

PUBLICLY IDENTIFIED PROBLEMS/ISSUES
taken from
Justice System & Public Safety Services Study Design: 2015

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



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Section III.B – Preliminary June 14, 2015 JS&PSS Issues, and Section III.D – Summary Of Preliminary July 15, 2015 Justice System & Public Safety Services (JS&PSS) Issues, that follow are part of *APPENDIX A. ISSUES*, supporting *Justice System & Public Safety Services Study Design: 2015* (Appendix A).

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Chapter III Outline From *APPENDIX A. ISSUES*

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PUBLICLY IDENTIFIED PROBLEMS/ISSUES

Taken From *APPENDIX A. ISSUES,* Supporting *Justice System & Public Safety Services Study Design: 2015*

The following sections are those identified in “bold” on the title page for Chapter III, PROBLEMS/ISSUES (*APPENDIX A. ISSUES*).

- Sec III.B Preliminary June 14, 2015 JS&PSS Issues
- Sec III.D Summary Of Preliminary July 15, 2015 JS&PSS Issues
- Sec III.D.2. Public Involvement Consultation and Criteria Considered In Design of Alternatives
- Sec III.D.2.a) Public Involvement Consultation and Criteria
- Sec III.D.2.b) Public Involvement Consultation and Criteria & Examples Of Specific Public Comments

Sec III.B. Preliminary June 14, 2015 JS&PSS Issues (Voters & Non-Voters)

The identification of the preliminary issues for why the levies failed has merit in its own right as a standalone summary of the problem as viewed by the majority of JO CO citizens. This list was initially developed by the JS&PSS Exploratory Committee. It would be as supplemented by the Exploratory Committee with information from a non-random set of informal interviews of JO CO citizens, and articles from The Grants Pass Daily Courier (e.g., citizen guest opinions and letters to editor, reporter articles, etc.). The list that follows was developed by the JS&PSS Committee.

This preliminary list of issues, not listed in order of importance, will probably change considerably prior to the date of actually submitting an application for a study grant. The test of reality is to first provide a preliminary June 2015 list, a second supplemented list (Sec III.D Summary Of Preliminary July 15, 2015 JS&PSS Issues), and a final list at the time of grant application (not developed yet).

1. Costs of JS&PSS would increase back to the 2000 level Prior to SRS (i.e., pro levy supporters want the old status quo).
2. Rural Patrol Presence Has Not Changed From 2000 - 2015.
3. Mistrust in Government Growing.
4. Cumulative Assessments Coordinated By JO CO Assessor Office Unaffordable to Many.
5. Citizens Can Provide Their Own Protection.
6. Citizens Feel Their Voices Are Not Being Heard.
7. Lack of Transparency.
8. Opportunities Had Not Occurred To Inform Voters in a Comprehensive Non-Special Interest Fashion.
9. No JS&PSS Business Plan From JO CO Government.

Sec III.D.2. Public Involvement Consultation and Criteria Considered In Design of Alternatives [Summary Of Preliminary July 15, 2015 JS&PSS Issues]

The Hugo JS&PSS Exploratory Committee believes the identification of the preliminary issues for why the levies failed has merit in its own right as a standalone summary of the problem as viewed by the majority of JO CO citizens (i.e., **you can't find solutions that last if you don't know the specific problem(s)**). The issues identified by the committee were supplemented primarily with information from a non-random set of informal interviews of JO CO citizens, and articles from *The Grants Pass Daily Courier* (e.g., citizen guest opinions and letters to editor, reporter articles, etc.).

