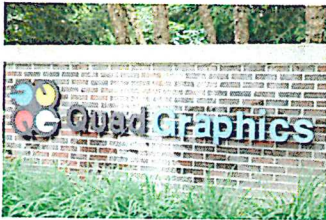


the establishment by NYS and other States of gaming opportunities that compete with horse racing.

- 3.1-36 Be prepared for emerging issues surrounding the potential increase in gambling businesses.
- 3.1-37 Encourage coordination among all marketing, tourism, and economic development organizations within the City.
- 3.1-38 Develop a strategy to create and promote the City as a global destination for tourism; enlist public and private partners.

Industry and Technology



- 3.1-39 Encourage industrial, technology and office-based businesses to locate within the City.
- 3.1-40 Develop a forward-looking strategy, including increased fiber optics and municipal wireless network (public wifi), to accommodate the increasing prevalence of home office activities, telecommuters, and changing business/community needs.
- 3.1-41 Utilize new technologies, such as smart phone applications and interactive websites, to promote business, economic development, and tourism.
- 3.1-42 Encourage and support more high-tech, small manufacturing, and service-oriented employment in the City-whichCity, which will enable many residents to work in town or at home.



Agriculture



- 3.1-43 Foster connection between City residents and local/regional farmers.
- 3.1-44 Investigate locations for the current Saratoga Farmers' Market to grow and expand, including additional parking.
- 3.1-45 Develop a plan to continue promoting sustainable agriculture within the City.
- 3.1-46 Consider allowing commercial agriculture uses within the City to further support agriculture as an economic driver in the City.
- 3.1-47 Encourage active and passive agricultural activities and agri-tourism.

- 3.1-48 Protect and enhance thoroughbred and harness horse racing in the City to sustain and grow our local agricultural sector and to protect open space.
- 3.1-49 Encourage the establishment of community gardens throughout the city.
- 3.1-50 Promote opportunities to expand Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) initiatives with local farmers.



~~DISCLAIMER: THE FOLLOWING IS A DRAFT WORKING DOCUMENT OF THE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN COMMITTEECITY COUNCIL. IT IS NOT INTENDED TO BE FINAL AND MAY BE SUBJECT TO CHANGE.~~



The long-term success of our City requires that we commit to a prudent, sustainable, and forward-looking stewardship of our natural resources and ecosystems and of the natural assets that are the foundation for our health, our quality of life, and our attractiveness as a tourist destination. Climate change, and other regional, national, and global environmental trends, require the City to structure and design future development in ways that protect our watershed resources, minimize pollution, use energy wisely, protect meaningful and linked parcels of open space, and design infrastructure that utilizes (or mimics) natural ecosystem processes to ensure the long-term sustainability of our environmental quality. Environmental health also encourages an active, healthy community that is accessible and provides opportunities for recreation.

The principle guiding environmental health and resiliency is:

To preserve and enhance a City that protects the natural environment, allowing all residents, regardless of income level, to live and recreate in an area that is beautiful, healthy, vital, and safe.

A primary assumption of this Plan, and indeed prior plans, is to encourage quality development that can be clearly balanced with the preservation, protection, and enhancement of open space. In fact, economic growth and open spaces are interdependent and there is compelling evidence that the presence of ample and accessible public open space increases community property values and contributes to economic growth.

Zim Smith Trail

County-wide, multi-use trail

Currently **9 miles**

Connects Halfmoon, Clifton Park, Round Lake, Malta and Ballston Spa

Only trail in NYS to be designated a **National Recreation Trail**

Named after the late **Zimri Smith** of Saratoga Springs

Open to all users including **walkers, bikers, hikers, rollerbladers, equestrian** and permits for **skiing, snowshoeing, and snowmobiling** the winter

Backbone of the County trail network and will eventually tie together **300 miles** of trail network

Furthermore, the provision of diverse and high quality indoor and outdoor recreation areas and facilities and a community that is linked by walking and bicycle trails adds immeasurably to quality of life. Saratoga Springs is unique in its well defined edge between the “city” and the “country”.

There are several types of open space/recreation resources worthy of protection and enhancement to preserve the image and experience of Saratoga Springs as the “City in the Country”. These general types of resources are described in the “Open Space Plan for Saratoga Springs” updated in 2002. These resources include:

- Natural Features such as stream corridors, wetlands, and important habitats.
- Rural Viewsheds of particular value along selected roadways and entranceways to the city.
- Linkages, which—provide natural corridors for wildlife, accommodate the city’s growing trail and recreational system, and promote greater accessibility to existing areas.
- Farmland, while taxed at a rate less than developed property, does not require services, provides visual beauty, and contributes to a balance integral to the City.
- Private Recreation Lands, which—provide essential leisure services, tax revenue and jobs.
- Public Recreation Areas including inge parklands, trails and open spaces in public ownership primarily put to passive use.

