

September 20, 2023

Dear Candidate,

Sustainable Saratoga is a not-for-profit organization that promotes sustainable practices and the protection of natural resources through education, advocacy and action, for the benefit of current and future generations in Saratoga Springs.

The upcoming November election offers an opportunity to discuss pressing environmental issues in our area. Our supporters are interested in knowing your plans for addressing the key sustainability issues confronting our community. We are requesting your responses to the questions below by October 4, 2023. Please email your answers back to us (kelsey@sustainablesaratoga.org) in digital form.

As a 501(c)(3) organization, we do not endorse any particular candidate for an elected office. Your responses and those of other candidates will be posted on our website, shared to our social media, and emailed to our members verbatim. We will not provide any comments on the responses.

Thank you in advance for your participation, and please contact me if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

Helsey Truell

Kelsey Trudell **Executive Director** Sustainable Saratoga

Board of Directors: Anne Ernst, Laura Faulk, Dianna Goodwin (Chair), Sarah Goodwin, Elaine McArdle, Harry Moran, Paul Murphy (Treasurer), Richard Romano (Secretary), David Sayer

1. Sustainable Saratoga believes that to be more sustainable as a city, we need more diverse and affordable housing. If you agree, what type of efforts would you support to achieve this objective? If you disagree, please explain why.

As a candidate for County Supervisor, I have advocated that the County encourage all municipalities to provide for additional units of housing via reform of restricting zoning and planning requirements. A number of states have taken this approach, including California, New Jersey and Connecticut. New York City is now proposing flexibilities designed to increase the overall number of housing units. Our environmental priorities must be retained, but they should not be a tool to prevent our health care workers, police, firefighters, teachers and others from living among the people they serve and support.

2. Saratoga Springs participates in the No Mow May movement encouraging residents, homeowners, businesses, and municipalities to reduce the frequency of mowing to provide habitat and food for pollinators. Rate your support for changing municipal mowing practices to encourage native plantings and natural habitat and for banning insecticide use on municipal properties.

0	1	2	3	4	<u>5</u>
Do Not Support					Highly Support

Comments:

As County Supervisor, I will recommend the highway department reduce its roadside mowing, and increase planting of pollinator plants on the county's hundreds of miles of roadsides.

3. Saratoga Springs' Complete Streets Policy is to ensure that road projects are planned and designed with safe, convenient travel for pedestrians, bicyclists, motorists, and transit riders. Rate your support for the Complete Streets Plan.

0	1	2	3	4	<u>5</u>
Do Not Support					Highly Support

## Comments:

We also need new measures so that interstate truck traffic does not continue to ruin our residential and downtown districts. The Church-Van Dam Street corridor is an interstate highway masquerading as a residential street. County government must get involved, but sadly, the Board of Supervisors does not even have a Standing Committee on Transportation.

4. Saratoga Springs has a long history of tree-lined downtown streets which provide much desired aesthetic value in addition to promoting clean air, clean water, and cooler

temperatures. Rate your support for the continued funding of urban tree plantings to expand Saratoga's urban forest.

0 1 2 3 4 <u>5</u> Do Not Support Highly Support

Comments:

Not a County issue, but I strongly urge the City to adopt an ordinance prohibiting "volcano mulching" of trees in the city right-of-way. The private landscapers plant trees, as required by City Planning, but then kill them by over-mulching them.

5. In 2016, the then City Council adopted a report of the Downtown Parking Task Force, which called for several steps including an "Office of Downtown Parking Management," a volunteer advisory board, and the selection of a professional parking management firm to design and implement a plan. Rate your support for implementing the recommendations in this report for a downtown parking management plan.

0	1	2	<u>3</u>	4	5
Do Not Support					Highly Support

Comments: I do not recall this report. But I believe that parking requirements for developers raise the cost of residential units and work against our need for more affordable housing. New York City is now trying to reform its parking requirements in order to provide for more affordable housing. Saratoga Springs should do so as well.

6. Saratoga Springs is known as the "City in the Country." Sustainable Saratoga believes it is critical for the city to codify zoning and planning standards, protect the Greenbelt and open space, and support sustainable growth principles. The city's current zoning ordinance (the UDO) allows development in the Greenbelt that risks urban sprawl. Sustainable Saratoga has supported amendments to the UDO to continue to protect the city's Greenbelt. Rate your support for amending the UDO to limit development and retain rural character in the city's Greenbelt, including the rural gateways into our city.

0	1	2	3	<u>4</u>	5
Do Not Support					Highly Support

Comments: See above, my comments on zoning and planning restrictions that limit our ability to provide the housing we need for our workforce.

7. Sustainable Saratoga advocates for limiting the amount of garbage and food waste that enters the landfill. Currently our downtown business district has no recycling bins for the public to dispose of recyclables, and the city of Saratoga Springs is lacking a municipal community compost collection service. Rate your support for the addition of public recycling bins downtown and the development of a community composting program.

0	1	2	3	4	5
Do Not Support					Highly Support

Comments: Not a County issue. The city does collect yard waste and compost it on Weibel Avenue. The generation of compost must be balanced by the market demand, or additional uses must be found. I fear that the commercial landscapers are using their abundant supply of compost to volcano mulch their customers' trees, killing them. Composting is a good thing, but more planning should be undertaken so that the end uses are appropriate and good for the environment.