

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING
OF THE
ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT AFFAIRS**

**Seventy-Third Session
February 9, 2005**

The Committee on Government Affairs was called to order at 8:06 a.m., on Wednesday, February 9, 2005. Chairman David Parks presided in Room 3143 of the Legislative Building, Carson City, Nevada, and, via simultaneous videoconference, in Room 4401 of the Grant Sawyer State Office Building, Las Vegas, Nevada. [Exhibit A](#) is the Agenda. All exhibits are available and on file at the Research Library of the Legislative Counsel Bureau.

COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT:

Mr. David Parks, Chairman
Ms. Peggy Pierce, Vice Chairwoman
Mr. Kelvin Atkinson
Mr. Chad Christensen
Mr. Jerry D. Claborn
Mr. Pete Goicoechea
Mr. Tom Grady
Mr. Joe Hardy
Mrs. Marilyn Kirkpatrick
Mr. Bob McCleary
Mr. Harvey J. Munford
Ms. Bonnie Parnell
Mr. Scott Sibley

COMMITTEE MEMBERS ABSENT:

None

GUEST LEGISLATORS PRESENT:

None

STAFF MEMBERS PRESENT:

Susan Scholley, Committee Policy Analyst
Eileen O'Grady, Committee Counsel
Michael Shafer, Committee Attaché

OTHERS PRESENT:

Michael L. Montandon, Mayor, City of North Las Vegas, Nevada
Kimberly J. McDonald, MPA, Special Projects Manager and Lead
Lobbyist, City Manager's Office, City of North Las Vegas, Nevada
Gregory E. Rose, City Manager, City of North Las Vegas, Nevada
Ted J. Olivas, Director of Government and Community Affairs, City of
Las Vegas, Nevada
Oscar Goodman, Mayor, Las Vegas, Nevada
Doug Selby, Ph.D., City Manager, Las Vegas, Nevada

Chairman Parks:

[Meeting called to order and roll called.] We have Mayor Mike Montandon [City of North Las Vegas], City Manager Gregory Rose, and we have both Kimberly McDonald and Mary Henderson here representing the City.

Gregory E. Rose, City Manager, City of North Las Vegas, Nevada:

[Introduced himself and Kimberly McDonald, Janette Jenson, Mary Henderson, Marvin Levitt, and Mayor Michael Montandon.]

Michael L. Montandon, Mayor, City of North Las Vegas, Nevada:

It's nice to be able to come provide a shortened version of our State of the City. I'll go ahead and talk to you a little bit about North Las Vegas's past, present, and future. We are a community truly second to none in our visions and successes. I hope you'll come to agree that we're trying to live up to our motto of being your community of choice. The phrase describes North Las Vegas's past, present, future as growth and development.

When I took office just a little under eight years ago, the City of North Las Vegas was 83,000 people. We're now more than double that at over 170,000 people. The numbers show we've doubled every eight years, and we'll probably continue to double every eight years. We duke it out with being titled the second-fastest growing city in the United States. Sometimes that's considered an honor; sometimes it's considered a curse with some of the things we have to deal with. At our build out, we expect to be over 500,000 people.

[Michael Montandon, continued.] One of the turning points in North Las Vegas's development was a master-planned community called El Dorado. El Dorado is almost 1,100 acres. It began construction in the late 1980s. For those of you who are familiar with it, it was in the middle of nowhere. Today, it has more than 4,300 homes and 14,000 residents. It's 78 percent built out. At full build-out, one community will be home to 18,000 people. The success of El Dorado raised the bar for developments in North Las Vegas and culminated in the development of Aliante. The story of Aliante: It was the first BLM [U.S. Bureau of Land Management] land sale, 1,905 acres, and it's now known as one of the most successful developments in the valley, actually in the entire United States.

It's very successful. For a North Las Vegas person, and those who are from there especially know it, I've got to tell you something very exciting. A while back, I got a realty advertisement from someone advertising a home, and they said, "It's almost in North Las Vegas. It's almost in Aliante. It's just outside the city limits." [Laughter.] That was very exciting. In concert with all of this growth and development, we are doing a complete revision to our comprehensive plan to ensure that, as we grow and develop, we are thoughtful and purposeful in how we plan and develop this area.

Comprehensive plans are wonderful tools for us. Most communities can build a comprehensive plan every 20 years or so. We end up updating ours every 5 or 6 years. We have to just make it stay up to date. In the future of North Las Vegas, BLM land sales include Phase 2 and Phase 3. The map shows them up here ([Exhibit B](#)). We are hoping, if everything stays on pace, that these lands will sell later this year. Actually, there are other sections of BLM land that are ripe for release along that transportation corridor of the Beltway that come along the north and east sides.

In the development areas of North Las Vegas, in the past 10 years, we've built or acquired 113 acres of parks on 11 different sites. In addition to this, renovation is an ongoing process. North Las Vegas has renovated more than 163 three-acre parks—78 of them are in the mature areas of town—during the past 5 years.

We also built a new recreation center, the Silver Mesa Recreation Center. Our previous recreation center was 25 years old. We've done some renovation there, and it's up to date, and the Mesa Recreation Center is very exciting. We broke ground just this year on the new Desert Horizons Park, a 13-acre park. It is truly a modern park. Parks aren't like what they used to be. This one has soccer, tee ball, bocce courts, and playgrounds—a very multi-use park, not just flat grass turf like the old parks used to have.

[Michael Montandon, continued.] We're also excited that we dedicated a 160-acre park where we had the land for a long time. We dedicated the new Willie McCool Regional Park. For those of you who remember, Willie McCool was the captain of the seven-person Space Shuttle Columbia. This park is currently anchored by a radio-controlled airfield, but when it's fully developed, it will have sports fields and picnic amenities. The total cost for that will come from Southern Nevada Public Lands Management Act funds, as long as that program stays in place.

Another aspect of the "SNPLMA funds," as we call them, is the development of the Las Vegas Lost Trails Project. It continues through our communities. Again, for those of you from the Las Vegas area, eventually that trail system, which is being completed by various entities, will go all the way from Tule Springs or Floyd Lamb State Park in the far northwest to be able to have one continuous trail system to Lake Las Vegas. It'll be a fantastic system.

In addition, the City got another 45 acres of parks out of the Aliante community. One of the great things about these BLM land sales in communities is the city gets additional parks and additional recreation facilities out of each one of them. The future of parks and recreation really centers around the process of acquiring the Craig Ranch Golf Course. A lot of people who grew up in the area know Craig Ranch Golf Course as the place they learned how to golf. As many of you know, golf courses, with the land prices in Las Vegas, aren't really economically feasible anymore. This golf course is being threatened with the fate of becoming a subdivision. We can't afford to lose a green asset like that, 132 acres right in the center of town. So we're working with the federal government to acquire it and convert from a B or B-minus golf course to an A-plus park that literally 2,000 to 3,000 people a day could be able to utilize with all the facilities there, a very exciting project.

