

Fredericton, New Brunswick

Trailer park closure may leave some homeless

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The residents of a Fredericton trailer park scheduled to close in August are worried that they soon may have no place to live.

"Our biggest issue: where are we going to go?" asked Tammy Wallace, a current resident of O'Donnell Land Lease Community Park off Greenwood Drive on the city's north side.

Wallace grew up in the trailer park and has now owned a mobile home there for the past eight years.

"My kids are worried that they're not going to be able to finish out their school year in the school that they've been going to," she said. "My boyfriend's upset because he doesn't want to have to shift jobs. For me it's upsetting because I don't want to have to leave my job because I love my job.

"It's really hard."

Many of the residents in the 14-unit park will likely have difficulty finding another trailer park that would be willing to take their older mobile homes, Wallace said. She said she might be forced to move outside of the provincial capital.

Wallace said she hopes that someone might buy the property and continue to manage it as a trailer park. But the owners of the land said they aren't actively looking for a buyer.

The park isn't profitable anymore, said Greg O'Donnell, who helps run the park for his mother who owns it.

Rising costs associated with insurance, property taxes and water are among the reasons for the closure, O'Donnell said.

"Expenses were a lot and then my health," said 88-year-old owner Blanche O'Donnell. "I have to go in for a heart appointment in a couple of weeks for a valve in my heart."

Blanche O'Donnell said she is doubtful that a new landlord would want to purchase the park and she's decided she's not able to manage it through another winter.

The tenants have been given the six months' notice required under the Residential Tenancies Act and the park will close in August.

The six months won't likely be enough for many in the park, said Gary Clarke, who has been a tenant for 35 years.

Most of the trailers are about 30 years old and some don't have the vinyl siding or rubber roofs that modern trailer parks require.

A lot of parks in the city limits also don't have space for new tenants, Clarke said, and many of the trailers are too old and fragile to move, anyway.

"I imagine you bulldoze it down — move her out for junk — somebody might buy it for the steel frame," he said, speculating that he'll likely have to leave his home behind.