

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?

I want to maintain the Greenbelt however without coordination with surrounding municipalities it becomes meaningless in the face of up-to-the-edge development outside of our jurisdiction. From inside our borders, spot zoning/PUDs must be avoided in the name of "fast housing" fixes.

Economic development that promotes sustainable growth includes: 1) Policies and infrastructure to encourage a more diversified economy so that the people who live in Saratoga Springs can afford to work in Saratoga Springs rather than having to commute hours every week. This is an update to the Comprehensive Plan as well as ensuring adequate water and services. 2) Partner with builders to encourage energy-efficient construction methods. This includes incentives at the local level and sourcing grants from state or higher levels.

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?

We must continue to follow state laws and our own development ordinance with regards to protection of wetlands and continue our partnership with private organizations to promote urban tree planting. Permeability requirements must be adhered to and enforced for projects approved by the city, which requires adequately staffing both the building department and code inspection.

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 although it was my understanding that there was already a project to stand up composting of food waste in partnership with Pitney Meadows farm. I would like to see that project continue and if successful implement a complete program.

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.

First, affordability is not just about housing. Systems and policies that require, or cause to require, excess time or cost (such as needing to commute long distances to work or to buy goods or services) also contribute to affordability issues, along with the cost and inconsistent availability of services, utilities, and food.

However, regarding housing in particular, outside of price control, the only way to reduce housing cost is by increasing the stock of available housing. There are three ways to do this, the easiest is to build in undeveloped properties, then there is repurposing existing development (either internal conversion or demolition and rebuild), then there are implementing policies to increase stock (such as disincentivizing speculation on houses and apartments that sit idle and discouraging excessive 'upgrades' that price houses well above market value for their neighborhood). I do not believe that we have yet maximized our options for increasing stock without resorting to new construction. In-fill applications continue to come in and must be weighed against future affordability. The city has adopted a policy that will likely discourage external speculation on property to be used as short term rentals.

To make Saratoga Springs more affordable, besides the housing costs, we need to address the other affordability issues as well. Encouraging walkability/bikeability and continuing to partner with the CDTA to reduce reliance on automobiles will make our city more affordable, as will public-private partnerships to provide food aid, repair, and other community supports.

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 believe it is critical and it is a commitment per the approved 2013 Urban and Community Forest Master Plan, as adopted by the city, and I also believe should continue to operate to the more recent recommendations of the Urban Forestry Management Plan. Tree management impacts infrastructure and energy usage and is an important investment in both sustainability and affordability.

I do also advocate for updating the Comprehensive Plan and as part of that reviewing and incorporating changes where warranted to the supporting land use and development plans adopted by the City - which would include incorporating the recommendations of the Urban Forestry Management Plan. This would necessarily commit funding as well as compel us to seek outside partnerships and assistance to maintaining our urban forest.

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

My sustainability priorities are also key affordability priorities - either by reducing costs on the public to maintain our infrastructure or by providing residents and workers more economic freedom.



*Educate.
Advocate.
Act.*

Transportation - things that can help move residents and workers away from cars reduces their costs, reduces energy usage, and frees up space especially in more crowded commercial areas

Land Use (Permeability and water management) - development that manages runoff and can sustain through heavy rains and dry spells will reduce private repair costs, mitigate risk, and help smooth the peaks of usage on both our water and sewer infrastructure