One of the key things when you're growing as fast as we are is transportation. The city has placed increased demand on transportation, forced us to place tremendous financial and human resources on that. We currently maintain about 450 miles of roads. In the past, the City made improvements for major coverage including Martin Luther King, Craig Road, Lake Mead Boulevard, and Camino El Norte. Of course, our major east-west corridor is the Beltway. The completion of the Beltway through the community in 2002 really enhanced the northern part of our city. As the Beltway continues to be widened to its full width into a full freeway, it will continue to add additional transportation capabilities.

Major construction is occurring at Lamb and I-15, converting that from a half-diamond to a full diamond interchange. We're very excited to have the

MAX [Metropolitan Area Express] bus operating in North Las Vegas. For those of you who have not seen this, this is state-of-the-art bus technology. It's a cross between bus and light rail in that it drives like a bus on regular lanes, but near it, as it approaches the bus stops, it reads the white lines painted on the road, and the driver lets go of the steering wheel, and it takes over and drives itself through the station. It's really a spectacular technology.

[Michael Montandon, continued.] In the future of North Las Vegas, has additional major transportation corridor projects. We're going to rebuild the Craig Road/I-15 interchange. A very exciting, but very difficult project is the 5th Street super-arterial. We've analyzed our north-south arterials and realize we only have two: I-15 and Martin Luther King Boulevard, and we can widen them to 12 lanes each and it wouldn't do the trick. We have to add another north-south arterial. That means all the difficulties that come with taking property and widening streets, but we are convinced it will offer us the transportation we need and the opportunity for light rail through North Las Vegas connecting all the way through Las Vegas down to Henderson.

Switching to education—it's a priority for every community—we are blessed to be able to work very closely with the University and Community College System of Nevada [UCCSN], and the Clark County School District to ensure these educational opportunities. The City of North Las Vegas is proud of its previous accomplishment with CCSN [Community College of Southern Nevada]. The community college campus, 80 acres, would not exist if it were not for the partnership with North Las Vegas to be able to acquire that land and work with them to develop CCSN. The school has been a partner with the city in a development in one of our major economic quarters called the Cheyenne Technology Quarter.

Since I took office, the number of K-12 schools has doubled along with our population. More schools are additionally planned throughout the city, as you see on the map ([Exhibit B](#)). Both the existing schools, the planned schools, and the future schools that have been both planned and acquired by the school district are shown here.

The biggest news on the education front in North Las Vegas is the partnership we've recently forged with UNLV. We went to UNLV and said, "What do you need?" We sat down with the regents, we sat down with President Carol Harter—we're very grateful for their support—we went to the BLM. Here's what they need. We identified a full section of land, 640 acres, for UNLV to occupy. We are not trying to make delusions to anybody that this is exactly what this is going to be.

[Michael Montandon, continued.] The current UNLV campus is only about 340 acres. We've offered them 640 acres. It is right on the freeway and two major arterial streets. This is a prime site. In the future, there will be a satellite campus down on Tropicana and Maryland Parkway. Again, the Board of Regents and Carol Harter have been absolutely fantastic working on this campus.

You may also recall a press conference a little while back with another exciting project. A VA medical center was announced last September by then-Secretary of Veterans Affairs Anthony Principi. Secretary of the Interior Gale Norton came out and announced their attempt to acquire land from the BLM and build a \$295 million veterans hospital at the intersection of I-215 and Pecos Road.

Some of the first naysayers said, "That's in the middle of nowhere." We have a long history of working in the middle of nowhere. Before you can build it, it's not in the middle of nowhere. There are currently about 22,000 homes somewhere in the permit process in North Las Vegas. The middle of nowhere will be the middle of somewhere quicker than they can build a VA hospital. It will be a 90-bed hospital, 120-bed nursing home, and a full complement of diagnostic and treatment services. They've begun design. They expect to start construction in 2006 and complete it in 2009. The City worked very closely. I'm very proud of the work we did identifying it and locating with them.

For years, our public safety resources were very limited. We identified that as a principal concern of the constituents and have tackled that in the firefighting area. We have built three new fire stations in the last three years, one per year, which is pretty exciting because prior to that it had been 12 years since the last fire station was built. We built Station 52, we moved it west of the freeway on Losee Road. We moved up and built Station 55 on Anne and Allen. We just opened Station 56 up in Aliante. We're very excited to say that Station 56 won an award for being the best new public works project under \$5 million. We tell people all the time that we're getting really, really good at building under-\$5 million projects. We're hoping we're as good at building the larger projects also. Station 57 has been identified and will be built in the northeastern side of town at Statz and Asher. We'll start that, I believe, near the end of this year.

Our police department detention services have also increased. We've added 55 police officers over the last five years, and we just opened our new community policing facility. It's an 18,000-square-foot facility. It cost about \$5 million and it houses about 125 police officers. So now we have our old station downtown and our new station up in the northwest.

[Michael Montandon, continued.] In addition, there's a plan that our police chief brought to us a while back to help responsible gun owners. He's got about 15 different plans in place to reduce violent crime. He said one of those was responsible gun owners are being treated poorly because of irresponsible gun owners, people who have guns that don't need them. So we offered a gun turn-in program. As you can see in these pictures, we opened up in the parking lot of Wal-Mart and offered a \$50 gift card if they would turn in any guns they didn't want. In one afternoon, we got 2,000 guns, sawed-off shotguns, AK-47s, pistols, deer rifles. It was a fascinating program. I would have never believed it a success, but it worked very well in addition to all of the other programs that our very innovative police chief has put in place. Our violent crime has gone down 31 percent in the last two years, per capita. Very exciting programs.

We've got to hope that Judge Van Landshoot has his "A Life of Crime" program, which has become a model program that other judges in jurisdictions have come up and visited us to see how it works, something we're very proud of. Speaking of Judge Van Landshoot, our municipal case court load has increased dramatically over the past few years. The city council voted in December to add a second court to the North Las Vegas municipal court, which coincides with the opening of our new justice facility. Our new justice facility will open in about a month. It's the largest capital improvement project in city history, about \$29 million, and it was built in about 14 months. It's about 96,000 square feet and provides not only the justice center, but jail management facilities and all other things that go along with that.

Economic development in North Las Vegas is something we've been very excited about, but I want to make something clear: North Las Vegas has absolutely just exploded in population. Just a quick anecdote, we added our second grocery store in North Las Vegas as we were crossing 100,000 people. At the same time, Boulder City added their second grocery store crossing 15,000 people.

The point I'm trying to make is that the commercial development has not kept up. We're just entering a phase of North Las Vegas's life where the commercial development is rapidly going to catch up with the residential development because of the demand that the residents have generated. I bring that to your attention so that over the next 120 days, you'll have lots of hearings and lots of discussion on property taxes, on assessed values, on those kinds of things. North Las Vegas is at a point right now where we've been living in anticipation of this economic development boom. Let us enjoy it. Let us have it out there.

