

# Las Vegas streets provide obstacles for bicycle commuters

Although bicyclists find Las Vegas streets difficult to travel, the situation may be improving.

BY MERILYN POTTERS  
CONTRIBUTING WRITER

Bicycle commuters brave dangerous roadways to and from school, while bicycle advocates throughout the state are aware that conditions must improve.

"It's a terrible shame that Las Vegas had not foreseen a need for bicycle lanes and routes," said Detective Sergeant Lonnie Barrett.

The major streets in all four directions around campus are very dangerous, he said. "There are no designated bike lanes, and motorists won't move over. I caution people to be very careful crossing major roadways around the university."

Many students are willing to put up with the hazards because of the benefits that pedaling offers.

Michelle Skinner, a junior, began riding her bike to school this semester. "It's faster, gives me exercise, and I enjoy being outdoors," she said.

Another student who is a physical therapy major from San Diego commutes by bike because it provides exercise, it is economical, and is environmentally sound. "But I miss the bike lanes and routes that San Diego offers. Here the streets and traffic are not safe," he said.

Cynthia Salinas, who commutes on a mountain bike five miles each way and crosses overpasses said, "Motorists hate bikers."

Statistics reflect the grim facts. Figures from 1992 are not yet available, but in 1991, over 600 injuries were reported due to bike collisions in the state and three people were killed, said Sue Newberry, the bicycle-pedestrian safety administrator in the Nevada Office of Traffic Safety.

It is actually worse than that, she said, because only 10 percent of all bicycle accidents are reported—those that are collision-related.

Various entities through-

out Nevada are attempting to identify and remedy the problems. One of Newberry's goals is to coordinate these efforts.

Her position was mandated in 1991 by the Nevada Legislature when it voted to place a 50-cent fee on each driver's license to pay salaried personnel to review the needs of cyclists.

There is no money designated within the state's budget for bicycle facilities, nor is there pending legislation.

"But in five years, you will see improved facilities," she said. "Facilities are a major aspect in the issue of safety." The term "facilities" includes bike lanes adjacent to roadways, bike trails, adequate bicycle parking, bike racks and even racks on buses.

Newberry will be involved in the planning and design of state highways and any other projects that are federally-funded. "There is also a potential for federal funding for facilities and we will be applying for those funds," she said.

Lee Gibson, planning coordinator for the Regional Transportation Commission (RTC), is developing policies and procedures for safer bike corridors.

"UNLV is primarily a commuter school," Gibson said, "and a large number of students live around UNLV. An analysis for dedicated bicycle lanes will prove beneficial."

"We hope to put together workshops to get citizen input. All of this represents a quality investment to encourage the use of bicycles for commuting. These projects will be eligible for federal funding under federal programs," Gibson said.

Bicycle groups such as the Las Vegas Valley Bike Club support a bicycle survey that has been drawn up by the RTC. The survey has been distributed throughout town to bicycle shops asking for cyclists' opinions and recommendations for changes in road systems.

"It is the job of citizens to make recommendations to make cycling a safer proposition," said Larry Kidd, president of the Las Vegas Valley Bike Club.

# Tax cuts could elevate state economy

Legalized prostitution, attention to small business and tax cuts are proposed as boosters for the state economy.

BY LOUISE KLEES-WALLACE  
FOR THE YELL

Converting downtown Las Vegas into a red-light district, with legalized prostitution, was a suggestion made to stimulate Nevada's economy at a panel discussion Thursday titled "Economic Agenda For Nevada."

"One success in downtown Las Vegas is 'Girls of Glitter Gulch,' and I know (Mayor) Jan Laverty Jones hates it," said *Las Vegas Review-Journal* assistant editorial page editor Vin Suprynowicz.

"It is not our philosophy anymore to see what's working in the private sector and try to emulate it. If we could turn downtown Las Vegas into a red-light district like the one in Amsterdam, we could have another 60-year boom."

Suprynowicz said Nevada was traditionally a state with a laissez-faire government but it was now veering off course.

"It is generally conceded that downtown Las Vegas is in financial trouble," he said.

In the past, solutions to elevate downtown have too often

come at the taxpayer's expense. Suprynowicz cited Rosie O'Grady's Good Time Emporium as an example.

Nevada State Senator Ann O'Connell, who owns two Christian bookstores, did not endorse the proposal for a red-light district downtown.

