


**City of
Saratoga Springs**
2015 Comprehensive Plan
Adopted by City Council 6-16-15

The official seal of the City of Saratoga Springs, New York, featuring a horse and rider, with the text "CITY OF SARATOGA SPRINGS N.Y." and "INCORPORATED 1915".



In May 2013, the City Council initiated an update to the City’s Comprehensive Plan and associated maps.

On December 18, 2014, following 19 months of much dialogue and discussion including 19 public meetings, four public workshops, a 2-day open house and numerous focus groups, the Saratoga Springs Comprehensive Plan Committee voted to send to the City Council its “final work product” consisting of the November 2014 version of the Draft Comprehensive Plan and a list of 53 possible amendments to this draft.

The City Council discussed this work product and the list of possible amendments over the course of four City Council workshops, occurring on February 24, March 24, March 31, and April 14, 2015. At its last workshop, the City Council confirmed consensus on the desired language to be included in this Plan.

On June 16, 2015, following a SEQRA Negative Declaration of Environmental Significance, the City Council voted 5-0 to adopt this 2015 Comprehensive Plan update.


Acknowledgements

Saratoga Springs City Council

(Finalized and approved 2015 Comprehensive Plan Update)

- Joanne D. Yepsen, Mayor
- John P. Franck, Commissioner of Accounts
- Michele Madigan, Commissioner of Finance
- Chris Mathiesen, Commissioner of Public Safety
- Anthony “Skip” Scirocco, Commissioner of Public Works

- Former Mayor Scott Johnson



Comprehensive Plan Committee

(Produced committee “Final Work Product” and provided to City Council.)

- Geoff Bornemann, Chair (1/14-12/14)
- Clifford Van Wagner, Chair (5/13-1/14)
- Jamin Totino, Vice Chair
- Sonny Bonacio
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- Devin Dalpos
- Tom Denny
- Casey Holzworth
- James Letts
- Oksana Ludd (Zoning Board of Appeals)
- Steven Rowland (Design Review Commission)
- Todd Shimkus
- Mark Torpey (Planning Board)
- Charles Wait
- Janice White (5/13-4/14)

- This document was prepared with assistance from MJ Engineering & Surveying PC and the staff of the City’s Office of Planning and Economic Development.

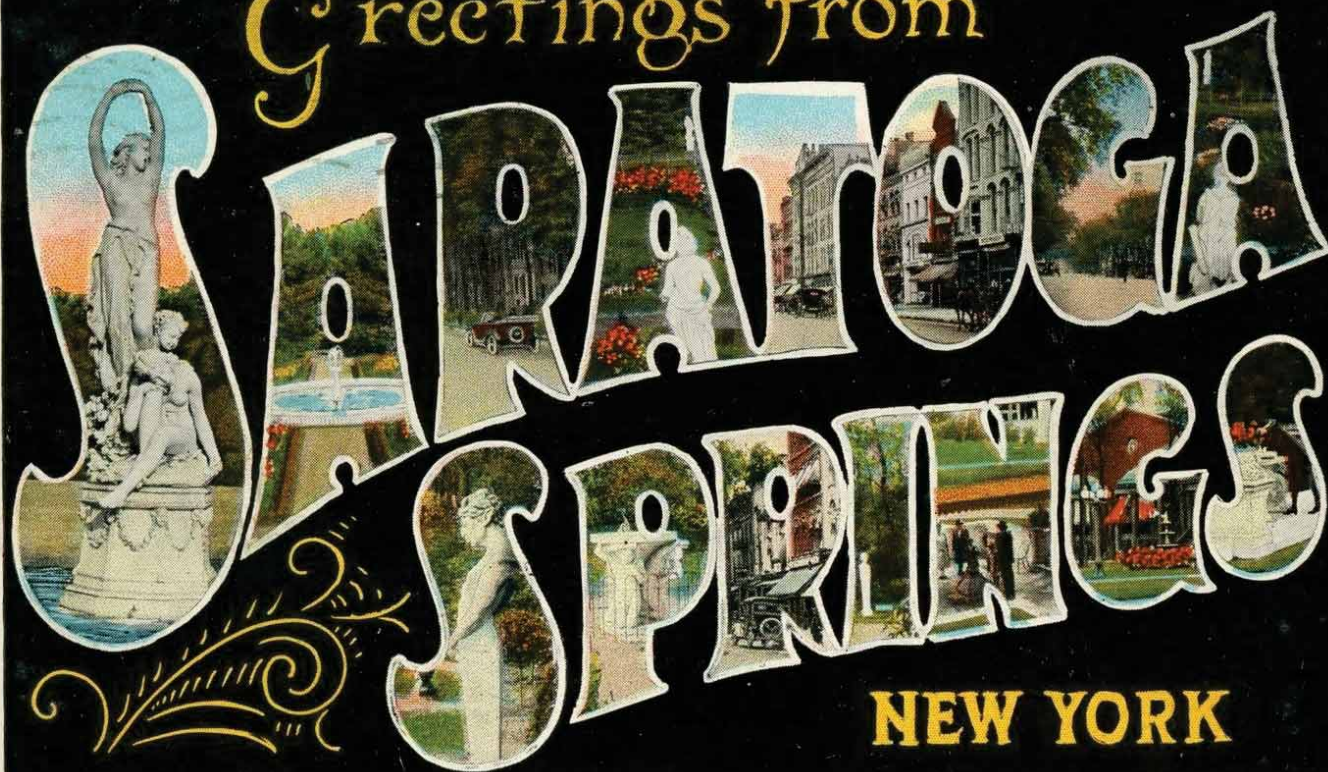
CONGRESS SPRING, NEW YORK STATE RESERVATION, SARATOGA SPRINGS, N. Y. 127



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Greetings from





EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This Comprehensive Plan is a unified set of policies that will guide the future development of the City of Saratoga Springs. The Plan consists of nearly 250 recommended actions and a Future Land Use map that indicates the desired location, uses, and intensity of development.

This Plan sets forth the following vision for the community:

Saratoga Springs is the “City in the Country.” This concept reflects a city with an intensively developed urban core and an economically vibrant central business district, with well-defined urban edges and an outlying area of rural character, comprised of agriculture, open lands, natural and diverse environmental resources, and low density development.

The overriding philosophy that will guide future development of our “City in the Country” will be sustainability. Sustainable development meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. Sustainable development makes investments that yield long-term benefits for our community. Sustainable development enhances economic opportunity and community well-being while protecting the human and natural resources, upon which the future of our economy and our community depend.


Recognized for its commitment to history, health, and horses, the City is a small, livable community with a strong sense of pride, family, and volunteerism. The City’s vibrant, walkable core, stable neighborhoods, and high level of mobility support regional economic growth and ensure its position as a world class destination for entertainment, education, and cultural activities.

This Plan updates the community’s 2001 Comprehensive Plan. The process for updating the prior Plan had the following objectives:

- Community/economic sustainability
- Preservation/enhancement of historic qualities
- Strengthening of individual and collective “City” and “Country” components
- Strategic positioning for future opportunities
- Public-Private cost sharing

This new Plan has the key following objectives that have been a core part of our community for more than a decade.

- Promote a broader mixture of uses in selected areas to encourage social, business, and residential interaction and diversity.
- Implement land use and design policies to enhance our quality of life.

- 
- Balance the cost of municipal services with revenue.
 - Protect sensitive environmental resources.
 - Preserve traditional community character.
 - Promote pedestrian and bicycle access, transit services, and transitional neighborhood design to reduce dependence on the automobile.
 - Continue investing in the amenities that contribute to our community's success.
 - Support the City's sense of history and the "City in the Country" by preserving the quality of, and linkages, among, cultural and open space resources.
 - Encourage and increase housing diversity and affordability as well as neighborhood vitality.
 - Maintain a compact downtown with adequate parking and supporting infrastructure, as is essential to businesses.
 - Protect open space resources that constitute a vital economic component and a valuable environmental, aesthetic, and recreational amenity. It is this unique open space character that creates the inherent value of the "City in the Country".
 - Strive to provide for adequate revenue sources to maintain and enhance services.
 - Continue enhancing and investing in the social, cultural and recreational amenities that are essential to the City's economic and social dynamic.

This new Plan mirrors the 2001 Plan in the following ways: 1) the mission statement is almost identical; 2) many of the recommended action are similar; and 3) the location of future land uses and their intensities are almost identical.

However, this new Plan also improves upon the prior plan. It addresses changes in the community that arose during the past decade and anticipates new values and interest. These include complete streets policies, energy conservation, recycling, climate change, resiliency, and greater protection for the community's natural resources. The new Plan is also a "whole-community" plan in that it sets forth and relies on actions that can be undertaken by the public, non-profit, and private sectors. This Plan does not burden the government with the sole responsibility for its implementation.

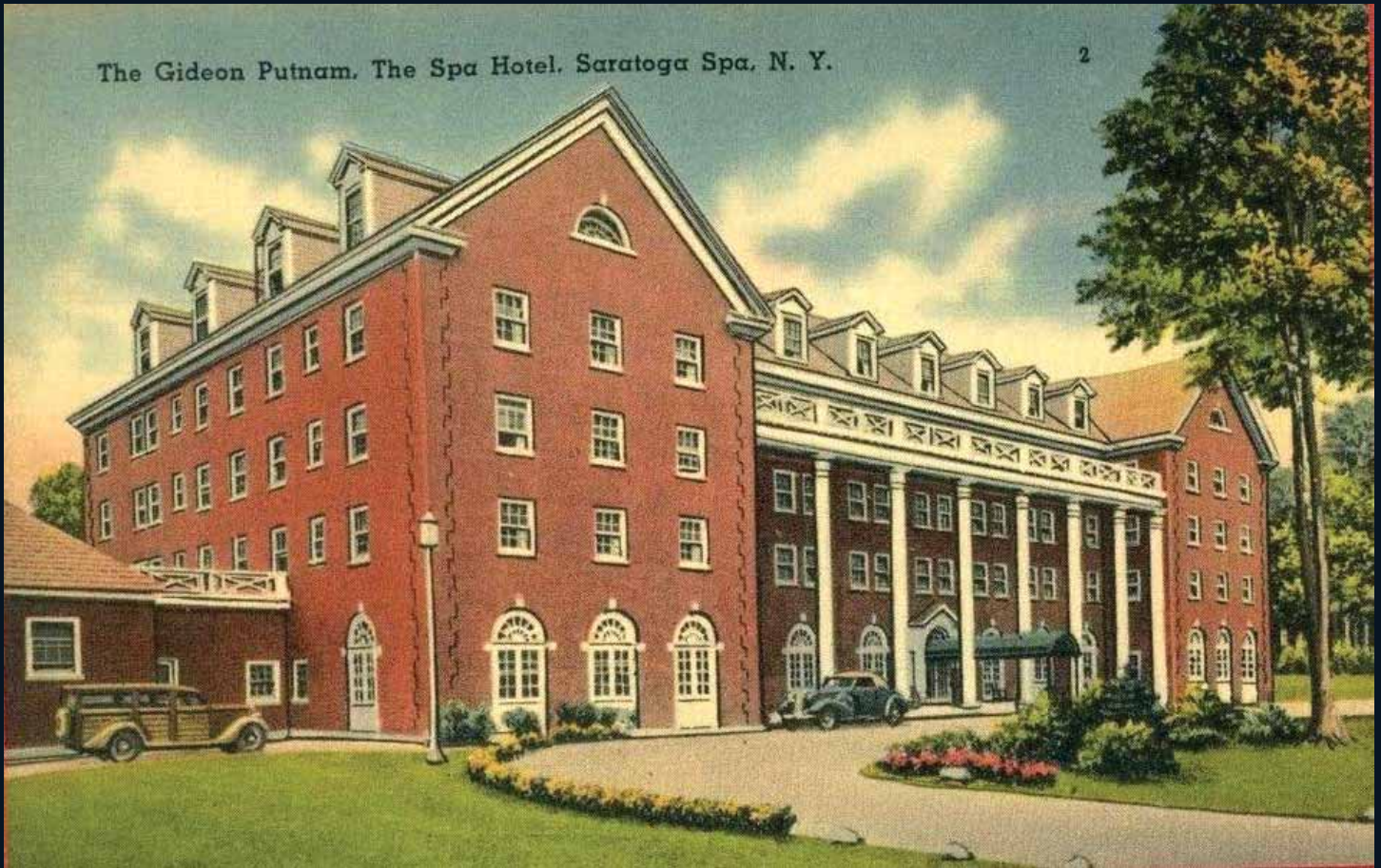
The Plan's 250 recommended actions are built around four guiding principles: 1) Economic Strength and Stability; 2) Environmental Health and Resiliency; 3) Transportation and Mobility; and 4) Community Character.

This Plan is ambitious and comprehensive. It recommends actions that are educational, investigative, and regulatory. Some will cost a great deal of energy and money; some very little. Its implementation relies on opportunities and individual determination.

This Plan lays down the vision for our future and frames the challenges.

The Gideon Putnam, The Spa Hotel. Saratoga Spa, N. Y.

2



BUSINESS CENTER, BROADWAY, SARATOGA SPRINGS, N. Y.

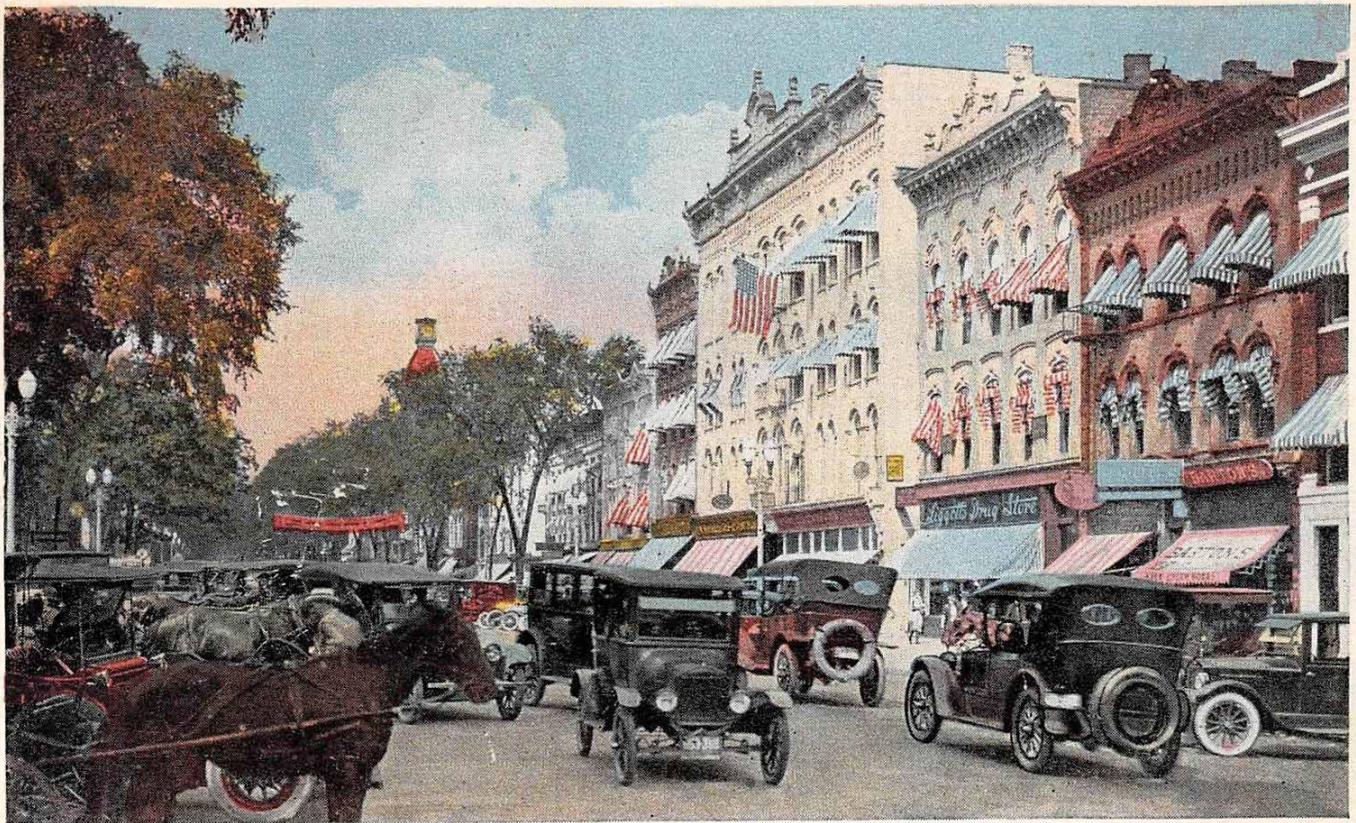




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INTRODUCTION

1.0

Accolades

Broadway named one of the **Ten Great Streets** in America by American Planning Association (2012)

Broadway named one of America's **Greatest Main Streets** by Travel + Leisure Magazine (2012)

#75 in CNN Money's list of America's **Best Places to Live** (2011)

#1 Fan Favorite in the poll of CNN Money's 2011 List of America's **Best Places to Live**

Named as one of the **Top 10 Winter Cities** by Livability.com (2011)

Named as one of America's **Dozen Distinctive Destinations** by the National Trust for Historic Preservation (2002)

Named one of 50 **"Super Cool"** cities in the **world** by TravelOrMove.com

The following is an update to the City of Saratoga Springs' 2001 adopted comprehensive plan. The City Charter requires that the City Council review the comprehensive plan every five years to ensure it is reflective of the community's current and future needs. This update is a snapshot in time that outlines existing local and regional trends impacting the City as well as the City's long-term vision for the future.

