

Greetings Co-Chair Beyer, Co-Chair Fahey, Co-Vice Chair Knopp, Co-Vice Chair Wallan, and Members of the Committee,

I am the Council President on the Talent City Council, testifying on behalf of myself and my constituents, in strong support of LC 9, the Emergency Rent Assistance Policy.

As our region recovers from the Almeda fire of last year, we cannot sustain another housing crisis of needlessly evicted families.

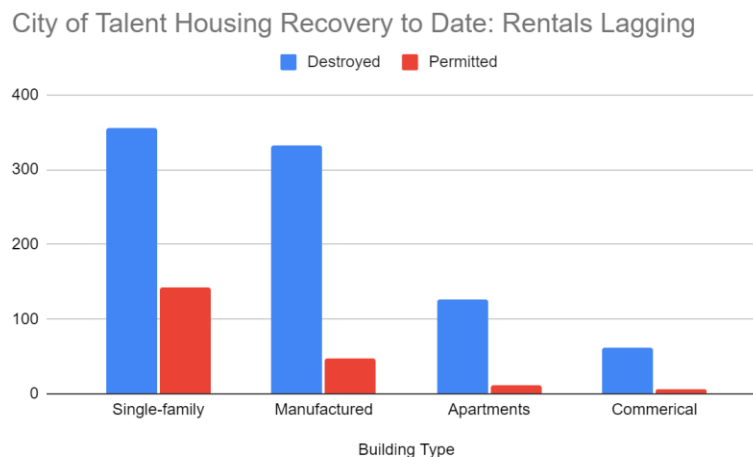
Talent's rental housing stock recovery is under 15 percent

Many of you know the situation in Talent, a small city in Southern Oregon. Last year, the Almeda fire destroyed **800 homes** and 60 businesses, roughly a third of our town.

More than half of those homes destroyed were apartment units and manufactured homes, and disproportionately impacted our seniors, LatinX, and low-income families.

As we continue to rebuild 15 months later, our city data tells us that single family homes are rebuilding faster than manufactured homes and apartment complexes. In Talent, about **42 percent** of the single family homes have applied for rebuild permits. For manufactured homes, that number is **13 percent**. For apartment units, that number is only **9 percent**.

Below is a chart based on the breakdown from our Community Development Department:



And meanwhile, hundreds of people in our valley are still living in hotels, or in garages, or in spare bedrooms of friends and family, with **no clear path** back to safe and secure permanent housing.

Our Region is working on Solutions, but it takes Time

Yes, we have a great deal of affordable and rental housing to make up for. Yes, we are working hard to develop creative housing solutions.

One example, the Talent Gateway transitional housing project spearheaded by the Talent Urban Renewal Agency, will support 53 displaced non-FEMA eligible families, and folks are already moving in. Another example, today I attended a wall-raising event creating homes for two of our displaced families, made possible by Habitat for Humanity.

But replacing the housing we lost in the fire takes time.

The last thing we need is a new wave of displaced neighbors, forced to join the hunt for scarce housing, or, as some may end up doing, spending winter nights sleeping in their cars.

Southern Oregon cannot take another Housing Crisis

Simply put: The housing ecosystem in Southern Oregon will not sustain the stress of a wave of evictions.

We have seen how crises exacerbate already existing disparities in our communities. Evictions would not only waste scarce resources for families paying to move or store their belongings, but also make our community's recovery that much harder.

Fortunately, this is a potential crisis we have the power to prevent. At the very least, families should not be evicted while they wait for rent assistance to be distributed.

Please support our efforts, and do everything you can to keep our community housed. Thank you for your service, and thoughtful consideration in this matter.

Sincerely,

Eleanor Ponomareff
Council President
City of Talent
Talent, Oregon