"I would not be thrilled over a red-light district. I would have a very difficult time supporting it," she said.

O'Connell said one of Nevada's problems is the state business tax and called it the worst kind of head tax. She talked about the difficulties she had keeping a 150-room hotel she is a part owner of viable.

"Each time government increased taxes they made it harder for us to do business," O'Connell said. "Originally we had 36 families involved with the operation. We now have 16 people full-time."

"In my estimation, the government of Nevada has not been attentive to the plight of business, especially small business. We have got to liberate private enterprise in this state."

Hans-Hermann Hoppe, economics professor, also called for tax cuts. "Nevada is a high-taxing state," he said. "It ranks 14th in the country in terms of taxes per person. Why doesn't anyone in Carson City dare to propose that tax should be cut? Taxes are always a burden on pro-

ductive people, contrary to what Mr. Clinton may think. Taxes punish productivity."

Hoppe advocated federal government decentralization to give more power to states or counties as opposed to the federal government.

"Nevada should have the option to opt out of any federal program. Even within Nevada we should support decentralizing."

Hoppe said he would welcome a split between northern and southern Nevada because the north isn't as growth oriented as the south.

"Why should we support these guys if they favor stupid policies?" Hoppe asked.

Hoppe does not believe Nevada should have a diverse economy. "We don't necessarily need to diversify. Nevada should be a place that specializes in sin."

Francis Beckwith, philosophy professor, also addressed the change in the current political climate saying he remembered the furor caused by the Willie Horton ads four years ago.

"I think the Willie Horton of the '90s is the rich," he said. "The problem in this country is that we want to penalize employers. You don't tax sources of growth during a recession."

The discussion was sponsored by the UNLV Political Economy Club.

## Funding

from page 1

because of the last budget," Spitler said. "It was a very sombre presentation because it was based on things that were doable."

Spitler said that there might be a possibility that the budget picture could get brighter if only slightly. While he did not make any bold predictions Spitler agreed with Sen. Bob Coffin's remarks of a few weeks ago that

the projections—on which the budget is based—could be revised

"The assembly is taking a wait and see approach," Spitler said. "We are real hopeful that some of the indicators are rising but they are not doing spring flips. Until a number of months have passed it will be very difficult to predict what will happen."

As for what UNLV and the rest of higher education can expect from the legislature Spitler said that there are still a number of hearings to go before any decisions are made. He said that the subcommittees of both the Senate finance committee and the

Assembly ways and means committee will hold hearings where Maxson and others from the university system will testify in more detail.

When finished the subcommittees will bring their results to the full committee. "That's when they will have the full dollar amounts and funding proposals," Spitler said.

"The commitment for education is in this legislative body," said Spitler. "When we can find the money we will use it. It's just finding the money that's difficult."

## Forum

from page 1

"And 68 percent of our respondents agree that athletics are overemphasized at this campus," Hudgins said. "Thus, according to information provided by the Center for the Study of Sport in Society, twice as many faculty at UNLV are disturbed by the relationship between academics and athletics on this campus as would be the norm in their experience."

Weaver suggested an athletic board of directors be established to bridge the gap between the two sides.

"One thing that can help university and athletic programs grow closer quicker," Weaver said. "Create an athletics board of directors compiled of faculty, students, alumni and communi-

ty members."

Weaver also quoted from the mission statement of the athletic department.

"The striving for excellence in athletics is the same challenge to human capacity as the striving for excellence in other departments in the university. . . The athletics department enhances the university's image by providing competitive athletic teams that engender the sense of pride and recognition of the university."

"While the hope is for victory, the goal is to pursue excellence within the rules and available financial resources."

Weaver said his department is cutting back on unnecessary spending like the rest of the university.

"We are trying to determine where we have fat and if we do

have fat in our budgets," Weaver said.

He said his presence at away basketball games is not entirely necessary for the team to win and is an added expense.

"I am only going to one away game this season," Weaver said. "I can't make one foul shot and I'm certainly too old to make a slam dunk."

Hudgins said several people, including President Robert Maxson, played key roles in initiating a positive environment between academics and athletics.

"I believe that we've turned the corner. I think that the appointment of Weaver and of several of the new members of the coaching staff has been a good start," Hudgins said. "They join several coaches here who have long been committed to academic excellence."



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