

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING  
OF THE  
ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION**

**Seventy-Fourth Session  
February 20, 2007**

The Committee on Transportation was called to order by Chair Atkinson at 1:31 p.m., on Tuesday, February 20, 2007, in Room 3143 of the Legislative Building, 401 South Carson Street, Carson City, Nevada. The meeting was videoconferenced to Room 4406 of the Grant Sawyer State Office Building, 555 East Washington Avenue, 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/74th/committees/](http://www.leg.state.nv.us/74th/committees/). In addition, copies of the audio record may be purchased through the Legislative Counsel Bureau's Publications Office (email: [publications@lcb.state.nv.us](mailto:publications@lcb.state.nv.us); telephone: 775-684-6835).

**COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT:**

Assemblyman Kelvin Atkinson, Chair  
Assemblyman Mark Manendo, Vice Chair  
Assemblyman David Bobzien  
Assemblyman John C. Carpenter  
Assemblyman Jerry D. Claborn  
Assemblyman Ty Cobb  
Assemblywoman Susan Gerhardt  
Assemblyman Ed Goedhart  
Assemblyman Pete Goicoechea  
Assemblyman Joseph Hogan  
Assemblywoman RoseMary Womack

**GUEST LEGISLATORS PRESENT:**

Assemblyman John Ocegüera, Assembly District No. 16  
Assemblywoman Heidi Gansert, Assembly District No. 25

**STAFF MEMBERS PRESENT:**

Marjorie Paslov-Thomas, Committee Policy Analyst  
Kelly Troescher, Committee Secretary

Minutes ID: 221



Christine Henricksen, Committee Secretary  
Matt Mowbray, Committee Assistant

**OTHERS PRESENT:**

Curtis Myles III, President and Chief Executive Officer, Las Vegas Monorail  
Dr. Craig Kadlub, Director of Government Affairs, Clark County School District  
Rosanna Coombes, Interim Director, Truckee Meadows Regional Planning Agency  
Kent Cooper, Assistant Director, Planning and Research, Nevada Department of Transportation  
Martha Barnes, Administrator, Central Services and Records Division, Nevada Department of Motor Vehicles  
Susan Boskoff, Executive Director, Nevada Arts Council  
Mary Ellen Horan, Executive Director, VSA Arts  
Bob Burnham, Member, Eureka County School Board  
Dr. Ben Zunino, Superintendent, Eureka County School District  
Julie Whitacre, Director, Government Affairs, Nevada State Education Association  
Dr. Bryn Lapenta, Interim Assistant Superintendent, Washoe County School District  
Scott Konnath, Nevada Parent Teacher Association, Kids About

**Chair Atkinson:**

[Meeting called to order at 1:31 p.m. Roll called.] We have a quorum. Today we will be listening to two presentations, one on the Monorail system in southern Nevada, and the other on Assembly Bill 231 of the 73rd Session, Safe Routes to Schools, a bill I sponsored last Session. We will start with the Monorail.

**Curtis Myles, President and Chief Executive Officer, Las Vegas Monorail:**

I want to thank the Committee and the Chairman for inviting us here to give you an update on the Las Vegas Monorail, to give you some perspective on its place in the community, and to let you know what our plans are for the future. We have put together a brief presentation ([Exhibit C](#)) to give you an idea of some of the things we have been working on as well as where the system is today and how it is operating.

To put things in perspective, the Monorail was first conceived to do a number of things: to relieve congestion in the resort corridor in Las Vegas; to facilitate

more efficient travel within the most congested corridor in the Las Vegas valley, which is the resort corridor; to provide a fast and convenient transportation option in Las Vegas that does not impact roadways; and to maintain and increase economic vitality. Our economy is heavily dependent on tourism, and to the extent that those tourists are able to move around in the resort corridor, we see our economy benefiting.

The system was also created to help Las Vegas meet the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) air quality requirements. Back in the late 1990s and early 2000s, Las Vegas was considered a non-attainment area by the EPA. The Monorail is a zero-emissions vehicle that allows individuals to travel on the system without contributing to the non-attainment designation. It was also created to induce a higher percentage of transit trips. It is well known throughout transit agencies that an introduction of rail-like service induces transit trips and has been shown to induce them in significant numbers throughout the United States. Another reason for the Monorail's creation is to provide these benefits at no taxpayer expense, and to provide transportation that is conducive to the Las Vegas tourism mobility patterns.

I will go through a few things with you: the current system status, the background on ridership and financials, the resort corridor development and how it will impact us in southern Nevada, and the Monorail's part in it. I will talk about the airport extension and what the next steps are for the system.

Some of the background has been well documented in the press, and some of it has not. The system was first awarded its franchise by Clark County in 1998. It was a 50-year franchise, but now is a 75-year franchise that was awarded in December 2006. It closed finance in December of 2000, with State-issued tax-exempt bonds. In July 2004, revenue service started. In September 2004, the system had some very well-documented and high-profile system problems, including extended service outages of about 107 days. In December 2004, the technical problems were resolved. The system has operated at about 99 percent availability since then. To us, availability means it is making all of its scheduled stops. Since then, the system has carried nearly 20 million passengers. Sometime around the middle of March 2007, we will carry our 20 millionth passenger. As of February 19 we were at about 19.6 million. We are going to get there quickly.

To give you a perspective of what that means, some of the systems considered to be the most successful rail start-up systems in the United States are the Denver Regional Transportation District, the Salt Lake City TRAX, and the New Jersey River Line. When you compare the Las Vegas Monorail to those systems, we compare quite favorably, no matter which statistic you look at. In

reviewing self-reported numbers of annual ridership in 2005, we compared very favorably to systems that, in some cases, are nine times our size. In terms of daily ridership, or ridership per mile, we are right up there with the systems that the Federal Transit Association (FTA) consider to be their most successfully publicly funded systems.

The financial outlook is another area that receives of a lot of attention for us. The system's earnings today pay all of its operation and maintenance (O&M) costs, and most of it is dispersed to debt service. It is unheard of for a transit system, particularly a rail system, to actually pay its O&M costs. To give you an example, the New York City Subway is probably the most successful in terms of revenue generation. That subway system pays approximately 65 percent of its operational costs and 0 percent of its capital costs. Most of the New York City Subway System is financed through federal grants and local taxes. We have enough cash reserves on hand to pay all of our debt service through 2010 without any increase in revenues. I say that because although the system is only three years old, we see today a current trend in revenues that is positive and on the upswing. To give you an example, we have experienced about a 4 percent increase in revenues in 2006 over 2005.

The system is fully financed by privately held and privately insured debt issued through the State of Nevada Department of Industry. That seems not to resonate very much with members of our press corps, but the system is fully backed and fully insured privately. There is no recourse, call, obligation, nor legal tie to the citizens of the State of Nevada for this system.

We are going to talk a little about resort corridor development and what is happening. I am sure you have seen some of these things in prior presentations, but I will repeat a few here because they are relevant to the extension of the system to McCarran Airport. Some of the realities facing us in southern Nevada, particularly in the resort corridor, are these high-density projects that have been approved. [Referring to PowerPoint] ([Exhibit C](#)) To give you an example, the first one, on the upper-left of that screen, is Project CityCenter. Project CityCenter, which is scheduled to have the first phase open in 2009, will add around 25,000 work trips per day. That does not include service trips, play trips, shopping trips, or gambling trips. These are strictly trips that will be created by workers who will work in CityCenter. To put the 25,000 extra trips in perspective, Las Vegas Boulevard has a total of 57,000 trips conducted daily. This one project will add nearly half the number of trips to an already congested Las Vegas Boulevard. The other projects combined will add nearly 40,000 hotel rooms in the resort corridor, bringing our total to 170,000 available rooms by 2010. In 2009, 43 million visitors will come to Las Vegas, up about 4.5 million from 2006. Those are significant increases for a

city of any size, but in Las Vegas and the narrowly defined geographic area these people are visiting, it creates significant congestion concerns for those operating systems in southern Nevada.

