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Calling Binghamton Our Home: A Housing Market on the Rise, Leaving Many Behind

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How has the presences of Binghamton University impacted the Binghamton low-income housing market? What policy solutions could help the low-income housing market?

BACKGROUND

Binghamton has a significant lack of low-income housing.

For every 100 extremely low-income households, there are only 17 housing units that are within their price range.

Binghamton University has grown in recent decades, as the low-income housing market has shrunk. This begs the question:

METHODS

Along with studying census data and maps, I interviewed members of the following groups on the Binghamton housing market and where it may go in the future:

- landlords
- tenants
- non-profit organizers
- public/university officials

My research focuses mainly on **qualitative data—collecting stories and thoughts from the people who live and work in Binghamton** to create a dialogue surrounding the housing market and the impact of Binghamton University.

Calling Binghamton Our Home: A Housing Market on the Rise, Leaving Many Behind

Trevor Fornara — People, Politics, and the Environment

LANDLORDS

“These people just don’t seem to be responsible... these lower-income people that qualify for federal and state income or assistance, they just **don’t take care of the property.**”

“The house price doesn’t match the rent that it’s collecting, so **the house price to rent ratio is completely off.**”

“It makes more sense for a landlord to try and get a student in there, typically because **the student is willing to pay higher rent** than a local would be.”

COMMUNITY ORGANIZERS

“If you dig a little, you’ll find where all the disfunction is, and why it is that Binghamton has such a high rate of high-income high-end housing, and **not nearly enough to meet the demand** for the [low-income population].”

BINGHAMTON UNIV. OFFICIALS

“The university has no plans to build any student housing for the foreseeable future. I believe the rental housing market supply in the Binghamton area is **in balance with the demand.**”

POLICY SOLUTIONS

The Broome County Anti-Poverty Advisory Council and the Broome County Safe Housing Task Force have both released policy recommendations with ways to improve the Binghamton low-income housing market.

- Implement **ticketing system** for housing code violations
- State-level ordinance that **incentivises landlords** to rent a percent of total units at below market rate
- Tax benefits for renting units at below market rate to incentivize the **development and use of dormant property**
- **Outlaw income bias** in the leasing process

CONCLUSIONS

The majority of landlords and non-profit organizations believe **the presences of Binghamton University has greatly impacted the low-income housing market.** Landlords rent to students instead of locals for increased rent income and lower eviction rates.

REFERENCES

- Broome County Anti-Poverty Advisory Council (2019). Reducing Poverty in Broome County Policy Recommendations.
- Broome County Safe Housing Task Force (2019). Protocol-Policy Final Recommendations.

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