

An Oral History of Lisa Jaramillo

4th Street | Prater Way History Project

Interviewed: March 31, 2012

Published: 2014

Interviewer: Amanda Roberts

Born into a military family, Lisa Jaramillo moved to Reno upon her father's retirement in 1979. She is co-owner, with her daughter, Addie Jaramillo, of the Pet Play House, which offers day care and overnight boarding for dogs at 2403 East Fourth Street.

The 4th Street | Prater Way History Project is a collaborative community history project launched by the Regional Transportation Commission of Washoe County in 2011. The project's website, with full transcripts, photographs, and other historical material about the 4th Street | Prater Way corridor through Reno and Sparks, Nevada, may be found at <http://4thprater.onlinenevada.org/>.

This interview may be downloaded and/or printed for personal reference and educational use, but not republished or sold. Citations should include the name of the person or people interviewed, the date of publication, and the fact that the work was produced for the Regional Transportation Commission of Washoe County as part of the 4th Street | Prater Way History Project. All transcripts in this collection as well as interview recordings are available in the Special Collections Department, University of Nevada, Reno Libraries. Requests for permission to use transcripts or recordings for commercial purposes should be directed to the Special Collections Department, University of Nevada, Reno Libraries, (775) 682-5665, specoll@unr.edu.

Copyright 2014

Regional Transportation Commission of Washoe County

<http://www.rtcwashoe.com/>

All rights reserved. Published 2014.

LISA JARAMILLO

Interviewed on March 31, 2012

Amanda Roberts, Interviewer

Born into a military family, Lisa Jaramillo moved to Reno upon her father's retirement in 1979. She is co-owner, with her daughter, Addie Jaramillo, of the Pet Play House, which offers day care and overnight boarding for dogs at 2403 East Fourth Street.

Roberts: I'm here with Lisa Jaramillo and we're here at her business, the Pet Play House, at 2403 East Fourth Street in Reno, Nevada. The date is March 31, 2012. Let's go ahead and get a little information about you. Could you tell me where you were born?

Jaramillo: I was born on June 11th of 1963.

Roberts: Where were you born?

Jaramillo: I was born at Homestead Air Force Base in Florida—near Miami. A hurricane took it out and it's no longer there.

Roberts: Did that have anything to do with your deciding to relocate?

Jaramillo: No, no. My dad was in the military and we traveled a lot. We were in Florida for three years and that's where I was born. My brother was born in Arizona and my sister is from Sacramento, or Mather Air Force Base, which I think is also no longer there. My mother is originally from [unclear] area, the [unclear] family. I think my dad was stationed in Fallon at that time, and they met here in Reno and then they got married. They began traveling and we've lived in quite a few places.

Roberts: Fallon's the Top Gun academy, right?

Jaramillo: Yes. My father was in electronics and he built the flight simulators that top pilots have to fly. He did quite a few exciting things, was out of town a lot throughout our childhood on military missions and things like that. He went to Nagasaki and Hiroshima—he was over there for that, testing and that kind of stuff.

Roberts: That's kind of intense.

Jaramillo: It was, which we all attribute to his early demise. He died of cancer. They worked with a lot of the radiation from that testing.

Roberts: I'm sorry. That's really unfortunate.

Jaramillo: Unfortunately, our military people a lot of times are used experimentally, and they had radiation detectors on them that they could feel the heat of the radiation from the explosions, and the detectors never went off. So they were exposed to a lot that wasn't

reported.

Roberts: Goodness, that had to have been hard on your dad.

Jaramillo: Well, I wasn't even born yet. That's why we came later on in his life—they had to wait until they were sure that they didn't have any of these problems from all the radiation before they could start having children, so my parents were very old when they had children. More information than you wanted, but, yeah, there's a story there.

Roberts: It's unfortunate the way your father was treated, but I think we have a lot of that here in Nevada, so it's not unheard of.

Jaramillo: It's very true.

Roberts: So you lived in quite a few places growing up, then.

Jaramillo: Well, yeah, we did. I was obviously born in Florida and then moved to Sacramento, Mather Air Force Base. We lived there for six years and then went overseas to Germany, were there for three or four years, and then moved to New Mexico. We lived in Clovis for a few years and then my father retired, and because my mother is from here, they decided to move here after retirement, and that's how we came back to Reno. That was in 1979.

Roberts: How old were you then?

Jaramillo: I was thirteen, I think. I was a freshman in high school, so however old that is.

Roberts: So you lived in Germany. Did you enjoy that? Did you speak German?

Jaramillo: Not a lot. My sister did a lot of the exchange student programs over there. She spoke a lot more German than we did, but we did live in the towns. We lived off base for several years and then moved on base later on, but we lived in the community and it was a lot of fun.

Roberts: And you have one sister?

Jaramillo: One sister and one brother. I'm the youngest.

Roberts: What do you remember about coming to Reno in '79?

Jaramillo: Well, it was interesting. It was very different than it is now. My mother, having been from [unclear] Gardnerville and Reno and having not been here for thirteen years, was very surprised. When we came into town, we were looking for a hotel to stay in and we went to the Sutro Motel, which is very different than it was back in the day when my mom lived in Reno. It used to be a nice hotel. We came in in the middle of the night, and it was dark, and so in the morning when we woke up and looked out the

window, we decided that we were going to a different hotel. [laughs]

Fourth Street, the way my mother remembers it, was very different from when she was a child, and it's also very different now. In the years when we first moved here, we lived over on East Eighth Street in Sparks. That's where we got our first house, and Prater Way at that time ended pretty much right there. There were none of those shopping centers or anything at that end of town, so it's very different, quite a lot bigger than it used to be.

Roberts: What do you think about the changes Reno has gone through?

