

An Interview with Laura Perkins

Perspectives from the COVID-19 Pandemic: Leadership and Learning in Nevada

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Each interviewee had the opportunity to review their transcript. All measures have been taken to preserve the style and language of the interviewee. This interview features Laura Perkins, Regent for Nevada System of Higher Education Board of Regents, and was conducted on 7/3/23 by Kelliann Beavers and Elia Del Carmen Solano-Patricio. This interview covers topics including reflections on leadership, organizational challenges, and opportunities for collaboration.

Interview with Laura Perkins

Date: 7-3-2023

SPEAKERS: Kelliann Beavers, Carmen Solano-Patricio, Laura Perkins

Carmen Solano-Patricio [00:02]

Okay. It is July 3rd, 2023. We are here interviewing Laura Perkins P-E-R-K-I-N-S, with Dr. Kelliann Beavers, and myself, Carmen Solano. Thank you for coming to see us today, and for agreeing to be interviewed. We'll just start with a very simple question. Who are you, what do you do, and what was your role during COVID before and after? What is it now?

Laura Perkins [00:29]

Well, thank you for having me. I appreciate it. I appreciate being asked, and let's see. I'm Laura Perkins. I currently serve as the district one representative for the regents for the Nevada System of Higher Education. My area starts at Charleston and goes all the way north to the Mountain. On one side, it's I-15 with a couple of little pockets that are just on the other side of I-15, and then, Rancho Decatur on the other. So it's a part of – it's generally a good – a big area. Let's see. I got a degree from UNLV in post-secondary ed. I worked for CSN, as a teaching assistant, for a while, and then I taught in the corporate world for about eight years. So I thought that would be the perfect fit for being a regent. However, it was like drinking from a firehose when I first got elected, even though I'd been inside academia, outside academia, and around academia.

Carmen Solano-Patricio [01:24]

Mm-hmm.

Laura Perkins [01:27]

The roles were vastly different. Any – what else?

Carmen Solano-Patricio [01:31]

And before that, you worked for the City of North Las Vegas.

Laura Perkins [01:34]

Oh, I didn't work for them. I volunteered for them too. I was appointed, as the Planning Commissioner, under two different administrations, for about 10 years. Where I did land use – just because it can be built doesn't necessarily mean it should be built there, and that was the dilemma with most of the planning commission.

Carmen Solano-Patricio [01:55]

Yeah. I worked on a couple of projects that we proposed to the City of North Las Vegas when I was working for some lawyers back in the day. So we were right there.

Laura Perkins [02:03]

We were right next to each other.

Carmen Solano-Patricio [02:05]

Yeah, up until recently. I'll pass it on to you, Kelliann.

Kelliann Beavers [02:10]

Okay. So this is more about how you saw your role during the pandemic – since the onset of the pandemic is a fine way to tailor it, or the timeframe that seems most salient to you since then?

Laura Perkins [02:26]

How did I see my role? Basically, to make sure that students, faculty, and the community were safe. I think that was my role. Primarily, folks on the campuses. That was my role then. And I think I was – in the midst of it, I think I was the “Let’s try to see if we can have a win-win situation,” from the very beginning. Most of my colleagues were on the other side: Everybody needs to get the vaccination. Everybody needs to be vaccinated. And if you’re not going to be vaccinated, you’re going to be fired; you’re going to be kicked out of school. I’m like “We need an off-ramp because there might be some reason that we don’t even understand or comprehend because I am *not* a doctor, by any means.” And then we have eight institutions. We have the most brilliant minds. And I felt that we should listen to those minds, rather than going on a knee-jerk response or an emotional response. Because it was very emotional; people had lost their families, they lost some family members, or they might have been sick themselves. And then the separation that it cost, where you *couldn't* go to visit your loved one in the hosp.

Kelliann Beavers [03:31]

Mm-hmm.

Laura Perkins [03:33]

All that stresses you – but I didn’t think that bringing those forward into our picture – we needed to look at metrics. That’s the latest and greatest information. And heck, we had much better experts right on staff that we could ask, you know? People that worked in this for years and years and years. Brian [L-03:53] was wonderful. Actually, he was at the health district when I was health district, so I came across him once or twice before. But he is the resident expert. They’ve always come to him in the news, but we didn’t want to exactly listen to him.

Kelliann Beavers [04:10]

Yeah. We had another interview where we also mentioned him. We haven’t had a chance to speak with him yet, but thanks for reminding me about that.

The next question is, which groups do you believe were hardest hit by the economic downturn related to the pandemic?

Laura Perkins [04:24]

Wow. North Las Vegas was one of those. We were the hardest hit in the State of Nevada. We lost more jobs, and we lost more people, and they were getting to the land use – because there’s only one hospital, and we don’t have a lot of specialists in North Las Vegas. And a lot of the funding was aimed at populations rather than populations affected.

Kelliann Beavers [04:47]

Mmm.

Laura Perkins [04:48]

So even though we had the most people that were affected, we didn't get the amount of funds in that city, in that area, that we should have gotten because it was based on population. So the City of Las Vegas got the most because they're the largest in the city and in the state, but they weren't the hardest hit. Most of my constituents work in the entertainment industry, and everybody was laid off. Everybody was laid off. So, yeah, we were the hardest hit, I think.

Kelliann Beavers [05:19]

That is a very interesting distinction. Thanks for articulating that specific aspect of the funding, the way it was allocated, and the oversight about how it was distributed.

Laura Perkins [05:32]

And I believe that people who are closest to the problem are also closest to the solution. And we didn't involve both – we didn't involve the top and the bottom. Not that we're the bottom, but you know, we didn't involve-

Kelliann Beavers [05:43]

Local – I get it – on the ground.

Laura Perkins [05:44]

Local, yeah, on the ground.

Kelliann Beavers [05:45]

Yeah, I know what you mean.

Laura Perkins [05:47]

Yes, much better said. (laughs)

Kelliann Beavers [05:48]

Well, you said it, really. I just – I didn't even think that when you thought back to it. But – and this is something, too, that we interviewed the city manager in North Las Vegas, and he articulated some of the similar things that you're articulating, in terms of there being this "disconnect" between those who were immediately experiencing the height of the crisis and those who were, sort of, handing down the edicts, as far as what would be next. Is there anything else you want to share about that?

Laura Perkins [06:19]

And also, more students. CSN was more affected than UNLV, for example.

Kelliann Beavers [06:23]

Mm-hmm.

Laura Perkins [06:25]

Just because of the populations that go there. One thing, I don't think we took full – I don't think we advertised or promoted enough that you could come back to school. Because a lot of people who were out of work started to rethink their career choices, and we should have been able to guide them, lead them, and give a lit path to “Hey, this might be a time for you to take that credit.”

Kelliann Beavers [06:54]

Mm-hmm.