[Michael Montandon, continued.] In our community, the five members of our city council cannot create this even with the help of wonderful people like Gregory and his staff in the back. We've gone out and created a process that we call "Vision 2025," a process to identify the city's long-term vision. The city council appointed a 15-member citizen committee. We brought in outside staff. We brought in city staff, and we've been going through this process now for months. The draft of the visioning report is not complete. We're going through dozens of focus group meetings, citizens' group meeting, surveys done, and we're going through the finalization stages of this plan to basically answer the question, "What do we need to do to become the community of choice?" We want people to choose to live in North Las Vegas, not to live there because they just happened to land there, but to choose this. What can we do to affect the quality of life? The plan is on the CD ([Exhibit B](#)) we passed out to everybody. It identifies some of the opportunities and obstacles for growth.

As I summarize the past, present, and future of North Las Vegas, I think you'll all have to agree that I've talked to enough people. In general, no one has told us this is anything less than remarkable, what's happening in North Las Vegas. It's absolutely an incredible growth. We keep doubling in population, we're growing in both value and quality of life, and we continue to outperform ourselves and continue to exceed the expectations of those who are following and watching us.

The successes we've had with the BLM have been landmark. There are other states, other communities looking to copy. Just this week, I met with an entire group from Arizona's lands commission looking to figure out how they can make Arizona succeed with their public lands as well as we've succeeded in the Las Vegas Valley and in North Las Vegas. What we've had in the past decade is going to be a tough map to follow, but we believe we have a plan in place with our comprehensive plan. We are very, very excited to continue what we're doing.

This concludes my comments and presentation, but I would like to share with you a little 90-second video. We've got a very talented North Las Vegas resident, and we've asked him to take everything that we've done in the past year and cram it into 90 seconds for us. I wanted to share that with you after I gave the speech to maybe get a taste of some of the excitement that I've talked about. ([Exhibit B](#))

Assemblyman McCleary:

Mayor Montandon, you mentioned the economic boom in North Las Vegas and you made a comment, "Let us continue it." What's your recommendation, sir?

Michael Montandon:

As I said, we've had this unprecedented residential growth. What I'm specifically referring to, just to give you some rough numbers, we've gone from \$1 billion to \$2 billion in assessed valuation. Actually, we're over \$3 billion now. We went from \$1 billion to \$2 billion about the same time Henderson was going from \$2 billion to \$4 billion. Each time you double in assessed value, it gets more difficult, as you can imagine. Henderson made that boom from \$2 billion to \$4 billion with the construction of Sunset Station, Green Valley Station, the Galleria Mall, those major commercial projects. North Las Vegas is just poised at that point right now when those kinds of commercial projects—malls and major commercial development—are ready to come to town. At this point, I don't have specific ideas on the plans that people are looking at, but taping assessed valuation at a point when we've been literally setting up for this for ten years would be more than detrimental, almost devastating, to us. That's specifically what I'm referring to.

Assemblyman Munford:

I'd like to ask: what are the demographics of North Las Vegas? All this growth and so forth, what is the demographic breakdown? I also have another question too. You mentioned the commercial being behind the residential, and you have these commercial and retail companies coming in. Are they under any guidelines from your city that says that they have to be diversified in their construction projects and hiring and so forth?

Michael Montandon:

I'll answer those in reverse order. I'll first start by saying, obviously, all of the public works projects. We manage about \$300 million in public works projects when you consider both the RTC [Regional Transportation Commission of Southern Nevada] and the Regional Flood Control District. All of those, we have to have all of the Disadvantaged Business Enterprises [DBE]—minority-owned enterprises—all of the regulations that require those. There are not specific requirements that I'm familiar with in private industry, regarding the diversified hiring that the municipality puts in place, other than what the federal government puts in place regarding diversified hiring.

On the demographics, I can give you rough estimates. The City of North Las Vegas is a very divided city, in that I-15 provides both a kind of cultural and physical barrier. East of I-15, we have about 50,000 people in population. It's currently 85 percent Hispanic east of I-15. West of I-15 is a very diverse city. The last I saw the numbers overall of our 170,000, we are in the range of 20 percent African-American, about 25 to 28 percent Hispanic, and the rest everything else. Again, those numbers may be a percent or two off, but they're pretty close.

Assemblyman Atkinson:

I do have a question, and it pertains to the El Dorado community I live in. I've seen some of the highest assessed value. I know it's always been said that in North Las Vegas, we pay the highest property taxes. Could someone explain why that is?

Michael Montandon:

Yes. Over the years, North Las Vegas has put a number of public safety issues in place. In its interest, and I can talk about it for a long time, but about two decades ago, there was a wave of property tax initiatives, and Henderson put a number of property initiatives in place for the construction of parks and capital improvements. At the same time, North Las Vegas put tax initiatives in place for public safety, the difference being parks and capital improvements you pay off, and those assessments go away. Public safety becomes salary, and they stay with you. We've managed to keep those for the public safety side, and we're currently about 10 cents above some of the other communities in southern Nevada, and, again—this is for a property tax hearing—we've actually had lengthy discussion about the ability, with the increase in assessed valuation, to lower our property tax rates. But we can't do it alone. If you look at the property tax rate of \$3.40 in North Las Vegas, only \$1.20 of it is North Las Vegas. The majority of it goes to education. If we want to lower our rates to make it equitable, we need help from the other taxing entities to lower theirs also.

Gregory Rose:

If I can just add briefly to what the Mayor has indicated. We also have a bill that will be coming through the Legislature that has an impact on our property tax rate as well, and that's the "C" tax bill that we are seeking equity because that certainly impacts our ability to reduce our tax rate.

Assemblyman Grady:

I have two questions. Complements on what you have done in North Las Vegas on your bus system. Is that only in North Las Vegas, or is this valley-wide?

Michael Montandon:

It's part of the Regional Transportation Commission, so it's valley-wide. But currently, that particular bus that I was bragging about, the MAX bus, only runs one route, and that's Las Vegas Boulevard North. About 90 percent of its route is in North Las Vegas. It goes from downtown Las Vegas, up Las Vegas Boulevard, almost to Nellis Air Force Base, up there.

Assemblyman Grady:

I'm sure in the future you're looking at adding more of these buses?

Michael Montandon:

It's actually one of the options we're seriously considering for the Fifth Street transportation corridor. We've identified enough right-of-way for that—to put a mass transit component in there—and it looks like this MAX-bus might be one of the most viable options for that because it gets the best of wheel transportation and rail transportation in one vehicle. We'll probably end up using it there too.

Assemblyman Grady:

On your gun program, which I compliment you also on, what do you do to ensure—especially guns that you're picking up that may be acquired other than legal means—what do you do to make sure these guns are not put back in circulation?

Michael Montandon:

The most difficult thing we do is we grind them all up. They're destroyed. We did two things: one, we worked with Wal-Mart, and Wal-Mart offered a \$50 gift card for anybody who would turn in a gun. For those of you who know guns, we got people giving us brand new nickel-plated Smith and Wessons, still in the box, that they could get \$500. They were turning them in just because they had them in the garage and didn't want them anymore. We had a deal with Wal-Mart where those gift cards could not be used for the purchase of firearms or ammunition, which obviously makes sense. We checked every gun to see if it was either stolen or used for the commission of a crime. Out of 2,000, 4 of them were stolen; 17 sawed-off shotguns, 4 AK-47s, and we destroyed them all.