Jaramillo: I think it's great. I think Reno is still a small town. Everybody knows everybody here and that's kind of nice. It's still nice that anywhere you go in Reno you can be there in five or ten minutes. A lot of the people who move here from California are used to the long commutes to work, and a lot of people are now moving out into the Spanish Springs areas and farther out of town, but we currently live in a house in downtown Reno, on South Arlington. It's nice just to be able to get to places quickly where you don't have a huge commute.

Roberts: I love the architecture over there.

Jaramillo: Yeah, Old Southwest is very nice. We love that area. We also own my daughter's house. She lives next door to us. We bought that house as soon as it came up for sale and it has a lot of history. It was one of the original houses, 1919. We see pictures of our house from years and years ago. By the Mapes Mansion, that's where we live, right there on the corner of Mt. Rose and Arlington. We see pictures of my daughter's house when it was the only house there and then we see our house when it came into existence. So it's an interesting old neighborhood.

Roberts: So your daughter lives next door to you. And you also co-own this business together, correct?

Jaramillo: Yes, that's correct.

Roberts: You guys must have a very close-knit family.

Jaramillo: Yes, we do. She's an only child and so she grew up with us, so to speak.

Roberts: Let's talk a little bit about your business here, the Pet Play House. What sparked your interest in starting a business?

Jaramillo: Well, my husband and I have been doing a lot of investing in the area. We have a lot of real estate. We have rental property, and he, just a year before we started this, or maybe it was two years, had purchased his business, which is Casazza Oil Company, and so we're always looking for things to do. At the time, we had a dog. She just died two weeks ago, so it's kind of a difficult thing—

Roberts: Oh, gosh. I'm so sorry.

Jaramillo: —but she's the reason why we started this business. She was a crazy old dog. She was a puppy, and we needed daycare. She was crazy. She was destroying things in the house and a maniac. My friend, who took her dog to another daycare, she said, "This is what you need to do because this will save your marriage." [laughs]

We went to that daycare, and I just felt like I couldn't leave my child there because it was a warehouse and it was very smelly. So then I thought, I could do this and I could do this way better.

So my sister and I, we originally were looking around to do this business together, and we found the house next door, which is where we started, at 2401, and set it up like a child daycare with the backyard and play toys and the same kind of situation as that.

Then after ten years—we outgrew it way before then—but eventually, in ten years we were able to build this building by the property and build it.

Roberts: This is a huge, huge building, quite a big step up from the house next door.

Jaramillo: It is. We more than tripled our capacity, and offer a lot more services than we used to offer. There was only one other daycare when we started, and then when we started, a couple more cropped up, but we're the only daycare that had an outside area so the doggies could play inside and outside. The rest were warehouses that were converted, so the doggies were stuck inside all day, and it was quite smelly in the other places.

So in ours, our doggies were encouraged to go outside, and people really liked that their doggies had a natural environment—just like at home, we enforce the potty training. You go outside. You don't have to go on the concrete floor, so that was our huge draw. People really liked that aspect of it, so we became popular immediately.

A lot of the other daycares went out of business in that timeframe just because they were offering the same thing. They weren't going into the new renovations and the things that their customers wanted. That's why we chose the design that we had.

The reason we chose Fourth Street was because it was originally zoned industrial and that's what it has to be for a kennel. You have to be zoned industrial. So it just happened that that was the perfect location because it was a cute little house and served our purpose. It has a full basement over there, so there was quite a bit of room for the amount of dogs we thought we were going to get, which expanded way beyond the walls of the house.

Then this property here was for sale. My husband knows a lot of people in the community because he does fuel where he's at, so he sees a lot of the construction companies, and he knew Leland Hernandez, who owned this property, and we made an offer on it and purchased it.

That's right when a lot of the rezoning was going on with the City of Reno trying to change this over to mixed-use, which is commercial, industrial, and residential, which works for our purposes because we're grandfathered in because of the house for that property over there.

This property, because we built on it, had to conform to the new zoning which is mixed-use, which was very disappointing because when we purchased the property we had a plan and a goal, and the city was having meetings about that and they told us that if

you already own the property, you wouldn't be affected by the new zoning. Unfortunately, the truth of the story was if you owned the property but it was undeveloped, you would be subject to the new zoning as soon as you tried to develop it.

Roberts: Okay, so this was a vacant lot?

Jaramillo: It was. It was abandoned—we have pictures of how horrible it was. There were trailers, old abandoned trailers. There was actually a man murdered in one of the trailers.

Roberts: My goodness.

Jaramillo: Yeah, he was from the trailer park. Actually, people from the trailer park behind us murdered him. He was a worker, a vagrant worker for the Halfway Club next door, and then he would spend the night in this abandoned trailer. Apparently, he got in a fight with some people in the trailer park and they killed him with a two-by-four. It was a pretty brutal thing.

Roberts: Well, Fourth Street's an interesting place.

Jaramillo: Yeah, it is.

Roberts: When you started the original business next door in the house, did you have an overnight kennel and everything, or was it just doggy daycare?

Jaramillo: First we started out as daycare and that's all we did for the first couple of years, and then all of our customers were requesting that we do boarding, and so then we started to implement that as well. It was strictly as if you were in a house. It was a house, so it was doggies laying around all over the floors and beds and stuff. There were no kennels to put them in or anything like that, so it was a very natural environment and not very stressful, and our customers loved it.

However, occasionally the customers would want their dog to be put in a kennel or whatever at night and some people feel their doggies get over-stimulated and they need to go away and have some quiet time to themselves. It's your dog and you know what your dog needs. So that's why we decided when we built this to incorporate the suites and condos.

We are not okay with the cage situation. That's our deal. We are not a place where your dog is put in a cage. We have very nice rooms. They're much like bedrooms with TVs, piped-in music, comfy beds. They're very nice accommodations for your doggy at night. We have smaller ones and then we have bigger ones, and then we also have use of the yard for the outside areas.

We still do the slumber party, too, which is what it's called, where the dog beds are all about this area here and the doggies all crash, and somebody's here with them all night long.

Roberts: It's very luxurious here, the accommodations for the dogs. I've never really seen anything quite like this.