Las Vegas Boulevard has been at its 57,000 cars-per-day capacity since the mid-1990s. Since 1995 or 1996, Las Vegas Boulevard has been at capacity. You cannot add more cars because it does not have the capacity. The University of Nevada, Las Vegas (UNLV) conducted a study that concluded 2.3 cars are added to Interstate 15 (I-15) for each new hotel room. Keep in mind that between now and 2009, we will add 40,000 hotel rooms. You can see the impact it will have on I-15. For every hotel room that is constructed on the Strip, 320 new passengers are added to McCarran Airport each year. With an additional 40,000 hotel rooms, that total will quickly bring McCarran Airport to its capacity, which is reported to be around 53 million passengers. Today, they are at about 46 million. We are expecting just beyond 47 million by the end of fiscal year 2007. Another significant piece of data to keep in mind is that by 2020 there will be 775 miles of gridlock in Las Vegas, with 300 of those 775 miles in the resort corridor.

What does service on the rough mean? It is what Las Vegas Boulevard looked like this weekend with the National Basketball Association in town. I happened to be on it by mistake. It took about an hour to get from Tropicana Avenue to Spring Mountain Road, which is just under two miles. That is significant when the economy is heavily dependent on visitors being able to move around to all the places that they plan to visit while in Las Vegas.

Congestion and mobility in the resort corridor is such a significant problem that the Las Vegas Convention and Visitors Authority (LVCVA) has instituted a resort corridor mobility study. That mobility study was a result of surveying the approximately 6 million customers and clients who come to Las Vegas each year. Those clients listed transportation and congestion as their number two concern with having conventions return to the Las Vegas Convention Facility. It is so significant that the LVCVA thought it was time for them to start taking a hard look at how they are going to get people in and out of their facilities.

Obviously, good transportation options are critical to accommodate this development. The City of Las Vegas, particularly on the Strip, is going to be one of the most densely developed stretches of geographic area in the United States. Today, it is second only to downtown Manhattan. In 2010 after the projects are complete, it will exceed Manhattan in terms of the amount of square footage that is developed per square acre. It is a significant problem. Most communities that have similar development are addressing that type of development with transit options, particularly rail and/or rapid bus.

In particular, what seems to be the most significant use of transportation options in those densely developed areas are rail connections or transit connections directly to an airport. Airport connections to city-central business districts have been shown to be the most effective use of mass transit. That conclusion was arrived at by a consultant who performed a study on behalf of the Regional Transportation Commission (RTC) in 2003. They looked at a number of densely developed communities in the United States, and looked at these four in particular where transit is predicted to be most effective and successful. If you look at the connection between the New Orleans Airport and its central business area, it captures about 17 percent of all the trips that are made between that airport and that central business district. At Reagan National Airport in Washington, D.C., it is about the same amount. Chicago Midway Airport has an even larger share, and Boston Logan Airport is about 22 percent. They also concluded from their preliminary analysis that if the city of Las Vegas had a rail connection to McCarran Airport, it would catch an even larger share than the other four airports. That is simply because it is a very short distance, the transit trips will be relatively quick, and the majority of people who arrive at this particular airport, as opposed to the airports in the other cities, are going to one narrowly defined area. Approximately 70 percent of the 47 million people who arrive at McCarran Airport are going into and out of the resort corridor.

What would it accomplish if we were to complete our extension to McCarran Airport? We have an opportunity to do some things in Las Vegas and southern Nevada that cannot be done anywhere else in the United States, considering the kinds of things it takes to build this type of connection. First, we would connect to the fifth busiest airport in the United States. We would connect to a resort corridor that will soon be the most densely developed area in the United States. We do this and capture the transit trips in a way that accommodates an airport travel pattern created by 70 percent of the people traveling to that particular area. How do we make the connection? We have looked at a number of routes and performed some analysis through a number of our consultants to determine the best route into McCarran Airport. Having worked there myself, I have been exposed to many types of development off the ends of the runways that butt against Tropicana Avenue. I understand the limitations of those kinds of development. That being the case, we went through the analysis and anticipated that we would probably have to take this route farther north. The engineering dictated that we do so. The route is approximately four miles and five proposed new stations: one station at the proposed W Hotels, a 4,000-room hotel; a station located at the Hard Rock Hotel, which you see on the upper center portion of the map; a station located at the Thomas and Mack Center; and two stations at McCarran airport—one inside the northern baggage claim area so that individuals will be able to pick up their bags and go directly to

our station, and another outside the front door of McCarran's new Terminal 3. Our discussions with the airport have determined that that station should be located between two bridges. It would allow individuals to come directly out of the baggage claim building, and as they are accessing ground transportation, they would see our station right outside the front door. That is a choice location for any transit system, but most of all, for a rail transit system.

At this point, we are anticipating construction to begin in 2008, although that date is somewhat flexible. Construction and testing should be completed by the time McCarran Airport opens its Terminal 3 facility. A direct airport transportation solution that does not further impact existing roadways is critical. We are designing our system in a manner that allows it to utilize otherwise unutilized portions of the roadway system, mainly the medians and/or the shoulders where cars are currently not traveling. It is the most feasible and cost-effective route for us. Rather than going down Tropicana Avenue and trying to bury the system underneath the road, we would be effectively using every utility known to man in southern Nevada. We also do not have the power to use eminent domain. The route we settled on does not require eminent domain to be used, so it is an effective and efficient use of not only our system, but also the available routes that dictate this extension.

We have a brief video to show you what this will actually look like as it is connected. It is a digital video prepared by one of the train providers who wished to participate in this extension.

[Referred to slide ([Exhibit C](#)).] This is a look at our station that would be right outside McCarran Airport's baggage claim. We superimposed the number of people in the cab line to make it look like it was yesterday. That is the train heading out to Terminal 3. This depicts the station sitting about 40 feet away from the baggage claim building. We, along with the people at the airport, have looked at other ways to get the station into that building, which is not only our preference, but theirs as well. That is a view of the system heading out from the airport. This is looking westbound on Tropicana Avenue toward the Strip and the mountains. Coming up you will see an interior view of the train and what we hope to achieve with the technologies that we will employ. You see the luggage racks above the seats and next to the connections between the train cars. You also see some video advertising inside and static advertising above. This is the train exiting the station at the MGM Grand.

One of the next steps for us to complete the system you just saw in the video is to complete the ridership study. We have nearly completed that study today. Preliminary numbers look fairly strong, but it is still early in the development. We also need to finalize the finance plan. We have at least three of the largest

brokerage houses on Wall Street who are working with us on that plan to be privately financed. We need to secure sources of capital. We had some very positive and energetic discussions with a number of potential sources of capital, including the hotels that are on the Strip. We are going to satisfy the conditions of our land use permit that came with the award of our franchise extension by Clark County. We will complete the plan and hopefully close finance later this year or early next year.

There are a number of infrastructure projects that are critical to the growth of the Valley. McCarran Airport is not the least of those projects. Having grown up in southern Nevada and having watched the growth of McCarran Airport, it is significant to me to recognize that it was one of the places that was regularly criticized for not being able to accommodate the growth that southern Nevada has realized. Today, we shudder to think what we would be experiencing in terms of our economic vitality if we did not have a place such as McCarran Airport. Its role in our economy has been critical. The same is true of the Beltway (Interstate 215). It was one of the most criticized public infrastructure projects to ever get off the ground, and today the Beltway is probably one of the most traveled roadway systems in southern Nevada. It is critical to our economic vitality, not only for tourism, but for locals as well.

There are a number of individuals who have had discussions about the funding of the system, such as Terrence Lanni, the chair and Chief Executive Officer of the MGM Mirage. He wrote a letter, which included the quote you have before you [referring to presentation], on behalf of the Las Vegas Monorail System in getting not only its extension to the airport, but also extending its franchise. This is a quote directly from Commissioner Bruce Woodbury, who was instrumental in helping the original system get off the ground. He has been very supportive throughout the history of the Las Vegas Monorail. This is an additional quote from the president of both the Flamingo and Harrah's, who wrote on our behalf to the Clark County Commission in support of the extension of the Monorail and the extension of our franchise.

Although it has received a lot of criticism, some of it due, some of it left for others to decide, the future of the monorail is bright. It is a system that, compared to other systems, is relatively successful. It will connect destinations in the resort corridor in a meaningful way. It will integrate with the local, publicly funded transportation system, and it will create some enhanced transportation experiences that add value to the traveling public and the community. We have an opportunity to do that. You do not normally see that opportunity with other transit systems around the United States. We are going to leverage private dollars to complete an infrastructure project that is critically needed in southern Nevada.



**Chair Atkinson:**

I just heard you say how long it took to get through Tropicana Avenue over the weekend. I had the same concerns on Saturday. It took us an hour to get one-quarter mile from Paradise Road to Las Vegas Boulevard.

