, including affordable housing, parking, trails, energy conservation, environmental protection, recycling and waste reduction, and multimodal transportation. However, the City Charter does not assign responsibility for these issues to any specific City department.
 - What actions will you take to establish leadership and make progress in these areas?
 - For which of these specific areas will you pledge to assume responsibility, if no other council member has already assumed responsibility?
 - Could a non-profit like Sustainable Saratoga play a role in achieving your agenda?

It's true that policies around affordable housing, parking, and multimodal transportation do not have a specific "home" in the charter, but as outlined above I've taken actions to support both and will continue to do so.

But the remaining items on the abovementioned list do have an assignment, and it's the Department of Public Works. During my tenure as DPW Commissioner I've accepted responsibility and worked on a number of initiatives related to these items.

Trails: I've currently requested funding for a trails crew in the 2020 budget due to the expanding trails program (Geysers Road, Greenbelt). This will provide the maintenance



resource necessary to maintain and expand trails when possible and promote the continued usage of City trails by residents and visitors. Previously DPW has worked to build portions of the Railroad Run trail, and the Doug Haller Railroad Run Connector. While council action is needed to apply for grant funding and typically contractors are utilized to build trails, DPW has been actively involved in maintaining and in some instances, expanding, the trails system with city resources.

Environmental Protection: DPW is constantly working to ensure adherence to DEC regulations in many areas including stormwater management, watershed protection, stream maintenance, and compost operations. I also proposed (and passed) at the council table reducing the project size to one tenth of an acre to adhere to stormwater pollution prevention plan (SWPPP) practices. This threshold is less than the DEC requirement of an acre.

In addition, DPW works on a number of initiatives to ensure environmental protection practices including mowing patterns to protect the Kerner Blue Butterfly at the Weibel Avenue Landfill, and the hiring of the City's first Arborist to maintain the urban forest.

Recycling and Waste Reduction: DPW hosts a bi-annual household hazardous waste collection day to provide an opportunity for city residents to dispose of this material. This year, we will be cross-promoting this event with Sustainable Saratoga's Recycling Day with a proclamation declaring October 26, 2019 as Community Recycling Day in the City of Saratoga Springs. DPW also maintains the ongoing recycling operation at the Weibel Ave landfill, and a composting program to recycle yard waste.

In prior years under my leadership DPW attempted a public recycling effort downtown that was ultimately unsuccessful as many people disposed of trash in the recycling containers. Currently however, there have been conversations with Sustainable Saratoga and Waste Connections on how to provide education and recycling containers that can reduce this contamination.

I'm going to prioritize this initiative moving forward and hope the partnership with Sustainable Saratoga can continue and grow on making this a reality downtown.

YES, Sustainable Saratoga has already been a great partner in promoting and supporting a number of initiatives on these items and many more and I look forward to the opportunity to continue working with many great people who care about our city.

