

Dear Senator Ram Hinesdale:

We moved to South Burlington in October 2021. My husband is from New England, is a Norwich University graduate, and we wanted to be closer to family. As his job requires lots of travel, we wanted to be close to the airport and thought we had lucked out with the location and great schools in South Burlington. We moved into a rental and started working with a realtor to find our new home.

As we have young kids and an elderly parent to care for, our two priorities were a home in the South Burlington school district where the kids were thriving and a house with an in-law apartment or something similar to include my father-in-law in our new home. After several months of searching, we downgraded our expectations to search for a home in the school district that could be renovated to be handicap accessible at a minimum.

Finally, in May 2022 we decided the best option to accommodate our needs as a multigenerational family was to build a new home. We bought a lot to build on just off Dorset Road, putting us close to the middle and high schools and within an easy drive of my father-in-law's doctors. The time since we've closed has been a nightmare of slow-rolling and stonewalling by the town to keep us from building. Unknown to us at the time of purchase, there is a strong NIMBY movement in South Burlington.

As we started talking to other families we were meeting through various organizations and our kids' activities, we heard with terrible regularity the way South Burlington works to prevent new housing from being built. One family of medical professionals had given up after months of wrangling with the town and was looking at moving out of state. Another family lived in a campground through part of their first winter here because of the lack of permanent housing. Another family moved out of the county due to lack of housing but was still driving their kids to extracurricular activities in town to help their kids maintain cherished relationships. So many stories, and all were how the town policy to block new housing is hurting families.

We're one of the lucky ones. In the end, we will probably get our house built and we can afford to rent until then. Unfortunately, my father-in-law had to be moved to be near us before we could get that done but we're lucky enough to be able to pivot to Plan B and he's in an assisted living facility within South Burlington. But how many other families cannot afford a Plan B for housing? Too many, and the town of South Burlington is hurting those families.

The only way to address a housing shortage is to build more houses, at all price points and as close to existing communities as possible to mitigate urban sprawl. Please continue your work to help all families in Vermont, and remember families like ours as you work to untangle the regulatory framework strangling the Vermont housing market and hurting too many families in the process.

Thank you,

Amy Allen