



YorkCounts Policing Study
Police Executive Research Forum

Summary Report
September, 2012

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Overview

YorkCounts, an initiative of the York County Community Foundation, and the City of York contracted with the Police Executive Research Forum (PERF) in 2011 to examine policing options and possible merger/consolidation/shared services options involving nine municipalities in York County. The goal of the feasibility study is to identify options for delivering police services in the most efficient and cost-effective way. The intention is for the study to be used as a tool that municipalities may use to evaluate options for continued improvement and sustainability of policing services. The study was funded by private contributions and with a grant from the Pennsylvania Department of Community and Economic Development. Participating municipalities agreed to supply information to PERF and meet to review preliminary results. Below is a list of the municipalities that participated in the study and the police departments serving these municipalities:

<i>Municipality</i>	<i>Police Department</i>
East Manchester Township Mount Wolf Borough Manchester Borough	Northeastern Regional Police Department
Dover Township Manchester Township	Northern York County Regional Police Department
Springettsbury Township	Springettsbury Township Police Department
Spring Garden Township	Spring Garden Township Police Department
West York Borough	West York Borough Police Department
York City	York City Police Department

Methodology

The study questions included:

1. What would be the best way to make police service more effective and efficient?
2. How would merged or consolidated policing work? What are the advantages and disadvantages?
3. What would a merged/consolidated police force cost compared to what the same municipalities are paying now for police services?

4. Are there any other options or recommendations for making public safety more effective and efficient in the Metro York area such as other smaller combinations of agencies, shared services or centralized purchasing?
5. What internal efficiency or effectiveness enhancements can be achieved by the individual police agencies examined?
6. How would the varying police pension systems be dealt with under the terms of a regional police agreement?
7. What are potential funding strategies/sources available to the participating municipalities for financing a regional police department?

To answer these questions, PERF interviewed municipal and police officials, collected data on demographics, crime, police department budgets and organizational design.

Current Policing Services

The study began by compiling information on the current police departments in terms of population in the municipality, crime rates, budgets for policing services, and current cooperative efforts among police departments.

Crime Rates

Below is a chart outlining the level of crime in each municipality.

<i>Jurisdiction (2010)</i>	<i>Population</i>	<i>Part 1 Violent Crimes</i>	<i>Part 1 Property Crimes</i>	<i>Part 2 Crimes</i>
Dover Twp.	20658	16	310	736
East Manchester Twp.	7,264	5	153	211
Manchester Borough	2,763	1	34	120
Manchester Twp.	18,161	30	403	833
Mt. Wolf Borough	1,389	0	11	42
Springettsbury	26,668	39	911	1313
Spring Garden	12,758	25	494	536
West York	4,617	13	82	452
York	43,718	421	2,071	5096

Generally, caution should be used in interpreting UCR figures. The established methodology used to report and count crimes is flawed, and can be artificially increased or decreased in a

number of ways. UCR only counts “reported” crimes. Police department practices can influence how many crimes are reported. Nonetheless, it is the only standard measure of crime available. When applied in communities in the same geographical area, it may be considered accurate enough for high-level comparisons.

When considering the policing needs of the nine communities, the existence of conditions known as *policing hazards* should be considered. The presence of these characteristics is likely to generate more police activity. These characteristics include:

- Higher population per square mile.
- Higher percentage of multi-family residential properties.
- Higher percentages of low-income housing.
- Presence of schools.
- Presence of retail establishments.
- Presence of establishments that sell alcohol.

Law enforcement officials responding to PERF’s survey provided anecdotal information regarding the most frequent types of calls and crimes reported in their jurisdiction. Their responses are presented in the following table.