**Curtis Myles:**

That was not unforeseen. I recall my days at McCarran Airport in 1995 when we were preparing to develop and build the tunnel that runs underneath the east/west runways at the airport. One of the considerations was whether that tunnel was going to be needed, and if so, when. One of the elements of that decision included a study that suggested by 2004 it would take 45 minutes to get from the front door of McCarran Airport to the corner of Las Vegas Boulevard and Tropicana Avenue. Today that tunnel is in place. On Friday, Saturday, and Sunday, February 16-20, that trip took about 38-39 minutes. Without that tunnel, I hate to think how long it would have taken. That is the kind of congestion that we are facing today. If you add 40,000 hotel rooms, 320 passengers per room, and 2.5 cars per room, you can see the kind of congestion we will be facing in a very short time. It is something that is of concern to not only the LVCVA, the airport, and Clark County, but also the resort properties that are on the Strip.

**Chair Atkinson:**

I know the monorail was approved by the County Commission to go to the airport. Some of us are aware of that. How do you think that is going to help with the congestion, or do you think it will? Will it be different people riding it? I hope that it will. This is why I am asking.

**Curtis Myles:**

Sometimes I am more optimistic than I should be. I believe it is going to help congestion. Most of the people who conduct the planning studies, as well as the transportation engineers, do not think anything will actually reduce congestion. There is not a project you could implement today that would reduce it. Today, planners and traffic engineers are trying to slow down the growth of congestion. The monorail is one of those projects that will have a significant impact. The group that is performing the mobility study for the LVCVA lists the monorail as the only project on their list of initiatives that they can point to that will significantly impact the ability for people to move in and around the resort corridor, and in particular, into and out of the Convention Authority. It is going to impact it a great deal. How many people will ride it? I am going to reserve that until we actually get the study done, but I think the numbers will be enough to justify the expense of both building and operating the system privately. If you look at the travel patterns of individuals who come to Las Vegas for various reasons, whether it be for conventions or for leisure trips,

two things are well known by people in this industry: visitors other than conventioners come twice a year to Las Vegas, and most who come to Las Vegas plan to visit at least four destinations when they arrive. Mobility is a critical part to not only their leisure experience, but also to the economic vitality of those properties and businesses that are on the Strip. To the extent that the monorail can help facilitate those movements and that experience, we are going to add to the experience and economic vitality of the resort corridor in southern Nevada.

**Chair Atkinson:**

I will now open it up to Committee members.

**Assemblywoman Womack:**

During the tour you gave of the Monorail, we looked at the Sprint Central Station. I was very impressed, and I think the conventioners and the business community would be as well. Are you planning to do that at any other stops, especially the airport stops?

**Curtis Myles:**

We are. That is a critical part of how a privately funded system can help pay for itself. The Sprint facility contributes to the operational revenues that are generated by our system in a significant way. It is one of the only transit stations in the United States that enjoys the kind of contribution that Sprint provides to us. It is a themed station that also provides a retail outlet for Sprint, as well as a maintenance facility for their customers. That is something we plan to have at all stations on the Las Vegas Monorail, in particular when we go to McCarran Airport. The exposure that McCarran Airport offers to visitors that come to town each day is something that most advertisers across the United States are interested in having. The kinds of impressions that you create on a person's first introduction into Las Vegas are very important to a lot of advertisers. It can also command some significant revenue dollars for both the Las Vegas Monorail and McCarran Airport, so we plan to pursue it diligently.

**Assemblywoman Womack:**

Are you going to do what other cities did with underground shopping or shopping attached to the rail, especially around the airport area?

**Curtis Myles:**

In our discussions with the hotel properties that are interested in having stations, they have talked to us about development opportunities that may become available, depending on the location of those stations and their proximity to other shopping venues that exist on their properties today. For example, we have had numerous conversations with the MGM Mirage about a

station location situated between the Mirage hotel itself and the volcano, which would allow patrons to get off the system and view the volcano from a mezzanine outside our station, and then go to the other side of the station and into the bar area they have. It would also create some shopping opportunities and revenue opportunities for the hotel.

**Assemblyman Manendo:**

We always hear the criticism that there are not enough riders. What else are you doing to increase ridership? Is there anything the Legislative body can do to help you?

**Curtis Myles:**

There are a number of things that were anticipated to have been done when the system opened. As a result of the problems experienced in the first 100 or so days of the system, the managers of the system, as well as the company itself, were focused on getting the system up and running. Obviously, you cannot go out and sell advertising and entice people to ride a system that cannot get you from one place to another. They focused on that. As a result, many of the things that were anticipated to be done to promote the system and to put it into "the black," if you will, were not done. My task in coming to this company 18 months ago was to initiate those things. Unfortunately, those things had long lead times. They were anticipated, in many cases, to take from 18 months to 3 years to get up and going. In financing the system, the financiers put in a ramp-up period of about 5 years, from beginning of operations to around 2009 or so, that would provide enough revenues in reserve to allow the system to ramp-up. They spent the first year or so of the ramp-up period getting the system operational, which set it back significantly. What we are doing today is working directly with the LVCVA and their customers, the convention planners and organizers like Cima, Consumer Electronics Show (CES), Magic, and some of the large show organizers, to have them sell our tickets to the patrons. We have seen significant increases in some cases. For example, CES increased their ridership this year over last year. World of Concrete came to town for about 4 or 5 days, and we experienced a 25 percent increase of ridership over last year. That is significant for us.

We are also working with the hotels that are currently on our system to integrate our tickets with their room reservation system. It is a relatively tall task, since they all have varying types of systems. One of our challenges was to come up with a workable fare media. We are also talking to many online destination management companies, and are working with destination companies that are used by one in every four visitors who come to Las Vegas. We are working directly with those companies to try to get our fares sold directly with their vacation packages.

**Assemblyman Manendo:**

Is there anything the Legislature can do?

**Curtis Myles:**

As far as cash sources are concerned, we do not anticipate ever coming to the Legislature, the county, or the State and asking for any money. That is not needed in this case. It is a unique opportunity to do something that has not been done in the United States. We have it here, and all the elements are there to make it happen. You have probably seen or read about public-private partnerships. There is legislation that has been enacted across the country and by various states to encourage and promote public-private partnerships. As you view presentations by such entities as the RTC, McCarran Airport, Clark County, Department of Transportation, et cetera, I encourage you to look very closely at the public-private partnerships, particularly the ability for private entities to be enticed to invest private dollars into public infrastructure. There are a number of cases in which public infrastructure is being provided by private companies. The Chicago Skyway, the Indiana toll-road, and the Indianapolis Airport are all privately funded facilities that have benefited from public-private partnerships. There is a lot of money chasing public infrastructure in the United States. It is international money, and it is available. We have to be careful about obtaining it, but the opportunity is there. We are at a point in the development of our infrastructure, particularly here in Las Vegas, where the public resources that are needed to replace, to improve, or to maintain public infrastructure are not available. If you look at what your Committee is facing, as well as what the prior administration looked at in terms of needs of the State, that is a small portion of it. As you go on in this Legislative session, and you view those, keep that in mind. It will not only benefit entities like the monorail, it will also indirectly benefit public entities that are struggling to find the resources to perform those tasks today.

**Assemblyman Carpenter:**

What is the cost of this extension going to be?

**Curtis Myles:**

We are not sure of the exact cost. We have some preliminary numbers that we are putting into our financial model. We have to get about 25 percent into the design before we can nail down both the civil and systems costs. Typically, the civil cost ranges somewhere between \$270 to \$300 million. The systems costs are somewhere between \$290 and \$350 million. We will not be sure of the exact numbers until we get into the final design. We know what the alignment looks like, so we can come pretty close to estimating the civil cost. The systems costs would be dependent upon the type of technology we choose. If we were to choose the same technology that we employ today, the numbers I

gave you are pretty close. If we were to choose an alternative technology that can operate on a similar or integrated track, the numbers could be a little bit lower. It depends on how we arrive at that final position.

**Assemblyman Hogan:**

All of the current establishment is within my district, so we are very interested and supportive of what you are trying to do. I wanted to get a sense of whether, in the course of putting together these two portions, each with its own separate financing and quite a few differences, you are going to totally integrate it, including the fare structure. Are you looking toward a completely different, and maybe more attractive, fare structure?