Laura Perkins [06:57]

To take that class. And one that comes to mind is social media, you know, so that you can have some background. If you were in social media, you didn't lose any money because you were working from home anyway. And most of the things that you do, when you're engaged in social media, are on a computer, and you're on the phone, and you're emailing. But you're not like face-to-face with people. And so that was just one career path that was easy, or easiest, or one of the easier ones. You just needed a couple of classes, and we did not promote that enough as NSHE. We did not.

Kelliann Beavers [07:33]

Yeah. I'm sure the logistics of promoting anything, as things were in such dire straits, was challenging. And then, in retrospect, it's like “Oh, we should have.”

Laura Perkins [07:43]

Well, that would have given people hope.

Kelliann Beavers [07:44]

Yeah.

Laura Perkins [07:45]

Hey, you might be out of work now, but in six months, you're going to be on another job.

Kelliann Beavers [07:49]

Mm-hmm.

Laura Perkins [07:52]

And we didn't do a good job of that, I think, and it was a perfect opportunity for us to see why college is relevant.

Kelliann Beavers [07:57]

Yeah, absolutely. Thanks for articulating that, and I love the “Those who are closest to the problem should – are closest to the solution.” It's a really good quote too.

Laura Perkins [08:11]

I wrote it down. I don't know who originally said it, but (laughs)-

Kelliann Beavers [08:18]

You've somewhat spoken to this, but if anything comes to mind – what, if anything, do you wish that different levels of government would have done differently, or could do differently now, in response to the pandemic or economic downturn associated with it?

Laura Perkins [08:32]

A lot of things were sped up and exacerbated by the pandemic. We knew there were problems with people accessing the internet, for example. Well, I'm a nerd, so, we're going to go there.

Kelliann Beavers [08:46]

Yes.

Laura Perkins [08:45]

Accessing the internet; we knew that was a problem. But then, during the pandemic, we saw these two groups that just were “haves” and “have nots.” And that's not – I don't think that's what we, as Americans – I don't think that's what should subscribe to. That's not – everybody should have access to the same things.

Kelliann Beavers [09:07]

Yeah.

Laura Perkins [09:10]

How this relates to NSHE is that we control a lot of nodes in this valley. Nobody knows that. But those signs you see on the freeway, those are actually controlled by System Computing Services. So NSHE – higher education touches everything, and people don't believe me, but it touches everything.

Kelliann Beavers [09:29]

Mm-hmm.

Laura Perkins [09:34]

We should have been the first people – the people closest to it – we should have been the first people they were talking to about, for instance, CCSD. But they would rather give – okay, this is going to sound really bad – they would rather give the contract to Cox Cable than to invest money into SCS. Because SCS could have done it a lot cheaper and a lot faster. And because it's education, once again, you prove that NSHE is worth it. The money that we get, SCS does this for basically pennies.

Kelliann Beavers [10:06]

What does SCS stand for?

Laura Perkins [10:09]

I'm sorry – System Computing Services.

Kelliann Beavers [10:10]

Okay.

Laura Perkins [10:12]

Yeah.

Kelliann Beavers [10:13]

Do you think that was a lack of knowledge that that was a possible option, or it's bigger than that, as far as politics?

Laura Perkins [10:26]

First, I think it's way bigger than that.

Kelliann Beavers [10:27]

Yeah.

Laura Perkins [10:28]

But at first – my first thought is, what do our students need, and how can we provide it?

Kelliann Beavers [10:34]

Mm-hmm.

Laura Perkins [10:35]

Let's look at all the avenues. Let's get everybody in the room. Let's talk about it, and then we'll come up with the best solution. But I was horrified when they announced that Cox Cable was going to get all this money. I was horrified. But Cox isn't going to put it back into the community, whereas, if you put it into SCS, we could go into libraries. We control the nodes, like the [T-11:01]. We control those nodes. So anybody that – and we have nodes all over.

Kelliann Beavers [11:07]

What does it mean? It's like a place from which the broadband emanates essentially.

Laura Perkins [11:10]

Yes.

Kelliann Beavers [11:12]

Uh-huh.

Laura Perkins [11:13]

Sorry. (laughs)

Kelliann Beavers [11:16]

Wow, no, that's okay. I kind of thought that's what you meant. I just wanted to make sure I was hearing you correctly. And I didn't know that was even true, so it's really interesting.

Laura Perkins [11:23]

Yeah. And that could be NSHE's fault too because we don't promote that. A lot of the – right now, the director of SCS, there were so many opportunities for us to be engaged and involved in the discussion about every aspect of COVID, but we weren't. And I don't know whether it was

because of a lack of knowledge, a lack of time, or they didn't know we were here – which – whose fault is that? They don't know we were here.

Kelliann Beavers [11:52]

Yeah.

Laura Perkins [11:53]

So I guess we don't make enough noise.

Carmen Solano-Patricio [12:00]

So what do you think could be done better moving forward? One of our biggest questions is around lessons learned, and we want to learn them from the people that were there.

Laura Perkins [12:11]

Lessons learned – if we don't start presenting higher education as just that, higher education, not everybody is going to be a rocket scientist. However, even to work – and please don't, like, I don't want letters or emails about how I slammed the auto industry. No. But now, you can't just read a manual and learn how to work on cars.

Kelliann Beavers [12:33]

Mm-hmm.

Laura Perkins [12:36]

You need to know how to plug things – it's become more technical, as opposed to physical and mechanical.

Kelliann Beavers [12:41]

Yeah.

Laura Perkins [12:43]

It's more technical.

Kelliann Beavers [12:44]

And there's computers.

Laura Perkins [12:45]

Exactly. And you have to know which those codes are, and how to fix, and how to reset – it's become more technical. So out of high school – I mean, I come from a family of mechanics – out of high school, they just worked on people's cars. Because they could put their hands on the car and say, "Gun it a little bit. Okay. That's a carburetor."

Carmen Solano-Patricio [13:05]

Yeah.

Laura Perkins [13:06]

But those days are gone. So we need to start framing higher education as just that, higher

education. If you graduate from high school in 12th grade, you're going to need more than that high school diploma.

Kelliann Beavers [13:20]

Mm-hmm.

Laura Perkins [13:25]

And we can't get around that. You're going to need at least something, a semester; even if you just go a semester, your chances – your income increases – I can't remember the statistics right now – it's a lot of numbers.

Carmen Solano-Patricio [13:35]

Yeah.

Laura Perkins [13:36]

But your income increases just by completing one semester in high school. Your lifetime income can – and we need to start framing it like that, the value of college, because right now, that's a debate too.

Kelliann Beavers [13:46]

Mm-hmm.

Laura Perkins [13:49]

The value – is college really worth it? And for some it is, and for some, it isn't. But everybody needs something past high school.

Kelliann Beavers [13:55]

Mm-hmm.

Laura Perkins [13:57]

I don't think there's a single job that you can get – even for the apprenticeship programs, or something like going into construction.

Carmen Solano-Patricio [14:01]

Yeah.