Many elements from the 2001 comprehensive plan continue to be valid today. Those elements have been incorporated throughout this update. There are, however, new concepts and ideas introduced in this update that will help address the current and future needs of the community.

1.1 Saratoga Springs – A Great American Place

Saratoga Springs is nationally recognized as a great place to live and a great place to visit. The qualities that have brought Saratoga Springs such acclaim are no accident. The City's attractions are the direct result of its land use policies, most readily captured in the "City in the Country" concept, as well as the passion and commitment of residents and business owners in the community since, at least, the early 1970s. The key planning principles that have guided the City's successful trajectory include historic preservation, concentrated development in a vibrant downtown, conservation of natural and scenic resources in our rural greenbelt, and support for the cultural and natural amenities that enhance the quality of life for residents and visitors alike.

This heritage combines with the community's excellent quality of life and strong sense of place to create a balance of physical, economic, and social assets.

- Saratoga Springs is a safe community with world-class recreational and tourism attractions
- Saratoga Springs combines an industrial, retail, office, and entertainment center with architectural beauty and historic charm
- Saratoga Springs is host to respected institutions of higher education
- Saratoga Springs has an award-winning downtown
- Saratoga Springs has unique and abundant open spaces, including recreational fields, Saratoga Spa State Park, Yaddo, and farmlands, which the City has worked hard to protect.

The Saratoga Scoop

The Potato Chip was invented in Saratoga in 1853 at Moon's Lake House by George Crum.

The Saratoga area has over 18 mineral springs. The cold water springs are naturally carbonated.

Caffe Lena is the oldest continually operating coffee house in the country.

Over 2,000 horses are present in Saratoga during the peak of racing season.

The Battle of Saratoga featured heroics from none other than Benedict Arnold.

The club sandwich was invented at the Saratoga Club (Canfield Casino) in Saratoga Springs in the 19th century.

Source: Saratoga County Chamber of Commerce



- Saratoga Springs has an enthusiastic citizenry that actively participates in a multitude of community, service, and governmental activities

It is this diversity and balance of economic, sociological, and ecological assets that makes Saratoga Springs an attractive global destination for entertainment with an active, year-round residential and business community.

Saratoga Springs originally gained fame during Colonial times as word spread of the springs and curative waters found in the community. This natural occurrence, and subsequent resort attraction, initiated the construction and development of what is now the valued downtown area. The advent and prosperity of the horse racing and wagering industries not only provided the City with a colorful historic legacy, but also reinforced the concentrated and compact form that is the key to the success of our downtown. Indeed, horse-related industries including thoroughbred and standardbred racing, polo and dressage events, horse sales, and equine services remain important contributors to the economic, cultural, and social makeup of our community as well as the region. Saratoga Springs' thoroughbred racetrack, for example, is the oldest continuously operated racetrack in the country and is part of the Union Avenue National Historic District. These unique assets have reinforced the City's centralized business district and developed urban core since the 1800s, and are the key to the success of our downtown.

Following a period of deterioration, Saratoga Springs rebuilt itself into an award-winning community and celebrated resort destination. While most cities have experienced serious decline, Saratoga Springs has maintained, and even increased its momentum as a vibrant community.

The 1915 incorporation of the City, joined the urbanized area of the former village with an expansive and largely undeveloped countryside. While the City actively protects its surrounding green space, it is a continual challenge to balance the natural environment with the built environment, growth, development, preservation, and sustainability.

The City's open space resources provide a multitude of benefits to the City and the surrounding area including, active and passive recreation opportunities, the preservation of water quality and ecological habitats, and tourist and economic attractions. These critical resources are maintained through a combination of public and private ownership. Institutional examples include Yaddo and Skidmore College; the City offers Congress Park, several neighborhood parks and multi-use trails; State and private-sector holdings include more than 2,000 acres at Saratoga Spa State Park, the equine polo fields, harness and thoroughbred tracks, and golf courses. These public and privately owned open space resources are complemented by three lakes and an abundance of state



and federally regulated wetlands. The preservation of these open space resources is a key component in the City's commitment to sustainability.

The City's population in the 2010 Census was 26,586. During the last century, the City had a slow population increase, with a growth rate near 1.5%. There was a large increase in population from 1970-1980, at almost 27%, but the rate leveled off between 1980-1990 and 1990-2000 at just under 5%. Within the City, the largest population group is 50-59 years. Every age group over 55 years is growing, and all but one age group below 55 years is decreasing. Subsequently, it is important to plan for the aging population as well as attracting younger citizens and families.

1.2 The Planning Process and Public Engagement

The Comprehensive Plan (Plan) is a unified set of principles for guiding the City's goals for future land use, design, and enhancement to protect the unique character of the community. It also provides the justification for planning and regulatory policies that encourage efficient growth patterns to maximize the City's social and economic potential. It is a plan that shall be taken into account by all City legislative, administrative, and regulatory bodies.

The update of this Plan began in May 2013, with the appointment of an 18 member Comprehensive Plan Committee (CPC) by the City Council. The CPC held 18 committee meetings over the course of 18 months, working closely with the community and relying on the assistance of the planning staff and consultant team. This Plan represents the CPC's effort to synthesize the diverse opinions it heard, and respond to the issues facing the City.

This update was a community-driven process that included public engagement efforts. Highlights of the public engagement strategy are outlined below. Summaries of public input received during the development of the update are presented in **Appendix A**.



- ***Public Workshops, Meetings and Open House***
 - o A Kick-off Workshop (Public Workshop #1) was held on May 29, 2013, at the City Center. This first workshop introduced the planning process and schedule to the public. Over 30 residents, business owners, property owners, and other stakeholders participated. Small group sessions were facilitated by the consultant team where participants were asked what elements make Saratoga Springs unique today, how do you envision Saratoga Springs in 10 years, what challenges do you anticipate in achieving that vision, and what opportunities do you see.



Participants in a facilitated table discussion at the Kick-off Meeting

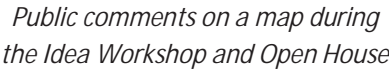


Attendees at Public Workshop #2



CPC members at a committee meeting

- A 2-day Idea Workshop and Open House was held at the Universal Preservation Hall on June 26-27, 2013. Over 60 residents, business owners, property owners, and other stakeholders participated in the workshop and attended the open house. Participants were encouraged to provide input at one or more of the 11 interactive stations.
- Focus Group Meetings were conducted concurrent to the Open House. Over 34 representatives from key stakeholder groups met during the Idea Workshop to discuss needs and opportunities for the City. The focus groups covered the following topic areas: green and smart energy, history and culture, development and housing, tourism, open space and recreation, neighborhoods, economic growth, health and human services, transportation and mobility, and education.
- Public Workshop #2 was held on July 11, 2013, at Universal Preservation Hall to share with the public the information gathered from the Open House and Focus Group Meetings. Additional input was obtained from over 60 participants.
- Public Workshop #3 was held on September 30, 2013, at the Saratoga Springs Public Library. This workshop was a "listening session", providing an opportunity for the public to share thoughts, ideas, and suggestions. Over 100 residents, business owners, and other stakeholders attended the workshop.
- A CPC Public Hearing was conducted on December 9, 2014.
- Interactive Website – The CPC created an interactive website called Engage Saratoga. This website was an important way to reach an expanded audience within the community. A series of questions were posed and participants could add their ideas, photos and comment on other posted ideas.
- City Website – Draft documents and information/materials for each meeting were posted to the City's website for easy public access.
- CPC Meetings – The CPC held monthly and sometimes weekly meetings at the City Recreation Center. While these were intended to be working sessions of the CPC, there were opportunities for public comment at each meeting.
- Project Binder – A project binder including printed materials developed throughout the process (meeting summaries, PowerPoint presentations,



- Report Card – An early step in the CPC's process was to review the 2001 Comprehensive Plan through a "report card" process, which evaluated the existing comprehensive plan against today's Saratoga. Each CPC member conducted an online survey to evaluate the 2001 Comprehensive Plan's major policy areas and recommendations. Recommendations were evaluated to determine, first, if the recommendation has been completed, is in-progress or ongoing, or has not yet been initiated. The second evaluation included, whether that recommendation is still relevant, not relevant, and/or a priority item for the City moving forward. In addition, any known impediments to the implementation of that recommendation were also identified. The report card also allowed the CPC to identify new and emerging topics to consider. The full results of the report card are included in **Appendix B**.

The CPC also conducted an overview of the City's current growth and socio-demographic trends. The Trends Analysis can be found in **Appendix C**.



Above: A word cloud illustrating input from a visioning session during Public Meeting #1.

1.3 Plan Organization

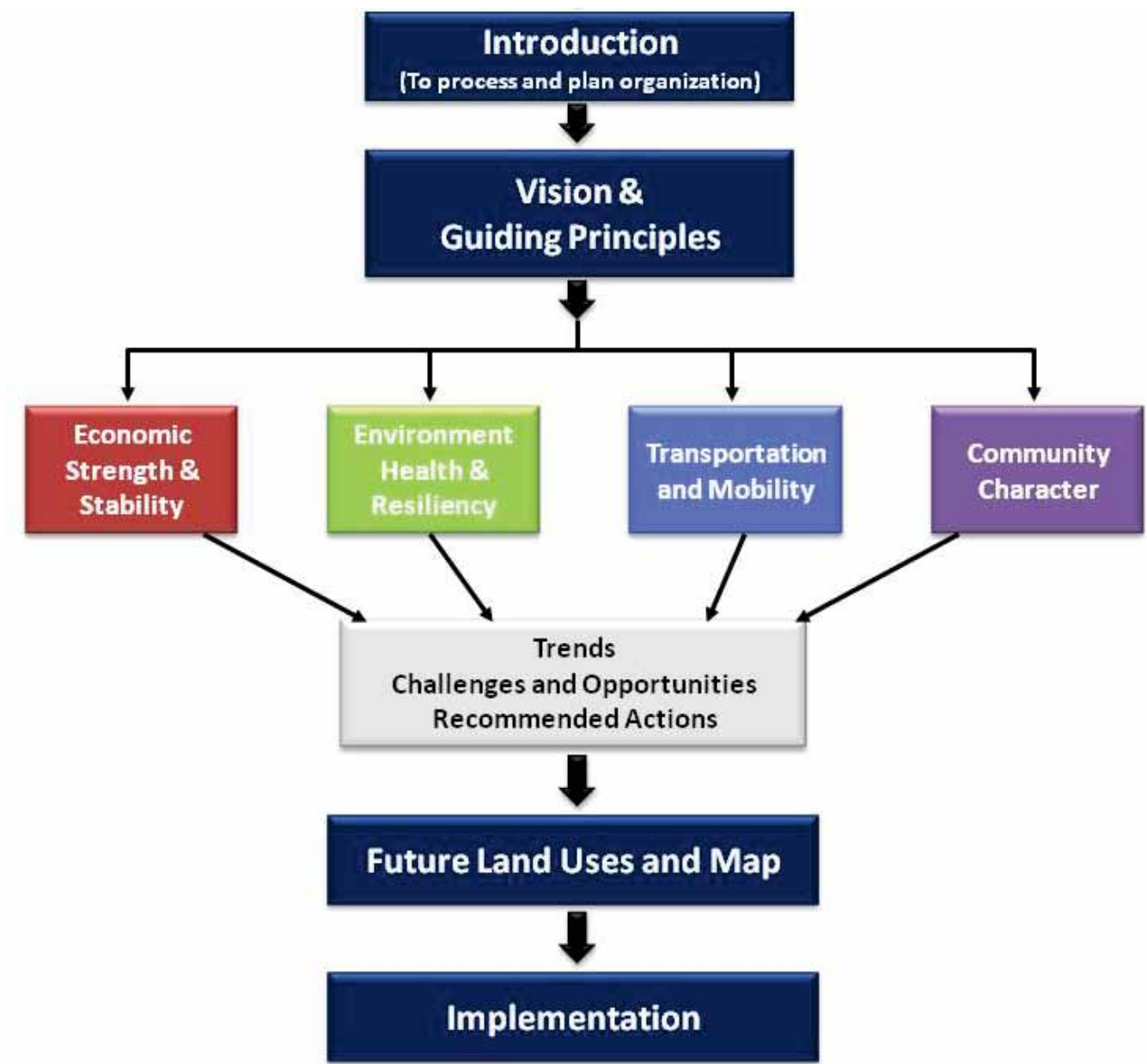
The Plan is organized into four main recommended action sections: Economic Strength and Stability, Environmental Health and Resiliency, Transportation and Mobility, and Community Character. Within each section are *Trends, Issues and Opportunities*, and *Recommended Actions*. It should be noted that several sections may overlap with one another. This is an important reminder of how interrelated each aspect of the Saratoga Springs community has been and will



continue to be. It is these interrelationships that will sustain the community economically, socially, and environmentally into the future.

The Plan then looks at future land use within the City and illustrates the City's vision for future land uses on a map. Finally, the Plan discusses implementation of the recommended action items.

For ease of use, each section has an accompanying icon. In the implementation section, the interrelationship of each recommended action is identified by the appropriate icon. The following flow chart illustrates the Plan.







VISION AND GUIDING PRINCIPLES

2.0

VISION STATEMENT

Saratoga Springs is the "City-in-the-Country." This concept reflects a city with an intensively developed urban core and an economically vibrant central business district, with well defined urban edges and an outlying area of rural character, comprised of agriculture, open lands, natural and diverse environmental resources, and low density residential development.


