

2021 Candidate Sustainability Questionnaire

1. General Sustainability:

- A. *What do sustainability and climate resiliency mean to you in the context of local governance?*

Sustainability for me ultimately means a carbon neutral footprint. As a municipality we can enact projects, policies and procedures that will reduce the impact the city has on the environment.

Saratoga Springs does benefit from our geographic location and mild climate as far as climate resiliency. In 2017 I was directly impacted by 2 category 5 hurricanes. The first one destroyed our family's house. Fortunately, we do not see the same impacts as areas that are already prone to severe weather and wildfires.

With that being said, climate change will have a greater impact on our economically disadvantaged citizens. As a municipality, we must make sure that those who don't have the resources to adapt to climate change are not left to suffer. This would include continuing initiatives like our code blue shelter and cooling stations.

- B. *What are your top 3 sustainability-related priorities for Saratoga Springs, and what concrete actions will you take to address them?*

As Commissioner of Finance, part of my platform is to aggressively pursue state and federal funding for projects in the city. I have been involved in a \$350,000 solar installation project at one of my businesses and we recently signed a \$200,000 solar installation project for our hotel in Saratoga Springs. These projects are both heavily subsidized by local and federal grants, tax credits, and tax deductions.

New York State Energy Research and Development Authority (NYSERDA) has a clean city program. This program "is for local government officials and staff who want their communities to benefit from the new clean energy economy but struggle with tight budgets and limited staff." State grants are available for municipalities, such as Saratoga Springs, to reduce our carbon footprint. (We will be using a public NYSERDA grant to subsidize part of our current solar project)

The federal government has a Weatherization and Intergovernmental Programs Office (WIP). WIP has subsidized energy refits in 20,000 buildings and the installation of more than 60,000 renewable energy systems.

There are federal and state dollars available to greatly offset the cost of "clean" projects. We, as a municipality, need to find ways to access this funding. As your next Commissioner of Finance, I will use my experience to do just that.

As far as my top 3 sustainability related priorities, it would come down to the "lowest hanging



fruit.” How can we spend the least amount of money on and get the greatest return. As of now my priorities would be:

1: The installation of high efficiency fixtures. This would include LED streetlights and smart traffic lights that reduce car emissions in our streets. Nearly one third of the energy use to power a typical municipal building can be conserved. We can begin to see considerable savings in our buildings by adding things like smart thermostats, water efficient faucets, etc.

1b: Recycling Bins: Currently there is no public recycling on Broadway. As a former board member on the Downtown Special Assessment District, I would work with the DSA to make our downtown bins recyclable ready.

2: Moving to an electric fleet. The cars and trucks that keep Saratoga Springs employees moving around our city have useful life. When that useful life is over, they must be replaced. Whenever feasible, taking into consideration of the type of vehicle, its role, and current technology, I would support procuring only electric vehicles in the future.

The New York State Vehicle Marketplace offers state and local government entities the opportunity to purchase or lease electric vehicles from dealers under contract with the Office of General Services. Partnering with the state has the potential to offer a wider range of electric vehicle options and lower prices. There would also be significant fuel and maintenance savings over the life of the EV.

3: Clean Energy Production: As I stated above, I have worked on a couple significant solar installations. They would have not been economically feasible as a stand-alone project. State and federal funding made the projects good investments both for the businesses bottom line and the environment.

I believe using some of these same incentives, Saratoga Springs can bolster our solar production in an economically feasible way.

2. Climate Crisis:

A. *What role do you think local government should play in preparing for and addressing climate change?*

As stated above, Saratoga Springs does benefit from our geographic location and mild climate. We do not see the same impacts as areas that are already prone to severe weather and wildfires. With that being said, climate change will have a greater impact on our economically disadvantaged citizens. As a municipality, we must make sure that those who don't have the resources to adapt to climate change are not left to suffer. This would include continuing initiatives like our code blue shelter and cooling stations.

Local governments must take proactive steps, to reduce carbon emission by utilizing clean energy sources and becoming more efficient with the electricity we do consume.



