MINUTES OF THE MEETING
OF THE
ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT AFFAIRS

Eighty-Third Session
February 10, 2025

The Committee on Government Affairs was called to order by Chair Venicia Considine at 8:03 a.m. on Monday, February 10, 2025, in Room 3143 of the Legislative Building, 401 South Carson Street, Carson City, Nevada. The meeting was videoconferenced to Room 1 of the Nevada Legislature Hearing Rooms, 7120 Amigo Street, Las Vegas, Nevada. Copies of the minutes, including the Agenda [Exhibit A], the Attendance Roster [Exhibit B], and other substantive exhibits, are available and on file in the Research Library of the Legislative Counsel Bureau and on the Nevada Legislature's website at www.leg.state.nv.us/App/NELIS/REL/83rd2025.

COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT:

Assemblymember Venicia Considine, Chair
Assemblymember Duy Nguyen, Vice Chair
Assemblymember Max E. Carter II
Assemblymember Rich DeLong
Assemblymember Reuben D'Silva
Assemblymember Rebecca Edgeworth
Assemblymember Tanya P. Flanagan
Assemblymember Danielle Gallant
Assemblymember Heather Goulding
Assemblymember Bert K. Gurr
Assemblymember Linda F. Hunt
Assemblymember Jovan A. Jackson
Assemblymember Venise Karris

COMMITTEE MEMBERS ABSENT:

Assemblymember Heidi Kasama (excused)

GUEST LEGISLATORS PRESENT:

None

STAFF MEMBERS PRESENT:

Alex Drozdoff, Committee Policy Analyst
Sarah Delap, Committee Counsel
Judith Bishop, Committee Manager

Nikki Peterson, Committee Secretary
Mary Whalen, Committee Assistant

OTHERS PRESENT:

Brittany Lee Walker, City Attorney, City of Boulder City
Joe Hardy, Mayor, City of Boulder City
Warren Hardy, representing City of Boulder City
Nicole Rourke, Director, Government and Public Affairs, City of Henderson
Michelle Romero, Mayor, City of Henderson
Stephanie Garcia-Vause, City Manager and CEO, City of Henderson
Nic Ciccone, Government Affairs Manager, Office of the City Manager, City of Reno
Kathleen Taylor, Vice Mayor, City of Reno
Jackie Bryant, City Manager, City of Reno

Chair Considine:
[Roll was taken. Committee protocol and rules were explained.] Today, we will hear presentations from three of Nevada's cities. We will begin with the presentation from Boulder City, followed by the City of Henderson, and we will conclude with the City of Reno. First, we have Brittany Walker, city attorney, and Warren Hardy, government affairs representative with Boulder City.

Brittany Lee Walker, City Attorney, City of Boulder City:
Our mayor, Joe Hardy, is in Las Vegas and, with the pleasure of the Chair and Committee members, he would like to present and introduce us.

Joe Hardy, Mayor, City of Boulder City:
My family and I have been in Boulder City for the last 42 years. My last two of eight children were born in Boulder City. I am a native of Reno, Nevada. I went to medical school there, and was grateful that we could end up in Nevada and end up in Boulder City. Many of the laws that we pass in the Legislature that you will hear, I am sure in this session, deal with cities under 25,000. Boulder City is one such city. I am grateful to have the opportunity to address the Committee at this time. We are a small town; we have small words that describe Boulder City: the dam, Lake Mead, the railroad, and small-town charm. We have an opportunity to be a place of refuge for many people who want to come and stay for the day and enjoy a little distance from Las Vegas or Henderson.

Just barely over the hill, we see the solar fields that play such a vital part for our community. We have the "Ram Cam," where you can find out if the sheep are in the park and come and visit. There are a lot of different opportunities we have in Boulder City. We participate in ways that are somewhat unique. We had what they call the Eldorado Valley Transfer Area in 1995, which cost us about $1.2 million. What we did with that, we saved a conservation area. This allows a place for wildlife to be protected, as well as we recognize the Eldorado Valley. It is a rich resource for us, and you will hear a presentation that talks about how that relates to Boulder City.

I am very grateful for the opportunity to introduce, unfortunately not related, Warren Hardy as our lobbyist, as well as our city attorney, Brittany Lee Walker. We are grateful to be here in front of your Committee, Madam Chair. Any questions you have, I will gladly defer them to the people who are sitting there in front of you. I am grateful to have the opportunity to be in front of you as well. Thank you, Madam Chair.

Chair Considine:
Thank you very much, Mayor, and it is nice to see you, even if it is just virtually, back in the building.

Brittany Walker:
Good morning, Chair Considine and members of the Assembly Government Affairs Committee. Today, I would like to share with you a little bit more about our community and educate you on why we are a unique and integral piece of Nevada.

Boulder City is historically significant to the development of our state. The Boulder Canyon Project Act authorized the construction of Hoover Dam, signed by President Calvin Coolidge in 1928, just as the Great Depression was beginning [page 2, Exhibit C]. Construction was set to start in 1931, and 5,000 families came to work on the project. Boulder City was built to house the workers. The Bureau of Reclamation held all title to the land, and the federal government essentially owned Boulder City. Construction was completed in 1936, almost two years ahead of schedule. In 1958, the federal government transferred ownership of Boulder City's government, and Boulder City was an incorporated city in January 1960. At the time, it was 33 square miles, one-sixth of the size that it is today.

Boulder City is unique compared to the rest of Nevada [page 3]. We have various charter amendments and initiative pass ordinances that are different than most cities. For example, we are only one of two cities in Nevada that prohibit gaming. Also, we do not have any gaming revenue. Voters adopted a ballot initiative in 1979 for growth control; we are limited to 120 residents per year. We cannot grow more than that; and 30 per development. While Boulder City acquired 167 square miles of former federal land, voters have restricted how the city can use that land. More than an acre must be approved by the voters to be sold. While we have the largest square mileage in Nevada, most is dedicated towards conservation and is undeveloped. We also have a debt limitation of $1 million. Any debt larger than a million must go to the voters for approval.

Here is a depiction of our city council [pages 4-6]. We have our mayor, Joe Hardy, whom you just heard from; our city council members, Mayor Pro Tem Sherri Jorgensen, Councilwoman Cokie Booth, Councilwoman Denise Ashurst, and Councilman Steve Walton. We are led by our appointed officials: our acting city manager Michael Mays; our city clerk is Tami McKay, I am the city attorney, and then Victor Miller is our interim municipal judge.

Boulder City is a regional partner [page 7]. We pride ourselves in assisting Nevada as a whole, and especially southern Nevada. We played a key role in the economic development, as the mayor had mentioned, with the purchase of the Eldorado Valley Transfer Area. We set

aside 136 square miles to create the Boulder City Conservation Easement. That helped conserve land dedicated to the valley so that southern Nevada was able to get an incidental take permit and continue to grow. Additionally, we donated the land for Interstate 11, and that provides for rapid movement of people, goods, and services and contributes to the strengthening of the southern Nevada economy. Whether it was Boulder City's agreement to a 99-year lease to the State of Nevada for no compensation to help with the building of the Nevada State Railroad Museum or partnering with the National Park Service to provide fire and life safety support for the Lake Mead National Recreation Area, Boulder City is a strong partner with the other local government agencies to provide regional benefits to residents and tourists.

Here is an overview of our strategic plan goals [page 8]. Each city has a strategic plan to ensure that we are making progress and moving forward to meeting our goals and our mission for the city. We just revamped our strategic plan, and our goals are to maintain high-quality recreation and tourism offerings for residents and visitors, continue achieving prudent financial stewardship, maintaining our community character, promoting historic preservation, maintaining dependable and reliable infrastructure, improving our public health and accessibility, and continuing to maintain high levels of public safety.

Boulder City also values transparency [page 9]. We have a public records portal where most of our public records are available to the public online. Anyone can go and find nearly any document they would like to see already available on our portal. Additionally, we implemented a tool called Socrata, which is like an open checkbook [page 10]. You can essentially go on our website and see any check the city has written to any vendor or contractor or employee. We have all of that readily available, including an overview of our budgets and spending. It shows there [page 11] what our general fund and enterprise fund budgets are, as well as what our spending and payroll are each year.