The overriding philosophy that will guide future development of our "City in the Country" will be sustainability. Sustainable development meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. Sustainable development makes investments that yield long-term benefits for our community. Sustainable development enhances economic opportunity and community well-being while protecting the human and natural resources, upon which the future of our economy and our community depend.

Recognized for its commitment to history, health and horses, the City is a small, livable community with a strong sense of pride, family, and volunteerism. The City's vibrant, walkable core, stable neighborhoods and high level of mobility support regional economic growth and ensure its position as a world class destination for entertainment, education, and cultural activities.

The Comprehensive Plan expresses the City's dedication to carefully balance growth and preservation in a manner that promotes diversity in housing, commerce, and industry while it maintains and respects its open spaces and natural resources.

The following guiding principles reflect the City's goals and objectives in achieving this vision as well as the character and spirit of the Saratoga Springs community. Taken together, these guiding principles present a





sustainable framework for a healthy, productive and creative City in the Country.

2.1 Economic Strength and Stability



- To preserve and enhance a City that is economically strong and adequately diversified to withstand cyclical changes in the economy; that creates economic and employment opportunities for all of its citizens
- To encourage development that benefits and does not burden our tax base and is based on sustainable concepts
- To preserve and enhance a City that is accessible and affordable to all income levels
- To foster job growth by retaining existing businesses and attracting new businesses within the City.
- To maintain the balance of land uses, economic forces and social diversity. Downtown is the key to the City's economic health. Likewise, the City's open spaces resources constitute a vital economic component and valuable aesthetic and recreational amenity. It is the strength and preservation of these two distinct and unique attributes that assures Saratoga's continued success and sustainability.



2.2 Environmental Health and Resiliency

- 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
- To maintain a City that is prepared for the impacts of climate change, that does not contribute to the degradation of the environment, that recognizes the blessings and inherent value of its natural resources, and protects and maintains them for the good of this community and future generations
- To create and maintain a City that increasingly derives its energy needs from clean and renewable energy sources that do not contribute to greenhouse gas emissions
- To re-establish health and wellness as one of the leading reasons why people and businesses shall choose to visit and/or locate in the City, making Saratoga Springs one of the healthiest places to live and work



2.3 Transportation and Mobility

- To maintain a City that accommodates all modes of transportation including vehicles, freight, rail, pedestrians, bicyclists, transit, and people with disabilities
- To encourage walking, bicycling and mass transit to reduce traffic congestions and improve local air quality



2.4 Community Character

- To maintain a City that provides educational, civic engagement, artistic, cultural, and musical opportunities in a safe manner
- To maintain a City that includes diverse housing opportunities for all economic levels throughout the City
- To maintain a City that values historic preservation and architectural quality in its built environment



GUIDING PRINCIPLES

3.0



3.1 Economic Strength and Stability

3.2 Environmental Health and Resiliency



3.3 Transportation and Mobility

3.4 Community Character





ECONOMIC STRENGTH AND STABILITY

3.1

Saratoga Springs' economic strength and stability are the foundation of this vibrant City. Driving the City's economic engine is our quality of life. To create sustainable growth, quality of life considerations should be a paramount financial consideration. Guiding principles for economic strength and stability include:

- *To preserve and enhance a City that is economically strong and adequately diversified to withstand cyclical changes in the economy; that creates economic and employment opportunities for all of its citizens.*
- *To encourage development that benefits our tax base and is based on sustainable concept.*
- *To preserve and enhance a City that is accessible and affordable to all income levels.*
- *To foster job growth by retaining existing businesses and attracting new businesses within the City.*
- *To maintain the balance of land uses, economic forces and social diversity. Downtown is the key to the City's economic health. Likewise, the City's open spaces resources constitute a vital economic component and valuable aesthetic and recreational amenity. It is the strength and preservation of these two distinct and unique attributes that assures Saratoga's continued success and sustainability.*



Did You Know?

The United States

NAVY has a presence in Saratoga Springs.

4 times the impact on local economy as the Race Track

\$1.3 billion – Impact on Capital Region economy in 2009

The **Knolls Atomic Power** Laboratory Kenneth A. Kesselring site in **Milton** is one of only **2 places** in the world where nuclear-powered aircraft carrier and submarine training takes place

9,971 – Total employment impact, including naval personnel and direct, indirect, and induced employment

Source: Saratoga Chamber of Commerce

TRENDS

It should come as no surprise that one of Saratoga's greatest strengths is its solid footing in the tourism industry. According to the 2010 U.S. Census, nearly 11,000 people in Saratoga County are employed in the arts, entertainment, recreation, accommodation, and food service industries. More than 14,000 additional people are employed in the retail sector. According to the Saratoga County Chamber of Commerce 2012 Third Quarter Tourism Report, these two sectors make up nearly 25% of Saratoga County's working population.

According to the Saratoga Tourism and Convention Bureau, Saratoga County is also seeing positive gains in the lodging industry. Since 2010, occupancy rates have increased, and 37,000 group room nights were consumed, accounting for more than \$15 million in estimated economic impact. Expansion of the City Center has, and will continue to enhance those figures over the coming years due to increased conference bookings and the resulting retail, restaurant, and lodging economic benefits.

The City's economy, however, is supported by more than just tourism. Education, healthcare, and industry are also present and growing. Skidmore College, for example, has a significant impact on the City's economy. According to a report from Skidmore's director of community relations, the college's financial impact on Saratoga County has increased 10.2% over the past five years, equating to \$416.4 million when adjusted for inflation (2011-2012 figures). The United States Navy also has a strong presence in Saratoga.

Saratoga Springs is home to several manufacturing and distribution facilities providing long-term employment and attracting employees from the surrounding region. Quad Graphics, Espey Manufacturing and Electronics Corporation, and Saratoga Eagle are several key employers located within the City that have a national and international presence. The healthcare and wellness industry, including Saratoga Hospital, is also a major contributor to the local economy.

Saratoga Springs is proud of the locally owned and operated small businesses. These businesses represent the entrepreneurial spirit that filled the vacant downtown storefronts of the 1960s and 1970s and continues to make Saratoga Springs the economically and socially vibrant community that exists today.

Saratoga Race Course has a \$186-212 million annual economic impact on the region (2011) and generates between \$4.5-5.5 million in tax revenues for the City and Saratoga County. Saratoga Casino and Raceway also significantly contributes to the City and region by employing 622 people with a payroll of over \$16 million.



One of the largest construction projects in the Northeast is underway in the neighboring Town of Malta. GlobalFoundries, a full-service semiconductor foundry, is constructing “Fab 8.1” at an estimated cost of \$6.9 billion. Fab 8.1 has generated 10,000 construction jobs and 2,000 permanent jobs. The planned expansion, or Fab 8.2, is anticipated to cost \$14.7 billion and generate an additional 3,700 jobs. (Business Review) This development is bringing people from around the world looking for a world-class destination to live and play. As part of an area deemed “Tech Valley”, Saratoga Springs is in a prime location to attract research and design facilities and incubators, as well as work with higher education institutions in the technology sector.



ISSUES AND OPPORTUNITIES

The ongoing growth the City is experiencing is attributable to the high quality of life enjoyed by our residents and businesses. While cities in our region are still experiencing stagnant growth rates, an ever-increasing number of people are discovering the advantages of our community. The City’s natural resources and its intrinsic desirability as a destination location play a major role in providing economic opportunity.

A healthy balance of economic activities will ensure a sound future, encourage a diverse community, and help our community to make rational decisions based upon long-term financial needs. Maintaining Downtown as the City’s economic center continues to be a vital goal. It is imperative to continue strengthening the successful, compact, and defined commercial and pedestrian center.

Efforts to strengthen and enhance this area through infill development and reuse are integral to the overall success of the City. The City will need to continue to evaluate and ensure the appropriate infrastructure is in place to support sustainable growth.

A balanced approach to encourage development that is complementary to the existing Downtown will strengthen the overall long-term economic stability of the City. Supporting a diverse economic base is a key aspect of that stability.

RECOMMENDED ACTIONS

Local

- 3.1-1 Maintain the Downtown as the economic center of the community, including the primary retail and commercial center.
- 3.1-2 Encourage adaptive reuse of vacant buildings and infill.
- 3.1-3 Support the viability and growth of the community's unique institutions (e.g. Skidmore College, Saratoga Hospital, SPAC, Saratoga Spa State

Did You Know?

The **Saratoga Performing Arts Center (SPAC)** is a premiere venue for music and the performing arts.

110-feet high (**10** stories)

Sheltered seating for **5,200** people

Sloped lawn provides space for additional **20,000** people

Located in heart of **Spa State Park**

Annual features include:

- New York City Ballet
- Philadelphia Orchestra
- Freihofer's Jazz Festival
- Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center
- Opera Saratoga
- Saratoga Wine & Food Festival

2014 – Russia's Legendary Bolshoi Ballet, one of just three appearances in U.S.

40,231 – Largest Crowd The Grateful Dead, 1985

19 – Most Performances James Taylor

10 years – Longest Performing Relationship Ray Charles and Chicago

19 – Most Sold-out Shows Dave Matthews Band

Park, and the racetracks) and community-based arts and cultural programs through strong partnerships.

- 3.1-4 Foster more intensive collaboration between the City and other entities such as the Chamber of Commerce, Downtown Business Association, the Saratoga Tourism and Convention Bureau, the Saratoga Springs City Center, Special Assessment District, Saratoga Economic Development Corporation, the Prosperity Partnership, and the Saratoga County Economic Development Agency.
- 3.1-5 Use creative placemaking as a tool to rejuvenate structures and streetscapes and to improve local business viability.
- 3.1-6 Develop and incentivize a program to encourage business growth in underutilized commercial areas.
- 3.1-7 Develop a strategic plan to promote a diverse local economy including agriculture, forestry, tourism, technology, and manufacturing.
- 3.1-8 Promote the creation of youth programs and internships to provide summer job opportunities.
- 3.1-9 Promote existing and create new opportunities and marketing for local craft persons and artists.
- 3.1-10 Develop programs that promote independently owned local businesses.
- 3.1-11 Promote the development of pools of capital to promote and expand local small business investments.
- 3.1-12 Create and promote a range of job opportunities, including those for young adults and professionals, within the community allowing residents to work in the City and encourage land uses that build long-term fiscal sustainability.
- 3.1-13 Maintain a diverse property tax base and accommodate a broad range of land uses while minimizing conflicts.
- 3.1-14 Supplement and support City code-enforcement in monitoring and informing property owners of needed code compliance actions.
- 3.1-15 Develop contingency plans to mitigate the impacts of any large decline from any single employment sector.
- 3.1-16 Encourage home-based businesses, in a manner consistent with the surrounding neighborhood.
- 3.1-17 Incentivize the burial or rerouting of utility lines within the City, where appropriate, and in conjunction with other infrastructure improvements to minimize impacts and costs.

Did You Know?

The **Saratoga Springs City Center** is a key economic driver.

32,000-sf Conference Complex

242 room adjoining Saratoga Hilton Hotel

Annual Report (2013):

230 Rental Days

153,638 Guests

\$28 million – Potential Sales Generated

\$423,000 – City and County Tax Revenues (each)

Source:

www.SaratogaCityCenter.org

Placemaking

‘Placemaking’ focuses on designing cities that cater to people, not just cars, through the development of lively neighborhoods, inviting public spaces and amenities to create a social life in public spaces.

An effective Placemaking process capitalizes on a local community’s assets, inspiration, and potential, ultimately creating good public spaces that promote people’s health, happiness, and well being. This in turn attracts visitors and residents that support the local economy.

Source: Project for Public Spaces

- 3.1-18 Provide a clear process for developers regarding potential projects. The City should provide a “guidebook” which defines the development process and schedule for the public.
- 3.1-19 Encourage development that diversifies the City’s economic base, promotes year round economic benefits and activity, and brings new resources and people to Saratoga Springs.
- 3.1-20 Work closely with local businesses to help reduce operating costs and gain public recognition by adopting sustainable business practices.
- 3.1-21 Amendments to the Zoning Text and Map should be highly scrutinized, and standards established for City Council, Planning Board and Design Review Commission to use in evaluation.

Regional and Beyond

- 3.1-22 Foster strong partnerships among various civic stakeholders such as governments, private investment, not-for-profit organizations, artists, and citizen groups to form a distinctly creative and welcoming community.
- 3.1-23 Work with County and regional economic development organizations and establish clear guidelines regarding the City’s long-term economic growth and sustainability objectives.
- 3.1-24 Promote the City's connections to regional, national and international artists, musicians, businesses, and culture.
- 3.1-25 Establish services needed to attract global visitors and investors to the community.
- 3.1-26 Create better access to and from Albany International Airport for visitors, residents, business travelers, and employees.
- 3.1-27 Work with emerging industries and trends throughout the region, such as the Luther Forest Technology Campus, for future development.
- 3.1-28 Consider lobbying New York State for a change to condominium taxation.
- 3.1-29 Emphasize the City’s strategic location and proximity to major activity centers and natural areas including the Adirondacks, Gore Mountain, Lake George, and the Hudson River.

Tourism and Entertainment

- 3.1-30 Promote and accommodate an increase in visitors during fall, winter and spring by supporting the diverse recreational and entertainment amenities of the City.

A form of Placemaking.... Horses – Saratoga Style

2 outdoor sculpture exhibits
(2002 and 2007)

34 fiber glass horses
decorated and sponsored by
artists and local businesses



Photo Credit: Saratoga-Arts.org



- 3.1-31 Grow and expand heritage tourism opportunities by encouraging the use of historic preservation as an economic development tool.
- 3.1-32 Promote the City as a hub for sports tourism.
- 3.1-33 Promote the City as a place for bicycling, kayaking, hiking, and other outdoor activities and adventures tourism, and encourage related stores, clubs, and trails within the City.
- 3.1-34 Highlight proximity and connections to regional systems (Zim Smith Trail, Champlain Canalway Trail, and designated State Bike Route 9) and events (Tour de Cure, Lions Club Duathlon).
- 3.1-35 Recognize and establish a plan to offset the challenges facing the racing industry, both the Thoroughbred and harness track, due to 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, 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.



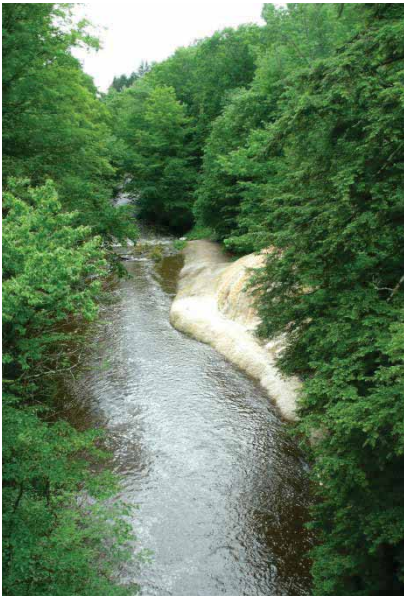
- 3.1-45 Develop a plan to continue promoting sustainable agriculture within the City.
- 3.1-46 Consider allowing commercial agriculture uses within the City to further support agriculture as an economic driver in the City.
- 3.1-47 Encourage active and passive agricultural activities and agri-tourism.
- 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.





ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH AND RESILIENCY

3.2



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.

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 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 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.

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

- 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.

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



Photo Credit: Saratoga County

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 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 policy 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. Another challenge is to think



Photo Credit: Saratoga County

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.