Sec III.D.2.a) Public Involvement Consultation and Criteria: [July 15, 2015]

- Public Safety Should Be Paid By Public
- Mistrust in Government Growing: Honesty, Transparency and Accountability
- Citizens Feel Their Voices Are Not Being Heard. What Part Of "No" Don't They Understand?
- Rural Patrol Presence Has Not Changed From 2000 - 2015; I Don't Feel More Unsafe Or More Safe.
- Not Fair That Only Property Owners Pay
- Opportunities Had Not Occurred To Inform Voters in a Comprehensive Non-Special Interest Fashion: Planning & Business Plan
- Cumulative Assessments Coordinated By JO CO Assessor Office Unaffordable to Many.
- Promote Economic Development & Education
- Permanent 58 Cents Per 1,000 JO CO Tax & Current Taxes, Fees, Etc. As Identified By JO CO Assessor's Office
- Income & Opportunities Inequity Affects Ability To Pay/Multiple Overlapping Socio-Economic Issues Affect Ability to Pay Taxes, Fees, Etc.
- City and County Residents Should Pay Their Usage Share

Sec III.D.2.b) Public Involvement Consultation and Criteria & Examples Of Specific Public Comments [July 15, 2015]

- **Public Safety Should Be Paid By Public**

There is no doubt that public safety needs to be financially supported.

Most of us realize the need for a strong public safety system. Homeowners are willing to pay a "fair and balanced" share, but not to foot the entire bill.

Measure 17-66 for patrol, jail, juvenile shelter: While I'm not against the measure per se, I don't understand why only property owners are expected to bear the burden of funding it.

- **Mistrust in Government Growing: Honesty, Transparency and Accountability**

Lack of trust in our elected officials is the greatest single factor affecting Josephine County. Trust is built on truth-telling, transparency and accountability. "Can you trust the government? Ask an Indian?"

We have major leaders in this world who take authority in their own hands by not telling the truth so they can benefit themselves. This includes the U.S. Congress, and its failure to implement the 1937 O & C revenue sharing scheme in lie

Brought up a great idea to solve our public safety problems other than raise property taxes. . . At a recent budget committee meeting, a commissioner said that he feels that our roads are more important than our safety issues. . . I do believe that this is the commissioners' way of punishing homeowners for voting down the levy.

Spin Perception versus facts.

Now, regarding the proposed levy, some of the money generated by your property taxes will go to PERS, a benefit that both this newspaper and our state government have said is unsustainable. In the Oct. 1, 2012, edition of Sneak Preview, a commissioner candidate said voters should be told where the levy funds would be used. She said, "The ballot measure would be written in plain language, enunciating exactly where every cent will go." This is not the case with the current levy. We have not been told by its proponents anything about the 10 percent for the Internal Services Fund, nor how much will go to PERS. The fact we have not been privy to the actual distribution of the levy money makes one feel apprehensive about the proponents' honesty and their tactics to get votes.

General fund money would be available from "unallocated carryover; use of transportation monies

Transparency. Ideally, people make decisions based on facts. Facts to support levies are in short supply.

I believe this means that the money collected under this measure may or may not do what has been "promised." I believe many others feel as I do: We're tired of politicians' promises and tired of their using our money at their discretion. Our county taxes may be low, but they do not include fire protection – and it's not cheap.

To promote a more palatable funding source for public safety consider taxing methods that will "even the load" rather than relying on homeowners to shoulder the entire burden. . . . A multi-faceted approach to spread the burden will improve the chances of public approval. During promotion of a new levy, be honest on how the money will be spent. If it's to go into the general fund in any way, forget it! This is public safety money and must be restricted to that use. Additionally, what happens to the money currently being allocated to public safety? After a levy passes, does this money get reallocated to other uses, therefore becoming a windfall for the county to use elsewhere? It's OK, but if so we need to know. Educate us honestly about byproduct benefits from a successful levy.

Do we need honesty and clarity from those who espouse one point of view or another? Even more.

The number one reason I'll vote against the safety levy is this simple fact: If the levy passes, \$900,000 of it will be diverted to the county's internal service fund – not law enforcement. Repeated another way: 10 percent of the safety money can go to almost anything the commissioners dream up. . . Also, this levy establishes an “oversight” committee composed of non-elected people accountable to no one – not even to the commissioners! Committee members don't need to have any financial background.

But today, many poor people of Josephine County are tired, they are more than poor and they are unable to breathe free because the county fat cats and all of their deep-pocketed buddies harass and threaten the poor with levy measures year after year. Then when we can't pay the new taxes which they impose on us, they then threaten us with property seizure.

