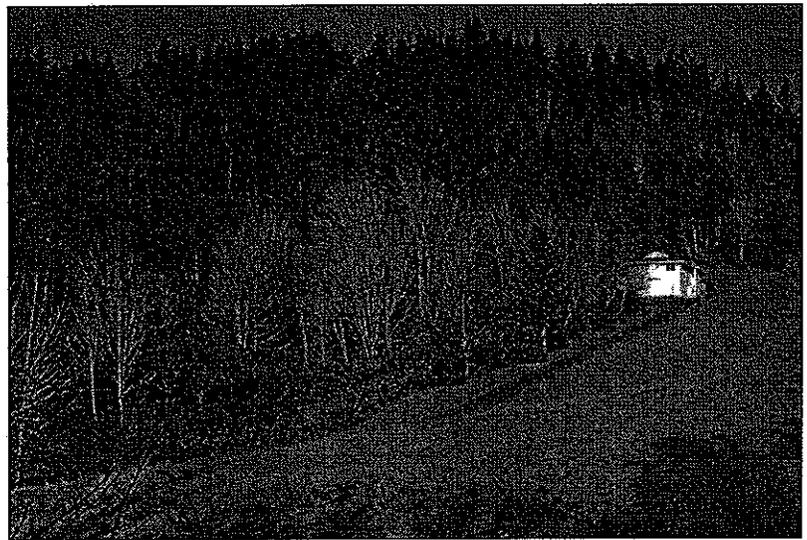
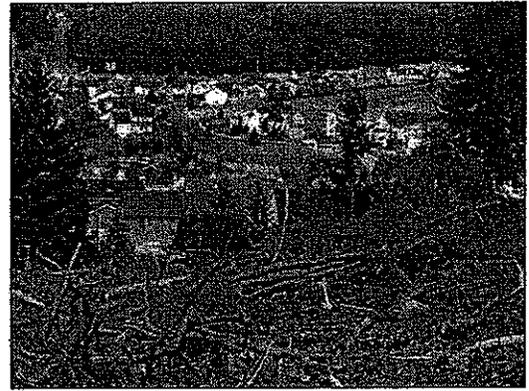


The Damascus Story



BY
DEAN APOSTOL,
MIG AND
ANITA YAP,
CITY OF DAMASCUS

PHOTOS COURTESY
OF THE CITY OF
DAMASCUS

A Great Oregon Experiment

Damascus, founded in 2004, was the first new city incorporated in Oregon in over 22 years. (La Pine incorporated in 2006). Four years later, we report on the progress, challenges and lessons learned in the creation of this new American city in the 21st century.

THE JURY IS STILL OUT on whether Damascus will be a success. In the interim we have a story to tell that may have important lessons for planners and policy makers alike.

A Bit of History

The Portland Region established a large Urban Growth Boundary (UGB) in the late 1970s. Pressure to expand it built gradually. In 1998 Metro added 1,400 acres to the UGB in upper Pleasant Valley, a semi-rural enclave between Gresham and Portland. The rural center of

Damascus is only a few miles south of Pleasant Valley. At that time, both areas were characterized by unplanned scatterings of random subdivisions separated by farms, nurseries, and forested buttes.

Farming was always marginal in this area. Crop choices and productivity were limited by lack of irrigation, presence of class 3 and 4 soils, and poor drainage. Berry growing thrived for a time but declined by the 1950s.

Ornamental nurseries have

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been successful but require a lot of infrastructure investment, including deep wells for irrigation and dense networks of drain tile. Because of close proximity to Portland, many farms had been chopped into smaller part-time farming or forestry operations. Some landowners opted for subdivisions where septic fields could function.

In early 2002 Damascans and Boringonians (residents of nearby Boring) received notice that Metro was considering the area for urban expansion. 1000 Friends of Oregon scheduled a "design charrette" to explore how a city of 100,000 or more people could be squeezed onto the local hills and valleys using progressive planning principles. The "Damascus Charrette" produced a plan for a city of over 100,000 and alerted local people as to what was likely to be coming their way.

