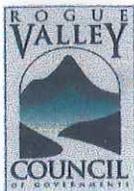


City of Talent Strategic Plan

Developed
by the
Residents and
Community Leaders

Funded by the
Rogue River National Forest
United States Forest Service



Prepared by
The Rogue Valley
Council of Governments

TABLE OF CONTENTS

I. INTRODUCTION

II. TALENT: A BRIEF HISTORY

III. THE PLANNING PROCESS

IV. DRAFT VISION

V. GOALS

VI. GOALS, STRATEGIES AND ACTION PLANS

VII. NEXT STEPS

APPENDIX A: Strategic Planning Chart

APPENDIX B: Planning Newsletter

APPENDIX C: SWOT Analysis

I. INTRODUCTION

In the spring of 1998, the City of Talent invited residents to chart a path for their community's future by developing a Strategic Plan, which was adopted by the City Council in the fall of that year.

In the summer of 2001, the city convened a committee of elected officials, citizens, and members of the Planning Commission to review the 1998 Plan, to assess what had and had not been accomplished, and to produce an updated Strategic Plan. This report documents the updated 2001 Strategic Plan resulting from those efforts.

A Strategic Plan is a practical document that establishes a vision for the future and identifies strategies for reaching that vision. It contains strategies for preserving what people most value about their town and for bringing about positive changes that will enhance livability and economic conditions.

The initial planning process was funded by a grant of \$20,000 from the Rogue River National Forest, United States Forest Service. Of that grant, \$5,000 was set aside for implementing some part of Talent's Strategic Plan. The grant funds came from the Northwest Economic Adjustment Initiative, which assists communities formerly dependent upon the natural resource extraction industry. The Oregon Economic and Community Development Department provided funding for the update process.

The Rogue Valley Council of Governments (RVCOG) assisted the City of Talent to staff and facilitate the overall planning process and to produce this new report. RVCOG provides a variety of resources to participating local governments in Jackson and Josephine County.

II. TALENT: A BRIEF HISTORY

Before the arrival of Euro-American settlers and miners in the mid-nineteenth century, the Bear Creek basin was home to indigenous Shasta and Tekelma peoples. Early settlers to the area knew these groups and others as “Rogue Indians.”

The history of Talent is rooted in the fertile soils of Wagner, Anderson, and Bear Creeks. Over time, the significance of those lands in shaping Talent’s history was replaced by another factor, namely, Talent’s location along a succession of major transportation routes. George Kramer’s 1994 report entitled “Historic Context Statement for the City of Talent, Oregon” provides a well-documented, brief history of Talent. We have relied on that report for much of the information in this section.

In 1852, the same year that gold was discovered in Jacksonville, Jacob Wagner filed his Donation Land Claim along the creek, which later took his name. Wagner was the first to farm a claim in the area. During the 1850s, settlers continued to come to the area to pursue agricultural activities, although by 1857, there were no more than 50 people living in the area. Anderson came to the area at about the same time as Wagner, setting up his claim along what is now Anderson Creek, and producing some of the first grains for market.

Wagner helped the military build a log stockade called Fort Wagner where settlers in the region could gather during outbreaks of hostilities between settlers and Native Americans, especially during the Rogue Indian Wars of 1853 and 1855.

Most of the early development in the Talent area was along the Applegate Trail, an extension of the Oregon Trail. Some hold that Talent Avenue was built over the Applegate Trail itself. Growth was slow in Talent during the 1860s and 1870s. Settlers farmed the area and there was relatively little commercial activity. With the arrival of J.P. Talent, in 1877, however, this changed. J.P. Talent opened a general store and established a post office. The core of a small town began to form.

The town secured a railroad depot in 1900, long after Ashland and Medford did so. With this depot, the local service center in Talent flourished. Orchards and truck gardens produced for the greater market. A packinghouse began operating around the turn of the century. The period of 1909 - 1912 was dubbed the “Orchard Boom” in the Rogue Valley.

