



## Regional police merger study under way soon

**JOHN WALK** The York Dispatch

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York City Police Capt. Russ Tschopp said he believes public safety would be improved if York City merged its police department with surrounding municipalities.

"You would have better coverage, more manpower in specialized areas," he said. "And it would be cheaper because you could eliminate replication of some of the administrative duties."

That's why Tschopp said he is looking forward to a study that will soon be under way to analyze the feasibility of regionalization between York City and eight surrounding municipalities.

**Study:** The study could take up to six months to complete. Along with York City, municipalities participating in the study will include Dover, East Manchester, Manchester, Springettsbury and Spring Garden townships and Manchester, Mount Wolf and West York boroughs.

Springettsbury and Spring Garden townships and

West York Borough

are served by their own police departments; Dover, East Manchester, and Manchester townships and Manchester and Mount Wolf are served by regional police departments.

The study will be completed by D.C.-based consulting company Police Executive Research Forum.

The study is a result of work from the nonprofit YorkCounts. The group has been pushing for the study since 2007, when it recommended that the city and surrounding municipalities consolidate police departments.

**The cost:** Since then, YorkCounts has been polling municipalities and urging municipalities to participate. The study will cost \$78,000.

Money to cover the cost will come in the form of a \$39,000 state grant. The state is requiring the grant be matched dollar for dollar; YorkCounts will be picking up that tab.

After years of trying to make the study a reality, YorkCounts executive director James DeBord said he is eager to see the results of the study.

"But who knows? Maybe this study won't come back with positive news about regionalization. But we won't know until we look at everything," he said.

No matter the results of the study, DeBord said it's important it be completed because he wants

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"to make sure the community is receiving the quality service and public safety it needs."

**Much needed:** The study is much needed, Tschopp said.

"Even in the 1950s and 1970s, society in general was a lot less transient," Tschopp said. "People lived where they worked and worked where they lived. But today's society has grown. People are a lot more transient. And technology has advanced, too. Yet, we're still operating under boundaries that were laid out before we even had telephones."

As a result of people becoming more transient, the amount of crime in recent decades in York County has become less concentrated and more spread out, with suspects coming from far away from the place where the crime was committed, Tschopp said.

"So, it would make sense that we work together," he said.

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