

Hugo Neighborhood Association & Historical Society

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November 23, 2015 Letter/Email

Diane Hoover, Director
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Subject: Share Information About Josephine County's (JO CO's) Justice System & Public Safety Services (JS&PSS) Problem/Issue

Dear Diane:

We contact you as a stakeholder in defining the JO CO's JS&PSS problem/issue, and in seeking solutions for it. In May 2014, Measure 17-60, the Animal Shelter/Control Levy, easily passed with 62 percent of the vote. The three-year levy raises 8 cents per \$1,000 of assessed value which translates to \$8 a year for a home with an assessed value of \$100,000. The tax increase brings in approximately \$500,000 a year. If not renewed by the public, Measure 17-60, and its expanded animal protection and regulation services, ends in 2017 (Appendix A).

The Hugo JS&PSS Exploratory Committee has been trying to understand the JS&PSS Issue since 2013, and we would like to get together and brainstorm ideas. We are especially interested in explaining the 2015 JS&PSS Study Design project (*Study Design*; Appendix B). For example, some of the Committee's core beliefs are that all citizens, voters, votes, and values are legitimate. *Study Design* flows from this center. The results are a study to be researched and written from a neutral point of view, meaning representing fairly, proportionately, and, as far as possible, without bias, all public views that have been published on the safety topic.

The final *Study* product of *Study Design* is to document a comparison of the publicly identified range of alternative solutions for the JS&PSS Issue. 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 professional expert investigations.

To accomplish our goals, the trust, or mistrust, of citizens with their government must be addressed. How can JO CO demonstrate trust and enhance communication between our neighbors and government? 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 (e.g., voting, writing letters to the editor and guest opinions in *The Grants Pass*

Daily Courier, writing arguments in voters' pamphlets, etc.). It emphasizes the importance to citizens of knowing they are being heard, of being the decision-makers that decide their own futures. As active participants, neighbors at the grassroots level can gain ownership of *Study Design* information processes and become "stakeholder" decision-makers in the range of potential solutions they, as a group, identified (Appendix B, *Study Design* web page address).

Understanding the JS&PSS Issue and designing a solution are complicated tasks. The Exploratory Committee's rationale for this position is that there are substantial differences between Oregon counties in terms of their geographic and demographic characteristics, priorities, historic crime rates, willingness to tolerate certain levels of crime, and past and present funding of various public safety services.

We believe this complexity has resulted in four proposed public safety levies and one sales tax, in as many years; after which the public could be excused if it feels exhausted. What does the public really think about public safety, of which animal control, sheriff patrol, justice courts, search and rescue, and the county jail are services provided by the county? This November Nathan Davis, a 2nd year graduate student at Oregon State University (OSU), formally settled on tiering his Master's of Public Policy (MPP) research paper to the public safety issue. He is in the OSU School of Public Policy which is part of the OSU Rural Studies Program. The focus on citizens as the decision-makers will be the core of Nathan's MPP paper, which is recording and analyzing the public's opinions, pro and con, across their range of values, through a "Content Analysis" research methodology.

In conclusion, we feel there are significant unique decision-maker differences between our proposed *Study Design* and the usual major information or impact studies. We hope you will be interested in sharing information with us one-on-one. As a follow-up we will contact you again in hope of scheduling a meeting.

Sincerely,

Mike Walker, Chair
JS&PSS Exploratory Committee
Hugo Neighborhood Association & Historical Society



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Appendices

Appendix A. Josephine County Animal Protection & Regulation
Appendix B. Summary Highlights: Arguments for Supporting *Study Design*

APPENDIX A. Josephine County Animal Protection & Regulation

<http://www.co.josephine.or.us/SectionIndex.asp?SectionID=106>

The JO CO Animal Protection program provides the following services.

Animal Protection Mission Statement: To promote a humane, safe and healthy environment for our animals and our community

Objectives/Program Purpose:

- Maintain a clean and disease free environment for sheltered animals.
- Enforce Animal Regulation and Protection State laws, Local Ordinances and Mandates.
- Provide professional and compassionate animal services through shelter, adoption, educational programs, population control and health care services while remaining fiscally responsible.
- Create a sense of community ownership.

A few media articles applicable to the Josephine County Animal Protection & Regulation Problem/Issue follow.

- ***Top local stories: 2014 a hot year on the political scene.*** December 31, 2014, No Author, The Grants Pass Daily Courier (TGPDC), Front Page News.

Voters did express their love of animals by passing a three-year levy for 8 cents per \$1,000 of assessed value for the Josephine County Animal Shelter. It was approved with 62% of the vote.

- ***Levy confusion challenges Humane Society.*** September 5, 2014, Kevin Widdison, Editor. TGPDC, Editors Opinion.

