

Backgrounder: Midfield Mobile Home Park

On February 19, 2018, The City of Calgary closed Midfield Mobile Home Park due to aging and failing sanitary and water lines. Located at 954 16 Ave N.E., the park consisted of 173 mobile homes. Tenants were provided with over three years notice of the closure and provided access to a multitude of resources and supports to help them relocate to new accommodations.

A history of the park and its closure follows.

History

Year	
1968-1969	Midfield was developed by Richfield Development Corporation on land leased from The City.
1973	Richfield Development Corporation turned the operation and management of Midfield over to The City. The City's former Land Department (later called Corporate Properties & Buildings, or CPB, and then Real Estate & Development Services, or RE&DS) was originally in charge of Midfield.
2001-2018	Calgary Housing Company (CHC) assumed operations and management of Midfield on behalf of The City.

Over 12 years, The City engaged and informed Midfield tenants of the status of the aging and failing water and sewer pipelines. Several open houses and information sessions were held to provide detailed information and obtain feedback on the possible options being evaluated by Administration and Council.

Year	
2005	Information session for Midfield tenants was held by the Ward Alderman Joe Cerci and Administration (CPB) to present information about the condition of the water and sewer pipelines, three general approaches to address the water and sewer pipeline problems, and to respond to tenants' questions.
2006	After further analysis, Administration and Alderman Joe Ceci presented six options to address the water and sewer pipelines challenge to Midfield tenants.
2007	Council directed Administration to inform tenants of the closure of Midfield in approximately five years, to continue the repair of pipelines on an as required basis and to develop a relocation strategy for Midfield tenants.
2008	Council directed Administration to acquire a site for a new mobile home park, conduct a detailed feasibility analysis, and initiate the redevelopment of Midfield following the closure and relocation of tenants.

2010	A new City Council was elected and in 2011 the new Council directed Administration to re-evaluate the previous direction to ensure all possible factors were considered and examined.
2014	Council approved plans to close Midfield and not pursue construction of a new mobile home park at East Hills Estates. (Announcement)
2017	The Court of the Queen's Bench recognized the validity of The City's September 2016 termination notice in relation to the closure of the Midfield Mobile Home Park and dismissed the application for a declaration that The City breached the tenants' Charter rights. Tenants were permitted to remain on their mobile home sites until noon February 19, 2018, as determined by the Court.

Summary of City Support and Resources

Recognizing the decision to close Midfield would be highly disruptive and difficult for tenants, The City provide them access to a multitude of resources and supports.

- The City assisted Midfield tenants with costs associated in relocating. This included a lump sum payment of \$10,000, legal fees up to \$500, and up to \$10,000 to cover the cost of either moving or demolishing a mobile home.
- Through meetings and one-on-one conversations, City staff, along with an external agency, made themselves available daily to help tenants with their specific needs, to answer their questions, and to connect them to appropriate resources. In the Midfield office, tenants were provided with access to information on housing options and a computer to help with housing searches.
- CHC held a number of homes to ensure that Midfield tenants had immediate access to support if needed.
- CHC provided extensive support to Midfield tenants in finding potential alternative housing arrangements, including a concerted effort to tour Midfield tenants through CHC properties. Various CHC staff were onsite throughout this process including CHC Leasing Agents to meet with Midfield tenants to provide information about CHC housing options and to help them complete CHC applications and forms.
- CHC concerned itself with tenants of low-moderate income as well as anyone else who requested help. In addition to making the availability of a new housing development in Bridgeland known to qualifying tenants on rent reduction, CHC staff reached out to those same people to ensure they were aware of available housing options and connect them to appropriate resources.
- RE&DS and CHC staff remained available with information and assistance concerning housing options through the completion of the closure process.
- The services of Homewood Health were made available to Midfield tenants. In addition to providing counselling and social support services, Homewood Health provided information on other rental or housing opportunities, connected Midfield tenants to social and housing agencies and resources, and provided assistance in completing applications and forms.
- Homewood Health made concerted efforts to reach out to Midfield tenants. They held housing information sessions where various housing providers were made available on-site to meet with tenants and review the numerous housing options available. In 2014 and 2015, Homewood Health called all tenants who were

seniors, on AISH or rent reduction, to offer their support and counselling services. They also reached out to remaining tenants via door knocking to offer their services before the closure date.

- As vacant lots become more commonplace and safety became a concern, The City provided 24/7 on-site security and installed fencing around the site.
- The City froze rent increases in 2008 to provide Midfield tenants the opportunity to save money to pay for costs associated with their moves and finding alternative accommodations.
- The City made an Advisor available to counsel Midfield tenants on financial and debt management matters on an as-requested basis.
- The City provided assistance to Midfield tenants who needed help packing their belongings.

Frequently Asked Questions

Why did Midfield Park close?

Midfield closed because it was challenged by aging and failing infrastructure. Unlike typical residential neighbourhoods, the water and sewer lines were located underneath the tightly spaced mobile homes, making access, repair and/or replacement of those lines impractical. It would have been prohibitively expensive given that accessing that infrastructure would have required that the mobile homes, garages and other structures be removed.

Did Council consider other alternatives to closing the park?

The status of Midfield Park had been debated for many years by City Councils who took great care and consideration in evaluating the situation. As far back as 2005, The City engaged Midfield tenants towards considering several options in addressing the Park's many challenges. Considerable time was taken to closely review and evaluate all feasible options before Council made its final decision.

Why did The City decide not to pursue development of a new park east of The City?

City Council reviewed the feasibility of the East Hills project and determined that there were several outstanding planning issues relating to:

- the preparation and approval of the area structure plan;
- the extension of utility services to the East Hills Estate lands;
- provision of a fire station in the vicinity of East Hills Estate lands; and
- provision of storm water management for the entire area.

Additionally, East Hills Estates could not be completed in the time frame originally proposed. Lastly, but most important, the costs to complete the East Hills Estates had increased significantly from the original estimate and budget. As result, City Council determined that the project was not feasible.

In making the decision to close Midfield Park, was consideration given to the welfare of its tenants?

Council took into account the challenges faced by the tenants but it also had the responsibility to balance that with the interests of all Calgarians. Accordingly, Council opted to inform tenants three years in advance of Midfield's closure, to provide financial assistance, and to provide social services and housing supports through Homewood Health and CHC. Private operators would not generally provide this level of support when closing a mobile home park.

Are Midfield tenants being assisted financially to help them move?

Tenants were offered the Midfield Closure Program, which included a lump sum payment of \$10,000, legal fees up to \$500, and a maximum of \$10,000 to cover the cost of either moving or demolishing a mobile home.

Did The City compensate tenants for the value of their mobile homes?

The City opted not to buy out tenants' mobile homes. Instead of buy-outs, The City opted to assist Midfield tenants through the Midfield Closure Program, which includes a lump sum payment of \$10,000, legal fees up to \$500, and up to \$10,000 to cover the cost of either moving or demolishing a mobile home. Tenants who owned their mobile homes had the option of relocating them if it was feasible to do so.