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## The other affordable homes

### Trailer-park tenants get squeezed

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When policymakers and advocates talk about the need to expand affordable housing in Nassau and Suffolk, they rarely - if ever - mention the plight of families living in the region's few remaining trailer parks. Usually hidden from sight and awkwardly juxtaposed against more upscale suburban communities, they provide one of the most basic forms of affordable housing. But they are rapidly disappearing from Long Island.

Some still exist on parts of Suffolk's East End. In Nassau's last trailer park, a few holdouts in Syosset face imminent eviction to make way for pricey condos and shops.

Families living in trailers, many of them elderly and struggling to afford their leases, confront difficult choices and few alternatives as developers eye the expensive land on which their homes sit. Most trailers, "mobile homes" in name only, are on permanent foundations, surrounded by gardens and lawns. Relocating them, even if physically and financially possible, would be out of the question for most of their owners. There's no place for them to move on Long Island.

So what options do the owners have? Only one, really: pooling money to purchase the land on which their trailers sit, possibly with help from housing agencies and other nonprofits. But that's increasingly difficult and assumes that the landowner is willing to sell to them.

In Syosset's case, the developer who just purchased the land isn't willing to sell the property to tenants, even if they could get the money. There's more profit to be made developing it.

Agencies such as the Long Island Housing Partnership are studying possible solutions. At the very least, those facing eviction from trailer parks should not be forgotten as suburbia turns its back on them in search of another generation's definition of affordable housing.

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