The Country Overlay Area map is a graphic representation of these resources for comprehensive planning purposes.

TRENDS

For nearly half a century, Saratoga Springs has employed planning policies that intentionally conserved open space on the outskirts of the city while concentrating development in the urban core. The City has made these anti-sprawl policies ~~have become~~ more explicit in recent decades, with passage of a detailed Open Space Plan in 1994 (updated in 2002) and the increasing importance of the “City in the Country” concept in our planning documents and civic conversations. But they were already built into the citizen-driven Plan of Action of the early 1970s. On these issues, Saratoga Springs was well ahead of the curve, marching in

the vanguard of the growing national movement that has come to recognize that balancing conservation with development is the best strategy for the long-term benefit of communities. Evidence of the current national interest in these issues can be found in the US EPA June 2013 publication, "Our Built and Natural Environments."

- The U.S. population is projected to grow 42 percent between 2010 and 2050, from 310 million to 439 million (Vincent and Velkoff 2010).
- While the population roughly doubled between 1950 and 2011 (U.S. Census Bureau), vehicle travel during this same period increased nearly sixfold (Federal Highway Administration 2010 and 2012). However, evidence suggests that the growth of vehicle travel might be slowing in recent years.
- Virtually every metropolitan region in the United States has expanded substantially in land area since 1950—including regions that lost population during that time (U.S. Census Bureau).

In recent years, the City Council has taken many steps to move the City toward a more resilient community that recognizes the importance of the natural environment from a health, economic, and social perspective.

In 2011, the City adopted the Climate Smart Communities Pledge, which is a public declaration of leadership and commitment to reducing emissions and adapting to a changing climate via 10 focus areas, or "pledge elements." 1. Pledge to be a Climate Smart Community 2. Set goals, inventory emissions, plan for climate action 3. Decrease community energy use 4. Increase community use of renewable energy 5. Realize benefits of recycling and other climate-smart solid waste management practices 6. Reduce greenhouse gas emissions through use of climate-smart land-use tools 7. Enhance community resilience and prepare for the effects of climate change 8. Support development of a green innovation economy 9. Inform and inspire the public 10. Commit to an evolving process of climate action. The Pledge demonstrates that local government is acting to protect the future of its citizens and of coming generations and invites everyone to take action regarding climate change. By preparing for a changing climate, public health and safety is protected, and a secure economic future is supported.

The *Urban and Community Forest Master Plan (UFMP)* was adopted in May 2013 by the City of Saratoga Springs. The plan builds upon the vision outlined by the City Council in its June 3, 2008 resolution, in which they declared that “the preservation and expansion of the Urban Forest will serve the public interest by improving the community’s physical, social, cultural and economic environment.” Five Action Strategies form the backbone of the UFMP: 1. Use planning, legislation, and enforcement to integrate trees more fully into Saratoga Springs’ infrastructure; 2. Appoint City Arborist; update inventory information regularly; review plans and adjust strategy annually; 3. Develop and implement Best Management Practices in [the Department of Public Works \(DPW\)](#); 4. Identify, leverage, and commit more resources for the trees; 5. Promote and cultivate citizen involvement—Engage the public in the care and stewardship of our urban forest. Build public-private partnerships to achieve the City’s goals.

Photo Credit: Saratoga County



Source: National Recreational Trails

In May of 2012, the City adopted a Complete Streets Policy, which will ensure that new and updated public and private projects are planned, designed, maintained, and operated to enable safe, comfortable, and convenient travel to the greatest extent possible for users of all abilities including pedestrians, bicyclists, motorists, and transit riders. The implementation of a Complete Streets Policy can help to reduce emissions and improve the economic vitality of the community. [These steps have recognized the inherent health benefits of encouraging walking and cycling as a form of transportation.](#)

A number of local and regional organizations are partners with the City as it continues to strive for environmental health and resiliency. These organizations include but are not limited to the following:

- *Sustainable Saratoga* – 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 the Saratoga Springs area.
- *Saratoga PLAN* – a nonprofit land trust that helps communities make long-term plans for conserving our region as a great place to live, work, visit, and farm. PLAN assists landowners with fulfilling their conservation goals for their land and provides stewardship

Sustainable
Saratoga 



for over 3,500 acres of farmland, forest, natural habitat, trail corridors, historic places, and water resources in Saratoga County.

- *Sustainable Skidmore* – Works to promote and advocate for sustainability on campus at Skidmore College, and off campus in the community and beyond. Various topic areas of involvement through researching, discussing, planning, and ~~creating~~-policy ~~around-making~~ include: local food, energy and climate, recycling, composting, diversity and justice, and land management. (Campus Environment Committee, Environmental Action Club, Sustainability Committee (SuCo), Sustainability Rep, North Woods Stewards)

Additionally, the Saratoga County Chamber of Commerce, Convention and Tourism Bureau, Downtown Business Association, Special Assessment Districts, and Saratoga County Home Builders Association also support sustainability and environmental welfare.

CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES



The most obvious challenge is ensuring that actions we take do not jeopardize the long-term sustainability of the natural resources upon which our health and economic success depend. In the sensitive environmental areas outside our City's core, conservation standards should guide any development initiatives. The key to future growth is focusing development near the City's core and existing infrastructure resources. However, if development does occur beyond the core, it needs to be harmoniously incorporated into the natural environment. It is not necessarily natural versus built, but the integration of both that will make a sustainable community ~~to live in~~. Another challenge is to think creatively about how development can be designed to work in concert with its natural surroundings, as opposed to against or without consideration of it.

There is also a great opportunity to create unique buildings and spaces, construct infill projects, and enhance the City's already strong downtown. Providing incentives and flexibility to property owners and business owners may be one way to encourage growth in the downtown area.



RECOMMENDED ACTIONS

Open Space

- 
- 
- 3.2-1 Protect important open spaces and natural areas including stream corridors, wetlands, and agricultural resources.
 - 3.2-2 Provide linkages between existing areas of protected open space and natural resources such as habitat areas for wildlife.
 - 3.2-3 Provide linkages and public access between existing areas of protected open space and natural resources such as trails.
 - 3.2-4 Encourage the preservation of agricultural land as a means to preserve open space.
 - 3.2-5 Establish creative mechanisms to protect key farmland parcels such as transfer of development rights or tax abatements.
 - 3.2-6 Update the City's adopted Open Space Plan (2002) periodically.
 - 3.2-7 Encourage high quality, aesthetically pleasing gateways into the City.
 - 3.2-8 Continue to adopt and enforce land use policies that reduce sprawl, preserve open space, and maintain a compact, walkable urban community.
 - 3.2-9 Create and preserve civic spaces within the urban area such as courtyards, gardens, plazas and pocket parks.
 - 3.2-10 Partner with other jurisdictions in the County to implement the county-wide Green Infrastructure [Vision](#).

Recreation

- 3.2-11 Work with local and regional departments and clubs to evaluate and identify the community's recreational needs [for all income levels](#).
- 3.2-12 Maintain and expand active recreational facilities that meet the needs for diverse range of age groups and interests.
- 3.2-13 Create flexible recreation space that can serve multiple recreational functions.
- 3.2-14 Pursue public/private partnerships to meet identified recreational needs and provide access to nearby water bodies such as Saratoga Lake and the Kayaderosseras Creek.

The various land use categories shown on the map represent the intended uses and densities desired or anticipated for the community in the future. There are a number of important points to note about these land use categories:

- The land use categories in the Map are not zoning districts. The land use categories are broader and more general than zoning districts.
- The boundaries for each of the land use categories are intentionally non-precise and are meant to be fluid. The boundaries of the zoning districts are far more specific and detailed.
- The land use categories are general guides to future zoning or other regulations. State law mandates that zoning must be in conformance with the policies of the Comprehensive Plan. This means that the density within the zoning for a particular area must be equal or less than that what is described within this document. When areas are to be rezoned, the uses and densities permitted within the zoning district must be compatible with the ranges presented in the land use category.
- The land use categories reflect a vision for the City in the future. It may take many years for the proposed changes to occur. The vision is something to aim for and work towards. Since zoning is the primary tool to implement this plan, the zoning for an area may be changed or upgraded several times in an effort to reflect community input.

The following descriptions are offered for the proposed land use category designations. The descriptions are intended to include the purpose or intent of the category, an overview of general uses and a description of the character for each land use category.



**Downtown Core
(DC)**

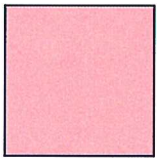
Downtown Core (DC)

The Downtown Core designation represents the heart of the City of Saratoga Springs. It includes areas of the highest density commercial, office, civic, and residential uses that support a highly compact and walkable core, as well as multi-modal transportation options. While the Downtown Core serves local uses, it also attracts people regionally and globally as a vibrant commercial center, employment center, entertainment center, and historic and cultural center.

The Downtown Core is characterized by mixed use buildings with architecturally-interesting facades, streetscape design with ample room for street trees, sidewalks, benches, and other amenities that make the streets pedestrian-friendly. The designation also provides for mid to high-rise residential projects and mixed use projects incorporating housing above non-residential uses.

Looking forward, the Downtown Core will continue to be highly urban in character, with a mix of commercial and residential uses, and a balance between dense infill through development and redevelopment and the creation of attractive public spaces such as plazas and pocket parks.