Threat that HJR21 would force a \$2 per \$1,000 of assessed value tax on county property owners is inaccurate. It must be approved or rejected by the state electorate. Ware uses questionable tactics and inflammatory statements to scare voters into voting for the safety levy. Voter beware.

County commissioners said that 100 percent of all money collected would go directly to public safety. Now we find out that 10 percent of all money collected will go to the Internal Services Fund.

I have in the past voted for public safety levies that have been defeated. I've been trying to decide how to vote this one, weighing the unequal way it is paid for (\$1.40 per \$1,000 of assessed value, meaning home owners of modest houses will pay so much less than owners of expensive houses) with the very real need for more police presence in the county. Then the article about accused murderer Gary Goins got my attention. The article implies the jail has had him in there for four years, awaiting trial. Four years? Huh-uh. Not getting any more of my money. I am not going to pay to feed and house people like that for that long.

Now the commissioners might consider lowering the levy amount when the feds come through with funds. I trust our commissioners about as far as I can throw their chambers building. . . . This levy just wants us to pay more and more while the costs from the past don't change. What the tax levy really translates to is: If you give us your money, we will spend it.

The extension does, however, offer an opportunity to address one of the central issues in Josephine County politics: trust in county government in general and in the Board of County Commissioners specifically. Opponents of tax measures often cite lack of trust as a reason for their opposition — they don't believe county officials would be good stewards of the money. The argument is a debate-ender because, once it's thrown on the table, what's left to say? You either do or don't trust the people we've elected. However, the commissioners could use the county payments extension as an opportunity to prove they are trustworthy. All they need to do is pledge that, for as long as federal county payments continue, they will reduce the public safety levy by an amount equal to the federal payments — dollar for dollar. Since the levy as it is currently proposed would generate about \$9 million in its first year and the county payments renewal is for \$4.6 million in the next fiscal year, the county would collect only \$4.4 million next year, effectively cutting the proposed \$1.40 tax rate in half.

- **Citizens Feel Their Voices Are Not Being Heard. What Part Of “No” Don't They Understand?**

As the election draws closer, the voices in favor of passing the public safety levy, Measure 17-66, get shriller and the attempts to scare voters into passing it get more intense and numerous. This has happened every time this levy comes up for a vote. It is unfortunate that those placing it on the ballot have not been more reasonable in their demands and, instead, belittle those who would argue for a much smaller property tax increase to fund the Sheriff's Office.

What about repeatedly doing the same thing and continually getting worse results? The last three times the county safety levy has been on the ballot, the margin it lost by more than doubled: First by 2 percent, then 4 percent, now 8 percent. . . Foolish for . . . to think that taxpayers would trust the county commissioners with \$900,000 of the levy money for their use-it-on-anything slush fund.

The Courier did its part contributing to the defeat, consistently finding ways to fill its front page stories with reasons to vote yes. Instead it should have been a watchdog and included criticism of the levy's structure and insufficient implementation guidelines.

Enough is enough. Four times rejected and commissioners don't get the message. What part of "no" don't they understand? Leave the homeowners alone and no more taxes.

Once again, what part of no more taxes do our so-called leaders and special interest groups not understand? . . . These smoke-screens aside, it's time a real answer for funding public safety services is explored by those who are supposed to be responsible for running our city and county. . . . We want more sheriff's deputies, we want more jail cells, we want a juvenile justice system – just not on the backs of homeowners.

It's time to figure this mess out and more taxes is not the answer.

Does "the common good" trump "private property rights"? Last July, I submitted two sample property rights resolutions to the board of county commissioners. After waiting long enough, a few weeks ago I reminded the commissioners the people still want to know where they stood.

- **Rural Patrol Presence Has Not Changed From 2000 - 2015; I Don't Feel More Unsafe Or More Safe.**

It never ceases to amaze me the lengths this county administration will go to try and sell us a bill of goods. . . Let's be clear . . . These taxes will not give us the protection we need.

