

# ROSEMOUNT Town Pages

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## **Residents can help shape 'U' land's future**

*Nathan Hansen*

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Things are already starting to change on the University of Minnesota's UMORE Park property in Empire Township. Trees are disappearing, hauled off by an energy company. Suddenly it's easier to see the remnants of the Gopher Ordinance Plant that operated on the property briefly during World War II.

The big changes are yet to come, though, and the University wants to give area residents a chance to have some input.

Starting Monday the University will host a series of six listening sessions regarding development planned for the UMORE property. Over the next 25 or 30 years that residential development, guided by University-produced master plan, will bring an estimated 20,000 to 30,000 new residents to the area.

Each of the six listening sessions will focus on a different aspect of the development, from education opportunities to energy to the environment. Charles Muscoplat, the university vice president responsible for the project, said the goal of each session is to let residents talk as freely as possible about what they would like to see happen on the property and what they would like to avoid. Muscoplat expects conversations to cover philosophical and practical issues as well as specific examples of what people want to see happen on the property.

"People have ideas and people have strong objections, too," Muscoplat said. "I've done a lot of these over the years and often times people who feel passionately either pro or con show up at these events.

"It's always been hard to get the silent majority to show up, but we have sent literally thousands upon thousands of invitations."

This is the first of several meetings to be held regarding the 5,000-acre UMORE project, which will be both a typical neighborhood and a chance for University researchers to put into practice theories of building a healthy community. The community will also likely maintain a University presence, with professors offering lectures and classes.

"The vision is that, over time, we will help create a university-founded, culturally rich, diverse community of 20,000 to 30,000 people," Muscoplat said. "We are hosting the listening sessions to involve people very early in our planning process. We'd like to hear what people would like to have in a community if they could help build it from the ground up."

The project is still in very early stages. The University's board of regents voted last week to hire a consultant to identify concrete and other resources on the UMORE property. The University will sell concrete on the site to help pay for the planning process. Muscoplat expects the regents to vote early next month on a consultant to help develop the master plan for the development.

If you go

Sept. 17: Education

Sept. 19: Environment

Sept. 20 Energy

Sept. 25: Health

Sept. 26: Interdisciplinary opportunities

Sept. 27: Transportation

The Sept. 17 and 19 meetings will be held in the Dakota Room at Dakota County Technical College, 1300 145th St. E., in Rosemount. The remaining meetings will be held in the banquet room at the Rosemount Community Center, 13885 S.

Robert Trail. Because a light meal will be served the University has asked that people interested in attending make reservations by calling 612-626-3976 or visiting [www.umorepark.umn.edu](http://www.umorepark.umn.edu).