

2021 Candidate Sustainability Questionnaire

1. General Sustainability:

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

Supporting operational and quality of life initiatives that improve our local community while also supporting overall goals that preserve and protect our natural environment. As Commissioner of Public Works I've invested considerable time and resources into these efforts. This includes improving the City's open spaces and parks, developing the urban forestry plan, trail development, planning for public space recycling, emission reductions in the DPW fleet, increased energy efficiency in city owned buildings and protecting the greenbelt.

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

- 1) Enhance and improve the Urban Forestry Master Plan through the growth of the tree program by supporting the City's top-knotch Arborist and Urban Forestry Division employees.**
- 2) Public Space Recycling requires a focused investment of time, resources, and public education to ensure participation and an effective program. The current plan is to purchase a dual purpose garbage and recycling EV truck. Public education is next to ensure people understand how they can help. Lastly, developing a plan for staffing to handle the increased roles involved with recycling. This will be challenging to operate effectively, and I look forward to working with Sustainable and interested high school students and residents to make this a success.**
- 3) Protect the Greenbelt and ensure only thoughtful development occurs in areas of our city that provide the beautiful greenspace we need.**

2. Climate Crisis:

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

The City of Saratoga Springs has done a good job at being mindful of policies and initiatives that are environmentally supportive. It's been outstanding to be at the council table and vote on new or expanded trails, protecting the Pitney Farm from development, and preventing unreasonable development in the greenbelt.

Within DPW I've made certain that the Urban Forestry Master Plan is thoroughly supported, and have proposed a trails crew to maintain and support our growing trail system. It's also been a priority to improve efficiencies in buildings. The most obvious example of this occurred during the renovation of City Hall, where energy efficient climate and lighting systems replaced antiquated building systems. We've installed GPS programs in vehicles that monitor emissions and have worked with staff to identify ways to reduce unnecessary idling.

As the above outlines, to address climate change the City Council needs to promote environmentally conscious policies, and departmental initiatives must be taken to do our part to fight climate change and/or heal our environment.

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 above outlines some of the initiatives I've championed as Commissioner of DPW. Including public space recycling planning, planting more trees and creating a staffing program that implements the Urban Forestry Master Plan, and increasing energy efficient buildings (and more).

This would be a good opportunity to share some concerns about storm drainage. The recent increase in severe rainstorms has exposed inadequate storm planning from decades ago. Subdivisions and development from as far back as the 1970's are now showing plan designs that cannot handle the extreme rainfalls we're experiencing today. It's fair to say we know much more about drainage today than those involved in the past, but it's starting to become a significantly expensive proposition for the City to solve serious drainage issues. I've directed multiple staff in DPW and Engineering to work with outside engineering firms to resolve real drainage problems but new issues are developing year after year.

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?

Some of these have been described in detail already. With information from the GPS Fleet Management software, DPW is working on internal policies to curb emissions. Additionally, the improvement of efficiencies in buildings has demonstrated multiple benefits (including participation in National Grid rebate programs). I would like to continue investing in LED lighting and building systems efficiencies in all City owned buildings, including recreational facilities. DPW currently owns one electric vehicle (EV) and is taking over the responsibilities for the EV chargers. I'm working on a plan now to purchase more electric vehicles and add new EV charging stations downtown within the next year.

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.

I'm concerned about the levels of protection for the greenbelt, our more rural areas, and the gateway designs of our City. During my time in office I've been a strong proponent of protecting the greenbelt and ensuring appropriate uses and development. In public workshops for the UDO I've objected to new uses such as a campground, country club, and community center. The UDO needs to be clear about design specifications for the City's gateways and the more rural areas of the City. Overall, I think the current UDO draft would benefit from additional opportunity for public comment and input.

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?

My biggest concern with the UDO is making certain it protects the greenbelt appropriately. Having been elected, I previously voted on a resolution that established important protections for the greenbelt and will continue to do so if given the opportunity to serve again.

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?

This is an ongoing discussion that seems to rise to the top during some projects and then unfortunately disappear. There have been a number of projects recently to promote lower income and workplace housing within the City. I was supportive of the housing authority project on West Circular, and worked with them on many water and sewer issues to help that along. Not to mention affordable housing through the Intrada Project. Other projects have not progressed successfully, such as the planned redevelopment for workforce housing at the old Spa Diner. What the City Council can do is vote to promote pilot programs to make development easier, look at the City side process that will slow down these projects and try to instead help these projects along. That might remove some hurdles these projects experience or expect and hurts getting them to the finish line.



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B. Would you support inclusionary zoning (or some other proposal) to promote affordable housing in Saratoga?

I think this question would need to include the proposal or ideas for the proposal to truly weigh-in. At the council table the idea of inclusionary zoning was brought forward by prior Commissioner of Public Safety Chris Mathiesen. There were benefits discussed and issues vetted but ultimately the idea never moved beyond discussion. It would be important to review that discussion and what roadblocks were identified to recall what the community felt about inclusionary zoning.

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? 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?

Sustainable Saratoga is a great community organization that provides valuable insight into important sustainability issues. There have been multiple instances where input from Sustainable Saratoga has assisted my decision making as both a department head and Council Member.

I've had a great working relationship with Sustainable, and worked hand-in-hand on the development and implementation of the Urban Forestry Master Plan. Additionally, the efforts of Sustainable help with our application to the Arbor Day Foundation to qualify as a Tree City USA.

Currently, we're in discussions about how to implement public space recycling effectively. It's been a few years in the works, but new equipment and opportunities will help to make this happen, but it will be a partnership to help bring forward the public communication component.

I enjoy working with all community organizations but especially appreciate the close relationship with how impactful DPW can be on Sustainable Saratoga initiatives. For that reason, I certainly would be open to meet with and review sustainability progress, and have always done so during my time in office.