

An Oral History of Tim Iveson

4th Street | Prater Way History Project

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Interviewer: Catherine Magee

Born and raised in Reno, Tim Iveson spent thirty years as a firefighter—five years with the City of Sparks and 25 years with the City of Reno. After retiring, he continued to help firefighters through the Reno Firefighters Local 731. He discusses his experiences responding to emergencies along Fourth Street and Prater Way, and the impact of city development on local firefighting operations.

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TIM IVESON

Interviewed on March 24, 2012
Catherine Magee, Interviewer

Born and raised in Reno, Tim Iveson spent thirty years as a firefighter—five years with the City of Sparks and 25 years with the City of Reno. After retiring, he continued to help firefighters through the Reno Firefighters Local 731. He discusses his experiences responding to emergencies along Fourth Street and Prater Way, and the impact of city development on local firefighting operations.

Photo by Patrick Cummings

Magee: I'm sitting here with Tim Iveson. Today is March 24, 2012, and we're going to talk about Fourth Street.

So can you state your name, please?

Iveson: Timothy Larry Iveson.

Magee: Thank you very much. To start off, could you tell me if you're from Nevada?

Iveson: I am. I was born and raised in Reno.

Magee: Where were you born?

Iveson: St. Mary's.

Magee: And is your family from Nevada?

Iveson: They are. My father was born and raised on a small ranch outside of Gerlach, Nevada, and my mother was born and raised in Battle Mountain, Nevada.

Magee: Were their parents raised in Nevada as well?

Iveson: On my mother's side, yes. One of my grandfathers came from Austin, Nevada. The other came from Battle Mountain, Nevada. On my father's side, I believe my grandparents and great-grandparents came from the East Coast.

Magee: Can you tell me where you went to school?

Iveson: I went all through school in Reno. I started at Hunter Lake in about 1965 and then was moved to Roy Gomm Elementary School when it opened up sometime around 1966, maybe '67. At that time, Roy Gomm was out in the middle of nowhere. Nobody wanted

to go to it. It was just a horrible place to be. Students were bused in from Verdi who were troublesome students that had basically been removed from Verdi Elementary. So it was a school for the outcasts, but we were district for it and that's where I ended up going, and I enjoyed it. From there I went to Swope Middle School and from there to Reno High School.

Magee: And then did you attend college here in Reno?

Iveson: I did. I spent roughly six years with no degree to show for it, lots of credits, but I took the classes that I thought I would need to get by, and the piece of paper that stated the college degree wasn't going to get me any further than what I needed.

Magee: When you were in college or growing up in Reno, did you have any interaction with the East Fourth Street area, basically from Keystone to Sparks?

Iveson: Sure. There are four restaurants that I can distinctly remember going to as a kid and I still go to them today. The Gold 'N Silver is probably the city of Reno's coffee shop—any morning that you want to go in there at seven o'clock, eight o'clock, you'll see a half a dozen tables of businessmen drinking coffee and eating ham and eggs, getting their day started from building contractors to Wally Rusk, who had Caravan Campers off of Fourth Street, west of that. A lot of businessmen in there.

Then on down the way would be Louis' Basque Corner. That's been around as long as I can remember, had a little hotel above it, still does. Then Casale's Halfway Club, and then, of course, the Coney Island. As a kid and as an adult, those are four of the restaurants that we frequent quite a bit, besides the modern stuff, of course.

Casale's is west of the Coney Island, on the same side of the street, just a little tiny place. I haven't been in there for a few years, but the last time I was in there, one of the owners was still behind the counter making pizza and raviolis.

Magee: I understand that you are a Reno City fireman.

Iveson: Retired, yes.

Magee: How long were you a fireman?

Iveson: I spent five years with the City of Sparks and then finished with twenty-five years with the City of Reno.

Magee: And now you're retired, and are you still involved with the Fire Department?