Complementary Core (CC)



**Complementary
Core (CC)**

The Complementary Core designation consists of areas of commercial uses of moderate to high intensity interspersed with higher density residential uses. This area is intended to be pedestrian-oriented with multi-modal transportation options and is a complementary, yet slightly less dense, extension of the Downtown Core. These areas represent a mix of freestanding offices, commercial uses, or clusters of businesses meeting the day-to-day needs of residents. The character of the Complementary Core areas is reflective of an urban environment with buildings near the street, parking to the rear or side, and streetscape elements such as sidewalks, and ample room for street trees.

The Complementary Core designation offers opportunities for infill and new development that continues to support the Downtown Core. Freestanding commercial structures as well as mixed-use, multi-story buildings with residential uses above the commercial uses would both be appropriate in this designation.



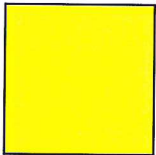
**Community
Mixed Use
(CMU)**

Community Mixed Use (CMU)

The Community Mixed Use designation includes areas of moderate density residential and community-supported commercial uses. These areas are characterized by mixed use neighborhoods that are walkable and connected to adjacent residential neighborhoods. Each area includes a variety of neighborhood-scale businesses and services that meets the needs of the surrounding community.

While the character of each Community Mixed Use areas may vary, all areas are intended to be pedestrian-oriented with an attractive streetscape, along with amenities such as small parks and plazas. In some areas, identity is already well established through architecture and streetscape while in others, identity will be shaped by future planning decisions.

Core Residential Neighborhood-1 (CRN-1), Core Residential Neighborhood-2 (CRN-2), and Core Residential Neighborhood-3 (CRN-3)



**Core Residential
Neighborhood-1
(CRN-1)**

**Core Residential
Neighborhood-2
(CRN-2)**

**Core Residential
Neighborhood-3
(CRN-3)**

The Core Residential Neighborhood-1, -2, and -3 designations provide a transition from the Downtown Core and Complementary Core to the predominantly residential neighborhood areas and represent the historic residential village. These areas are primarily residential in use, with single and two-family homes allowed in all three CRN designations, while multi-family uses are allowed only in the CRN-2 and CRN-3 areas. The Core neighborhoods reflect Saratoga’s quintessential residential character and charm through unique architecture, historic elements, front porches, sidewalks, and tree-lined streets. This area is highly walkable, and should be accessible by transit and a range of multi-modal options.

Although the Core Neighborhood is primarily residential in character, existing neighborhood-scale commercial uses may currently exist to complement residential uses.

CRN-1 Note: The maximum density is 10.0 Units/Acre.

CRN-2 Note: The maximum density is 15.0 Units/Acre.

CRN-3 Note: The maximum density is 30.0 Units/Acre.



**Residential
Neighborhood -1
(RN-1)**

**Residential
Neighborhood-2
(RN-2)**

Residential Neighborhood -1 (RN-1) and Residential Neighborhood-2 (RN-2)

The Residential Neighborhood-1 and Residential Neighborhood-2 designations are characterized by single family residential uses with moderate density two-family. While a mix of housing types is present, these areas retain the basic character of single-family neighborhoods, such as front and rear yards, driveways, and garages. Small, neighborhood-scale commercial uses may currently exist to complement the residential uses.

RN-1 Note: The maximum density is 3.5 Units/Acre.

RN-2 Note: The maximum density is 7 Units/Acre.



**Conservation
Development
District (CDD)**

Conservation Development District (CDD)

The Conservation Development District designation reflects the “Country” of the City in the Country. This designation allows for low density residential, outdoor recreation, agricultural, and other rural uses utilizing land conservation methods such as clustering. Areas typically include single-family lots and subdivisions, existing planned developments, farms, estates, and natural areas. Commercial activities should be limited to those that support rural and recreational uses and which protect valuable open space, protect natural resources and maintain natural systems. This designation reflects a rural or agrarian character that works to preserve contiguous open spaces, protect natural resources and restore and maintain natural systems, which will all become increasingly important and valuable ~~as climate change progresses~~ community resources.

Development in this area shall require a “conservation analysis” and utilize land conservation methods to protect environmentally sensitive areas and features, minimize the development’s edge effects and conserve significant open space.

CDD Note: The maximum density in the CDD is an average of 0.5 Units/Acre of unconstrained land. Unconstrained lands are areas of the site that do not contain severe constraints to development, such as wetlands, very steep slopes, stream corridors, and floodplains, as well as lands with legal impediments to development. ~~Following based upon a~~

“conservation analysis” of proposed land to be developed by the City, constrained lands, along with at least 50 percent of the site’s developable open space, shall be set aside as permanent open space through a conservation easement.