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February 14, 2022

Saratoga Springs City Council
City Hall
474 Broadway
Saratoga Springs, NY 12866

RE: Saratoga Springs Greenbelt Trail – Downtown Connector

Dear Mayor and Commissioners,

Sustainable Saratoga is dedicated to promoting sustainable practices and protecting the natural resources in Saratoga Springs for current and future generations. It is through this mission that we have long supported implementation of the City's Complete Streets Plan and other initiatives that improve the safety and accessibility of a cleaner, greener transportation system.

Creating safer bicycle infrastructure throughout the City will encourage more residents and visitors to reach their destination on bikes rather than automobiles, which helps to reduce traffic congestion, parking demand, and pollution. This results in many benefits to our environment, public health, and the economic vitality of the community.

Climate change is already impacting this region, and experts warn us that we must act now to avoid greater climate disruption. Investing in greener, alternative transportation is one critical component of any strategy to reduce our greenhouse gas emissions (GHG).

New York's nation-leading climate law, The Climate Leadership and Community Protection Act, mandates a 40% reduction in state GHG emissions by 2030 from 1990 levels. The Draft Scoping Plan, which creates a roadmap for achieving emissions reductions, notes that the transportation sector was responsible for approximately 28% of the state's GHG emissions in 2019. Transportation sector emissions are about 16% higher today than they were in 1990.

The city's Downtown Connector trail is a critical link in the Greenbelt Trail that will give Saratogians, residents of nearby communities, and visitors a safe and convenient option for commuting into downtown Saratoga Springs that isn't dependent on greenhouse gas emitting road transportation. This can result in significant reductions in our city's GHG emissions. Studies have also shown a connection between better bicycle infrastructure and the strengthening of local economies.

In summary, the city's Downtown Connector trail is a critical expansion of the city's green infrastructure with multiple benefits to the city, its residents, and visitors. Sustainable Saratoga supports the build-out of this trail and looks forward to its completion.

Sincerely,

Wendy Mahaney

Wendy Mahaney
Executive Director of Sustainable Saratoga