**Curtis Myles:**

One of the things we initiated in my days at the RTC was a regional fares system. We procured a consultant to help us put that together. I had lunch last week with the head of the RTC, Jacob Snow. We talked about the fare structure. We plan to integrate, using a fare media that can be used on both systems, the CAT and the Deuce, and also the monorail system. We are also looking at a fare sharing program where, under certain circumstances, we may be able to generate the kinds of revenues from the two systems that will benefit both and allow us to further develop them. We are in the early stages of both discussions. My understanding from the RTC is that they are going to send that procurement out for bid again so they can get an entity to come in and help design that system. We participated with them in those meetings to help develop the procurement document to set the scope of work of services that that consultant would provide. We are intimately involved with that process. As far as our own individual fare structure, we have multiple fares that are allowed to be used on the system: a single ride, two rides, ten rides, et cetera. We are looking at that fares structure to determine whether or not we can simplify it for customers. It is one of the responses that we get when we conduct our surveys about our fares system. We are looking at ways to allow the system to operate at a lower fare structure than it currently does. All those things are on the table. We are looking at them often, especially in connection with the extension, to make sure we put a system out there that optimizes both the ability for people to use it and the fare structure we can put in place.

**Assemblyman Goedhart:**

The current monorail goes up the east side of the Strip behind the casinos. If you were to integrate that system into the airport, would it still be a bit of a walk for a person who has some luggage to go from behind the east side, across the Strip, to hit the casinos on the west side of the Strip?

**Curtis Myles:**

That is a question that comes up more often than any other. The system today, as you noted, is on the east side of the Strip behind properties. To some extent, some hotels have facilitated the movement of their passengers from the train to their hotels. MGM Grand spent millions of dollars creating the connection for their customers to ease their experience.

When the system is connected to McCarran Airport, the current system will necessitate a different type of customer introduction for those hotels. They recognize it. I do not want to speak for them, but they have looked at those plans and can see what they need to do to accommodate their airport customer coming off the existing system. We have looked at and been told by the hotels on the west side of the Strip that those facilities are designed to accommodate their customers and introduce them to their facilities in a certain way. If you look at the Bellagio, the Mirage, Treasure Island, or Caesar's Palace, they introduce their customers to their facilities some 300 to 500 feet from Las Vegas Boulevard. There is no desire on their part to have their customers dropped off at the curb, or for them to be brought to the back of the facilities. We have been talking to them about a way to integrate the monorail into those facilities to allow introduction in a way that meshes with how the facility is currently designed.

Our plans include working with existing hotels and the existing system to introduce new operational plans to accommodate the airport customer, and also integrating and designing the alignment of the existing facility and operation to extend the system to the west side of the Strip.

**Chair Atkinson:**

I have a question concerning downtown. I know the mayor has made a huge commitment to build up the downtown area. There are also casinos downtown, the World Market Center, et cetera, which is growing daily. Do you ever see the monorail going down that far?

**Curtis Myles:**

We have had these conversations before. The RTC and Las Vegas Monorail Company flirted with the idea. In fact, we got so far along with that idea that the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) had tentatively agreed to award the RTC \$150 million in federal grants to facilitate that development. That development and tentative agreement were dependent upon this system becoming operational in a designated timeframe. Since it did not, that grant has been retracted. I have had a number of conversations with the mayor. He is not very forthcoming in his opinions about the system going downtown. He strongly desires having a direct connection with the Las Vegas Strip. We are a

privately funded, privately operated system. It has to make business sense for us to do so. It certainly makes community sense, and being a member of this community for my entire life, I think it would be a great idea to have the system connected to downtown. Until such time that both the economics and the performance suggest that it can pay for itself, we probably will not start designing it. Having said that, we have weekly conversations with a developer, a property owner, or a member of the city administration to talk about the extension of this system to downtown. I would love to entertain an idea about how that can be done. I have suggested a tentative plan of finance that can actually support it. Today, if the system was to rely solely on the ridership that would be generated between downtown and the Strip at the fares we currently charge, we could not build it ourselves.

**Chair Atkinson:**

That is a fair answer. I want to thank you and your staff for giving us a tour of your facility in December. Some of us were able to ride it for the first time. I have known you for quite some time, and I know with your type of skills behind this project, I am sure the monorail will get to where it needs to be. We appreciate it.

At this time we are going to have the presentation for Safe Routes to Schools.

**Dr. Craig Kadlub, Director of Government Affairs, Clark County School District:**

This study ([Exhibit D](#)) was a result of Assembly Bill 231 of the 73rd Session from the last session, which required certain counties to conduct studies of safe walking routes for students. Assembly Bill 231 required: a review and evaluation of existing walk paths within a one-mile radius from schools, recommendations for improvements to those walk paths, and a review and evaluation of the programs currently implemented in the county to ensure safe walking routes for pupils. Participating in the study in Clark County were representatives from the agencies that all belong to the Southern Nevada Regional Planning Coalition: Dan Musgrove from Clark County; Terri Barber from Henderson; Kimberly McDonald from North Las Vegas; Ted Olives from Las Vegas; me from the Clark County School District; and support staff from each of our organizations in areas of engineering, transportation, and other skills.

The first thing we did was identify some definitions for ourselves and make clear, as the Legislative record made clear, that "safe" does not refer to social environment, but simply to the condition of the walking surface and its proximity to hazards. That was a focus of our study.

We identified three levels of acceptable paths: sidewalks being the optimal path; paved paths, which are generally temporary, four-feet wide, and asphalt; and the pathway, which is flat, made of native material, and is found in urban areas in places referred to as "rural neighborhood preservation" areas.

For purposes of this study, the definition our group agreed upon was, "Safe walking paths are those that are concrete, paved, or native soil surface, with or without type-II gravel, flat, free from obstruction, and parallel to a dedicated street or roadway."

After reviewing and evaluating existing walk paths, all of the entities agreed that no school should be exempt except for those in the rural areas of the county, the rural preservation neighborhoods, and those areas where a clear hazard exists that requires the school district to provide transportation for children who live within the traditional walk zone.

We focused on the one-mile zone around each school, and we found that most walk paths met the definition of an acceptable walk path; however, there were some exceptions. In some instances there were difficulties obtaining rights-of-way. There were other instances where a school served multiple jurisdictions, and there was some overlap on who had responsibility off school property. Then there were the areas that had clear hazards, such as major roads, washes, railroads, and so forth, where the school district provides a hazard route.

For purposes of this study, I looked at the 2005-2006 school year. We had 150 hazard routes serving 14,000 students who actually lived within walking distance to the school, but were prevented from walking there because there was a hazard that we felt inhibited safe pedestrian access.

Section 2 of the bill required some recommendations for improvements. Despite improvements, you can see from those statistics [referred to slide ([Exhibit D](#))] that there is still a lot to be done, even in areas where there are safe walk routes. It became clear that many of the incidents could only be addressed through a process of education. That would be educating drivers about safe driving habits, particularly around schools; educating children and parents about safe walking habits and selecting safe routes; and finally, creating mutual respect between drivers and pedestrians.

Coincidental to our establishment as a study group, a coalition formed in Las Vegas called Kids About that developed as a result of community concerns about the safety of pupils going to and from schools. We were working on parallel tracks. Kids About is broadly represented. It has members from all local



governments and police, the American Automobile Association, parent organizations, juvenile justice, and many others as well as the school district. Their key goal is also a program to educate parents, students, and citizens about safe routes to school and safer habits for both drivers and pedestrians. The Kids About coalition also has subcommittees that are actively engaged in creating outreach programs for parents, public service announcements, and packets for schools to distribute to principals for pupil education. The Kids About coalition also had some recommendations for improving safe passage for students to school. One of them is the uniform application of federal guidelines governing walk routes and traffic control devices. It is their view that there is some inconsistency among jurisdictions in how those uniform guidelines are implemented. The Kids About coalition also believes that local governments should have some capacity to impose penalties on contractors, builders, or developers who do not comply with conditions of the permit that state they always have to maintain safe passage for all pedestrians throughout their construction projects. Other recommendations included providing information to parents on the school district website, on the websites of each of the participating jurisdictions, and the establishment of multi-jurisdictional reviews of school plans when the school will serve several jurisdictions. There is an example of that in the full report ([Exhibit E](#)) that I provided to everyone. Another recommendation is for better enforcement of existing requirements, so the pedestrian routes are not disrupted. Finally, the school district submitted a bill draft that would permit school police officers to issue citations on streets strictly adjacent to the schools. That would help in the immediate vicinities of schools.