Community members were sent surveys about local values, asking what people liked about the land, whether they favored urban growth and so forth. In overwhelming numbers the answers were: we like it as it is and no thanks to urban growth. Bye-bye now, and don't let the screen door hit you on the way out. But planners are a stubborn lot accustomed to initial rejection. They knew that land use rules require "exception lands" (mostly rural residential zoning) to be urbanized before more productive farm and forest land, and that this would eventually push urban expansion into the Damascus area regardless of

local opinion.

Some community members formed the "Committee for the Future of Damascus" which became the voice of the community to elected officials. Most local residents remained on the sidelines. Others came to open houses to berate the planners and perhaps scare them off. "Thanks for coming, your input is very important to our process" was the usual response.

In the end Metro decided to expand the Urban Growth Boundary (UGB) by 12,500 acres around rural Damascus. Boring was spared, at least for the time being.

When in Doubt Form Another Committee

Metro has a requirement that a concept plan be created for new UGB expansions before rezoning and development can proceed. This is a sensible provision that slows things down, and prevents poorly planned development.

The chief problem at the outset was political. Since the 12,500-acre expansion area was unincorporated and not obviously attached to any existing city, who would be in charge? Clackamas County was on record that any urban development in the Damascus area would have to be within incorporated city limits. They already had their hands full providing urban services to unincorporated, previously urbanized areas, and did not want to govern another non-city. Ultimately the County and Metro teamed up and a \$1.4 million Federal Transportation grant was appropriated to pay for the effort. A combination staff and consulting team (OTAK) was assigned and an unwieldy advisory committee recruited (including one of the authors, Dean Apostol).

Eighteen months, many meetings, some spirited arguments, a new design charrette, and a few public open houses later a plan was agreed upon. This was a compromise stitched together from the disembodied parts of four or five previously considered alternatives. It was part two-dimensional land use map and part visionary urban design using smart

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Highway 212 traffic near the city center, over 22,000 vehicles daily travel on Highway 212.

growth principles. But it was compromised to the point where few really liked it and it lacked defenders. The committee and community had begun with "let's build a vision" and ended with "this will have to do." The final open house had over 800 people. An anti-green contingent handed out anti-plan flyers at the entrance. People were herded from one display to another. "Your input is very important to our process" was the refrain.

Reactions ranged from "interesting" and "what are all these color blobs" to "You have got to be joking!" Three years of effort and the local community was no closer to embracing an urban future than it had been in the beginning. Faced with the prospect of apartments next door, new roads slicing through neighborhoods, subdivisions transformed to industrial parks, and every farm paved over the process had come full circle to "thanks but no thanks." The concept plan process ended with a loud bang when the anti-greens joined forces with anti-new-roads-in-my-backyard neighbors in theatrical shout-fests at the final two Advisory Committee meetings.

The process closed with no modifications made to the plan that nobody liked very much. And the funds were all spent.

The New City of Damascus

Part way through the Concept Plan development Damascans voted to incorporate a new city. A few saw this as a hopeful sign that the community was organizing itself to go boldly where no Oregon community had gone before—to a planned future before the city was built. But the yes vote was rooted more in fear than in hope. Pro-incorporation campaigners knew that raising the specter of Happy Valley and/or Gresham gobbling up green space via annexations and paving over strawberry fields with ugly McMansions or cheap apartments was the surest way to get people to vote for what amounted to a hefty tax increase to pay for what few wanted in the first place. Sixty-five percent voted for incorporation.

One of the new city council's first acts was to

quietly bury the Concept Plan. Understandably, they wanted a fresh start, and brought in new consultants and the first of four community development directors to begin again. It went back out to the community, this time in small kitchen table "coffee klatch" groups (thus avoiding theatrics,) to ask everyone once again what their values were, what they liked about Damascus, and so forth. To no one's great surprise, the answers were as before.