Laura Perkins [14:04]

Well, construction is feast or famine, so we need to realize that. And you're either going to be working 10-12-16-hour days, or you're going to be sitting home on the couch eating Bon-Bons. You're not "halfway employed" when you're in construction. So, okay, fine. You want to be in construction. There are apprenticeship programs, but those apprenticeship programs require that you have English 101 and 102.

Kelliann Beavers [14:23]

Mm-hmm.

Carmen Solano-Patricio [14:24]

Mmm, okay. The unions just released a slew of programming for apprenticeships, right?

Laura Perkins [14:27]

Mm-hmm.

Carmen Solano-Patricio [14:30]

And I don't know if you subscribe to music platforms, but a lot of the commercials that have been running now are more like "Don't be afraid of the stigma of not going to college. Go to trade school. Go to tech school. Mechanics *this*, and-

Laura Perkins [14:47]

It's highly competitive.

Carmen Solano-Patricio [14:48]

Yeah.

Laura Perkins [14:50]

And if you have an AA degree, they're more likely to take you because at least you've shown that you can complete something. And yes, high school completion is important, but you just need that extra "edge." And if you're not going to get into the apprenticeship program the first year, why not take a few classes?

Carmen Solano-Patricio [15:09]

Yeah.

Laura Perkins [15:11]

But we need to start framing that a little bit better.

Carmen Solano-Patricio [15:12]

So you think some kind of campaign – I'm sorry.

Laura Perkins [15:15]

Yeah, go ahead.

Carmen Solano-Patricio [15:16]

Some kind of public awareness campaign or information campaign?

Laura Perkins [15:20]

An Information campaign would help immensely.

Kelliann Beavers [15:24]

Yeah. I was trying to understand whether you meant that, or if you also meant that in our offerings, we needed to be offering different things. Or maybe- [overtalking 15:33]

Laura Perkins [15:35]

Well, CSN is very community-responsive.

Kelliann Beavers [15:36]

Okay.

Laura Perkins [15:38]

I said CSN, but what I meant was the community college – the four community colleges.

Kelliann Beavers [15:41]

Uh-huh.

Laura Perkins [15:44]

TMCC is doing wonderful things with – GBC is doing wonderful things with finding – WMC is doing wonderful things with truck driving.

Kelliann Beavers [15:51]

Mm-hmm.

Laura Perkins [15:54]

So they each are responsive to – I think TMCC just got something with Panasonic about training their people to do the robotics. So it's like we have the technology.

Kelliann Beavers [16:11]

Yeah. It's more about the messaging, and ensuring that people hear, and are spoken to in a way that is clear, and that's a different thing.

Laura Perkins [16:21]

A well-lit path.

Kelliann Beavers [16:20]

Oh, I like that. "A well-lit path."

Carmen Solano-Patricio [16:21]

That's good advice.

Laura Perkins [16:26]

Yeah. Because we keep saying that we're trying to compete with other institutions, but we're actually competing against Western Nevada colleges. Or because they'll say, "Here's your piece of paper. You want to be what now? Okay. If you want to be a phlebotomist, here we go. This is what you're going to need, and this is how much it's going to cost. These are your classes all lined up, that you take these – you know. And it's just a sheet of paper, basically, that tells you everything you're going to have to do for the next two years."

Kelliann Beavers [16:50]

Mm-hmm.

Laura Perkins [16:51]

We don't do that very well.

Carmen Solano-Patricio [16:52]

We do white papers all day, so I see what you mean by "information campaign."

Laura Perkins [16:56]

Yeah. We don't do that very well at all. I'm sorry; we were going to a direction and then I took a left turn. [overtalking 17:06]

Kelliann Beavers [17:07]

-very meaningful, yeah. No, I really appreciate that you did take that turn, and that helps me understand, sort of, the – exactly what you meant by the ways in which we need to be clear.

Laura Perkins [17:16]

Yeah, and that came out in COVID too. We're going to go – well, Detroit – we're going to – people kept saying, in Detroit, when robotics first started appearing on the scene "Oh, nobody can do my job. No robot will ever take my job." Well, we have – okay. I'm going to have to weigh how appropriate this is. We have robotic strippers.

Kelliann Beavers [17:39]

Uh-huh.

Laura Perkins [17:40]

So if you think that your job cannot (laughter) – let's look at this, right? Let's really take a stark look at this. If you think your job can't be taken, we have electronic bartenders. However, what you don't see is that that bartender needs somebody to stock it because it can't stock itself.

Kelliann Beavers [17:56]

Right.

Laura Perkins [17:57]

It needs somebody to repair it, in case something goes wrong, and it needs somebody to program it with new drink recipes, for instance, or maybe a new conversation. Because if you go to your favorite bar and you hang out, a robot's going to say, "Well, how are you doing, sir?" And maybe some facial recognition in there so they can call you by name, those types of creative inventive things that the robot can't do.

Kelliann Beavers [18:18]

Mm-hmm.

Laura Perkins [18:20]

And so it takes three people to support that one bartender. But if you're a bartender, and you don't get equipped to do that, then you're out of a job. And that's one of the things we don't say very well, either. Because everybody's like "Well, technology's going to be the death of us." No,

it's not. I mean, come on. If technology was going to be the death of us, we wouldn't be driving in cars, and we wouldn't have lights in our houses.

Kelliann Beavers [18:43]

Right.

Laura Perkins [18:47]

So it's going to take- [overtalking 18:49]

Kelliann Beavers [18:50]

That's a really important point. Yes to what?

Laura Perkins [18:52]

Did the candlemaker go out of business? Yes, they did. However, look at electricity. How many people do we have to employ just to get electricity into our homes?

Kelliann Beavers [19:00]

Mm-hmm.

Laura Perkins [19:01]

So, yeah.

Carmen Solano-Patricio [19:02]

So I'm hearing "retraining"- [overtalking 19:03]

Laura Perkins [19:04]

Yes. Reskilling, retooling, yes.

Carmen Solano-Patricio [19:05]

Mm-hmm.

Laura Perkins [19:06]

I don't know what the politically correct term is, but yeah.

Carmen Solano-Patricio [19:07]

All of them. I would think so, yeah. Because I heard this term before in an economics class. It was about "adjacent jobs."

Laura Perkins [19:16]

Oh, yeah.

Carmen Solano-Patricio [19:17]

So-

Laura Perkins [19:18]

That's a great word.

Carmen Solano-Patricio [19:19]

It works in tandem.

Laura Perkins [19:32]

So yeah. And a lot of things that came out of COVID, I hope we don't lose. My political promise was, when I first got elected, "We're going to do more online classes." Well, we went to 100% online, so thank you very much. (laughter)

Kelliann Beavers [19:42]

Yeah.

Laura Perkins [19:44]

During COVID.

Kelliann Beavers [19:46]

Yeah.

Laura Perkins [19:47]

So I kept my campaign promise.

Carmen Solano-Patricio [19:50]

It highlights the need for broadband access.

Laura Perkins [19:51]

Exactly.

Carmen Solano-Patricio [19:55]

Were there any particular policies that you thought were successful, whether at the federal level, state, or local?