In 1910, Talent was incorporated with an estimated population of 250. New homes and businesses sprung up along Talent and Wagner Streets. The fire of 1911 resulted in the destruction of a large portion of the downtown central business district and required the reconstruction of many buildings.

According to Kramer (1994), Talent made a reputation for itself in the region as a progressive town based on the election of the first “woman councilman”, hiring the first woman city recorder, and electing a Socialist Party Mayor.

In 1914, the Talent School District sold its wood frame building to the city and moved to a new brick building. That former schoolhouse, now known as the Community Hall became the center for community events and still serves as an anchor for community identity and activities.

The early twentieth century was a period of commercial growth and investment in Talent. The Bagley Canning Company was opened, adding to local ventures of a creamery, box factory, and saw mill.

The construction of the Pacific Highway (Hwy 99) in 1913 and the growth in automobile ownership brought many more people directly through Talent. The construction of the Talent Irrigation District began in 1919 and buttressed the importance of orchard production and agriculture in the area.

The 1920s, however, brought decline in population and commerce to Talent, explained in part by the growth in business and institutions in neighboring Ashland. Another blow to Talent's commercial life was the realignment of the Pacific Highway in 1938, which bypassed Talent's existing commercial core and created a faster route to Medford and Ashland.

The construction of Camp White in the early 1940s brought new energy to an economy that had slumped during the Great Depression of the 1930s and early 1940s. As Talent moved into the second half of the twentieth century, agriculture no longer dominated the local economy.

In 1958, Talent developed and ratified a new city charter. Housing developments and mobile home parks appeared in Talent in the 1960s and 1970s. By 1970, the City had a population of 2,620, representing growth increase of 300% between 1960 and 1970. This growth was spurred by the completion of Interstate 5 in 1963.

Talent continues to play a role in providing attractive and affordable housing to the Rogue Valley. Recent construction has brought retirement enclaves and multifamily building types to Talent. Regarding commercial development, light industrial development in the southwestern part of the city has been notable. Commercial development has occurred along the Valley View Road corridor leading to Interstate 5 and along Pacific Highway. With few exceptions, the "Old Town Talent" commercial core on Talent Avenue has experienced frequent business turnover.

Recent Efforts

In 1997, the City Council and City staff initiated one of the largest and most expensive public works projects in the city's history. The Talent Ashland Phoenix (TAP) Intertie Project will connect Medford Water Commission's supply and distribution system by the spring of 2002.

In addition to supply, water quality has been an issue in Talent since the mid-1980s, when an outbreak of illness resembling dysentery was attributed to the city's water supply. The state called Talent's water "the worst in the state". Documentation of the water problem by an engineer prompted the city to consider a solution.

Thanksgiving time 1996, the problem of water quantity was added to that of quality. The city lost its water intake to a saturated and overflowing Bear Creek and requested assistance from the State to address these concerns. But a few weeks later, the a major flood on New Years 1997 brought additional problems to Talent and the rest of the Rogue Valley. A few single-family detached homes were destroyed in Talent and residents were without tap water for a period of time.

With City Council's focus on solving the community's water problems, significant progress on the TAP Intertie Project has been made in the past three years and completion is slated for the year 2002.

Between 1990 and 1996, Talent's population grew by 45.5% to a total of 4,765. Its current population is 5,589 (Census 2000). The growth of Talent has brought changes in local community dynamics. As one person sees it: "...physically, culturally, and economically, there are now two Talents. One is north of Rapp Road and the other is south of Rapp Road. The City Center is no longer the center of the city physically and most people on the south end of town have no reason to go there." The Strategic Plan was developed in response to this observation. The Strategic Plan provides the framework for creating a sense of place and a "reason to go there."

Much of the population growth has been in migration of retirees who share a similar concern for livability issues of more elderly populations. Changes in the faces, management styles, and goals of town officials have disconcerted some residents and encouraged others. As one resident said, "There's a sense in Talent that things are changing."

