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What's Inside

[News Releases](#)

[National Media](#)

[U of M News Wire](#)

[Expert Alert](#)

[Story Tips](#)

[U of M Moment](#)

[Resources](#)

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Public invited to September listening sessions to contribute ideas for new University of Minnesota-founded community at UMore Park

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MINNEAPOLIS / ST. PAUL (9/4/2007) -- The University of Minnesota is hosting six listening sessions in September to gather ideas and input for a new community being planned on the site of the University of Minnesota Outreach, Research and Education (UMore) Park. Located in Dakota County, Minn., UMore Park includes 5,000 acres of land owned by the university. Following studies of how best to use the land, the university's Board of Regents charged the university to initiate a concept master planning process to guide the development of a new community at UMore Park, to be undertaken over a 25- to 30-year period.

"The vision is that, over time, we will help create a university-founded, culturally rich, diverse community of 20,000 to 30,000 people," said Charles Muscoplat, the University of Minnesota vice president responsible for the development. "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 six listening sessions are tailored around six topics:

- * Mon., Sept. 17 - Education - including early childhood development, daycare, K-12, post-secondary and adult education and lifelong learning;
- * Wed., Sept. 19 - Environment - including "green" buildings and infrastructure, the landscape and natural resources, storm water management, air and water quality;
- * Thurs., Sept. 20 - Energy - including renewable energy (biomass, geothermal, solar, wind), energy production and efficiency, reduction of greenhouse gases, and conservation practices;
- * Tues., Sept. 25 - Health - for individuals and families, including nutrition, prevention, recreation, safety, health care and health services;
- * Wed., Sept. 26 - Interdisciplinary Opportunities - including housing, diversity, arts and culture, technology, and international linkages;
- * Thurs., Sept. 27 - Transportation - including increased access and mobility through multiple transit options, innovative transit services, transportation infrastructure and safety.

The Sept. 17 and Sept. 19 listening sessions will be held in the Dakota Room at the Dakota County Technical College, 1300 145th Street East, Rosemount, Minn. All other sessions will be held in the Banquet Room at the Rosemount Community Center, 13885 South Robert Trail (Highway 3), Rosemount, Minn. The sessions, which will run from 5 p.m. to 7:15 p.m., are free and open to anyone who would like to attend. Because a light meal will be served, RSVPs are appreciated. Registrations can be made online at www.umorepark.umn.edu or by calling (612) 626-3976.

The sessions correspond with six academic task forces formed by the university to consider and identify university strengths that would contribute to the quality of life in the community. Each session will include a brief presentation about the vision for the new community, an overview about the specific subject being discussed, and roundtable discussions to hear from those attending.

People who are unable to attend the sessions may provide input by submitting their comments at www.umorepark.umn.edu, or by calling (612) 624-6252.