Laura Perkins [20:01]

Well, I thought pouring money into the cities and states was successful. I think it kind of had a safety net, so that – especially for Nevada – I mean we lost 75% of our income. So yeah. That safety net was really important for Nevada, really important, and it also showed us, again, that we need to diversify.

Carmen Solano-Patricio [20:23]

Mm-hmm.

Laura Perkins [20:25]

It's not a matter of if it's going to happen. Every 10 years, we go through this, literally, every 10 years. Maybe 12, you know, on a good spurt. But every 10 or 12 years, we go through this. We went through it in 2008; we went through it in 2018, 2020. And now, you know, it's like, come on, now. And once again, the solution to that is getting people into education.

Kelliann Beavers [20:47]

Mm-hmm.

Carmen Solano-Patricio [20:49]

Somebody needed to say it.

Laura Perkins [20:54]

And workforce development, that's all we do folks. I don't know what you think; we just produce these "thinkers." No, we produce – those thinkers create jobs for others, in a way that we wouldn't necessarily see. So if you talk about workforce development, how can you not include higher ed?

Kelliann Beavers [21:18]

Mm-hmm.

Laura Perkins [21:19]

And I think those are the two most important things that I saw. Yeah. And, of course, well, eating. People were depending on the school district to feed their kids.

Kelliann Beavers [21:29]

Mm-hmm.

Laura Perkins [21:34]

And when it wasn't there, we had to scramble to find a way to feed people. Even with all – the casinos; the resorts; the properties – the name changes every so often – even with the casino properties donating all their food, it still wasn't enough.

Kelliann Beavers [21:54]

Mm-hmm.

Laura Perkins [21:56]

If you're not getting an income, what are you cooking on?

Kelliann Beavers [21:59]

Mm-hmm.

Laura Perkins [22:00]

How are you cooking your food? And we didn't necessarily think about them.

Carmen Solano-Patricio [22:04]

What do you think we should diversify into?

Laura Perkins [22:07]

Well – oh, ah, that's a loaded question because I'm a nerd. (laughs) We have the ability to – I saw North Las Vegas as being the next San Jose because first of all, we have no state income tax.

Carmen Solano-Patricio [22:26]
Mm-hmm.

Laura Perkins [22:30]

Our housing is cheaper. Our gas is a little bit higher, but when you offset that with not having a state income tax, like you're not paying, every paycheck, to the state, it kind of balances out. And we're 45 minutes away by plane – what is the downside? You could fly into work every morning, literally; you could fly to work every morning. And with the difference in housing cost and the pay scale, you would be able to do that and still make the same amount of money as if you lived in San Jose. A lot of people are – yeah. I think we have that possibility. But it's a chicken-and-egg situation because we don't have the educated population, and they say, "Well, you don't have the educated population to give us the people that we need."

Carmen Solano-Patricio [23:14]
Mm-hmm.

Laura Perkins [23:15]

And so, how do we – but then we don't have the people we need because we don't have the educated population. So we – it's like a chicken-and-egg situation. So that I don't have a solution for.

Carmen Solano-Patricio [23:22]
Mm-hmm.

Laura Perkins [23:26]

I really don't. Unless, like you said, get the message out that we need to reskill.

Carmen Solano-Patricio [23:30]
Yeah.

Laura Perkins [23:30]

And most people don't realize that you can go to CSN for free.

Carmen Solano-Patricio [23:35]

Yeah. You said San Jose because of its proximity to Los Angeles, right, and North Las Vegas, and its proximity to Las Vegas.

Laura Perkins [23:44]
Yes.

Carmen Solano-Patricio [23:45]

Okay. I just wanted to be clear. I wasn't sure if you were going to say because of technology, or maybe we should diversify.

Laura Perkins [23:51]

Well, technology – yeah, right?

Carmen Solano-Patricio [23:53]

Yeah.

Laura Perkins [23:51]

Yeah. Because of technology.

Carmen Solano-Patricio [23:52]

Okay.

Laura Perkins [23:55]

Oh, yeah. The number one think tank for technology.

Carmen Solano-Patricio [23:56]

Okay.

Laura Perkins [23:57]

Even on Amazon [24:00] said, "Oh, we don't have enough educated people to support Amazon." I'm like "Well, we could have talked better." We could have just said, "Give us two years. We will give you everybody you need, trust, and believe out of our four institutions." And our system – oh, God. Our system, we have everything.

Kelliann Beavers [24:15]

Mm-hmm.

Laura Perkins [24:17]

"You don't have to go and negotiate with this president or negotiate it with this institution. You just negotiate it with NSHE," and we're like "Okay."

Kelliann Beavers [24:21]

Mm-hmm.

Laura Perkins [24:23]

We have a research institute, a world-renowned research institute. Our one university – the one state university and the four community colleges. We have everything you need. We can cater – I was joking with somebody that "Six months later, if you tell us what you need, six months later, we can have a program up and running, or less. So if you say, 'Hey, we need somebody that knows how to look for a widget,' we can have a widget program because we're that flexible."

Kelliann Beavers [24:57]

Yeah. So there could be a connection between economic development and economic development efforts, and communication with you all, which I'm sure there is, to some extent. But a direct communication saying "This is what we foresee the potential of needing if we were to bring on X, Y, Z employer.

Laura Perkins [25:10]

Right.

Kelliann Beavers [25:11]

That's really interesting.

Laura Perkins [25:13]

And then COVID brings me back to medical. That's my heart, right there. Medical – North Las Vegas only has one hospital, and for our population, we should have about four. I keep relating this to North Las Vegas because they have the most potential for growth.

Kelliann Beavers [25:25]

Yeah, please relate it to it. And also, it is a really informative case study of a place that is extraordinary, in terms of ways they go about things, and also circumstantial – history, and where they are now, and where they were. Speak all about North Las Vegas all day long; because I'm interested, specifically, to learn about it, and you have a lot of insight and nuanced knowledge. So, anyway-

Laura Perkins [25:49]

Well, thank you. It's good that they can hear, though. (laughter) We do tourism like nobody else in the world. We are number one. The Bishop Paiutes they want to come here and learn how to do their gaming better, and they have casinos all across the country.

Kelliann Beavers [26:09]

Mm-hmm.

Laura Perkins [26:12]

They come here. They come to Vegas. They didn't go to Dartmouth. They didn't go to Yale. They came to UNLV because we do that very well – hospitality. So let's use that to our advantage. I was speaking earlier; we only do kidney transplants here.

Kelliann Beavers [26:28]

Mm-hmm.

Laura Perkins [26:31]

And I asked the transport people – and then we have two med schools, which is unheard of for a state of our size to have two med schools. Unheard of. But we only do kidney transplants. We could be the tourism destination for other types of transplants. When I say that, like corneal transplants, for instance, our – I know this sounds kind of gross – but our corneas go all across the country.

Kelliann Beavers [26:54]

Mm-hmm.

Laura Perkins [26:55]

And we could only go to certain places because they have to be – they're only viable for so long. So if we start in Las Vegas, they can't go – you can't fly them to New York because it takes too long.