An overview of our revenue sources: intergovernmental accounts is more than a third of our revenue; most of that comes from CTX [consolidated tax distribution] [page 12]. We also have rents and royalties from land leases mostly leased to solar developers in the Eldorado Valley. That accounts for almost a third of our revenue. Our fiscal year (FY) 2025 revenue is estimated at $48.39 million.

Our expenditures: we have 18 percent for culture and recreation; we have 17 city parks and 2 golf courses that are municipal-owned [page 13]. Public works accounts for 20 percent. Like most cities, public safety is a large portion of our budget as well, with our police and fire department. Then we have general government, the judicial branch, and community support.

We have 224 full-time employees [page 14]. Because most of our buildings were built in the 1930s—and some 1940s and 1950s—we do have a lot of accessibility issues we are working to address, but we are continuing and committed to making those ADA [Americans with Disabilities Act] improvements to improve accessibility. Our staff often does multiple jobs. For example, our director of business licensing is also our utility billing supervisor. We have

a thin staff, but they are dedicated and work very hard for our community. We have 8 collective bargaining units and, as I mentioned, 17 parks, a swimming pool, and our 2 city-owned golf courses.

We are happy to report that we have the lowest crime rate in the state [page 15]. Our police department has been able to sustain critical staffing levels where other police departments are seeing challenges with recruiting and retention. We have been lucky to not have those same issues. We continue to maintain our low crime rate. Our fire department responds to an average of 2,600 calls annually; 87 percent of those are EMS [emergency medical services]. We are proud to report that we are the fourth nationally accredited fire department in the state of Nevada, which we received in March 2023. We also are dedicated to the community to improve life safety. We partnered with our local businesses to implement an AED [automated external defibrillator] program so that we could put eight defibrillators in local businesses, and we train them on how to use it so that we can save lives in the event of an emergency [page 16, Exhibit C].

We have two elementary schools, a junior high school, and a high school. Here is just a depiction of our enrollment numbers [page 17]. While a lot of our students are from Boulder City, we have a lot of students who commute into Boulder City to attend our schools.

We are an older population with 15,000 residents, but unlike Clark County's 2.3 million residents, our median age is 51.1 compared to 37.8 in Clark County. Twenty-nine percent are over age 65, and just under 50 percent are in the workforce. Ten percent also have veteran status [page 18].

Why is this important? Well, most of our residents live on fixed incomes. Agencies like Emergency Aid of Boulder City, Lend A Hand, and the senior center all asked the city for support from eligible ARPA [American Rescue Plan Act of 2021] funds due to an increase in need the past three years [page 19]. Increase for assistance with utility bills and rent has increased substantially, and our fire department also saw more calls for service in recent years for health conditions.

Another thing that makes Boulder City unique is, we are one of the only cities in Nevada—Fallon is another—that provide electric service to our residents [page 20]. We operate our own electrical distribution system and are not-for-profit. Our entire distribution system is subject to our Boulder City Council rather than the Public Utilities Commission of Nevada. The city does not own or operate any generation resources and obtains all its energy needs from existing power purchase agreements. We are a leader in clean energy, getting most of our power from renewable sources. Hydropower is a large part of it, but we also purchase five megawatts from one of our solar developments in our city. We do, at this time, receive most of our power from renewable resources.

We also diversified our revenue sources with utility-scale solar [page 21]. As I mentioned, our lease revenue makes up about a third of our budget. It has helped us survive difficult

times like the Great Recession, and most recently, the COVID-19 pandemic. The first utility-scale solar project to benefit the city that I mentioned earlier was the Townsite solar project, and that delivers five megawatts of firm power. We are also exploring additional power purchase agreements in the future due to the dwindling capacity of Hoover Dam with the ongoing drought. We hope to implement those to continue to save money for our ratepayers.

Tourism draws a lot of residents to Boulder City from Las Vegas, all over the United States, and internationally, the Hoover Dam being one of our nation's marvels [page 22]. We also have the Nevada State Railroad Museum, which we are proud to house, and proud to be home to the Lake Mead National Recreation Area that sees more than 5 million visitors annually. Just recently Boulder City, jointly with the city of Henderson, was designated by the National Park Service as a World War II American Heritage City.

Also, home of the Ram Cam [page 23]. If you have ever heard of Hemenway Park in Boulder City, it is a very special place in Nevada where our bighorn sheep actually come down from the mountains and graze on the park's grass. They are there nearly every day, and you can go and see these majestic creatures right here in our home and with a beautiful view of the lake there as well. Many people ask and call us and they say, What time are the rams coming? We say we do not have their schedule, we do not know; that is why we installed our ram cams. You can go to our website and you can see if they are there before you make the drive into town to go see them. We have had over 164,000 views.

We are also going to be building a Boulder City Adventure Center [page 24]. Our chamber of commerce was awarded a U.S. Commerce Department grant. The proposed layout will be built in our state welcome center, which is where the chamber of commerce is housed, and they will allow tourism companies to develop operations at a centralized location. Visitors can just schedule various activities in one location. You will have all of these kiosks and little storefronts where you can book your kayaking trip. We are hoping to reopen our zip line soon if you are familiar with our Bootleg Canyon zip line. Those are various tourism opportunities that we hope to continue, and the adventure center will allow a centralized place for our visitors to come and experience all that Boulder City and southern Nevada have to offer.

We completed the Railroad Museum Road, and the State is currently building that visitor center. We are very excited and continue to support that State project. We also installed our Home of the Boulder City Eagles sign [page 25]. When you come into town, you will see that sign greeting you as you come in. We have—are proud to say—135 state championships right now. Very proud of our Boulder City Eagles.

To update you on language and ADA access, we do provide all election materials in English, Spanish, and Tagalog. We offer public safety employees bilingual incentives, and we also are working on increasing our ADA accessibility. Although our city hall building was built in 1931, we have revamped our ADA access entrances. We have installed a hearing loop in the council chamber so those with hearing impairments can listen to meetings directly to their

hearing aids. That is very helpful. We also offer closed captioning on all our public meeting recordings. With that, Committee members and Chair, I am available for any questions. I know Mr. Hardy wanted to add something.

Warren Hardy, representing City of Boulder City:
Thank you, Chair, members of the Committee. It is good to be here with you. Those of you that know me well will be pleased to know that I have lost my voice and I do not know if I will get it back. I am at the very end of this, so do not worry, I am not contagious.

Chair Considine, members of the Committee, it is a pleasure and honor for me to represent and work with the City of Boulder City. It is sort of full circle for me. I have been able to represent the city as a state assemblymember, a state senator, and have had the pleasure of working with Joe Hardy, who is the only Hardy I can find that I am not related to. I cannot really add to anything Ms. Walker said, except this—you can see that Boulder City is a very, very unique city, not only in terms of the locale, the location, but also in terms of governance. We are very, very different in a lot of different ways. You will hear from us often regarding those differences and how what the Legislature does impacts us.

I am going to just suggest we are different in one additional way as well. We are a small city in a large county, in the largest county. The members who have been here for a long time know—and the new members will start to learn—that we do a lot of things sometimes on population basis and things that impact the large counties. I am just going to ask now that you be mindful, and we will certainly be there to remind you, that we are a small city in a large county. Sometimes what works in large cities in large counties does not work in small cities in large counties. That is something we will be talking to you about regularly and often.

It is a unique city. I am sure all of you have been to Boulder City. If you have not, come and take the time; it is a wonderful community. I still go every Fourth of July to the parade, and it is just a wonderful, wonderful place. I ride my motorcycle there probably twice a month for breakfast at The Coffee Cup Cafe. If you have not had breakfast at The Coffee Cup Cafe, you need to try that. Chair, I apologize for taking the additional time, but I wanted to add that additional perspective that we are a small city with very different needs than much of the other large cities in Clark County. Thank you.

Chair Considine:
Thank you very much, and it is nice to have you back as well; glad you are feeling better.

Assemblymember D'Silva:
I have a quick question about the demographics in Boulder City. I know that Boulder City, along with a place like Scottsdale, are more mature cities in regard to population. I was wondering if this maturity in this population and the dwindling amount of the workforce has had any sort of economic effects, or is Boulder City able to keep up with these sorts of demographic changes?

