

## Green goals for UMore Park



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U of M releases its final concept plans for developing its property near County Road 42 in Rosemount

by Jessica Harper  
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The University of Minnesota recently revealed its final concept plan for a large eco-friendly community within Rosemount.

“The community will not be utopian or space age, but hopefully different,” said Charles Muscoplat, vice president of statewide strategic resources for the U of M.

The university’s concept plan for developing its Outreach, Research and Education (UMore) Park property was presented to its board of regents Nov. 14.

The board is expected to vote on the plan Dec. 12.

UMore Park is located off County Road 42 and Biscayne Avenue in the city of Rosemount and Empire Township.

The university’s goal is to turn the 5,000-acre property into a community of 30,000 people by 2030, which will double Rosemount’s population.

The concept plan provides a detailed map and description of what the community will likely include.

University officials hope to create a modern, walkable community that is innovative in using eco-friendly and energy efficient technologies, Muscoplat said.

The community will include eight neighborhoods that will each be within walking distance from places of worship, schools and parks.

In addition to making UMore Park a walkable community, the university plans to have Bus Rapid Transit and light rail services extended to the development.

The Minnesota Department of Transportation (MnDOT) does not currently have plans to expand the light rail to the area.

However, planning for transit now is a good way to prepare for needs in the future, Rosemount Mayor Bill Droste said.

“With the aging demographics, there will be less demands on roads and more people looking at alternative transit,” he said.

Additionally, the university reported that homes and offices will be built using energy efficient and eco-friendly materials.

University researchers are studying how they could use biomass to produce energy for the community and use underground heat pumps to reduce natural gas usage in homes and offices.

“This project will demonstrate how people can live more sustainable and set this as a national and international model,” Muscoplat said.

UMore Park will also feature a man-made lake and about 30 percent of the land within the community will consist of green-spaces.

Vermillion Highlands, a 2,822-acre research, recreation and wildlife management area will remain south of UMore Park.

In addition to being an eco-friendly community, UMore Park will include numerous commercial, industrial, retail, office and civic centers, which will create jobs in the community, Muscoplat said.

As the university’s plan moves forward, the city of Rosemount will face the challenge of incorporating the large development into the existing city, Droste said.

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