Assemblyman Goicoechea:

Could you tell me off hand, or someone there with you, what your entry-level pay is on your police department? I think you were saying 54 new officers you were putting on?

Michael Montandon:

Fifty-five. Gregory, do you know what the entry-level pay is off the top of your head?

Gregory Rose:

It's around \$40,000-\$45,000 entry-level pay.

Assemblyman Atkinson:

Mr. Grady, you mentioned about the "C" tax. I don't know if everyone is familiar with that, and I'm a resident, but I have a difficult time to explain it. I

think it's important to talk about it. Living in North Las Vegas is unique because we pay property taxes. I know the county gets a large portion of it, and we have other taxes as the Mayor said. I was just interested to know how much of that actually comes back to North Las Vegas. I ask that question because, as the Mayor said, it is the number-two growing city in the United States. Living up there, every other week it seems we have something new, some new development or some new business or some other new community, and it's just interesting to find out how much of that comes back and if we are doing a good job of that.

Gregory Rose:

Mr. Chairman, to respond to your question regarding our consolidated tax—our “C” tax, as it's commonly referred to. That is the shared tax revenue source for sales taxes throughout Clark County. It's shared among each of the jurisdictions. Our financial consultant, Marvin Levitt, is very experienced in the consolidated tax area. He could provide you with good information on it.

The bill that we have presented to you has to do with trying to establish equity among the distribution of the consolidated tax. Currently, for example, North Las Vegas, is a very fast-growing community. At some point, we may indeed reach the same population as Las Vegas, but under the current formula, if we have the same population, and relatively the same assessed evaluation, we would not recreate the same distribution because of the way the formula is structured. I think many of you will hear, as you progress through the session, comments regarding the formula, and how it works. We agree that the formula works. It just is not equitable. Those are very different questions regarding does it work and then is it equitable. That's one of the issues that we're trying to get addressed. We believe that it should be equitable among all of the jurisdictions that receive the tax benefit.

To respond to your second question regarding the amount of funding that actually comes back to North Las Vegas, it's difficult to address that because of that formula situation. It's based upon population; it's based upon assessed valuation, but also part of the formula establishes a base. But if your base is established in past years and it was relatively small, then the amount of money that you would eventually receive in future years will continue to be based upon that small base, which means it will be relatively small in comparison to other jurisdictions. I would say, as it amounts to the amount of money North Las Vegas receives, I don't believe that is equitable as well.

Michael Montandon:

Assemblyman Atkinson, I just want to mention, because you asked that question, it's something that we debate often. As to how much comes back

from the county, it does not come back on a consistent basis, but it does occasionally come back. We mentioned the Silver Mesa Recreation Center was built with funds specifically directed by Commissioner Yvonne Atkinson Gates from Clark County back to North Las Vegas. She and I had this very discussion. Does any of it come back? Unless somebody makes a specific attempt to push some of it back, it does not come back on a programmed regular basis.

Assemblyman Munford:

You mentioned also, Mayor, in your presentation that your crime had decreased 31 percent. And you know my district borders North Las Vegas. Sometimes there comes some confusion amongst the general public that sometimes crimes that happen in North Las Vegas, they also say that's West Las Vegas, too. If crime happens in West Las Vegas, that's also North Las Vegas. So we both get that stigma, but what do you attribute to the 31 percent drop? And you said about hiring 55 new police officers last year. Do you think that has something to do with it? Because maybe that's what we need in Las Vegas, too.

Michael Montandon:

One of the things I tried to emphasize here is that if there was one magic formula for solving the crime, I'd tell you what it is. It is literally a series of 10 or 15 different programs that, all made up, total that magic word you hear a lot called "community policing." It involves more cops in the street, more programs, more visibility, and we're familiar with those issues. If we step up our crime prevention efforts there in that part of North Las Vegas, it just pushes the crime into West Las Vegas, and then Metro [Las Vegas Metropolitan Police Department] steps up and pushes it back and forth. We work very collectively trying to work on those programs, but there is no one magic program. It's a comprehensive effort. I have to give great kudos to our chief, Mark Paresi, for putting multiple programs in place. But the main thing he's done is really increase the visibility that cops are out there walking, biking, driving. They're just everywhere. Thank you.

Assemblyman Goicoechea:

Mr. Mayor, could you get me your combined city/county tax rate property tax rate. Do you know it right offhand?

Mayor Montandon:

It is about \$3.40.

Assemblyman Goicoechea:

It is about \$3.40? So you're about \$0.24 under the cap?

Mayor Montandon:

Yes.

Assemblyman Goicoechea:

Well, minus \$6.15... So you're close, too.

Mayor Montandon:

We're getting real close.

Assemblyman Hardy:

This question is for whoever gives the answer. Is the intent of your C-tax bill to keep the cities whole or is there an intent to decrease the revenue to a given entity in moving forward? That's the same question I tried to ask the government, state, and local tax committee during the interim. Are you intending to keep the cities whole and what they're getting now, or is it to decrease the revenue and what they've been getting?

Gregory Rose:

If our bill is successful, I believe that it keeps all of the jurisdictions whole. It simply reduces the amount of funding that they would receive in the future. It would be unrealized gain because the consolidated tax, if you look at it as an economic pie, the pie continues to expand, and North Las Vegas's expansion would be greater than the other jurisdictions until we are able to catch up. And currently, we are behind.

Chairman Parks:

Any further questions? Okay. I have perhaps a comment first and then one or two questions. With regard to the C-tax, we don't know exactly which committee is going to hear that. It may be a bill that we hear in this Committee, but we'll know probably at the time the bill does get introduced as to which committee it will be referred to.

Could you comment on libraries? I know there are several library bills that will be floating around, and if you could give us any perspective that you have relative to libraries in your community.

Michael Montandon:

In North Las Vegas, our Library District is a separate government entity. It gets its own slice of property tax and its own funding source. Our library growth has been the one area that has not grown as fast as our population. We currently have one main library and one satellite branch, which is about 4,000 square feet retail space that we rent.

[Michael Montandon, continued.] Through the course of the development agreement for Aliante, we acquired another piece of land for a library. We are currently floating a medium-term bond and are going to build a new library at cost of about \$5 million in Aliante. We'll probably have to shut down the satellite rental branch in order to afford the staff at the new full-service library; we really don't have enough to offer both. There really isn't a funding source for us to allow libraries to grow at the same rate as the population. The property tax slice would allow library staff to grow at roughly the growth of population, but it doesn't leave any room for capital improvements, so we have to find other sources for that.

Chairman Parks:

Do you know offhand how much your tax rate is for the libraries?

Mayor Montandon:

It is about \$0.07.

Chairman Parks:

That's consistent with the Las Vegas/Clark County rate.