<i>Agency</i>	<i>Most Common Calls</i>	<i>Most Common Crimes</i>
NE Regional	Ambulance assists, suspicious activity, domestics, busy signal/hang ups, business alarms	Theft, vandalism, disorderly conduct, DUI, burglary
Northern Regional	Assist fire/ambulance/medics, disabled vehicles, Non-criminal domestics, civil intervention, warrant services	Part I: theft, burglary, auto theft, aggravated assault, robbery Part II: simple assault, vandalism, disorderly conduct, fraud, drug laws
Springettsbury	Traffic crashes, domestics, alarms, disputes, medical assists	Theft, fraud, criminal mischief, drunk/disorderly, DUI
Spring Garden	911 hang-ups, alarms, miscellaneous, vehicle accidents (no injury)	Thefts from autos, vandalism, burglary, thefts-all others
West York	Not Provided	Not Provided
York	Disturbances, ambulance calls, domestics, disorderly conduct/harassment, suspicious activity	Disorderly conduct/harassment, theft, criminal mischief, burglary, drugs

Based on community population and the policing hazards for each municipality, the distribution of crimes presented in the above table is predictable.

Cost of Police Services

Below is a chart that summarizes the 2011 municipal budgets for policing services.

<i>Municipality</i>	<i>Population</i>	<i>Police Department</i>	<i>Budget</i>	<i>Officers</i>	<i>Cost per Citizen</i>	<i>Cost per Officer</i>
Dover Township	20,658	Northern Regional	\$2,046,225	15.37	\$99	\$133,088
East Manchester Township	7,264	Northeastern Regional	\$1,168,040	8	\$160	\$146,005
Manchester Borough	2,763	Northeastern Regional	\$362,774	2	\$131	\$181,387
Manchester Township	18,161	Northern Regional	\$2,229,221	16.75	\$122	\$133,088
Mt. Wolf Borough	1,389	Northeastern Regional	\$190,943	1	\$137	\$190,943
Springettsbury	26,668	Springettsbury	\$4,556,425	32	\$170	\$142,388
Spring Garden	12,758	Spring Garden	\$2,482,310	19	\$194	\$130,648
West York	4,617	West York	\$1,206,200	9	\$261	\$134,022
York	43,718	York	\$15,687,282	109	\$358	\$143,920

The category of “cost per officer” does not reflect the cost of a single officer, but includes a proportionate amount of all other expenses associated with the police department. For municipalities that are using the services of regional police departments, the cost per officer or citizen is based on a cost share or number of units established in the contract for services. While this analysis is descriptive at a high level, it is important to remember that the costs associated with policing a particular community are heavily influenced by contractual obligations, pension costs, and health insurance costs.

Current Cooperative Efforts

The six departments in the study group share a number of services. All can provide mutual aid under state law provisions. The York City Police Department participates in the County’s drug task force and quick response team. They also provide investigative assistance to other departments. The Springettsbury Police Department provides the assistance of their canine unit to other agencies. In addition, communications and data-sharing initiatives are underway among all the municipalities.

Options for Consideration

Sharing of Individual Services

After communication and data sharing, fleet management and maintenance is the most viable shared services option and has the biggest potential of reducing costs to agencies sharing this function. A fleet management program could reduce costs over time by managing vehicle purposes and distributing costs to the individual departments in a way that is equitable and predictable. Fuel use reduction programs applied to a large fleet could reduce fuel costs for the individual agencies.

Contracting

The contracting relationship between two or more municipalities is viable; however this approach results in a buyer-seller relationship between the municipalities. The costs associated with this relationship are negotiated. PERF believes that this is the best approach between York and West York. All municipalities involved in this study have the option of exploring a contracting relationship with each other using the data available in this study.

Consolidation

The PERF team developed the following six consolidation models for York County officials to consider:

1. *Full Consolidation* - consolidate the police services of all the participating municipalities.
2. *Ring Consolidation* - consolidate the police services of East Manchester Township, Mount Wolf Borough, Manchester Borough, Dover Township, Manchester Township, Springettsbury Township, and Spring Garden Township.
3. *Southeastern Consolidation* - Consolidate the police services of Springettsbury Township and Spring Garden Township.
4. *Northern Consolidation* - Consolidate the police services of East Manchester Township, Mount Wolf Borough, Manchester Borough, Dover Township and Manchester Township.
5. *Urban Consolidation* - Consolidate the police services of York City and West York Borough.
6. *Eastern Consolidation* - Consolidate the police services of East Manchester Township, Mount Wolf Borough, Manchester Borough, Spring Garden Township and Springettsbury Township.