Brittany Walker:
As an older community, we have not seen impacts to our economic sphere as far as the city revenues and city budgets. Of course, our residents that live on fixed incomes, when there are downturns in the economy, we do see an increased outreach for need and support. We try to support our local nonprofit groups to help with that. Most of our council members deliver Meals on Wheels to our residents and volunteer in our community. We have seen that, but as far as our city revenues, we have been insulated from that. We are a retirement community, so people move to Boulder City to retire. Those in the workforce commute to Las Vegas; we are only 20-30 minutes away from the valley. A lot of people still commute there.

Warren Hardy:
Assemblymember D'Silva asked a very important question because we are impacted in some ways because of the aging population. There are a lot of advantages that come with that—the experience, institutional knowledge, and the things that those individuals can contribute to the community. We do sometimes struggle with regard to employment and finding individuals to fill slots. We will be bringing a piece of legislation hopefully in the very near term to you to help address that problem. That is another area where we are sort of impacted because of our demographic. We are hoping that you will help us solve that this session.

Assemblymember DeLong:
With regard to the power generation, is Boulder City subject to the Rural Electrification Act?

Brittany Walker:
I would have to look into that and get back to you.

Assemblymember Jackson:
I know you mentioned in the budget there was funding for community support. What types of community support do you have for the homeless population there?

Brittany Walker:
Like most of the local governments in Nevada and everywhere across the nation, we have seen an increase in the homeless population. Two years ago, we implemented a homeless outreach team. Our fire department joined up with our community resource liaison at the Boulder City Hospital and they go out weekly to make contacts with these individuals and try to get them to services. We have made over 80 referrals to services for these individuals. We continue to try to get them access to services. It takes several contacts a lot of times before these people are willing to receive services. We are trying to do that, and we partner with Clark County, which has the bulk of the homelessness services for southern Nevada. They offer us a lot of resources as well.

Assemblymember Flanagan:
I have been familiar with your 30-max bill for a really long time. I had not realized you only allowed 120 new residents. I am curious to find out how you manage that. You referenced fixed incomes, but really nothing that spoke to median household incomes, average incomes, or household value. Can you talk about that?

Brittany Walker:
We do limit it to 120 per year and 30 per development. How we regulate that is the ordinance, which was passed by the voters. It was an initiative petition and provided for an allotment committee. We have a committee that meets and evaluates applications, and they issue what are called allotments before any building permits can be issued. And we have actually not even come close to the 120 number. We have had developers that wanted to build more than 30. The allotment year starts in July and the person would apply in June and then apply again in July and would get 60 for the year. Then they build 60 homes and would then apply the next year for additional. But we have been fortunate in that we have not seen any issues with that whole process, and we have been able to follow that ordinance very, very easily. As far as the median household income, I do not have that information. I can get that to the Committee members for you and provide that information.

Assemblymember Gallant:
Thank you for the presentation; you did a really good job, but you also let out a really nice secret about how wonderful it is to live there. I am a new resident there; I do not know if you knew that, Ms. Walker. In terms of our aging population, it is affecting our elementary schools. Maybe you could opine on that a little bit. Thanks to Mayor Hardy, he educated me on this a few months ago about the Eldorado Valley conservation, and it allowed Las Vegas to be able to grow because Boulder City put aside that land. With the federal bill in which the Governor requested millions of acres, will the current Eldorado Valley acreage be able to support that growth, or are we going to be looking at possibly needing to increase our conservation area?

Brittany Walker:
To answer your last question first, the Eldorado Valley Transfer Area and the acreage, I do not know what the future of that is. Our incidental take permit, I do know for the Valley is going to be expiring soon. I am not sure what the process is for continuing that and if there will be a requirement to set aside additional conservation area in order to keep an incidental take permit under the Endangered Species Act. That remains to be seen. I will say with the easement, we granted the easement to Clark County and that will continue in perpetuity for a significant amount of time. That Boulder City conservation easement will stay unimpacted.

I do not have the exact information, and I can definitely reach out to the school district and get more. We have seen our schools struggling with enrollment numbers and keeping teachers. Our population does not have the number of children to support our schools and keep our same teachers. We have seen teachers leaving, and we have seen our impacts to the schools. I will reach out to Clark County School District and get more information on that for the Committee members. I do know they are trying to increase enrollment from outside of Boulder City so that we can continue to keep our schools open and provide the great education that our schools have been able to provide.

Chair Considine:
Regarding the Ram Cam, I have read about the lack of rain and lack of water. How is the herd doing? If you have any updates or plans, I would like to hear that.

Brittany Walker:
We do work with the Nevada Department of Wildlife very closely to make sure we are keeping that area for the bighorn sheep and doing everything we can. I do not have an update on the latest status of how the herd is doing, but we can definitely reach out to the Department of Wildlife and find out how they are all doing. Anecdotally, I take my son there every weekend and we do see them. They seem to be doing OK. There is always a good amount of them there, but we can definitely reach out and get more information to the Committee on how the herd is doing and whether they have seen impacts due to the drought and other factors.

Chair Considine:
They have just been there so long. My daughter is much older than your children, but I took her there when she was a kid. I like that specialness of that area.

Before we move on to our next presentation, we will have a bill draft request (BDR) introduction. As a reminder, voting in favor of introducing a BDR does not imply a commitment to supporting the measure later. All this action does is allow the BDR to become a bill or resolution and be referred to a committee for possible hearings.

BDR 23-402—Makes changes to the computation of credit for service for certain members of the Public Employees' Retirement System. (Later introduced as Assembly Bill 232.)

I will entertain a motion to introduce BDR 23-402.

> ASSEMBLYMEMBER NGUYEN MOVED TO INTRODUCE BILL DRAFT REQUEST 23-402.
>
> ASSEMBLYMEMBER D'SILVA SECONDED THE MOTION.

Is there any discussion? [There was none.]

> THE MOTION PASSED. (ASSEMBLYMEMBER KASAMA WAS ABSENT FOR THE VOTE.)

Next, we will have a presentation from the city of Henderson. With us to present are Mayor Michelle Romero, Stephanie Garcia-Vause, City Manager, and Nicole Rourke, Director of Government and Public Affairs.

Nicole Rourke, Director, Government and Public Affairs, City of Henderson:
It is my pleasure to be here and introduce you to Mayor Michelle Romero and our City Manager and CEO, Stephanie Garcia-Vause. They will be doing the majority of the presentation, and I will be providing some comments at the end just to give you a brief introduction to the two bill drafts that the city of Henderson is bringing to the 2025 Legislative Session.

Michelle Romero, Mayor, City of Henderson:
Thank you, Chair Considine and members of the Committee, for the opportunity to join you today. I would like to share with you some highlights from the city of Henderson. We appreciate the opportunity to meet with you at the start of each legislative session.

It has been my honor to serve as the mayor of Henderson since 2023 and, prior to that, to serve as the Ward 1 representative since 2019. I am a lifelong resident of the city of Henderson, and I also had the honor of serving as an employee of the city for 25 years before I was elected. I am also vice chair of the southern Nevada workforce development area Local Elected Officials Consortium and president of the Nevada League of Cities and Municipalities. I also serve on the Las Vegas Convention and Visitors Authority Board of Directors.

I am here today representing my colleagues on the Henderson City Council. From left to right [page 2, Exhibit D], Councilwoman Monica Larson from Ward 2, Councilman Jim Seebock from Ward 1, Councilman Dan Stewart from Ward 4, and Councilwoman Carrie Cox from Ward 3. I am very pleased to introduce you to our new city manager, Stephanie Garcia-Vause. Stephanie was named city manager in December, and I am going to turn over the next portion of the presentation to her.

Stephanie Garcia-Vause, City Manager and CEO, City of Henderson:
I am really thrilled to be here. I have served the city of Henderson for three decades, including the past seven years as an assistant city manager, and prior to that as the director of community development and services for nearly a decade. Although they were not able to join us today, you can see their pictures on the screen [page 3]. I would like to highlight our two assistant city managers who are part of our senior leadership team. Alyssa Rodriguez, who is our assistant city manager and chief infrastructure officer; and Lisa Corrado, who is our assistant city manager and chief strategy officer. Both our city leadership and our government affairs team, who are here on the ground in Carson City, are eager to work with you during this legislative session, and I appreciate this opportunity to share our perspective and unique needs with you today. If there is anything we can assist you with during the session, any questions to be answered, please do not hesitate to get in touch with any of our team, either here on the ground or back home.