Michael Montandon:

As a matter of fact, I think ours is \$0.0715 and theirs is \$0.0735. They're almost identical.

**Kimberly McDonald, MPA, Special Projects Analyst and Lead Lobbyist,
City Manager's Office, City of North Las Vegas, Nevada:**

Just for your information, you may be receiving a bill before this Committee that is being sponsored by the Nevada League of Cities. It does deal with libraries. It is enabling language and clarification for library districts to be able to transfer, swap, or trade donated land. You may be hearing that bill as well.

Assemblyman Hardy:

Has the school district been forthcoming in sharing library space and opening up libraries to your constituents to come in and check out books and bring them back and teach their children how to read?

Michael Montandon:

If such programs exist, I am not personally aware of them.

Assemblyman Munford:

On that library question in North Las Vegas, I know Rancho High School in North Las Vegas is trying to partner with West Las Vegas Library and trying to

do something to assist with the improvement in the testing process on the proficiency test. I'm working with Rancho and West Las Vegas trying to do something, and, based on what you were saying, Assemblyman Hardy, are partnering and getting together, so we're doing something. North Las Vegas is so close to us that many of your residents, West Las Vegas serves very well, very much so.

Michael Montandon:

On the issues about eight or nine years ago, we attempted to pass a library tax issue and it failed. One of the reasons it failed was because everybody in North Las Vegas said, "We don't need another library." We've got West Las Vegas Library. So, we are familiar that it serves a great number of our population.

Assemblywoman Kirkpatrick:

I know that North Las Vegas is growing, and we've made great strides over the last 15 years. We started with priorities as police and worked to bring more than just affordable housing, to bring upscale housing too, to diversify our economy with commercial, and then we focused on parks. I know tonight that you're meeting on libraries. So is that a new priority that North Las Vegas is heading towards? That we need to look at some additional funding sources? What is your visioning for your library meeting that you're having tonight? To determine the reasoning behind the bill that you actually have before us?

Michael Montandon:

Yes. One of the things that we take pride in—and we have a list of about half a dozen priorities, but they're not prioritized in order—library is one of them, and we continue to address libraries basically at the same priority that we address public safety, parks and recreation, transportation, and other quality-of-life issues. Unfortunately, the library has its own board of directors, the majority of whom are also on the city council. The library meets on a regular basis, its own director, its own board, aggressively pursuing more libraries. It's part of the plan. It's not a change or a new emphasis; it's just always been part of the plan.

Chairman Parks:

Any further questions? I have one other. In many other states, there's a big competition to get regional malls, primarily because of the tax revenue that the individual entity generates from the regional mall. Do you have, along the [Interstate] 215 corridor, plans for a major regional mall that would compete with the Meadows, the Boulevard, the Galleria mall?

Michael Montandon:

It will come up extensively in the consolidated C-tax debate. We have this interesting tax formula in southern Nevada. Where I'm from originally in Arizona, cities compete dramatically with each other for high tax generating. Things like regional malls and car dealerships, but in southern Nevada, all of the sales tax goes to one pot and then is redistributed. There's not the direct competition for the precise locations of those things. We're getting a Costco at the corner of Decatur and I-215. Costco is going in on the Las Vegas side of the border. We'll all share in the bounty if the C tax is equitable.

Eight interchanges with the 215 in North Las Vegas. Right now, the majority of those interchanges are controlled by the BLM, but we expect them to continue to sell as time goes on. We've identified on our master plan, literally all eight interchanges as commercial corners. Right now, we are suffering. We're being hammered every day by residential developers because the prices are inverted. Residential is currently more valuable than commercial. We have residential developers attempting, most of the time unsuccessfully, but attempting to rezone good commercial land in Beltway interchanges to residential. We're trying to hold those out because of the fact that there's simply enough people to create enough demand for a regional mall, and we do expect to eventually see one out along one of those eight Beltway interchanges.

Chairman Parks:

I would like to thank the City of North Las Vegas for that very nice presentation. At this time, we'd like to move on on our agenda to the City of Las Vegas.

Ted J. Olivas, Director of Government and Community Affairs, City of Las Vegas, Nevada:

[Introduced himself.] Thank you for giving us the opportunity to speak before you today, specifically for videoconferencing it, so that we have some folks from down south, particularly the Mayor and the City Manager, who can address the Committee about some of the opportunities and challenges we face as a city. I would like to turn it over to Mayor Goodman in Las Vegas.

Oscar Goodman, Mayor, City of Las Vegas, Nevada:

We are going to be 100 years old on May 15, 2005. We kicked off a wonderful celebration on New Year's Eve. We had giant fireworks.

We're bringing back the "old Las Vegas." We're bringing back the great days of El Dorado and the El Dorado Parade. We're going to be involving the entire community in that we're going to have 100 weddings. We're going to have 100 renewals of marriage vows as well. We're going to have the world's largest birthday cake. We're going to have 100 murals throughout the community here.

[Oscar Goodman, continued.] I went out to UNLV just two days ago, and they have a wonderful mural that was designed by their fine arts department which depicts a "V" with colorful arrows going into the skies to show the vitality of our community here and the interaction between the University and the City of Las Vegas. I hope on February 22 all of you will join us at the Governor's Mansion; we're going to be having a centennial reception. We'll be bringing up memorabilia of old Las Vegas with us. I think it's a very important occasion to recognize and to celebrate where we are as far as our past is concerned.

But we are not here to discuss the past. I'd like to talk to you today about the present, and then Dr. Selby will perhaps touch upon the future. The present in Las Vegas is remarkable. I've never seen anything like this in my life. I became the mayor six years ago, but I've lived in Las Vegas for 40 years. Las Vegas, when I got there in 1964, was basically a small town, a cow town which wasn't very sophisticated. We had the Las Vegas Strip and all that the Strip provides us as far as entertainment, food, shopping, and the like. But we really didn't have what I considered to be the ingredients to call ourselves a real city, a great city, a city that would be considered to be cosmopolitan, a city which had values of culture or sophistication and the like. With the seeds that have been planted recently, I think we'll be able to say that we've crossed the line. We've become something different than what we were before. We'll have a heart and soul in our community that did not exist before this time. One of the values of having the centennial is to make people feel like they are part of their community.

Our redevelopment has been incredible. When I was first elected, I would sit in my office and the phone wouldn't ring. I would wait for the phone to ring. I wanted people to be calling up and saying that they wanted to build beautiful homes in this city. I wanted them to say that they were going to be bringing businesses into the city, but it didn't happen. Fortunately, because of the ingenuity of our staff, we were able to negotiate the acquisition of some 61 acres on a brownfield site that was controlled by the Union Pacific Railroad. The city traded for this land because this particular 61-acre parcel, which was surrounded by about 140-plus acres, was owned by Lehman Brothers, who took it over in forfeiture, and the city got title to the 61 acres. I began to talk about the 61 acres, and refer to it as the "Jewel of the Desert." Wherever I went, I talked about the "Jewel of the Desert." Finally people woke up, and they said, "What is this mayor talking about? What is this 'Jewel of the Desert?'" As a result of our discussions about this piece of property, which was in the heart and soul of the entire Las Vegas Valley, right in the middle of everything that makes us so vibrant and so great, they recognized that there was this land that could represent a city within a city in the future.

