

**Kendall Hicks -- STATEMENT**  
**Candidate for Commissioner of Public Safety**

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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)?

Economic development and environmental sustainability are not mutually exclusive. In fact, developing our community in an environmentally sustainable manner can spur economic activity and draw people here to live. Nurturing a cleaner and healthier environment will result in people wanting to root their lives in our community, and when people root themselves here, they support our local economy. I am strongly committed to building a healthy and sustainable Saratoga Springs, and I am strongly committed to the development of our local economy -- I believe these two ideas can work cooperatively to continue to improve the quality of life here and to ensure our community is a place people want to visit and live.

Affordable housing is becoming an ever-greater challenge to a wider range of people in our city, as well as across the nation. As we turn our attention to a “Housing First” model in meeting the challenge of Homelessness here in Saratoga, we will have the opportunity to revisit more inclusive ways of addressing these rising costs. The integrated youth housing units in the new “*Intrada*” building off of West Avenue is just one example of this paradigm shift. There are, in fact, many creative approaches to housing being used around our country - I am committed to researching and applying the best practices that other communities have been implementing with success!

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?

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I completely agree with this action and with aligning Saratoga Springs with the Paris Climate Change Agreement! Seeking an aggressive reduction in greenhouse gasses is an obvious, practical first step. I also plan to champion a

more walkable, bikeable Saratoga, which will foster greater accessibility of our city while lessening the consumption of fossil fuels. I will work to expand our sidewalk & trail systems, bringing an important focus to user safety and access.

I strongly support the goals of the Paris Climate Change Agreement and will vigorously seek to put regular action *behind* these, including augmenting the education of our citizens about the possible and probable impacts that we will experience in our region due to climate change. I have much to learn about what is unfolding, as we all do, and I will continue to seek insight into possible local actions, as well as ways to mobilize our communities, perhaps by drawing upon national expertise, such as that of Dr. Peter Fiekowsky of the [Foundation for Climate Restoration](#).

Saratoga Springs is already engaged with Urban Reforestation, which will continue to help offset our carbon footprint, as well as mitigate some of the impact of more severe rainfalls and flooding - all results of the intensification of weather systems. Speaking of water, I would also like to bring greater focus to basic water conservation, along with broadened protection of our waterways and our extraordinary water shed that starts high in the Adirondacks.

On a final note, it is my understanding that Saratoga Springs signed on as a Cool City a decade ago and that we have been seeking to become fully certified under NYS's Climate Smart Communities program -- I will do my best to move areas forward that are or may be still "pending" or in "process" in support of this valuable redirect for our city and for our "livable" future.

To be clear, Climate Change is the ultimate Public Safety issue!!

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?

Saratoga is challenged with seasonal and event traffic congestion, as well as a lack of viable parking -- much is a reflection of the dynamic popularity of our city to visitors and businesses! THAT is a good thing! However, our infrastructure has not been able to keep pace with the increase of people and vehicles that travel through our communities. I believe we need to draw on best practices that we've seen developed in other towns and communities around us, including the possible introduction of "roundabouts" to help to ease traffic flow in appropriate, practical locations.

With regard to the current parking management plan, I will need to spend more time understanding what the City has agreed to and what the goals and intentions are before I can address this specific topic. Of course, I would want to consider the impact, as well, on the various stakeholders of Saratoga Springs.

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?

This is another example of the need for third party research to determine the viability of desired changes and whether said changes will be in the best interest of the majority of our citizens, their communities, and of preserving the resources of Saratoga Springs. For instance, there needs to be a task force created around the proposed Hospital Expansion to investigate the impact on the surrounding community and that task force needs to include citizens from that surrounding community. Any change to the plan to make more provisions for one entity over another must be considered strongly in light of the impact on the greater good of those who live and work in that region.

I believe that providing an environmentally desirable and sound residence for our citizens is critical to the overall health and wellbeing of all of our people,

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and contributes directly, therefore, to their sense of safety and the protection of our community, as a whole. I support our city making informed decisions to provide an excellent way of life for our community for many, many years.

- 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?

Zoning considerations must accommodate defending the integrity of the lake and our watershed from overuse. One consideration may be limiting new construction permits that compromise the environment, which includes monitoring water runoff from jobsites. Another would be capturing and managing storm water and agricultural runoff, as well as landscaping pollutants. Critical to climate change resiliency is developing measures to protect our drinking and waste management facilities. We must enter into any and all new development with a forward-minded plan that considers the city we leave for our future generations.

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?

I plan to engage with all of the stakeholders of Saratoga Springs in developing and implementing a "Housing First" policy for the Homeless and for those who may be in imminent peril of becoming homeless. Furthermore, I will support the #311 plan to activate supportive services outreach to engage with the homeless first, rather than our police force.

I have a strong personal interest in continuing the expansion of our trails and sidewalks, bringing more focus to the safety of pedestrians and cyclists through more sidewalks, improved surfaces, better lighting, and increased officer patrolling by bicycle and/or horse.

Furthermore, I would support assigning these areas of interest to specific commissions or task groups in order to focus them in the forefront of our city management and council action, rather than relegating them to afterthoughts.

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- For which of these specific areas will you pledge to assume responsibility, if no other council member has already assumed responsibility?

I believe that it would make good sense to bring parking, trails, and multi-modal transportation under the jurisdiction of the *Commissioner of Public Safety*. I would also appreciate being a secondary support to developing affordable housing.

- Could a non-profit like Sustainable Saratoga play a role in achieving your agenda?

YES!! Sustainable Saratoga already brings unique insights to these specific interests that will serve our community well into the future. Being secure in our resources is a big part of making Saratoga Springs a residence of choice ... Sustainable Saratoga is already leading the charge as a guardian of those resources, as well as a local educator, and as a vital community organizer and catalyst. THANK YOU!