



PHOENIX-TALENT SCHOOLS

EXCELLENCE *for* EVERYONE

February 6, 2023

City of Talent
Attn: Talent Urban Renewal Agency
P.O. Box 445
Talent, OR 97540

Re: Almeda Fire Recovery and Revitalization Plan

I am writing this letter on behalf of the Phoenix-Talent School District #4. In conversations with our board of directors as well as other staff and community members, we have several concerns regarding the adoption of the urban renewal plan noted as the Almeda Fire Recovery and Revitalization Plan.

Although we do agree that the City of Talent does need to focus on recovery efforts from the Almeda Fire, specifically the needs to recover affordable housing, revitalize commercial areas, upgrade city infrastructure, decrease risk and increase resiliency, we also believe that this proposed project is happening too soon.

Although school districts and education service districts would not be directly impacted under the current school funding law, there is no guarantee that the state school fund formula will remain unchanged in the next 17 years. In addition, that property tax revenue for education will not be affected if future taxes are forgone as proposed in the current TURA plan.

In addition, our city and county partners including the fire and police departments are very important to our school district and we are concerned that if their funding decreases that they may have to resort to budget cuts or go out for a bond campaign. As our communities rebuild, we need to make sure we have the public infrastructure to support a growing population.

We share in the concerns that others have voiced as well. Should this measure pass in May, this would become effective in June and those dollars would have a small window of time to be utilized. One main concern is, does the City of Talent staff have the capability of dealing with all the extra planning that these projects would create? It seems that the current flux of planning from the Almeda fire and the planning that will need to be done when funds are received from all of the affordable housing grants, would increase tremendously for a department that already has many challenges.

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We believe that allowing for more time to hear from citizens, owners and tenants as individuals and organizations who reside within or who have financial interest within the Almeda Fire Recovery and Revitalization Area would provide more project support. Waiting one more year would provide opportunities for more critical engagement and feedback.

Sincerely,



Brent Barry
Superintendent