[Oscar Goodman, continued.] As a result of that acquisition, we've been able to negotiate with the private sector some wonderful projects. If one were to go to the intersection of the Main Street and Bonneville, and pause and take a look to the west towards the mountains, they wouldn't be able to see the mountains anymore. There's a 1,350,000 square-foot Furniture Mart which is being built and will be completed in July when the first show will take place, and it's already been leased to 300 tenants. The next phase, which is even bigger than the 1,350,000 square-feet, is virtually leased out. Then there's a third phase which is being planned, which will basically diversify our economy overnight and make us the furniture capital of the world. That building is real. It's not a wish on our part anymore. It's actually up there and can be seen. It's beautiful. It's a great tribute to the city, developing a relationship with the private sector, engaging in TIF [tax increment financing], making it the kind of project that will redefine our downtown.

Immediately to the south of it is a mall that everybody said could never be built. Downtown was thrilled. Of course, if downtown Las Vegas was thrilled, it would have a reverberating effect throughout the entire area: North Las Vegas, Henderson, the county, Boulder City. Everybody would be affected if downtown Las Vegas wasn't healthy. This mall that was built by Chelsea has 130 premium discount stores. Their only complaint is that they don't have enough parking, which is a terrific complaint for new business. It's phenomenally successful. That too is a public/private partnership because we engaged in TIF financing with them as well.

To the north of these two properties is an IRS [U.S. Internal Revenue Service] building which will be opening this month. It was built by a private developer, was leased to the IRS, and I say with a twinkle in my eye that we'll be able to tax the IRS, but that's for another day.

Immediately west of that, a new building is planned. I believe it's 16 stories. It's a public/private partnership with the Water Authority and Irwin Molasky, a developer in Las Vegas, who's going to be putting his business headquarters into that, and that's going to be the surrounding perimeter to the 61 acres that the city has. The city has engaged the related company. They're a phenomenal developer. They did City Place in West Palm Beach and redefined that entire area in Florida. They did the Time-Warner Building and the Mandarin Oriental Hotel in New York City, and they're terrific developers. It looks like they'll be our master developer. We're in an exclusive negotiating agreement with them right now, and we hope to enter into a Disposition and Development Agreement (DDA) within about three months, assuming that everything progresses as it has. They will be building us a city within a city on the

61 acres. There will be high-rise residential. There will be commercial. There will be retail. We're going to have a performing arts center there. We'll be getting into that a little bit later as to our cooperation and our efforts to work with the Assembly, which has been so very, very gracious in providing us with the innate building legislation at the last legislative session, which will be going to fund the performing arts center.

[Oscar Goodman, continued.] We're going to have an academic medical center there. Discussions are taking place with UNR and their medical school, with the University of Pittsburgh Academic Medical Center, and with private physicians in the Las Vegas area in order to bring first-class medicine to southern Nevada which will be able to service the entire state, and people won't have to leave in order to get this kind of treatment. They'll be able to stay in Nevada and be able to have fine doctors who will be able to cure their diseases. We are the largest city in North America that does not have an academic medical center. We're the largest city in North America that does not have a performing arts center. We believe in the City of Las Vegas, and in order for us to be the world-class city that I know we want to become, we have to have those two projects.

We'll also, hopefully, be able to get ourselves a Major League Baseball team. I'm not looking at that as a generator of income. I'm looking at it as a way to pull the community together to give us a sense of self, to give us a sense of belonging. I think that it's important that there be a sports component with the performing arts component to make everybody feel like they are Las Vegas. These are projects that are on the drawing board.

We have projects that are coming out of the ground right now. People are absolutely amazed when they go down Las Vegas Boulevard, they will see a 61-garden apartment building at Las Vegas Boulevard and Gass. It is beautiful and it is by a world-class architect in San Diego. We've designated it to be affordable, so we're getting the word out to the teachers in the community that they'll be able to rent a beautiful apartment at market rate that would go perhaps two or three times what the rent will be and will be able to live in the downtown area. We'll be able to solve the needs to attract teachers, to keep teachers, and also to have bright people live in a very urban environment.

Right across the street from that is the SoHo Lofts. If somebody told me three years ago that we would have a 120-loft project at 4th Street and Hoover, Las Vegas Boulevard and Hoover, next to Dona Maria's, right in that part of the community, and that it would be presold before it was actually completed, I would have said that they were smoking something. This project is well on its way to completion. I understand that all but two units have been presold. That's what's happening in the downtown. Virtually every corner has a sign on it

saying there will be condos, lofts that will be built. The city is entering into agreements at 3rd and Bonneville with a group out of San Diego that is going to build over 300 units there, right across the street from City Hall. Remarkably, there is a streamline project that will be 22 stories high. They're preselling that as well. That will be condos and lofts.

[Oscar Goodman, continued.] Over on the brownfield site south of the County Administration Building, Sandhurst is contemplating a giant towers at Las Vegas Boulevard and Sahara. Perhaps the largest building west of the Mississippi will be built if their dreams come true. Immediately west of that, the Allure has two 50-story towers that are going up. At Casino Center and Bonneville last night, there was a party celebrating the Renaissance, which will start off at a very reasonable, in this day and age basis, of \$150,000 for the less expensive units, going all the way into the millions of dollars, as far as units are concerned. So the residential, which is imperative if we are going to be a real city, is actually being developed, as I'm speaking to you at this moment. It's absolutely incredible. The Art District—it's virtually impossible to buy a piece of land near Charleston and Main—one would think that area was long gone. The Art District is thriving. We have galleries. The Godt-Cleary Gallery just had a Rauschenberg exhibit. The Dust Gallery had New York artists come in for our First Friday.

First Friday is an event that was begun about two years ago. On the first Friday of every month, people were invited down to our Art District to go to the lithography studio there, to frequent the restaurants that were in the area there, and they have 30 people. This last First Friday, with the weather being decent, had estimates of about 7,000 people there. People who were thirsting for the arts are finding it now in Las Vegas, and the city is doing everything we can to partner with them.

These successes don't happen in a vacuum. These successes happen because we have had an extraordinary relationship with those who represent us at both the federal level as well as the State Assembly and in the State Senate. It's necessary that this partnership and this cooperation continue in order for us to enjoy the unprecedented success that we have to build ourselves a city that will be the model city for all of the world. Hopefully, our cooperation will continue. We just had a wonderful opening with Assemblywoman Buckley being able to get us funds for senior assisted living. It's the first one of its kind. We got land from the BLM. Harrah's donated money. The City donated money. The Legislature had money that was directed towards us, and we are now able to service that part of the community that really didn't have any facility they could go to that was being subsidized. It's going to be a wonderful way to take care of those citizens who, in their older years, need the assistance, but without this cooperative effort, would not be able to receive it.

