
Justice System & Public Safety Services (JS&PSS) Exploratory Committee

After four failed JO CO public safety levies and one proposed City of Grant Pass sales tax from 2012 - 2015, the public could be excused if it feels exhausted. What do the citizens really think about public safety?

The Exploratory Committee was established by the HNA&HS in 2013 to research public safety.¹ The Committee asked the question, “*What can we do to shed some light on the public safety problem/issue?*” In 2015, two of its members, Mike Walker and Jon Whalen, decided to document “listening” which wouldn’t be scientific in the sense of random sample public opinion surveys, and targeted populations.²



Officers: HNA&HS

Jon, Liz, Wayne, Special Guest Janet, Rene, & Mike

What is the JO CO’s JS&PSS Problem/Issue? Or, is there a problem, and, either way, judged by what standards and criteria?²

1. Hugo JS&PSS Exploratory Committee. January 1, 2016. *Justice System & Public Safety Services Study Design: 2015*. Public Outreach 9.1. Hugo, OR.
2. Hugo JS&PSS Exploratory Committee. Draft 2015. *Justice System & Public Safety Services Study Design: 2015*. HNAHS. Hugo, OR.

Justice System & Public Safety Services Study Design: 2015 (*Study Design*)

OSU Rural Studies Program On November 7, 2015 Nathan Davis, a 2nd year graduate student at Oregon State University (OSU), formally settled on tiering his Master’s of Public Policy (MPP) Essay research paper to the Josephine County (JO CO) JS&PSS public safety issue. Nathan is in the OSU School of Public Policy which is part of the OSU Rural Studies Program.



Nathan Davis, Jon Whalen, & Mike Walker

Davis stated, “*The importance of government hearing citizen voices is what attracted me to policy research and, inevitably, to this project in Josephine County.*” At OSU he expanded his knowledge of policy research and the role it can play in making government action more effective and more democratic. “*This project not only affords me the chance to utilize this knowledge, but it also allows me to help create solutions for a practical policy problem,*” said Davis. His hope is that through this project, citizen values will be revealed, enabling JO CO to make more democratic decisions.

Rural Studies Program, School of Public Policy, Oregon State University

Citizen Opinions On Public Safety Through Content Analysis: 2015 - 2016 The Exploratory Committee is pleased to announce Davis has completed his research paper which addresses the question: *What Do Josephine County Citizens Really Think About Public Safety?* Davis’ MPP researches what the citizens think about public safety, by relying on citizens to identify problems, and formulate their own goals and solutions for the future. His database for the research paper is the voting history of the last five referenda from 2012 - 2015 in over 800 letters-to-the-editor in The Grants Pass Daily Courier (JS&PSS Press Release 2015-1).

Championing Informed Voters

June 14, 2016, 9:00 a.m. Davis’ Presentation of MPP’s Findings to JO CO Board of County Commissioners Josephine County has been struggling to raise funding through taxes for public safety services since 2012. Referenda in 2012, 2013, 2014, and 2015 all failed to garner the support of the public, suggesting a vital need for a greater understanding of Josephine County citizen motivations for supporting or opposing levy referenda. This project took an objective look at citizen opinions through an analysis of letters to the editor to The Grants Pass Daily Courier to determine citizen opinions of the public safety levies. Through this analysis, this paper determined that ideological concerns over policy instruments, the riskiness of policy, and the trust of individuals in the government all played a role in determining citizen engagement decisions regarding Josephine County public safety property tax levy referenda.

Hugo Justice System Exploratory Committee

The following core values of the Committee are part of *Study Design*.

- All Citizens, Voters, Votes, & Values Are Legitimate, Pro & Con.
- Fair Representation of All Values.
- Neutral Point of View.
- Public Is Decision Maker.



Since 2000, and the Secure Rural Schools and Community Self-Determination Act (SRS Act), Congress had repeatedly sent messages that federal payments

would be phased out, and this was intended to give O & C counties *time to plan for the change* in funding their own public services, especially PSS. The Committee's aspiration is that the final *Study* product of the *Study Design* project be considered part of this needed planning. The *Study* components include the following: 1. the publicly identified issues, range of 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 professional expert investigations.

Based on the last four levies, and one proposed city tax funding attempt, the following PSS are generally considered the major components of JO CO's historic public safety program: 1. adult jail beds, 2. juvenile justice center, 3. district attorney's office, 4. rural patrol deputies, 5. criminal investigations and related sheriff's office support services, and 6. animal/control protection.

Edited by the Co-Authors of *Study Design*
Jon Whalen & Mike Walker and Nathan Davis, OSU

Hugo Neighborhood Association & Historical Society (HNA&HS Officers)

Wayne McKy, Chair
Liz Butowitsch, Treasurer
Rene Ford, Liaison HETC
Mike Walker, Education Chair
Jon Whalen, Chair, HSTP



Justice System Exploratory Committee

<http://www.hugoneighborhood.org/justicesystemexploratorycommittee.htm>

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Citizen Values of Public Safety Levies in Josephine County, Oregon *Study Design: 2015*

http://www.hugoneighborhood.org/JSPSS_Studies.htm

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HNA&HS 2016 - 3

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2015\Outreach Documents\JSPSS_3.3_PublicOpinionDavisOSUMPP_061316.wpd

Understanding Citizen Motivations for Public Safety Referenda in Josephine County (Public Outreach 3.3)

Justice System & Public Safety Services Series



“Championing An Informed Public”

Hugo JS&PSS Exploratory Committee Hugo Neighborhood Association & Historical Society

Rural Studies Program
School of Public Policy
Oregon State University

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