Spring Run Trail

Off-road, two-mile pedestrian and bicycle path situated on an old railroad bed along the fault line of historic natural springs

Owned and maintained by the City

Spring Run Trail is a paved multi-use trail and, together with accompanying on-street segments, provides safe, pedestrian, bicycle and handicapped accessible access from downtown Saratoga Springs to its current terminus at I-87

Future improvements will link downtown and High Rock Park (site of the summer Farmer's market), to the City's indoor recreational facilities, and the commercial area surrounding Wilton Mall, and further connections east

Source: Saratoga P.L.A.N.

- 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.
- 3.2-15 Establish an on-going dialogue with adjacent communities and the school district to identify opportunities for inter-municipal recreation programming and facility use.
- 3.2-16 Investigate spaces within the City for additional multi-use recreational facilities including indoor/outdoor soccer and playing fields, given the high level of participation and involvement.
- 3.2-17 Look to the possibility of partnering with private, educational and institutional groups whose recreational fields are underutilized.
- 3.2-18 Investigate feasibility for recreational trails when utility easements are being considered.
- 3.2-19 Ensure recreational facilities are located within all portions of the City and accessible to established and new neighborhoods.
- 3.2-20 Continue to implement the City's adopted Greenbelt Trail.

Recycle and Reuse

- 3.2-21 Increase recycling in the City operations and promote recycling in the community.
- 3.2-22 Seek partnerships to create urban composting programs for household organic materials and make available for public use.
- 3.2-23 Incentivize salvage "unconstruction" and reclamation of building materials whenever feasible.
- 3.2-24 Adopt reasonable guidelines that encourage restoration and expansion as an alternative to demolition.
- 3.2-25 Create more opportunities for household hazardous waste disposal.

Water and Stormwater

- 3.2-26 Promote and encourage the use of green infrastructure techniques, including the expansion and preservation of the urban forest, to manage stormwater.
- 3.2-27 Identify and rectify water, sanitary sewer, and stormwater issue areas in the City.
- 3.2-28 Coordinate with Saratoga County Intermunicipal Stormwater Management Program, which is a regional approach to better manage water resources and meeting the comprehensive requirements of the Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System (MS4) Permit Program.



Mineral Springs/Baths

Historic City icon

Arose from waters that were trapped **eons ago** in layers of **limestone** capped by solid **shale** deep beneath the Earth's surface

Naturally carbonated, contains at least 50 grains of **mineral salts** per gallon and maintains a constant **55° F** year round

Categorized as cathartic (**laxative**), alkaline (**antacid**), or chalybeate (**high in iron**)

17 springs accessible to the public in the City

Source: Saratoga Chamber of Commerce

- 3.2-29 Promote rainwater harvesting for residential and public use, such as flower programs.
- 3.2-30 Promote water reclamation systems.
- 3.2-31 Pursue demonstration projects for green infrastructure best practices.
- 3.2-32 Ensure adequate supply and quality of drinking water is provided for the long term needs of the City.
- 3.2-33 Assess the capacity and functionality of the City's natural storm water management systems to maintain adequate long term performance in response to a changing climate.

Natural Resources

- 3.2-34 Develop and adopt comprehensive, science-based plans to protect all of the existing City water resources, including our watersheds, groundwater recharge areas, aquifers, and reservoirs, and recreational streams and lakes, including Loughberry Lake, Lake Lonely, Kayaderosseras Creek and its tributaries, and Saratoga Lake.
- 3.2-35 Investigate ways to protect groundwater recharge areas and resources within the City and surrounding communities that are important for replenishing and cleansing drinking water supplies, as well as maintaining the hydrologic regimes of natural aquatic and wetland systems.
- 3.2-36 Undertake an inventory and analysis of the natural resources in the Outer District of the City as part of proactive resource conservation. This could also include an evaluation of ecosystem benefits. This could be accomplished through partnerships with other organizations.
- 3.2-37 Educate the public on the important roles that preservation and maintenance of natural resources play.
- 3.2-38 Review guidelines for stream buffers as they relate to the protection of natural watercourses.
- 3.2-39 Promote water conservation programs.
- 3.2-40 Develop a plan to identify and eliminate invasive species.
- 3.2-41 Continue to implement the City's adopted Urban Forestry Management Plan and pursue funding opportunities to assist with said implementation.
- 3.2-42 Evaluate the amount of the City's drinking water lost due to infrastructure leaks and identify a long term plan for remediation.
- 3.2-43 Complete an inventory and analysis of all existing conservation easements to determine the City's collective public value and monitor long term climate change impacts.

NYSERDA ¹

Public benefit corporation, offers objective information and analysis, innovative programs, technical expertise, and funding to increase energy efficiency, save money, use renewable energy, and reduce reliance on fossil fuels

Cited by the U.S. Department of Energy as being among the best government research organizations in North America, including others such as NASA

Offers funding and grant opportunities

www.nyserda.org

Source: www.nyserda.ny.gov

Energy

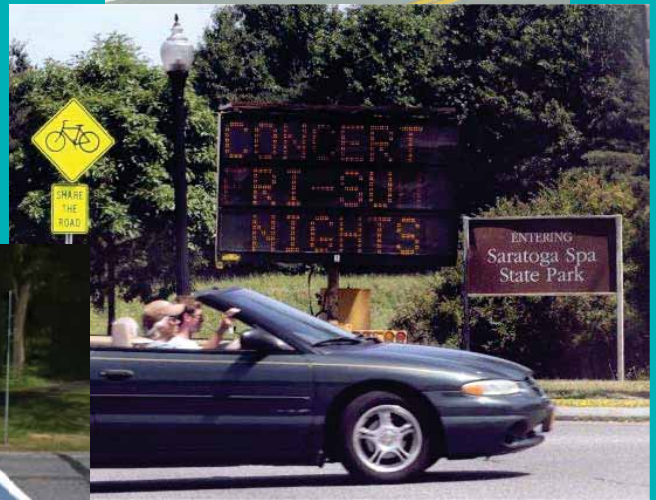
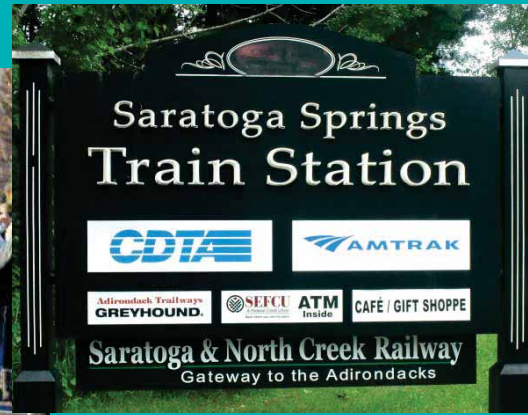
- 3.2-44 Promote and encourage the broader use of renewable/alternative energy sources, such as wind, solar, geothermal, or biomass.
- 3.2-45 Encourage the purchase and use of fuel efficient municipal fleet vehicles and institute an employee education program including anti-idling messages.
- 3.2-46 Continue efforts to increase delivery infrastructure efficiency in water and wastewater systems.
- 3.2-47 Encourage the City to partner with local businesses and institutions to coordinate renewable energy procurements that can reduce/stabilize long term energy cost.
- 3.2-48 Identify potential funding sources for public and private alternative energy activities.
- 3.2-49 Promote both commercial and residential solar energy projects and other community-based renewable energy technologies.
- 3.2-50 Work with partners, such as the New York State Energy Research and Development Authority (NYSERDA), to promote and encourage energy efficiency and renewable/alternate energy sources for the City, businesses, and homeowners.
- 3.2-51 Encourage greater energy efficiency and provisions for renewable/alternate energy sources in new construction and redevelopment.
- 3.2-52 Work with regional agencies and entities in a broad effort to address future energy needs.
- 3.2-53 Promote the energy efficiency of city lighting and a reduction in light pollution while still maintaining safety.
- 3.2-54 Consider additional incentives or resolutions to encourage implementation of alternative energy resources.
- 3.2-55 Encourage the development of residential and commercial buildings that exceed minimum state-level energy efficiency standards.
- 3.2-56 Increase education and enforcement of environmental laws already in existence including the prohibition of idling vehicles.

Resiliency

- 3.2-57 Review and evaluate the City-wide emergency management plan.
- 3.2-58 Coordinate emergency management plans among the City and various public, private, and regional organizations.

- 3.2-59 Identify emergency shelter locations within the City that provide safe, clean facilities for the public to seek shelter during an emergency, such as long-term power outages.
- 3.2-60 Develop an emergency communication system that can educate, alert and protect the public from hazards.
- 3.2-61 Develop and implement a Climate Adaptation Plan to anticipate ways the City can adjust its resource management, land use planning, and infrastructure improvements in an incremental way to address and respond to future climate changes.
- 3.2-62 Practice and promote sustainable building practices.
- 3.2-63 Improve the City's procurement process to support the purchase of environmentally sensitive products from local suppliers.
- 3.2-64 Complete an assessment of the fundamental resiliency of the City's natural resources to withstand the threats of climate change.







TRANSPORTATION AND MOBILITY

3.3

Located at the southeast edge of the Adirondacks, a large number of roads connecting the Mohawk and Hudson-Champlain valleys converge in the City, making it a transportation hub. Consequently, a guiding principle of the Comprehensive Plan is to:

Maintain a City that accommodates all modes of transportation including vehicles, freight, pedestrians, bicyclists, and people with disabilities.

TRENDS

Transportation and mobility is not just about moving vehicles, it is rather about moving people. An efficient and effective transportation system provides for a variety of travel options (by car, by foot, by bus, by bike) and travel routes. While this section focuses on transportation and mobility, it is important to acknowledge that the effectiveness of transportation options is directly correlated with the land use. For example, a compact, mixed use neighborhood can more efficiently support reaching destinations on foot, bike, and via transit than a suburban-style residential neighborhood.

The City has a number of transportation facilities including streets, sidewalks, biking and walking trails, mass transit routes, and bike routes. The maintenance for these facilities falls largely to the City; however, some facilities are maintained by a combination of public and non-profit entities such as Saratoga PLAN, New York State Department of Transportation (NYSDOT), and Saratoga County. The Transportation Facilities Map in **Appendix B** illustrates the variety of transportation facilities within the City.

According to the 2007-2011 American Community Survey (ACS) commuting to work data, the majority (72%) of workers age 16 years and over drove alone to work. Over 16% of workers carpooled, walked, or took transit. Approximately 7% of workers worked at home. The mean travel time to work was 21 minutes.

The transit system within the City is operated by the Capital District Transit Authority (CDTA). CDTA operates a number of routes throughout the City. The Route 50 route which travels from Wilton Mall to Ballston Spa and beyond is by far the most heavily used route. This route also includes a stop at the Grande Industrial Park, which is home to several major employers within the City.

The City is serviced by freight rail service. Amtrak operates year-round passenger rail service and others operate seasonal service on the Saratoga &



North Creek Railway. The city supports increased bicycle accommodations on Amtrak and other rail services to promote regional tourism.

The City has continuously been advancing multi-modal efforts and policies. This is certainly on-trend with state and national efforts. In May of 2012, the City Council adopted a Complete Streets Policy with an advisory committee focusing on promoting and encouraging access for all modes of transportation for all users throughout the City of Saratoga Springs. This follows the 2011 Complete Streets law adopted by New York State. The City's policy encompasses the design, planning, and operations of transportation systems in the City, and will accommodate and encourage travel by cyclists, pedestrians of all ages and abilities, and public transportation users, in accordance with established best practices. Implementation will improve the economic vitality of the community, and fiscal requirements can be addressed and mitigated through updated planning practices. Additionally, the policy identifies a set of recommended action items for implementation, many of which are currently underway.



CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

Truck traffic through the city and potential bypass alternatives have continually been a topic of discussion and debate within the City. Locating a feasible bypass route has proved difficult in the past and finding solutions remains a high priority. This challenge extends to trucks accessing the Grande Industrial Park on Geyser Road as well as local delivery trucks. The enforcement of traffic safety laws and other laws governing use of trucks continues to be a challenge.



Improvements to transportation gateways of the City offer great opportunity. A section of South Broadway near the Spa State Park entrance was reconstructed as a planted boulevard several years ago, and is often referenced as a positive transportation improvement. The New York State Department of Transportation has designed improvements for the Route 50 Arterial between the downtown and Exit 15 to enhance multi-modal access and improve traffic flow. The City continues to pursue funding opportunities to make this a reality. The City is also embarking on a traffic safety improvement construction project on Ballston Ave between Lincoln Ave and Hamilton Street that will bring badly needed traffic signals, vehicular turn lanes, and safe pedestrian crossing to this highly traveled area. The Region continues to discuss the viability and possible introduction of a commuter rail service and a more robust tourism train service. This would create an opportunity to encourage additional development in the vicinity of the train station.

Mindful of the fiscal resources required to enhance and maintain the transportation system, the City has continued to foster working partnerships with a variety of entities. One positive example is the partnership with the





Saratoga Springs School District for the Safe Routes to School project on Geyser Road. The City, with support from the School District has received a grant to construct sidewalks and pedestrian crossings connecting Geyser Crest, one of the City’s largest neighborhoods, with the Geyser Road Elementary School.

RECOMMENDED ACTIONS

Saratoga Springs Complete Streets Vision

With the signing of the Complete Streets Law by Governor Cuomo, statewide attention is being given to the complete streets programs, which improve the safety, health and vibrancy of New York State communities. The City of Saratoga Springs Complete Streets Policy will encourage the development of a complete streets network throughout the City to create a more balanced transportation system. The Complete Streets Policy shall be consistent with and assist in achieving the goals and recommendations set forth in the City’s Comprehensive Plan and other policy documents. The Policy shall 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.

Complete Streets

- 3.3-1 Continue to implement the City’s Complete Streets policy and pursuit of funding opportunities to assist with implementation.
- 3.3-2 Ensure an adequate size and width for public right-of-ways whenever feasible to provide accommodation for bikes, pedestrian, street trees, utilities, and green infrastructure.
- 3.3-3 Promote educational and enforcement programs relating to “share the road” concepts.
- 3.3-4 Synchronize policies and plans regarding multi-modal movement including Complete Streets, the Open Space Plan, development plans, existing sidewalks, paths and trails, the proposed Greenbelt system, and designated bicycle routes to better implement both downtown and city-wide multi-modal improvements.
- 3.3-5 Prioritize pedestrian, bicycle, and automobile improvements to major activity areas such as parks, educational institutions, large employers, commercial areas, and recreational facilities.
- 3.3-6 Install more context sensitive public improvement features (traffic lights, parking signs, curb cuts, sidewalks, power lines, etc.) in our residential and mixed use neighborhoods.
- 3.3-7 Identify shovel-ready projects in anticipation of available funding.
- 3.3-8 Consider the establishment of a Generic Environmental Impact Statement to address city-wide traffic impacts.
- 3.3-9 Evaluate existing traffic control measures at intersections to determine if changes are necessary for better flow of vehicles, pedestrians and cyclists.
- 3.3-10 Support the creation, implementation and pursuance of funding of the forthcoming citywide bicycle, pedestrian, and transit plan.
- 3.3-11 Continue to coordinate with State and County on roads under their jurisdiction to ensure improvements plans are consistent with complete street concepts.