The table below shows the potential savings in costs per citizen of the various options.

<i>Municipality</i>	<i>Population</i>	<i>Current CPC*</i>	<i>Option 1 -9.05%**</i>	<i>Option 2 -10.73%</i>	<i>Option 3 -9.95%</i>	<i>Option 4 -7.92%</i>	<i>Option 5 +.57%</i>	<i>Option 6 -9.14%</i>
Dover Township	20,658	\$99	\$90	\$88		\$91		
East Manchester Township	7,264	\$161	\$146	\$144		\$148		\$146
Manchester Borough	2,763	\$131	\$119	\$117		\$121		\$119
Manchester Township	18,161	\$123	\$111	\$110		\$113		
Mt. Wolf Borough	1,389	\$137	\$124	\$123		\$127		\$125
Springettsbury	26,668	\$169	\$153	\$151	\$153			\$154
Spring Garden	12,758	\$179	\$162	\$160	\$161			\$163
West York	4,617	\$261	\$236				\$263	
York	43,718	\$359	\$325				\$361	

*Cost per citizen

** Cost reduction per citizen

These figures show that each community in each scenario would realize a reduction in their cost per citizen except for York and West York in Option 5. For reasons outlined in the report, Option 7 should only be considered as a contracting relationship between York and West York. Finally, these figures assume that there will be a proportionate reduction in cost for municipalities involved in a given consolidation. Actual costs attributed to each community will be determined through the use of a negotiated cost sharing formula.

Organized Labor Issues

The participation and cooperation of labor officials and represented employees is critical to the success of a consolidation. Many issues related to costs have been negotiated in the past, and are part of existing labor agreements.

In order to analyze labor issues, PERF consultants performed a content analysis of the respective labor agreements and interviewed labor representatives from several of the departments.

Generally, all issues related to wages and benefits are subject to collective bargaining. A 2006 article written by a Pennsylvania labor attorney¹ said that “[w]hile it is generally true that a municipality may make a good–faith decision to totally disband its police department and go without police services funded by the municipality, it may not unilaterally replace its unionized force with another, even if the same officers continue to provide such services.” It is clear that each municipality must negotiate the impact of a consolidation with its respective bargaining unit.

Considerations for the Future

Based on information received by the police departments, the report recommended that municipalities explore options for expanding shared services especially in the area of fleet management and maintenance. In some instances, contracting for direct police services could be an affordable option. Various scenarios for consolidation of police departments are evaluated in the report and specific recommendations for organizational design, staffing levels, cost savings and facility usage are outlined for each scenario. Implementation of any of these scenarios would be a decision for the municipalities to evaluate.

The primary consideration for any option is cost savings. Cost savings in a consolidation come primarily from personnel costs with only one chief and reduced administrative staff. All consolidation scenarios would result in cost savings except the City and West York consolidation.

All consolidations propose the establishment of a joint oversight board and formation of a new department rather than folding one into another. The expected challenges to the process are negotiating union contracts so that benefits are not lost and; addressing concerns about pension liability. Implementation planning gets into the details of structure and staffing and would be the next step for municipalities choosing to pursue consolidation.

Next Steps

The YorkCounts Public Safety Committee has met with PERF to review the report. They are taking the summer to discuss the report with their peers and will reconvene as a committee in the fall of 2012 to determine how to proceed. If any of the options are considered to be feasible, the municipalities would then move to the implementation planning stage of this initiative. This phase will include, but is not limited to, decisions regarding participation, funding formulas, organizational structure, governance models, and labor management issues. This phase will also include detailed assessments of business processes, equipment needs, and similar issues.

¹ The paper entitled “Regionalizing Police Services” Was authored by Richard D. Miller, Esquire. It was published by the *Borough News Magazine* in June of 2006.