



City of Talent

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STATE OF THE CITY ADDRESS - 2018

Each year in preparation for the State of the City address, I ask the staff to prepare an outline to include what I believe are of community interest. This year, what I received was an awe inspiring report called Accomplishments of the Past Year which included goals. This great report very accurately reflects the productivity, the pride in their work and values of ownership that are found in today's City of Talent's staff.

When I received the report, I was struck by the remarkable reach into our community that this report of accomplishments represents. When this powerful team pulled together in the face of challenge, their work was fulfilled and perhaps even exceeded beyond what I would have imagined possible given the change in circumstances. As always, I will summarize the State of the City with their input, highlighting the accomplishments of the staff as well as the volunteers. However this year, I will attach to the report provided by staff; "accomplishments of the Past Year", in order to demonstrate for Talent residents the incredible amount of work that this small team is able to accomplish in one short year, especially as we respond to their needs for a responsive and healthy work environment. Let this lesson never be lost; that we can return their excellence as employees, by being excellent employers. In the spirit of real gratitude for their hard work, our responsibility as employers must always be with an intention for the highest standard provided for all of Talent's staff members.

As for their report, my hope is that if you take the time to read it, you will share in the gratitude for this team and their dedication to Talent.

In my interactions with regional leadership throughout the Southern Oregon, I am often congratulated for Talent's rise as a forward performing community, with a keen eye on the future. Recently, a regionally respected leader reached out his hand to shake mine, in congratulations for success in Talent he said in part, "what is great about Talent is the volunteer work being done. Talent is very lucky." What was strikingly evident about that comment is that the efforts of our resident volunteers are being noticed with admiration throughout our region. What that says about Talent is twofold. One is that we do a great job of stating publicly that our volunteers are productive and they get things done. By making known the volunteer efforts of co-developing our community, we send that message not only to them, but also to other communities who wonder what is among Talent's secrets of success. The second thing it says, and by far the larger point in my humble opinion, is conversely what the volunteers themselves

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say about Talent. That there is something very special about this place where incredibly “Talented” people live, who are inspired to share what they know and what they have, for the betterment of their neighbors. In great numbers, people come out to mitigate poisonous sprays where their children and pets play, to plant gardens that feed pollinators, to collaborate on traffic safety that guards walkability and alternative transportation modes, to create and install art for everyone to enjoy, to design recreational spaces, to seek better standards for the less fortunate by building economy, finding housing solutions, demonstrating for health care and feeding those in grave need. We demonstrate our community values by creating a space which will ignite and support the economy of our own residents, and build a pipeline to share their products, while educating regionally to help rebuild and sustain skilled labor in the trades. We assert our community values by joining a world wide effort, adopting an action plan to increase our use of clean energy starting now. If one ever wants to know what a community stands for, one only need discover what the volunteers are working on. It is high compliment indeed, that are admired for our successes in other Cities.

If you choose to read the report, **Accomplishments of the Past Year**, you will find highlights in our **Administrative and Finance Department** such as another A+ financial audit without comments, which is no surprise coming from Financial Director **Ryan Martin**, and his team’s office. They have accomplished many updates to policies that ensure better controls of our purchasing, and asset management. They negotiated and completed all new Franchise Agreements with Charter Communications, Avista and Pacificorp. Also, you will find that Administration supported the completion of the Community Center’s solar panel project, as well as the install of the first public-use Electric Vehicle charging station in Talent. But what cannot go unnoticed, is the interim leadership provided by Ryan Martin in difficult times. His positive-can-do-leadership style, kept the team grounded, and inspired the entire staff to rise above the challenge. Talent is as productive as ever; making many improvements as we move toward a new era in Talent.

To the City Records office enters Talent’s most recent star, **Erin Zelinka**. With great experience, she hit the ground running with updates to our organizational methods that will surely keep us more transparent and able to manage our historical documents, with consistency and security. Read about our ongoing successes, in the beautifully redesigned Flash newsletter and enjoy easier interaction with improvements to now fillable documents, on our City web page. But most importantly, Erin is an expert records keeper. With the most modern organizational techniques, Erin corrected in very short order our records retention; a City’s important responsibility for informing our future and maintaining our rule of law. Within weeks of her hire date, she restored lawful order to the City Records office and deemed Talent compliant.

