

IMPORTANT INFORMATION FOR TALENT RESIDENTS AND BUSINESS OWNERS WITH PROPERTIES THAT WERE DESTROYED IN THE ALMEDA FIRE

September 18, 2020

On September 8, 2020, over 800 structures in the city of Talent were destroyed by the Almeda wildfire. The majority of those were homes or other residences. Our hearts go out to everyone who suffered losses on that day; the City and its employees are doing everything possible to help residents begin the long process of putting lives back together.

Utility providers have been proactive in shutting down services and canceling accounts in the burned areas. Please go to Wildfire Resources at www.cityoftalent.org and scroll down to "Utilities and Services" to see more information from local providers.

Fire damaged areas in the city are currently under the control of local law enforcement agencies, who are still conducting search and hazard assessment operations. We expect that work to be completed in the next several days. Once the law enforcement activity is finished, the cleanup process can begin. **The most important information for residents to know is that the cleanup process will be governed by state and federal regulations that must be followed, and those regulations supersede the authority of the City.**

All sites that were damaged or destroyed will have to be cleaned up pursuant to Department of Environmental Quality regulations, including certifications from licensed cleanup specialists. Many sites will need cleanup certification from licensed asbestos removal contractors as well. The County Office of Emergency Management estimates that the average cost for cleanup at just one damaged site will be approximately \$75,000.

These costs may be reimbursable through private insurance or through federal reimbursement programs, **but only if all of the required procedures are followed and required certifications received.** At this time, anyone who brings fire debris to a transfer station will be turned away without all of the proper certifications. A city demolition permit will also be required before cleanup can begin, but that step will be one of the last in the process.

The City is working with other regional officials to develop a coordinated process for cleanup efforts. We hope to have a central area for residents to go to receive information and ask questions, and will get that information out to everyone as soon as it is available. If we are able to work out an agreement with state and federal authorities to do the cleanup, then those costs can also be absorbed by the government and not passed on to owners.

Thank you for your patience as this very difficult process begins. It will take time and effort, but we will be certain we are protecting people's health and safety, and also doing everything we can to reduce the financial burden on property owners at this difficult time.

City of Talent