Henderson really is a place for everyone to call home, and we have joined the rest of southern Nevada in seeing increased diversity among our residents over the last few decades [page 4]. Our population now exceeds 345,000, and we are the second-largest city in the state. We are also the state's largest full-service city, providing police, fire, emergency management services, parks and recreation, public works, water, and wastewater services.

As a city, we face our challenges with optimism and hard work, core elements of our culture, and we pride ourselves on achieving our goals no matter the odds. As a result, the city has been awarded the prestigious Malcolm Baldridge National Quality Award [page 5]. We are one of only five cities to ever achieve this highest recognition for performance excellence bestowed by the President of the United States. This award is typically reserved for the

private sector, so this is quite a distinguishment. This award validates our data-driven approach using national best practices to inform our strategies and achieve our goals. We are excited to accept the award in Washington, D.C., next month.

We want to share some information with you about the city's finances and budget—that seems to be at the top of the mind of all of us [page 6]. We are proud to have the highest bond rating of any city within the state, with an AA+ bond rating. Henderson maintains the lowest tax rate among any major city in the state at only 77 cents per $100 of assessed valuation. While we are proud that we maintain our services, programs, and amenities with such a low tax rate, the city statutory ability to increase it is quite limited, including the significant limitations of the property tax caps.

Our general fund is comprised of a variety of sources, but approximately 73 percent is made up of consolidated and property taxes [page 7]. Our general fund revenues are budgeted at just over $388 million for fiscal year (FY) 2025. Since over 70 percent of our general fund is tax-based, that leaves only a small portion that we can control as a city. We are beginning to see real challenges in the near future with our available revenues. As you can see here [page 8], our total budget for FY 2025 was approved at $392 million. Public safety accounts for more than half of our general fund-budgeted expenditures. Add in parks and recreation and 72 percent of our general fund budget goes towards those three areas: parks, fire, and police. The rest of the budget is allocated to various priorities identified in our strategic plan as well as city operations.

As a city government that provides full services to the community, most of that budgeted expense is in the form of salaries and benefits. We partner with our unions and our employees directly to understand what is important to them, and we work to provide the most competitive compensation and benefits packages that we can afford. Yet, we remain one of the most efficient city governments with only 6.6 employees for every 1,000 residents [page 9]. This also takes a partnership directly with our employees and our unions because we know that they are working really hard to achieve those results as a city. We have a lean and well-structured organization that makes the most of the limited resources we have.

As we look to the near future, we know we face some daunting challenges. Consolidated taxes, which are primarily comprised of sales tax, are falling below initial budgeted projections [page 10]. Pre-pandemic averages were 3 to 5 percent growth, and we have projected a minimal conservative 1 percent increase in CTX [consolidated tax distribution] for FY 2025. However, revenues have come in well below our projections for the last six months of reported revenue. We have also seen significant cost increases with the city's Public Employees' Retirement System (PERS) contributions. This year, PERS contributions will increase from 50 percent to 58.75 percent for public safety and from 33.5 percent to 36.75 percent for non-public safety, making a tremendous impact on our budget. These increases in PERS contributions are split with employees, and we anticipate a $6.2 million impact for the city's half this year. We are also seeing significant increases in our workers' compensation claims and healthcare costs. As we stated previously, original budget projections were for a 1 percent increase in consolidated tax. But for the last six months, we

have seen consolidated tax coming in well below that projection [page 11]. On average, CTX is running about $390,000 below projections per month with a total deficit of almost $2.4 million just over the last six months.

One of the areas we are watching closely is workers' compensation. Claims and judgment expenses have seen a dramatic increase from $12.4 million in FY 2023 to over $29 million in FY 2024 [page 12]. The increase in claims results from multiple factors including an increase in overall number of claims submitted, heart and lung claims submitted, and post-traumatic stress claims. I want to make sure everyone knows we want to take care of our employees. As you heard me mention, they are essential to providing the great services and leading to the great quality of life we have. We do have some significant concerns with those increased expenses and our ability to continue to fund those. We look forward to continuing that conversation with you as the legislative session proceeds.

Last year, we adopted a new four-year strategic plan with input from residents, businesses, and Henderson's elected leaders. This plan establishes the priorities that guide the decisions we make as a city, focused on five strategic priorities [page 13]. Our budgetary process reflects these as well as the legislative priorities that we will be working with you on during this session. We have an ambitious plan and a track record of success, but our annual budget requests for capital improvements and operational strategic priorities continuously outpace the available resources that we have. Therefore, we must be strategic and innovative in allocating our finite resources.

Over the next few slides, we will share with you some of the accomplishments and challenges we are seeing within the areas. I am going to turn it back over to the mayor to discuss community safety.

Michelle Romero:
The city council and city leadership have invested significantly to maintain strong police and fire departments. In fact, almost 60 percent of our operating budget is dedicated to keeping our community one of the safest in the nation [page 14, Exhibit D]. Police Chief Holly Chadwick has been at the helm for almost two years and our twelfth Fire Chief, Scott Vivier, was sworn in last October. Like other cities, we are facing significant challenges with recruitment, retention, and increasing cost of equipment due to inflation. Traffic fatalities are up significantly across the state, and we are invested in increasing enforcement and roadway improvements like our reimagined Boulder Highway project. Emergency calls are also rising. An increase in public safety funding will be necessary to maintain our high quality of services as our community continues to grow.

Our fire department is of particular concern. We have been able to make progress in building and renovating our fire stations in Henderson. Many of those fire stations were built long ago and they are not equipped for the fire services we have today. Many of them do not even have separate sleeping quarters or facilities for female firefighters. However, with the failed fire ballot initiative, many of our priorities are going to have to wait, like those renovations. Despite being ranked as one of the top fire departments in the country, our fire and

EMS [emergency medical services] response times are not hitting our benchmarks and face further strains as our community continues to grow, even though we have a very steady and manageable 1.6 to 1.8 percent growth rate in the city. Whereas police have two outside revenue sources to help weather downturns, the fire department does not, which we see as a potential opportunity for legislative action. I am going to turn it over to Ms. Garcia-Vause.

Stephanie Garcia-Vause:
Another national challenge we face is that increases in housing prices have outpaced income growth, making housing affordability a critical issue, even for the city of Henderson. Henderson's housing supply is currently underserved by approximately 5,800 units and projected to be underserved by more than 65,000 units by the year 2040. To meet this challenge, we have taken action to address the housing needs of all residents, including producing the Henderson Housing and Community Development Strategy and creating the Housing Advisory Committee in 2023, where we asked members of the community and representatives from the housing industry to help us work on solutions to address this issue [page 16].

Thanks to the work of the Legislature that has been done with Senate Bill 103 of the 80th Session and other legislation, we have also implemented important updates to the city codes and regulations which serve to increase the supply of affordable housing in Henderson, including providing affordable housing incentives; including reducing fees for development and inspections; consideration of expedited plan check for affordable housing development projects; reducing parking requirements; increasing allowed building heights for qualifying affordable housing projects; and—this one should sound familiar—establishing standards for tiny houses, which was something that the Legislature asked for; and council adoption of fee waivers for affordable units.

With one-time stimulus funds, we facilitated affordable residential projects in Henderson, including the Sunrise Ranch project, partnering with Nevada Hand, which will provide 144 affordable units at the corner of Broadbent Boulevard and Boulder Highway; the Ovation West Henderson Family Apartments project, which will provide 390 affordable units; the Arroyo Grande Apartments project with 121 affordable units located on American Pacific Drive across from the Arroyo Grande Sports Complex; and the Center for the Blind is a partnership with Clark County, Las Vegas, and North Las Vegas to build 100 permanent supportive units for people who are visually impaired at Vision Park in Las Vegas. With more funding, we could look forward to more affordable housing projects like these.