Kelliann Beavers [27:06]

Uh-huh.

Laura Perkins [27:07]

So they have to be used in a certain geographical area that can be reached in the timeframe. So if we did that – North Las Vegas, we have the VA, and we have all that vacant land right around the VA. We can have one of the top medical tourism sites in the world because everybody wants to come to Vegas. There's no denying – nobody really wants to go to Costa Rica. I mean they do, but who wouldn't? Every place I've traveled, if they say, "Where are you from?" I say, "Las Vegas," and they're like "Oh, Las Vegas."

Carmen Solano-Patricio [27:38]

Yeah.

Laura Perkins [27:40]

They've never been anyplace – well, Thailand – but I've never been anyplace where they didn't know somebody, some thing, or someone, who – they were going, they wanted to go, or it was on their bucket list. So everybody wants to come to Vegas. Imagine if we could do liver transplants.

Kelliann Beavers [27:55]

Mm-hmm.

Laura Perkins [27:57]

That would open up the doors for – people have to stay here until the organ is available.

Kelliann Beavers [27:59]

Mm-hmm.

Laura Perkins [28:03]

They have to be within the same proximity. So gosh, that's an untapped resource, and I don't know why we're thinking "Oh, well, the medical district downtown is going to be enough."

Carmen Solano-Patricio [28:16]

Mm-hmm.

Laura Perkins [28:17]

It's landlocked – where can they go? Or one on Tenaye it's, again, landlocked. Where can they go?

Kelliann Beavers [28:23]

So facilities need to be elsewhere in relationship to it. I see what you're saying, and that's very interesting about the whole transplant relationship to geography.

Laura Perkins [28:34]

There is a town called Teeth Town. It's right on the other side of the border, and that's all they do.

That's all they do. It's like dentist, place to eat, place to stay, place to eat, and dentist. I mean, they're next door to each other.

Kelliann Beavers [28:51]

Mm-hmm.

Laura Perkins [28:52]

And you walk down the street, and you pick a dentist. And usually, they're comparable, I mean, for the expensive dental work. They're comparable in their qualifications to any dentist in the U.S., and they're about 1/3 of the cost.

Kelliann Beavers [29:04]

Mm-hmm.

Laura Perkins [29:06]

But that town is flourishing because everybody flies down there, they stay, and they make a vacation out of it because you can't do implants overnight. So they make a little vacation out of it, and that town is flourishing. Why can't we have our own transplant town, you know? What's wrong with us? Why don't we think that far in advance?

Carmen Solano-Patricio [29:25]

I'm so glad you said it. I've been saying it forever, to anyone who would listen, that we already have the tourism infrastructure. Why not specialize – increase our medical capacity and become a medical tourism destination? Thank you.

Laura Perkins [29:40]

Yeah, and transplants are the perfect way to do that because we're very good at kidney transplants; very, very, very good. But to go to the liver, which you know, is just around the body, a little bit, to go to the liver, it's a whole different ballgame. It puts you on a whole different level because of the aftercare. So it's like (huffs). And we have a VA – every medical school that has a VA associated with it – that's a federal problem, and we need more residencies because we need more doctors. Because we need doctors to stay here and treat people here. That's a federal thing. They have to allow more residencies.

Kelliann Beavers [30:15]

Oh, but do we have to ask for it, or it's more complicated than that?

Laura Perkins [30:22]

I've been trying to get to the bottom of it. (laughter)

Kelliann Beavers [30:26]

We'll work on it, too.

Laura Perkins [30:25]

I'm like "Just ask your federal delegation," and they're like "Okay." But it's a finite number that they finance.

Kelliann Beavers [30:31]

Mmm. Oh, in totality.

Laura Perkins [30:36]

In totality. And it hasn't changed, I believe, in like 20 years.

Kelliann Beavers [30:38]

Mm-hmm.

Laura Perkins [30:40]

And they did – yeah, it's been a while. I can't remember the exact date, but they haven't upped the number of residencies in a while – federally funded residencies. We could fund our own residencies, but once again, that would require forward thinking, and thinking about the future.

Kelliann Beavers [30:56]

Mm-hmm.

Laura Perkins [30:57]

Right now, we're sending our veterinary tech people to Salt Lake because we don't have a veterinary doctor – a Doctor of Veterinary Medicine program.

Kelliann Beavers [31:07]

Mm-hmm.

Carmen Solano-Patricio [31:09]

Hmm.

Kelliann Beavers [31:12]

So it's like "There they go."

Laura Perkins [31:14]

"There they go." And the deal is if we pay for their – we pay the difference; they pay the in-state portion of the tuition where – and Nevada picks up the out-of-state portion.

Kelliann Beavers [31:26]

Mm-hmm.

Laura Perkins [31:27]

Like the state does. And they have to do one from one. So if they get one year of funding, they have to work one year in Nevada. It's an okay process, but why are we sending people to another state?

Carmen Solano-Patricio [31:43]

Yeah. [overtalking 31:44]

Kelliann Beavers [31:45]

It must be complicated for them.

Laura Perkins [31:46]

It is, right?

Kelliann Beavers [31:47]

Yeah.

Laura Perkins [31:49]

And the residencies – we can get more residencies, but we have to really push our federal delegation to give them to us.

Carmen Solano-Patricio [31:58]

Okay.

Laura Perkins [31:58]

I mean we're on the fast-growing – when you look at a map and see who's going where, Nevada's always in the red. More people are coming to Nevada than any other – Nevada, Texas, and I can't remember the other state.

Carmen Solano-Patricio [32:12]

Yeah. So how, at the same time, are we also experiencing a brain-drain, that we're sort of contributing to, right, by not preparing well ahead in advance?

Laura Perkins [32:21]

Yep.

Carmen Solano-Patricio [32:22]

To the same brain drain that is affecting us negatively? But at the same time, we're experiencing a population increase.

Laura Perkins [32:28]

It doesn't make sense, right?

Carmen Solano-Patricio [32:29]

No.

Laura Perkins [32:30]

It's like counter – it doesn't make sense. Well, that brings me back to the Chancellor surge.
(laughs)

Kelliann Beavers [32:35]

Yeah.

Laura Perkins [32:36]

Dynamic man. I mean his resume was quite impressive. He was the CEO of Coca-Cola. And he wanted to come and run NSHE, and I'm like "Oh, my God, YES! PLEASE!"

Kelliann Beavers [32:47]

Right.

Laura Perkins [32:51]

The things that you learn in the corporate world are – the skills transfer, as a matter of fact, more so. Because in the corporate world, you're not going to tolerate a certain level of complacency.

Kelliann Beavers [33:03]

Mm-hmm.

Laura Perkins [33:05]

You can't. You have to be reinventing yourself in order to stay at the top of the market. So – and we said, no. We didn't want that in Nevada.

Kelliann Beavers [33:14]

Mm-hmm.

