



REGIONAL COOPERATION: WHAT DO YOU THINK?

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Nov 25, 2007 — **Last week we asked:** *Do you agree with Metro-York's suggestions on boosting regional cooperation in York County?*

I agree about how to improve life in York County, York city and York County. I'm 1,000 percent behind the whole idea. Anything that will get more policemen on the streets, anything that will keep more children in the school, anything that can be done to get parents involved with their children to keep them off the streets.

NORMA MANGAN YORK CITY

Implementing Metro-York: How about incremental changes instead of trying a massive overhaul?

1. Consolidate police departments? Physicians get credentials to practice in multiple hospitals, why not license police officers in several municipalities as a first step?
2. County government: Can only three people actually handle it? I think we all know the answer to that, but from what I see of New York City, L.

A., Cleveland and others, political fighting and corruption get worse when there are more people involved. Regional planning is a must, local municipalities must be forced to conform to a board, comprising experienced and non-political individuals, who are independent of the commissioners.

3. Tax reform. Let's start simple. Give a deduction of \$1,000 to \$2,000 per year of ownership, from the assessed value, for actual residents and local businesses - residence or place of business as determined by federal taxes. Or, for retirees, defer all tax increases until they, or the estate, transfers the house to another. There should be no reliance on gambling income or partisan fighting in the Legislature. Unless, of course, one wants to let developers, landlords and speculators have a free ride.

4. Schools: Look around at other consolidated districts. Where the parents are involved, the students do well. Consolidation provides another level of bureaucracy, but doesn't improve the worst schools. I believe most would agree that the smaller the school the better the chance of quality education. Let's first try using the millions to break up the large, under-performing schools into neighborhood schools.

The computer-and-wireless age changes the way the world operates. By moving drastically to models developed before it matured, we certainly will have to throw out expensive changes made to convert to a system that is becoming obsolete. Simple, incremental, changes

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now will make the gradual incorporation of new technologies a lot easier.

CARL HUBER JR.
SPRINGETTSBURY TOWNSHIP

While I strongly support the recent report and recommendations of Metro York, I feel compelled to point out that they are very similar in tone and content to the York 2000 report of the 1990s and the Rusk Report.

It is not a new concept to recommend the merging or consolidation of local governments, agencies and school districts. However, these recommendations will keep showing up until the leaders of these organizations support them through action rather than indifference.

For example, newly reelected county Commissioner Steve Chronister could move his crime fighting agenda ahead by actively encouraging the consolidation of the police forces of York City and the surrounding townships.

The hard work of Metro-York (and York 2000 and Better York) deserves more support than it will probably get from those who can truly make a difference.

KELLY ADAMS
HANOVER

Rusk was right a decade ago. Now we have community members who are finally putting forth those ideas.

We should, as NIKE says, "Just do it!"

The city is overburdened with high taxes and failing schools with a dropout rate that recycles into poverty and crime.

Businesses that were enticed into the city by tax incentives leave after the eight or 10 years for more favorable suburban settings and much lower taxes. Lowering city taxes to levels enjoyed by suburban areas is only fair.

Sharing that tax burden would begin to make doing business in the city worthwhile. Work study programs during high school may encourage students to see beyond their school years and give them a venue to a better, more productive future. Since some parents aren't stepping up to stop the failure and dropout rate, a strong mentoring program may help diffuse the hopelessness some kids endure.

There is already a flight out of city schools by parents who have seen the positive results of placing their students in other districts. Central is one of those districts, and the diverse student population encourages a productive, enlightening environment that educates the students to live in a society that blurs color and class and affords opportunities for anyone who takes advantage of the educational opportunities provided.

York city students and residents need those same opportunities. It will take work and sacrifice and cooperation among municipalities, and the local fiefdoms who are reluctant to relinquish some power and share the wealth and the taxes in a more equitable fashion. Home ownership should be a goal for city residents.

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Neighborhood pride and safety should be a priority. The city should have access to supermarkets and shopping areas that suburban residents enjoy. Think of the uproar if there were no food stores in a suburban area.

There is so much potential for greater York. We need to eliminate boundaries and think as one. We cannot afford to wait another decade. I'd love to see it happen in my lifetime. I remember as a child when downtown York was the place to go. Bears, The Bon-Ton at Christmas, Jacks's, Newswangers, Weists. And the Strand and Capitol were the theaters to see movies on weekends. But I also recall the blighted York neighborhoods of the '50s and the bigotry and racism that spurred the race riots of the late '60s. We've come a long way, but we're obviously not where we need to be.

MARG GOTWALD
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