Jaramillo: We're the only one like this in Reno. Others have tried to replicate, but have not succeeded, so, yeah, it's very different. We did a lot of research in Europe. That's what we called it next door was European-style boarding, and that's what they do there—they have dogs over to the house and a bunch of dogs in a house, and they free-run and that kind of thing.

Then we did a lot of research before we built this one about other things throughout the country, similar situations like PetSmart Hotels and Camp Bow Wow, similar to that in California. They have several chains across the United States. So we definitely went for the luxury because that's what our customers want, because these are their children.

Roberts: Yes, I can understand that, as a dog owner myself.

Jaramillo: And you can't have a good time on vacation if you think your dog is not having a good time. If your dog is miserable, you're going to be miserable, too.

Roberts: That's true. And it's just dogs here, correct?

Jaramillo: Just dogs. We had originally thought that we would do something with cats next door, but we haven't done that yet. We're definitely busy with the dogs.

Roberts: You still own the building next door then?

Jaramillo: We do.

Roberts: What's it being used for now?

Jaramillo: Nothing right now. It's just storage, and it's also in case we ever need to evacuate, we have a place to take the doggies, so we have a plan with that.

Roberts: I guess you have to think about all sorts of things like that.

Jaramillo: Right, and for instance, if there was ever any kind of a contagious disease, we could take doggies over there and separate them on a different air supply than what we have here, because a lot of doggy things are airborne.

Roberts: I didn't know that.

Jaramillo: Yeah, so if you ever get something scary, you want to put them on a different air supply so that everybody's not breathing the same germs.

Roberts: That's good to know. Can you tell me a little bit about what you do here day to day?

Jaramillo: We do doggy daycare. Doggies come in when their parents go to work, and the doggies run around and play and socialize with other doggies. We encourage good doggy

behavior, no jumping, no barking, no peeing inside. We help the owners with that.

A lot of times we get doggies that are not social. For whatever reason, they haven't been around a lot of other dogs, and the owners want them to be friendly with other dogs and so they'll bring them here so that we can introduce them to different dogs and teach them the proper play styles, because some dogs, if they're taken away from their owner or from their parents too soon, they don't get the mommy signals on how to interact and how to greet other dogs, because there's a definite greeting process that goes on, a sniffing that has to take place, or things will not go well. So we encourage them to do it the right way.

Roberts: That's interesting—sort of behavior skills.

Jaramillo: Little bit. We don't get into any crazy behavior training, obedience training. This is the fun place. We're not a rescue. We don't take doggies that have a history of bad behavior or aggression simply because there are places that do. That's what they do. They're trainers and they want to rehabilitate dogs, but we feel like people come here because it's a safe, fun place and they're not being exposed to aggressive animals, and so we don't allow those kind of animals in here.

Roberts: That reminds me, earlier you mentioned something about the insurance company telling you certain breeds you can and can't have here.

Jaramillo: We get a better insurance rate because we have fewer injuries, because we don't take dogs that are aggressive or pit bulls or any of the bull breeds.

Roberts: So it's really just pit bulls?

Jaramillo: It's pretty specific, and not pit bulls, bull terriers, bullmastiffs.

Roberts: How do you feel about that?

Jaramillo: I actually had a pit bull and he was very aggressive. He tried to kill my other dog twice. He was very good with people. I think they're very good with people. People want to say that it's all in the breeding or it's all in how you raise them, and it's not. They were bred originally for a specific purpose in life and that was fighting, and they're powerful dogs. They don't have a locking jaw or anything silly like that, that people want to say about them, but they are powerful dogs and they can do a lot of damage. They're also from the terrier breed, which is very active and hard to train.

So in that respect, we love them. We do take them in private boarding, but we can't take them into the group play area for the safety of the other dogs in our environment. They're great dogs. We have no problem with them. We love them. I've had them, but not in a group play situation. Unfortunately, people will want to say, "Well, mine's a good one," and everybody says their dog is great, and then you put another client in jeopardy, so no.

Insurance companies all over town are refusing to have boxers in apartment complexes, pit bulls also. Your homeowners' insurance can turn you away if you have a

pit bull. It's a very common thing, very common. If you own your own home, you'll find all about that. We can have Dobermans and Rottweilers and German Shepherds. German Shepherds are known to be the dog most likely to bite.

But we're happy about that, in that our insurance rates are low, which is very important to a business, and the fact that because we don't have those kind of breeds here in group play, we don't have a lot of injuries, we don't have a lot of vet bills. In other daycares, that is not the case.

Roberts: So if something happens, you're responsible for vet bills and things like that?

Jaramillo: It depends on your policy. For our policy, when people sign up, they say that we will do due diligence, care for their dog and do what we see fit, and we also say in our sign-up that if we see that your dog is acting aggressively and it has hurt another doggy, we're responsible, whoever the aggressor was. A lot of times, it's that you don't know who started it, so you can't really blame one or the other and so they'll take care of their own bills.

Occasionally we have paid bills for things, minor things that have happened, just because the owner was upset, but our policy is that you're responsible for our own dog, and if your dog has caused damage to another dog or another person, if you bite one of my employees, you're going to pay their bill. And that discourages people from coming who know they have an aggressive dog, who know their dog has potential of doing harm. They think, "Oh, I'm going to be paying bills. I'm not going there."

So that's the policy. Whether we always follow it, not always the case. We have paid vet bills – just as a part of doing business.

Roberts: Yeah, and that's good, I guess, if it acts as sort of a weeding-out process.

Jaramillo: It does. It certainly does.

Roberts: What time do you get here in the morning?

Jaramillo: We open at six-thirty a.m. and close at six p.m. during the week. We have people who spend the night. Occasionally I spend the night. Generally, they get up at four-thirty in the morning, start feeding the dogs and taking them out and that sort of thing. Most of the crew comes in at six when we open at six-thirty, to prepare for the incoming dogs at six-thirty in the morning.