Despite being Nevada's second-largest city, the number of individuals experiencing homelessness in Henderson accounts for only about 5 percent of those experiencing homelessness countywide. While we do not have Henderson-specific data for previous years, we have been experiencing consistent population growth, which includes individuals experiencing homelessness. Last year, we created the Henderson Homeless Response Team to do outreach to this community and provide them with resources [page 17]. To date, we have helped more than 500 individuals, placing 80 people into various emergency shelters in just the last six months. We have connected others to housing through nonprofits and helped

hundreds of households facing a loss of housing with rent or utility assistance to remain in their homes.

The need is greater than the funding available from year to year due to the rising rent costs. Our one-time COVID-19 funding has since expired. This pilot will wind down in September unless we can find a funding source to sustain it. Unfortunately, Henderson is not an Emergency Solutions Grant (ESG) entitlement community, despite being the second-largest city in the state of Nevada. As you know, ESG grants are designed to assist people experiencing homelessness or for people who are at risk of being homeless. Not having that money as a permanent source of revenue is a challenge for the city. We are continuing to work with our congressional delegation to address this issue. Last year, Congress approved $4 million in community project funds for a Henderson homeless navigation center to help connect individuals and families experiencing homelessness to needed services. We are working with HUD [U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development] to stand up this project and hope to work with Clark County to complement their Campus for Hope model. Now I will turn it back to the mayor.

Michelle Romero:
We have a great story to tell in economic diversification which benefits the region as a whole. We are focused on bringing good-paying jobs that promote economic mobility [page 18]. Since 2019, we have helped 36 companies move or expand to Henderson, especially to the fast-growing West Henderson area. Haas Automation has begun vertical construction on their 2.4 million square-foot facility in West Henderson in fall of 2024 with an anticipated opening in 2026. When completed, the facility will employ 1,400 people and invest over $300 million in the region.

To support Haas and to attract additional advanced manufacturers, the city partnered with the College of Southern Nevada to open the Debra March Center for Excellence. When fully operational, the Center for Excellence will be able to support and train 500 individuals and students annually for those high-skill jobs. They have already started graduating people from that program. We have updated our target industries with very specific focus for economic development efforts. We have a robust and dynamic targeted program where we factor in upcoming jobs, where the economy is headed, how things are changing with technology, and we update that targeted analysis on a regular basis.

Tax incentives from the Governor's Office of Economic Development (GOED) continue to play an incredibly important role in the continued success of many Henderson businesses. Aiming incentives that help attract new out-of-state businesses at high-impact target industries would allow Henderson and the state to continue to be the community of choice for the types of businesses we are trying to attract. The City of Henderson looks forward to working with GOED, the Legislature, and our regional partners towards modernizing Nevada's tax incentive offerings. We want to be very deliberate about how those are administered and what results we get as a result of those incentives.

Our Henderson residents strongly value education and our city is actively involved in supporting the local schools. Thanks to the work of the Governor and the Legislature in the last session in enacting A.B. 400 of the 82nd Session, the city has been approved to become a charter school authorizer to offer more options for Henderson families. We have established the infrastructure to support authorizing work, and we have accepted seven notices of intent to apply with applications due at the end of April 2025. We have also approved design and construction for a second preschool program with an anticipated completion at the end of 2026. We have one fully accredited preschool program right now, and the second one will add our ability. We have focused those efforts in very targeted locations within our city to help the most at-risk and lowest-income areas of our city so that those families have the opportunity to give their children a head start as well [page 19].

The transformation our city has accomplished just in my lifetime is nothing short of amazing. I believe we have proven ourselves very good stewards of the limited resources we have been given. We humbly ask for your continued support and promise to continue to overdeliver through hard work and continued optimism even in the face of challenges.

Nicole Rourke:
I just want [unintelligible] bills that we are bringing forward. We know that today is not the bill hearing, but we certainly look forward to presenting these to you sometime in the near future. Assembly Bill 10 seeks to expand projects eligible for neighborhood improvement districts for the repair of private water or sewer facilities in common-interest communities. Senate Bill 72 includes updates to our city charter that were recommended by our Henderson Charter Committee [page 20]. As you may know, we had a special election for the council member in Ward 1 when Mayor became mayor and vacated that seat in 2023. We wanted to address some of the time constraints that we encountered during that process.

We also have updates to the process for considering ordinances as well as an issue on the sale of real property that we discovered while working with Nevada State University. That is the conclusion of our presentation. We will be happy to take any questions.

Chair Considine:
Committee members, do we have any questions?

Assemblymember Jackson:
Tiny homes are something new to all of us. I am just curious, what are your set regulations to allow tiny homes to be developed in Henderson?

Stephanie Garcia-Vause:
I can get you a copy of those regulations, but prior to the legislative action in the bill, it was a little bit more challenging to have tiny homes. We have specific requirements within our code. Nobody has taken us up on developing a project yet, but we have seen quite a few projects come in and be proposed. They just have not made it to the development stage, but we will follow up and get you those regulations.

Assemblymember Nguyen:
Great presentations, a lot of information. I think you know this, but I am a proud small-business owner in Henderson and we love being there. It is a great place to do business. You did a great slide on the economic vitality [page 18], and I see a lot of the larger business conversations are in the slide. Do you have statistics on the small businesses? In terms of the city's focus, if there is any on small businesses and what the city is doing to help with small business in Henderson?

Michelle Romero:
We have a very strong focus and a very robust program. We have an economic development department that is the only nationally accredited economic development department in the state of Nevada. We have a program specifically targeted to our existing businesses. They are the backbone of our community and we want to make sure that our small businesses are thriving. We just recently started a new program that helps those that are just starting out. Those that have passed the initial, "I have an idea, and I am getting started but need some help getting to the next level." We have a program that gives them grant funds to help them get to that next level, provides them the services and the guidance they need to make sure they are on the right path to be successful.

We also do regular visits with the Economic Development Department and with the council to go to different businesses to find out how things are working for them. I go on those visits quite often, and several times we have been made aware of an issue that they are having. Typically, they are fairly minor issues, but we have often been able to fix those issues while we were at the site. It has been a very big focus for us and we will continue to do that.

Assemblymember Nguyen:
I asked this question for one of your sister cities as well, but do you have or keep Diverse Business Enterprise (DBE) databases and a number of DBEs in your city?

Stephanie Garcia-Vause:
We do not keep those records. However, we do a biennial business survey, and should the business choose to share that information with us, we have that available, but that is their choice.

Assemblymember D'Silva:
My question is about the Veterans Treatment Court. I know that Henderson was one of the pioneers, really, in the development of this sort of tangential legal process for our veterans. Could you give us an update and also let us know if there are ways we can support?

Michelle Romero:
We do have a very robust Veterans Treatment Court program; we have many people who have gone through that program. For those who are not aware, it is a program that works with veterans who have, somewhere along the line, made a choice that led to a not great outcome and they have been through the legal process. They have a mentor program that is years long. They have to prove they have accomplished a certain number of things, they have to have

employment, and they have to have steady housing. They come back on a regular basis and report to the judge and to their mentors on how they are doing, they do random drug tests, and they do all kinds of things to make sure that people are staying on the right track through the program. The recidivism rate in those programs is extraordinarily low; they have been incredibly successful. We have both the Veterans Treatment Court and the ABC [Assistance in Breaking the Cycle] Court, which is a drug court that does the same thing. We have been very, very happy with the results of both of those programs. They are strongly supported by the city and we will continue to work with our judges to help those programs.

Assemblymember Flanagan:
You mentioned that public safety is 58 percent of the budget and the need to meet the growing demand on your services. Is regional recruitment for firefighters or fire personnel helpful to you and how often have you participated in that?

Michelle Romero:
[Audio was lost] this question on a regular basis. We have also gone outside the region and done targeted recruitment at other cities across the nation that we think would provide people who would meet our high standards and would welcome the opportunity to come to a community that values its public safety. We have greatly changed the way we recruit over the last year or so, and the last three recruitment programs for both police and fire, each one of them has been bigger than the last. We have had the highest number of participants in our programs these last few times than we have ever had in the past. Those recruitment efforts are working, and we continue to refine those and find ways to reach out to other communities and make them aware of the opportunities we have in Henderson.

Assemblymember Goulding:
It is interesting that you decided to take on the challenge of sponsoring charter schools as an added complexity to your community. Can you talk a little bit about that and why you decided to seek that authority to sponsor charter schools? Are you at capacity in your current schools?