Pedestrians use the recently installed signalized crosswalk on Railroad Run Trail at the Route 50 crossing

Bike Sharing:

50 Bike Share programs in North America

414 programs in Europe

3 programs in NYS: Long Beach, NYC, and Buffalo

\$800 - amount a Bikeshare member can save annually on transportation costs

40% of bike share users report driving less;

For every **1 mile** on a bike rather than in a car, **.82 lbs of CO₂** are kept out of our atmosphere

Bike-Share Planning Guide released in December 2013 by the Institute for Transportation and Development Policy (ITDP)

Source: www.bikeshare.com

3.3-12 Develop an interactive digital mapping system to convey information to citizens, tourists, and the general public. This system would also be used as a digital asset management tool for the City to enhance efficiency. Specific information may include:

- Identify all available parking surface lots and garages with number of spaces, hours, rates (if applicable), and links to driving directions and more information, if available. Identify tips for event and track parking such as trolley and shuttle services.
- Identify train station, bus routes and stops, trolley routes and stops, and bicycle routes with links to additional information (Amtrak and CDTA websites, schedules).
- Identify sidewalk system, connections to trail heads, and places where Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) compliance is lacking. Implement system for reporting issues. Provide link to information on how to obtain City assistance for sidewalk repairs.
- Physically identify multi-modal facilities in City; color code by use and type (i.e. bicycle, surface, off-street, future) and ensure the availability to the public. Provide links to additional information where appropriate. Show trailhead parking and number of spaces.

3.3-13 Implement a consistent wayfinding system and consolidate existing signage to better assist both residents and visitors in navigating the City and its offerings.

3.3-14 Consider procuring alternative vehicles for the City, such as electric and natural gas, to reduce environmental impacts and operating costs.

3.3-15 Adopt streamlined permitting and standard engineering details for residential and commercial EV charging stations. Encourage the establishment of charging stations in the city including placing them in the city owned parking garages/lots.

Pedestrian and Bicycle Facilities

3.3-16 Promote opportunities for bicycle sharing.

3.3-17 Develop a comprehensive sidewalk plan to identify existing sidewalk facilities and system gaps.

3.3-18 Prioritize target areas for new construction, maintenance or enhancement, and filling existing gaps within the sidewalk system.

3.3-19 Provide educational materials to property owners regarding the responsibility to maintain public sidewalks along their property to improve safety, such as the removal of snow and ice.

3.3-20 Enforce clearing regulations of sidewalks, especially during winter.

Did You Know?

52% of Americans want to bike more ¹

55% of Americans would prefer to drive less and walk more ²

25% of walking trips take place on roads without sidewalks or shoulders ³

1/3 of Americans are non-drivers ⁴

More than **50%** of non-drivers stay home on a given day because they lack transportation options ⁴

40% of all trips are **2 miles** or less ⁵

20% are **1 mile** or less ⁵

65% of trips under **1 mile** are now taken by the automobile ⁵

1 – American Bike Polls

2 – Surface Transportation Policy Partnership Poll

3 – National Survey of Pedestrian & Bicyclist Attitudes and Behaviors

4 – American Planning Association

5 – National Personal Transportation Survey



Truck turning off of Broadway

- 3.3-21 Educate and publicize the availability of City assistance to help residents with sidewalk repairs.
- 3.3-22 Create a mechanism to report issues. This mechanism could also assist the City in developing a maintenance priority plan.
- 3.3-23 Consider an incentive program sponsored by the City for property owners to repair or install sidewalks.
- 3.3-24 Work with neighboring communities to connect regional pedestrian/bicycle amenities and routes.
- 3.3-25 Coordinate with the Special Assessment Districts (SAD) in developing a wayfinding plan, to not only provide direction but create a sense of place as well.
- 3.3-26 Review regulations for inconsistencies as to when and where sidewalks are required to aid in the elimination of gaps.
- 3.3-27 Seek to improve Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) compliance to improve accessibility throughout the City.
- 3.3-28 Develop a comprehensive citywide, multi-use trail plan that integrates existing pedestrian, bicycle, road, and open space systems.
- 3.3-29 Provide vital linkages to existing and planned facilities and parks such as Railroad Run Trail, the proposed Geyser Road Trail, and the proposed Greenbelt Trail.
- 3.3-30 Support the implementation and construction of the Greenbelt Trail and its regional linkages and the pursuance of funding opportunities to assist with implementation.
- 3.3-31 Support construction of the regional Zim Smith Trail.

Vehicular Circulation

- 3.3-32 Evaluate where it is appropriate in the City to enhance traffic calming measures, circulation and access.
- 3.3-33 Evaluate opportunities to improve synchronization of and upgrades to traffic signals within the City to improve traffic flow and safety.
- 3.3-34 Implement congestion management techniques to improve flow during peak demands on the transportation system. Such techniques may include modifications to the street system to reduce congestion and partnerships with local businesses to create flexible work schedules.
- 3.3-35 Promote opportunities for vehicle sharing.

Truck Circulation

- 3.3-36 Evaluate truck traffic patterns and identify actions that will improve goods movement within the City for both local and regional goods.

Did You Know?

The Capital District Transportation Authority (CDTA)

provides bus service within the City and Region.

4 regular routes through the City connecting regionally: Schenectady, Albany, Ballston Spa, Glens Falls, Park & Rides along I-87 and locally:

Train Station, Skidmore, Downtown, Rt 50/Wilton, Race Track, Racino, Weibel

1 seasonal trolley linking many popular attractions:

- \$1.50 per trip
- \$0.75 for seniors
- \$4.00 for day pass

- 3.3-37 Balance efficient truck flow with economic viability, as to not negatively impact businesses, residences and the City's quality of life.
- 3.3-38 Research and evaluate new circulation opportunities on existing routes and possible new routes while drawing from previous studies and data that are still relevant.
- 3.3-39 Focus on ways to alleviate truck congestion and difficult turning movements on Broadway.
- 3.3-40 Identify appropriate truck route designations, equipment limitations, and brake restrictions.
- 3.3-41 Investigate feasibility of coordination of truck deliveries and other ways to mitigate delivery congestion.
- 3.3-42 Continue to strictly enforce truck regulations and laws while implementing new technologies for monitoring and reporting violations such as cameras.
- 3.3-43 Install wayfinding signage for truck routes and common destinations for such areas as the Grande Industrial Park.

Transit

- 3.3-44 Investigate new park and ride locations in the vicinity of Northway exits 13-15 for regional commuters and local buses.
- 3.3-45 Consider establishment of Park and Ride lot location within and outside of downtown and encourage public/private partnerships such as with the Capital District Transportation Authority (CDTA) and NYRA.
- 3.3-46 Investigate the feasibility of creating a multi-modal transportation hub in the Downtown area.
- 3.3-47 Work with CDTA to improve overall ridership and public/private support to facilitate the creation of a year round public trolley that links lodging facilities to activity areas to promote fast and consistent access to local and regional activity centers.
- 3.3-48 Improve passenger rail access by enhancing bicycle and pedestrian connections to the train station, providing accommodations for bikes on train, and improving connections to downtown.
- 3.3-49 Continue to coordinate with the Capital District Transportation Authority (CDTA) on local and regional transit initiatives.
- 3.3-50 Develop marketing and promotional materials to encourage the use of public transit.
- 3.3-51 Improve the availability of public transit to move people from the outer district to popular destinations and special events within inner district of the City.



CDTA Summer Trolley Route

- 3.3-52 Support efforts for bus rapid transit (BRT) for improved linkages to the City.
- 3.3-53 Promote the use of universal access agreements to provide free/reduced cost access to employees, students and tenants of businesses, educational institutions, and housing properties.
- 3.3-54 Incentivize transit-oriented-development in the development approval process via updates to the City's land use regulations.
- 3.3-55 Encourage and incentivize bus shelters, benches, and other street amenities around bus stops in close proximity to proposed development.
- 3.3-56 Develop a Citywide plan to ensure maintenance and removal of snow and debris from sidewalks surrounding and leading to bus stops.
- 3.3-57 Collaborate with Capital District Transportation Authority to ensure that future bus route restructuring and service improvements occur in coordination with any citywide parking management system to favor transit access over vehicle access within the areas being addressed.
- 3.3-58 Investigate ways to finance improved transit services.
- 3.3-59 Explore and promote alternative transportation opportunities for seniors.
- 3.3-60 Work with regional agencies to improve direct services to and from the Albany International Airport.

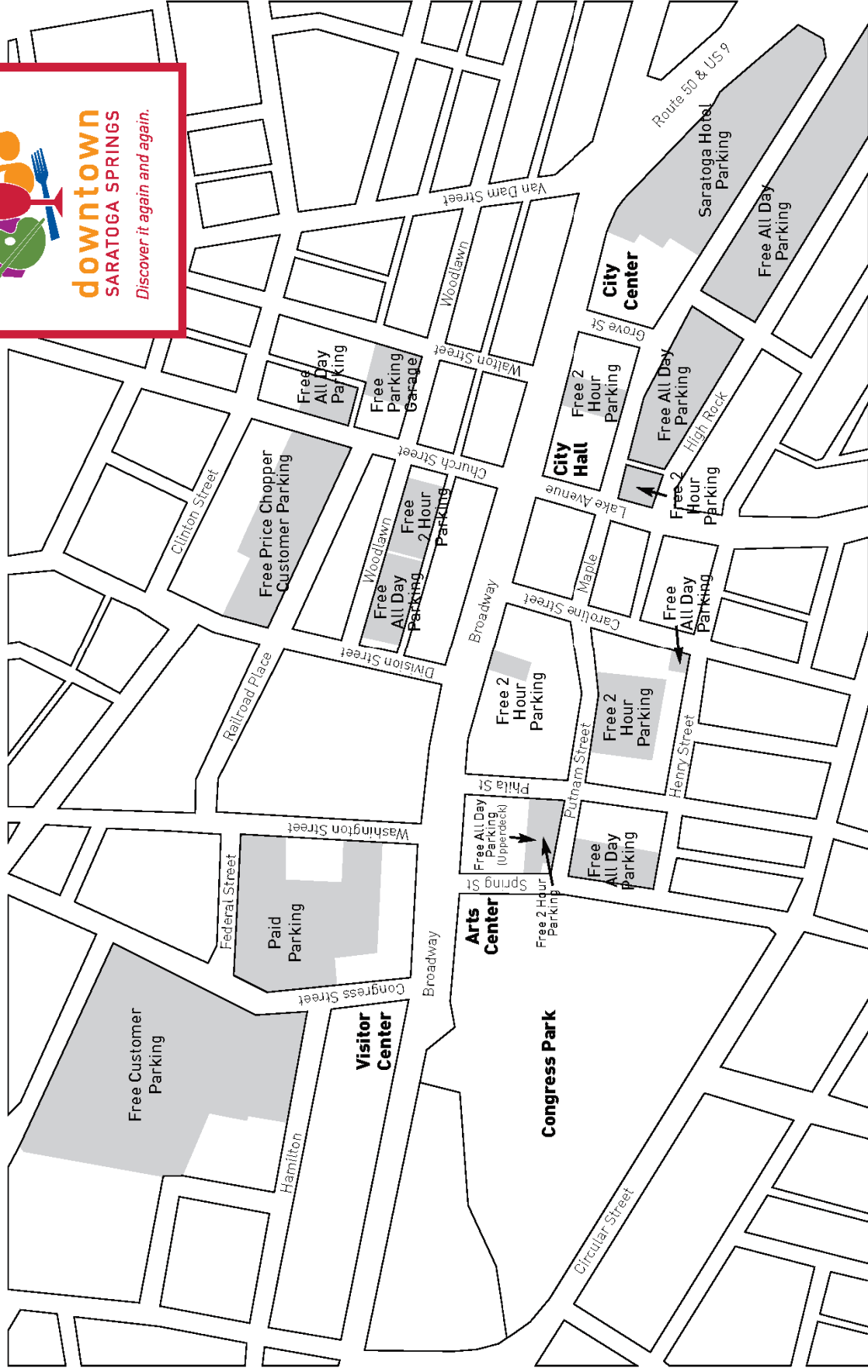
Parking

- 3.3-61 Develop a Citywide parking management plan, including signage, to better utilize existing facilities and understand the need for future facilities.
- 3.3-62 Develop an on-street and off-street parking inventory to understand how changes to either can impact parking availability.
- 3.3-63 Consider implementing and enforcing alternate side of the street regulations during snow emergencies for efficient snow removal.
- 3.3-64 Identify opportunities for shuttling from open lots outside downtown to improve pedestrian movement and alleviate peak parking demands.
- 3.3-65 Consider neighborhood impacts when identifying opportunities for off-street parking.
- 3.3-66 Review existing City parking facilities and opportunities for operations and maintenance support.
- 3.3-67 Investigate ways to finance public parking.
- 3.3-68 Encourage businesses to offer incentives to employees who do not park downtown.



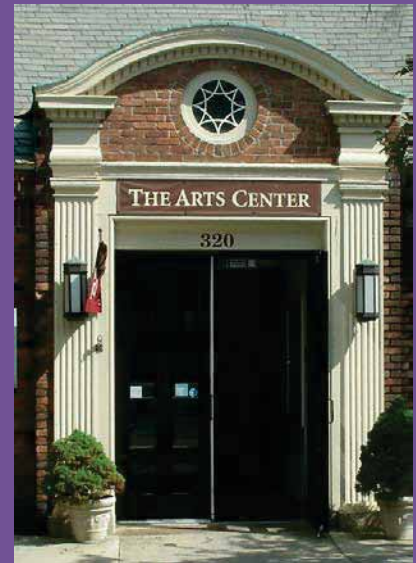
- 3.3-69 Better direct people to parking appropriate for the duration of their stay to improve turnover.
- 3.3-70 Consider new technologies that manage parking structure available supply and direct people to open parking spaces.
- 3.3-71 Work with City Center Authority to ensure there is adequate parking to enable the City Center to continue to attract meetings, weddings and conventions to our downtown.

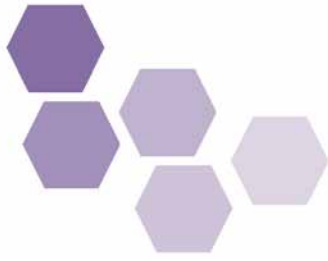
Downtown Saratoga Springs Parking Lot Map



Public rest rooms: Visitor Center, Arts Center, City Hall, City Center

Parking map by the Downtown Saratoga Springs Marketing Initiative (DSSMI).



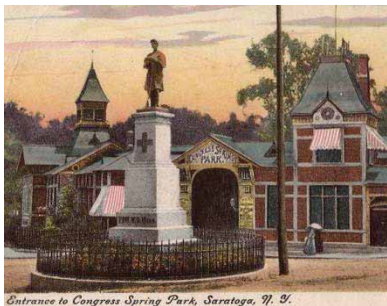


COMMUNITY CHARACTER

3.4

Saratoga Springs is a community rich in historic, cultural, and artistic resources. The Community Character section is a compilation of multiple elements that make Saratoga Springs such a unique place unlike any other. The power of place is critical to the character and economic longevity of a community. Enhancing and preserving that sense of place, while also embracing the changes necessary to compete with today's ever changing world requires a careful balance. This section includes recommendations for the following elements that are intended to keep that balance in place:

- Community form, design, and quality
- History and Heritage
- Arts and Culture
- Education
- Housing
- Public Services



A primary goal of the comprehensive plan is to:

- *To maintain a City that provides educational, civic engagement, artistic, cultural, and musical opportunities in a safe manner*
- *To maintain a City that includes diverse housing opportunities for all economic levels throughout the City*

TRENDS AND OPPORTUNITIES

Development Trends and Community Form

Saratoga Springs has experienced steady growth and development for many years. That growth impacts the community's design and form. While the recent economic downturn did cause slower growth, growth still occurred. The Office of Planning and Economic Development tracks development trends within the City. The Development Summary Maps, contained in **Appendix C**, illustrate the location of recent and current development. Additionally, the August 2013 Planning Activity Report, also in **Appendix C**, provides detailed information about specific projects. Following are some key highlights from that report.