Roberts: So there's someone here twenty-four hours a day.

Jaramillo: Twenty-four/seven. Long hours here.

Roberts: Do you get more business with the daycare or the kennel services?

Jaramillo: It's about fifty-fifty. In the wintertime, we have more daycare because people don't want to leave their dogs at home when it's inclement weather, and also because their kids are in school, so during the winter and the school year, we have more daycare

than we have boarding because people are not out of town and that kind of thing. In the summer and then on any spring breaks our boarding increases, so it's a fifty-fifty situation. It kind of ebbs and flows depending on what time of year it is or what's going on, but it's pretty steady on both sides.

Roberts: That makes sense. How many dogs would you say you have here on an average weekday?

Jaramillo: About 120 total. That's an average day for us.

Roberts: That's quite a few dogs.

Jaramillo: It is.

Roberts: But they have a really large play area.

Jaramillo: They do.

Roberts: The big dogs, at least, and then there's a separate area for small dogs.

Jaramillo: We believe, in life, big and little dogs have to learn to get along, so we have a big and small dog play area. So for dogs that like it and if the owners are okay with it, big and little dogs are all together. We don't take any big dogs that are little-dog aggressive, which sometimes can happen and they can't do daycare because there are little dogs out there.

But then we have some owners who don't want their doggies in with big dogs for whatever reason, little-dog people, and so they have their own separate little-dog area with a yard also. But in life, big and little dogs really do get along. They do and they should. They should get along and they do get along, but some owners are afraid.

Roberts: We got our two dogs at the same time because they got along so well together. We were just looking for one, but we got them at the SPCA in August, so it hasn't been very long. But we just couldn't leave one of them there. They were just too cute.

Jaramillo: Oh, they were left that way. That's sad. Yeah, that would be sad to just take one.

Roberts: So we brought them both home.

Jaramillo: Well, good for you. We support the SPCA a lot. We do a lot for the SPCA. We give them food. We used to have events for them over there. We used to have a doggy Easter egg hunt where the doggies would come and hunt for Easter eggs that had little cookies in them, and we've done Halloween costume contests and all kinds of things that support the SPCA. We also support the Humane Society.

Roberts: That's great. Are you involved with any other sort of organizations?

Jaramillo: Not as involved as that. We do, of course, for the Fourth Street Food Bank and those kinds of things.

Roberts: Could you tell me a little bit about that?

Jaramillo: We also do Veterans of Foreign Wars and that kind of stuff. You get a lot of calls for that kind of thing, donations. We used to do the Shrine Circus, but then my daughter, who's very enlightened about that, said we're not going to support them anymore because they're so mean to their elephants and the animals in the circus, which is true, which I hadn't even thought of when I was giving them money. But, yeah, we support the local community.

Roberts: That's great. I guess that's sort of part of really any business' place in the community, right?

Jaramillo: It is.

Roberts: Is there anything you'd like to mention about the business in particular that we haven't discussed thus far?

Jaramillo: I don't think so. I think the main thing in our business is that we're driven by what our customers want, as far as services for their pets, and that's what any business should be doing.

Roberts: Well, it seems to be working for you.

Jaramillo: It is.

Roberts: Especially in this time, this economy, a lot of people are struggling.

Jaramillo: And it's so weird because with all we've done—we haven't felt it at all because people love their dogs and they will spend money on their dogs, I think, before they spend money on themselves. I don't know whether that's a good thing to say about society or not, but we haven't had a problem at all with anything like that. It's been nothing but building. We actually need to build a bigger space because we need more space.

Roberts: Really? Do you know about the square footage of this building we're in here?

Jaramillo: Eighty-three hundred.

Roberts: Because this is a rather large space.

Jaramillo: It is. It's huge.

Roberts: But you need a little bit more?

Jaramillo: We do. We're always full, and it's upsetting to our customers. They keep begging us to build a new place because when they have short-notice boarding we can't take them. We're full. So all of our customers want us to build somewhere else.

Roberts: Do you have any plans to do that in the future?

Jaramillo: We would like to. We've looked at several properties around here that are vacant as well.

Roberts: On the Fourth Street corridor?

Jaramillo: Yes, just because it would be close by and it's an easy access area with the freeway on and off. It's a good location for this type of business, people wanting to get to the airport and from their homes. It's getting from home to work. It's centrally located. It's perfect for this kind of business. Unfortunately, the city would rather have condominiums here.

Roberts: Oh, is that so?

Jaramillo: Well, I'm assuming. That's what they're building all downtown, which hasn't gone that well. City of Reno.

Roberts: Do you want to talk a little bit about Fourth Street? Obviously you chose this location because it's centrally located.

Jaramillo: We originally chose it because of the location and the zoning.

Roberts: So it was a must to have industrial zoning.

Jaramillo: Exactly, for the type of business we wanted to do.

Roberts: Why is it, do you think, that kennels must fall in an industrial area?

Jaramillo: Because of the noise. People in houses don't want to have kennels next to them, dogs barking. Industrial areas are noisy.

Roberts: Do you want to talk a little bit about the process you went through to start a business here on Fourth Street in Reno?

Jaramillo: The process, as far as getting a business permit and that sort of thing, was very simple. It's just forms that you fill out and find a location, and that was relatively easy. The building of this building was much more difficult and most of that was because of the change in zoning.

Roberts: How did that affect you?

Jaramillo: Well, because it's in a transit district, they had all kinds of rules about density, how big the building had to be for the size of the lot, how much parking you had to have. We had problems with power lines in the back. We back up against a utility easement. Unfortunately, the trailer park has parked their trailers on the easement and so when our utility trucks wanted to come in, there were trailers there. We could have made them move, probably should have made them move the trailers, rather than delaying our progress to put the building up, but that's what was chosen to happen.

Roberts: So there are trailers on your property?