If the levy passes, they claim children could play without fear of violence – 10 years ago when public safety was fully funded there was violence against our children. How can they guarantee there will be absolutely no violence if the levy passes? If the levy passes they claim we seniors (elderly to them) will feel safe when someone is breaking into our home to do us harm, and an officer may get there in 7 to 10 minutes – that will be too late. I am a senior who lives in the county, and I will not feel any safer. How can they speak for me?

Patrols do not arrive in time to prevent crime.

What will the money — expected to be more than \$9 million to start and rising to over \$10.5 million over 5 years — buy us? Those of us living in the sprawling county will still have to buy our own fire service, which is expensive, and security systems. Additional sheriff's deputies could not even begin to adequately patrol those areas.

I have found that sheriff's patrols are mostly reactive, not proactive, meaning they come after the crime was committed.

The presence of law enforcement does not promote safety. The city has a very large police department with response times in the three to four minute range. Yet for all that protection the city experiences 80 percent of the crime in the county.

It is not that difficult to figure out what is going on. The typical homestead in the outback involves, "No Trespassing" signs, large obnoxious dogs, and an excellent likelihood that the owner has a gun. Considering these obstacles, it is unlikely a deputy reponding a half-hour after the event would have any consequence whatsoever.

- **Not Fair That Only Property Owners Pay**

Property owners recognized there was a public safety problem, but they were used to paying almost no taxes and don't want to pay more.

A fair tax is when the burden is paid by everyone [versus property owners].

The dislike of taxing a person's property is understandable. I equate the taxing of one's home as the same as blackmail. The fear of losing one's home to a tax lien is very real. . . . We need the citizens of this county to meet at public places and start a dialogue on how to raise money for county safety. The taxing of one's home is not the answer.

I'm in favor of paying my "fair share." That "fair share" should not be determined by one's wealth. We have worked hard, sacrificed and made good life choices. Why should we pay more than others for the same service? This Robin Hood economic model that is proposed to fund the levy would make Karl Marx proud.

Measure 17-66 for patrol, jail, juvenile shelter: While I'm not against the measure per se, I don't understand why only property owners are expected to bear the burden of funding it. Is this not a community issue? Shouldn't everyone be assessed as equally as possible to implement measures to increase public safety and services?

Why is it the only ones that will be making financial sacrifices and adjustments with the proposed tax levy will be the taxpayer. We don't hear anything about the Sheriff's Office, the District Attorney's Office, or the other county departments adjusting their salaries or inflated pension programs to fit the budget.

- **Opportunities Had Not Occurred To Inform Voters in a Comprehensive Non-Special Interest Fashion: Planning & Business Plan**

For the next year, the Sheriff's Office and other sectors of the public safety system in our county will have to figure out how to make do with the meager resources that will be available.

Public safety services will just have to operate at the level these resources will allow. It remains to be seen whether the Oregon State Police will continue to expend additional resources here to make up for our lack of sheriff's deputies, or how long taxpayers in the rest of the state will tolerate the situation. Then, two years down the road we can decide whether what we have is good enough.

There's no guarantee, however, that Congress will approve another extension of county payments, even at their current paltry level. In fact, members of Congress have said for years that the program is being phased out and the day will come soon enough when this money will stop flowing altogether. When this happens, the entire premise of the public safety debate will likely change.

Everyone I know who voted no on the levy did so as they felt there should be other alternatives sought other than placing the entire burden on the homeowner. Pretty narrow thinking.

We are being asked if we will authorize a tax on those who own property. My answer is "no." It's about time we started talking about other alternatives. I would like to have that conversation.

I'm sure there is a way to fund the Sheriff's Office to operate at a reasonable level and provide the services absolutely necessary, but this levy is not it.

Is there a possibility of instituting a county-wide flat fee for every adult, 18 or older, residing in Josephine County? Then maybe those who are actually using the system will also be supporting it financially. Now that is something I would vote for.

I have found that sheriff's patrols are mostly reactive, not proactive, meaning they come after the crime was committed. Why should all homeowners pay 240 percent on the county portion of their taxes? Not fair! . . . The scientific poll that was taken was a farce. Community United For Safety says a lot of things, but nothing of real importance.