Laura Perkins [33:15]

So the "brain drain" – I don't know if it's a brain drain or if it's the network. And I don't want to use those terms, but the "network."

Kelliann Beavers [33:21]

Mm-hmm.

Laura Perkins [33:24]

If we don't want people that are going to bring fresh, new ideas to us. And I always tell people "Never say, 'Back where I was from.' Please don't say that because that's one nail in your coffin in Nevada. We don't like that when you say, 'Well, back where I was from, we did it like this.'" Because that's why we have some of the pollen problems that we have in our valleys – because somebody came here and said, "Well, back where I was from, we had olive trees."

Kelliann Beavers [33:51]

Mm-hmm. (laughter)

Laura Perkins [33:52]

Yeah, okay. "That's great, but this is a desert. Olive trees will not do well here." Actually, they do, but olive trees – we're in the valley. Everything just kind of circulates and stirs like in a bowl. We don't have the wide, open – where the pollen goes, no, it just stays right here, and keeps stacking up.

Kelliann Beavers [34:07]

Mm-hmm.

Laura Perkins [34:12]

And so we don't want to hear that. However, if you can tell me best practices, metrics, or how this worked in this particular community, I will listen to that. I will listen to that 100%, but don't ever say, "Back where I was from." And I think that's our problem – we don't want that challenge because we want to keep doing things the way we've always done them. People are scared of change.

Carmen Solano-Patricio [34:31]

Yeah. As analysts, we always look to other places for lessons learned, right? So I have a specific question for you about that. We've been talking about economic development and workforce development, and how to attract new business into Nevada. But speaking specifically on climate issues and housing issues, how do you propose that we prepare for such an influx?

Laura Perkins [34:59]

Mixed-use is my favorite because we started talking mixed-use, gosh, back in 19 – in 2000, so 22 years ago. And do you see much mixed-use around here? No. Because we-

Kelliann Beavers [35:12]

And by that, do you mean making the land itself, that it is allowable to do a range of uses? Or do you mean a development in which there's a mix of uses on the property?

Laura Perkins [35:24]

Kind of both. But I would think a range of uses within inside a particular – I think that would – that might ease us in.

Kelliann Beavers [35:31]

Mm-hmm.

Laura Perkins [35:33]

Because we don't build like that. We've always had lots of land, and we love the ranch estates. We love to build our houses all spread out. We love the big backyards. But there's – I'm getting tongue-tied because I get so excited. Chicago, for instance, I remember going into one of the high rises – the first floor was a Whole Foods.

Kelliann Beavers [35:53]

Mm-hmm.

Laura Perkins [35:54]

And then the second, third, fourth, fifth – because it was like 50 floors – but they were doctor's offices, nurses, and things that you – barber shops and nail salons. Things that the residents would need.

Kelliann Beavers [36:10]

Mm-hmm.

Laura Perkins [36:12]

So technically, you never had to leave your building.

Kelliann Beavers [36:14]

Mm-hmm.

Laura Perkins [36:16]

And especially if you're working from home, everything was there, you know? You could go down and get your nails done, and then you can do some shopping every day. And it worked, and I think that would work here. And we could even do it better because we're so good at hospitality. We can do it even better.

Kelliann Beavers [36:30]

Mm-hmm.

Laura Perkins [36:32]

One example I saw that I was really impressed with, is that instead of having – because parking is a problem at UNLV. One of the top problems on the campus is parking. Imagine if you had a building, where, first of all, the first level was the grocery store, your basic needs, and the second one was the niche-y one – the spa and all those types of – doctors and things that you need, and then everything else was residential. Well, in one example, they had – in the basement, you could rent the car – there were cars just available in the basement, and if you were a resident, you would just say, "Hey, I'm going to need a car on this day," and you would-

Kelliann Beavers [37:11]

Oh, like "Car to Go" or whatever those businesses [overtalking 37:14]

Laura Perkins [37:14]

But it was included in your rent, and I'm like, that's brilliant.

Kelliann Beavers [37:20]

Mm-hmm.

Laura Perkins [37:22]

So not only are we not creating food deserts and service deserts, we're actually creating – making it help – better for the environment. Because Nevada – southern Nevada especially, you need a car. I'm sorry. We did spot developing; we did not see the future; we did spot developing, and spot developing, you can't – in LA, an "L" Bus – a bus runs in a square.

Kelliann Beavers [37:49]

Mm-hmm.

Laura Perkins [37:50]

We can't do that here. It just doesn't work because there was Henderson; there was North Las Vegas, and there was Vegas. All of them are very far apart.

Carmen Solano-Patricio [37:58]
Mm-hmm.

Laura Perkins [37:59]
A nightmare for getting electricity. Nightmare for getting other – gas and cable-

Carmen Solano-Patricio [38:03]
Broadband.

Laura Perkins [38:04]
Yeah, and broadband.

Carmen Solano-Patricio [38:05]
Yeah.

Laura Perkins [38:05]
And so, a nightmare. But that's who we are, folks, and let's embrace it, and let's stop saying that we need public transportation. Because there's no way a rail system will ever work in this valley.

Kelliann Beavers [38:15]
Mm-hmm.

Laura Perkins [38:16]
Look at the rail system on the Strip. Nobody uses it. And that was the perfect – I thought the Strip would work because that's where a lot of our employees are, but it doesn't. So having a building that thought that far in advance. And then we have urban, like, plants. Urban-growing garden.

Kelliann Beavers [38:35]
Oh, vertical farming-type stuff and urban agriculture?

Laura Perkins [38:40]
Yeah, we could have that in that same building. We could have all of that, and it's brilliant. And with the plants – I don't like gardens because I live in a *desert*. (laughs)

Kelliann Beavers [38:52]
You're saying, don't create a need for water and a bunch of plants that are not appropriate for the climate, yeah.

Laura Perkins [38:59]
Exactly. Oh, thank you. Very much – better said. Much better said.

Kelliann Beavers [39:03]
Because she said she didn't like gardens! (laughter)

Laura Perkins [39:05]
Much better said, much better said.

Kelliann Beavers [39:07]
I knew what you meant.

Laura Perkins [39:09]
I don't like outdoor – it doesn't make sense in our valley.

Kelliann Beavers [39:10]
Yeah.

Laura Perkins [39:14]
I mean sunflowers don't even do well here.

Kelliann Beavers [39:15]
Mm-hmm.

Laura Perkins [39:18]
And they require lots of water. Why are we growing watermelon, for God's sake – and not in a hydroponic environment?

Carmen Solano-Patricio [39:23]
Yeah, I was going to say. We might do better with hydroponics. So do you think that Las Vegas being the Las Vegas Metro of Southern Nevada – desert ranch-style – we might ease in better to mixed-use by promoting mixed density?

Laura Perkins [39:40]
(whispers) Mixed density-

Carmen Solano-Patricio [39:42]
So it kind of prevents sprawl, right? Because you're saying that this is the ideal model, like what Chicago did.

Laura Perkins [39:47]
Right.