Upon further review of the staff report, you will find that the **Talent Police Department** under the leadership of Chief Curtis Whipple and Lieutenant Jennifer Snook, has been equally productive. Read about the measurable reductions in crime, the statistics of calls handled and investigations written. The exhaustive training and the increased visibility, as this department strives for the greatest level of community engagement that I have ever seen in Talent. I was warmed by efforts like “have a coffee with a cop” events, “Dinner and discussion with residents” their ongoing events with local schools and my personal favorite the “Helmet for Ice Cream” campaign, in collaboration with Ray’s Food Place.

Through the program, Talent's youth was rewarded with a complementary ice cream cone for properly wearing helmets while riding bikes and skateboards. That is just downright small town beautiful! Their collective efforts have earned the City of Talent, the distinction of 11th Safest City in the State of Oregon, according to Safewise in October of 2017.

In **Community Development**, **Zac Moody's** team has been preparing some of the biggest legislation and land use updates, that Talent has seen in decades. They updated the Comprehensive Plan with both an Economic and Housing element, which includes opportunity for the future housing development with a concept called Missing Middle Housing that creates multi-family housing with smarter more efficient design. They have been stream lining the permitting process and designing education material, as we prepare for the next big wave of building, over the course of the next few years. They achieved recertification for Talent with FEMA, which serves to keep all of our home flood insurance at lowest rates. I served with Zac Moody for a short time when we were both Planning Commissioners. What struck me at the time was how knowledgeable he is about swales and other types of drainage in relationship to water conservation through storm water management. It is no surprise to me that he has carried his knowledge into his work for Talent by way of signage for storm water education in collaboration with the Bear Creek Watershed Council, as well as through articles in the Flash newsletter and the Adopt-A-Swale program to enhance public swales. Zac Moody and his team are guardians of water. Looking forward, they are working hard to install the first elements of the Clean Energy Action Plan, as well as collaborating with the Administration team, Public Works and volunteers to engage immediately the Strategic Energy Management program with Energy Trust.

Public works has not let the grass grow under their feet either. Read about how the team led by **Brett Marshall** and **Chance Metcalf** are working on improving transportation as they move utilities and the storm water infrastructure in preparation for sidewalks along ODOT's Highway 99 improvement project. They have installed rapid flashing beacons near the roundabout and 2 additional LED flashing school zone signs near the route to schools to improve safety for our most precious children. In our parks they are completing walking trails, improving the splash pad, installing benches and trees and coming soon is a shade structure which will be installed in the Spring. Public Works has installed storm drain lines, decorative street lights, a 45 foot tower to improve communications over trees and participated in the installation of the EV charging station at the Community Center. Very soon, they will participate in building a 2 million gallon water storage tank that will mitigate the cost of water associated with peak demand rates as well as protect Talent from water loss in the event of a natural disaster. This hard working team can be found doing tasks as simple as mowing the lawns and as complicated as rebuilding and calibrating our fresh water delivery systems, all of which can easily be taken for granted. They are the strong back of this community, and they are recognized for an important role within Talent.

But there is so much more to do. You will find as you read the Accomplishments of the Past Year that the report closes with goals for the upcoming fiscal year. These staff goals will be combined with the goals adopted by the City Council. We are proposing building better livability, environmental sustainability and stewardship, including those neighbors in need, improving our economy and striving for improved efficiency, maintaining public safety and building community with events, gathering space and education.

