

Pearl District apartment complex sues City of Portland over homeless shelter

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PORTLAND, Ore. (KOIN) — A legal battle is heating up in Portland's Pearl District.

The owners of the ORO Apartments have filed a lawsuit against the City of Portland and the Salvation Army, claiming a nearby overnight shelter on Northwest Northrup Street has caused property values to drop.

"We've spent months raising concerns with the city, requesting solutions, and asking for anything," said Robert Rudinsky with ORO Ownership Group

[The lawsuit](#) alleges the city is responsible for nuisance and negligence, claiming more than \$5 million in lost value since the shelter opened.

"No one is going to fault the mayor for trying to address this problem with overnight shelters, but they don't work and they don't do anything to help improve the lot of the people who visit," said attorney John DiLorenzo.

Residents and management say they deal with open drug use, trash, and human waste on the sidewalks daily.

The suit also claims the city failed to follow its own guidelines regarding perimeter checks and neighborhood cleanup.

Portland Mayor Keith Wilson has previously defended the site, stating that expanding shelter space is a critical part of the city's plan to address homelessness and enforce camping bans.

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"The goal is housing. Overnight shelter beds save lives today and connect people to the next step tomorrow," Wilson said.

The City of Portland released a statement about the suit, saying in part that their shelters are "saving lives."

“As of February 12th, the NW Northrup shelter has provided 11,304 nights of safe sleep to those experiencing homelessness in Northwest Portland, serving over 1,500 unique individuals.

During a week of dropping temperatures and frigid winter rain, this threatened legal action attempts to wrest lifesaving emergency care away from our most vulnerable. The City of Portland estimated that approximately 600 individuals were experiencing unsheltered homelessness in the Pearl and Northwest districts prior to the opening of this shelter. The tort claim notice ignores the clear reality that widespread homelessness existed in the Pearl before the opening of a temporary emergency shelter, and that the shelter is part of the solution to the suffering on our streets.“

The Salvation Army also released a statement on Thursday afternoon.

“As the City has indicated in previous comments, housing insecurity and homelessness has existed in the Pearl District long before a shelter opened to serve them. The Salvation Army’s mission is to meet human needs in the name of Jesus without discrimination. This means The Salvation Army has served and continues to serve hundreds of unhoused people in Portland each night, among the many other services it provides to underserved communities in the Metro area. While it disputes the allegations in the lawsuit and characterizations that have been made in the media, The Salvation Army will handle this matter through appropriate legal process without further comment while it continues the work of the mission it holds dear.”