After reading all that I could find out about the tax levy, Measure 17-66, I have concluded that more jail beds are needed. No argument there. Solution: Double the "service fee" on the city sewer bill, from \$3.74 x 13,000 households to \$7.48 x 13,000, which will bring in \$97,240 per month, well over \$1 million a year. Much cheaper

than the tax levy. Most of the crime is committed in the city and the city has a substantial police force, just not enough jail beds.

I also don't like that the group Community United For Safety appears to have formulated the levy and set the rate prior to any opportunity for public input. I learned about the group from a Daily Courier article on Dec. 17. When I went to their website that same day, there was no contact information for anything except to make donations. They think they can just set a higher rate than previous levies and convince us it will pass this time because they did a study and are wearing us down. I believe the levy should have been structured with two rates, one for city residents and a higher rate for county residents which would cover rural patrols.

What is the truth about the tax levy? Problems with levy 17-66. Who is the oversight committee? What is a reasonable time that law enforcement will respond? How is a person to call 911 if the criminal has a gun pointed at them? . . . The survey taken is flawed. Only 402 people were surveyed out of about 50,000 registered voters. How can that be a good representation? If the juvenile center is reopened, will there be any talk about Christian values to these abused and homeless children, and where do they go later on? Why is it that the homeowners and businesses have to keep paying more taxes, while churches don't pay any property tax?

A small county sales tax or tiered income tax dedicated solely to this purpose would be better choices and spread the costs more fairly among all who will benefit. . . . But this measure is particularly burdensome in that it proposes to more than double the taxes we now pay to fund county government. It will not end in five years, but more likely be increased.

But I have a couple of questions that are not in the Voters' Pamphlet. Who will be in control of the money? Why is it planned to only show us the audit each year and not every month? I have also heard that if this measure doesn't pass, the state can force us to pay a \$2 per \$1,000 of assessed value. If this is true, and \$1.40 would cover the need, then what happens to the extra 60 cents?

How can we raise money to fund our deputies? The current proposal for the tax levy is embedded with funding for a myriad of public services. Lots of folk are not happy with this and as we know past levies have failed. I offer a proposal to fund some deputies that is not at taxpayer expense. . . . I'm not in favor of higher taxes but I sure would dedicate all my pocket change to fund additional deputies. We might be surprised at how this "loose change" could add up to real money if a lot of people got behind it.

It's time we, the residents of Josephine County, stepped up like adults and paid our way. If not, look for House Joint Resolution 21 requiring a minimum level of funding in every Oregon county of \$2.00 per assessed \$1,000 of property value to make that decision for you.

Ever since the payments peaked at more than \$12 million in 2006, they have been gradually reduced year to year. The reason for this step-down in payments was to give counties time to identify new funding sources. Unfortunately, Josephine County did plenty of cost-cutting but nothing to replace the lost funding.

May 17, 2015. Jeff Duewel. *RCC Students Explore Levy-related Sociology Concepts*

The 35 students in Henry Wisniewski's introductory sociology class at Rogue Community College got their hands dirty with crime data, interviews, surveys and research this term. They wrestled with two topics on everyone's minds — taxes and crime, in light of Tuesday's election.

They learned that Josephine County is among the poorest counties in the state, and it has a drug problem. Their own surveys told them most people felt safe, and that most surveyed didn't think crime would decline if taxes went up.

"I don't feel like a lot of people are informed. We're just told we need taxes to be safe," said student Kristina Shone, who surveyed about 60 fellow students in two classes.

Some in the class took issue with the presentation of 58 cents per \$1,000 as the lowest permanent rate in the state. When you add taxes for fire districts, school districts, city services and 4-H/Extension services, the overall property tax rate is certainly higher, and varies significantly, depending on where you live.

The actual property tax for county services alone is currently 82 cents per \$1,000 — 58 cents permanent, 15.8 cents for the voter-approved jail bond from more than a decade ago, and 8 cents for three years for an Animal Control levy, approved just last year.

Josephine County's overall average property tax rate of \$9.48 per \$1,000 in assessed value — based on the Oregon Department of Revenue's latest data from 2012-13 — is actually the second-lowest in the state. Curry County's is the lowest at \$8.68.

