



*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](mailto: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)?

**The current Comprehensive Plan continues the ‘City in the Country’ concept for Saratoga Springs, keeping the inner district more densely developed than the outer areas of the City. This concept, while sustainable for the long term, has perhaps unintentionally caused real estate values to rise to a level that has made it difficult for those of modest means to either rent or own in Saratoga Springs. I support the Comprehensive Plan’s goals and ideals. While the County Supervisor does not have any direct input into the City’s planning, I would be supportive of any affordable housing initiatives, such as the new developments near West Avenue, which give those of moderate incomes the ability to reside within the City limits. I would say that any Zoning plan that may attempt to provide for mixed-income or other subsidy for apartment rent or home purchase, be carefully considered before it is voted on or implemented. These types of plans artificially create price points outside of market forces and should be used as a means for people to achieve market-rate units for the long term. I do believe the next challenge for the City of Saratoga Springs is the ‘outer downtown’ districts such as South Broadway and Excelsior Avenue, and out toward West Avenue and the railroad station. Those areas are a great opportunity for the city both economically, but also for smart development. Those areas need to grow in a complementary way to Downtown and provide a gradual transition to the ‘country’ areas of the City.**

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?

**The County Board of Supervisors recently passed a resolution that gives companies or individuals a Payment-in-lieu-of-Taxes arrangement in order to incentivize Solar installations on large tracts of land within Saratoga County. Some of the towns have looked to the lead of Saratoga Springs in seeking Solar installations on Town land.**



**My hope is that my colleagues on the Board of Supervisors continue with initiatives in their towns to promote alternative energy. I also support the efforts of the City in moving forward with looking at alternative energy generation that does not rely on fossil fuels, such as the Spa Solar Park. Additionally, I would support initiatives at both the City and County level that move our gas fleet to electric or hybrid vehicles where we can in order to save on gas costs and promote fuel efficiency in our fleet. There are also many things such as driver routing technology that could allow for more efficient routing of our DPW trucks or snowplows, to efficiently drive their routes and save fuel.**

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?

**As a County Supervisor, I am not very familiar with the plan and its recommendations, so I am not sure if it should be amended. I do believe that it has not yet been implemented, and I would advocate for the City to begin the process of implementing the recommendations. In terms of mobility and transportation issues, I think the City needs to look at ways to make the CDTA bus service more available and efficient. There are many residents that need this service, and with limited routes within the City, it becomes difficult for those who need to get to places such as jobs and services to get there. We should continue and accelerate our implementation of the Greenbelt Trail as funds become available. There is increasing use of alternative transportation such as bicycling, and the City needs to be ready to accommodate these modes of transport within our community.**

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?

**Saratoga Springs has done the right thing over the years by creating a Zoning plan that concentrates development within the urban core and has less dense development in the Greenbelt. It has made our City a desirable place to live, to work, and to raise a family. I think the boundaries of the Greenbelt are fine as they are. I do not believe that the City should change overall zoning to increase or decrease allowable density in the Greenbelt. I do believe though that individual projects should be weighed on their merits, and any allowances for variation from the zoning should be used sparingly with review from the City's Land-Use boards,**



**on a case by case basis. I would be against a total prohibition of all potential projects that do not fit zoning in the greenbelt area.**

- **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?**

**Saratoga Springs has the option to take various actions to protect the Saratoga Lake Watershed. It has already set aside land for the Waterfront Park, and I believe the City should take advantage of any available Open Space funding to purchase land around the Lake and protect it, much like the City has been doing by purchasing land surrounding Loughberry Lake, both within the City Limits, and in the Town of Wilton. There may be other options such as examining the zoning density allowed surrounding Saratoga lake, and the potential for working with the surrounding towns around the lake to work together in limiting the effects of development on the lake.**

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 believe that throughout my tenure as a Supervisor, I have worked to assist the City, and lead at the County Board of Supervisors, on these types of issues. Back in 2009, I chaired a 'Green Committee' of Supervisors that studied various ways we could be more sustainable and our recommendations to the County were passed unanimously. I have been a primary advocate for Open Space, and especially Trails at the County, proposing and chairing the first County Board Trails Committee, and initiating our Trails funding back in 2015, which the County has annually funded since then. As Chairman of the City's Open Space committee in 2016 and 2017, we recommended the City's purchase of several parcels of land and worked with the City during the initial purchase phase of the Pitney Farm. We also reviewed and provided input on the Conservation Easement that exists over the Pitney Farm. I continue to support the County's recycling program, and I encourage all residents to take advantage of our Recycling Center on Weibel Avenue. I will continue to support efforts to add Bike lanes to our City's streets where they are appropriate, and to study what the most efficient routes should be for bikes through our City. I have proposed a County bike route system that is awaiting review at the County, which will**



**hopefully give those wishing to bike outside the City safe and appropriate route options to get from place to place in our County.**

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

**As County Supervisor, I will take responsibility for those things I can do at the County level, but I do not have a direct role to play at the City Council regarding this question.**

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

**I believe that Sustainable Saratoga has done great work as an organization, advocating for our City to become more sustainable in all aspects of its operation. The group has spoken in support of several of the various initiatives that either me or Council members have proposed, and that support is appreciated. I do think that Sustainable Saratoga, through speaking out at City meetings (and also County meetings, if appropriate) does help to shape policy and steer the conversation among our Citizens, so I do believe that Sustainable Saratoga can play a role in achieving our shared goals.**

