



*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)?

I will continue what I’ve been doing for the last 8 years. For example, I spurred the development of three affordable homes on what was once city owned property to build homes with Habitat for Humanity. I assigned funding to assist with receiving tax credits for developers to build affordable homes with the Saratoga Springs Housing Authority, and the South Broadway project – I expect they will request project funding again this year and our financial incentives will be available. I have worked closely with the Saratoga Economic Development Corporation, Saratoga County Prosperity Partnership, and three mayors on sustainable economic development issues. This is a very important issue to the long-term financial health of the city. We must have sustainable economic development to ensure that we can manage through any decrease in the revenues driven by SPAC, the Track, Skidmore, the Hospital, and the City Center.

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 was the City Council member to bring forward the successful Climate Change Agreement modeled after the Paris Agreement, but our agreement was actually stronger than the Paris Agreement and more accurately reflected the Governor Cuomo’s Revising the Energy Vision (REV) program. As you know, I worked with Sustainable Saratoga to make the dream of one of your members a reality by spearheading the construction of the Spa City Solar Park on the Weibel Avenue landfill, along with NYSERDA and the Governors NY Sun Program, which greatly reduced the city’s carbon footprint. I’ve been working to make Saratoga Springs a regional leader on these issues, beginning with establishing the Smart City Commission. I have been working with Public Safety and Public Works on issues like smart street lights and traffic lights, Community Choice Aggregation, and public space recycling.

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?



I've recommended, and funded, the City's Public Safety Department hire of a part-time parking project manager to help move forward a parking plan for the city of Saratoga Springs. This person has been hired and will begin to meet with various stakeholders throughout the city, including Sustainable Saratoga, the Chamber, City Council, residents, etc. to determine a good plan leading to a next phase RFP for a full parking management plan for the City. I have offered several smart parking presentations to the New York State Parking Authority and will do so again this October 9th.

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?

The Comprehensive Plan and how it is to be updated is outlined in the City of Saratoga Spring's Charter. I support the City Charter and its process for the updating of our Comprehensive Plan.

- 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 has long been purchasing land surrounding our watershed and Loughberry Lake (our primary drinking water source) to support protecting these lands from development. I support this initiative and will support this going forward.

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?

I have been working with Commissioner Scirocco to address recycling and waste reduction, and hope to continue to do so. As mentioned earlier, when a former Mayor decided not to lead the development of affordable housing on what was then city owned property, as proposed by the city's Planning and Economic Development Department, I took the lead and made that proposal a reality. I've already worked with Sustainable Saratoga on issues like the Spa Solar Park and hope to do so again on other issues in the future. Every year I support through the city budget an annual appropriation for tree-toga to support new tree plantings throughout the city. This year I will ensure we have adequate funding to support trail maintenance.