Voters approved a three-year levy for animal protection. The roughly \$500,000 in new revenue for Animal Protection will make a huge difference in the level of service it is able to provide for the residents of Josephine County and their furry friends. However, too many people appear to have leapt to the assumption that the new tax levy will benefit the Rogue Valley Humane Society. It will not. Although approval of the levy was an important step forward, there is plenty left to do by volunteers using donated money. The Rogue Valley Humane Society continues to operate solely on donations and grants — no tax money flows its way.

- ***Cuddly cause seen as key to success for shelter levy.*** July 29, 2014. Jim Moore. TGPDC, Front Page News.

So how is it that in May 2014 voters approved a three-year levy to support the Josephine County Animal Shelter? What magic did the shelter's proponents invoke? After a thorough investigation and in-depth interviews with the major players in the successful endeavor, it turns out the answer isn't so mystical: "People love animals."

- ***Commission to discuss animal emergency plan.*** July 8, 2014. Jim Moore. TGPDC, Community.

Local pet and livestock owners who are unsure of how to care for their animals in times of an emergency or disaster will soon have a blueprint to follow. The Oregon Office of Emergency Management requires a written animal emergency operations plan that provides for the evacuation, transport and temporary sheltering of animals during a major disaster or emergency. Josephine County has a set of guidelines that were created by Diane Hoover, the county's public health director. The new plan will be an upgrade, she said.

- **Commissioners discuss budget.** June 19, 2014. Jim Moore. TGPDC, Community.

Another \$500,000 is expected during the budget year from the new Animal Protection levy that passed last month. It didn't exist when the Josephine County Budget Committee last month approved a recommended budget.

- **Animal tax levy adds \$500,000 to county budget.** June 14, 2014. Jim Moore. TGPDC, Community.

Animal lovers approved a three-year property tax levy for the county's Animal Protection program. The levy revenue more than doubles Animal Protection's budget, taking it from \$422,200 to \$922,000, allowing the department to expand hours and better care for the animals that land at the county's shelter. Diane Hoover, the Josephine County public health director who is in charge of Animal Protection, said her plan is to set aside \$150,000 this year in a contingency fund. She also intends to increase the animal shelter staff by 1.9 full-time-equivalent positions, which will allow her to increase hours at the shelter by one hour per day.

- **Animal control levy wins by wide margin.** May 21, 2014. Ruth Longoria Kingsland. TGPDC, Community.

Measure 17-60, the animal shelter/control levy, which easily passed with 62 percent of the vote. The three-year levy raises 8 cents per \$1,000 of assessed value beginning in July. That translates to \$8 a year for a home with an assessed value of \$100,000. The tax increase should bring in more than \$500,000 a year, money that will be used to increase staffing at the county's sparsely staffed animal shelter in Merlin. The staffing increase is expected to allow for an increase of open hours at the shelter, which should make it more convenient for people who want to adopt a pet there and reduce euthanizations. The shelter is not a no-kill shelter.

The new funds should help pay for spay and neuters to be done pre-adoption, allow for expansion of the foster program and also make it possible for capital improvements to the shelter facility, Smith said. Levy funds also are expected to help with countywide animal control coverage. Animal Control currently has two officers to cover all of Josephine County. One of those officers also serves as shelter coordinator, since the previous manager was let go in 2012 due to budget cuts. This isn't the first time an animal control levy has gone to the voters; however, it's the first time the animal control levy wasn't sandwiched inside previously failed public safety measures.

- **Animal control levy worthy of support** (Daily Courier Endorsements). May 2, 2014. Daily Courier Editorial Board. TGPDC, Local Races.

One of the first tests of this a la carte approach to government comes this month, when voters will decide whether it's worth a buck a month to have an adequately funded Animal Control operation as part of our Public Health Department. Measure 17-60 on the May 20, 2014 ballot would increase property taxes by 8 cents per \$1,000 of assessed value.

- **Tax sought to fund Animal Control.** April 1, 2014. Ruth Longoria Kingsland. TGPDC, Front Pg. News .

Measure 17-60, a three-year property tax. The proposal would levy an 8-cent per \$1,000 of assessed value tax for three years, beginning in July. The proposed tax would raise \$508,953 in 2014-15; \$546,204 in 2015-16; and \$562,590 in 2016-17. In the past four years, funding for Animal Control and the shelter has ranged from \$264,000 to \$344,000, according to county records. The agency generates an average of \$194,000 from licenses, permits and fees, according to records at the Public Health Department, which is the county department that Animal Control is part of. The balance of its budget comes from donations and grants. The estimated annual amount to operate Animal Control and the shelter at an appropriate level is \$600,000.

- **Animal shelter tax idea draws mixed reactions.** February 25, 2014. Shaun Hall. TGPDC, Street Beat.
- **Voters to decide 4 items in May.** February 20, 2014. Jim Moore. TGPDC, Community.