Saratoga 150

- Saratoga Racecourse celebrated 150 years of racing the summer of 2013
- America's oldest sporting venue
- More than 100 events including: derby parties, film festivals, fireworks, horse shows, parades, concerts, cash giveaways
- Over 64 local non-profit organizations helped sponsor events ranging from duathlons and symphonies to Shakespeare and rock concerts

Source: www.saratoga150.com

Since 2009, 154 residential units have been constructed and 170,130 square feet (SF) of commercial space has been constructed. Some projects of note include the Market Center on Railroad Place, the City Center expansion, the Leonard Bus Facility in the Grande Industrial Park, and the Saratoga Hospital Administrative Building.

As of August 2013, 611 residential units and 347,217 SF of commercial space are under construction. Some projects of note include the Congress Plaza Redevelopment on Congress Street, the Excelsior Avenue Mixed Use Development, industrial development at the Grande Industrial Park, Bowtie Cinemas on Railroad Place, The Springs at Weibel Avenue, and residential units at 420 Broadway.

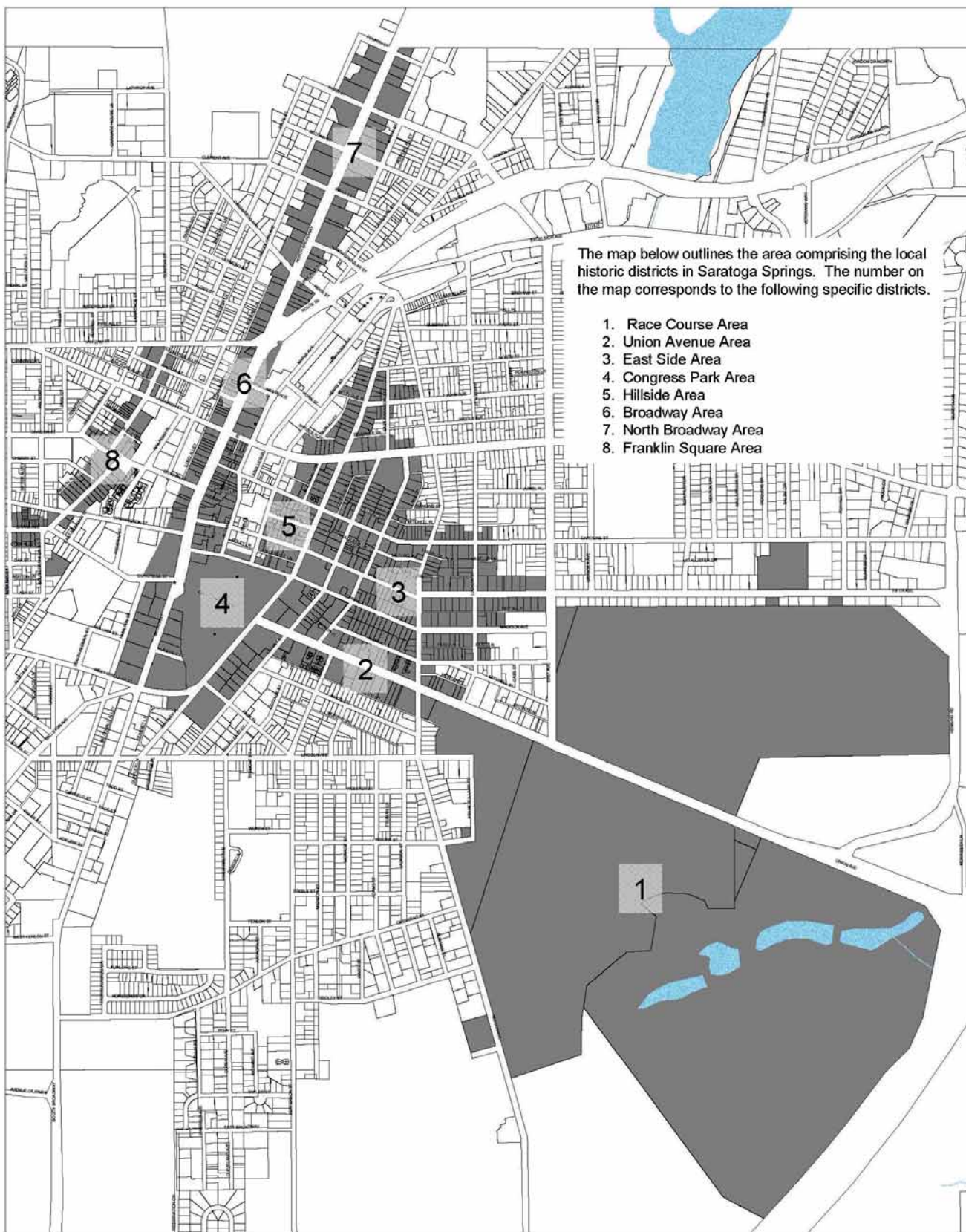
An additional 348 residential units and 275,108 SF of commercial space have been approved and are awaiting construction.

Maintaining Saratoga's neighborhoods, while encouraging tax base enhancement, will be important as Saratoga continues to be a destination for new residents and businesses.

History and Heritage

Saratoga Springs is a City rich in history. Within the City there are eight historic districts as described below and as seen on the following page:

- *Union Avenue:* Both sides of Union Avenue from Regent Street to Ludlow Street as well as structures located on the parallel streets and alleys to the north and south.
- *Eastside Area:* 400 structures on Circular Street, Nelson Avenue, Madison, Fifth, and East Avenues, and the alleyways: Cottage, Mitchell, Diamond, Morton, Talford Place, and Starbuck Lane.
- *Congress Park Area:* Congress Park and sections of Broadway from Circular to Spring Streets, Sections of Circular and Regent south of Spring Street.
- *Hillside Area:* Phila, Lafayette, and Caroline between Henry and Circular Streets.
- *Broadway Area:* Section of Broadway stretching from Spring Street to Van Dam Street.
- *North Broadway Area:* North Broadway from Van Dam to Fourth Street, includes buildings on Greenfield, Clement, Woodlawn, Clinton, State and First Streets, and Carriage House Lane.
- *Franklin Square Area:* One block west of Broadway along Grand Avenue, Franklin, Division, Clinton, Walton, and West Harrison Streets.
- *Race Course Area:* encompassing the thoroughbred race course complex, the estate of Yaddo, and the Dupont parcel.



The map below outlines the area comprising the local historic districts in Saratoga Springs. The number on the map corresponds to the following specific districts.

1. Race Course Area
2. Union Avenue Area
3. East Side Area
4. Congress Park Area
5. Hillside Area
6. Broadway Area
7. North Broadway Area
8. Franklin Square Area

HISTORIC ZONING OVERLAY DISTRICT

There are several existing plans, documents, groups and assets relating to history, the arts, and education. It is important to build upon, complement and work in harmony with these valuable resources.

A **Working Plan for Historic Preservation in Saratoga Springs** was completed in 2001. The Plan maintains that “historic preservation has been and continues to be critical to the attractiveness and vitality of Saratoga Springs.” Over 125 specific action items for achieving these goals are identified in the plan and are based on community input. The study also outlined six “Principles of Preservation” including the balance of preservation, restoration, preservation, and development; the promotion the health, safety and welfare of residents; the collaboration between public and private; and the ongoing identification efforts.

Within the City is the **Saratoga Springs Preservation Foundation**, a longtime advocate for “the preservation of Saratoga Springs’ unique architectural, cultural, and landscaped heritage.” The Foundation drives community stewardship of heritage through educational programs, technical assistance, preservation projects, and advocacy and encourages preservation of the past to protect the future.

In 1883, the **Saratoga Springs History Museum**, located in the Canfield Casino in Congress Park, was founded as the **Saratoga Historical Society**. The society’s mission is to foster public education and chronicle the story of Saratoga Springs history by operating the museum, conducting programs, and collecting, preserving, exhibiting, and interpreting materials that document the City’s social, political, economic, geological, and cultural history.

Saratoga National Historic Park is also located within Saratoga County, less than 10 miles southeast of downtown Saratoga Springs. As part of the US National Park Service, the park commemorates the site of the American Revolution’s Battle of Saratoga, considered one of the fifteen most decisive battles in world history.

The **Historic District Residential Design Guidelines** were developed as a tool for building owners who are considering exterior changes to an existing structure, building an addition, or constructing a new building. The Guidelines are intended to protect historic architectural character, help direct the quality of new construction, encourage the preservation and rehabilitation of existing historic structures, ensure exterior changes and new construction are compatible with surroundings, and encourage creative designs which reinforce the tradition of quality design.



Arts and Culture

Saratoga Springs is home to a variety of art and cultural resources. The Tang Museum and Zankel Music Center at Skidmore College, SPAC, and the Arts Center are just a few. While countless opportunities exist for cultural activities within the City, various examples are outlined below.



Artsfest venue, Café Lena.

Source:

www.saratogaartsfest.org

- Caffè Lena is recognized as the oldest continuously-operating coffee house in the United States. Caffè Lena launched some of the most recognized songwriters of our time such as Bob Dylan and Ani DiFranco.
- The National Museum of Dance and Hall of Fame is one of the few museums in the world that is dedicated solely to the art of dance.
- Each June, Saratoga Artsfest brings thousands downtown for five days to experience visual and performing arts at venues scattered throughout the City. The concept for Artsfest was born when representatives from various arts and educational entities recognized the need for a festival celebrating cultural resources and arts programs in the region.
- Yaddo is a 400-acre artist retreat founded in 1900 by Spencer and Katrina Trask. Artists that have worked at Yaddo have experienced great success and include Pulitzer Prize winners, National Book Awards winners, MacArthur Fellowships, and a Nobel Prize In Literature thanks to Saul Bellow.
- The Beekman Street Arts District is a three-block area on Saratoga's west side that features local artists and unique galleries. Several restaurants also support this budding arts district.

The cultural and artistic resources in the City provide a strong economic base for tourism and also provide a unique sense of place for Saratogians. Supporting these resources into the future will be critical to Saratoga's economic success.

Skidmore College

Campus encompasses **890** acres with **43** academic departments and offers more than **1,000** courses

Approximate enrollment is **2,400** students from **40** states and **40** countries with a gender mix of **41%** men and **59%** women

248 full-time faculty and **84%** hold a doctoral or the highest degree in their field

Education

Saratoga Springs has a variety of public and private educational institutions at every level. Private schools include the Saratoga Independent School and the Waldorf Schools. The Saratoga Springs City School District is the public school system that encompasses the City and areas beyond and includes:

- Caroline Street Elementary School
- Division Street Elementary School
- Dorothy Nolan Elementary School
- Geyser Road Elementary School
- Greenfield Elementary School
- Lake Avenue Elementary School
- Maple Avenue Middle School
- Saratoga Springs High School

At the collegiate level, Skidmore College is a four-year, private, nondenominational, coed, liberal arts school with the main campus located in Saratoga Springs. A regional economic model completed in the summer of 2011, determined the economic impact of Skidmore College on the surrounding area and concluded the following:

- The economic impact on Saratoga County is approximately \$416.4 million annually
- The annual employment impact is 3,080 jobs
- The 10-year outlook of construction and design impacts is \$20 million annually
- The College provides 839 full-time equivalent jobs with \$80.3 million in annual compensation
- The 2,400 students spend more than \$9 million annually within the region
- The College's special weekends (Family Weekend, Commencement, Alumni Reunion) attract thousands of visitors to the campus and the City of Saratoga Springs

Empire State College (ESC) was established in 1971 by the State University of New York (SUNY) Board of Trustees with a focus on nontraditional teaching and learning. College faculty mentors guide students by designing unique degree programs for each student within 12 broad areas of study. The College enrolls mostly adults that are pursuing associate, bachelor's, and master's degrees. The students choose to learn online or face to face onsite at 35 locations throughout New York State. Saratoga Springs is home to ESC's School for Graduate Studies, the Center for Distance Learning, and the College's administrative offices.



Building on these important educational resources and continuing partnerships with these entities will be important as the next generations prepare to take leadership roles in the community and beyond.

Housing

The City of Saratoga Springs had a total of 11,312 households in 2010 with an average of 2.13 persons per household. This represents an increase in the number of households from 2000, yet a decrease in the persons per household. This is consistent with trends elsewhere, including in Saratoga County.

Data from the 2000 Census indicates:

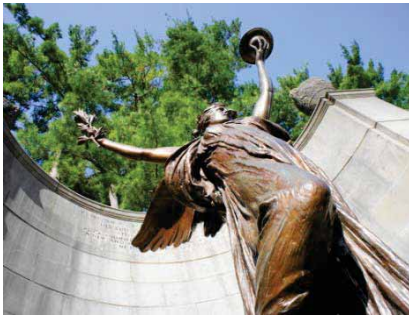
- 40% of the City's total households are low and moderate income (earning less than 80% of Metropolitan Statistical Area median figure).
- 26% of all Saratoga Springs households spend more than 30% of their annual income on housing and experience a housing cost burden.
- Over 35% of rental households experience a housing cost burden and spend more than 30% of their annual income on housing.
- 42% of elderly (64+) renter households experience a housing cost burden and spend more than 30% of their annual income on housing
- Nearly 57% of the City's low and moderate-income households experience a housing cost burden and spend more than 30% of their annual household income on housing.
- 28% of the City's low and moderate-income households experience a severe housing cost burden and spend more than 50% of their household income on housing.

Providing housing options that can accommodate multiple socio-economic sectors and multiple generations of residents is key to Saratoga's future.



RECOMMENDED ACTIONS

Community form, design and quality



Spirit of Life

- Spirit of Life and Spencer Trask Memorial
- Dedicated 1915, same year the City was incorporated
- Honors Spencer Trask and his efforts to preserve Saratoga Springs waters
- City /Preservation Foundation partnering to restore the masonry, landscape setting and the bronze Spirit of Life Sculpture.
- Commissioned Daniel Chester French and Henry Bacon, the designers of the

- 3.4-1 Maintain and promote the “City in the Country” form that includes an intensively developed urban core, an economically vibrant central business district, and residential neighborhoods with well- defined urban edges and an outlying area of rural character, comprised of agriculture, open lands, natural and diverse environmental resources, and low density residential development.
- 3.4-2 Maintain the greenbelt by restricting incompatible uses and the intensity of development.
- 3.4-3 Continue to prohibit the establishment of Planned Unit Developments (PUDs) in the Conservation Development District of the City.
- 3.4-4 Continue to work to enhance the vitality and success of the City’s downtown area.
- 3.4-5 Discourage destination type resorts that compete with the downtown core.
- 3.4-6 Identify priority gateways into the City, such as Route 50 and South Broadway, and develop/review guidelines for appropriate area-specific amenities and treatments.
- 3.4-7 All development and rehabilitation should be respectful of the original community character.
- 3.4-8 Increase the development of public and private outdoor plazas and meeting spaces to enhance the sense of community.
- 3.4-9 Promote the reuse and reoccupation of vacant and underutilized buildings and strengthen the new vacant building registry.
- 3.4-10 Create new landscape design guidelines for neighborhoods that add safety, comfort, and beauty, while maintaining or enhancing ecosystem linkages, connectivity, and natural resources.
- 3.4-11 Improve the availability of information on land use activity by expanding the City’s Geographic Information System (GIS).
- 3.4-12 Evaluate and assess models for form-based zoning as a means to achieve desired community character, improved development expectations and predictable review procedures.
- 3.4-13 Develop an interactive digital mapping system to convey information about community events, facilities and resources to citizens, tourists and the general public.
 - a. Identify all the historic features and amenities with links to directions, hours, and additional information.

