

Six Principles For A Clean, Green, Affordable And Fair Community

The designs shown in this report conform to a detailed set of design instructions, referred to as the *Design Brief* (see Appendix). In some ways the design brief is as important as the designs that it informs. The design principles and instructions contained in the brief are tailored for the Damascus area, but could be applied anywhere else in the Metro region, or even beyond – anywhere that a clean, green, affordable, and fair community is desired.

The process for developing the design brief revolved around a series of stakeholder roundtable events that involved people with a direct professional, emotional, or economic interest in the issue. (See Appendix for the Design Principles Group membership list). The first step in this process was to distil a voluminous body of existing federal, state, regional and local policy and law into six community design principles. Distilling such a volume of policy and legislation was a difficult task; however, at the end of the process the design principles group was virtually unanimous in their support for the following six principles, and for the design instructions that flowed from them.

- 1. *Design Complete Communities***
- 2. *Provide an Interconnected System of Streets Parkways and Greenways***

3. ***Establish Green Infrastructure Systems to Bound, Protect, and Reinforce All Neighborhoods***
4. ***Shift to Lighter, Greener, Cheaper, Smarter Infrastructure***
5. ***Build a Healthy Economy***
6. ***Preserve Present Homes; Introduce New Ones***

(See Appendix for a more complete description of the six principles)

These six principles provided the basis for the detailed instructions included in the brief. The instructions in the brief explicitly described the required workshop outcomes and were stated either in the form of numeric requirements (such as a specific number of jobs or housing units to accommodate) or performance requirements (such as mandates to protect and enhance stream function).

Three Design Teams: Go, Home, and Green

Twenty-five square miles is a large area to design in six days. It is a daunting task even when there is a detailed design brief, talented and knowledgeable team members, and ample base information. To make it more manageable, the task was broken into three issue areas. The participants were divided into three teams to address each issue area. Each team was then asked to start from their assigned issue when developing proposals, but also directed to prepare a complete plan that satisfied all of the other imperatives of the brief. It was hoped that this would allow each team to give adequate attention to their assigned issues without losing sight of the plan in its entirety.

The first team approached the task with a special emphasis on protecting and repairing the natural systems and features of the area; they were the “Green Team.” The second team was asked to look at the problem with a special emphasis on transportation; they were called the “Go Team.” The third team was to approach the problem with a special emphasis on community and neighborhood design; they were called the “Home Team.”