



YDR Opinion: Join metro police study

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Who's in on a YorkCounts study of the feasibility of a Metro York regional police department?

Tuesday's front page had a helpful box accompanying a story on the study listing participating organizations - reprinted here. They all deserve applause from citizens/taxpayers who ought to be pushing elected officials for more efficient, cost-

effective services such as police.

But who's out?

Unfortunately, there are some conspicuous absences on that list. For instance, West Manchester Township, a major inner-ring suburb of York. Officials there have steadfastly refused to even study the possibilities of such a venture - even going so far as to include a nonregionalization clause into the recently approved West Manchester Township Police union contract.

That's a shame.

The potential of such a venture will be diminished by the absence of that major local crime fighting player.

Another potential major contributor that will be sitting on the sideline is the Northern York County Regional Police Department, which has not made a commitment to provide information for the study.

That's surprising and disappointing.

For one thing, some of the largest members of the

Northern Regional compact are participating in the study: Manchester and Dover Townships. In fact, Dover Township is home base for the regional department .

Northern Regional - one of the first regional police departments in Pennsylvania - is often held as an example of what regional police departments can offer: Cost-effective but highly professional police services that would be difficult for one municipality to afford on its own.

Perhaps its not too late for Northern Regional to get on board - and at least share data for the study? We hope so.

In any case, the results of this year-long study will be highly anticipated. What's needed is a hard, nuts-and-bolts, dollars-and-cents look at a such a venture. Does it make fiscal sense? What would the costs be in various configurations with various participants?

How might such a venture address the elephant in the room - the costs and burdens of crime fighting in the city - in a way that would be politically palatable to suburban taxpayers? Honestly, that's going to be a tough equation to solve.

But the police departments and municipalities that have pledged to participate in this study deserve enormous credit for staying open to the possibilities of a regional department that can effectively operate across invisible municipal lines to fight crime that doesn't respect such boundaries.

Kudos also to YorkCounts for taking the lead on this important issue.



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