Iveson: Not necessarily the department, but I am involved with the employees through the Reno Firefighters Local 731. I volunteer my time through the union to assist some of our men and women who end up either hurt or come down with an occupational disease, whether it be cancer or a heart disease or a lung disease, and I help them get through the hassle of the workman's comp claims.

Magee: Can you tell me a little bit about what it was like being a fireman in Reno, and do you have any memories particularly of Fourth Street, or does anything really stick out in your mind during the history of your employment?

Iveson: Fourth Street is always interesting in the summertime with the special events, as far as firefighters are concerned. A lot of times, whether it's Hot August Nights or the motorcycle rally [Street Vibrations] or any of the other big events that come to town, the corridor downtown will be blocked off and that includes Fourth Street, so it makes it very interesting to get around. A lot of times it will be set up so we can pull the barricades down and drive through, but a lot of times there are vendors on the streets and everything is blocked off and you can't drive through.

New Year's Eve is also an exciting time downtown to be a fireman. You're busy. You're up all night. A lot of times we would put on a backpack filled with medical equipment and carry our radios and just walk the streets because we knew we were going to be assisting with medical calls downtown.

At one point, the Fire Department would overstaff for those special events, and we would basically have fire engines that weren't in fire stations but were just located throughout a strategic area to try to get into these places, because we're bringing in 100, 150,000 more people than normally live here, so we know we're going to have calls and we're going to be busy.

Magee: You mentioned medical calls. So that's also part of being a fireman, you don't just deal with fires?

Iveson: Yes, the majority of our calls are medical-related. Reno Fire does not transport. I wish we did. I think we would be more efficient if we did the work in the field and transported. I also think financially city-wise it would benefit the city to be able to bill for the transportation, but a private ambulance company does all the transportation and all of the billing. That would be REMSA.

Magee: Did you ever have any calls where you went into any of the buildings downtown or on Fourth Street?

Iveson: Of course, the modern casinos we're in all the time with medical calls, with smoke detectors, and thank goodness, for the most part, false alarms. We have had a situation, on the site of the Eldorado—I wasn't on duty that day, but I was at our old headquarters and I got to watch this. One of the big neon signs went up in flame. I guess I shouldn't say neon because they're not neon anymore, but it was probably about 30-by-50, the sign that burned. It was pretty impressive from the outside where they'd fallen off, but nothing penetrated the building.

There have been several smaller fires in some of the older establishments, the Morris Hotel or down by the Alturas Bar, but those are old hotels and most of them have basements. A lot of them not only have basements, but they had tunnels that went from underneath the old Lincoln Highway, so you could go from one building to another. Those are mostly blocked off now, but they could pose a serious problem for firefighters if you got a basement fire and those old timbers start to burn. Smoke and fire can find a

way through things that people can't crawl through.

Magee: Have you been in any of those tunnels?

Iveson: Yes, not for a long time. One of the things that happens when you first get hired on a district, in whatever fire station that they place you in, the captains will try to get you out and get you familiar with the buildings so you're not lost if you do have a fire in one of these buildings. So we do these pre-planning walk-throughs with the building owners most of the time, and it gives us an idea what we're going to deal with under smoke and low light or no light conditions. So, yes, I have been in most of them.

Magee: That's interesting. Do you know that a lot of people in Reno think the tunnels are a myth?

Iveson: Well, they're not. [laughter] Most of the tunnels are blocked off, but most of them were on Virginia Street, not necessarily Fourth Street, and they went from the larger casinos and the older casinos, the Horseshoe and Harrah's. No, there were plenty of tunnels. Whether they're still there, I can't tell you now.

Magee: That topic has come up quite a bit in a lot of different realms.

Iveson: Is that right?

Magee: Yes.

Iveson: No, they're there. I can't tell you how many, but there's more than one.

Magee: So you've been in some of those resident motels, like the Morris Hotel. What was it like inside? Can you remember being in the Morris?

Iveson: They're old. Their rooms are very small. The beds are very small, typical of the era in the forties and the fifties. I imagine at one time they were very nice. We've had several fires in the area—we've lost the Mizpah. That wasn't on Fourth Street, but it's all part of that era. I imagine these old hotels will be there until they end up burning down. There's really not a lot of desire for people to purchase them, tear them down, and build something new.

