

Hugo Neighborhood Association & Historical Society

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January 20, 2016 Letter/Email

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Subject: Share Information About Josephine County's (JO CO's) Justice System & Public Safety Services (JS&PSS) Problem/Issue (i.e., public safety issue)

Dear Author:

We contact you as a stakeholder in defining JO CO's public safety issue (Attachment 1), and in seeking solutions for it as a JO CO Manager, and we would like to get together and brainstorm ideas. The Committee believes that the JO CO Management Team's August 19, 2014 recommended strategy elements to identify mandated and elective PSS would be foundational in developing a minimally acceptable level of public safety services (MALPSS) analysis (Appendix A). We would be interested in any necessary or mandated services your work unit identified.

We think this fits with some recent JO CO Board of County Commissioners' (BCC) ideas on PSS. For example, the citizens need to understand how the PSS elements (e.g., jail operations, sheriff's patrols, juvenile justice, district attorneys' office, etc.) work together as a system. How do the different PSS departments interact? A framework of understanding is significant in realizing where the CO's PSS program stands in the scheme of things. Are we above an emergency level of PSS, or below? Are the PSS adequate, or less than adequate? And, just as important, what is the science and/or facts supporting the adequacy determination?

As you know, understanding the public safety issue and designing a solution are complicated tasks. The Committee's rationale for this position is that there are substantial differences between Oregon counties in terms of their geographic and demographic characteristics, historic crime rates, willingness to tolerate certain levels of crime, and local priorities, including past and present funding of various PSS.

The Hugo JS&PSS Exploratory Committee has been trying to understand the public safety issue since 2013. For example, some of the Committee's core beliefs are that all citizens, voters, votes, and values are legitimate. Our 2015 JS&PSS *Study Design* idea flows from this center, which is a long-term strategy, not a quick fix. The idea's goal is an independent, philanthropic-funded, socio-economic impact *Study* to be researched and written from a neutral point of view. This means representing fairly, proportionately, and, as far as possible, without bias, all public views that have been published by reliable sources on the public safety issue.

A major issue is how to gain public trust and enhance communication. The *Study Design* approach primarily relies on citizens to provide insight about how to identify and manage problems, and formulate their own goals and solutions for the future. For that purpose, a web page of “*listening*” to the public has been started for consideration in *Study*. Over 800 letters-to-the-editor; 10 guest opinions, and five voters pamphlets will identify opinions of the public through a content analysis research project. It emphasizes the importance to citizens of knowing they are being heard, of being the decision-makers that decide their future. As active participants, neighbors at the grassroots level can become "stakeholder" decision-makers in the range of alternative solutions they, as a group, identified.

The final *Study* product of the public safety *Study Design* idea is a comparison of the publicly identified range of PSS alternatives for the public safety issue (i.e., content analysis research project). The *Study* will be accomplished by documenting: 1. the publicly identified issues, range of JS&PSS alternative solutions, and affected conditions; and 2. analyzing the impacts of each alternative evaluated by condition indicators and standards through a combination of citizen input and expert investigations.

We believe that there are significant unique decision-maker differences between our public safety *Study Design* idea and the usual government impact study. We hope you will be interested in sharing information with us one-on-one. Our specific agenda is to explain our idea, with the acknowledgment that solutions to significant problems only happen when the people demand it.

Sincerely,

Mike Walker, Chair
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Attachment 1. Hugo JS&PSS Exploratory Committee, HNA&HS. January 18, 2016. *Public Safety Study Design Idea*. Guest Opinion Submitted to Kevin Widdison, Editor, *The Grants Pass Daily Courier*. Grants Pass, OR. http://www.hugoneighborhood.org/JSPSS_Guest_Opinions.htm

Appendix A. JO CO Management Team. August 19, 2014. Exhibit A. *Managers Recommendation on Strengthening County Services*. September 3, 2014 *Approved Minutes of August 19, 2014 JO CO BCC's Weekly Business Session*. Grants Pass, OR. http://www.hugoneighborhood.org/JSPSS_Studies.htm