Certified Local Government (CLG) Program

City participates in the CLG program through the [State Historic Preservation Office \(SHPO\)](#)

Nationwide initiative that directly links City's preservation goals to state and federal preservation programs

Eligible to receive a variety of services including:

- Technical preservation assistance and legal advice
- Direct involvement in SHPO programs, such as identifying properties that may be eligible for listing in the State and National Registers of Historic Places
- Training opportunities to increase the ability to protect historic resources
- Grants designated exclusively for CLG projects
- Membership in statewide and national CLG networks

Source: NY State Historic Preservation Office

- Identify the "arts" resources (Beekman Street, SPAC, Dance Museum) with links to directions, hours, and additional information.
- Identify the cultural assets with links to directions, hours, and additional information. (Schools, libraries, museums, etc.)
- Identify the historic district and properties that require regulations and procedures. Provide link to these requirements, electronic forms, and where to find additional information.
- Create themed tours and trails such as a historic tour and art trail. Partner with other public/private organizations to implement, and ensure public awareness of sites, hours, and special events.

3.4-14 Continue to locate most citywide civic facilities in the core area of the community.

3.4-15 Continue to provide linkage between and among community neighborhoods.

3.4-16 Continue to provide linkages and interconnection with and among all the various social, employment, and commercial activity centers.

3.4-17 Enhance our City's award winning and attractive downtown streetscape with a significant tree canopy, street furniture, and other pedestrian amenities that add comfort and interest for shoppers and visitors.

3.4-18 Allow for and encourage community gardens, rooftop gardens, urban gardening and backyard agriculture, and sustainable agriculture within City limits.

3.4-19 Investigate appropriate solutions for the storage of boats, trailers, RV's and other large mobile items within the respective front yard setbacks of neighborhoods.

History and Heritage

3.4-20 Continue efforts to establish creative mechanisms to protect historic properties in all areas of the community.

3.4-21 Promote the institutions and events that highlight the rich heritage of the community.

3.4-22 Continue efforts to promote the equine-related activities in the area along Union Avenue and East Avenue to tie together the activities at the Racecourse, the National Racing Museum, Fasig Tipton, the Oklahoma Track, etc. in a manner consistent with the historic context.

3.4-23 Continue to implement the City's adopted Historic Preservation Plan (2001) and the pursuit of funding opportunities to assist with implementation.

3.4-24 Review and update the City's adopted Historic Preservation Plan.

- 3.4-25 Expand educational efforts relating to historic resources in the City to market heritage tourism.
- 3.4-26 Encourage the public to assume a stronger role in the protection of the community's historic resources by providing educational materials, technical assistance, and financial resources.
- 3.4-27 Increase coordination and strengthen partnerships among all agencies and organizations involved in historic preservation.
- 3.4-28 Ensure consistency among various local governmental policies that affect the community's historic resources.
- 3.4-29 Provide special training sessions for members of the Design Review Commission to remain in compliance with Certified Local Government standards.
- 3.4-30 Pursue funding opportunities and provide incentives to sustain a range of preservation activities.
- 3.4-31 Survey historic resources within our community on an ongoing basis to identify which resources are significant and are worthy of preservation.
- 3.4-32 Expand the local Historic District to match the boundaries of the various historic districts listed on the National Register of Historic Places.
- 3.4-33 Periodically review the City's architectural guidelines to determine if updates are needed.
- 3.4-34 Pursue community collaboration to support and enforce local legislation and code enforcement to address buildings threatened to be demolished due to neglect.
- 3.4-35 Expand City Urban Heritage Center programming in cooperation with museums and educational and other institutions.



The fountains at Yaddo

Arts and Culture

- 3.4-36 Promote access for all residents and visitors to the community's museums and cultural facilities.
- 3.4-37 Promote volunteer opportunities and participation in all sectors of the community.
- 3.4-38 Promote cultural diversity programs and events throughout the community.
- 3.4-39 Support arts and cultural festivals as well as the various organizations that work to organize such events.
- 3.4-40 Support cultural organizations by offering operational support such as parking and traffic control for not-for-profit arts organization events and publicizing and participating in cultural arts venues on city-owned street signs and banners.

- 3.4-41 Implement creative placemaking tools to engage residents and contribute to a healthy sustainable community.
- 3.4-42 Use creative placemaking as a tool to animate public and private spaces, improve public safety, and bring diverse people together.

Education

- 3.4-43 Encourage community inter-relationships with higher education institutions.
- 3.4-44 Encourage more coordination and sharing of all public and private educational and institutional facilities to complement community and neighborhood needs.
- 3.4-45 Promote more sustainability-based and civic curriculum within community education facilities.
- 3.4-46 Support community education programs and outreach efforts of the public library.
- 3.4-47 Foster coordination between school district and local/regional businesses to provide the training and skills that meet the needs of today's employers.
- 3.4-48 Promote more school participation in cultural and educational opportunities.
- 3.4-49 Provide opportunities for higher education students' involvement in the community.



Affordable Housing Spotlight – Allen Drive

- Saratoga Affordable Housing Group, a nonprofit partnered with the Saratoga Springs Housing Authority
- 15-unit work force housing complex
- \$2.3 million project was primarily funded by a \$1.86 million grant from New York State Homes and Community Renewal
- Playground added in 2010
- New sidewalks and streetlights added in 2011

Housing

- 3.4-50 Encourage a range of residential opportunities that will be available to all residents to promote the social and economic diversity vital to a balanced community.
- 3.4-51 Actively promote affordable housing of all types and tenure throughout the City, and avoid overconcentration in any one area to reduce the potential for isolation of income groups.
 - a. Promote diversity of housing types in close proximity to employment centers such as Downtown, the hospital, Skidmore College, the racetracks, etc.
 - b. Encourage the development of higher density residential alternatives within the urban core including the conversion to residential use of upper floors in commercial districts.
 - c. Make greater use of City-owned properties for affordable housing and consider acquiring additional properties for this purpose.



- 3.4-52 Promote the implementation of the City's "Consolidated Plan" to achieve identified community development objectives and increase the availability of safe, affordable housing and promote the pursuance of funding opportunities to assist with implementation.
- 3.4-53 Support existing and consider new partnerships to address housing needs. Continue supporting collaborative efforts to develop additional affordable housing with organizations such as the Saratoga Affordable Housing Group and Saratoga Springs Housing Authority.
- 3.4-54 Rehabilitate and develop affordable housing via a "whole-site approach" with attention to site location and layout, façade design, pedestrian movement and accessibility, adequate infrastructure provision, and sensitivity to historic preservation and neighborhood context. This will also assist to revitalize and/or preserve existing neighborhoods.
- 3.4-55 Assist At-Risk Persons with housing needs.
- Provide adequate temporary shelters for the homeless and at risk population.
 - Increase supportive housing and services that enable persons with special needs to live in dignity and independence.
 - Assist homeless and persons at risk of becoming homeless in obtaining affordable housing.
- 3.4-56 Promote more effective development incentives.
- Consider incentives, such as density bonuses, temporary property tax relief from building setback, and parking requirements, to encourage affordability.
 - Consider providing infrastructure incentives for developments with affordable units.
- 3.4-57 Address procedural items related to housing Citywide.
- Review zoning, subdivision, building codes, and develop policies to actively encourage affordable housing construction or redevelopment.
 - Investigate appropriate opportunities for the conversion, building, and permanent residential use of building code compliant accessory buildings such as carriage houses and garages.
 - Promote more aggressive enforcement of housing codes and zoning regulations.
- 3.4-58 Identify funding resources to assist the City and its residents in meetings its housing needs.
- Consider establishing dedicated funds (e.g. development fees, non-profit PILOT programs, etc.) or land trusts for affordable housing development, land acquisition, construction subsidies, etc.

- b. Maximize participation in Federal and State funding programs for the construction and rehabilitation of affordable rental and homeowner units.

3.4-59 Provide housing opportunities to support an aging population.

- a. Encourage construction of senior housing in proximity to transit service as well as health and community services.
- b. Allow for diverse types of senior housing such as: cooperative housing, concierge housing, senior rooming houses.

Public Services



- 3.4-60 Investigate the feasibility of a centralized public safety facility.
- 3.4-61 Work to ensure that all areas of the community are adequately serviced by fire, police and emergency medical response.
- 3.4-62 Diligently enforce public safety and welfare matters such as truck traffic, speed limits and illegal use of property.
- 3.4-63 Support continued provision of economically viable emergency medical service.
- 3.4-64 Support the expansion of neighborhood watch programs.
- 3.4-65 Continue current and improve coordination and delivery of a wide range of support services for special needs population, including seniors, such as accessibility, medical, food, social, transportation options, security, recreation, and delivery of information.





FUTURE LAND USE

4.0

If the City is to be successful in preparing for the future, it must have increased flexibility to accommodate the rapidly changing needs of business, commerce, and our residents. In addition, the City must have increased accountability to ensure and enhance the physical, cultural, and social amenities that make Saratoga Springs an attractive and vibrant locale.

Fortunately, Saratoga Springs is currently in a good position to capitalize on its collective strengths and enthusiasm at a time when many other communities cannot. To maintain and improve upon the City's current position, a close look was given to the City's future land uses and the Comprehensive Plan Future Land Use Map (Map). The Map sets the direction for future land uses within the City. It illustrates the City's vision by identifying broad categories of land use. The Map is not a zoning map. However, the zoning map must follow the direction set forth in the Comprehensive Plan in accordance with General City Law §28-a. The zoning ordinance is typically the regulatory document that addresses densities, area, bulk, and specific permitted uses.

A key factor in revising the Map for this update is to ensure it reflects the City's vision. The vision for the City remains relatively unchanged from the 2001 Comprehensive Plan and, therefore, the Map will appear very similar. That vision includes the most intense uses and greatest mix of uses at the City's Core (Broadway). The intensity of uses becomes less as one travels away from the Core. The concept of the greenbelt, which was represented by the Conservation Development District (CDD) in the 2001 Comprehensive Plan, is reinforced in this updated Map.

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)

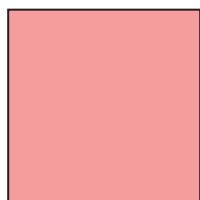


*Downtown Core
(DC)*

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.

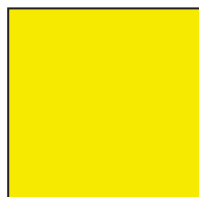


*Community
Mixed Use
(CMU)*

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)*

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

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



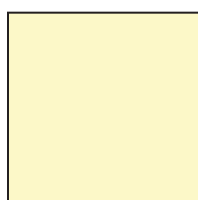
This area is highly walkable, and should be accessible by transit and a range of multi-modal options.

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)*

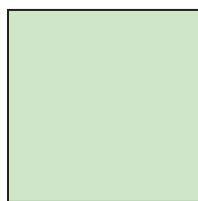
*Residential
Neighborhood- 2
(RN-2)*

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 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.



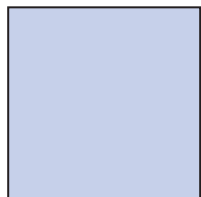
CDD Note: The maximum density in the CDD is an average of 0.5 Units/Acre of unconstrained land. Unconstrained lands are areas of the site that do not contain severe constraints to development, such as wetlands, very steep slopes, stream corridors, and floodplains, as well as lands with legal impediments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



*Parks and
Recreation (PR)*

Parks and Recreation (PR)

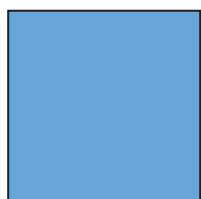
The Parks and Recreation designation consists of recreational areas and parkland owned by the public (State, City and School District). This designation includes a mix of recreational and cultural uses that support recreational opportunities for residents and visitors. This designation is characterized by a combination of buildings and uses supportive of active and passive recreation, recreational tourism, and open space. These areas should incorporate bicycle and pedestrian connections to the surrounding community.



*Institutional
(INST)*

Institutional (INST)

The Institutional designation includes areas that provide services such as religious, educational, health, cultural and tourism.

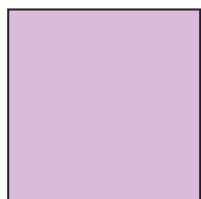


*Equine and
Related Facilities
(EQ)*

Equine and Related Facilities (EQ)

The Equine and Related Facilities designation includes areas utilized by the equine industry and supporting facilities. Such areas include, but are not limited to, the thoroughbred race track, harness track, stables, racing museum, sales barns, parking and feed stores. This designation represents a significant contribution to the City’s tourism economy.

This designation is also envisioned to allow for supporting facilities such as employee housing and businesses that are essential to the equine industry's sustainability and future success in the City. Uses and design within this designation must be sensitive to the surrounding neighborhoods.



*Specialty Mixed
Use - Park (SP)*

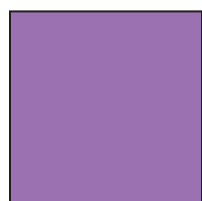
Specialty Mixed Use - Park (SP)

The Specialty Mixed Use - Park designation allows for a mix of commercial and residential uses that are complementary to the Downtown Core and Complementary Core and that do not negatively impact the rural character of the area adjacent to the Saratoga Spa State Park – a National Historic Landmark.



Future growth in this area should be designed and sited as a campus-like setting to create a distinctive gateway that complements the beauty of the adjacent Spa State Park. Bicycle and pedestrian connections to the Park and adjacent uses should be provided.

This designation may lend itself to support research and development, creative economy workplaces, “green and clean” technology businesses, and other low to moderate intensity uses that do not negatively impact this critical gateway to the City.



*Specialty Mixed
Use - Gateway
(SG)*

Specialty Mixed Use - Gateway (SG)

The Specialty Mixed Use - Gateway designation allows for a variety of low to moderate intensity uses that focus on maintaining a distinctive entrance to the City. The goal for the commercial gateways is not to foster more intense or dense land use development, but rather to improve the physical appearance and attractiveness of the commercial uses. These uses are primarily commercial in nature and are complementary to the Downtown Core and Complementary Core. This designation is characterized largely by automobile access yet with aesthetically pleasing buildings and landscaping along the street with parking in the rear.



Industrial (IND)

Industrial (IND)

The Industrial designation includes areas of light to heavy industrial uses to support economic growth and provide a strong tax base for the City. Adjacent residential neighborhoods should be adequately buffered from the Industrial uses. Additional buffering and screening may be required to enhance public rights-of-way and ensure land use compatibility.

Looking forward, this designation will allow for research and development, “green and clean” technologies, and semiconductor, computer hardware, software and related technological, administrative, sales, and engineering facilities. These areas will support a variety of quality jobs, generate revenue, and provide services that strengthen the local and regional economies.

Country Overlay Map

The balance between the “city” and the “country” is fundamental to the general health, welfare and economic viability of the community. This has been reiterated by the community time and time again. Therefore, this plan sets out to reinforce the “country” within the City’s jurisdiction through a Country Overlay Map. Since the development of the towns surrounding Saratoga Springs is indeed beyond the City’s control, the City must take proactive measures to preserve the greenbelt surrounding the urban core.