Michelle Romero:
Every time we are out in the community—and we are out a lot—we do a lot of public meetings, informal meetings with our residents to let them know how we are doing and to get feedback. Without question, public safety and education are number one every time. Our community is extremely involved in our education system. Almost every school we have, at all levels, elementary through high school, are at or exceeding capacity including our charter schools; all of those have very, very long waitlists. The need for additional choice in our community was strong. We felt it necessary to be able to guide some of that and that is why we wanted to become a charter authority.

We have done many things over the years to help set us up for having success in that area. We have our Education Advisory Commission [*sic*] that we have established. We also take 30 percent of the marijuana business licensing funds that we get and 18 percent of the redevelopment funds that we have, and we put it into a set-aside account for education. We

make grants to public schools, charter and CCSD [Clark County School District] schools; we make them directly to schools within our community to help improve outcomes for our students. That has helped over the years, and it also has helped setting up that base of funding that will be available in addition to the school funding formula for students. We felt we were ready and able to make that transition to a charter authority and that we had the support of our residents to do so. Just a basic need for fewer children in the classroom and more choice for our residents.

Assemblymember Karris:
I want to revisit the workers' compensation numbers. It seems to me you have had a drastic increase from FY 2023 to FY 2024; it has more than doubled. Can you go a little more into detail on how that occurred?

Stephanie Garcia-Vause:
We can follow up with you in more detail, but it really is the result of some of the past workers' compensation, the expansion of services, and we are seeing the impacts of some of the heart and lung claims coming. As our employees have aged, as our workforce ages with some of those presumptive benefits, we are seeing those now come into play. I think as we see our employees continue to age, I think we are going to see those numbers. There has also been an expansion of what is allowed under the claims. We see that number continuing to grow.

Assemblymember Carter:
The question I have is in regard to public safety. We keep hearing about the need to go out of the area to recruit. Have there been any comprehensive efforts to make sure that there are not any legacy discriminatory practices and rules in the selection procedure? We have a huge number of young people graduating. Is it the education system? Is it legacy rules? I acknowledge the Henderson Police Department has led the way on being more lax when it comes to facial hair and trying to get rid of some of those old things that were really probably there to keep people out. That is what I am wondering. Have we looked clear through those to make sure we are not creating barriers to good candidates who are local?

Michelle Romero:
We have done a lot of introspect on what our hiring practices are. We feel like we have, as you said, lowered the barriers in regard to physical appearance and things like that. What we are unwilling to do is lower our standards for the level of person coming in. What we are seeing is that a lot of them cannot pass the drug test. That is the biggest problem we have seen. Marijuana is the biggest problem we have seen that disallows people from moving further into the process.

It is a matter of educating people earlier on. We have an Explorer Program that brings kids in—for both police and fire—during the high school years to help them understand what the requirements of public safety are, what it involves, and what you would need to do to be prepared. What we were missing for a long period of time was, they are out of school at 18 and they cannot be hired until they are 21, and we were losing them in that time period. We

have created a cadet program that continues that and allows those young adults to become employed on a part-time basis and continue their education, continue learning, and then move right into the actual recruitment process once they are 21. We are finding that has been very successful as well. Again, we are seeing those numbers go up quite a bit from previous recruitment classes and a lot of it is because we are making those changes.

Assemblymember DeLong:
I want to applaud the city for taking the lead on expanding parental choice in schools. That is great to hear. As it relates to that set-aside fund you had talked about, is that available to help the new charter schools with infrastructure allocation?

Stephanie Garcia-Vause:
That money would not be available to help with the charter school infrastructure. That money is set aside for Clark County School District schools and that is money that we would invest in those.

Chair Considine:
I have a couple of questions as well. You mentioned reducing the parking requirements for developers. I have heard some complaints from constituents about residential, such as apartments or condos, where there is one parking space per apartment. There is no additional parking, and the neighborhood area does not allow parking. Can you explain how you determine those parking restrictions?

Stephanie Garcia-Vause:
Our team takes a look at national best practices and what works. We are constantly reviewing those because we hear similar things. We have approved some projects with 1.5 parking spaces per unit or one space per unit, especially in the downtown. We know that there are pressures; we are trying to find what that sweet spot is. We know in southern Nevada; most people rely on a vehicle to get everywhere. It is one of those things that we may take a look at national best practices but then what works for our community. If you have some more information or insight on some particular projects, we would love to sit down and take a look at it because maybe we have not found that right sweet spot yet.

Chair Considine:
It is great to see all those affordable housing communities being built. I do not know if they are all geared to the same income level or if you can explain what the AMI [area median income] levels are—0 to 150; 30 percent to 50 per person.

Stephanie Garcia-Vause:
I do not have all of that detail, but we will follow up with you on those. I know that a couple of them are geared towards families. One is across the street from the Arroyo Grande Sports Complex with great public infrastructure there, near public schools and the baseball fields. If you have ever been out there for baseball tournaments, it just seems like a perfect place for families to be able to enjoy all of Henderson. The other on Boulder Highway is going to be close to public transportation. Originally, the idea behind that was to take a look at people

who are aging out of foster care and setting aside some of the units for that population. We will follow up with the specifics for each one of those.

Chair Considine:
Finally, we have a presentation from the city of Reno. With us today are Jackie Bryant, City Manager; Vice Mayor Kathleen Taylor; and Nick Ciccone, government affairs manager.

Nic Ciccone, Government Affairs Manager, City of Reno
I am honored today to be able to introduce you to our City Manager and our Vice Mayor, Kathleen Taylor. Otherwise, I will just be here to continue the slides.

Kathleen Taylor, Vice Mayor, City of Reno:
Not uncommon to what you have heard today from other cities and organizations, we are facing some economic challenges, but I am going to save that for later in the presentation. I get to talk about some of the great things that we have been doing over the last couple of years. Some major milestones that we have accomplished is investing in the Truckee River with resources. We are one of the only downtowns that has the jewel of the river going right through our downtown, which we are taking care of and doing great things on.

We have completed some historic projects; one, with the Moana Aquatic Center, which is our first new pool in the last 30 years. We have completed the Public Safety Center, which is a state-of-the-art public safety center. This council and our leadership team has prioritized housing in our community, regionally allocating millions of dollars in affordable housing and in regional emergency rental assistance through direct dollars and incentives for affordable housing developers. Moving on to our most recent accomplishment is hiring our new city manager, Miss Jackie Bryant, who I am going to turn it over to now.

Jackie Bryant, City Manager, City of Reno:
We are grateful for the opportunity to highlight Reno and the many things that have happened since we were last here two years ago [Exhibit E]. In 2024 the Reno City Council changed from five wards to six, each represented by one councilmember and the mayor. We are a council-manager form of government where the council establishes policy and the city manager is responsible for implementing the policies through day-to-day operations. The council meets at least twice a month on Wednesdays, and we accept public comment in person, via email, and via Zoom.

The council established seven strategic priorities for the 2020 through 2025 period [page 3]. These priorities are the backbone of staff recommendations and council decisions. We are embarking on an updated strategic plan this year. By the next time we are here, we will have a new plan for you. Reno is a vibrant, diverse, and a growing city with 54 percent of the Washoe County population in the city of Reno [page 4]. Reno is the fourth-largest city in Nevada and the eightieth largest city in the United States. Growth brings increased jobs, innovation, and new cultural experiences; but rapid growth creates challenges, such as keeping up with demand for roads, housing, and infrastructure.

This chart [page 5] represents the fiscal year (FY) 2025 general fund adopted budget. The three largest sources of revenues for the city's general fund are consolidated taxes, property taxes, and franchise fees, in that order. The CTX [consolidated tax distribution] is also the most volatile. For this fiscal year, we budgeted a 4 percent increase in CTX over last year based on projections at the time of budgeting. We are currently at zero percent growth. This equates to an approximately $4 million deficit fiscal year to date. Property taxes are a more stable funding source but are limited by statutory caps and depreciation. Further, a quarter of all real property in Reno is fully depreciated. Franchise fees make up 14 percent of the general fund revenues. These revenues are currently down approximately 12 percent from the budgeted amount. Telephone and cable franchise fees are shrinking due to consumers switching to mobile phones and streaming services. Consumers who are plagued by housing and grocery costs are choosing to save money by adjusting thermostats, which affects gas and electric franchise fees.