- B. *What policies and programs will you implement to improve the environmental health and climate resiliency of our community in the face of increasing climate disruption, including extreme temperatures and precipitation events?*

The city of Saratoga Springs and Sustainable Saratoga currently work with an arborist to plant more trees in our neighborhoods. Not only does this improve the aesthetics of the city, but the shade provided by the leaves will keep homes cooler in the summer and warmer in the winter. Supporting these commonsense programs will be something I look forward to doing as your next Commissioner of Finance.

- C. *Given the urgency of the climate crisis, what policies and programs will you implement to curb greenhouse gas emissions and under what timeline will these policies and programs be implemented?*

The programs stated above will have varying timelines. The installation of LED streetlights and smart traffic lights is currently taking place.

Upgrading fixtures in municipal buildings could begin as soon as the council would appropriate money to fund this initiative.

The electric fleet transition will take place as vehicles come to the end of their useful life and need to be replaced.

I also believe in the complete streets project and connecting neighborhoods with things other than roads for cars. The idea of sidewalks, trails and bike lanes connecting the city has many advantages. The use of these forms of transportation has health benefits, reduces carbon emissions and take cars off the roads and out of parking spaces primarily in the warmer months when demand is at its peak. As Commissioner of Finance, I would look for federal, state and local funds to continue the Complete Streets project.

- 3. *Unified Development Ordinance (UDO):*** *For several years, the city of Saratoga Springs has been engaged in a complete rewriting of the city's zoning ordinance. This Unified Development Ordinance is ostensibly the most important regulatory document in the city and will direct land use and development standards for years. The UDO is slated to be voted on after the election, on November 16.*

- A. *Do you believe the draft UDO contains adequate sustainability measures, including protections for our natural resources and mitigations for addressing the climate crisis, to satisfy the vision laid out in the 2015 Comprehensive Plan? Please explain your answer.*

The city of Saratoga Springs has a "greenbelt" – a large area of low-density, low intensity development in the outer portions of the city – to retain a sense of rural character outside of the city's core while concentrating the impacts of development and transportation within the core, to protect sensitive environmental features such as wetlands and open spaces, and to advance the city's identity as "the City in the Country."



- B. *Given the intense and persistent development pressure on the greenbelt, what is your assessment of the effectiveness of the UDO to protect this city resource?*
- C. *If elected, what additional measures would you take, if any, to ensure the continued existence of the city's greenbelt?*

Saratoga Springs has devoted more than 5 years and countless resources in developing its Unified Development Ordinance (UDO). Multiple experts, including city employees and outside consultants, have contributed to its formation. I respect our sitting Planning Board and their advisory opinion. I also respect the opinions of the various experts who have helped to form our UDO.

With that being said, The UDO leaves open the opportunity for “Suburban Sprawl” in our greenbelt. Development that is not conducive to keeping our downtown strong and vibrant.

As Commissioner of Finance, I will work to protect the greenbelt from any development that would undermine its rural character, and potentially damage it's natural resources.

4. Affordable Housing:

- A. *What steps will you take toward achieving increased opportunities for diverse and affordable housing (both rental and ownership) for both middle- and lower-income levels?*

Workforce development will be an initiative that I will pursue as the next Commissioner of Finance. In order to have a workforce, we need workforce housing. I support Inclusionary Zoning, that will give developers density credits for including affordable housing in their development. This would economically diversify new developments and provide affordable ownership housing options for economically challenged individual and families.

Having grown up in a family that provides affordable housing options in Saratoga Springs, I understand the need and solutions available. Inclusionary Zoning for rental developments is something I would support, as well as the private charitable organizations that look to provide pathways to house rental options such as Shelters of Saratoga.

5. Sustainable Saratoga's Role:

- A. *What are your thoughts about working in cooperation with Sustainable Saratoga in helping the city achieve greater sustainability features and environmental protections?*

In my business career, I always listen to a subject matter expert. I listen to my lawyer and take his legal advice. I listen to my doctor when she offers medical advice. I listen to engineers, architects and contractors for building advice. I would be very interested in listening and working in cooperation with Sustainable Saratoga in helping the city achieve greater sustainability features and environmental protections. I view your organization, Sustainable Saratoga as a subject matter expert.



B. *If elected, would you be receptive to a mid-term follow-up with Sustainable Saratoga, to review sustainability progress, obstacles, and possible ways we can work together?*

Yes.

