



Study calls for police merger

Recommendations to improve quality of life will be released Thursday

By TERESA ANN BOECKEL
Daily Record/Sunday News

Article Last Updated: 11/11/2007 01:06:12 AM EST

Nov 11, 2007 — One of Metro-York's recommendations will be to create one police department for the immediate York area, and, in January, officials plan to ask municipalities to help figure out whether it would work.

Consolidation of police departments will be one of numerous recommendations Metro-York will make Thursday to improve the quality of life in York County. The YorkCounts organization looks for regional solutions to problems.

A few area police chiefs already have publicly supported taking a look at a consolidation. Crime is increasing countywide, and departments are being stretched thin, York Area Regional Police Chief Tom Gross has said.

His department covers Dallastown, Felton, Jacobus, Red Lion, Windsor and Yoe boroughs, as well as Windsor and York townships.

Right now, seven police departments cover the city and the surrounding boroughs and

townships: York City Police, Springettsbury, Northern Regional, York Area Regional, Spring Garden, West Manchester and West York.

Representatives from the City of York, and West Manchester, Spring Garden, Springettsbury and York townships have been involved in discussions about possible consolidation.

York City Council President Cameron Texter said he thinks a study would be good. Crime crosses municipal boundaries.

Much of the city crime is drug-related, and people from the county come in to buy drugs, Texter said. Another example is the recent crackdown on the drag racing on Route 30, which also involved people from outside the city.

Richard Guyer, a Spring Garden Township supervisor, said he thinks there's merit in looking at a consolidation if it could make the community safer.

Spring Garden and Springettsbury townships recently merged their fire companies, and, so far, people have been satisfied with it, Guyer said.

"It was a long, long process until it came to bear," he said.

Municipal leaders said they expect the same long process would happen with a police consolidation study. All sorts of issues would have to be addressed, including contracts, pensions and levels of service.

Advertisement



A bright idea in online advertising.

PrinterStitial® ads by Format Dynamics.



FormatDynamics®

Print Powered By  FormatDynamics™

ydr.com

The chiefs supporting a potential consolidation say it would allow departments to put their assets where they would be most effective. It would allow officers to specialize in areas, improve communications, and give residents a bigger bang for their buck.

Some residents, though, have worried about how police coverage would be handled, such as whether an officer would be working in each district, as is the case now.

Some of the concerns would be ensuring that all areas are receiving equal protection and service, Guyer said. And if it comes down to the point of being prohibitive because of cost, that's a whole other issue.

York Township commissioner Phil Briddell recalled that officials had 139 items to be addressed when the York Area Regional Police Department was formed years ago - everything from police certification on down the line.

"We made it through," he said.

The Governor's Center for Local Government would conduct the feasibility study at no charge to the municipalities, said James DeBord, director of YorkCounts. It would be paid for with state money. The municipalities would need to give a letter of intent.

Metro-York, a YorkCounts organization that looks for regional solutions to problems across the county, will be presenting a list of recommendations, which will include actions that

can improve high school graduation rates and ensure high paying jobs.

The organization also will announce co-chairs to handle the recommendations, DeBord said.

Going public

Metro-York will release its recommendations 10 a.m. Thursday during a news conference at the York Jewish Community Center, 2000 Hollywood Drive.

The organization picked the JCC for the event because the Spring Garden Township/York Township line runs right through it, according to a news release. The center also is not far from the Springettsbury Township and City of York borders.

And in the background is York Suburban High School, which, like other school districts in the region, faces its own set of challenges as the school district population grows.

For a multimedia look at regionalization issues facing York County and York City, visit <http://www.ydr.com/projects> and click on "Greater York: Still at Risk."

top

What the report says

Metro-York's report will include the following list of recommendations on handling the municipal and educational problems:

Advertisement



A bright idea in online advertising.

PrinterStitial® ads by Format Dynamics.



FormatDynamics®

Print Powered By  FormatDynamics™

ydr.com

- Conduct comprehensive, regional land planning for Metro-York.
- Address the way people are taxed in the Metro-York region.
- Modernize York County government through its form and structure.
- Establish a consolidated, regional Metro-York police department.
- Attack the high-school dropout rate in the York City School District.
- Try to reverse the drain of middle-income families out of the city school system.
- Give York City School District students a choice about where they attend school.
- Address the stress that suburban schools are seeing, such as growth and increased taxes.

top

Advertisement



A bright idea in online advertising.

PrinterStitial® ads by Format Dynamics.



FormatDynamics®

Print Powered By  FormatDynamics™