III. THE PLANNING PROCESS

The Strategic Planning Process has three phases:

- A) Identification of Community Issues;
- B) Plan Development; and
- C) Plan Implementation. (See Appendix A for a flow chart of the Strategic Planning Process)

A. Identification of Community Issues.

A Strategic Plan responds to local issues impeding a town's progress towards its desired future. An assessment produced by the Rogue Institute for Ecology and Economy in 1995, entitled "I Feel Famous Here: Community Issues Regarding Transportation and Growth in Talent, Oregon," provided good baseline information for this phase. Several approaches were used to reconfirm the validity of issues reported in 1995 and to identify new community issues. The City Council, community volunteers, and RVCOG staff participated in this process.

To connect with some of Talent's Latino community, City Councilor Telerski and RVCOG staff conducted two meetings in Spanish with residents of Anderson Vista, an apartment complex recently constructed by the U.S. Department of Agriculture for farm workers. Residents expressed their appreciation for Talent's small town and peaceful atmosphere. They shared concerns about the inadequacy of bus service in the community, and safety concerns about walking on Talent Avenue to catch the bus or buy groceries. Many families have young children and they would like to see Chuck Roberts Park developed with playground equipment and made more inviting with landscaping and additional facilities. Several volunteered to help with that effort.

RVCOG staff interviewed a variety of Talent residents, including elected officials, business owners, educators, high school students, parents, and senior citizens. Also contacted were leaders and members of organizations, such as the Parent Teacher Organization, and the Talent Business Association.

Briefly stated, the purpose of these informal talks was to understand what people most value about their community and what they would most like to change. We include a few quotes from residents in the margins of this section to illustrate local concerns in people's own words.

In addition to these talks, surveys were attached to the City's newsletter, *The Flash*, requesting residents' input on issues related to economic and community development. This process was used to increase the number of people from whom information was attained, as well as to provide pertinent information to the City's Planning Department for updating the Economic Element of the Comprehensive Plan.

Resident volunteers were invited to participate in the fieldwork process and met with an RVCOG staff over a four-week period.

The information gained from these different methods was then analyzed to discover patterns in peoples' responses. Comments about similar concerns were grouped into general "Issue Areas," such as transportation. Similar statements and attitudes about community life were grouped as "Themes," such as "small town feel."

Themes

Many people enjoy a strong sense of place and community in Talent. What they most value about Talent are intangibles that make for a high quality of life, including: the small town atmosphere; a sense of belonging; the rural, natural beauty surrounding Talent; the townspeople's "honesty"; having a good cross-section of American society in town; and a sense that their town is different from neighboring communities.

Some residents are content with the idea that Talent is and has long been a sleepy bedroom community. Others have a vision of Talent providing a full range of opportunities for community activities and employment.

Issue Areas

Residents' concerns cluster around basic infrastructure issues, transportation, and a desire to protect and enhance what they love about their city. Issue areas are bolded below.

Getting around town:

Talent residents enjoy walking and cycling about town; going on foot from their home to the grocery store, the post office, City Hall and back again. They point, however, to a lack of basic infrastructure that makes for a safe and pleasant experience. Residents complain of sidewalks in disrepair (or altogether lacking), potholes on main thoroughfares and no bike lanes. Residents, to serve young families dependent on the bus for shopping and to serve elderly residents who face difficulties reaching the bus stop, desire more bus stops throughout town.

Transportation issues abound, including navigating unsafe and frequently dangerous intersections with Highway 99. Street improvements are another issue, with Talent Avenue (south of Wagner Creek) being the most contentious.

Business and jobs:

Ideas for business development abound among local residents. Small, locally owned shops that serve the Talent community are envisioned, such as a bakery, a deli, an ice cream parlor, and cinema. The business community emphasizes the need for taking care of the basics, such as good roads, adequate water and the appearances of public places. Some see a need for a greater array of professional services in town. Few envision large-scale development; many would like a downtown core than enhances the small town feel of Talent. Job development through expansion of the existing light industrial zone is generally favored, although residents do not see job development as the main task of local government.

