

# Calgary Herald

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## Trailer park closure looming

Owners say utility systems antiquated

Kerry Williamson, Calgary Herald

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Laurie and Brad Korstad moved into their trailer 10 years ago and quickly made it a home.

It is the only home their seven-year-old daughter Kirsten has ever known.

But now they face possible eviction, after a letter from their landlord informed them it is "very probable" their trailer park will close, something that could force up to 300 people from their trailers.



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**"I don't know what I'm going to do," says trailer park resident Heather McIntyre, with son Christopher, 3.**

"We are just in shock," said Laurie outside her home at the Blackfoot Mobile Home Park in the city's southeast.

"If this happens, we will have to try and rent an apartment or something. And where are we going to find that? It's just devastating, because this is our home."

Residents of the 145 mobile homes at the Blackfoot park were told of the likely closure in a letter on Monday from park owner Wentworth Development, a notice that also informed them of an annual lease increase of up to \$105.

The residents were told the park's electric, water and sewer systems are "antiquated" and that updating and replacement of the utility systems is not an option.

However, a source told the Herald the park owner has a redevelopment plan in place for the land which would not include a mobile home park.

The owner could not be contacted Tuesday.

"I don't know what I'm going to do," said resident Heather McIntyre, who lives in a trailer fronting Blackfoot Trail S.E. with her husband and three-year-old son Christopher.

"We can't afford to move into a house," said McIntyre. "This is our own place."

"Are we supposed to just abandon it all?" asked McIntyre.

In the letter to residents, Wentworth president Kathie Mintoft blamed the problems on a city-owned hill at the east of the park that is slowly slipping into a ravine adjacent to Deerfoot Trail.

Mintoft claims the city has refused to maintain the hill, or helped repair and maintain parts of the park affected by the slippage.

"It is very probable that the property use as a mobile home park will have to be discontinued," Mintoft wrote in the letter. "Unfortunately we do not have a specific timeline at the writing of this notice but it would be best for you to consider any continued occupancy to be of a temporary nature."

Park manager Donna Payne said that unless something is done to halt the hill's slide, the park will likely close. "The problem exists and it's not going away unless the city does something."

The city, however, says it has done all it can to work with the park owners to solve the hill problem.

Mac Logan, director of city roads, said the slippage is caused by a lack of stormwater drainage on the park, and that his department offered to work with the owner to shore up the slope.

The city was prepared to redo some of the drainage above the hill, but Logan said that offer was turned down late last year. He suggested the park owners may have an ulterior motive.

"If you were to, say, develop it into a shopping centre, it would be worth several hundred thousand dollars an acre. It's awfully convenient to blame the city," said Logan. "If it's a business decision . . . then say so, tell it the way it is."

Payne said the owners have no intention of selling the land. She said eviction notices aren't imminent, and that park residents are aware of the hill problem.

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