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UMore options: From golf to green industrial park

By **JEFF SHELMAN**, Star Tribune

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Maps of the University of Minnesota's community of the future feature a little bit of everything. Lakes on the site of former gravel mines, an eco-friendly industrial park, a light-rail line to downtown St. Paul and even 36 holes of golf.

It's still a long way from becoming reality, but the university on Thursday offered its most detailed proposals for the nearly 5,000-acre UMore Park site just west of Hwy. 52 in Rosemount.

University Vice President Charles Muscoplat presented the school's Board of Regents four potential scenarios for development. The university hopes to generate significant income from any development, initially from gravel mining. But university officials have said that revenue likely won't cover expenses for several years.

"I like what we're doing now," university President Robert Bruininks told the regents. "I think it has vision, it's creative. This is about advancing new ideas for the public good."

The first step is an environmental study that will take an estimated 18 months. But now the regents have four different visions to ponder:

SCENARIO NO. 1 TRADITIONAL MASTER-PLANNED COMMUNITY

Population: 23,000

Parks and open space: 26 percent of property

Acres of gravel mined: 615

The story:

This option looks the most like other Dakota County suburban developments. The emphasis here would be on single-family detached homes with prices similar to the surrounding area.

Design Workshop, the Colorado-based consultants hired to develop the proposals, acknowledge that this option lacks some of the innovation and research opportunities that the university is hoping to create.

SCENARIO NO. 2 URBAN CENTER

Population: 30,000

Parks and open space: 24 percent

Acres mined: 638

The story:

This plan features a greater density in housing and creates transit hubs surrounded by retail. Because of the density, this model would provide a variety of housing prices and styles. It would also be an alternative to sprawl.

This plan, however, requires transit to be an option. While the hope is for a rail line into downtown St. Paul, that possibility is likely a decade away. In addition, there is the challenge of getting people to accept higher density housing so far from the Twin Cities' urban core.

SCENARIO NO. 3 LIFESTYLE COMMUNITY

Population: 26,400

Parks and open space: 36 percent

Acres mined: 300

The story:

Call this one the upscale model, featuring estate-type housing, large lots and two golf courses. This is described as a "conservation-oriented community with wildlife habitat."

There are disadvantages to this option. Costly houses don't create a socially or economically diverse community. In addition, major employment centers wouldn't be as attracted to this kind of site, according to Design Workshop's report.

SCENARIO NO. 4 SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY

Population: 30,000

Parks and open space: 26 percent

Acres mined: 497

The story:

The biggest difference in this model is the creation of an "eco-industrial business park" and a research park near Hwy. 52. The hope would be that companies interested in reducing waste and pollution would be interested in setting up shop in a green park.

The hope is that the business park would allow many residents of UMore Park to work close to home.

This plan features a mix of housing styles and incorporates rail transit.

Businesses would have to be attracted to the site and, again, transit funding would have to be obtained.

UPCOMING PUBLIC FORUMS

The U is hosting four public forums this month both on campus and in Rosemount to discuss proposed plans for UMore Park. People

interested in attending are asked to RSVP at www.umorepark.umn.edu or by calling 612-626-3976.

Monday 10 a.m.-2 p.m. Coffman Memorial Union

Tuesday 12:30-4:30 p.m. St. Paul Student Center

Thursday 6-9 p.m. Rosemount Community Center

June 23 6-9 p.m. Rosemount Community Center

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