Finally, the State of the City would be less, without the critical hard work of the near 40 elected and appointed officials who make up the volunteer Committees, Commissions and City Council. They all donate their time and sometimes their last bit of energy for the love of community. Without pay or work related benefit, the volunteers collaborate, cooperate and facilitate, entirely for the betterment of Talent. With best intentions for community and with needed support of the appointed officials, the City Council made decisions on a great deal of work. We held open houses and developed community partnerships with organizations like Business Oregon, Talent Maker City, BlueSky and True South Solar to name just a few. We initiated a diesel tax to better maintain our roads. We, with committee support, adopted the Talent Clean Energy Action Plan. We proclaimed our resolve as an inclusive and welcoming City to a beyond capacity Town Hall with over 30 people testifying. We assured continued service of the food pantry by securing a safe space in Town Hall. We updated the City Comprehensive Plan with objectives to improve livability with better wages and proposed strategies for housing of all kinds. We made upgrades to Parks and secured the needed funding for Parks maintenance. We adopted an ordinance that forms a recommending Economic Development Commission, whose mission will be to raise the median income. We supported community celebrations, we upheld recycling and we resolved to support the Clean Energy Jobs Bill. We all worked side by side to build a better Talent. It is a gift of the purest kind, to give your time and efforts, to benefit everyone in your community.

There is no better way to close the State of the City than with these reflections. Did we end the year in better shape than when we started? Yes, bumpy roads along the way, but definitely yes. So what is left to do is to offer a genuine, heartfelt thank you, on behalf of Talent, to EVERYONE, who endeavors to participate in administrating, governing and rolling up their sleeves, to make the City of Talent, the very best it can be. To quote a famous car magnet, I LOVE TALENT.

Grateful to serve,



Mayor Darby Ayers-Flood



City of Talent 2018 State of the City

Accomplishments of the Past Year

The City of Talent has had a productive year full of advancements that have improved and will continue to improve the quality of life of its residents. Projects have focused on enhanced safety, communication, transparency, energy efficiency, administrative efficiency, economic growth, and enjoyability of the City's parks and resources. We are proud to share what staff have been able to accomplish this past year with the dedication and support of Council, commissioners, committee members, volunteers and residents.

Administration/Finance has:

- Completed the Community Center solar panel project.
- Received a clean audit opinion with no comments for FY2016-17.
- Updated the Internal Control Policy to help better safeguard the City's assets.
- Updated the Purchasing Policy for committees and commissions to make the process simpler while still adhering to the Internal Control Policy.
- Installed the first public-use EV charging station in Talent.
- Adopted a new franchise agreement with Charter Communications and are in the process of working with Avista and Pacificorp on new franchise agreements as well.
- Began the Strategic Energy Management program with Energy Trust to learn about and implement energy saving projects for City-owned buildings.
- Completed a successful request for expressions of interest for the Gateway project and are moving ahead with a great developer with ideas that will change our city for the better.
- Redesigned and made various forms fillable for online submission.
- Redesigned The Flash newsletter.
- Established a better organizational method and consistent naming convention for ordinances, resolutions and minutes.

Talent PD has:

- Earned City of Talent the distinction of 11th Safest City in the State of Oregon, as named by Safewise in October 2017.
- Reduced Part I crimes by 2.4% in 2017.
- Handled 7,375 calls for service resulting in 3,855 written investigative reports.

- Issued 1,225 citations for driving offenses and gave numerous other written and verbal warnings.
- Implemented an online training program, Police One Academy, which contributed to over 500 hours of officer training at a reduced cost.
- Increased community engagement, including:
 - 5 “Coffee With a Cop” events.
 - Dinner and discussion with residents at Anderson Vista.
 - Participation in the Conozca a sus Oficiales (Get to Know your Officials) at the Medford Library.
 - Events with local schools.
 - The “Helmet for Ice Cream” campaign with Ray’s Food Place, which rewarded Talent’s youth for properly wearing helmets while riding bicycles and skateboards.

