

Mayor Safford and Deputy Mayor Kiernan,

Thank you for including Sustainable Saratoga in early discussions of the proposed development on Denton Road. We appreciate that the City values our opinion as a local resource for best practices in smart, sustainable land use. A project application has not been submitted to the City, and therefore Sustainable Saratoga is not taking an official position on the proposal at this time. However, we wanted to provide general feedback relating to the elements of the proposal supplied by the owners and their representatives.

As we understand it, the proposed “Village at Westbrook” project would be a high-density, mixed use urban development consisting of multiple housing types, some commercial uses such as restaurants and stores, and some recreational uses. The parcels of land that we believe to be within the scope of the proposed project lie within the Conservation Development District, an area identified in our Comprehensive Plan as the Greenbelt, or the “Country” part of the “City in the Country” model. The Unified Development Ordinance (UDO) conforms with the Comprehensive Plan by including the project area and the lands around it within the Rural Residential (RR) zoning district. The RR District “is intended to accommodate low density residential development and agricultural uses in a manner that helps to preserve open space and Saratoga Springs’ rural character areas.” The portion of the Greenbelt that includes the proposed project is part of a larger contiguous area extending east, west, and south.

As presented, it appears that the project would exceed the density limitations of the RR District and would include uses that are not permitted. Sustainable Saratoga would not support a project that did not conform with current zoning regulations.

During the meeting, a project representative mentioned the concept of a “floating zone,” presumably to bypass current zoning requirements. He suggested that the zone could be structured in a way that would preclude similar projects at other locations within the Greenbelt. We are very concerned that such an approach would violate the clear guidance of the Comprehensive Plan and the regulations of the UDO. Floating zones are similar to Planned Unit Developments (PUDs), which are strictly prohibited in the Greenbelt by the City’s Comprehensive Plan.

The City Council must consider that any mechanism intended to accommodate a single instance of inappropriate development in the Greenbelt could become a precedent that would open the floodgates to commercial and high-density development throughout the Greenbelt.

Since 2001, the City in the Country model – an intensively developed urban core surrounded by an area of rural character – has been the guiding principle for our City’s development and land use practices. Because it makes Saratoga Springs desirable as a place to live, work, and visit, it has been consistently endorsed by citizens and successive City Councils. By protecting our Greenbelt, we maintain our City’s unique character, limit sprawl development, support downtown businesses, enhance our City’s appeal as a vacation and recreational destination, conserve streams, wetlands, and wildlife habitat, and defend against climate change.

We expect the City to uphold the City’s land use policies and regulations to ensure that Saratoga Springs will remain a popular, vibrant, and sustainable community for current and future generations.

Thank you,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Kelsey Trudell". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long horizontal line above the first few letters.

Kelsey Trudell  
Executive Director



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**Board of Directors:** Jeff Altamari (Treasurer), Jeff Buxbaum, Amy Durland (Chair), Carla Fox, Bethany Khan (Vice Chair), Judi Knispel, Sarah Goodwin, Harry Moran, Paul Murphy, Beth Plummer, Richard Romano (Secretary), David Sayer, David Washburn