



Talent Urban Renewal Information <info@talenturbanrenewal.com>

Public Comment

Lucas Wedeman <lucas@rogueactioncenter.org>
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Cc: Dana Greenblatt <dana@rogueactioncenter.org>

Wed, Apr 27, 2022 at 1:22 PM

04/27/22 TURA Open House - Lucas Wedeman

April 26th, 2022

Greetings Talent City Council, Mayor Ayers-Flood and Planning Staff,

Thank you for the opportunity to write testimony in support of passing a Urban Renewal Plan for the City of Talent. I work as a bilingual fire relief aid worker for the Rogue Action Center and am also a resident of Talent. In the days immediately following the 2020 Almeda fires, the Rogue Action Center wasted no time in setting up donation and aid stations to help meet the basic needs of fire survivors. These aid stations evolved into a central relief center at the Shoppes at Exit 24 in Phoenix which operated for a year after the fire. Following the closure of the Shoppes Relief Center in August 2021, our team has continued to maintain and build relationships with hundreds of fire survivors through continued resource navigation support and supplies distribution events.

Myself and the rest of the RAC fire relief team have witnessed first hand the need for stronger mitigation efforts and disaster response planning in Talent, especially to support our most vulnerable community members. Southern Oregon has known for years that we struggle with wildfires. For three to four month out of the year, our southern valley is filled to the brim with wildfire smoke that never leaves. Although these conditions have been worsening over the past decade, not enough measures were taken to manage vegetation and implement other fire prevention tactics to protect our beloved town.

Over the last year and a half, we have heard countless stories from survivors in Talent who experienced the failings of the emergency notification systems during the fires. Many survivors, especially non-English speakers, did not receive official evacuation notices in the language that they speak, and were left with no time to grab essential belongings before evacuating their homes. Although our organizations and others have been working to ensure that our community is better prepared to respond to future disasters, we need support from the City to strengthen these efforts. **The proposed Talent Urban Renewal plan would allow the city to take proactive measures to help prevent future disasters and improve disaster preparedness through implementing key pieces of city infrastructure (wayfinding, signage and resilience hubs.)**

Even before the Almeda fire, the amount of low income housing in Ashland, Talent, and Phoenix was insufficient. **Since the Almeda fire and since losing over 2,500 homes, the issue of low income housing has grown exponentially.** Through our housing navigation work, the lack of housing options for Talent Fire Survivors, particularly for those in need of affordable housing, is clear. Many of the families we are working with were living in older, manufactured home parks prior to the fires and have been unable to find housing options that fall within their budget since. **If passed, the proposed Talent Urban Renewal plan would help ensure that Talent is able to produce affordable housing options during the city's rebuild process and avoid permanently displacing hundreds of the individuals and families.** Plans include a purchase program to assist low-income and first time owners in purchasing a home. Funds would

also be used to secure land for affordable housing projects, which currently stands as a significant barrier to development.

Although federal and state funds have been critical during our communities' rebuilding efforts, they are not enough. We need significant investment from the City of Talent to make a full recovery and adequately prepare for future disasters.

I am grateful to live in a community with so much heart and believe we have the opportunity today to plan for a stronger Talent, one that cares for and uplifts people from different backgrounds and at different socioeconomic levels. Talent is the unique and culturally rich town that we all love *because* a diverse group of people are able to live, work, and thrive here. Voting for a Talent Urban Renewal Plan is an important step we must take to protect what matters most in our community.

Thank you for your time and service.

Sincerely,

Lucas Wedeman



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Talent Urban Renewal Agency Board and Staff,

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in support of the proposed Talent Urban Renewal Work Plan. Rogue Climate was founded in 2013 in the Rogue Valley of Southern Oregon. We serve and work alongside Southern Oregon and South Coast communities most impacted by climate change, including low-income, rural, youth, and communities of color, by organizing for clean energy, sustainable jobs, a healthy environment, and more recently supporting our communities through the impacts of climate change.

Beginning the day following the Almeda Fire, Rogue Climate has supported fire survivors with supplies, connection to rebuilding resources, and more. Today, we continue to support fire survivors at monthly pop-up events outside of Talent City Hall and through direct outreach to ensure fire survivors aren't missing opportunities to receive aid. From these conversations, we know there are many fire survivors still lacking permanent housing and many more wanting to return home to Talent.

Talent's Urban Renewal Work Plan presents an important opportunity to make significant investments in affordable housing, preparing for future climate disasters, and transitioning to clean energy and energy efficiency all while investing in our local economy. This is a critical moment for Talent to ensure that hundreds of community members, especially low-income people and people of color, are not permanently displaced from our community due to the fire and rising housing prices.

Talent Urban Renewal funds should be prioritized for affordable housing in our community. Some ideas to support this include a purchase program to assist low-income and first time home owners in purchasing a home in Talent or using the funding to secure land for affordable housing projects, which currently stands as a significant barrier to development.

Since 2015, Rogue Climate has worked with volunteers, community leaders, and City staff to develop and implement the City of Talent's Clean Energy Action Plan (CEAP) which recommends significantly reducing energy usage, transitioning to 100% renewable energy by 2030, increasing resilience, and boosting our local economy.