Our Identity:

Residents agree that appearances count and that Talent could do a better job. They feel that local public landmarks, homes, and yards should be spruced up, better cared for, and less cluttered. Areas of greatest concern are Main Street and Talent Avenue. People are concerned that the town's older homes and neighborhoods will be lost to redevelopment or remodeling that destroys the town's historic feel. The business community and other residents would like attractive entryways into Talent. Given the city budget, people know that such projects require volunteer labor and sense that the base of volunteers has dwindled from what it once was.

Recreation:

Residents of all ages mentioned the need for better recreational opportunities in Talent. With the growth in apartment complex living, there are more children, whether teens or young children, in the community. Parents of young children note the lack of developed park areas with adequate playground equipment. Older youth travel to nearby cities to work out in gyms. Adults would like to see park areas where they can relax with friends. People are sensitive to the loss of traditional in-town events and celebrations that once marked the year's passage.

B. Plan Development.

Upon the completion of the field survey and interview process, a Town Hall meeting was held on May 2 to share findings with the community and refine the issue areas. To create interest in the meeting, a newsletter was sent to all residents within city limits. (A copy of that newsletter is in Appendix B.)

Some 30 residents attended this Town Hall meeting. Participants confirmed the identified issues and added others. They developed Best and Worst Case Scenarios for their town, comparing the future that would result from tackling those issues to the future that could result from adopting a *laissez faire* attitude. While the larger group developed these scenarios, a smaller group of volunteers drafted a vision statement. At the end of the meeting, participants agreed upon the four Issue Areas for committee work and committed to working on those committees. The four committees that emerged were: Transportation; Our Identity; Recreation; and Business and Jobs.

With the exception of the Recreation Committee, each committee met once a week over four weeks to develop goals, strategies, and action plans related to their Issue Area. An RVCOG staff member worked with each committee to structure and facilitate the four meeting process. Gordon Safley, Executive Director of Southern Oregon Regional Economic Development, Inc., served as a resource person to the Business and Jobs Committee. The Recreation Committee, comprised mainly of Parks Commissioners, wished to focus its energies on developing and implementing their plans for Chuck Roberts Park.

On June 8, a second Town Hall meeting was held to present the work of the committees to interested community members. A representative from each of the four committees presented the plans their group had developed. After discussion of their plans, several

people indicated their interest in forming a Community Response Team that would assist the City in implementing the Strategic Plan.

Based on the information gained from the City, residents and additional research, RVCOG staff prepared an analysis of the factors encouraging and hindering community and economic development in Talent. This analysis is called a SWOT analysis and is contained in Appendix C. This analysis looks at Talent from a regional context of economic development and suggests potential directions that converge with local realities and aspirations. The Strategic Goals developed by the committees relate to the findings of the SWOT analysis.

After the June 8 Town Hall meeting, the Talent City Council met with RVCOG to discuss the Strategic Planning Process. Their main concern was low turnout and participation in the overall process. Another was the lack of participation by the business community in the committee process. They were concerned that committee plans were similar to plans that had been discussed in the City for some time. Some Councilors raised ideas for soliciting opinions from more residents. Although RVCOG agreed with the Council's desires for greater participation, resources for further work were not available. It was agreed that the City Council and public would prepare the draft final report for comment.

In August 1998, the draft Strategic Plan was placed in the Talent branch of the Jackson County Library and in Talent City Hall for public review. A draft was delivered to each City Councilor and committee participants. All residents were invited to submit comments on the draft to the Talent City Planner. In September 1998, the City Council reviewed the draft and made suggestions for revisions. One major revision was the inclusion of all Parks Commission goals and plans. These revisions are reflected in the Recreation component of the plan.

C. Plan Implementation.

Setting goals is an accomplishment; reaching those goals requires a significant amount of work by citizens and officials. Implementation efforts need to begin soon after adoption, so that the Plan maintains credibility and benefits from the burst of community energy that first produced it.

