

July 26, 2021

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## **RE: Missing Links Project**

Dear Mayor and Commissioners,

Sustainable Saratoga is in strong support of the City's work on the Missing Links sidewalk project and commends the City Council for successfully applying for a grant to improve our pedestrian walkways. The additional sidewalks will help fulfill the recommendations of our Comprehensive and Complete Streets Plans to promote walking and biking in Saratoga Springs.

The Missing Links sidewalk infrastructure project is an important step toward fulfilling key goals from the 2015 Comprehensive Plan. Goal 3.3-4 broadly affirms the City's commitment to "multi-modal movement." The Missing Links project directly targets Goal 3.3-5, which calls for connectivity in the form of improvements in all modes of transport (pedestrian, bicycle, and automobile) along corridors that lead "to major activity areas." The project also addresses Goal 3.3-6, which calls for installing public improvement features, including sidewalks, in both "our residential and mixed-use neighborhoods." It also has the potential to be literally a life-saving initiative, as it will minimize the risk to pedestrians of serious injury or death.

We urge the Council to support the completion of this project in its entirety. There may be individual homeowners who object to a sidewalk within the City's right of way for a variety of reasons, but those objections must be weighed against the project's long-term benefits to the common good of current and future generations. We particularly applaud the thoughtful selection of prioritized streets for the Missing Links sidewalk project. Each of the streets selected—Vanderbilt, State, Grand, West Fenlon, Congress, First St., East Ave and Third St—is an important, yet currently dangerous, pedestrian link to a "major activity area" (Comp Plan 3.3.-5). We encourage the Council not to diminish the impact of this well-conceived plan for a better and safer future by selectively eliminating segments from the project that would fragment the sidewalk network and thwart the overall goal of the project – connectivity through the completion of missing sidewalk linkages.

When City Council applied for this grant, the Council was acting with vision and a commitment to achieving the goals of the Comprehensive Plan for a walkable, sustainable city. We commend the City for carrying out this visionary project, one that will protect lives and enhance the quality of life for so many citizens and visitors to our city. It is important that City Council fully implement the project as originally designed.

Sincerely,

*Wendy Mahaney*

Wendy Mahaney, Executive Director  
Sustainable Saratoga

cc: Tina Carton

