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UMORE Park listening sessions are important

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On Monday, the University of Minnesota will hold the first of six September listening sessions designed to give Rosemount residents and others in the area a chance to have input on the design of a project that could turn out to be one of the most significant in Rosemount's history. Over the 10 days that follow, the public will have several chances to shape, even if just a little, the future of a development that could ultimately bring as many as 30,000 new residents to Rosemount, more than doubling the city's current population.

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There are certain groups sure to be there. People either strongly in favor of the project or vehemently opposed will show up to speak their minds. It's the group in the middle, that silent majority, that Charles Muscoplat, the U of M vice president in charge of the project, would like to hear from. It's also the group he most worries will stay home on listening session nights.

It would be too bad if they did. The seemingly neverending

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argument over the future of downtown Rosemount should be ample evidence of just how difficult it is to redevelop an existing city. Why wouldn't Rosemount residents take advantage of a rare opportunity to make sure things are done right the first time?

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commercial/residential development, part living science lab for testing U of M researchers' theories on everything from developing healthier neighborhoods to better using renewable energy sources. It's development will have a huge impact on Rosemount's future and the future of everyone living here.

The project envisioned for 5,000 acres the U of M's UMORE property is ambitious. Fully built it will be part

There will be plenty of other chances to have input before this all comes together. The University will not hire a consultant to help develop the project's master plan until early October, and it will likely be a quarter century or more before everything is fully developed.

Still, these discussions will go a long way toward shaping the look of things to come. It would be a shame if what came of them did not truly represent something all Rosemount residents wanted.