The City is continuing to recruit people to the Community Response Team, which will assist in the challenge of realizing the Strategic Planning Goals. In cooperation with City staff, RVCOG will facilitate the establishment of this group, so that it is organized to meet that challenge.

IV. DRAFT VISION

During the May 2 Town Hall meeting, community members drafted a Vision Statement for Talent. The Draft Vision was enthusiastically received by participants.

Our Vision

Talent: A small, people-oriented village offering creative opportunities for quality living, work and leisure.

The City will be focused around a vital, vibrant, downtown core and neighborhoods, which reflect the City's architectural history and values. Further, the City will offer opportunity to its young people through well-planned growth, a clean agricultural, industrial and business base, which reflects and promotes local self-reliance and the talents and interests of all residents.

The community as a whole will be a safe, clean place which offers quality living and leisure for residents of all ages, cultures and backgrounds served by a multi-modal transportation system which meets all their needs.

V. GOALS

Each of the four committees formed at the May 2 Town Hall meeting produced goals, strategies, and action plans related to their Issue Areas. For easy reference, this section presents only the Goals from each committee.

TRANSPORTATION

Goal 1:

A reliable, multi-modal transportation system. Ensure that the City of Talent provides and maintains safe, pleasant and efficient means of moving through and within the City for all modes of surface transportation.

Goal 2:

Enhanced transportation within the downtown core. The City of Talent should provide a “people-friendly” transportation system to, from and within the downtown core area which accommodates and enhances commercial activity and safe, efficient movement equally for pedestrians, bicycles and automobiles.

Goal 3:

Safer intersections, streets, roads and pathways. The safety of our citizens being of the utmost importance, the City of Talent should to the greatest extent possible, eliminate all preventable hazards to pedestrians, bicyclists and automobile occupants.

BUSINESS AND JOBS

Goal 1:

Talent will have a beautiful vibrant downtown with a wide variety of basic services for its residents.

Goal 2:

Talent will promote environmentally friendly manufacturing businesses that are consistent with the community’s rural character and employ a trained and skilled workforce.

RECREATION COMMITTEE

Goal 1:

To create civic pride and a sense of community by providing recreational opportunities for all ages.

OUR IDENTITY

Goal 1:

Promote and enhance Talent’s friendly, small town atmosphere.

VI. GOALS, STRATEGIES AND ACTION PLANS

TRANSPORTATION

Goal 1:

A reliable, multimodal transportation system. Ensure that the City of Talent provides and maintains safe, pleasant, and efficient means of moving through and within the City for all modes of surface transportation.

Strategy 1A. Develop an expanded transit network. Establish a more comprehensive public transportation network to shuttle passengers into a centrally located downtown “depot” and Rogue Valley Transportation District (RVTD) connections.

Action Plan:

- a.) Pursue the option of partnering with RVTD to provide a “feeder” system for the city and surrounding areas.
- b.) Conduct a survey to determine what transportation system improvements residents would most like to see.
- c.) Review existing transit routes and schedules and improve where feasible.
- d.) Provide additional bicycle parking where needed.
- e.) Make available to Talent residents better and more accessible information on transit within the City, including routes and schedules and promote its use. As an example, this information could be included on Talent’s website. Explore linkage to RVTD website.

Strategy 1B. Reduce reliance on single occupant automobiles. The City of Talent should provide for a transportation system, which reduces the reliance on the single-occupant automobile and encourages other modes of transportation including walking, cycling, and shared-occupancy vehicles.

Action Plan:

- a.) Pursue policies which encourage ride sharing and car pooling.
- b.) Provide website access for people wanting to organize ride sharing and car pooling.
- c.) Promote the survey of existing streets to identify space for bike lanes.
- d.) Provide safe and easy bike parking at all suitable locations.
- e.) Research and pursue the development of off street bike/pedestrian ways throughout the City.
- f.) Identify areas, map right-of-way. Acquire land or easement. Research and apply for grants. Develop walkways to make them inviting.
- g.) Build pedestrian connectivity into future development.