Most people (of the several hundred who showed up) liked Damascus as it is, meaning a semi-rural tapestry of farm fields, forested slopes, and scattering of large lot or small acreage subdivisions. Some additional development was acceptable, but not too much and not too fast. Many liked the idea of having a nice new downtown, permanently conserved green spaces, walkable neighborhoods, retention of rural character, and so forth. These were codified in seven "Damascus Core Values," essentially the same as expressed before.

The new planners assured the participants that "your input is very important to our process."

Starting a new city proved to be more difficult than most had imagined. There needed to be a place to hold council meetings, someone to take meeting notes and make public records, an official budget, computers, desks, pencils and someone to answer the phone. It took several years for essential administrative tasks and a basic infrastructure to be put into place. Initially, all city administrative tasks were run by the Mayor, city council, and various consultants, most of whom had little relevant experience in city administration and political and community relations. New staff were hired and dispatched with alarming speed, including five city managers and four community development/planning directors in the first two years.

The Draft Comprehensive Plan Process

A new planning committee was formed, called the Community Coordinating Committee (C3). It included 23 members, all local

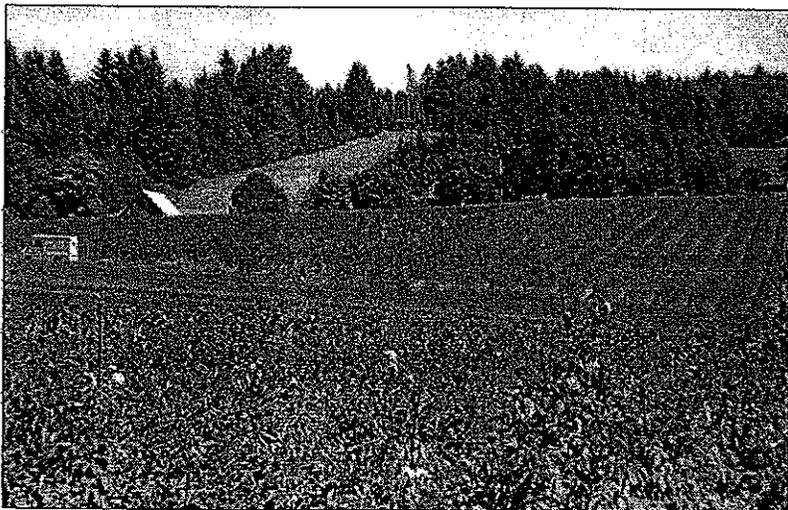
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citizens, property, or business owners. Their role was not well defined at the beginning, but they were expected to serve as a filter for planning until a formal commission could be created. They were asked to represent the wider community rather than their own personal interest. Opinions ranged from strong private property rights advocates to strong conservationists, with all shades in between. Additional committees were initiated for transportation, citizen involvement, codes, and natural resources.

Consultants did detailed mapping of natural resources (Goal 5) and hazards (Goal 7). Other consultants created land use suitability maps that used complex formulas that considered a range of variables (slope, wetness, proximity to main roads, parcel size, and so forth). A Community Atlas was assembled from various demographic and GIS databases. A scenic landscape survey was completed to get at the question of what citizens valued with respect to rural character (a key sticking point during the Concept Plan). Damascus was divided into four sub-areas to break a big planning problem down into more manageable bits. A series of workshops and a third design charrette were held, culminating in a Draft Comprehensive Plan.

The Proposal

The Draft Comprehensive Plan proposes a basic land use framework. It includes a base zone of at least 1-3 new housing units to the acre, so that



Thompson Farms looking east to the UGB edge

every landowner with more than an acre would likely get some new development opportunity. This is intended to soften the resistance of landowners with natural resource constraints. It includes a conservation overlay that encompasses steep slopes, stream corridors, wetlands, hazard areas, and forested habitats. A new downtown core is located in the Southeastern quadrant of the city, where slopes are gentle, tax lots large, and major highway access good. Employment centers are placed mostly at the periphery of the community. The interior includes several village centers at key intersections. All existing subdivisions are kept intact, possibly with light levels of infill, but no major land use changes. An "urban farm" overlay is included in part of the city, with the hope that some small to moderate scale local food growing can continue into the indefinite future.