Carmen Solano-Patricio [39:49]
Great. But we have zoning regulations that say you can only do single-family here, and you can only do this there, right?

Laura Perkins [39:56]
Well, technically, it is single-family.

Carmen Solano-Patricio [39:57]
Hmm.

Laura Perkins [39:58]

Technically – it is single-family – because you’re not doing – in those buildings – it’s a 3,500-square-foot apartment, I mean, and you’re buying it.

Carmen Solano-Patricio [40:09]

Mm-hmm.

Laura Perkins [40:10]

Or you’re renting it. But it’s 3,500 square feet – it’s not the apartment that we, in Nevada, picture. It’s not that. It’s a house, you know?

Kelliann Beavers [40:20]

Maybe defining some new ways of defining the property uses themselves, yeah.

Laura Perkins [40:22]

Yes. So yeah.

Carmen Solano-Patricio [40:27]

So I’m also hearing "mixed-income" because you just said, "Buy and rent."

Laura Perkins [40:29]

Most definitely.

Carmen Solano-Patricio [40:31]

So mixed-use, mixed-density, and mixed-income.

Laura Perkins [40:32]

Yeah, most definitely. I guess it would have to be mixed-density – it’d have to be multifamily, I guess.

Carmen Solano-Patricio [40:40]

Mm-hmm.

Laura Perkins [40:41]

But not the traditional multifamily.

Carmen Solano-Patricio [40:42]

Yeah.

Laura Perkins [40:43]

Please don’t build an apartment building, with a little green spot in the middle, and call it a day. Let’s not do that. And no, don’t build this community garden, that is outside, that requires lots of water. That’s not sustainable. It’s not smart. It’s just not. But I don’t know – people don’t like change, and I don’t know why. Community garden – yay – everybody can just grow their own vegetables – no – that’s not how this works.

Kelliann Beavers [41:17]

Yeah, and it would be interesting to think strategically about which parts of the valley would be more open to, or appropriate for the kinds of development that you're describing. Because you could see how there would be a certain resistance to it in certain parts of the valley. But there's probably pockets where it would work, or could work, that people might be excited about it.

Laura Perkins [41:38]

I think it's all about the promotion. Nobody likes apartments. (laughs)

Kelliann Beavers [41:45]

Mm-hmm, yeah.

Laura Perkins [41:46]

When you say, "I'm going to put an apartment in your backyard," they're like "Oh, no," and people come out in droves. "No apartments, no apartments."

Kelliann Beavers [41:50]

Right.

Laura Perkins [41:51]

But they don't remember that when they first were in there, they needed an apartment. And now, apartments are so much more necessary because of the cost of housing.

Carmen Solano-Patricio [41:58]

Mm-hmm.

Laura Perkins [41:59]

Most people can't afford a house. But if we did that mixed-use thing, everybody could have a piece of the pie.

Kelliann Beavers [42:05]

Mm-hmm.

Laura Perkins [42:07]

It would definitely be a win-win situation.

Carmen Solano-Patricio [42:08]

It would be normalized, right?

Laura Perkins [42:10]

Yeah.

Carmen Solano-Patricio [42:13]

Thank you for addressing the housing crisis.

Kelliann Beavers [42:15]

Yeah. And if there's any other questions that you have, based on what you all learned together, with respect to housing, that you want to get at during this conversation, you're welcome to bring up anything.

Laura Perkins [42:22]

Did we cover all of the questions though? Because I feel like if we don't cover them – okay.

Kelliann Beavers [42:29]

We have talked about everything here, other than the last question. Which is why I wanted to give you a chance if there was anything else you wanted to get to.

Carmen Solano-Patricio [42:36]

No – you've pretty much given me your recommendations around housing, and they've been in line with what I've been thinking. But I'm curious to hear anything that you might have to say, that you think hasn't been said enough, or, you know? We're in the perfect place to make it happen.

Laura Perkins [42:51]

Really.

Kelliann Beavers [42:54]

Yeah, to learn from you.

Laura Perkins [42:53]

Oh, I love you, guys. (laughter)

Carmen Solano-Patricio [42:56]

We love you too.

Laura Perkins [42:57]

I don't – you know, somebody's going to have to be the first one to do it. And when it proves profitable, which – Winslow Park would probably be perfect – because if they mitigate the ground underneath – the problem with Winslow Park was that they drained the water table, and then they put houses on top – well, the houses were there, they drained the water table, and so the houses started to sink. Perfect swatch of land; however, you can't do the high-rises there because it's on one of the landing strips for the North Las Vegas Airport.

Kelliann Beavers [43:32]

It couldn't be tall.

Laura Perkins [43:34]

Yeah, it couldn't be very tall. I think five stories is the max at that point. And then you have to worry about [N-43:40], their flight path. So I was thinking it would have to be somewhere like the center – downtown, and there's a good swatch of property in downtown North Las Vegas.

Kelliann Beavers [43:51]

Mm-hmm.

Laura Perkins [43:54]

And that would be perfect.

Kelliann Beavers [43:55]

Mm-hmm.

Laura Perkins [43:56]

Because I could see a 10-foot building-

Carmen Solano-Patricio [44:01]

So it would have to be master planned?

Laura Perkins [44:02]

No. It would be more of – the word eludes me – it's an agreement between the city and the developer.

Carmen Solano-Patricio [44:11]

Okay.

Laura Perkins [44:12]

They have to paint the picture exactly the way it's going to look, and that's what that property would be. Because we know what happens with mixed-use. Mixed-use was supposed to be off of 5th Street, between Centennial and 215. That was supposed to be all mixed-use.

Carmen Solano-Patricio [44:26]

Mm-hmm.

Laura Perkins [44:28]

But what happened was, people were like "Well, we just want to build single-family now, and we'll get the mixed-use later."

Carmen Solano-Patricio [44:33]

Mmm.

Kelliann Beavers [44:35]

"We'll start with this use."

Laura Perkins [44:38]

And, of course, it doesn't happen. We have a lot of – well, I see that acreage out way north.

Carmen Solano-Patricio [44:44]

So this is a good example of how spot development could be used for the better.

Laura Perkins [44:50]

Yeah, oh, God, yeah.

Carmen Solano-Patricio [44:52]

Okay.

Laura Perkins [44:53]

Some of the things that are failing right now – we're always talking about – what do they call it when – infill – infill projects.

Carmen Solano-Patricio [45:00]

Infill development.

Laura Perkins [45:02]

Yeah. This would be a great infill project.

Kelliann Beavers [45:03]

Mm-hmm.

Carmen Solano-Patricio [45:05]

Okay.

Laura Perkins [45:06]

I mean if you look at the map, there's like "Well, we could put it here. We could put it here." (laughs) Because there are so many pockets of just – we call it "desert," but most people call it vacant land. We just call it "the desert."

Carmen Solano-Patricio [45:15]

Mm-hmm.

