

Sustainable Saratoga 2025 Candidate Questionnaire

Responses from Michele Madigan, Candidate for Mayor, Saratoga Springs

1.

Yes, I support the “City in the Country” vision — it’s what makes Saratoga Springs truly special. As Finance Commissioner, I balanced economic growth with environmental stewardship, helping our city grow responsibly while protecting our natural assets. My approach has always been about smart, sustainable development — not growth for growth’s sake.

As Mayor, I’ll continue to ensure that we maintain a vibrant downtown and preserve our cherished Greenbelt. I believe we can expand our economy by investing in green innovation, smart infrastructure, and energy efficiency, positioning Saratoga Springs as a regional leader in sustainability and technology. My vision is for Saratoga to become a Smart, Sustainable City — one that embraces electric vehicles (EVs), renewable energy, and smart infrastructure to support our residents, visitors, and local businesses alike.

2.

I am deeply committed to protecting our city’s green infrastructure — our trees, wetlands, and open spaces — which play a vital role in managing stormwater, mitigating flooding, and reducing heat. I spearheaded the Spa Solar Park, which now offsets roughly 40% of the City’s electricity use, and led the citywide LED streetlight conversion, cutting both costs and emissions.

As Mayor, I will prioritize climate resilience planning — strengthening tree canopy coverage, improving stormwater management systems, and exploring incentives for property owners to install green roofs, permeable pavement, and other sustainable designs. The New York League of Conservation Voters recently recognized my record and leadership, noting that I bring a “bias toward action” and a “proven track record of environmental leadership.” That bias for action will guide my approach to protecting Saratoga from climate risks.

3.

Yes. Adding municipal food scraps collection is a natural next step for Saratoga Springs. We’ve already demonstrated success with our composting initiatives, and expanding to include food scraps would further reduce landfill waste, cut methane emissions, and support a local circular economy.

I would work closely with Sustainable Saratoga, DPW, and community partners to develop a pilot food-scrap program, coupled with strong public education to encourage participation and maximize impact.

4.

Housing affordability is a sustainability issue — it affects our workforce, our economy, and our carbon footprint. When people can live close to where they work, we reduce commuting emissions and strengthen our community fabric.

We need a mix of housing options, including workforce housing, accessory dwelling units (ADUs), and public-private partnerships that ensure affordability without compromising character. I also support smart growth principles — directing development where infrastructure already exists, protecting open space, and encouraging energy-efficient construction.

5.

Our urban forest is part of Saratoga's identity and one of our most valuable natural assets. It improves air quality, provides shade, reduces flooding, and enhances our overall quality of life.

As Finance Commissioner, I established a dedicated funding stream for the city's urban forestry program — ensuring that tree planting, maintenance, and professional staffing were treated as essential investments, not optional extras. I'm proud that this commitment has allowed Saratoga to expand its tree canopy and preserve our "City in the Country" character.

As Mayor, I would continue to prioritize and strengthen that funding, explore new grants, and build public-private partnerships to expand tree planting and maintenance citywide. Investing in our trees is investing in public health, climate resilience, and the long-term sustainability of our community.

6.

My top sustainability priorities include:

- Accelerating Saratoga's transition to renewable energy, building on the success of the Spa Solar Park.
- Making Saratoga a leader in EV infrastructure by expanding charging stations and electrifying municipal fleets.
- Developing a Smart City infrastructure plan, integrating technology to make city services more efficient, sustainable, and transparent.
- Protecting our water resources and expanding green stormwater management initiatives.
- Partnering regionally to position Saratoga Springs as a model for sustainable innovation in upstate New York.

I'm proud to have been recognized by the New York League of Conservation Voters for my environmental leadership. Their confidence in my record reinforces my belief that Saratoga can lead — not just follow — in building a smarter, greener, more resilient future.