Jaramillo: No, they're behind us. They are actually on Fifth Street, but they're parked on the utility easement.

Roberts: So they're perhaps not supposed to be there.

Jaramillo: Exactly. Whatever's on the utility easement has to be mobile, but these are very old mobile homes, so they can't be moved. They would fall apart.

Roberts: Do you have any opinions about Fourth Street in general?

Jaramillo: Fourth Street used to be the old Lincoln Highway. It was commerce. It's a huge industrial street, with businesses, trucks, transportation all up and down. It's always been—it still is. There's quite a bit of traffic. It's a four-lane street out there, with the middle lane a turn lane. It's a very busy street. The motels, unfortunately, have gotten really run down. Now mostly they're apartments. People live in them, not as motels as in traveling, but as in that's where they live, for whatever reason. A lot of interesting people are on the street. We have the homeless shelter up the street, so we do get a lot of traffic. Not sure if they're coming from the Galletti Way Hospital, Mental Health Hospital, and then traveling back and forth to the Food Bank situation. But we see a lot of interesting things on the street.

Roberts: How far away is the Galletti Mental Health Hospital?

Jaramillo: That's just a couple blocks up. I'm not sure why, other than the fact that they have to be on the street for the homeless shelter and the St. Vincent's Dining Room, so it's a huge congregation of the mentally ill who have been homeless and other homeless people who don't, for whatever reason, want to be in the shelter.

Roberts: And the shelter is relatively new, is that correct?

Jaramillo: Yeah.

Roberts: How many years do you think it's been here?

Jaramillo: Maybe two. Just shortly or around the same time as the ballpark, which makes absolutely no sense for the City of Reno to want to upgrade the area and have new sites and put in a homeless shelter right where they want tourists to come and go.

Roberts: So you think that's perhaps a negative.

Jaramillo: Huge mistake.

Roberts: Have you noticed any changes in the area since the homeless shelter went up?

Jaramillo: What I noticed was we went to all the meetings and such regarding the rezoning and they told the business owners that they would not allow the homeless to congregate on their sidewalks in front of their businesses. That was one of the things the city promised, and then we ended up with Tent City and people all over the sidewalks in front of all the businesses right there by the homeless shelter. It was horrible, horrible. If you ever drove down there or went by there or tried to go to a game, it was horrible.

Panhandling is an unfortunate fact of life, but I think if the city wants to improve the area, you don't put that there where you're trying to improve the area. The homeless shelter's beautiful. It could be a beautiful hotel, could have been perfect for the baseball stadium to have guests stay there.

Roberts: Do you think maybe there was a better location for it?

Jaramillo: I'm sure there was. I'm sure they had a lot of difficulties trying—because they did try to find better locations, different locations, but they didn't.

And then they didn't follow through with the businesses and keep them off the street in front of their businesses. Matter of fact, Bob Cashell, the mayor, gave them tents for Tent City to encourage them to stay there, nice tents.

Immediately after giving them the tents with the aluminum poles, the people living there cut down all the tents and recycled the poles. So that was really effective. And so then they continued with their blankets and cardboard boxes because they took down their gift of a nice tent and a shelter to recycle it. Grateful people.

But he had a heart. He wanted to help, which I don't think it was the right thing to do because you don't want to encourage them to stay there—but they stayed, even though the tents were gone because they recycled the poles.

Roberts: What other changes have you noticed in the area, in the Fourth Street corridor since you've had your business here?

Jaramillo: Well, they want to encourage the corridor, like Sparks did. They did their entire Prater Way. They put in beautiful lights, which is encouraging to business because you see an improvement, you see sidewalks. They said they were going to do it here. They did all of Fourth Street up till Sutro, so from Sutro to Galletti Way they stopped. They said, "We don't have enough money. We're done."

So I was required to pay for that. I have a beautiful sidewalk and beautiful lights out in front of my building that I had to pay for that conformed to what the city wants for

the area. Everywhere else, all the businesses got those on the city's dime. So any company or any business that wants to build here will have to buy those things themselves, whether they want them or not, which looks nice and it's great, but they have to pay for them themselves, which is a huge expense and it's in addition to the business expenses that you had already initiated and decided that you were going to do.

Another unfortunate thing is if you want to improve your property, like, for instance, if the Halfway Club would want to do something nice over there, if you exceed a certain dollar amount, then you have to conform to the new zoning, which means they'd have to put in those lights and a sidewalk and do all this stuff that they don't have the money for. So they're stuck in a quandary along with, I'm sure, many of these businesses. They can't spend to improve their property because then they'll have to spend more because the city will require it.

Roberts: So the lights that you're talking about, are these just regular street poles, street lamps, that sort of thing?

Jaramillo: Candy-cane lights, all with the whole theme of Fourth Street. It's kind of the same thing that Prater Way did. They have a little bit different light fixture, but it's lighting on vertical poles. They look really nice, and they require that you have a sidewalk, and I'm surprised that the idea hasn't been involved here because half this area here has no sidewalks. That's what the city would have put in had they continued from Sutro down to Galletti Way. We'd actually have sidewalks for our handicapped people, and we do have handicapped people on the street, homeless handicapped people who can't get by on their wheelchairs because we don't have sidewalks.

Roberts: So that's something that you might like to see more of?

Jaramillo: I would love to see sidewalks and I would love to see them finish the project that they said they were going to do.

Roberts: Well, hopefully, that's something they're working on with this project.

Jaramillo: Unfortunately, this project, I think, is a little different—they want to change it to two one-way lanes, or they want to cut the traffic on this street. They want to put in bike lanes. They want to put in a median. They can't finish the lighting and the sidewalk, but they want to do all these bus stops, giant bus stops, which I highly doubt will ever make it down to this end of Fourth Street because they don't do anything on this end of Fourth Street. We've been forgotten.

