



Board of County Commissioners

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Fairfield County Requests Proposals for Economic Development Strategic Plan

Lancaster, Ohio – As Fairfield County prepares for future growth, the county commissioners have announced they are seeking proposals for a comprehensive economic development strategic plan. The plan will focus on smart growth to ensure the county maintains a balance between its agricultural base and expansion of residential and commercial land.

The COVID-19 pandemic has changed the landscape of economic and workforce development and this plan will help address that. Intel's announcement for a massive complex in New Albany will lead to unprecedented growth in the region. An update to Fairfield County's 2018 land use plan is necessary to make it more relevant due to these new factors.

"Fairfield County is poised to benefit from the job growth throughout the Columbus Region," said Jeff Fix, Fairfield County Commissioner. "It's important for us to provide a roadmap to our villages and townships to make sure they are prepared for that growth while at the same time preserving the landscape that makes each of them unique."

The Commissioners hosted a symposium of residential development in May attended by governmental entities from throughout the County. The need for planning became evident in that meeting to fulfill both workforce and housing needs in Central Ohio.

The comprehensive plan will identify growth areas throughout the County and improvements needed to make those areas ready for development. It will involve input from villages and townships to create a roadmap for future development. The plan will also identify industries the economic development department should target based on strengths and weaknesses of the County. While the cities of Canal Winchester, Lancaster, and Pickerington will be consulted in the plan, the focus will be on areas outside of those municipalities since they already have planning mechanisms in place.

"We want to make sure we are ready for the growth that will continue in our County for the decades ahead," said Rick Szabrak, Fairfield County Economic and Workforce Development Director. "We're excited about this process and hopeful to find a consultant or a group of consultants who can help us prepare for that growth. Fairfield County is already the fourth fastest growing county in Ohio and has a great story to tell companies that are looking to expand."

The intent to bid is due on August 22, 2022 with a goal to roll out the plan in February of 2023. Meetings with cities, villages, and townships will take place throughout the end of 2022.

The Request for Proposal can be found at www.businesscounty.com. For more information, please contact Rick Szabrak at Rick.Szabrak@FairfieldCountyOhio.gov.

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