So far, it is fair to say that the Draft Comprehensive Plan has been met with a less than enthusiastic response from the community, the C3, and the city council. The main arguments against it are that it lacks vision and does not correspond to the community core values. Negotiations are under way to figure out what to keep and what to change. We expect that this process will take several further iterations before a plan is created that has a critical mass of community support.

Lessons Learned

There are several reasons why planning and future development of Damascus has been, and will continue to be, difficult.

- First, there are simply too many landowners operating at cross-purposes. Successful planned communities the world over have been initiated and controlled by top-down authorities, either empires establishing colonies (Rome, Greece, Spain,) strong states creating orderly growth (Finland, Sweden, Great Britain, the Soviet Union,) or private developers who owned large areas of land as real estate ventures (Seaside, Irvine, Radburn, Riverside, and Reston among others). China has been

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planning and building large cities over the top of rural residents, but they can and do simply order existing residents, who hold no title to the land, to move out and make way for progress. None of these are not going to happen in Damascus.

- Second, a substantial majority of the community still resists the idea of transforming the rural place they live into a city. The local political climate is uneasy. Without a long-term track record of municipal decisions, the newly elected city council is uncertain about making any unpopular decision. Local citizens resent the rules imposed from above (Metro and the Land Conservation and Development Commission (LCDC)), and this resentment has fertilized the soil for seeding anti-government ballot initiatives. About 65% of current residents live on an acre or less, and have nothing to gain from development. The latest evidence of this resistance is a series of local ballot measures that restrict any and all methods to pay for planning and infrastructure. The most recent (not yet voted on) would prohibit all inter-governmental agreements without a direct vote of the people. Inter-governmental agreements are essential to the functioning of a new city, and it is difficult to imagine moving forward if the measure limiting them passes. Local control is unfortunately being used to keep most or all development out, rather than to make it better fit local values.
- Third, the projected cost of new infrastructure may be prohibitive. As every reader of this Journal well knows, there is not enough funding for infrastructure needed in existing communities, let alone to build a new one. Current estimates are that total infrastructure costs to service a Damascus of around 60,000 people will be \$4 billion, requiring systems development fees of \$40,000 a unit or more, which would be the highest in Oregon. (Note: a vote of the people is also required before SDCs can be established due to the aforementioned ballot measures).
- Fourth, there is the land itself. If Damascus were a good place for a mid-sized city, in all likelihood one would have been built here years ago. The combination of steep topography, wet

soils, and high stream density all conspired to make Damascus a fairly isolated location. It was settled only a full two decades after the rest of the Willamette Valley was claimed, did not get electricity until the mid 1930s, and even today is hard to get in and out of by road. Several streams form deep canyons that are barriers to development and road crossings. It could be that these land constraints are significant enough to keep development away for many years to come.

- Fifth, the state-planning framework has no provision for planning and designing a new town. When Lawrence Halprin drafted Willamette Valley Choices for the Future in 1972, the foundation for Oregon's planning system, he called for identifying suitable locations for new towns, recognizing that if urban growth boundaries simply kept on expanding Oregon would end up with the very sprawl it wanted to avoid. But the state planning goals failed to make provision for entirely new towns (other than destination resorts, which are not meant to be complete towns).

The Metro Functional Plan and Statewide planning goals thus push Damascus into a planning approach designed to shape new growth in existing communities, not to create new communities. All Oregon planners and cities must work within the state framework, but every city in Oregon, including Keizer and La Pine, were substantially built before the rules were established. Damascus lacks a comprehensive plan policy framework. State administrative rules address requirements "at periodic review" or a "post acknowledgement plan amendment," but Damascus has no plan to amend. How do these rules apply to a new city? The regulatory jury is still out, waiting until Damascus can piece together a comprehensive plan, policy document, development code, zoning map, transportation system plan, Goal 5 and 7 program, a housing needs analysis, economic opportunities analysis, and numerous other requirements. A "chicken and egg" question follows every planning work task at hand. No adopted comprehensive plan map, no buildable lands inventory, no

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ESEE analysis based on plan designations. What comes first?