But I think it would be a big detraction to the area because this is a major highway. People travel—this street is so busy during the week with traffic, people, businesses, trucks getting from here to there, and you want to cut it down to one lane each way? Do you know the bottleneck that's going to create? Where are these trucks and cars going to go? It's going to be constant bumper-to-bumper traffic on the street, which is silly.

Roberts: You've mentioned a couple times now that this end of Fourth Street doesn't really get as much attention as, I guess, closer to downtown.

Jaramillo: And West Fourth Street. They've gone all the way out West Fourth Street with their streetlights and sidewalks, and they stop at Sutro.

Roberts: Why do you think that is?

Jaramillo: I don't think they care about this end of Fourth Street. They don't travel on this end of Fourth Street, probably. They don't see it. They say they ran out of money. It's entirely possible they did run out of money, but maybe they should invest a little money to finish the project. It's what, three, four blocks to finish?

Roberts: So are the candy-cane lights that you had to put out front, are you paying for that electricity and everything?

Jaramillo: No, the city pays for electricity. I paid to purchase them.

Roberts: It seems a little unfortunate that this area, you feel, has been left out.

Jaramillo: Well, if they want to encourage business, they have to put in a little, too, and I think that they look at it from the selling side of it. They're saying, "Fourth Street, this is great. This is up and coming. This is going to be great."

Yet when you look at it as a buyer, you're looking at it saying, "Why is this great? You don't care about it. You haven't finished the streetlight thing. Why would I want to invest in here if you're not going to do anything?" to the city. So they'll go elsewhere. We have so many abandoned buildings and vacant lots along here that would be perfect for certain types of business. They also restrict the kind of businesses that can go here now because they've decided what they want is businesses with residential on top.

They did do that down there at Wells. They have a convenience store, one of those little Dollar Store-like things, which never really took off, but they have apartments above. When we were building here, they thought that we could have apartments above our dog daycare. And my comment was, "For hearing-impaired people?" I mean, does that make any sense? It doesn't.

They need businesses in here that support the people going to work in this area and the people who are coming from work and going home, but it seems like they want to get rid of all the car garages, auto mechanic garages. Where are we going to get our cars fixed? People want to drop their car off on the way to work. It's convenient for that kind of thing. They want to put in a bar. They want this to be an entire bar district here like some other city—I think it's San Antonio. I can't remember what it was.

Roberts: Texas?

Jaramillo: I think so. They're trying to model this after some other city, and they put in all these bars and nightclubs and it was just this booming thing. That's another thing they want to do. They hire all these crazy focus groups, like recently they had a focus group come through and do a study. One of the businesses not too far from here is Reno Ironworks, and their focus group idea was to have Reno Ironworks start doing their

welding outside so that the public could watch. Okay?

Roberts: All right.

Jaramillo: Do you see any problems with that?

Roberts: Well, I—

Jaramillo: You can be blinded by watching an arc weld. You can be blinded.

Roberts: But also I wouldn't think you would want metal and whatnot out there in the elements like that.

Jaramillo: True, but they thought it would be interesting for the Fourth Street corridor to be watching ironwork outside, and they paid so much money to have this focus group come up with that as an idea for Fourth Street. City of Reno—I mean, that money they spent on that focus group, they could have finished streetlights out here and made it more of a desirable place for businesses to come and make buildings, and that kind of thing.

Roberts: Where would you like to see Fourth Street go in the future? What direction would you like to see the corridor head?

Jaramillo: Well, definitely I'd like to see more business in this area, businesses that support the outlying community, not necessarily residential. There are a number of problems with residential here. We're right next to the railroad tracks, very noisy, extremely noisy. When the trains hook up here, it's a huge loud bang. Why would you want an apartment building next to the railroad track? If you were purchasing a home and you had a choice of a home right next to the railroad track or in a nicer area, that's where you would go. Businesses like auto repair shops, kennels, veterinary hospitals, feed supply stores, those kind of things, that's okay. Nobody cares about whether there's a train going by next to your dog supply store. It doesn't matter, but a home, it matters. You're going to end up with buildings that aren't going to be able to rent or people that can't afford it.

Roberts: It drives the prices down cheaper, even though it might be similar quality to elsewhere.

Jaramillo: But you can't charge the same amount of money. So you need to think about that kind of thing for location. So I think businesses, not residential. And the other noisy thing is the freeway. When we went to these meetings when they were trying to change the zoning, people were complaining, "When are you going to put up my sound abatement next to my house where you're building this huge freeway?" Okay, City of Reno, why are we putting in more houses in a noisy area that we're going to have to spend more money on to stop the noise of the freeway that's already there?

Roberts: So you think perhaps they need to shift—

Jaramillo: Rethink what they're putting in. I don't think this is a place for residential. This is a place for businesses that support the outlying residential areas and support what's here already—the casinos, businesses that support the casinos, businesses that support people who come to work at the casino. This is a business district, and it has been and it should be. Restaurants, things like that. Dry cleaners.

Roberts: Well, the way the street has developed, at least from what I can see, you have quite an eclectic mix of businesses here already. You've got some bars, restaurants, doggy daycare, and the welding and feed supply, motels, quite a few varieties of business.

Jaramillo: I want the City of Reno to encourage improvement of the existing properties, which will make the vacant properties more valuable to people who want to move in without putting in roadblocks for the people who want to make their businesses nicer, which means if you want the businesses to improve, you need to give them something, like streetlights and sidewalks.

Roberts: Do you think the requirements that they're imposing on businesses to build and start up here are too much of a deterrent?

Jaramillo: I think for a business, obviously, we could afford it. We did. But if you want to encourage them to do it, you give them something. So if you were to put in some nice sidewalks and streetlights by those vacant lots, people, investors might look at that and say, "Hmm. Reno's doing something here. This really is going to be a nice area. Let's invest in this area." And they're not going to do that until the City of Reno does something. I mean, why would you do it here when you could get it somewhere else?

Roberts: It is a great location, though. I guess it definitely has that going for it.

