

Another southside housing story: simultaneous coordinated strategies needed

The Bethlehem Gadfly Affordable Housing, Neighborhoods, Serious Issues, Southside July 2, 2019

(The latest in a series of posts on the Southside and Neighborhoods)

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Gadfly:

I'm about as big as Southside fan as they come, and it took me an entire year of searching to buy a home on the Southside. The home we purchased went on the market around 8 pm in the evening, and we were in the house the next day at 5 pm for a showing. When we got there, my realtor found her colleague's card on the counter, and she called her to find out that the house had already been shown to an investor interested in renting to students. My realtor talked her colleague into talking her client out of purchasing the home, and we put in a bid by 11 pm that evening. We had already lost out to cash buyers on a home in Fountain Hill and another in West Bethlehem, so we knew we had to act quickly . . . Two homes in south Bethlehem that we were interested in purchasing never went on the market and were snapped up by investors before we could even put in a bid.

Some of the trends are national (see:

<https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2019/06/20/business/economy/>

[starter-homes-investors.html?mtrref=www.google.com](#)), but many of the the unique characteristics in the Southside housing market are creating an increasingly untenable situation for families who would like to own homes here . . . Meanwhile, renters (67% of Southside families) deal with low supply and high demand, leading to high rents, poor conditions, and increased discrimination. While I wish there were a clear solution, altering the market is challenging; the best alternative (that I see) is a wide-range of coordinated strategies implemented simultaneously by public and private actors. No single policy or program can do it all!

Anna

See Dana Grubb's [similar thoughts](#).

The NYT article is frighteningly fascinating . . .