But average rates hardly tell the whole story — tax rates vary widely within the county. Grants Pass residents pay \$6.32 per \$1,000 for city services and \$4.52 per \$1,000 for School District 7 services, out of their total of \$12.58 per \$1,000, or \$2,516 for a house assessed at \$200,000.

Those in the county — outside of Cave Junction and not in any public fire district, have the lowest rate at \$6.01 per \$1,000, or \$1,202 on a \$200,000-assessed property. Many of them do pay a private company, Rural/Metro Fire Department, for fire protection.

Students found crime statistics even more difficult to decipher.

Student Ben Musser found some good apples-to-apples statistics, when comparing Josephine County to Benton County (county seat, Corvallis). He found virtually the same number of crimes (7,378 to 7,471, respectively) for almost the same number of people (82,775 to 86,785, respectively), in the most recent state statistics.

He also found that crimes against people are gradually declining nationwide. But property crimes in Josephine County were 85 percent higher than the national average. That turned Musser from a no to a yes vote on the public safety ballot.

He was the exception. Randy Humphrey said, based on information gathered by the class, that he went from "on the fence" to a no vote. Josh Sharpe, who owns property in the county, said he was originally for the levy and now is against it, based on a "lack of a comprehensive plan for the future." In other class findings:

- The students, curious about potentially frivolous spending, found that a SWAT vehicle used by the Grants Pass Department of Public Safety was essentially donated from a grant.
- Sharpe's research indicated that 22.6 percent of Josephine County households made less than \$15,000 a year, and that the poverty level here is 21.9 percent, compared to 16 percent for the entire state.
- Damon Howard was told by two insurance agents that rates haven't gone up for renters or property owners because of lack of public safety, and the agents don't believe they will.
- A handful of senior citizens were surveyed, and they opposed the levy by a 2 to 1 margin. One described living in the middle of nowhere and said it didn't matter if there were deputies or not.

"Why should I pay more taxes for them to continue to ignore us," was the response.

Another wrote "It's such a small increase, I can't believe it hasn't already passed. Are people so greedy they would prefer break-ins and junkies becoming the norm?"

Wisniewski said the goal was to exercise everyone's brains. "We're not going to change people's minds anyway," he said.

- **Cumulative Assessments Coordinated By JO CO Assessor Office Unaffordable to Many**

Being proactive involves anticipating events and planning ahead. Alternatively, being reactive means you have ignored the forecast, got caught in the storm and expect the local to provide you shelter. JO CO commissioners have known for a long time the federal O&C lumber subsidy had a finite lifespan. Yet they took no action for dealing with the shortfall. . . So here we are, and the county and city administrators are still shooting from the hip, yet the solution is obvious. . . We need administrators who are community orientated and who are willing to get the residents involved to get this great city [county] back on track.

To the 54 percent who voted no: If there way a way to support law enforcement at a more affordable level, that wasn't mandatory, would you? If \$1.40 is too high or five years is too long, would you be will to contribute less? . . . It's time to be creative and stop repeatedly trying the same failed methods. County administrators could come up with a way to give the citizens another option.

How are retirees and the unemployed supposed to keep up? It is unrealistic and will only result in more empty houses and storefronts.

- **Promote Economic Development & Education**

The argument is that we cannot attract new industry to our area until we first create a "safe" county. The opposite is true. Economic Development is the driving force that will reduce crime in this county.

It has also become clear that an increase in local taxes, smaller than proposed in the past, must be part of a multi-pronged effort that will also include possible longer-term revenues generated by a lottery initiative, environmentally responsible mining and mineral development efforts, and timber harvesting on county-owned land. And we need to keep fighting on the timber equation on federal land as well. We are also working on drug and crime prevention programs that will make our county safer and the criminal justice system a more effective and efficient system.

New businesses moving in. New restaurants and home construction, real estate sales are up. . . Why are those people moving here and why that huge new hospital addition? There are expert planners behind these medical and financial additions. They plan to serve the large number of old people retiring from California, bringing their pensions with them. Why? Because Josephine County taxes are a fraction of equivalent California property taxes, plus no sales tax.