Finding the Opportunities

While the challenges are substantial, opportunities to think and plan creatively are also abundant. The absence of existing urban infrastructure opens the door to exploring alternatives. City planners and consultants have been investigating an "ecosystem services" approach to public facility planning. This would place a value on the existing natural environment for the services it provides to the community. For example, healthy upland forests, riparian corridors, and wetlands all protect water quality and reduce stormwater management costs. Since Damascus has yet to implement new zoning and development regulations, it can charge valley bottom development to pay for upland forest conservation that reduces stormwater system costs. This approach has potential appeal to both the resource conservationists and property rights advocates who advocate compensation for providing green space for the community.

Oregon's land use program is based in large part on strict separation of farms and cities, and thus discourages or prohibits zoning exclusively for agriculture within an urban growth boundary. But Damascus has several property owners making a good living farming, and we know local citizens value farm conservation. We may be testing state assumptions by using various tools to set aside land for continued use for growing food, and integrating active farming and the agricultural heritage into urbanization, albeit at a scale appropriate to an urban community. Initiating a regional foodshed strategy is one possible outcome of these efforts.

Recognizing the high costs of infrastructure and limitations on groundwater and surface water supply, Damascus is exploring options for integrating potable water, wastewater, and stormwater management. We may be able to employ alternative wastewater systems, including reuse of stormwater, and marry this effort to farm conservation.

Arguments over greenspace are what derailed the Concept Plan, and open space conservation is probably the make-or-break issue for Damascus. Nearly 40% of the city is mapped as Goal 5 (Natural resource), Goal 7 (Hazards), or both. Damascans are conflicted over conservation. Based on public input, most of the community supports conserving forests, steep slopes, and streams, but at the same time many also support private property rights and want there to be economic fairness when allocating new development rights. Planners are exploring three key methods for achieving both conservation and economic fairness.

- First, landowners would have to build their density allotment on only the most developable part of their property, avoiding natural resources and hazards.
- Second, the plan may organize the community into master plan districts that require or encourage multiple landowners to join together to plan development and conservation in concert. If one landowner has valuable conservation land, their entire development allotment could be transferred to nearby properties with less conservation value, with everyone receiving near equal value for their property.
- Third, a transferable development right option (TDR) could allow broader shifting of development rights from parts of the community with high conservation value (the forested buttes) to areas with high development potential (the new city center).

We expect some combination of these three methods, along with ecosystem service program.

Predictions about the Future are Hard

Damascus was incorporated to gain "local control," but cannot avoid the broad legal and policy framework established by state and regional officials. As the first new city ever pre-planned in Oregon, Damascus may be allowed to test the edges, and possibly directly

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challenge one or more aspects of the Oregon Land use program. This potential has several regulatory and watchdog organizations keeping their eye on our progress.

One positive outcome to date has been the impetus to build community where in the past there had not been one. Damascus was essentially a disparate cluster of subdivisions, with kids attending one of several school districts, some on community water systems, most not, some with homes hooked to County managed sewer systems, but most not. The only two entities in common were the Boring Fire District, the nursery ground for a number of community leaders, including the first City Mayor, Dee Westcott (recently passed away), and the local newspaper, the Damascus-Boring Observer. Planning a new city has brought the authors, City Council members, committee members and hundreds of others that have shown up at meetings together for the first time. Many have lived in the community 20 or more years but had never met most of their neighbors. City staff has begun to develop a neighborhood association program and has initiated other community building events. This is a slow process and building trust among community members, city staff, and elected officials will take some time.

