

September 9, 2025

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.

Prior to the upcoming November election our many supporters are interested in knowing your position on sustainability issues in our community. We are requesting your responses to the questions below by October 3, 2025. 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 newsletter subscribers 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,



Kelsey Trudell
Executive Director
Sustainable Saratoga

1. In the city's Comprehensive Plan, Saratoga Springs is defined as the "City in the Country," meaning an intensively developed urban core and vibrant downtown surrounded by "the Greenbelt," an outlying area of rural character and natural resources, with low-density residential development. Do you support this vision of Saratoga Springs or do you think it should change? What are your ideas for economic development that promote smart, sustainable growth for our community?

Our comprehensive plan has been in place for 10 years and I believe it is due for a review. At present my concerns relate simply to housing and affordability. I do believe we need to review policies that could help enhance affordability in the city and have ideas on how to do so. The liberty housing project being one example of use of space in the inner tax district that created 220 workforce housing units and also conserved 20 acres of land forever wild. I believe a well constituted working group of all stakeholders will continue our legacy in terms of a balance between growth and nature. In addition I have already begun work to greatly expand the use of ADUs in the city. Presently permitted under UR3 and 4, I am analyzing the areas to assess how many can be built on available land. I am planning to have their construction driven by a tax/assessment reduction. I am happy to discuss this at greater length

2. The Saratoga Springs Hazard Mitigation Plan ranks severe storms, flooding, and extreme temperatures as the top hazards for the city. The city's natural "green infrastructure," including forests and wetlands, helps protect against flooding, reduces urban heat, and absorbs carbon from the atmosphere. What is your plan for keeping the city's "green infrastructure" intact and for protecting city residents and our local economy from intensifying climate hazards?

Unfortunately, I believe we are past the point where our current infrastructure and systems can manage effectively the weather patterns we are now experiencing. We need to make significant investments in hardening our infrastructure: be that roads, stormwater systems, curbing, or watershed protections for our source water, we cannot simply hope that the impacts of global warming will not come to our door. That is not a reasonable approach as we have already seen it.

3. Approximately 40% of the food produced in the U.S. for human consumption is wasted, with much of it ending up in landfills and resulting in further environmental problems. Should municipal food scraps collection be added to the City's existing composting operations?

At this time, I do not have an understanding as to what a food scrap recycling program would cost vs the value it would provide our community. I would need to know much more about this.

4. The cost of housing in Saratoga Springs continues to rise. In other resort communities such as ours, simply building more housing has not reduced housing costs. Please discuss your ideas for making Saratoga Springs more affordable.

5. Sustainable Saratoga and the city of Saratoga Springs have worked hard for years to increase the presence of trees in the city—the “urban forest”—which provides environmental, social, and economic benefits for Saratoga Springs. This ongoing program requires investment in trained professional staff, tree planting, and maintenance. How important is funding for the urban forest among other city priorities?

I'm a long time participant in Tree Toga and in a previous runs for the DPW department, I committed to planting 1000 trees in my first term. I am aware that we've lost over 7000 trees in the last decade +. I believe we need to continue to try and build back the forest as much as possible, though we are having issues with invasive species that are being addressed. We have to have adequate staffing within our urban forestry group as we have a sizable inventory of trees. I will always look to make sure that department is properly staffed and funded.

6. Please feel free to address your top sustainability priorities for Saratoga Springs or any other sustainability topics.

Sustainability has many definitions, when I look at the City of Saratoga Springs, three areas that leap out to me are our infrastructure, our economy, and our community. We need to make sure that our infrastructure is sustainable for the long-term and that would start with securing our water source as it is currently in peril. Additional steps would include strengthening access to affordable housing such that everyone who participates in our economy, has the ability to live here. If we do not have the ability for our workers to live here, we will no longer have them. With that, we will not have a sustainable economic model to move forward. Lastly, sustainable housing is essential to the long-term survival and sustainability of our of our community. Right now, people are being priced out of their homes, young families do not have access due to housing shortages created by a glut of short term rentals (approx 900). I am working diligently to reduce that number and to create additional units. I have a laser focus on accessibility and affordability of housing.