[Oscar Goodman, continued.] The performing arts legislation, which was passed at the last Legislature, which enabled the county to impose a 2 percent rental car tax, looks like it may become a reality. I understand that the performing arts group has gotten a wink of the eye from county commissioners saying that they're going to be supportive of this. Of course, the City is most supportive of this. Once again, we need this in order to get the basis to get this building going to have a world-class theater there. Then we'll go out to the private sector and try to get philanthropy in order to support the operating costs of it.

We thank the Legislature for the wonderful centennial license plates. I believe that we've raised over \$1,250,000 in the sale of our centennial license plate, which will go for a legacy project, development of the post office, or projects like that in downtown Las Vegas that will be lasting not only for this year, but for generations to come. We thank you for your support on the scenic byways project. We work very, very closely with you as far as Yucca Mountain is concerned, and it looks like we're well on our way to winning that fight. We have had legislation passed, which I appreciate.

I brought this up at the Conference of Mayors when I was in attendance three years ago, and Dr. Hardy can appreciate this in particular. I was terribly concerned if a disaster took place in southern Nevada, the first responders, and I'm not talking about law enforcement officers such as the sheriff or police officers or the firefighters, but the doctors and the nurses would not be able to respond if in fact they found the issue of a biochemical attack or an attack that we haven't experienced before.

There is now an educational requirement that they be educated in order to be able to address matters of a disaster of that nature. I've been to two of these sessions for nurses, and the nurses are absolutely enthralled with the idea that they are learning how to address these problems. That is a prototypical program. Nobody else has that in the United States. We're able to educate those if, God forbid, there be an emergency here.

We've had tremendous expression of interest in our academic medical center from Assemblyman Arberry and Assemblywoman Giunchigliani. They both indicated that they seek the value of being able to have first-class medicine here in Las Vegas so our constituents won't have to go elsewhere. We're involved in support of some key initiatives this year. As you know, the voters in our area voted in support of an increase in the sales tax to put 1,000 more police officers on the street. I think that's necessary. I support the Sheriff in that. Of course, there are always ways we can save money. That's what elected officials are supposed to do. But the presence of police officers in a community

such as ours, which is so dependent on the tourist industry that to be able to ensure that there not be an incident that would basically make us into a ghost town and cripple us, requires the presence of officers on the street, and that's the promise of the Sheriff, should he get this type of funding.

[Oscar Goodman, continued.] One of the things we did in the past two weeks as a member of the Nevada Regional Planning Coalition, I made a suggestion. I think that elected officials have to step up and at least make themselves heard on issues that affect our constituents. I called for and I got the support of the other members of our coalition, for our city managers to get together, and to plan a presentation to all the electeds at the local level from North Las Vegas, the county, City of Las Vegas, Boulder City, the school district, get us all in the same room, make a presentation to us, and let us then hammer out what we think would be the way to go as far as the tax structure is concerned, because our constituents are very, very concerned about that.

We have issues in Las Vegas I hope we're addressing. I'm scared to death with what the president has said as far as taking certain monies that we depend upon and diverting them from the use that we've had in the past as far as our funds, which we've been able to use in these public land sales or trails, and develop environmentally sensitive areas. If we lose that, I don't know how we're going to make up that difference. That's a fight that we're going to have to fight, of course, in Washington. Hopefully, we'll have the leadership there which will be able to allow us to keep these monies, which we need in order to preserve and sustain the communities as we become used to having in Las Vegas, and that's critical.

We have issues of mental health. Once again, I'm concerned that, with the cutbacks on various funding out of Washington, we won't be able to address those problems. We have problems with the homeless, which we are addressing, and I think we're making great strides along that line. We have to provide all of these social services in our community in order to make it the kind of place we want it to be and what it is at this point in time.

I appreciate everything that you do for us. I appreciate your accessibility. I know if I pick up the phone, I'm always able to reach each and every one of you and if we have an issue or a problem, we're able to address it and be able to resolve it as reasonable people should. I thank you for the opportunity of allowing us the privilege to speak to you by way of the television. I'd like to turn this over to Dr. Doug Selby, who is our City Manager, for some comments as to how his perspective is concerned.

Doug Selby, City Manager, City of Las Vegas, Nevada:

I'd like to just say a few words about our organization and some of our priorities as they relate to topics that Mayor Goodman mentioned, as well as legislation that you may be considering this year. We have a vision to be a diverse, affordable city of opportunity in which all of our citizens feel safe, and they know they'll be heard by their elected officials.

To achieve that vision, the City has a number of priorities. One of our priorities is to effectively manage growth in our community. We're continuously challenged by the need to balance our construction, maintenance, and rehabilitation efforts in the more mature areas of the City of Las Vegas with the needs of the areas where new development is rapidly occurring.

However, what you'll find common in both new redevelopment and development is a concerted effort by the City to encourage planning that promotes the concept of smart growth and sustainable communities. We're encouraging full development that takes advantage of existing infrastructure and improvements. We're encouraging employment centers and retail nodes like our Centennial Town Center that are convenient to residential development and help to reduce traffic and commute times.

The construction of higher density mixed-use projects, predominately in the downtown core of the city, as the Mayor has mentioned, are also a results of this planning effort. Sustainable development includes creating master plans and standards that promote the preservation of natural resources by providing for energy and water-efficient designs as well as minimizing air pollution, traffic congestion, and overall improving the quality of life for our residents. A couple examples of activities in this area include the Kyle Canyon Gateway project; a recent 17-acre land sale, for which the City Council adopted criteria for sustainability and open space preservation; our water and energy conservation programs internal to the city facilities; our support for the building the Mayor mentioned, that the Water Authority and Irwin Molasky will be headquartered in, that is a LEAD-certified building; Leadership in Environmental and Energy Design. It will be the largest such building in the state of Nevada, 200,000 square feet.

Our City Hall addition, which we designed, is also designed to be lead-certified. We also created a green building program for the 61-acre project, a program also designed to look at sustainability and reduction of energy and water use. Therefore, we'll be closely monitoring and supporting any legislation you may be considering that will support and enhance our ability to have these kinds of developments.

[Doug Selby, continued.] Another priority is to manage our cost and revenue resources so we can maximize the efficiency of our operations. As the Mayor mentioned, the property tax issue is of great concern to us. We're committed to working with the Legislature on a solution that will address the needs of the residents who are facing these high property taxes, as well as preserve our ability to continue to support services and the needs of our community. We'll also support any legislation that would permit us to streamline our operations and enhance our customer service without preempting any of our decision-making authority. In particular, we were very supportive of efforts that would allow us to be innovative in how we construct public buildings to avoid cost overruns, construction disputes, and delays in occupancy.

The Mayor referenced our aggressive program to diversify our economy by attracting, retaining, and developing existing businesses. We do that through a dedicated Office of Business Development. Our primary objective is to give us a broad and diverse economic base for the City of Las Vegas. We've placed several new programs in place this year that focus on business retention as well as the development of business parks, that the city would basically master-plan an area, and then allow that to be occupied by businesses that will create more economic vitality as well as employment.