Sometimes it is hard to see how this community will be able to move forward, create a workable plan, and gain enough support for managing and financing orderly development. Damascus may yet emerge one day as a model 21st century American city, or it may remain a lovely rural landscape that is a city in name only. A hardy few continue to meet and make plans.

The current economic crunch has bought some time for Damascus to regroup and get things right. If a good plan, supported by a critical mass of the community can be completed soon,

perhaps the anti-development, anti-community backlash can be interrupted and even reversed. A lot rides on Damascus' shoulders, and we often feel that the whole state is watching us. If we can create a compelling community of walkable, solar powered villages and hamlets nested within green corridors, forested slopes, and urban farms, with employment close at hand, and if a way can be found to build an affordable infrastructure, Damascus could become the star on the crown of the state land use system. But if it continues to sink into an unproductive argument clinic, it could become a battering ram for those who want to take state planning down once and for all.

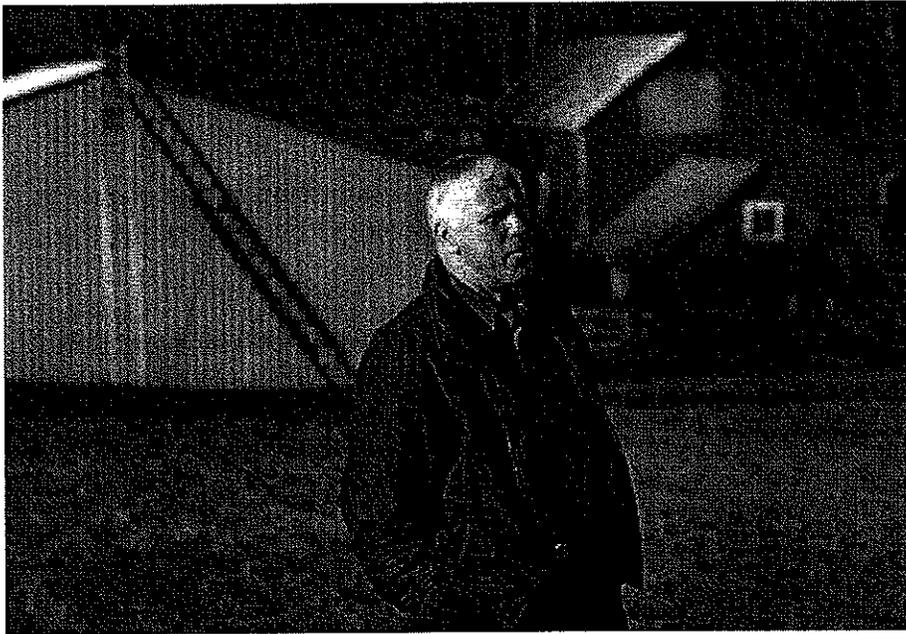
Readers who have any ideas that can help us should call or write. We are still in the planning stage, so stay tuned. Your input is very important to our process!

Dean Apostol is a senior landscape architect with MIG, a planning, urban design, and landscape architecture firm in Portland and Berkeley. He lives in Damascus on a small farm-nursery, and has published three books: Forest Landscape Analysis and Design, Restoring the Pacific Northwest, and Designing Sustainable Forest Landscapes. He writes regularly for the Damascus-Boring Observer (winner of the 2004 Oregon APA Merit Award in Journalism).

Anita Yap is the Damascus Community Development Director, the longest tenured planner in the history of Damascus (two years and fingers crossed). She previously worked for Bend, Coburg, Lane Council of Governments and Lane Transit District. She received several awards for her work on innovative projects and building community, including the Governor's Livability Award and the Oregon Downtown Award. She finds that the Damascus experience is the challenge of a lifetime.

Road to bigger, better Damascus leads to dead end

Posted by Amy Reifenrath, The Oregonian January 16, 2009 22:26PM



Randy L. Rasmussen/The

OregonianDamascus resident Dan Phegley helped organize a taxpayer revolt after discovering that his 2.5-acre property fell into a proposed green area and becoming angered at the prospect of paying urban-level taxes on land that could be restricted to rural-density development. With state and federal funding also drying up, the city now has no way to pay for mammoth growth intended for the area.