Talent's Urban Renewal funds must also be used to further Talent's CEAP, including by creating incentives to support electrification and fire hardening in low-income households, community based renewable energy projects and storage, funding a resiliency hub, and strengthening disaster preparedness for the community.

Rogue Climate strongly supports moving forward the proposed Urban Renewal Plan for Talent.

Thank you,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Allie Rosenbluth', with a stylized, cursive script.

Allie Rosenbluth
Campaigns Director
Rogue Climate



Talent Urban Renewal Information <info@talenturbanrenewal.com>

in lieu of wed planning mtg

janet ievins <janet@ievins.org>
To: info@talenturbanrenewal.com

Sat, Apr 23, 2022 at 9:33 PM

my comment on urban planning.

looks like too late. everyday i drive around the block of talent av, rapp, arnos, 99. the replacement buildings are going in helter-skelter. i see no plan evident-- bldgs of all sizes, shapes and orientations. it makes our town look completely unplanned (and unloved).

yes, i understand the town recently approved that sort of thing, in the name of affordable housing. however, at that mtg, when asked whether the relaxing of the rules would indeed result in housing which would be affordable, w/ a straight face, we were told that detail would need to be left to the owners. in other words—likely not. and if the many-storied houses turn out all to have absentee landlords, i foresee a slum in the making. very sad. it surely looks as tho the proposed mtg ought to have happened several years earlier. (do we indeed have a planning board? and guidelines?)

janet ievins



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Visioning Our Future as Community

Max Tenscher <maxtfnp@gmail.com>
To: info@talenturbanrenewal.com

Sat, Apr 23, 2022 at 5:56 AM

Thank you for the invitation to participate in this important process and for creating a venue for this work. It is important I think that we start with common understanding of where we are now and from what we have come to go to what might come next. Robin Kimmerer's Braiding Sweetgrass offers a sound and crucial basis for this retrospective as well as sound principals on which to move forward. I would suggest that we all participating have a chance to read or listen to it. I would be happy to purchase copies for those who would like. Also foundational to our process is the understanding that we now occupy lands taken from those who stewarded a sustainable culture for thousands of years. That these were families and communities and individuals. We must remember this as we strive for inclusiveness in our current and community to be. Their tradition offers valuable lessons. Thank you.

Max Tenscher
Talent Clinic



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Public comment for 27 April TURA Virtual Open House Subject: TID location

TMHoener <tmhoener@gmail.com>
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Tue, Apr 19, 2022 at 8:59 AM

Suggested Talent Irrigation District relocation

My wife, Carey, and I are rebuilding our house at 213 Talent Avenue, which borders the Talent Irrigation District property.

TID is located nearly in the center of Talent and is bordered with a chain link fence topped with three runs of barbed wire. Since the 08 September 2020 fire, the TID property looks like, well, an out of place compound.

We have been neighbors to the TID property since 2002 when we bought the house at 213 Talent Avenue. Of course, that house burned down.

When our house burned down, so did our cedar fence that I built years ago to block the view of TID's barbed wire and its materials (new and broken), machinery, and equipment (operational or non-functioning) that TID stores within its compound.

Although I have occasionally had one-on-one meetings with the TID administration (the GMs, foremen, etc) and have requested that, at the least, there is no need for barbed wire between the two of our properties, those efforts have failed. However, in fairness, TID, is and has been a good neighbor and the fence is it's fence and property. I can only ask.

I am familiar with the (I think) 2004 master plan the city created to "spruce up and invigorate" the downtown core with plans for realigning new roads, the roundabout, and for the eventual purchase and use of the TID property for community development. At the time, TID managers signed on to that concept. That plan was never fulfilled.

Efforts by the City to purchase the TID property and complete the master plan failed, and the TID -- for all the good it does in delivering water to the valley -- seemed to renege on its 2004 agreement in principle.

There are a lot of folks (unnamed, of course) who I've talked to who would like to see TID relocated outside the downtown core.

I have a suggestion (feasible or not).

I don't know if anyone was paying attention, but Fabricated Glass off E Rapp Road went out of business at the end of last year and has been selling its assets (an economic loss of dozens and dozens of jobs). I think this is a shame, but it happened.

I think the FG location, this already built facility with acreage comparable to what TID sits on now, should be a consideration for TID to relocate.

The FG location has land, ample space, it has offices, it has thousands of square feet of covered building space and it has good access to Rapp Road and beyond. All TID would have to do is build another chain link fence with its trademark barbed wire atop it. And, the land is zoned for a business.

I have no idea what purchase price FG would be asking for its property. I have no idea what TID's 3-member board (three members?!) would be willing to pay if they were offered the land and willing to move.

However, I wholly encourage the City -- or TURA -- to study this suggestion and, hopefully, perhaps, help (perhaps with \$) TID to relocate to where FG is -- if it is of course feasible, practical, reasonable and affordable.

That's my suggestion. Either TID continues operating where it currently is located, with its barbed wire enclosed compound in the center of Talent, or it relocates and allows the City to look, function, and feel like a City.

Good luck. Hope this helps. And, I hope someone takes some action to investigate this opportunity. I think it's worth looking into.

Please keep us posted.

Best, Todd Hoener