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Village and township get ready for growth

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THE COLUMBUS DISPATCH



COMMERCIAL POINT, Ohio -- Some residents of northern Pickaway County are concerned about losing their small-town feel in the face of almost certain urban development.

So the Commercial Point Village Council and Scioto Township trustees have pledged to work together to plan the area's growth. Together they hired a planning consultant and started soliciting input from the public. The second of two public hearings is scheduled for 7 tonight at the Men's Club adjacent to Scioto Elementary School in Commercial Point.

The consultant, Bird Houk Collaborative of Gahanna, will design a plan for growth.

"We've got to put together a lot of information to help us make the right decisions," said Bird Houk associate Gary Smith.

Village and township residents appreciate their proximity to Columbus, but they value their small-town atmosphere. They expressed concern about the consequences of development, such as traffic, drugs, crime, overcrowded schools and overworked emergency services.

"Township roads are too small for the development we've had in the last few years," said Jim Ramey, a township resident for more than 40 years.

Scioto Township is one of a few Pickaway County areas prime for development, said Terry Frazier, director of the county's Office for Development and Planning.

"The future is unknown to all of us and how we can manage not just growth, but change is a very valid concern," he said.

Rickenbacker Airport is an expected source of growth, particularly in the logistics business, Pickaway County Commissioner Glenn Reeser said. The next decade could bring up to 10 more facilities spanning nearly 1 million square feet and hundreds of jobs and homes.

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