Public Works has:

- Installed a new generator at City Hall.
- Made improvements to Chuck Roberts Park:
 - Completed the Heritage Trail.
 - Poured a concrete pad.
 - Installed a new bench.
 - Removed two hazard trees.
 - Purchased a shade structure to be installed in the spring.
- Began updates to the Water Master Plan to ensure that the system is efficient, considers conservation and will accommodate any expected population growth.
 - Began process for building a new 2-million-gallon reservoir to replace the 1.5-million-gallon reservoir at the Belmont site that is beginning to show signs of failure.
 - Rebuilt 4 pressure valves near the Rapp Rd. pump station that had either failed or were in bad shape.
- Erected a 45-foot tower to raise the height of the antenna and allow telemetry to communicate over growing trees and two-story homes built recently in the Clearview subdivision.
- Prepared for ODOT improvements to Highway 99 by moving the water utility to accommodate new storm water infrastructure and a sidewalk that will be installed during this project.
- Installed rapid flashing beacons near the roundabout to make the crosswalks at a busy section of road a lot safer for pedestrians
- Installed 2 additional LED flashing school zone signs on Wagner Street and on Foss Road to provide a safer route for children walking to school.
- Completed Phase 3 of the decorative street light retrofit to show the City's commitment to conserving energy.
- Began extension of a storm drain line on Talent Avenue, just south of Creel Rd., to eliminate road side pooling of water and close a small section of open ditch that is a potential hazard.

- Installed an electric vehicle charging station at the Community Center with directional street signs that will be going up soon.

Community Development has:

- Created web pages for Building, Planning, Code Enforcement and Conservation.
- Began to develop brochures to educate citizens on the building permit process.
- Increased the amount of building permits received online.
- Processed 238 building permits.
- Began the Urban Growth Boundary Analysis and Efficiency Measures.
- Began the Regional Problem Solving (RPS) Amendment Process for urban reserves (TA4 and TA5).
- Adopted revised Economic and Housing Elements.
- Completed Economic Opportunities Analysis and Housing Needs Analysis (and Buildable Land Inventories).
- Completed Intergovernmental Agreement with Jackson County to use 2016 aerial imagery.
- Recertified City as a Class 7 CRS Community (FEMA)
- Installed creek signage along Wagner Creek and Bear Creek.
- Completed IAMP 21 (Interstate Area Management Plan) with ODOT.
- Created the Adopt-A-Swale program to enhance quality of public swales.
- Processed 169 planning applications (up 64% from 2016 and includes ALL zoning permits).
- Processed 41 Code Enforcement Cases and Issued 95 High Grass Final Warnings (48-hour notices).
- Continued implementation of the stormwater Education Program that includes 12 months of Flash articles and updates to the City's website.
- Created regional signage dedicated to stormwater education in cooperation with the Bear Creek Watershed Council.
- Created GIS field map books for Public Works to verify location of storm and water facilities.
- Updated City's GIS data, including parcel, infrastructure and development data.

Various other projects are in progress and set to be completed by the end of FY2017-18. We look forward to sharing future accomplishments and continuing to make our City better every day. In the interest of doing so, here are staff goals for the upcoming fiscal year that we believe will continue to move our City in a positive, life-improving direction.

Goals for FY2018-19

- Improve communications between City staff and residents.
 - Redesign City website.
 - Start a City of Talent official Facebook page to enhance communications with residents.
 - Educate residents on how to submit concerns and feedback.

- Create and distribute education brochures (online and in lobby).
- Evaluate potential partnerships with other agencies and municipalities.
- Implement additional community outreach projects.
- Increase efficiency across all departments.
 - Create more fillable forms that residents may submit electronically.
 - Evaluate the notification process for utility late and shutoff notices.
 - Evaluate implementation of an automated phone system.
 - Install SCADA system to automatically shut off water pumps during peak times.
- Update internal control policy
 - Write Social Media policy.
 - Write Vacating Right-of-Ways policy.
 - Write Internal Energy Efficiency policy.
 - Write Community Center operations manual.
 - Write procedure and/or calendar for annual goal setting.
- Increase revenues.
 - Create an AirBnB zoning ordinance.
 - Evaluate Community Center fee schedule and market its availability.
 - Evaluate SDC schedules.
 - Update Transient Occupancy Tax ordinance.
 - Evaluate City rentals and leases.
 - Increase number of customers receiving electronic water bill statements by 50%.
- Improve employee morale and retention.
 - Increase training opportunities.
 - Schedule bi-annual team building sessions.
 - Schedule quarterly all-staff meetings.
 - Communicate open-door policy to all staff.