In reviewing existing programs, the first question to ask was, "Are there local codes in all the jurisdictions that already require builders to make provisions for pedestrian acts, and do all the entities currently have those provisions?" The expectation is that if the builder shows up in the area first and the school follows, then the school has the responsibility to build a pathway to where the development exists. On the other hand, if the school was in an area first and then a builder shows up, the expectation is that the builder will provide pedestrian access to the school from the development. I went back to the beginning of the 1998 building program just so you would know this is occurring. In fact, 35 of the schools constructed required the district to put in asphalt paths. Since 1998, we have put in about 40 miles of paved paths at a cost of \$1.6 million. Paved paths are the temporary paths, generally torn up as an area gradually becomes more developed. Each entity also has created, or is creating, maps for each school that show locations of stoplights, crosswalks, speed zones, and other traffic control devices. That information currently is available on the member agencies website. The information is also delivered to schools in some jurisdictions. It is also sent home in publications from the

schools or directly from the local governments. The RTC also weighed in on this issue. They indicated that they are working on acquiring federal money available through a Safe Routes to School program. Nevada's money will be managed by Nevada's Department of Transportation (NDOT). Local jurisdictions will be able to access those funds through an application process to NDOT.

In recapping a couple of the points, it is important to note that all local governments now have, or are completing, the development of safe route programs for each of the schools within their jurisdictions. All the local governments require, as a condition of property development, consideration of pedestrian passage. The school district provides transportation to thousands of students when there are hazards that cannot be overcome. The school district provides the walk paths into developments when the school comes after the developments. It is apparent that there are many solutions at hand, but we need greater efforts in terms of education and enforcement of codes that already exist. In conclusion, I would say that A.B. 231 of the 73rd Session served to bring all of the entities together and not only addressed the issues presented in the initial bill, but also identified some additional concerns and solutions.

**Rosanna Coombes, Interim Director, Truckee Meadows Regional Planning Agency:**

I apologize, Ms. Richards is in the hospital at the moment. She was scheduled to speak, but she had an unforeseen incident occur over the weekend. I have Mr. Joe Gabica here with me from the Washoe County School District. He is the manager of new facilities and the bond program.

**Chair Atkinson:**

That is fine.

**Rosanna Coombes:**

Thank you for the opportunity to present the Study of Safe Walking Routes for Public Schools in Washoe County ([Exhibit F](#), [Exhibit G](#)) this afternoon. We have actually found it a very positive experience as you have heard from our counterparts in southern Nevada. It was a great opportunity for us to bring all of the parties together on such an important topic. The safety of our children in Washoe County is certainly paramount. A general comment before I start: in terms of bringing everyone together, this study helped us pull together on an assessment of our current situation, and it helps us now with leverage on what we need to do in the future for our safe routes. With that, I will walk you through the elements of our study.

The presentation will cover a brief overview of what we did and the background and approach that we took to the study. We will then walk you through the three elements of the study: the inventory of existing conditions, recommendations for improvements, and review of the programmatic elements that support safe walking routes. Then I will conclude with a few key issues and conclusions.

In terms of an overview, we have 103 schools in Washoe County with 65,000 students. The schools that we considered in this study are the 90 public schools. The other schools are mainly charter schools or private schools that serve a much larger regional base of students. They are not neighborhood serving schools. They may draw students from Truckee, California; Lake Tahoe; or Carson City, so a walking route for those students is probably not the highest priority for them. We assembled a multi-jurisdictional team. As you can see, our agency was the lead when working with the Washoe County School District. We also worked with the three jurisdictions and some of our other service providers, such as RTC and NDOT.

In terms of the approach, we actually evaluated each school. When we prepared the recommendations, we brought them to a regional level. They are broad recommendations that can be applied to the schools as necessary. We looked at the overall safety of the children. I will not repeat much of what our southern Nevada counterparts said about the elements of safety, and the fact that it did not include the social concerns, but we had the same basic premise. We made an assessment of the quality of the walking paths, surface types, and whether they connect. There is no point in having a great path if it does not get you to where you want to go. We also looked at school zones, which is what Assemblyman Mark Manendo was focused on last Thursday, February 15, in the bill he brought before you on safety in school zones. We also looked at things like crossing guards and other programmatic safety issues. The one thing we did not do in this study is look at the quality of every sidewalk. We did not inspect them and look for cracks in the sidewalks or tripping hazards. We based it on the best information we had available. We used information from Washoe County and the school district, and technical information from the three jurisdictions.

[Referred to slide ([Exhibit F](#)).] This is a diagram I would like to focus on for a minute because it is the crux of the study. The Washoe County School District prepares what they call a "School Walk Zone Map." They do it for every school. Assembly Bill 231 of the 73rd Session required us to evaluate the area in a one-mile radius from the school. The school district evaluates its walking paths, and this says a radius of one mile may actually require a student to walk more than a mile. In our current development setups, we often have cul-de-

sacs and subdivisions where the school may be right behind you, but you cannot get there from here. You may have to walk out and around. The way they evaluate these walk zones is by going a mile away from the school by bus. They look at the pathway. The three elements of color relate to that walk zone. The green and the red colors are the one-mile distance from the school. The green and the red zones are a mile by bus from the school. The green zone would be classified as a "safe walking zone." The red zone, in this case, would require the children to cross over a main arterial that is deemed to be unsafe as a walking area. The school district then provides bus service to those students. The orange area is not within the one-mile-by-bus zone because in order to get there, you have to travel over a mile. However, it is included in the walk zone because at the base of the orange area there are actually paths that the student can take that a vehicle cannot travel on. They are walking paths that the student could use and still only walk a mile to that school. With all of its schools, the school district has created a walk zone like this [referred to slide] that determines how safe the opportunities are for children. That is what we used when we did the assessment. The school district met with local government staffs and went through these walk zones to determine how safe they were and what hazards were there.

What did we find when we did that? We split our evaluation into three different categories. The first category is conditions that we feel are currently addressed—what we do really well. In particular, we addressed students having to cross major roads. Those are simply taken out of the equation. Those children are provided opportunities to ride a bus. Let us say a new school opens, and we think something is safe, but we quickly learn that there is something inadequate. Maybe the traffic controls are not in place. The local governments address that immediately and take care of any particular traffic control issues. We do that well.

Some things that we do well, but could improve on, are the lack of walking paths within a one-mile radius. An example is when there is a cul-de-sac, but the student has to walk two miles to get back to the school because the school is right behind it. We currently do not put paths in our subdivisions that provide that opportunity. That is a planning issue, and it is something we need to do better to make schools more accessible to students. Connectivity is another issue where we can do better. There may be instances, for example, where we have a sidewalk on one side of the road, but not on the other. Kids being kids, if it is closer to walk on the side of the road without the sidewalk, they will choose that one. Those are things we need to do better. We need to make sure we completely connect neighborhoods with schools. The area of crossing safety in front of schools, which Assemblyman Mark Manendo commented on last week, were equally as critical for our study. It is an issue. We are making

sure we have safe environments around our schools. That is always something we can continue to work on. The last area where we can do better is construction zone activity. I know that was a particular concern of yours, Mr. Chairman, when you introduced the bill. We do have communication between our local government staffs and the school district, and in many cases, bus routes will be modified during construction to allow students to have safe pathways to get to school. It is done more on an informal basis. There are not any formal mechanisms to do that. That is something we could do a little better.

The last group are those things that we really are not addressing at this stage in the game. I would like to preface this by noting that just because they are not addressed, it does not necessarily create an unsafe situation, but it could. For instance, we have a number of areas where we may have narrow paths in our neighborhoods. Children, as you know, do not walk single file, they cluster. If you have a narrow pathway, children will often step on or off the path in order to stay in the group. In some of our rural areas, we have ditches next to our roadways and paths. That could cause concerns if the children wind up in the ditches, or if we have flood events that fill the ditches with water. There may be areas where there is a lack of designated walk paths. There may be a traditional walking path they take through a field or an empty lot, but it is not a designated walk path. It may be safe at the moment, but it is not optimal. We can also improve in areas where there are no sidewalks, but there may be paths without sidewalks.

What do we think we should do in terms of our recommendations? We have contextualized our recommendations based on the number of injuries and fatalities that we have in Washoe County. I was interested to see that our injury rating is similar to what you have in southern Nevada. Certainly our fatalities are fewer. This data is over a 12-year period. We have had three fatalities, which is too many. Certainly we have some issues we must address.

