

Dear Mr. Pine,

I read the housing plan draft, and wanted to make a comment.

I am a resident of the Old North End. I work full time, and earn a wage that in any other city would be more than enough to live in a decent, at least one bedroom apartment. Here I find myself in a cramped studio apartment, in an old, dilapidated building with little insulation, ancient plumbing, and a roof that is literally falling off in pieces, for \$875/month.

I feel that not enough emphasis is put on the many people in this town who are in a situation like mine. The working poor simply can not afford to live in Burlington unless they also qualify for Section 8, welfare, and other public assistance. The number of TRULY affordable housing units needs to see a significant increase, but the current plan seems far more focused on "young professionals", the folks who earn 2-3 times what the average person in this area makes. And I know the senior population is growing, but too much effort is focused there too. The plan is not even enough.

I hope this isn't the case, but it seems like the city is going out of its way to try to force people like me out. But if you want a real balance, real diversity, and real vibrancy, much more focus needs to go on the needs of the folks in this demographic. The folks who are not in college but also not elderly, who don't have kids/are not married, who have student loans they can't pay if they also want a roof over their heads, who work 40+ hours a week, sometimes at multiple jobs, and yet barely squeak by month to month.

I make just a little too much to qualify for any assistance, I don't have kids so I can't get welfare, and my boyfriend and I are not married so even if one of us could get assistance, we couldn't live together. Even with our combined incomes we struggle to pay all of our bills. I feel like the only way we can hope to remain in Burlington is if some significant change happens here.

Is there any reason rent control hasn't been considered? And I know the colleges are supposed to limit how many students live off campus, but a drastic change in that number may be required. Perhaps seniors and grad students only. The students are paying an outrageous amount to the school anyway, you can't tell me they can't afford to house 3 years of students instead of just two. Plus maybe then we wouldn't have as many drunk kids running around screaming and setting off fireworks at all hours (one of many things that makes my neighborhood nearly unlivable).

I hope that the city is willing to consider putting more focus on real affordable housing. Not just affordable for the lucky few with jobs that actually pay a living wage, or those who qualify for housing assistance, or students whose parents pay for everything anyway. Affordable for the people who love this city, and put in a huge amount of work to be able to live here, but dream of doing so in a way that allows them to save some money aside for their future, or even just to pay all of the bills already in front of them.

Thank you for your time,  
Amber Christie