

Hello respected business owners/operators of Talent, and participants of the Talent Business Leaders Reception October 2015,

Thank you so much for your interest and participation in Talent's first forum for business leaders and community leader to share our vision for Talent. Your investment in our City is the economic heartbeat of Talent.

We all gathered in October at the new Talent Community Center in round table discussions, to brainstorm Talent's economy, its business climate, its strengths and weakness, opportunities and threats (S.W.O. T.). The discussions were recorded and a report was drafted to guide actionable plans for our groups, the Talent Chamber and the City of Talent, to utilize.

Prior to the round table discussions, we introduced the members of the Ad-Hoc Economic Development Team, who co-hosted the event with the Talent Chamber and who have volunteered to design economic initiatives to improve the business climate in Talent: Wendy Siporen, Executive Director of THRIVE; Ian Bagshaw, owner/operator of Flywheel Bicycle Solutions; Bobby Townsend, board member for the Talent Chamber and Chair of the Southern Oregon Grape Fair; City Councilor EJ McManus; Council President Ryan Pederson; and myself, Mayor Darby Stricker. We are a creative group, excited about the future of Talent.

As promised, attached please find the Event Summary, which coalesces and presents the many valuable ideas you shared with us. Also, I am sharing within this email the committee's thoughts, based entirely on the feedback from the forum, on what are short term action items and what are potential long term pursuits. The following are recommended action items derived during our first review of the Event Summary report during a recent meeting. We will be advancing these recommendations to City Council and Talent Chamber in May.

### **Branding**

A common goal among participants is to develop brand standards for Talent, a sense of entry, creating a brand through signage, trees and flowers. We would have an opportunity to tie this in with the road realignment and sidewalk install along Hwy 99, as per Transportation Strategic Plan, as well as to the similar realignment planned for West Valley View between Hwy 99 and I-5. The objective is to tie these projects together, creating continuity with all city signage, color schemes, tag lines, etc...

### **City Website Update**

Another goal is to update city website: Ensure that zoning, codes and ordinances are re-codified and accessible online with easy to use functions to check on permits through website links.

### **Grant Eligibility - Talent Urban Renewal Agency (TURA)**

Task Talent Urban Renewal Agency to communicate to all eligible downtown businesses and property owners within the urban renewal district about grants available/funding. Add info about additional funding for those who have already benefitted.

### **City Beautification and Maintenance**

Create a beautification plan addressing frontage, landscaping and streetscapes. Discuss at the City policy level to add landscaping guidelines/infrastructure/maintenance to City policies.

### **Strike Blight**

Task the planning commission to review codes on vacant and/blighted buildings to improve the downtown and residential look.

### **Welcoming Downtown**

Chamber is looking to develop free WiFi in downtown. Currently a Brewery is seeking to open a tasting room in downtown Talent. Ton Tons has qualified for improvements grants funded by TURA.

### **Support Start-Up/Small Scale Businesses**

Pursue installing Maker Space into City Comp Plans with definitions for development.

### **Communicate, Communicate, Communicate**

Develop a city wide communication plan involving the Talent Chamber and the City of Talent, that strives for ongoing comprehensive news and updates on economic development and need to know items for our business community. On that, starting in July, the City of Talent will be providing an Economic Development article each month, written primarily by Councilor Ryan Pederson included in the Flash section of the Talent News and Review.

I would also like to take this opportunity to introduce to you the current efforts of the City of Talent, and provide updates on two upcoming projects. Using grant funding, the City of Talent contracted ECONorthwest to develop an economic opportunities analysis (EOA). The EOA will determine whether the City has enough land to accommodate 20-years of employment growth. The EOA will provide the basis for an update to the City's Comprehensive Plan Economic Element, as well as the development of an action plan to implement the Economic policies. Vetting will be conducted by a Community Advisory Committee (CAC). Among the CAC members, is a Talent business leader who also participated in the business leader's reception. The CAC's immediate tasks will be to discuss the preliminary results of the buildable lands inventory in support of the economic opportunities analysis. They will also conduct a formal S.W.O.T analysis and revise the City Comp Plan policies and objectives. Further details on these efforts will be provided in upcoming Flash articles starting in July. The above planning effort of the CAC is already in progress. The City of Talent is very fortunate to have a group of seasoned professionals working toward these most worthy objectives destined to improve our economy in Talent.

There are ongoing discussions between Talent Urban Renewal and Talent Irrigation District (TID) with the goal of TID relocating and the roundabout being completed. Our current timeline shows potential for a contract as soon as the end of this year and developers are also having active conversations about the property. The Hwy 99 upgrades are scheduled for bid and construction beginning in 2017, and will include the sidewalks, bike lanes, and access needs that were raised by business leaders at the event. The completed plans of Hwy 99 and the Valley View projects can be found at [www.cityoftalent.org](http://www.cityoftalent.org) on both the **News from the City** link as well as **News from the Mayor** link. While you are there, give the city website a look around. You may find useful information there.

The City will plan for and nurture a favorable environment to attract and maintain new business.

- By creating an attractive, accessible downtown area
- Seek to complete the Talent Industrial Park and support businesses through an economic development strategic plan
- Support to increase the number of family wage jobs
- Support existing business by sharing technical resources
- With open communication and providing available staff support for economic developments projects initiated by the business community.

The Ad-Hoc Economic Development Team has adopted an “ALL IN” motto for our efforts in Talent. We know that if we want significant positive change to our way of developing family scale economy for Talent, we have to do things differently; with gusto! In the spirit of our motto, we thank you again for sharing your needs and your input at the 2015 Business Leaders Reception. Your contributions will help Talent continue to grow toward its vibrant and prosperous future. We look forward to continuing the conversation with you and we are always open to your valuable input.

Grateful to serve,

Mayor Darby Stricker

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