We tried to take a common sense approach to our recommendations. We factored them into two areas: those that are infrastructure based, and those which are more programmatic. One of the problems we have, and it is an issue we have to deal with before we do anything, is having a common agreement on what "safe" is. We do not necessarily have that in our jurisdiction or within our county. For example, is a path next to a ditch safe or unsafe, even if it is a good path? There are issues we need to come to a consensus on before we do anything. The next recommendation is that we need to develop a school safety handbook we can give to developers that will show what they need to do. Many of our other recommendations focus on cooperation, communication, making sure our entities are talking to each other, and developing guidelines so

everyone is on the same page in terms of what is "safe." We also need to ensure that our developers are providing those safe routes to school as they go through the development process. One of the other recommendations that we have is that a lot of different entities have a lot of different information. We need to pull all of that together regionally. Education is also a critical recommendation as you heard from our counterparts in southern Nevada.

I will not go through all of the programs in the third element of the study, but there are a number of both community and government programs for safe routes. There are elements of our development review process that we are putting into place now that require developers to prepare those safe route programs. We have reactive "trip and fall" programs so that if there are unsafe conditions, the community can let us know and we can correct those as we go.

In conclusion, we are generally doing a good job. There is room for improvement, as there always is, and conditions will change over time. We need to "keep our eye on the ball" because the safety of our children is critical. There is another side benefit to this study, and that is the general health benefits we can provide for more children walking or biking to school. There are also air quality benefits from those programs. I think the community as a whole will benefit from the recommendations that we have suggested. With that, we would be happy to answer any questions.

**Assemblyman Manendo:**

I want to say to you, Mr. Chairman, that this was a vital piece of legislation last session. It is important to our State for the safety of our children. I really appreciate your bringing forth this bill.

My question is on what you mentioned on the second-to-last slide ([Exhibit F](#)) as to what the local governments are doing to be proactive. You said that they are proactive, but what else are they doing?

**Rosanna Coombes:**

There are a number of programs that the local governments are putting in place. They have proactive programs where they are working with developers to require them, through the development review process, to prepare safe routes. If they are actually putting in place a proposal for a development, they need to bring forward a safe routes plan with that. It is not by ordinance or requirement, but it is something the local governments are doing at this stage. Over time, we can make it an ordinance so it would be required, as opposed to something that developers are encouraged to do. They also have reactive programs. They have a "trip and fall" program, so if you notice a sidewalk is in disrepair and there is a need to fix it, you can call your local government and it

will be addressed in one way or another. They do not necessarily come out on the first call to repair it. There is a requirement for a property owner to repair the sidewalk in front of his home if the owner is at fault in terms of the disrepair. There is a process that has to be followed.

The City of Sparks is putting in place a formal Safe Routes to School Program. They are probably leading the pack of the three jurisdictions that we have.

**Assemblyman Manendo:**

I think that is one of the problems we are having in southern Nevada. I do not think our jurisdictions are all on the same page on this. To be honest, I think they are very far from that. I commend Washoe County and the cities for working together. If there is an old project underway, for example, a road that needs to be repaved that happens to be in a school zone—what happens then? Are they required to come up with a plan for a new route? How does that work? I understand a new development, but what if the school has been there forever and now they are tearing up roads or a sewer? What happens in that case? Are they on the same page on that? What, exactly, do they have them do?

**Rosanna Coombes:**

There are a couple of issues that come into play. When a road is being repaved, the local government will come out and assess the sidewalk and the gutters at the same time. If road work is being done that does not necessarily impact the sidewalk, it is a good opportunity to do it as a package and fix both. An initial assessment is done. In terms of the safety or the inaccessibility of the sidewalk during the repair process, there is a public noticing system done by the local government in a neighborhood. They put up notices and inform the community that there will be certain types of construction occurring in the area. Much of it depends on the location of the particular construction. If there are alternative routes available, they will be available for students to use. This is where the coordination between the local government and the school district is critical because if there is not another route available, the school can put a bus on or modify the bus route, so they can pick up students if they do not have a legitimate walking path to get to school. They currently so coordinate with the school district as necessary.

**Assemblyman Manendo:**

It is frustrating for the Clark County School District. We hear all the time that with a new development, construction, or our own entities working on a project, parents are calling the school to let them know that they are scared. They do not think it is a safe route for our children. They call the school district

and are told that it is not the school district building the new housing development or putting in new sewer lines.

There is going to be a new sewer line project in my district that will be impacting schools for a couple of years. Cunningham Elementary School is going to be bombarded. I do not know what the local entities are going to do to fix that. I was picking your brain to see what is working for you so that maybe we can have that working in southern Nevada. I think we need to have our locals working together. This is critical for children's safety. We cannot make an excuse for it. There have been too many injuries and too many deaths.

**Chair Atkinson:**

Last session when I introduced this bill, there was a congressman who was doing something on the federal level for the same reasons. There was some federal funding allocated to Nevada to help us with some safe routes. There was a five-year allocation, and Nevada received about \$5.5 million. I want to hear from Kent Cooper about what you plan to do with it, what you have done so far, and how you want to proceed.

**Kent Cooper, Assistant Director for Planning and Research, Nevada Department of Transportation:**

We have worked out our issues with the United States Department of Transportation (US DOT). Most of you are probably not aware, but when they started this program, there were demands from the US DOT that all Departments of Transportation (DOTs) allocate one full-time person to this position. As you can imagine, a lot of the state DOTs had problems with that. I have one person administering programs that could be anywhere from \$5 to \$20 million per year. This program is \$1 million per year. It has to do with full-time equivalence and effective use of staff. We have worked out those issues with the US DOT. We have made all of our local contacts very active in the Kids About program. In Washoe County, a couple of the Kids About members are now on the Nevada Bicycle Advisory Board, which deals with some of these issues as well. They are being helpful in regard to the coordination issues we are having in Clark County. We have placed this program on our Statewide Transportation Improvement program, our federally approved document that includes all of the Nevada Counties' Regional Transportation Plans. That is an important step and is necessary before you can program any of the money. We have also worked out how we will allocate and administer this money. Anytime you are dealing with federal funds, you have a certain amount of oversight that is necessary as part of that program. We typically use the Stewardship Program, where we enter into agreements with the local governments to administer the money. We then maintain oversight over the money. We have worked out those details.



I want to talk briefly about eligibility because I saw that in some of your earlier presentations. There are some eligibility issues. For instance, if you use the federal money, it has to be on public right-of-way. If you are trying to do some of these connections on private right-of-way, which sometimes makes sense, this money is not eligible for that. That is something we need to keep in mind as we move forward. It is not a big stumbling block, but it can impact the types of facilities and where you decide to allocate the federal money. In addition, maintenance activities are not eligible. If there is a sidewalk or a street in disrepair and you want to use this money to fix it, the federal money is not usually eligible for maintenance activities. That is true in many areas at the DOT.

We are looking at some low-cost, high-impact fixes, and I would like to present them to you at a future date. We want to use the programs that local areas have. The local areas have done a great inventory for you, and they have also discussed types of fixes and where the high-problem areas are. We will work hand in hand with them in those arenas. We have received our fiscal year 2007 funding. Congress acted on a continuing resolution to give all the states the money for federal fiscal year 2007 through October 1. We are looking at about \$3 million out of the \$5.5 million you referred to earlier. We are excited to get off and running and to get the improvements on the ground. One other issue in regard to the Safe Routes federal program: there was a stipulation in the legislation that you cannot use more than 30 percent of that money on administration, public outreach, et cetera, leaving 70 percent of the money to go into infrastructure.

**Assemblyman Manendo:**

Could you tell us when we are going to start seeing some of this money being spent?

**Kent Cooper:**

Now that they have given us the 2007 money, we are ready to program it. I doubt you will see things other than striping and signing. We will be about six months off because it takes a while to get the agreements processed with the locals. They will be the implementing agencies. You will probably see signing, striping, and those types of improvements within the next few months.

**Assemblyman Manendo:**

If we have the money, I do not know if we need to wait six months because this is so important. Maybe we can send a letter to the locals encouraging them to please make this a priority and process these things in a timely fashion. It seems that it should not take the locals six months to move forward with this. If there is anything we can do, we should be able to help.

