

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?

Yes, I fully support the vision of Saratoga Springs as the "City in the Country." This guiding principle in the Comprehensive Plan captures what makes our city so special: a vibrant, walkable downtown surrounded by the natural beauty, open spaces, and rural character of the Greenbelt. Preserving that balance is key to maintaining both our quality of life and our economic vitality.

I believe smart, sustainable growth means honoring this vision while planning for the future in a way that benefits everyone. That includes encouraging economic development that aligns with our values, supporting locally owned businesses, investing in infrastructure that enhances livability (like bike paths, sidewalks, and green space), and focusing on infill and mixed-use development within the urban core to prevent sprawl.

It also means being intentional about protecting the Greenbelt, not just for its environmental value, but because it supports tourism, recreation, agriculture, and the overall character that draws people to Saratoga Springs in the first place.

By prioritizing transparency, fiscal responsibility, and community input, we can promote growth that reflects who we are as a city, forward-thinking, inclusive, and deeply rooted in our connection to both people and place.

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?

Protecting our city's natural "green infrastructure", including forests, wetlands, and open space, is not just about conservation, it's about resilience, public safety, and long-term economic stability.

I support policies that preserve and strengthen our green infrastructure. These natural systems play a vital role in absorbing stormwater, reducing flood risk, moderating temperatures, and improving air quality. They are also critical assets in fighting climate change by capturing carbon and supporting biodiversity.

Climate resilience isn't just an environmental issue, it's a financial one. Every dollar spent on proactive mitigation saves much more in avoided disaster recovery costs. By protecting our green infrastructure, we're also protecting the health, safety, and economic well-being of everyone who lives and works in Saratoga Springs.

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?

Yes, the Director of Parks, Open Space, and Historic Preservation recently visited a town with a successful food scraps composting program. It's definitely something we should explore here. Getting a pilot program off the ground would take some volunteers, but I'd fully support the effort and do what's needed to help make it happen.

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.

Making Saratoga Springs more affordable is essential so people of all ages, backgrounds, and income levels can live here, not just visit. Affordability affects housing, jobs, and community connection.

We have over 1,800 affordable units built, in progress, or planned. The Mayor's office has been working closely with the Planning Department on ways to support attainable homeownership, like exploring Community Land Trusts/Banks and helping property owners understand how accessory dwelling units (ADUs) can play a role.

We're also talking with CDTA about better transit options and support small businesses to create year-round jobs. As a certified pro-housing community, we're exploring grants to help review zoning for gentle density options and housing needs assessment.

Affordability doesn't mean lowering standards, it means making sure the people who keep Saratoga vibrant can afford to stay and thrive.

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?



*Educate.
Advocate.
Act.*

Our urban forest is a huge asset to Saratoga Springs, it improves air quality, keeps the city cooler, manages stormwater, and adds to our quality of life. Thanks to Sustainable Saratoga and the City, we've already made great progress.

Of course, budgets are tight, and we have to balance urban forestry with other priorities like public safety and infrastructure. But we can still support our trees in smart, cost-effective ways, by maintaining what we've planted, seeking grants and partnerships, and including tree work in existing projects like road or park upgrades.

Trees aren't just "nice to have", they're part of our infrastructure, and they pay off in the long run. With the right approach, we can keep growing our urban forest without overburdening the city budget.

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

Sustainability should be woven into everything we do, from housing and transportation to economic development. By making thoughtful, forward-looking choices now, we can keep Saratoga Springs a healthy, livable, and welcoming city for generations to come.