

What is YorkCounts?

YorkCounts is a community coalition... a public-private partnership... a change agent... an advocate... whose mission it is to improve our quality of life and build a better, stronger York County, Pennsylvania.

YorkCounts is a community-based coalition working to assess, sustain and enhance the quality of life in York County, Pennsylvania — building alliances, introducing partners, spotlighting issues and facilitating conversations on education, health and safety, diversity and more.

Partners include Better York, the United Way of York County, Wellspan Health, York College of Pennsylvania, the York County Chamber of Commerce, the York County Commissioners and the York County Community Foundation. Additional funding comes from the Campaign to Renew Pennsylvania (RenewPA), the Pennsylvania Department of Community and Economic Development (DCED) and the York County Economic Development Corporation (YCEDC).

It is sometimes asked, “**Who is YorkCounts?**” The answer is — YorkCounts is *all of us*. It’s everyone who wants to leave the sidelines and have a hand in making a better, stronger York County.

What is Metro-York?

Metro-York is a project undertaken by YorkCounts in 2006 and 2007 to generate recommendations for improving municipal prosperity and education. The aim is a better, stronger heart of York County.

Members of the community participated as part of three Metro-York committees — a Municipal Workgroup, an Education Workgroup and a Leadership committee. A strong, credible cross-section of elected officials, educators, municipal administrators, business and nonprofit leaders and retired Yorkers and others took part; what they had in common was a determination to tackle tough issues and stay focused on the core mission.

These panels heard from experts like David Rusk and Myron Orfield and held public hearings, then met numerous times to discuss and debate key concerns and formulate proposals. The Education and Municipal Workgroups presented their findings to the Leadership group, which in turn took the results to the YorkCounts Board. The Board decided on and adopted the recommendations.

YorkCounts will be a driving force in advancing these ideas in the coming months and years.

YorkCounts/Metro-York Timeline

1950s & 1960s — City of York begins trend of population decline as waves of middle class residents begin moving to suburbs.

1970s — Commonwealth of Pennsylvania begins to reduce share of funding for local school districts as tax bases erode in places such as York.

1980s — Community convenes York 2000 project to deal with problems, challenges facing York. York 2000 slips into obscurity after issuing public report for which there was no attempt to galvanize public support.

1996 — Nationally recognized consultant David Rusk comes to York, issues widely touted report detailing problems facing York County, in particular its urban core. Rusk illustrates connection between these issues and flawed development patterns.

1999 — Community partners create YorkCounts in order to identify key indicators, measure quality of life in York County.

2001 — YorkCounts issues first Indicators report on quality of life in York County, which confirms many of Rusk’s findings. YorkCounts partners commit to effort seeking to improve quality of life in York County.

2002 — On return visit, Rusk places York on his list of “Most Endangered Cities,” on the edge of “no return” — but notes York’s tremendous potential if trends can be altered.

2004 — YorkCounts issues action plan, detailing Ready Solutions to existing problems that can be addressed in collaboration with various entities throughout York County. YorkCounts establishes Compacts and Engagements to execute community improvement strategies — work that is still underway today.

2006 — YorkCounts releases Progress and Trends report, updating public on initial steps taken in implementing Ready Solutions. Report reflects clearly that issues confronting the heart of York County must be addressed immediately. YorkCounts launches Metro-York project.

2006 & 2007 — Metro-York Workgroups hear from experts, discuss issues, formulate proposals. Workgroups present findings to YorkCounts Board, which adopts recommendations.

Nov. 15, 2007 — Metro-York recommendations announced.