You can tell what is important to someone by how they spend their time and their money. Reno prioritizes public safety. The city's adopted FY general fund budget is $354 million including the ending fund balance [page 6]. Approximately 75 percent, which is $234.6 million of the expenditures, are for salaries and benefits, and 60 percent of the total general fund pays for the public safety departments of police, fire, and dispatch. This includes personnel and operating costs for public safety, but it does not include all the adjacent needs in order to support our public safety, such as IT [information technology], human resources, civil service, and finance.

The City of Reno has a history of sharing information across multiple platforms and in multiple languages. In 2017, Reno implemented bilingual communications on our social media platforms and in press releases and allowed for language translation on our website. In 2024, Reno adopted the Language Access Plan pursuant to Assembly Bill 266 of the 82nd Session. Since then, we have expanded access for those who need assistance hearing or communicating through the Listen Everywhere or UbiDuo devices [page 7]. In addition to our bilingual employees, we use language banks for languages when necessary.

Homelessness across the country has been a significant issue for everyone. The City of Reno spends approximately $7 million annually on homeless-related issues [page 8]. In addition to the general cleaning and policing costs, Reno has invested funds in a variety of innovative initiatives to assist unhoused individuals. The Rapid Rehousing program was funded in July of 2024. Via a partnership with Volunteers of America and the Reno Housing Authority, we are moving people directly from the streets to Village at Sage Street, which is a small compilation of apartments with wraparound services. Since that program began, we have moved ten people inside. The Highway 40 Motel rehabilitation program will be operable at the end of this year. Through a partnership with NNAMHS [Northern Nevada Adult Mental Health Services], Volunteers of America, and the court system, we will divert people from the court system into housing with wraparound services for up to two years at no charge. I am incredibly proud of the council's commitment and support of these programs and ensuring people receive the help they need while keeping our city clean and safe for all to enjoy.

As mentioned earlier, growth has its challenges and one of them is keeping up with the need for housing. Reno has waived $11.3 million in sewer connection fees and has donated $8.8 million in ARPA [American Rescue Plan Act] funding to support the creation of affordable and workforce housing [page 9]. Additionally, this Legislature has helped Reno to support those who are struggling financially by allocating funding for deposit and rental assistance. Reno's rental assistance is for those living in Washoe County. We assist individuals in Reno, Sparks, and unincorporated Washoe County. Additionally, the state's Home Means Nevada program has also been invaluable in helping Reno develop affordable housing complexes like Pinon Apartments, Dick Scott Manor, Silver Sage, and Essex Manor. Reno has been and will continue to be committed to increasing affordable housing. As of today, 87 percent of all affordable housing in Washoe County is in Reno.

We have touched on challenges briefly and so have the other cities who have been before you today, so I will not belabor the point [page 10]. Labor costs are increasing, revenues are declining and add to that the increasing number of people who are moving into Reno, which creates an increased need for services and infrastructure. It is difficult to keep up; however, it is a problem we are constantly assessing, and we are constantly looking for solutions.

Vice Mayor Taylor opened with some of the things we have recently celebrated in Reno. The pictures on the right [page 11] show the Public Safety Center and the new Moana Springs Pool. The picture on the left is from the ribbon cutting for Dick Scott Manor, a brand-new affordable housing development for veterans. The advanced purified water system is progressing nicely in Reno, as well as all the plans to revitalize Virginia Street and the Truckee River paths. Many wonderful things are happening in Reno, and we would welcome you to come visit and tour any of these new facilities. Thank you for listening and I am happy to answer any questions you may have.

Assemblymember Goulding:
As Reno has the distinction of being one of the fastest-warming communities in the country, can you talk a little bit about what the city is doing to address the warming situation?

Jackie Bryant:
Yes, we do have a sustainability program where we are actively attempting to enhance solar, geothermal, and other opportunities. We are partnering with our Parks and Recreation Department to increase the tree canopy, but it is warming at such a fast rate that we are not able to enhance the tree canopy at the same level. We are working on having all businesses report their energy usage. Through that, we are going to be developing an education campaign in the next 12 to 24 months, where we can enhance people's awareness of how they can reduce energy usage so that we can hopefully have an impact on the situation.

Assemblymember Jackson:
I am fairly new to Reno, but being born and raised in Las Vegas, we do not really see abandoned hotels or casinos; we knock down everything. Being in the Reno area, I did identify a few abandoned hotels and casinos. Are there any plans for those buildings?

Jackie Bryant:
It depends on the building. The buildings are generally owned by private developers. We are working through our redevelopment agency over the next couple of years to provide some support and opportunity through different programs to encourage them to remodel, destroy, or rebuild so that we can continue to provide a more vibrant community. The buildings that you are talking about are generally in the downtown core, and this program has been very effective. Over the last 12 months, we actually ran out of money where people were able to apply to receive a bucket of money for enhancing the exteriors or interiors of their buildings. We had an incredible take rate and have had some significant improvements in the area because of it. There will be some talk at the city council over the next 6 to 12 months about how we can enhance that program since we have already allocated that use.

Assemblymember Nguyen:
It is great to hear and great to see a lot of good stats that you provided. What are your initiatives on small business development, and do you keep statistics on women-owned businesses and DBE [disadvantaged business enterprise]?

Jackie Bryant:
City of Reno does not keep those statistics, but the State of Nevada does. Whenever we need to access that information, we access the State's website for that information. Some of the programs that we have implemented to support small businesses, which is the backbone of our community, is one, the ReStore Program that I just spoke about where we gave money to businesses to help them revitalize their buildings. Second, we have monthly meetings at the chamber of commerce. I and members of my team, depending on the topic, go and meet with small businesses and present and educate them about a variety of things they may experience as business owners. We have a partnership with UNR [University of Nevada, Reno], with its international small-business program, and we also have recently purchased a software upgrade, which will be an overlay over our business license software, Accela, which is notoriously difficult for people to navigate. This will make it much easier for your average citizen, including small businesses who really only want to go to that website once a year to renew their license. It will make it much easier for them to do so.

Assemblymember Nguyen:
As a user of Accela, I agree with you on that point. Thank you very much for seeing that.

Assemblymember D'Silva:
Thank you, Vice Mayor and team, for your great presentation. My question is pertaining to this notion out there. I think it is well known now that Reno could be a tech hub for the country. There is even talk of Silicon Valley 2.0 becoming a house here in Nevada, specifically up in the Reno area. What kind of relationships has the city built with UNR, which is one of the driving forces in this trajectory, and with Silicon Valley in making this a potential possibility in not the far but near future?

Jackie Bryant:
We have several different paths in order to enhance our ability to continue to recruit tech to the area. One is EDAWN [Economic Development Authority of Western Nevada], the economic development entity that actively recruits businesses to the community; they tend to take the lead on that. Yes, we are in partnership with UNR. We are actively working with them, both to bring UNR closer into the downtown and to expand access to our various operations, including different intern and employment opportunities for the individuals who are students there. We also have a revitalization manager who is very active in negotiating with different businesses, again with the help of EDAWN, in identifying locations for them. One of the Assemblymembers mentioned, we have some old buildings in downtown Reno that need to be torn down and built again. We are working with our own team, EDAWN, and a lot of the developers in the community in order to make that happen.

Kathleen Taylor:
I also meet personally with [UNR] President Sandoval once a month and we discuss ways we can partner at the City of Reno. The University of Nevada, Reno just purchased properties across the freeway where they are moving people into those. We are talking all the time about partnerships, and we just met with their government affairs to talk about how we might be able to include them in some of our neighborhood meetings too.

Assemblymember Flanagan:
I did not notice any mention about your healthcare community; what do you do in terms of providing support for health? How is that progressing and how do seniors fare in that space as well?

Jackie Bryant:
The City of Reno does not provide public services for health care in general service. We have a few operations that we do outreach for. Let me talk about our senior citizens first. We do have an ARPA-funded individual who is an employee right now, who provides direct resources for senior citizens in the community. She has been instrumental in creating once-a-month cooking classes and creating some technology classes on phones so people can learn how to use their phone and a host of other senior engagement opportunities. Because we know that seniors might have a tendency to not get out when they are not comfortable in certain spaces, we work really hard to make them as comfortable as they can and make it easy for them to have those engagement opportunities. One of the things we have just done is partner with a company to create a pod. They have developed a pod where you can go in and have a small office visit, and we are trying to locate them in various locations around the city to make access to health care a little bit easier.