Jaramillo: Centrally located, easy on-off freeway traffic, except for now that we're under construction our freeway exit's closed until August. It's far away, far away, long time of having to detour.

Roberts: When did that exit close?

Jaramillo: Just two weeks ago, I think.

Roberts: Do you think that's going to affect business here?

Jaramillo: A lot of our customers are complaining about it. A lot of the businesses, like Halfway Club and the Chevron, are doing things to promote their business during the construction so people will still come. I know my brother-in-law owned Land of Muffler right there at Wells and Fourth Street, and when they closed the Wells exit, he had a definite drop, and it's permanently closed.

I know businesses in this area are worried about it. Then they're considering this

new plan to put in medians and change it to one way, also thinking how that's going to impact their businesses in a negative way, putting in bus stops, crazy big bus stops. Have you seen those?

Roberts: I'll ask you some questions they're specifically interested in for the corridor. Do you think transportation issues play a big role in the health of the Fourth Street corridor?

Jaramillo: What do you mean by transportation issues?

Roberts: I guess we've sort of been talking about that already.

Jaramillo: I think it's a busy street that needs to remain four lanes. I don't think narrowing the street, congesting traffic is going to help on Fourth Street. Putting in bike lanes, it's very dangerous for people on bikes on Fourth Street. They should, I feel, be allowed on the sidewalk or where there aren't sidewalks because the street is not wide enough for bikes and four lanes of traffic, actually, five lanes of traffic. It's very scary for them. When I'm driving on it and there's a bicyclist, I move into the other lane because I don't want them having to swerve for a broken gutter and swerve into my car. So that, I think, is a problem.

Roberts: What would you like to see happen for pedestrians and bicyclists? Would you like bike lanes?

Jaramillo: No. There are bike lanes right over here one block on either side. There's the river bike lane, so you can easily go one block over. You could ride your bike to and from work on something that's already been built and already been dedicated to that purpose. Mostly it's the residents and their kids riding their bikes around here a little bit, people going to work. Some of my employees ride their bikes to work.

Roberts: Have they voiced any concerns?

Jaramillo: About the scariness? Yeah. I think they should put in sidewalks and I think they should allow the bike riders to go on the sidewalk because there's no room on the street for them.

Roberts: Would you like to see a wider sidewalk than what's already here?

Jaramillo: We don't have a whole lot of sidewalk here. My sidewalk is very wide. That's what they required of me. I was required to give up part of my property for a city easement. I was required to give them part of my land.

Roberts: You'd like to see that sort of caliber of sidewalk continue?

Jaramillo: Sure. Any kind of sidewalk would be nice because there is not a lot of sidewalk down here.

Roberts: So perhaps they just need to pay a little more attention to this side of Fourth Street.

Jaramillo: Yes.

Roberts: Are you aware of any safety issues in the corridor? For example, do you think the traffic is too fast here or are there any bad sightlines or anything like that?

Jaramillo: I feel, for what the street is, for the traffic that this road needs to carry, this is the speed limit we need to go. I don't see any problems with the speed of the traffic for a business district.

If they're changing it, I think it is a very bad idea to put in residential here—I'll say it again—potentially there would be issues there because you have, potentially, children and people on the street. This is a business district, so this is the appropriate speed for the road.

Roberts: What do you think the greatest transportation need is in this area? Is there something you'd like to see more of?

Jaramillo: A transportation need? No. What would that be?

Roberts: Well, I guess if you want more stoplights, or fewer, or something like that, wider lanes.

Jaramillo: Yeah, wider lanes. It's already a five-lane street. What could you do more than that?

Roberts: What do you think of the number and the arrangement of lanes currently on the street right now?

Jaramillo: I like it the way it is, four lanes. This street carries enough traffic that it needs to be four lanes. If you were to take out a lane on each side, you would have a bottleneck. It would be nice if they put in medians like they did right by the Eldorado. It's still four lanes, well, five lanes, and then they put in medians with trees. It looks very nice. They've put in the candy-cane lights. There's no bike lane there. There are nice sidewalks. There's a median that looks really nice and then they have the turn areas in that median, kind of like what they did on Wells with the medians in the turn lanes.

For the entire length of the street, I think if they put in the little median planting areas, that would definitely make this a nicer-looking area for investors.

Roberts: Okay. So you would support the medians then, for aesthetic purposes?

Jaramillo: Aesthetic purposes, yes.

Roberts: How about the buses? Should the buses have their own lanes?

Jaramillo: I don't think so.

Roberts: Well, you did mention about their wanting to put in more bus stops.

Jaramillo: Well, actually, they're doing these crazy huge bus stops like what they're doing on Virginia Street. I don't know if you've ever been there. Down by the Peppermill, in that area, they're putting in these huge concrete bus lane things, and when you look over there, you see two people sitting, waiting for a bus when they have nine chairs. So do we really need that? No.

Roberts: You think it's a bit much?

Jaramillo: Too much.

Roberts: So you, I guess, would not want to see that here.

Jaramillo: No, definitely not. There's nowhere to put it. If you want to put businesses in, where are you going to put those? They detract from the look of the building. They block the view of the building, which, if you're driving by and you want your business to be seen from the street from people driving by, you don't want a huge bus stop in front of it.

Roberts: I believe there's a bus stop just here in front of the parking lot, right?

Jaramillo: Right here by the Halfway Club, there at the end of our thing.

Roberts: Yeah, when I was pulling in, I was behind a bus.

Jaramillo: Someone's sitting there now, a homeless person.

Roberts: Oh, really? Okay, perhaps he's waiting to go somewhere.

Jaramillo: Unfortunately, with the bus stops that we have here, this is where the hookers sit. This is where the drug dealers sit and wait for their deals. Yes, some of our employees take the bus too. They don't want to sit near the bus stop because of who's sitting at the bus stop.

Roberts: So you think that's perhaps a problem that the city should address, could address?

Jaramillo: Yes. The crime element in the area.

