

# Summary Highlights: Arguments for Supporting Study Design

(Public Outreach 1.3)

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

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

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**Question:** Why support or sponsor a 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, or . . . Issue? We have three responses.

**Response 1: 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 can 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 recommend political strategies 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 **information 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**.

**Response 2: 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 – for citizens to speak a common language, to solve problems, not to spend valuable time and energy discussing potential conflicting facts. For that purpose, a web page of “*listening*” to baseline information, vetted facts, and disputed facts, has been started for consideration in *Study*: over 800 letters-to-the-editor; 10 (and adding) guest opinions, over 650 media articles, 5 voters pamphlets, and 24 studies & publications (e.g., declining federal payments to counties, demographic & population, health, reports of criminal offenses and arrests, budget, minimally acceptable level of public safety services (MALPSS), fiscal indicators, local crime information, poverty, and inequality).

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.

**Response 2: Key Outcomes Of *Study*** It is difficult when JO CO citizens are polarized over the public safety problem 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 CO public safety levies, and one City of Grants Pass proposed city sales tax.

A successful *Study Design* and *Study* sets the scene for new relations based on trust, or at least on the shared recognition of common interests. It prepares the way for a new community dynamic. The following possible key outcomes are possible, and anticipated. 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 starting to show between 2016 - 2026.

- \* *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 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.