

## COMMITTEE FOR THE FUTURE OF DAMASCUS

Date: March 31, 2003

Location: Damascus Assembly of God Church  
19070 SE Sunnyside Rd.

Meeting #: 45

Attendees: 24 (see roster for names)

Meeting will be recorded and minutes will be taken to abide by public policy. Any changes to the minutes should be given to the Secretary.

### **1. Call Meeting to Order:**

Dee Wescott, Chair, called the meeting to order.

### **2. Introductions:**

John Gray of Metro was present in the absence of Kristin Hall to explain the current findings of the Powell/Foster Corridor Study. Tim Smith of SERA Architects was in attendance to make a presentation on the core values process. Kim Anderson of Sunrise Water Authority was present as well. Welcome!

### **3. Presentations:**

#### **a. John Gray—Metro—Presentation on the Foster Road Plan**

John Gray began his presentation by saying that Metro has developed two studies, one that address the North/South transportation routes and the other addresses the East/West transportation routes. Variations of these will be tested in June to evaluate how well they address traffic needs as well as their environmental and social impacts. Changes to them will be made as necessary. The plan eventually adopted will respond to the changes in the Damascus/Boring area as it develops its own transportation plan so that there is a logical flow of transportation routes for the region.

The Powell/Foster Corridor Study was realized due to the deficiency in transportation to meet present and future land use goals on those roads from Ross Island to Gresham. (Transportation is defined not just as roads but as mass transit and bike lanes as well.) The study is using computer models based on the latest employment and population numbers available to determine where traffic exceeds regional standards for acceptable levels of service within 1700 travel analysis zones (TAZs) in the region. Improvements are then proposed, tested, analyzed and combined for a final proposal.

Some possible East/West changes include expanding Powell to five lanes, expanding Foster Rd. where possible (the Johnson Creek area is geographically prohibitive), improving Towle Rd. and expanding Hwy 212 and/or eventually constructing the Sunrise Highway. Some possible North/South changes include expanding 172<sup>nd</sup> (even possibly extending it north to connect with 174<sup>th</sup> into Powell and Division) and 190<sup>th</sup> (though not connecting it south to Hwy 212 due to buttes), and improving Butler Rd. and 242<sup>nd</sup>.

A question was asked regarding Pleasant Valley's new concept plan and how that would alter one of the concepts of these studies, which is to promote greater flow on Foster. John answered that, although the Pleasant Valley plan currently dead ends Foster at the city center, there may be ways to retain the essence of that concept but still allow traffic to flow East/West.

One option would be to detour around Pleasant Valley center and connect with an expanded 190<sup>th</sup>. Should additional traffic utilize 172<sup>nd</sup> to Foster to commute into Portland from an urbanized Damascus, Metro's plans will respond with better connectivity between the two. The current study should be able to forecast dilemmas like this by the study's conclusion in June. The study is using the latest employment & population numbers available. John will ask that Kristin Hall make those numbers available to the Committee.

John emphasized that all these options were not developed in a Metro vacuum, but in conjunction with ODOT, TriMet, Gresham and Pleasant Valley. Benefits and disadvantages are being studied for all options by all entities.

There is funding in place for some improvements but a good portion of proposed improvements have not yet been funded. Since Hwy 212 is a state road, a question was asked whether there would be state funds available for its improvement. John Hartsock answered that the state's history has been to unload highways as much as possible to local jurisdiction. The responsibility of Hwy 212 will fall to whatever city takes governance of the area probably without additional state money offered to assist in its improvement.

John Gray finished by stating that he would make available maps in hard form and possibly in soft file form to the Committee as they are completed. He cautioned that maps are always changing so copies become obsolete fairly quickly. He said that he would be glad to return in June after Metro has completed the study to give the Committee an update on their findings.

