



*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



Sustainable Saratoga Questionnaire

Response from: Tim Holmes, candidate for Mayor Saratoga Springs, NY 2019

[Holmes responses in *italics*]

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.

The Comprehensive Plan is a valuable tool in planning for the future. Most important is the narrative that accompanies the map. This reflects the intentions of the residents, and the spirit of the city. There should be a dynamic process of checking the progress of development with adherence to the intentions of the residents.

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

A good measure of sustainable is acceptance by residents. There are measures that include economic resilience and a healthy social matrix as well as environmental. Saratoga Springs is a moderately sized city with just 30,000 residents, with the benefit of a high level of 'destination dollars'. There is a healthy trend of residential stock for part-year residency. 'Affordable' housing is a concept in development and it will be important to learn from the models currently under construction. An important factor of sustainability will be the occupants' success continuing or finding fulfilled lives in Saratoga Springs.

The successful models should be learned from and emulated.

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 starting point is to learn best practices as practiced in similar municipalities, and to develop according to what is found to work.

In the development prognosis for the city as seen in the Comprehensive Plan, there can and should be provision for smart traffic design, and allowance for roadway improvements that will preclude the creation of traffic patterns that choke healthy movement. Public transportation options should be developed as practicable, with metrics that truly show effectiveness.

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?



Parking solutions should be designed to facilitate convenience for residents as well as to stimulate use of the downtown core. The recent move of oversight for the proposed parking garage to the City Center is a step forward. Yet to be defined is a plan to support operations of the garage. The viability of this facility will tie in with downtown parking availability and accessibility. There should be a plan for coordination of parking space terms of use and publicity that ties together downtown and the parking garages. Such a plan is in preparation, to be discussed with leaders of the downtown business community along with City Center leadership and residents.

Mobility and accessibility solutions should be included in all deliberations concerning parking locations and features.

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?
- 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?

I support protection of the Greenbelt. It is more than a conceptual region. It is an expression of city design identifying concentrations of development. This should be a reliable indicator to residents current and future of what to seek and what to expect in predictable density and uses. Densities should be clear, and maintained.

The watershed for Saratoga Lake is challenging to protect due the breadth of the region. Here, planning can be effective. With precipitation predicted to be equal or greater in coming years, I recommend dynamic mapping to show wetland and watershed perimeters, available to planners, developers and residents. As available from NOAA or the city's Sustainability Coordinator. Planning and zoning should keep up to protect the water bodies and resources.

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?

As Mayor I would undertake to form consensus of the governing body. Beyond specific wording in the Charter, the Mayor and Council adopts laws, codes and ordinances. In coming years the importance of environmental considerations will grow. It appears there is good opportunity for members of the Council to recognize important initiatives to include. I believe the responsibility belongs to the entire governing body and would appreciate the opportunity to lead in these initiatives as necessary.

Similarly, as Mayor I would take a strong interest in representing the city to other levels of government as well as nongovernmental agencies beneficial in achieving sustainable goals.



Sustainable Saratoga and like organizations are vital components of citizen action in the city. Sustainable Saratoga should continue to contribute its valuable insight and recommendations to the city. There are a number of ways in which this can be done. As Mayor I would add members to planning bodies who bring the longer and deeper perspectives often found in Sustainable Saratoga viewpoints, along with other members of the community who share a vision for sustainability in the city's future.

Thank you for the opportunity to respond.

*Tim Holmes
Candidate for Mayor 2019
Saratoga Springs*