**Kent Cooper:**

The locals have not been the holdup in this process. You can point the finger at me. We are working expeditiously to correct that.

**Chair Atkinson:**

It has been almost a year. We now have \$3 million and we still do not have a plan to use it. We need to come up with a plan very soon on how we are going to use that money to make safer routes to schools. We have many different ideas from many entities now. Dr. Kadlub and Ms. Coombes just gave us some information as well. I do not know if you have been working with them, although I know Dr. Kadlub has been requesting information from your office, and there have been some delays. We need to come up with a plan and some direction on how we are going to utilize that money. If you need us to do it, we will do it for you. We would rather not, but we support you in it, and we need to get moving on that.

We will now move on to Assembly Bill 54.

**Assembly Bill 54: Requires applicants for a special license plate to pay an application fee which is refundable in certain circumstances. (BDR 43-740)**

**Assemblyman John Oceguera, District No. 16:**

[Spoke from prepared text ([Exhibit H](#)). Copy of Special Plates not reproduced ([Exhibit I](#))]

**Assemblyman Cobb:**

Mr. Oceguera, did you or the Committee take any position on this suggested amendment by the Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV)?

**Assemblyman Oceguera:**

The Committee did not. However, the amendment is fine with me. It sounds reasonable.

**Assemblyman Goedhart:**

One of the reasons that we have the \$5,000 deposit is that not everyone who signed the petition went on to get the plate. If that amendment was to pass in this fashion, would it still serve a purpose to require that the petition be signed with at least 1,000 signatures? Are we looking for the \$5,000 to be a stronger control?

**Assemblyman Ocegüera:**

I have never thought about it that way, but it is a good point. Special license plates serve a purpose. There are many organizations that benefit greatly from them. However, we do take up a lot of Legislative time on these issues. You will see in the Commission on Special License Plates that we have tried to include some of the bill draft requests that the Committee has asked for, and also some of the increased requirements, including ensuring the organization is registered with the Secretary of State, and that they have their 501(c)(3) information. We are trying to hone in on the people who should actually get these. At this point, the 1,000 signatures do not count for anything because someone could go out in front of a supermarket and get 1,000 signatures. That is what has happened in the past. It might be reasonable for the Committee to consider replacing the 1,000 signatures with the \$5,000.

**Chair Atkinson:**

Is Mr. Goedhart suggesting that if you have the \$5,000, then you do not need the signatures?

**Assemblyman Ocegüera:**

I think we came to the conclusion in the Committee on Special License Plates that the 1,000 signatures did not do anything. Many organizations got the 1,000 signatures and then did not meet the requirement.

**Chair Atkinson:**

It is an appropriate question to the DMV to see what they do with the signatures. You are right, Mr. Ocegüera. You can collect 1,000 signatures in a number of ways. I know the signatures are supposed to suggest the individuals are interested and would get the plate, but who knows? I do not think we check it, and I am not sure if the DMV does either.

**Assemblyman Ocegüera:**

The DMV is here to talk about their amendment.

**Martha Barnes, Administrator, Central Services and Records Division,  
Department of Motor Vehicles:**

Our amendment ([Exhibit J](#)) is providing a way for the money to go into an account if, by chance, the design does not stay or meet the 1,000 plate requirement. The bill covers the refund portion very well. We found that if one of the designs was discontinued, there was nowhere to put the money. That is what the amendment does. In answer to your question about the 1,000 signatures, we ensure that the 1,000 signatures come in with the application. That is all we do.

**Chair Atkinson:**

That answers Mr. Goedhart's question and probably makes him feel that the \$5,000 should suffice.

**Assemblywoman Womack:**

How much of the fee goes to the non-profit organization, and how much of the fee goes to the general fund?

**Martha Barnes:**

A \$25 fee from most of the plates goes to the sponsoring agency. On a renewal, there is another fee. I do not have that information now, but I would be happy to get it to you.

**Assemblywoman Womack:**

I would like that.

**Chair Atkinson:**

Is there anyone else who would like to speak on A.B. 54? [There were none.] We will close the hearing on Assembly Bill 54 and move to Assembly Bill 76.

**Assembly Bill 76: Makes various changes to provisions governing the Account for License Plates for the Support of the Education of Children in the Arts. (BDR 18-853)**

**Assemblywoman Heidi Gansert, District No. 25:**

I have a special license plate bill, but it is not for a new license plate. ([Exhibit K](#)) Years ago there was a special license plate created called "Rich in Art," and both the Nevada Arts Council and Very Special Arts (VSA) Arts of Nevada benefited. They worked together to make the artwork for this license plate and get it going. The *Nevada Revised Statutes* (NRS) currently in our law states that funds from that license plate only go to the Nevada Arts Council. This plate was first issued in May 2000, and in the past, they redistributed the funds after the Nevada Arts Council received them. The funds were split 50-50. These two agencies had a mutual agreement that the money would be split, but the original legislation had the money going strictly to the Nevada Arts Council. The A.B. 76 legislation proposes they split the money up-front. We are looking for this change because last year the legislative auditor did an audit of the Nevada Arts Council and realized they were using a pass-through methodology for the funding, versus changing the statute in the NRS. I have members from both agencies here to tell you that it was mutually agreed upon, it has happened historically, and they would like to change the law to reflect exactly what has been transpiring for the last six or seven years.

[Chair Atkinson left meeting. Vice Chair Manendo took over meeting.]

**Susan Boskoff, Executive Director, Nevada Arts Council:**

I am here to support this bill. During the 1995 Legislative Session, Assemblywoman Vonne Chowning worked with me to create a special license plate that generates another revenue stream to support arts education for children. During that time period, we worked closely with VSA Nevada and Mary Ellen Horan. After going through the long process of getting the names collected, we were determined to do a statewide competition that included almost 1,000 students submitting artwork for this plate. This was the right public-private partnership. The VSA was the only statewide arts organization with a mission and active programs to serve children with and without disabilities and other social challenges. They remain the only organization in Nevada that continues to serve this population on a statewide basis. I believe it has been a very strong partnership. The VSA has been using this money since the first license plate was sold to provide programs throughout the State, certainly reaching children, communities, and populations that the State arts agencies and arts education program might not reach. A recent Legislative Counsel Bureau (LCB) audit report noted concerns that the arts license plate funds were not being distributed as other grant funds were in our agency. After some discussion about the distribution process we originally followed when the plate was created and authorized, it has since been determined that updating the NRS was in the best interest of all, and is in the best interest of our agency and the populations we serve.

**Vice Chair Manendo:**

How much has this raised so far? Do you have that data?

**Susan Boskoff:**

Right now, I think we have about 6,610 plates out. It has raised approximately \$16,000 per year. I would note that this funding is not always reliable data. We were the number two selling plate. I understand that now we are the number four selling plate. We are the only state plate in the country that was designed by a child to support arts education for children.

**Mary Ellen Horan, Executive Director, VSA Arts of Nevada:**

For 20 years VSA has been conducting programs in the State of Nevada. I have distributed a handout ([Exhibit L](#)) that tells you how we used the funds in 2005-2006. That was about \$33,000. You can see how many different programs we did throughout the State. We are in Clark County, the rural areas, and Washoe County as well. Without these funds, the programs you see listed there would not have been done. It has been important for us to have those funds. We are happy that we will be clarifying what the original intent was ten years ago.

**Assemblywoman Gansert:**

There are other license plates where the funding is split. For example, the money from Reno Rodeo plates is split, half to the Reno Rodeo Association, and the other half to the Nevada High School Association. The money from collegiate plates for the University of Nevada, Reno, and the University of Nevada, Las Vegas, is split to those universities, and then is split again between academic and athletic scholarships. There is also a Future Farmers of America plate where half the fees go to the Nevada Future Farmers and the other half to the Department of Agriculture. It is not unusual that this money is split. We just want to clarify the language.

**Susan Boskoff:**

I have the figures. We have received \$351,000 in the past ten years from the sales.

**Vice Chair Manendo:**

Is there anyone else testifying for A.B. 76? [There were none.] I am closing the hearing on A.B. 76.

[Chair Atkinson returned to committee room and continued the meeting.]

**Chair Atkinson:**

We are going to move to Assembly Bill 66.