DAMASCUS -- Seven years after planners tapped this Clackamas County hamlet as the epicenter of Portland-area residential growth, hardly a nail's worth of construction has been completed.

Visions of greenspaces, walking trails and bicycle paths wending through "villages" housing 50,000 new residents, it turns out, were just that. The decision backfired so badly that today, after passage of local anti-growth ballot initiatives, the metropolitan area once deemed most likely to develop appears to be the place where it's least likely to occur.



Now, with Metro once again facing a mandatory review of whether and where to expand the region's urban growth boundary, it's clear that the Damascus debacle has produced a philosophical sea change.

"I think this council will look very skeptically at further urban growth boundary expansions," David Bragdon, Metro Council president, said. "The reality is that we need to be more efficient with land already inside the boundary."

Growth expansions in Damascus and elsewhere were driven by a state law requiring larger urban areas to maintain a 20-year land supply on which development can take place.

What's lacking is any way to pay for that development.

The result, said Jim Chapman, president and general manager of Legend Homes, is a land-use system that is broken and perhaps unfixable. "Look at the trouble we have replacing even a single sewer plant," Chapman said. "What I know for sure is that places like Damascus won't develop in my lifetime."

Others share Chapman's opinion that Damascus, a semirural enclave served by septic tanks and narrow roads, never had any realistic chance of evolving into one of the state's larger cities. "We all stood back, rolled our eyes and said, 'This is nuts,'" said Tualatin Mayor Lou Ogden. "It was like a tree-planting movement at the North Pole. The Amazon, maybe, but not there."

Charlotte Lehan, Wilsonville's former mayor and new Clackamas County commissioner, said planners have learned a lesson. "I doubt this will ever happen again," she said. "It's very difficult to build a city from scratch."

Bragdon, who was a Metro councilor at the time of the 2002 decision, said he suspected all along that Damascus and the thousands of other acres added to the region's urban growth boundary in 2002 would never develop as planned, even if the economy had remained healthy. "The system is predicated on taxpayers providing free infrastructure on the edge of town," said Bragdon. "That may have been true decades ago, but it's just not the case anymore."

And it's not just Damascus. Thousands of acres on the region's west side, such as North Bethany and West Bull Mountain, sit virtually untouched. Despite the continued in-migration of thousands of new residents, those areas are likely to remain that way for years, planning officials and developers say.

Lack of money to pay for needed roads and services has other immediate implications, as well. It probably means that the era of building one new subdivision after another, platted on acreage spaced increasingly farther from existing urban services, is over.

Tight money

A quarter-century ago, local governments and developers relied on seemingly bottomless reserves of federal and state money to pay for the new roads and services needed to link increasingly outlying tracts of land with existing developments. In recent years, disappearing state and federal aid, combined with local tax-limitation measures, have severely crimped such subsidies.

Other difficulties have cropped up, as well.

Paying for new infrastructure in areas such as North Bethany and West Bull Mountain, for instance, became nearly impossible when developers, jumping at a then-red-hot housing boom, optioned land at top-of-the-market prices. The market's subsequent collapse sucked with it any ability for builders to chip in for new roads and services.

Real estate agents, who closely followed Metro's 2002 policy discussions, were stunned when they learned that roughly 12,000 acres of the total 18,600-acre expansion would encompass the buttes, valleys and rural hideaways around Damascus. The area, big enough to create another Beaverton, represented the largest residential boundary expansion in state history.

"We all took a deep breath and said, 'What are they thinking?'" said Mikalan Moiso, principal broker in Re/Max Equity Group's Lake Oswego office. "No matter which direction they decided to expand, you can't throw that kind of growth in one particular area and think it's going to work."

With the 2009 Legislature under way, there is little indication that lawmakers will look seriously at repealing the 20-year land-supply law.