Kelliann Beavers [45:19]

I think your planning department, too, at least, based on the little that I know about it; it seems to me like, as compared to some of the ways that other planning departments work in other municipalities throughout the valley. It seems like there's more of a free-thinking, innovative attitude in terms of North Las Vegas, in terms of a willingness to reduce red tape and make things happen. Do you think that's true, or is that something that I-

Laura Perkins [45:50]

Yes. I think we did a really good job of reducing red tape. That was one of the things that when I was on that, that was one of the things we were working on. The start of the big, giant warehouses – the "big box" warehouse places.

Kelliann Beavers [46:03]

Mm-hmm.

Laura Perkins [46:05]

I actually voted for that, and we changed ordinances to allow those to happen. And now, we're like the "Warehouse King of the World." So that's – yes. We do think like that. But I think we have to have elected leaders that steer that ship.

Kelliann Beavers [46:22]

Sure.

Laura Perkins [46:23]

That has those ideas like "No, we're not going to allow you to not do the landscaping," for example, which is another pet peeve of mine. Because I noticed, when I was driving through different cities – I travel a lot – (laughs) I see different cities, and then things just click. I was driving in Southern California, and I was driving down the street, and you didn't even have to tell me that I changed cities; because the city I was in, Rancho Cucamonga, really wide landscaping, beautiful signs – it had the post that said, "Rancho Cucamonga" in gold letters. And I'm like "Oh, wow, this is a nice area."

So I keep driving – I'm not familiar with the area, so I'm just driving, and I'm looking for someplace like a grocery store. So I keep driving and I keep driving, and then I notice that the landscaping, instead of it being 30 feet, now it's like 20 feet. I'm like "Oh, okay." Then it was 10 feet, and I'm like "Hmm." And then it was back-of-curb to a parking lot – that's when the liquor store started, the gun stores, and the quick payday loan places. And so I'm like "I'm not in Rancho Cucamonga anymore."

Kelliann Beavers [47:33]

Yeah.

Laura Perkins [47:35]

And so those types of things also attract a different type of resident.

Carmen Solano-Patricio [47:39]

Yeah, and investor, right? The income inequality is stark.

Laura Perkins [47:42]

Yeah.

Carmen Solano-Patricio [47:43]

We have the same problem here. I just have one final question for you, which is more specific, and this is from my own research, to kind of guide where I'm going. Is the Apex – massive land – the resource that we think it is, in that, we could keep sourcing building out into Apex, or is that kind of a stopping line?

Laura Perkins [48:05]

Well, they just got water out there, so that's good.

Carmen Solano-Patricio [48:07]
Okay. That's helpful; I didn't know that.

Laura Perkins [48:13]
Yeah. But Apex has its ups and downs. It was visioned to be like – you're too young to remember [48:24] (laughter) Industrial stuff that should not be next to residential, or anywhere near residential.

Carmen Solano-Patricio [48:29]
Right, that's why I asked the question.

Laura Perkins [48:31]
I think that is a good place to go, but then we have to be conscious of Nellas.

Carmen Solano-Patricio [48:37]
Mm-hmm.

Laura Perkins [48:38]
Because Nellas brings a lot of dollars, not only to Southern Nevada but to the whole, entire state.

Carmen Solano-Patricio [48:42]
Right.

Laura Perkins [48:43]
So we have to be very conscious of Nellas and what we're putting out there. And our elected leaders have to have that vision and be out there recruiting people to – we had the shrimp farm out there for a while, but there was no power.

Carmen Solano-Patricio [48:58]
Okay.

Laura Perkins [49:00]
But now there is a conduit to get power and water out there. So I think that might be good – but it would be things that people don't want.

Carmen Solano-Patricio [49:11]
So that would have to be master-planned.

Laura Perkins [49:11]
Yes. Oh, my God, yeah.

Carmen Solano-Patricio [49:14]
Yeah, okay.

Laura Perkins [49:15]

You can't put houses over there, no. Because that ruins the whole – if you put one house there, it's gone. You can't do it anymore.

Carmen Solano-Patricio [49:21]

That's a dangerous precedent.

Laura Perkins [49:22]

Right?

Carmen Solano-Patricio [49:23]

Thank you, Regent. Thank you so much. This has been really helpful.

Laura Perkins [49:26]

Well, thank you. Yay, Team. Thank you. [overtalking 49:27]

Kelliann Beavers [49:28]

I have one last question; are you hopeful, and if yes, what are you hopeful for?

Laura Perkins [49:32]

Yes, I'm hopeful because I see – plus I see so many possibilities that were actually developed through COVID. I mean because of COVID, a lot of these ideas – and I hope we don't lose them. That's the danger that – because we're like a rubber band, we stretch so far, and then we try to go back to where we were. As long as that rubber band doesn't stretch – decrease in size, there are so many things that we were made aware of, and like you said, "stark," we were made aware of them, and they were front-page, and they were in our faces, and we could not deny them.

Kelliann Beavers [50:01]

Mm-hmm.

Laura Perkins [50:02]

If we forget those lessons, especially here in Southern Nevada, we're going to do the same thing, and we're going to get the same results. I'm expecting another type of economic upheaval in about eight to ten years. So if we don't start now, in 8-10 years, we're going to be saying, "Oh, we need to diversify."

Kelliann Beavers [50:23]

Yeah.

Laura Perkins [50:24]

And I'm sick of hearing that. We needed to diversify yesterday. Not tomorrow, but it has to start now. And I know, I don't want to slam our legislatures. I really don't because I know they have a tough job and tough decisions.

Kelliann Beavers [50:34]

Very hard.

Laura Perkins [50:36]

Yeah. But they're sweating the small stuff. They're trying to get into city government in trying to tell cities what to do. As opposed to-

Carmen Solano-Patricio [50:47]

Helping cities do.

Laura Perkins [50:48]

Helping cities do what we want them to do, or helping – being that vision that says, "Hey, you need this to do this. Let's do that."

Carmen Solano-Patricio [50:57]

Yeah.

Laura Perkins [51:00]

So yeah, I'm hopeful. I'm hopeful.

Kelliann Beavers [51:01]

Thanks for saying that last bit. We've had a lot of people who have mentioned, similarly to you, that this is a moment in which they really are worried that we may forget all of the things that we learned or return back to the way things were. And one thing that we've talked about, although we haven't made a clear map for it yet, is potentially, in the coming year, creating some opportunities to bring people together to talk about that – people that we interviewed, to say, "Hey, you all said that you hoped that we don't forget, and we don't go back to the way things are." And again, we'd have to clarify, sort of, exactly what the conversation would look like.

Laura Perkins [51:33]

Sounds good.

Kelliann Beavers [51:35]

But I think making some space for things like that could be impactful, and I really appreciate everything that you shared. Thank you so much for your time.

Laura Perkins [51:40]

Thank you. And Sondra Cosgrove said to tell you all "Hi." I was on the phone with her for hours this morning.

Carmen Solano-Patricio [51:48]

Yeah, she just posted this morning "I have some really good news about youth-

Laura Perkins [51:53]

Youth programs.

End of Audio [51:54]