**Assembly Bill 66: Requires drivers to stop at any location for a school bus displaying a flashing red light signal. (BDR 43-867)**

**Assemblyman Pete Goicoechea, District No. 35:**

Assembly Bill 66 was introduced by request from the Eureka County School District. Under NRS 487.357, it is not illegal to pass a bus if it is not on the street or a roadway, even though it has its flashing lights on and the barricade in place. There have been citations thrown out of court because they were cited when the bus was passed in a public parking lot or off a highway or street. Clearly, it is an issue when we have a school bus with its lights and barricades out, and vehicles can pass on either side. There was also an email from Dotty Merrill of the School Board Association ([Exhibit M](#)).

**Bob Burnham, Member, Eureka County School Board:**

We have come here to discuss the safety of Nevada's school children. We have a problem that I am confident you can help us address. There is a serious deficiency in the State statute that frustrates both school districts and law enforcement personnel in their efforts to protect young people as they are entering and leaving school buses. The NRS 484.357 was originally enacted

with the admirable purpose of safeguarding children as they approached or disembarked from a parked bus. The law says that any vehicle, when meeting or overtaking a stationary bus, must also halt if the bus is displaying a stop sign and flashing lights. That purpose is to protect children from being run over. However, there is a major defect in the statute as it is currently written. The present law is only applicable when the bus is parked along a highway, street, or road. Therein lies the problem. Every school day thousands of our children enter and exit buses in school parking lots and other locations not mentioned in the statute. At these times, when student density is at its highest, the law becomes nearly unenforceable because the bus is not parked along a highway, street, or road. This bill removes that loophole by deleting a few words from the current statute. By supporting this bill you will allow the law to fully function as it was no doubt intended to. Children will be better protected wherever and whenever a school bus is stopped and has its lights flashing. Even in a district as small as Eureka County's, we have repeatedly had potentially tragic cases where vehicles were passing buses as they loaded or unloaded students in a parking lot. In one recent case, the matter was reported to our Sheriff's office, and they were unable to adequately enforce the law because of its narrow definition. We are aware of similar instances in other districts. I am sure the problem is statewide. In closing, I ask that you support A.B. 66. In doing so, you can better serve and protect the children of Nevada.

**Dr. Ben Zunino, Superintendent, Eureka County School District:**

This came to my attention when a person drove past one of my bus drivers with children getting on and off the bus. The bus driver had the flashing lights on, the barricades out, the stop signs, et cetera. She contacted the local Sheriff's Deputy, and he cited the individual. When it went to court, the judge said it was not on a highway, freeway, or roadway, so therefore it was thrown out. The District Attorney contacted me and told me that. I did not believe it, so I called the Washoe County School Police. I have a lot of history with them. They told me they have the same frustration. They have tried to cite people with failure to display due care, but they were still able to evade it. One of the things we do very well is to train our children that when they get off a bus, they are in a safe zone. In parking lots, they evidently are not. We continually let children off in parking lots when we take them on athletic events, field trips, and to and from school. I have contacted all the superintendents. All the superintendents are aware of this bill. None have voiced any concern. In fact, they thought they were already protected. They are not. With your support of A.B. 66, we can further support the safety of our children.

**Julie Whitacre, Director, Government Relations, Nevada State Education Association:**

The Nevada State Education Association is in favor of A.B. 66. When we first got word of the bill, I immediately contacted our two largest support staff affiliates: Washoe County and Clark County. I had no idea what a big problem this was. At the time, we were just going to monitor the bill, but both of them asked us to go to the table and support it. This is a big problem, and they are hoping it can be fixed. I can assure you that this is also frustrating to bus drivers.

**Dr. Bryn Lapenta, Interim Assistant Superintendent, Washoe County School District:**

I would like to support A.B. 66 to have vehicles stop anywhere when buses display the flashing signal and are discharging and receiving students. We would like to see an increase in student safety that we believe this bill brings.

**Chair Atkinson:**

Would anyone else like to speak on A.B. 66? [There were none.] I will close the hearing on Assembly Bill 66.

**Scott Konnath, Nevada Parent Teacher Association, Kids About:**

I would like to speak on the presentation for Safe Routes to School. I had some students from Hyde Park Middle School, Angelica Bengochea and Nawal Raja, who were going to do a presentation for you on a subject that fits in with the Safe Routes to School topic. We focused on the engineering side of everything with the presentation. Their presentation was on "No Need for Speed." It reminded me of several things that we need to look at when we are talking about safe routes. It is not just the physical sidewalks. If you look at the findings, these students brought up an interesting topic that Assemblyman Mark Manendo has a bill draft for. It involves the street racing and cutting through traffic that occurs with our teenage drivers. Their study promoted the use of speed bumps through our neighborhoods. We have an issue with our emergency vehicles if too many speed bumps are put too close together, but it was very interesting to see a future driver's perspective from middle schoolers. As they are walking home from school, the older teenagers out racing around the neighborhood are posing a threat to their safe routes to school. To hear this from the children was impressive. I was hoping you could hear them, but they had to leave to get back to school.

On the same line, Assemblyman Mark Manendo's bill about distracted teenage drivers with cell phones also fits in with the safe routes to school issues. Annabelle Watkins does the Auto Program in southern Nevada for our K-3 grades. She is the Vice President of Education in the Kids About coalition. She



would like us to start focusing on the high school drivers too. They pose a threat to the other people who are on the road. I would like to add that to comments for A.B. 231.

On Dr. Kadlub's comments, I was unaware of the fact that the City of Henderson was using Safe Routes Maps. To me, the Safe Routes Maps are the basis for how we plan our pedestrian traffic flow. It is critical. It is apparent to me that Washoe County, the City of Las Vegas, and other areas in Clark County all do things differently with their Safe Routes Maps. I have been pushing the people down south to use something that is standardized throughout the State. They are not eager to go off onto that path because they do not have the manpower. For the study, that area has a need also. When you put information on the map as to where you expect the children to go, you start to see some of the problems; for example, the lack of crosswalks and the lack of signals at non-stop intersections. I urge the Committee to look at those types of issues as well when you look at Safe Routes to School.

**Chair Atkinson:**

Would anyone else from the public like to speak? [There were none.] Seeing none, that concludes our meeting today. Last Thursday I mentioned we would have a work session this week. However, in order to allow people to have enough time to submit amendments for the bill that we heard last week, I am moving the work session up to Tuesday, February 27. I would like to remind people that any proposed amendments must be submitted in writing to the Committee along with your name, contact information, and the intent of the amendment. You may give your amendments to our staff. They would be happy to make sure they are a part of our records. I do not see any other business before the Committee.

[Meeting adjourned at 3:33 p.m.]

RESPECTFULLY SUBMITTED:

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Kelly Troescher  
Committee Secretary

APPROVED BY:

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Assemblyman Kelvin Atkinson, Chair

DATE: \_\_\_\_\_

**EXHIBITS**

**Committee Name: Committee on Transportation**

**Date: February 20, 2007**

**Time of Meeting: 1:30 p.m.**

<b>Bill</b>	<b>Exhibit</b>	<b>Witness / Agency</b>	<b>Description</b>
	A	Transportation Committee	Agenda
	B	Transportation Committee	Attendance Roster
	C	Curtis Myles, Las Vegas Monorail	Power Point Presentation
<u>A.B. 231</u> of the <u>73<sup>rd</sup></u> Session	D	Dr. Craig Kadlub, Clark County School District	Power Point Presentation
<u>A.B. 231</u>	E	Dr. Craig Kadlub, Clark County School District	Study of Walking Routes for Public School Students in Metropolitan Clark County
<u>A.B. 231</u>	F	Rosanna Coombes, Truckee Meadows Regional Planning Agency	Power Point Presentation
<u>A.B. 231</u>	G	Rosanna Coombes, Truckee Meadows Regional Planning Agency	Study of Safe Walking Routes for Public Schools in Washoe County, Nevada
<u>A.B. 54</u>	H	Assemblyman John Ocegüera	Prepared text
<u>A.B. 54</u>	I	Assemblyman John Ocegüera	Special Plate Matrix of Discontinued Plates
<u>A.B. 54</u>	J	Martha Barnes, Nevada Department of Motor Vehicles	Amendment for <u>A.B. 54</u>
<u>A.B. 76</u>	K	Assemblywoman Heidi Gansert	Proposed amendment for A.B. 76
<u>A.B. 76</u>	L	Mary Ellen Horan, VSA Arts	Handout for use of funds
<u>A.B. 66</u>	M	Assemblyman Pete Goicoechea	Email from Dotty Merrill