Goal 2:

Enhanced transportation within the downtown core. The City of Talent should provide a “people-friendly” transportation system to, from and within the downtown core area, which accommodates and enhances commercial activity and the safe, efficient movement equally for pedestrians, bicycles and automobiles.

Strategy 2A. Research and develop new options for traffic flow into and out of downtown Talent.

Action Plan:

- a.) Identify alternatives to the Valley View/Main Street/Wagner Street pattern.
- b.) Pursue the construction of the Rogue River Parkway connection to Hwy 99.

Strategy 2B. Develop adequate off street parking in and around downtown to enhance the small town feel and access to businesses.

Action Plan:

- a.) Create an inventory of parcels where off street parking could be developed. Locations should be close to the downtown area and designed for no cost parking.
- b.) Identify areas where additional parking could be created adjacent to or behind existing stores.
- d.) Survey business owners regarding their concerns about needs for parking.

Strategy 2C. Develop a plan for a local trolley-type system that would serve the Talent area, as well as feeding riders into the RVTD system.

Action Plan:

- a.) Develop a plan for serving outlying areas, ie., Culver Road, Wagner Creek Road, Suncrest Road, as well as neighborhoods within the City limits.
- b.) Research the cost of the system and feasibility of partial subsidy by the City of Talent.
- c.) Ensure that the system is capable of serving people of all ages.

BUSINESS AND JOBS**Goal 1:**

Talent will have a beautiful, vibrant downtown with a wide variety of basic services for its residents.

Strategy 1A. Ensure that public facilities are adequate for businesses.

Action Plan:

- a.) Explore telecommunication options to assure that adequate future capacity exists.

Strategy 1B. Set aside areas for potential neighborhood stores.

Action Plan:

- a.) Include in the Comprehensive Plan a series of criteria under which a zone change to Neighborhood Commercial could be considered.

Strategy 1C. Maintain viability of existing businesses.

Action Plan:

- a.) Establish pedestrian routes between businesses.

Strategy 1D. Encourage continuation of mixed residential and commercial uses.

Action Plan:

- a.) Revise zoning regulations to allow dwellings as permitted uses and to provide flexibility for commercial uses in two-story dwellings.
- b.) Implement design standards that reinforce existing and proposed development that are consistent with the historic character of the downtown.

Goal 2:

Talent will recruit and promote environmentally friendly manufacturing businesses that are consistent with the community's rural character and employ a trained and skilled workforce.

Strategy 2A. Develop manufacturing businesses at a scale that is appropriate for Talent.

Action Plan:

- a.) Businesses with up to 100 employees will be encouraged. Businesses that employ no more than two percent of a community's population are considered an appropriate size.
- b.) Seek uses similar to the value-added artisan industries already existing in the industrial area.

RECREATION

Goal 1:

To create civic pride and a sense of community by providing recreational opportunities for all ages.

Strategy 1A. Implement the Master Plan for Chuck Roberts Park.

Action Plan:

Phase II: Reconstruct restrooms to accommodate increased traffic and park redesign.

Phase III: Landscape construction begun:

Rough grading, drainage, automatic irrigation system, finish grading, plant material and planning, turf establishment, and landscape bark or mulch.

Phase IV: Walking/jogging paths accessible to all.

Phase V: Recreation facilities construction:

Softball field, horseshoe pits, volleyball court, basketball court, and covered picnic area.

Phase VI: Parking lot paving and landscaping.