#### **b. Tim Smith—SERA—Presentation on Visioning/Goal Setting**

Tim Smith began his presentation by stating that his professional experience includes a visioning and planning process for 300-mile Richland County, South Carolina, helping the Amish community in Lancaster, PA plan their role in the urbanization of the area and helping to develop an award-winning model while teaching at the University of Pennsylvania that outlined principles, concepts and strategies for achieving ecological, social and economic sustainability in rapidly urbanizing farming regions at the edge of

large metropolitan areas. Personally, he was Chair of the Land Use Zoning Committee for the 300-year-old town in which he lived as it tried to retain its history while managing increasing growth.

When asked for his opinion on whether the reality of living in Portland is different than the national reputation Portland has of well-managed growth, Tim answered that regionally Portland has done a great job managing growth and providing a working transportation system, but getting around within the region, especially within the suburbs, is lacking. He said it is more efficient to build a strong network of smaller roads for short trips rather than requiring use of larger roadways. He added that cul-de-sacs prohibit good flow of traffic within neighborhoods.

Tim distributed a handout outlining three questions that will help the Committee assess and plan for its role in the concept plan process and a draft proposal of a process for identifying community core values.

The first question was, “Is your planning decision-making role clear?”. This asked the Committee to define its relationship with the County/Metro. Possibilities ranged from decisions made solely by the Damascus community to solely by the County/Metro, with shades of sharing the decision-making in between. Tim offered that the relationship would hopefully vary depending on the issue at hand. For example, governance structure would most likely be a decision made predominantly by the community, whereas land-use definitions will be determined predominantly by County, Metro and state regulations.

The second question was, “Will you know a good plan when you see it?”. Tim explained that it is important to develop a set of core values and evaluation criteria against which plans can be judged. It is even possible to structure a number system as an evaluation technique to score each option so a clear decision can be made on its ability to satisfy the elements that the community determines are important.

The third question was, “Are you aware of alternative growth models that could be applied to Damascus?”. Tim briefly explained ways that other communities have retained important elements, such as owner-operated businesses on main street or a rural feel, through creative zoning.

To attain the former, one option could be zoning the commercial district to include mostly smaller ground floors. It is illegal to exclude a particular kind of business but most chains require a larger “footprint”. If an area has only small spaces to lease or buy, it narrows the potential field of applicants. Choices like this will affect the local economy because a portion of the money flows out of the community and into a corporate headquarters somewhere else. Money from owner-operated businesses generally flows within the community. The downside of restricted zoning is that limiting the field of applicants can result in vacant storefronts if supply is greater than demand.

To attain the latter core value, one option could be using a transfer of development rights. This idea allows higher density in designated areas and lower

density in outlying areas while compensating those in the lower density areas by allowing them to sell their density credits to buyers in the urbanized area for increased density. This allows some areas on the outskirts of the city to retain a rural feel, provides a place for small farms and nurseries and avoids one urbanized area from flowing into the next. The downside is that this idea has never been tried in Oregon and it would be a challenge to develop a structure that, in reality, fairly compensates landowners in the lower density areas who would be restricted from developing their land outright. This has been done in other parts of the country and in other countries.

There are four steps in Tim's draft proposal of a process he has previously used for identifying community core values. Step one identifies strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats of the community, documents visual preferences and documents functional preferences.

The community has identified strengths and weaknesses through previous forums, surveys, polls and meetings, but has not fully identified its opportunities and threats.

Tim offered one way to document visual preferences within and outside of our community. Residents would use a disposable camera and take pictures of spaces or places inside the community that they feel they could not or would not like to live without. As residents travel around the area or the country, they should do the same for elements of other places they would like to see become part of Damascus.

Functional preferences would include owner-operated businesses on main street or a particular type of road system. To facilitate visualizing how the community might want an urbanized Damascus to function, the Committee could identify places that have a density similar to Damascus' proposed density and ask residents what they like or don't like about those places.

Step Two is to organize the findings in Step One into categories of issues, like retaining rural character, community design, high water quality, etc., for example, then create subcommittees in charge of each category to devise goals and objectives for each issue. Some, such as water quality, could be already ensured due to regulations. All water that ends up in the Clackamas River must be treated to comply with strict water quality regulations. Others may need more research and strategizing to be accomplished.