The redevelopment of our urban core is a big issue for us and is closely linked to economic development. The authorities that we're able to exercise under the redevelopment statutes of the State of Nevada give us tools that allow us to attract major national developer like the related companies who bring expertise in revitalizing a downtown area that really for many years has been struggling to get attention. We're seeing the beginnings of these great things, as Mayor Goodman has mentioned, with the success of the outlet malls, 1.3-million-square-foot World Market Center. These have all been made possible through our ability to offer redevelopment incentives that are provided for under state law. Not only that, a successful redevelopment program provides money for affordable housing. Eighteen percent of the tax increment generated by redevelopment goes back to support affordable housing. A successful redevelopment program is good for affordable housing.

We also see a successful redevelopment program as a way to create incentives and fund the improvements that are so needed in historic West Las Vegas to help them establish a vital economy in that area as well. As a result, we wouldn't want to see any legislation that would adversely impact our redevelopment efforts. Redevelopment and job growth, of course, have to be coupled to strong quality-of-life components in order to keep a talented workforce satisfied with their community. Readily available recreation and

leisure activities remain a priority for us, as does our ability to nurture strong neighborhood associations that can represent the interests of their residents as we consider how the city will grow in the future.

[Doug Selby, continued.] We also support legislation that enables adequate law and code enforcement to ensure safe and well-maintained business centers, and residential neighborhoods. A final priority is to communicate well with everyone, regardless of whether they are residents or visitors to the city. We pride ourselves on our commitment to be open and to be an inclusive organization that provides both traditional mechanisms for communications as well as some innovative, state-of-the-art technologies.

Through television, the Internet, neighborhood meetings, electronic newsletters, print publications, and community outreach efforts, we're striving to understand the needs of our residents in order to address them effectively. I'm particularly proud of our technology programs that allow us to offer bill payment, traffic school, building permit tracking, employment applications, current and past council agendas, interactive mapping, and a variety of other services online over the Internet, free of charge, for anybody to access.

We are also looking at the diversity of our community. Las Vegas is growing in its diversity a great deal. Roughly 30 to 33 percent of our population is now Latino, and we've launched a new outreach effort in order to work with the business community, the various minority chambers of commerce, with our goal of being more inclusive and more focused on providing support for those business sectors.

We're fully committed to providing the best possible service to the public through the most cost-effective way and to continue the improvement in our economic opportunities and the quality of life for all of our residents. We also value, as our Mayor said, our partnerships with the Legislature and State agencies and look forward to productive dialogue with you as you consider critical issues that may affect the City of Las Vegas.

Assemblyman Munford:

I just wanted to direct the question on the homeless population. It's located in my district in West Las Vegas. One of the biggest complaints I'm getting from my constituents is that there are so many homeless people located in certain areas, and it seems like no one's really taking responsibility to address it. The street that I live on, I see them every day. I drive by them. Really, it's a blighted image to our community. I never really sat down with Councilman Weekly. We share that same district, and I would just like to see what is in place to address that problem.

Oscar Goodman:

This is not an issue that's easy to resolve. The city, when I came on board, had what's been referred to as a "homeless corridor," which borders North Las Vegas, which is very close to the historic west side. It is in the northernmost portion of our community in the downtown area. This homeless corridor was designed, I guess, in the early 1990s, with the expectation that if you built facilities that would be able to address problems with homelessness, the homeless folks would go there, and you would be able to take care of them. Nobody could have ever dreamt that the city would have grown the way it did, and instead of having the few homeless that existed at the time that this corridor was established, it now has thousands of homeless who are in that particular area. Thousands more are throughout the community, who are not just limited to the corridor.

Many of these people who seek help are in a position where they will be able to find help with the charitable agencies that are funded with City funds as well as with federal funds that are present there, Catholic Charities, Salvation Army, Shade Tree, and the like.

There is a group of folks who can't take care of themselves, who don't know any better because of their mental condition. It's very, very expensive, and we've had discussions with members of the Legislature over the years in order to help one of these folks who has a mental problem and to make sure that they are ultimately returned to a productive life in the community. It takes about \$25,000 per person, and the person will have a recidivism rate of six or seven times, where you help them, they go out, before they're able to get back into society. That is a group that's very difficult to deal with. In a moment, I'll tell you that what we're trying to do there.

There is a group that doesn't want to participate according to the rules, and they want to be homeless, as strange as that may sound. All they have to do is leave their alcohol and their drugs behind, and they could go into these facilities and be treated and taken care of, but they don't do that, and they make a concerted choice. They're the most difficult ones, as far as I'm concerned, to monitor and to keep your neighborhood free of the blight, which I know does occur.

So the city has taken an enlightened view. We have entered into a program, under the aegis of the president's homelessness director, Mr. Philip Mangano. We are doing our very best to establish housing, temporary housing, and then permanent housing; transitional housing, and then permanent housing. That is what we are trying to do. We are trying to stop people from hitting the streets.

We're making small strides. We've probably helped 100 people since the program has been in effect who would be on the streets, but we've been able to get them housing.

[Oscar Goodman, continued.] We've setup triages in areas where the homeless have congregated and created health problems because they urinate, they defecate, and they create real issues of public safety and health in the areas where they are located. We go out and tell them, "We're now ready to help you." We set up trailers, we have the cooperation of our neighborhood services folks, of Metro, of our marshals or city personnel who go there, and we say, "We want to help you." They come, we get information about them, and we try our very best to guide them so they don't remain homeless anymore. We've done two of those to my recollection at this point in time. We're trying to address the problem that way.

Another area, because so many of the homeless end up in jail, is that we're starting a program where we'll have social workers in the jail who will be able to ascertain after interviewing the inmates whether or not they are homeless, whether they have relatives elsewhere that they can contact. Many of the people don't have the wherewithal to find their relatives. We'll reach out for them and see whether or not we'll be able to reunite them with their families. So we are trying to address the issues, but there are no easy solutions.

Chairman Parks:

Thank you, Mayor. I know that we're certainly looking at a wide variety of issues, and I know that this Legislature is also very interested in the things that it might be able to do to help out. Certainly one of the programs that has been very successful in San Diego, I'm sure Las Vegas is looking at, the serial inebriate program. That will help a certain number. We know that there's a lot of homelessness that isn't really visible within our community, within our state. We certainly want to work to address that issue as well. Are there any other questions for either the Mayor or Dr. Selby?

[Chairman Parks, continued.] I don't have any other items from our previous meeting. At this time, I don't have any other Committee introduction bills, so I'll open it up for public comment. Is there anybody in the audience who would like to provide public comment? Not seeing any, we are adjourned [at 9:44 a.m.].

RESPECTFULLY SUBMITTED:

Michael Shafer
Committee Attaché

APPROVED BY:

Assemblyman David Parks, Chairman

DATE: _____

EXHIBITS

Committee Name: Government Affairs

Date: February 9, 2005 Time of Meeting: 8:00 a.m.

[illegible]