Phase VII: Parking amenities:

Drinking fountains, lighting, bicycle parking, and trash receptacles.

b.) Phasing needs to be strategic so that it creates community interest and participation.

c.) Create a detailed plan for each phase of construction.

d.) Develop a fund-raising strategy which involves: writing grants; requesting system development charges (SDCs) funds from new development; in-kind donations; raising cash contributions from individuals and organizations.

e.) Recruit and organize people who will contribute self-help labor to constructing the park. Identify people who can supervise self-help labor crews and the use of heavy equipment.

f.) Increase awareness of and participation by Talent residents in the construction of the park plan and its construction. For example, having a booth at the annual Harvest Festival; helping people to visualize the park with pictures in newspapers; putting up a project description regarding plans for the park and fund-raising.

g.) Explore options to establish a permanent source of funding for parks.

Strategy 1B. Continue Development of the Downtown Park.

Phase 1 was completed during the 1997-1998 fiscal year. It consisted of design, engineering and construction of a 12,000 square foot skateboard and in-line skating facility and the installation of storm drainage and underground utilities.

Action Plan:

Phase II: The park will include a shelter, a landscaped area for picnics and leisure activities, public restrooms and pathways.

Strategy 1.C. Implement plans to improve Lynn Newbry Park.

Action Plan:

a.) Improvements are phased as follows:

Phase I: Reconstruct restroom facilities to accommodate current and future traffic.

Phase II: Restore native landscaping, which was damaged or destroyed from 1997 flooding.

Phase III: Maintain parking area.

Strategy 1.D. Integrate Library Park Plan into the Civic Center Master Plan.

Strategy 1.E. Preserve City-owned property, currently used as driving range, as open space.

Strategy 1.F. Pursue the acquisition of land for parks, especially that are south of Arnos Street.

The type of park use intended, but not limited to, is a passive rather than active park providing a large, open and natural area, a pathway through and/or around the perimeter, and benches for viewing wildlife.

OUR IDENTITY

Goal 1:

Promote and enhance Talent's friendly, small town atmosphere.

Strategy 1A.

Assure that Talent's entryways impart a sense of pride in our community.

Action Plan:

- a.) Define Talent's City limits with welcome signs that are sturdy, artistically pleasing, and readable.
- b.) Survey entry areas and draw up landscape plan.
- c.) Form public/private community partnerships to raise funds to implement entrance strategy.
- d.) Make extensive use of volunteer labor.
- e.) Clear or clean up area and prepare ground for landscaping.
- f.) Use drought resistant plants whenever possible.
- g.) Where feasible bring irrigation to site.

Strategy 1B. Encourage citizens, businesses, organizations, and city government to take part in volunteer activities.

Action Plan:

Build this into responsibilities of city Volunteer Coordinator.

Strategy 1C. Create garden spots for the enjoyment of citizens and visitors.

Action Plan:

- a.) Shade is important! Small rest spots downtown (extending to the newly developed Depot area) should include either existing trees or planting of specimen sized trees.
- b.) Install comfortable benches.
- c.) Plant drought resistant colorful plants.
- d.) Install additional attractive trash barrels.
- e.) Park personnel and volunteers will coordinate the maintenance of these areas.

Strategy 1D. Establish architectural standards to unify the downtown and depot area.

Action Plan:

- a.) Install uniform colored "street signs" to direct people to important places, i.e., City Hall, Talent's Community Hall, the library, police station, fire station, parks, churches, etc.

Strategy 1E. Create incentives for businesses and property owners to engage in clean up and beautification programs.

Action Plan:

- a.) Hold a series of meetings between City Government and business to establish a cooperative effort to improve downtown.
- b.) Discuss which incentives might motivate merchants to beautify and repair their shops.

Strategy 1F. Recognize Talent's history through the preservation of historically significant properties.

Action Plan:

- a.) City to provide incentives to property owners to restore historical buildings.
- b.) City to seek grants to provide funding sources for the community's historic buildings.

VII. NEXT STEPS

A Strategic Plan is intended to be a “living document”, periodically reviewed to track accomplishments, and at times revised to reflect current conditions. As officials and citizens focus on the implementation of specific goals, they may continue to revise or refine the Action Plans originally designed in 1997. As additional residents are drawn into the process, goals and strategies will be refined.