- **Permanent 58 Cents Per 1,000 JO CO Tax & Current Taxes, Fees, Etc. As Identified By JO CO Assessor's Office**

Through the county payments extension, we'll get about \$4.6 million for the next fiscal year. Josephine County's permanent tax rate of 58 cents per \$1,000 of assessed value will generate another \$3 million or so. This compares to the \$12 million we once received through federal county payments, less than a decade ago — money that came on top of revenue generated by the permanent tax rate.

The proposed increase of the Josephine County tax from 58 cents per \$1,000 of assessed value to \$1.98 amounts to a 240 percent increase, or a 23 percent increase in the total tax bill for some rural residents — an outrageous increase.

As a multiple property owner I am tired of being asked to foot the bill every time a financial need arises in this county. Much has been said about Josephine County having one of the lowest property tax rates in the state, but no mention of how Josephine County ranks among the 36 Oregon counties with per-capita income.

Remember before you cast your vote: 1. That 58 cents per \$1,000 of assessed property value tax you now pay is not going away. Instead, it has its own permanency and you will continue to pay it even if the \$1.40 per \$1,000 levy passes. The current 58 cents will be transferred to the county general fund (if the levy passes) and will be spent by

the county commissioners for whatever appeals to them. 2. The \$1.40 per \$1,000 is for law enforcement and the commissioners will very happily take that 58 cents you now pay for law enforcement and spend it for their own purposes. 3. The true tax rate will be \$1.98 per \$1,000 with 58 cents of that being a windfall for the county commissioners. Do we need the levy for law enforcement? I think so.

- **Income & Opportunities Inequity Affects Ability To Pay/Multiple Overlapping Socio-Economic Issues Affect Ability to Pay Taxes, Fees, Etc.**

Currently, 30 percent are on food stamps, 35 percent on Medicaid, 7.4 percent unemployment plus those in poverty and on welfare. High school graduation rates are 64 percent. Hands down we are the most impoverished county in Oregon. Josephine County is something of a microcosm of the national situation. The rich have all the money and the rest of us live on Social Security and food stamps. In terms of cash in the bank. Josephine County ranks among the top five counties in Oregon.

I'm sick of hearing that if I don't support the levy, I am stingy, don't care about JO CO. I am selfish! My husband and I are both on Social Security. . . Every year I have to take money from my retirement IRA for federal taxes, state taxes and property taxes. All of the distributions are taxable. My retirement IRA is used almost exclusively for taxes. . . I have no problem paying a safety tax, but every resident should pay their fair share. Why does it always fall to property owners to pay for city and county programs?

I will not vote for a property tax increase to pay for city businesses leaders' public safety levy the majority of people in this county income is less than \$20,000 a year and most can't afford to pay more property taxes. Did you read the Daily Courier Sunday, May 10, about all the business people and their contributions. They're the ones who make hundreds of thousands a year and some of them millions a year and they want us to pay more property taxes!

No mention of how Josephine County ranks among the 36 Oregon counties with per-capita income. It's 29th by the way, which may explain the past failures of proposed tax increases. The average per-capita income for Grants Pass was \$16,234. This information came from the 2010 census, but I'm pretty sure there hasn't been a dramatic change in our ranking or incomes the last five years.

- **City and County Residents Should Pay Their Usage Share**

Please research the Oregon Uniform Crime Reports for yourself. The county pays 58 percent of the taxes and accounts for 20 percent of the crime. Grants Pass pays 41 percent of the taxes and accounts for 80 percent of the crime.

Most of the crime is committed in the city and the city has a substantial police force, just not enough jail beds.

I am a city of Grants Pass resident. I am against the public safety levy in its current form. I have no problem paying a fair share of the courts, courthouse, jail and Juvenile Justice Center costs. I am fine with the current charge for the jail on the utility bill. What I have a problem with is paying for rural sheriff's patrols when we already pay a lot of taxes for city police and fire services.

Soon we will be voting on a levy to fund public safety. There have been numerous letters to the editor opposing this levy. The basic argument from the county resident is we can't afford this and "no new taxes." This is coming from the folks who pay the lowest public safety tax rate in the state of Oregon. . . Those opposing the levy in the city of Grants Pass argue that we are already paying a fair tax for public safety.