The map of the Country Overlay Area illustrates the open spaces that remain and that are important to be considered in the preservation of city character. The Country Overlay map does not put any restrictions or additional requirements in place, but serves an illustrative purpose only. The Country Overlay Map is also intended to provide support for existing overlay design requirements such as the City's Gateway Overlay districts, which protect the character of the City's important gateways.

The Country Overlay Area depicts a desired "greenbelt" around the urban core which defines and shapes the "Country" in the "City in the Country" vision of this comprehensive plan. The map illustrates the diverse public and privately-owned open space resources that collectively convey a sense of the traditional settlement pattern – a dense urban core with a well defined edge surrounded by open lands – that characterizes the historic settlement pattern of Saratoga Springs.

The Country Overlay Area includes:

- Private recreational lands and institutional open space resources such as the Saratoga National Golf Course, Yaddo, and the racetracks
- Public recreational lands including the Saratoga Spa State Park
- Wetlands and stream corridors
- Rural and scenic viewsheds
- Linkages to provide natural corridors for wildlife, to accommodate the City's growing trail and recreational system, and to promote greater accessibility to existing areas
- Farmland, including lower West Avenue, outer Lake Avenue, and the northwest agricultural area of the City.

Within the Country Overlay Area, the enhancement of natural resources and the open space values present on a site, along with development tools to effect this enhancement, should be added as items to be considered by the Boards when evaluating development proposals. This evaluation will consider the balance between an activity's positive contributions to the City and the potential negative effects on natural resources and open space character.

The intent of this section is not to prohibit or permit any land use activity but instead is to reaffirm that open space values be taken into consideration in development proposals within the Country Overlay Area or in adopting any zoning amendments for areas included in the Country Overlay Area.



Incentive Zoning Supporting Public Purpose

Section 81-D of the NYS General City Law sets forth the conditions under which cities can enact incentive zoning. Saratoga Springs already has density bonuses for affordable housing and publicly accessible open space in several zoning districts. This legislation requires the density incentives to be consistent with the municipality's Comprehensive Plan. Therefore, public purpose density bonuses permitted by Section 81-D would be able to exceed the residential density caps in each of the land use categories.

Legitimate Public Interest in Protecting the Greenbelt

The City's Conservation Development District and Country Overlay Area, which constitutes the greenbelt, serves the following key legitimate City interests and important governmental objectives:

1. **Environmental benefits:** Natural features are valuable as part of a community's character, scenery, and wildlife habitat, as well as the area's quality of life. The ecological integrity of the City's natural resources, including groundwater, streams and wetlands, trees and woodlands, steep slopes, vegetated wildlife habitat, and areas rich in biodiversity must be maintained and protected, even as development occurs. The ecosystem services provided in the greenbelt include water and air purification, storm water runoff management, maintaining hydrological cycles, crop pollination, and nutrient dispersal and cycling. Actions to minimize impacts to these functions should be put in place to protect the City's natural resources. The City's legitimate interest in these natural resources has been well-documented in the 2001 Open Space Plan and the Saratoga County Green Infrastructure Plan. With conservation as the core development principle in this area, the community is assured that development in this area works alongside conservation values.
2. **Economic benefits and unique community character:** Natural features are valuable as part of a community's character, scenery as well as the area's quality of life. The City has a long history as a destination for tourism, attracted by spring waters, Victorian architecture, amenities of a compact downtown and the natural beauty of the surrounding landscape and water bodies. The greenbelt is a significant contributor to the City's tourism economy by providing scenic viewsheds and recreational opportunities. The greenbelt also continues to reinforce the traditional human development pattern that preserves the unique "City in the Country" character of the community. The low intensity development that has occurred in the conservation development district support the character of the community as a whole. Conservation-based development can generate a reasonable



return on investment for developers in this area. In addition, conservation-based development provides citizens with access to open space which encourages healthy lifestyles.

3. Climate change mitigation and adaptation: The greenbelt plays an important function in mitigating the adverse impacts of climate change, including carbon sequestration. The lands in the greenbelt area absorb and retain water, protecting against flooding, which is projected to increase due to more intense and more frequent storms resulting from a warming atmosphere. Open lands and wetlands in the greenbelt also serve to naturally treat and infiltrate stormwater runoff before it enters groundwater or surface water bodies.

Enhanced Land Use Review Process

In order to encourage development that looks to the long-term sustainability of the City, the regulatory and project review process should be clear and streamlined. This will help encourage investment in the City by reducing time delays and extraordinary costs to both the project sponsors and the City.

Recommended Actions to Enhance the Land Use Review Process

- 4.1-1 Review and evaluate the City's zoning ordinance to ensure consistency with this updated Comprehensive Plan.
- 4.1-2 Continue enforcing Existing Land Use Regulations - The City should focus resources to enforce existing zoning and other land use regulations. Enforcement should be consistent, equitable and swift.
- 4.1-3 Enhance Development Review and Approval Informational Materials - The City needs to provide applicants with an easily understood guide booklet to its review processes, including submittal requirements and time frames for each step. Similarly, application and informational materials should be streamlined and simplified.
- 4.1-4 Illustrate Zoning Standards Graphically - Greater use of design examples and guideline graphics will help the public and applicants visualize the desired development.
- 4.1-5 Initiate Earlier Development Review by City Departments - To expedite the development review process and encourage better coordination within the often complex framework of the commission form of government, this Plan recommends. City departments should respond to developer inquiries early in the application process. Efforts to develop and coordinate development policies among departments should be encouraged.



Amendments to the Comprehensive Plan and Land Use Regulations

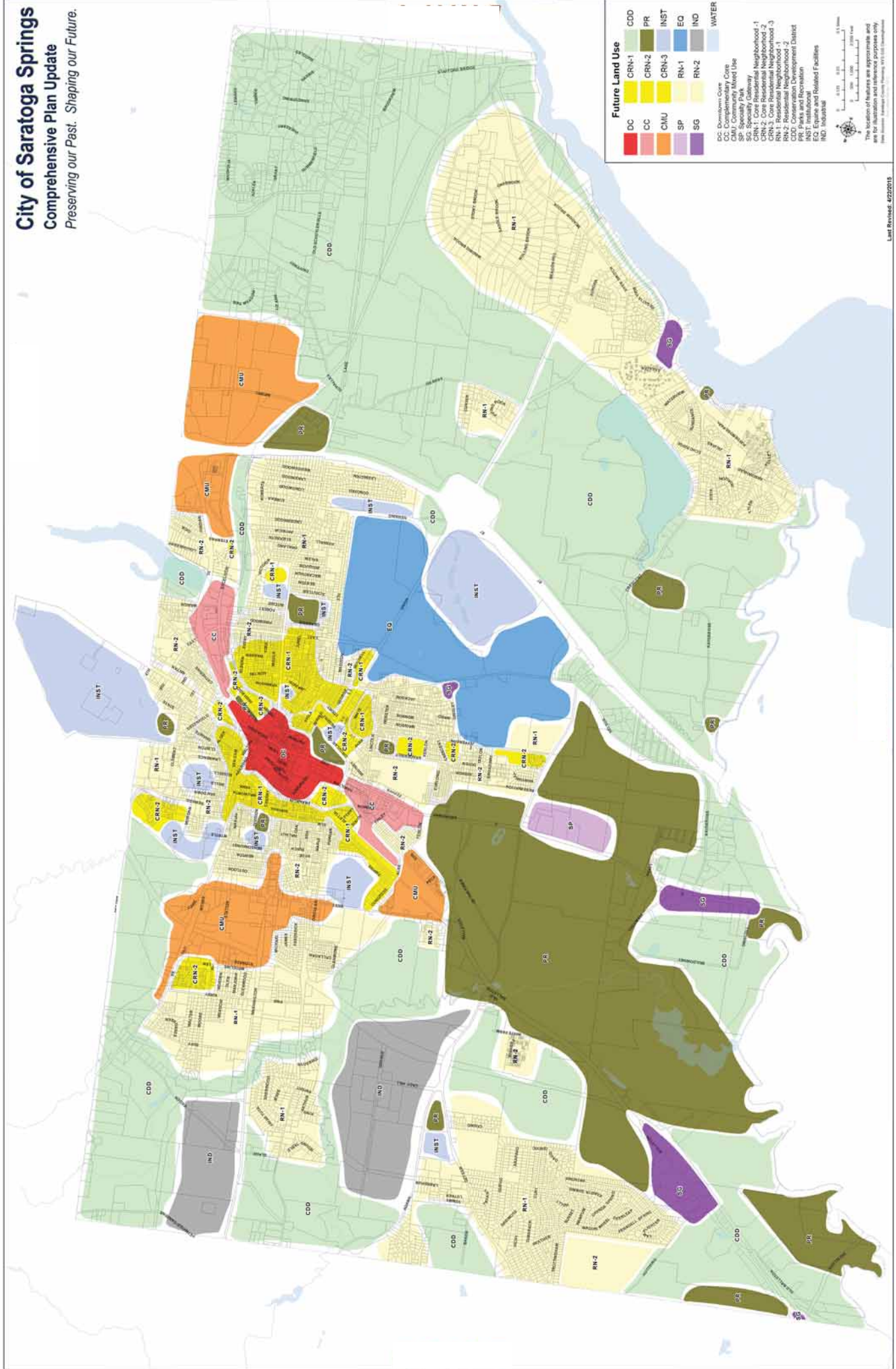
Significant decisions and actions affecting the immediate and long-range protection, enhancement, growth and development of the state and its communities are made by local governments. In Saratoga Springs, the City Council is the legislative body with the authority to modify the City's comprehensive plan and land use regulations.

Among the most important powers and duties granted by the legislature to a city government is the authority and responsibility to undertake city comprehensive planning and to regulate land use for the purpose of protecting the public health, safety and general welfare of its citizens. This is outlined in General City Law 28-a2(a,b). Pursuant to General City Law 28-a12(a), all city land use regulations must be in accordance with a comprehensive plan.

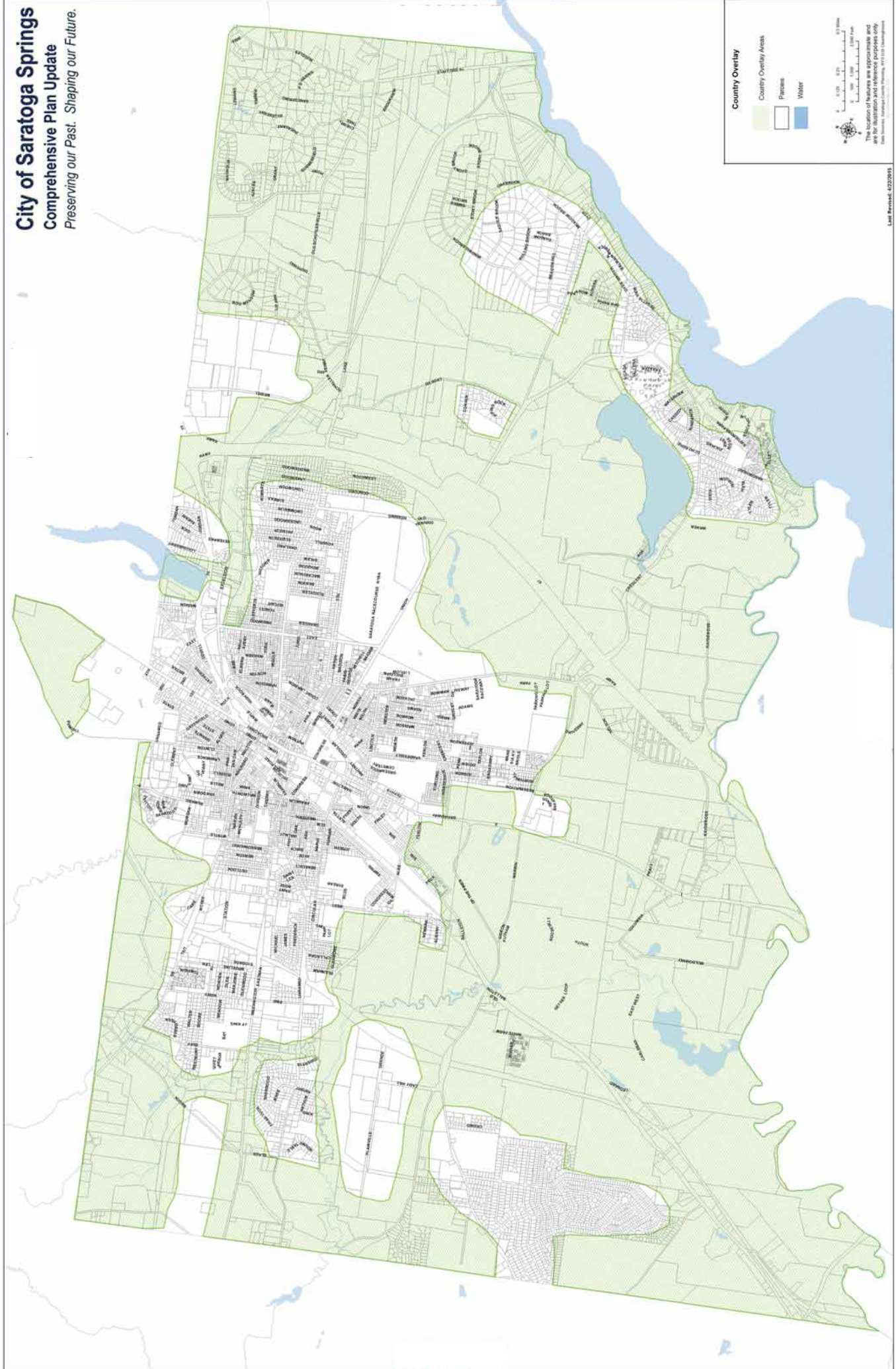
City of Saratoga Springs

Comprehensive Plan Update

Preserving our Past. Shaping our Future.



City of Saratoga Springs
Comprehensive Plan Update
Preserving our Past. Shaping our Future.



County Overlay

County Overlay Areas

Parks

Water

0 0.125 0.25 0.5 1 2 4 8 Miles

0 100 200 300 400 Feet

The location of features are approximate and are for illustration and reference purposes only.

City of Saratoga Springs, New York





IMPLEMENTATION

5.0

The adoption of this Comprehensive Plan Update is the first step in the implementation process. This Plan is the result of considerable effort on the part of the City of Saratoga Springs and its City Council, the Office of Planning and Economic Development, Comprehensive Plan Committee volunteers, residents, business owners and concerned citizens. An active implementation process will be necessary for the Plan to have a lasting impact. Working with a range of public, private and non-profit implementation partners, the City can accomplish many of the recommended actions and continue striving toward its vision.

This plan has many stakeholders. The nearly 250 individual action items in the Plan can be implemented by a variety of stakeholders within the community. These include entities from the private, non-profit and public sectors. Some actions can be implemented by a single entity; others will require collaboration.

The vast majority of the recommended action items are independent of other action items. These actions can be carried out whenever the individual entities have the energy, funding or “window of opportunity”. The timing for their implementation is not at all that critical. It is certainly the objective of this Plan that the vast majority of the recommendations in the Comprehensive Plan be implemented within the next ten years.

Within this Plan there are some minor adjustments to the policies relating to future land uses. There are some small changes in the recommended types of land uses, as well as some modification in location and intensity. Since existing land use ordinances and zoning regulation must be in conformance with the policies of the Comprehensive Plan, it is a priority for the City of Saratoga Springs to enact some changes to bring regulations into compliance with the new policies. It is fortunate that the City recently received grant funding to help accomplish this task.