



## CLIENT:

## Talent Urban Renewal Agency

The Talent Urban Renewal Agency engaged A.wordsmith to craft a messaging framework and go-forward strategy that would serve as the foundation for all internal and external positioning.

## Client Description

The Talent Urban Renewal Agency aspires to eliminate blight and deterioration in Talent, Oregon by designing and building streets, sidewalks, parks and civic spaces, replacing and repositioning water and power lines, installing streetlights and trees, assisting economic development, and providing facade improvement grants for commercial and historic structures.

Since 2020, when the Almeda wildfire created massive destruction across the Rogue Valley, destroying over 2,600 homes and displacing 816 families in the Talent-Phoenix School District alone, the Agency has been partnering with city leaders, government agencies, and non-profit organizations to design, develop and construct the first locally driven transitional to permanent housing development in the nation – the Gateway Project. With a unique combination of recovery and housing expertise, financial assistance, unprecedented community giving, case management, counseling, and support with everyday necessities, these organizations are taking bold action to restore community and reunite displaced families and businesses (despite demographic, cultural or socioeconomic barriers that may impede their ability to return home).

## Project Description

The Talent Urban Renewal Agency engaged A.wordsmith to craft a messaging framework and go-forward strategy that clarified their identity, guiding principles, project promise, heritage, values and timeline, and outlined recommendations for PR and communications. This was intended to serve as the foundation for all internal and external positioning.

### Key strategies included:

- **Meeting with key stakeholders** from the Talent Urban Renewal Agency to uncover their communications objectives and the anchor narratives, emotions, descriptors and services that brought the value of the Gateway Project to life.
- **Conducting a comprehensive market analysis** to identify opportunities for the Agency and partnering organizations to expand on current issues and trends, debunk the misconceptions, and shine a light on its innovative approach to local recovery.
- **Leading seven separate interviews with the mayor, city council members, the superintendent and communications director for the Talent-Phoenix School District, representatives from the Oregon Department of Human Services and Oregon Housing and Community Services, Rogue Retreat, the ACCESS Center for Community Resilience, and other organizations** who were telling the Gateway story with displaced families, students, business owners and partners on a frequent basis. These conversations helped extract their insights, experiences, successes, and perspectives on the project and its areas of differentiation.

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## Key Results

Through diligent research and meaningful conversations, A.wordsmith developed a thorough messaging framework and go-forward communications strategy that shined a positive light on the unprecedented community collaboration, new developments in construction and housing availability, unparalleled expertise of partnering organizations, and ultimately positioned the Gateway Transitional Housing Project as a pioneering example for other cities to emulate when faced with similar situations. These results can be observed through the following:

- Curated anecdotes and impact testimonials that captured the full breadth of the transitional to permanent housing project's value to external and internal audiences.
- Developed a messaging framework that successfully struck an emotional chord and set the project apart from other locally led recovery efforts, while reinforcing the impact the project has on families, students, business owners and the broader community.
- Developed a go-forward communications strategy designed to reinvigorate the Agency's reputation, increase awareness and site occupancy, position itself as a credible resource for relevant housing transition insights and advice, and uniquely differentiate itself as the first locally led recovery project in the nation. As part of this, we recommended a proactive and multi-faceted communications campaign centered on website consolidation and refinement, consistent community communications, a steady cadence of marketing materials and thought leadership content, earned media placements, social media management and awards.