

Hugo Neighborhood Association & Historical Society

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November 23, 2015 Letter/Email

James Goodwin, Director
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541-474-5186



Email: jgoodwin@co.josephine.or.us
<http://www.co.josephine.or.us/SectionIndex.asp?SectionID=163>

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

Dear James:

We contact you as a stakeholder in defining the JO CO's JS&PSS problem/issue, and in seeking solutions for it. The June 2012 budget cuts basically closed the JO CO Juvenile Justice's 16-bed shelter and the 14-bed detention center. We understand it is a struggle with renting beds from Douglas County. You have identified that "The problem is that the need outweighs bed availability, meaning that right now, some youths suspected of committing serious crimes are being cited and released rather than booked into detention because there's no room for them (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? 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



Jon Whalen, Member
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Appendices

Appendix A. Josephine County Juvenile Justice
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APPENDIX A. Josephine County Juvenile Justice

<http://www.co.josephine.or.us/SectionIndex.asp?SectionID=163>

The JO CO Juvenile Justice provides the following services.

- Intake of all Law Enforcement Referrals
 - Informal Intervention
 - Diversion
 - Petition Filed in Juvenile Court
- Juvenile Court Investigations
- Risk/Need Assessments
- Courtroom Case Presentation
- Probation Supervision
- Formal Accountability Agreements
- Counseling
 - Aggression Replacement Training
 - Functional Family Therapy (through OPTIONS)
- Custody Services for youth who are pending Court or serving Probation Violation Sanctions. This service is contracted through the Douglas County Juvenile Department (<http://www.co.douglas.or.us/Juvenile/>). For Detention Program information, call 541-440-4409.
 - Community Protection
 - Accountability

A few media articles applicable to the Josephine County Juvenile Justice Problem/Issue follow.

- ***County Struggling to Keep Youth Suspects Locked up***, October 13, 2015, Melissa McRobbie, The Grants Pass Daily Courier (TGPDC), Front Page News.

According to county Juvenile Justice Director Jim Goodwin, "We're in pretty rough shape." The beds are rented, and the problem is that the need outweighs bed availability, meaning that right now, some youths suspected of committing serious crimes are being cited and released rather than booked into detention because there's no room for them.
- ***Justice Officials Outline Fiscal Cuts***, May 8, 2015, Jim Moore, TGPDC, Community News.

Meanwhile, Juvenile Justice, with a budget of \$1,019,700, is facing a cut of \$81,000. Prior budget cuts forced the closure of the county's juvenile detention unit. Instead Director Jim Goodwin contracts with other counties for jail beds for youths.
- ***Local Forum Focus: Public Safety***, January 21, 2015, Melissa McRobbie, TGPDC, Front Page News.

The Juvenile Justice Center contains a 16-bed shelter and a 14-bed detention facility that are both sitting empty because the department can't afford to staff them. Criminal suspects under 18 are lodged at Jackson County's detention center, where Josephine County rents three beds. Youths who need a shelter bed because of an unstable home situation, including abusive situations, have nowhere to go, Goodwin added.
- ***More Juvenile Detention Beds Sought***, Dec. 19, 2014, Melissa McRobbie, TGPDC, Front Page News.
- ***Juvenile Center to Open Doors***, May 01, 2014, Shaun Hall, TGPDC, Community News.

The lights have been turned off for nearly two years in the shelter and detention area of the Josephine County Juvenile Justice Center. Opened 15 years ago at a cost of \$3.1 million, the 16-bed shelter and the 14-bed detention center closed in June 2012, due to budget cuts.

 - Location: 301 N.W. F St.
 - Built: 1999
 - Cost: \$3.1 million
 - Facility includes: 14-bed detention center; 16-bed shelter; Family Court courtroom/offices, Juvenile Justice administrative offices.

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.