Instead, policymakers are counting on a corollary planning effort now under way that could effectively supplant that law. The project, undertaken by Metro and Multnomah, Washington and Clackamas counties, will identify which edges of the current urban growth boundary will be developed in years to come and which will remain as rural reserves.

Regardless of the outcome, however, it won't erase the painful lessons still lingering from the Damascus decision.

A revolt by residents

The 12,000 residents living in and around Damascus responded to Metro's growth designation by voting, in 2004, to form Oregon's first new city in 22 years. The rallying cry became, if growth is truly on the way, we have a far better chance of controlling our own fate if we incorporate.

"When we looked to the west, all we saw was rooftops and asphalt," said Jim Wright, Damascus' newly elected mayor. "If 50,000 new folks were really on the way, we thought we could design our new city better than someone else."

Initially, some expected a land rush. A few longtime residents sold their properties to developers almost immediately. Some waited, hoping for higher land values, and became frustrated with the pace of the process. Others continued to oppose incorporation, fearing that the money needed to run the new city would wildly increase their property taxes.

Planning for the new city began with a series of neighborhood meetings and informal presentations. Aided by planning money provided by Metro, a concept plan finally was unveiled -- to decidedly mixed results. Some property owners who lived on the hillsides and other areas proposed as housing-free greenways heatedly objected, saying their development rights were being impinged.

Dan Phegley, who moved from Portland to Damascus in 1993, said he had difficulty even finding his property on the map. When he did, he was angered to see a proposed green overlay running through his lot.

Phegley subsequently founded an anti-city group called "Ask Damascus." The group pulled off a stunning coup in November's election by persuading nearly 70 percent of the city's voters to approve measures prohibiting the city charging, without a vote, a single dime for the systems charges that most municipalities rely on to pay the cost of new development.

"I'm not sure people understood exactly what they were voting for," Mayor Wright said. "But at this point, we're pretty much dead in the water."

Wright, however, remains philosophical.

"Most of us figured at first that the development coming our way meant we'd be built out in 10 years and, obviously, that's not going to happen," he said. "At this point, it may take 30 to 50 years, but come back then, and I predict that a lot will have changed around here."

-- Dana Tims; danatims@news.oregonian.com

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Comments

nativepdx says...

The revoke in Damascus happened, because Metro and the planners forgot to ask the people, that owned the property, what they wanted. Then the city council, working with Metro to rezone people private property, making some people very rich and other not, (sometime in the future). For some strange reason, people living in a rural area, were not all interested in living in a high density area. It just might be possible that they moved there, because they liked it, the way it was.

They forgot to "ask Damascus". But we should expect that from Metro. Metro knows better how we should live. And it was just too selfish, of many of the people in Damascus, to think they had a say how their property should be developed.

Metro is a bully with unlimited funds to push their agenda and Metro does not care about local control and how people feel in their neighborhoods.

Metro's job is to stack and pack our neighborhoods with as much development and density as possible. We should not be concerned, they are doing this to preserve our neighborhoods! NOT!

In Oregon we live on about 2% of the land and 98% of Oregon Is OPEN SPACE. Why Is Metro Mandating Density in our neighborhoods?

Every time Metro says they are doing this to preserve our way of life, It looks more like they are doing just the opposite.

Beware of false promises from Metro.

Posted on 01/17/09 at 7:04AM

2Z4 says...

Native - Metro didn't forget. They aren't interested in what the subjects think.

Posted on 01/17/09 at 8:17AM

bigguyII says...

It's now time for the people of the Tri-county area to vote to dissolve Metro. Maybe the "ask Damascus" could get that started!!! Do we really need a nonresponsive quasi government bunch of green nut cases telling us how we should live in and develop the land in the tri-county area?? NO!! Lets vote to eliminate this unnecessary 3rd level of government now!!!

Posted on 01/17/09 at 10:01AM

embian says...

I agree-- Metro is a useless bureaucratic mess that is out of touch with reality.