Step Three includes devising goals and objectives, as stated above, and then converting them into evaluation criteria by which planning options could be judged. All of this information would then be compiled into one document that enable the community to, Step Four, implement the evaluation criteria armed with a tangible way to comment on and evaluate design options.

Dee Wescott, Chair, asked how it would be possible to preserve the rural character of the area and comply with the density regulations set down by state law. Tim answered that it could be possible by preserving all stream corridors even those running through high density areas, focusing growth in places that make sense and preserving places where growth doesn't make sense and attempting to work out the logistics of the transfer of development rights idea.

When asked his opinion about the 1000 Friends study, Tim commented that it had good and bad elements. It very successfully identified land use zones and, as a conceptual model, demonstrated how to fit 100,000 people in the Damascus area. However, it may have been more useful to the community if it delved into a detailed comprehensive plan for a few test neighborhoods instead of the whole area and produced options that assumed a lower density or one that included a viable farming community. It did not take into account the community's values.

Though not a financial analyst, Tim reported that market studies in some of the communities with which he has worked have shown that smaller houses in urban settings sold better than larger sites further away from the town center. Also, there can be a cost savings on building infrastructure in smaller, higher density areas rather than an expansive medium density area. However, Dee mentioned that the service providers are not thrilled at having to extend the infrastructure through lower density areas to get to the higher density areas, as there are fewer developments to foot the bill along the way. But Metro has decreed that cities develop from the town center out, so service providers will likely have to find a way.

Tim also stated that a variety of housing types in most areas would avoid the formation of single socio-economic neighborhoods that can lead to ghettos. The most successful communities have a mix of housing types and price ranges, like Fairview and Orenco Station.

In closing, Tim was asked whether, in his opinion, the Committee could accomplish this core values process by September using a smaller group consisting of members of the Committee, the CPOs and "neighborhood captains" as a baseline and presenting a narrowed-down version for the greater community's opinion in a fall forum.

Tim thought it could be done using the County's structure of three 6-hour meetings, one in April, May and June, analyzing the data over the summer within the Committee and structuring it for community consumption at a forum, and for a consultant's fee of about \$50,000. The process would have to be tight and efficient. It would not be linear, but rather jump back and forth between conceptual and comprehensive. Ideally, a value would be developed, then it would be "tested" by extrapolating a detailed result, evaluating whether that was the intended result and altering it if necessary. It's not easy to do but is very effective.

John Hartsock reported that the County has only allocated \$10,000 for the core values process and that the Committee's funds are limited. However, the allocation was based on a more limited scope of work. There may be room for re-allocation of funds in the County's budget to accommodate the use of a consultant(s) threaded throughout the process. This "thread" would logically be hired for the core values process as well. Since it appears that Oregon Solutions will not be able to provide the service needed to accomplish the core values process, it is likely that the County will have to submit an RFP (request for proposal) for it to the Portland business community.

The question was asked what would a Plan B look like if there were limited funds available for this process. A few options surfaced: do as well as we can on our own using the proposal that Tim brought as well as input from other sources; hire a consultant(s) to evaluate how much of the process has already been accomplished and what areas need to be worked on; hire a consultant(s) on a sporadic basis to provide big-picture guidance and do most of it ourselves; ask County/Metro to hire the thread consultant and supplement that with a technical consultant when necessary; and start by setting up the documents that enumerate the parameters of the process that we know and distribute them to the neighborhood captains to get started.

Ernie Platt, At-Large Board Member, wondered aloud if Michael Jordan may be able to help us from his new position, as of May 1, as Chief Operating Officer of Metro. Metro is heavily involved in the process and a productive start to it may reap benefits during the long run, making the entire process more successful, which is in everyone's best interest.

John Hartsock mentioned that it would still be possible to accomplish the core values process and incorporate it into the County/Metro's concept plan design should it not be undertaken until the fall. However, this would put a severe time constraint on the Committee's ability to accomplish the core values process, the financial feasibility study and a proposed structure of governance documents and submit them to the County Commissioners by January of 2004.

4. **Open Agenda:** None
5. **Adjournment**