Roberts: What would you like to see done about that sort of thing?

Jaramillo: Well, the unfortunate part is when we've had people—for instance, there's one particular lady who when she's not on her medication does crazy stuff. She'll defecate on the sidewalk and do a variety of things—yell at customers, beg for money—and when

you call the police, they know who she is and they will discourage you from having her taken away. They'll come in and say, "Oh, she's just off her medication. We'll take her down to the hospital and she'll be fine," and blah, blah, blah.

Then a half hour later she's back. They didn't take her to the hospital. They didn't get her any medication. They just moved her off our property, which I was told—many of our customers happen to be police officers and they said, "Don't let them discourage you from filing because it is their job. They don't want to do the paperwork. They don't want to have this person in their car. Make them do it anyway."

Roberts: How about parking? Would you like to see parking changed in any way?

Jaramillo: I think that the businesses should be required to have their own parking.

Roberts: Their own parking lot?

Jaramillo: Uh-huh.

Roberts: How would you feel about on-street parking?

Jaramillo: There's no room for on-street parking. I think that if that on-street parking were restricted for that particular business and only people from that business could park there, that it might not be a bad idea, but I think if you had on-street parking, certain businesses would absorb all that parking, and then unless there were restrictions, your customers couldn't use that parking, so that's why I like the idea of the parking lot. If you have a business that requires customers to park, then you provide a parking lot.

Roberts: So you're happy. You have a parking lot here for your customers.

Jaramillo: We were required to put in a parking lot and we did.

Roberts: And this is sufficient for your needs?

Jaramillo: It is.

Roberts: Would you like to see on-street parking anywhere else for any particular reason? Do you think it could be beneficial somewhere else?

Jaramillo: Not on this main thoroughfare. This is a main thoroughfare. We'll go back to that mantra, main thoroughfare. Not on a main thoroughfare.

Roberts: So it sounds like you're expecting this area to be easily passable, I suppose. People should be able to travel at speed through the corridor.

Jaramillo: Sure, because it is a main way of getting from Point A to Point B. It's not where you go for a leisurely drive, whereas on the side streets maybe you'd want to do that. But if you're going from Point A to Point B, you need to get there in X amount of

time. You don't need to be sitting at a stoplight.

Roberts: Yeah. Well, there are quite a few stoplights, every block or so.

Jaramillo: Really?

Roberts: Yeah, near the downtown area of Fourth Street.

Jaramillo: It does get pretty backed up down there.

Roberts: It gets a little congested, I noticed.

Jaramillo: It does, so don't put in stop lights to slow things down. Let people get from Point A to Point B and don't obstruct the view of the businesses that are there, because that's what you get. You get drive-by business. People see you.

Roberts: Right, right. That's how I saw you guys, just driving by. I like the window in front. That giant window kind of resembles a doghouse entrance.

Jaramillo: Yes, that was the architect's goal.

Roberts: I got that, so that's good. [laughter]

Jaramillo: A lot of people say they thought this was going to be a church because of that big window—and I guess a door or something. They thought that's what it was going to be.

Roberts: Yeah, well, it's got the circular top to it like that. It looks very much like a little doghouse.

Jaramillo: Yeah.

Roberts: Or a big doghouse. It's a very large building.

Jaramillo: Got to get a big dog out there now, big statue.

Roberts: Oh, yeah. Is that something you're looking to do?

Jaramillo: No. When we first started, we had thought about the blowup dogs on the roof or something like that, like a Snoopy or something, because it would look cute. Cartoon factor, but it would also draw attention to the building—people could see us from 395: “What is that? I've been watching your building for weeks,” that kind of thing. “I just finally decided to drive by and see it.”

Roberts: Is there anything else you'd like to add that we haven't discussed yet about the corridor or something you would like to address, something you'd like to see done here?

Jaramillo: I just think that the City of Reno needs to look more from an investor's point of view, not from the city's selling point of view. They need to change seats and think, if you were an investor, what would you want to have the city offer to entice you to come here? And I wish that they wouldn't want to make us a city that we're not. We don't want to be San Antonio. We're Reno. We've always been Reno.

Reno is a great place to be. We don't want to be something that we weren't or aren't or don't want to be. People come to Reno because they like Reno. If they want to go to San Antonio or whatever city that is—I don't think it's San Antonio—they go there. They go there.

Roberts: And this street, too, certainly has quite a bit of history.

Jaramillo: History, yes. I mean, it's incredible. Reno has great history. For instance, my daughter's house was built in 1919 and it was a guest house. Someone lived there, but it was a guest house for people who came to Reno to get divorces.

You had to be here for a certain number of days before you could file for a divorce, so people would come to this house and stay there for the X number of days required to get their divorce. People would throw their wedding rings off of the Virginia Bridge into the Truckee River after their divorce, as a celebration that it was over. We've got the silver. We've got the breweries. We've got the lumber companies. This is a great city to expound upon. For instance, did you know that we have an old Indian squaw that lays up against the mountain?

Roberts: No, I was not aware of that.

Jaramillo: You have to see this.

Roberts: All right, so we're walking to the front of the building.

Jaramillo: Oh, you can't see it because of the clouds. But if you look up against these mountains here, Mt. Rose, there's a group of mountains right here, the Sierras, and the farthest mountain—there's three, one, two, three, and the third mountain to the left, it's the profile of an Indian woman laying back like this, and you can see her face and her breast. Then as the snow melts, you can see her war paint show up. It's beautiful, and nobody in Reno knows about that, nobody. You look up there the next time you're driving by.

Roberts: I will. I will.

Jaramillo: Stop your car so you don't run off the road, but take a look at that. It's beautiful. No one knows about that. My mom tells me these stories about the Indians and the baskets and all that stuff. My mom lived on a ranch out in Jacks Valley. That's where she was born. Indian Birdie [phonetic] made her cradleboards and baskets.

We have great history of Reno. Let's do that. Let's not be someplace else.