Assemblymember DeLong:
I want to follow up on Assemblymember D'Silva's question about the tech hub. How is the city doing on issuing building and occupancy permits for tech companies and data centers?

Jackie Bryant:
We recently permitted a data center in the North Valleys. There is a tension, because it is new, between various citizen groups around whether we should or should not have some tech buildings. We are doing a lot of public engagement and we will continue to do so. We are currently in the process of drafting a text amendment, and it will discuss what a data center can have, must have, and cannot have; that will launch February 26. We have several data centers in the queue who would like to come to the area, but there are some tensions between individuals who want them and individuals who do not. We are going to be having a lot of public engagement in the near future to sort through that and see if we can address as many concerns as we can.

Assemblymember Gurr:
Housing affordability: the Reno-Sparks area has the highest median-priced housing in Nevada. Is Reno limited in space that you can develop? If so, and if it is not, what are your permit fees to build a house? How long does it take to get development done inside the corporate city limits of Reno?

Jackie Bryant:
The average median income (AMI) in Reno is $78,000 and the average housing is upwards of $500,000 for a single-family home. Approximately half of the single-family homes in Reno are owner-occupied. The rest are some forms of rental, short-term rental, or vacation home investment. Our permitting fees are not the problem. We actually waive permitting fees for affordable housing programs. After COVID-19, there was a significant cost to building and those costs have not really come down. As we work with the affordable housing developers, we have offered grants, we have waived sewer connection fees, and we have waived building permit fees. We do everything we can to bring that cost down as much as possible so that the housing can be built, and then serve those individuals who are at 60 percent AMI or 40 percent AMI. We have a wonderful relationship with the Reno Housing Authority, but at the end of the day, it takes a very long time to build housing, and the cost of the housing is outpacing the ability of us to subsidize them in a way that allows them to offer the lower rent.

Assemblymember Gurr:
I am not asking about the city's ability to lower the affordability of housing. When you do waive fees, what is the final number on a house for sale that has been built under the affordability program?

Jackie Bryant:
It can range anywhere from two to five years.

Assemblymember Gurr:
Timewise, but what is the final product price when you are done? To sell me that affordable house, what would it be?

Jackie Bryant:
I do not know the answer to that question. I will have to get that number for you and get back to you. I do not want to even attempt that one.

Assemblymember Gurr:
That is part of the confusion with affordable housing and everybody talking about it. Nobody knows what that number really is when it is done. Are we helping or hurting by taking two to five years to absorb this rate? You are not the only city that I am going to ask this question of as we go through session because I see it in Elko too. We do not even talk affordable housing in Elko because it is not available. It bothers me when it says affordable and we spend all this money at it, but nobody can put a number on what is affordable when it is done. I would really like to see what that is, because if you are making $78,000 as your median income, and your medium house price is a little higher—$614,000 is the last number I saw. . . .

Jackie Bryant:
Whenever we talk affordable housing, it is generally in some type of multi-unit apartment complex, and affordable housing is generally 60 percent of the AMI of the area in which the multifamily unit complex is being built. Workforce housing is generally 80 percent. In this case, in order to live in a subsidized unit, one who made $46,000 a year would be eligible for a 60 percent AMI product. Then there is a chart that says what that rent would be. We will get you that chart as to what the rent would be.

Assemblymember Goulding:
I wanted to share with you that I am receiving lots of emails about constituents' interest in the data center, as I am sure you are. There is a lot of activity there; in particular, the folks who live in my district are concerned about the water and power demands. Has the city identified some barriers that the council has identified to holding the data center developers accountable for management of the demands of water and power?

Jackie Bryant:
There are a couple of things. Currently, we use what is called a conditional use permit to permit the data center. What that means is that when someone comes in and says they want to build a data center, we say, OK, we are going to look at you on an individual basis, but we are going to look at some overarching principles, but no hard and fast rules when you can and you cannot. That is when they look at electricity, water, and other issues that might or might not be a factor. What we are going to be doing is bringing forward an amendment to our zoning code that says, Hey council, we want you to say what is good and what is not. Must all data centers use effluent water? Must all data centers have a solar capacity? Those rules are not fully in place yet. That is what we are going to be talking about and that will be kicking off on February 26. Once we go through that process—and it will take three to six months—we will have some more, stronger guardrails in place that will address those individuals' concerns. Right now, the guardrails are more of a give-and-take. We have overarching principles, but there is no hard and fast rule that says, for example, that you must use effluent for a data center.

Assemblymember Carter:
My question goes back to what Assemblymember Gurr was talking about, in affordable housing. We hear that a lot and we have heard about the robust program of subsidies and fee waivers that are put in. Are there any guardrails to try to mandate or enforce that these units that are being built—single-family residential, maybe detached, maybe not, maybe attached—are going into the owner-occupied realm, rather than being bought up by property management people?

Jackie Bryant:
Not that I am aware of.

Kathleen Taylor:
I think the City of Reno has done an exceptional job at looking at affordable housing and we looked at it from a holistic approach. Our city manager's office brought in an expert that told us the three things that we need to do for affordable housing: one, build more types of housing, not just affordable; two, get rid of barriers where we can in the permitting and in the connection fees; and three, allow incentives where we can. The City of Reno has taken an approach to do all of that. I am also the chair of the Reno Housing Authority. When we bring on affordable housing projects, as part of the financing, the owner or the developer has got to maintain that affordability for a certain amount of time or they lose their tax credit. Most of these projects will not even pencil unless there is some sort of tax credit affordability to them. If they do not go through with that, then they will not get the tax credit, and that is how they make it work financially.

Chair Considine:
We will now go to public comment [Public comment protocol and procedures were explained.] Is there any public comment?

Dora Martinez, Private Citizen, Reno, Nevada:
I represent the Disability Action Coalition, and I just want to give a good shout-out to the vice mayor and Mayor Schieve. Thank you so much for always answering my email, especially when I am out and about with my service dog. Kudos to Khalil Wilson, who is the public works person who always helps me when there are obstacles in the sidewalk here in the city of Reno. It goes to show that as constituents, we are heard when we do email our elected officials. I just want to thank the mayor and everyone, especially the City of Reno, because right now I am active with a lot of walking with a service dog. They have implemented the audible pedestrian signal (APS) lights, so it is safe to cross as a blind person, or anyone who cannot see the light; they just hear the audible sound that says it is safe to cross and they indicate the street. I hope the state of Nevada will follow suit, because I hear in Boulder City and Clark County, some of my peers said that it is hard for them to request the APS, audible pedestrian signal light. I hope that you all see that this is not just for people who are visually impaired, but it is also for people who are seniors and hard of hearing, because they can feel the button and it vibrates and signals them to cross the street and it has the arrows.

Chair Considine:
Is there anyone else on the line? [There was no one.] Our next meeting will be Tuesday, February 11, 2025, at 8 a.m., and that concludes our meeting for today. The meeting is adjourned [at 9:53 a.m.].

RESPECTFULLY SUBMITTED:

_____
Nikki Peterson
Committee Secretary

APPROVED BY:

_____
Assemblymember Venicia Considine, Chair

DATE: _____

EXHIBITS

Bill	Exhibit	Witness / Agency	Description
	A		Agenda
	B		Attendance Roster
	C	Brittany Lee Walker, City Attorney, City of Boulder City; and Warren Hardy, representing City of Boulder City	PowerPoint presentation titled "City of Boulder City: The City that Built Hoover Dam"
	D	Michelle Romero, Mayor, City of Henderson; Stephanie Garcia-Vause, City Manager, City of Henderson; and Nicole Rourke, Director, Government and Public Affairs, City of Henderson	PowerPoint presentation titled "Assembly Committee on Government Affairs: February 10, 2025"
	E	Jackie Bryant, City Manager, City of Reno; Kathleen Taylor, Vice Mayor, City of Reno; and Nic Ciccone, Government Affairs Manager, Office of the City Manager, City of Reno	PowerPoint presentation titled "City of Reno: 'Creating a community that people are proud to call home.'"