

# Portland slapped with lawsuit over failed move of homeless camp to Central Eastside site

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A longtime Central Eastside business sued the city Wednesday, claiming Portland's failed 2015 plan to move a homeless camp adjacent to its property may end up costing the company "irreversible damage."

East Side Plating filed the lawsuit in Multnomah County Circuit Court this week, asking the court to either intervene and rule Portland illegally gave up rights to a stubby section of Southeast Harrison Street to pave the way for Right 2 Dream Too, or prevent the city from selling the property altogether. Absent either of those remedies, the company is seeking \$9.9 million in damages.

The lawsuit is the latest twist in a disagreement between the business and city officials. In 2015, Portland planned to move the Right 2 Dream Too homeless camp to land adjacent to East Side Plating's shop. Portland bought the property and decided to abandon the street, a process known as a street vacation, to make the site more contiguous for the camp. But East Side Plating had used that street for decades as a way to back up trucks of chemicals and other shipments.

The city spent roughly \$1.1 million to buy the land, clean it up and add mobile showers for the homeless community. The company opposed the move, but Right 2 Dream Too never came after a state land use board blocked the move. The company didn't foresee losing access to a key door on its property.

According to the lawsuit, Portland previously agreed to work in good faith to keep allowing the company to back up its delivery trucks onto the city's property, but that pledge is no longer being honored.

"The City has refused to be bound by the terms of the ordinance it enacted and has instead notified ESP of its intent to sell the property," the lawsuit states. "The proposed sale will effectively extinguish ESP's access to its property and its ability to continue plant operations at this location."

East Side Plating has operated on the same site for 72 years. The company said it offered to pay \$45,000 to the city for an easement to use the unpaved alleyway, but bureaucrats did not respond several times. According to the lawsuit, one of Mayor Ted Wheeler's staffers subsequently said the city was in the process of selling the land, but East Side Plating "might be able to talk to the developer."

Margie Sollinger, Portland's independent ombudswoman, got involved in the matter earlier this year. "The City should honor its promise and support a local, family-owned business," she said in an email in June. "At this point it isn't clear that it will, and I am concerned the City's decision is being influenced by East Side Plating's earlier opposition to relocating R2D2 at this property."

Right 2 Dream Too has since moved to a temporary location near the Rose Quarter.

Sophia June, a spokeswoman for Mayor Ted Wheeler, said the city was unable to comment on active or pending legal matters.

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