Appendix B. Summary Highlights: Arguments for Supporting Study Design

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

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

Mike Walker & Jon Whalen, Co-Authors of *Study Design*

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

November 8, 2015

Question: Why support or sponsor another socio-economic study that purports to represent the citizens of Josephine County (JO CO), Oregon in their efforts to address the county's Justice System & Public Safety Services (JS&PSS) problem/issue?

Answer: Unique Long-Range Impact Study In a nut shell *Study Design* proposed a *Study* which will be based on formal vetted inventories and an impact methodology model which promotes informed decision-making through a unique decision process, where the citizens identify the problems and potential solutions, and are the decision-makers. This definition of citizens is much narrower than the U.S. Supreme Court's decision in *Citizens United v. Federal Election Commission* with its ruling that corporations are persons. *Study Design's* definition of the public does not include corporations and major non-local special interests, nor agencies, the government, or the media (e.g., opinions of the Grants Pass Daily Courier, etc.). It does include news articles where the citizens' opinions are identified. The *Study Design* idea is a study focused on people, per "We the People" by whom and for whom our Constitution was established." Supreme Court Justice Stevens, January 2010. Arguments for the uniqueness of the long-range planning *Study* that will result from *Study Design*, compared to the usual major information or impact study, follow.

- *Study* focuses on the human face of citizens being the decision-makers.
- *Study* is unique in not representing a singular point of view objective, and in representing the range of citizen values, pro and con.
- *Study* flows from "public" identified issues, affected conditions, alternative solutions, and potential impacts. It emphasizes the importance to citizens of knowing they are being heard, of being the decision-makers that decide their future.
- *Study* is not associated with any specific proposed funding mechanism (e.g., levy, sales tax, etc.), or right answer.
- *Study* is limited to investigating, researching, and evaluating the JS&PSS Problem/Issue.
- *Study* will not make evaluations of proposals or alternatives as to right or wrong, nor make recommendations to the citizens on how to vote.
- *Study* is non-political; it will not be used in politics in the sense of lobbying for a particular outcome.
- *Study* is independent research with opportunities for education. Information will be publicly shared through web page publications, and volunteer outreach projects.
- *Study* has no Analysis of the Management Situation; there will have an Analysis of the Public Situation.
- *Study* results are not a formal government decision selecting an alternative or some combination of alternatives.
- *Study* confirms tht information is for informed public decision-making, not a decision by the government.
- *Study* formally acknowledges the public as the designer of *Study*, and as the decision-maker.

Answer: Vetted Study Baseline Facts/Inventories Understanding is made more difficult with all those noisy facts when truth isn't always something as clear and unquestionable as desired. It is believed that a step in the right direction is for different publics, that don't trust each other, to share vetted, or checked, information. This is one of the purposes of *Study Design* – for citizens to speak a common language, to solve problems, not to spend valuable time and energy discussing potential conflicting facts.

Although not unique to *Study*, vetted baseline facts/inventories (i.e., affected conditions) will be part of it, as they are part of any reliable impact study. The best impact studies have a professional structure in place for checking or analyzing facts, legal issues, evidence, and arguments. The greater the degree of scrutiny given to these facts, the more reliable the study.

Answer: Key Outcomes Of Study It is difficult when JO CO citizens are polarized over the public safety problem/issue and have not yet found a consensus solution, and its compelling that a significant minority of city and county citizens fear for their safety because of decreased number of jail beds, 911 call responses, JO CO rural patrol, etc. How will *Study Design* change the way people live?

What will occur as a result of a successful *Study Design* and the development of the impact *Study*, a largely untried and fundamentally different approach to identifying a public safety solution? How will the situation improve? What the authors know is that *Study Design* is a potential alternative that has not been considered as a serious solution in JO CO. It is beyond the adversary model of pro and con arguments during the last four 2012 - 2015 JO CO proposed public safety levies, and the one City of Grants Pass proposed city sales tax.

The following possible key outcomes are hoped for from a successful *Study*. They are all about the idea of slow long-range incremental changes, and the confidence that there will be an increase in the number of citizens believing the following.

- * *More* People know they are being listened to.
- * *More* People are better informed.
- * *More* People trust the vetted baseline facts/inventories (i.e., affected conditions).
- * *More* People understand that the range of public safety problems/issues and range of alternatives were identified by them, individually, for consideration by the collective public.
- * *More* People better understand the concerns of their neighbors.
- * *More* People speak a common language to solve problems.
- * *More* People agree on a consensus public safety “problem/issue.”
- * *More* People agree on a consensus public safety “solution.”
- * *More* People have a consensus to also address the causes of the problem/issue.

At this stage of *Study Design*, part of its public outreach strategy is to share with stakeholders, concerned with the JS&PSS Problem/Issue, by explaining *Study Design* with the goals of moving toward a consensus definition of the problem/issue, including two or three key outcomes.