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October 12, 2020

Mayor Meg Kelly
Commissioner of Finance, Michele Madigan
Commissioner of Accounts, John Franck
Commissioner of Public Safety, Robin Dalton
Commissioner of Public Works, Skip Scirocco

Dear Mayor and Commissioners,

RE: ENDORSEMENT OF THE SARATOGA SPRINGS' NATURAL RESOURCES INVENTORY

Sustainable Saratoga is very pleased with the final draft of the Natural Resources Inventory (NRI). The completion of this NRI is a recommendation of the City's 2015 Comprehensive Plan, and it provides a thorough description of the current status of the City's natural resources. We applaud the members of the Open Space Advisory Committee, Tina Carton – Administrator of Parks, Open Lands, Historic Preservation and Sustainability for the City, and the NRI consultants for their efforts, which are especially laudable given that most of the revisions were completed during the COVID pandemic.

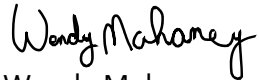
The NRI contains comprehensive descriptions of the City's remaining natural resources, including forests, lakes, streams, and wetlands, as well as key recommendations to ensure their protection. Indeed, this document is not simply a list of resources but rather a more comprehensive look at our resources, including why they are important and strategies to protect them. The assessments contained in this NRI can be used as the baseline upon which to make long-ranging planning decisions on important issues like promoting climate resilience, protecting our wetlands and other important water resources, and reducing fragmentation of the City's Greenbelt.

While we had hoped that the scope of the project would include additional data collection and a more critical analysis of the existing data, the NRI does recommend specific actions to address data needs and calls for specific studies to be completed to fill in gaps in our knowledge. Despite these data limitations, the NRI does a good job of identifying initial strategies that the City can employ to protect our valuable natural resources and plan for the future. We hope the Council will begin to implement these recommendations quickly.



As population pressures and the impacts of the climate crisis continue to grow, it is critical that we act now to preserve and protect our natural resources. We urge the Council to support the adoption of this Natural Resources Inventory. Thank you for considering our position.

Sincerely,



Wendy Mahaney

Executive Director, Sustainable Saratoga

cc: Tina Carton, Admin of Parks, Open Lands, Historic Preservation & Sustainability
Tom Denny, Chair, Open Space Advisory Committee