Hats off to the Daily Courier for the April 10 headline, "Yes, jail bed utility fee expires June 30." I have been asking proponents of the levy where my \$1.40 would go and could not get a straight answer. "More patrols," I was told, but then, no, the response time would be no better than it is now. "More jail," I was told, but then your article told me what that is about. The "more jail" part would go to house city criminals. That makes sense. Well-funded city public safety doesn't have enough money to take care of their own criminals, so they want county folk to pay for it. If I were in the city, I might well vote for a scheme to get someone else to pay for it.

In summary, the July 15, 2015 preliminary list of problems/issues will probably change considerably prior to the date of actually submitting an application for a study grant. The project started in 2013 when the Hugo JS&PSS Exploratory Committee initially started studying the JS&PSS Issue (2013 *Justice System & Public Safety Services Issue Scope Of Work*; Appendix A). The first preliminary summary effort to identify the issues was June 14, 2015 after the fourth public safety levy failed in four years (2012 - 2015). The next test of reality was a soon after developed second supplemented July 15, 2015 list (Sec III.D Summary Of Preliminary July 15, 2015 JS&PSS Issues). The July version is mainly what this overview of problems/issues is about.

A final list of Committee issues is being developed at this time. This goal is a comprehensive analysis that includes a systematic review of more of the data prior to the grant application date. For example, the Committee has 517 hard-copy LTTE in its files (2013 - June 12, 2015). The July 15, 2015 analysis of issues was based on 60 LTTE (i.e., 12 % of the 517 TTTE). This same partial analysis applies equally to other public opinion data sources identified in the Study Design (e.g., guest opinions, news articles, arguments in voters' pamphlets, etc.). The Committee is considering a formal content analysis as part of this effort.

The final awarded Study is to analyze all public opinion data sources identified in the Study Design associated with the four levies from 2012 - 2015 with a formal content analysis strategy (Appendix A3.2). The Committee's problems/issues list completion date is unknown, except it will be the date of grant application (e.g., winter 2015, spring 2016, summer 2016, etc.).

Sincerely,

Mike & Jon, Authors

Justice System & Public Safety Services Study Design: 2015

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Appendix A. Web References

For *Justice System & Public Safety Services Study Design: 2015*

Hugo Justice System Exploratory Committee

Justice System & Public Safety Services Study Design: 2015

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

- Hugo Justice System & Public Safety Services Exploratory Committee. Draft 2015. *Justice System & Public Safety Services Study Design: 2015*. Hugo Neighborhood Association & Historical Society. Hugo, OR. http://www.hugoneighborhood.org/JSPSS_GRANT_DESIGN_Draft072215_6wpd.pdf

Justice System & Public Safety Services Study Design: 2015

- Arguments For Supporting Study Design
- Interested In Becoming Involved?
- Publicly Identified Problems/Issues
- Publicly Identified Range of Alternative Solutions
- Appendix A Appendices to Study Design
 - Appendix A. Issues
 - Appendix A1. Being Heard
 - Appendix A2. All Values Are Legitimate
 - Appendix A3. Measures Representing Public Opinion
 - Appendix A3.1. Letters To The Editor As A Measure Of Crime Salience
 - Appendix A3.2. Content Analysis Writing@CSU

Appendix A. Issues, Supporting *Study Design: 2015*

- Hugo Justice System & Public Safety Services Exploratory Committee. Very Draft July 18, 2015. Appendix A. Issues, supporting *Justice System & Public Safety Services Study Design: 2015*. HNA&HS. Hugo, OR.

Authority: 2013 *Justice System & Public Safety Services Issue Scope Of Work*

- Hugo Justice System & Public Safety Services Exploratory Committee. Draft July 18, 2013. *Justice System & Public Safety Services Issue Scope Of Work*. Hugo Neighborhood Association & Historical Society. Hugo, OR. http://www.hugoneighborhood.org/JS&PSS_Issue_Paper_Outline_071813.pdf