They're going through some changes on East Fourth Street and the business community is getting involved now, but I don't see that happening for a while. I think they'll eventually just either fall down or burn down. It's an old warehouse district, as well, and it was probably six or seven years ago that we had a huge snowstorm—heavy snow, and lots of it. We probably lost three, four, five of the old warehouses when the roofs came down from the weight of the snow, so things like that turn these old buildings into parking lots in a hurry.

Magee: I didn't realize that kind of damage was happening there.

Iveson: Yes.

Magee: I mentioned Fourth Street just because that's one of the areas I've been interested in, but it's basically that whole district, the warehouse district, the Freight House District. As a fireman, what do you call that area?

Iveson: Well, we use the same language that the city uses, because they're redevelopment districts. The Freight House District is where the ballpark is now. They have the RDA 1, RDA 2, and these are redevelopment districts and that's how they classify them for tax purposes.

Magee: So when you get a call on the radio, would you just give a street location, or how are you oriented to find yourself when going to a call?

Iveson: Address, street address. They would never tell us that this was in the Freight House District.

Magee: Those are more contemporary terms for the area.

Iveson: Yes, those are, like I say, for tax purposes, whether they're developed through STAR bonds or special tax incentives to bring businesses downtown. I'm not an expert certainly on these districts, but I do know that there are several special tax districts downtown.

Magee: Can you talk about the redevelopment of downtown and how that has impacted your work over your thirty years as a fireman?

Iveson: Sure. When I came to Reno Fire in 1984, we had four engines downtown, and on top of that, two truck companies and one utility rig or rescue rig, with the combined four stations downtown in the downtown corridor. We now have two. Now, the downtown area has grown. The high rises have gotten higher and bigger with more rooms, and you would think that we would have more people and more stations downtown, but that's not what has happened.

As Reno grew, the downtown grew. So did the outlying districts. Rather than build new stations, we moved two of our stations. Station 3 was on the corner of Virginia Street at California Avenue, at that intersection. That station is now at the Moana Ballpark and that station is gone. It's now Starbucks.

Station 2 was in the Fourth Street corridor, East Fourth Street, on Morrill and Fifth, so it was one block off of Fourth Street. That station is now, or was, the homeless center, and I believe now it's privately owned, and that station has moved to just below Hug High School on Sutro, so it's moved way outside of the corridor just like the one that moved to the Moana Ballpark.

Station 1, our headquarters station, was torn down when the [new Reno Aces] baseball park came to town and it is temporarily relocated on the corner of Fourth Street and Valley. Like I say, it's a temporary structure. It's a couple of double-wides stuck together with a tent-type structure—

Magee: I've seen it. Like a Quonset hut?

Iveson: Yes, like a Quonset hut. You see them on the sides of the road. NDOT will store gravel or salt or something in them to keep it dry. So that's what we're using to house our equipment. We have a truck and an engine in that station.

Magee: How long has that station been there as a temporary station?

Iveson: Boy, you know, since the ballpark came to town, so three years, and I don't anticipate it to be very temporary. I think it's going to be there for a long time. I don't think the city has the finances or the appetite to build another headquarters fire station like we had.

Magee: So Station 1 was the headquarters fire station, and the service support, the truck and the firemen who man the truck, are at Fourth and Valley. Where did the administrative people move?

Iveson: Well, just so you know, in Station 1, we had two engines, and the engines are the apparatus that carry hose and water. We had a ladder truck and that's self-explanatory, and we also had a rescue rig and that was used to run certain types of nonviolent medical calls, non-cardiac medical calls, something where two people could handle it because it was housed by two people. Our heavy rescue piece of equipment was stationed there. Our boats and a boat and a trailer and a Suburban that we use for water rescues, all of that was there.

Magee: Because the river's right there.

Iveson: For the river, yes. Dispatch was there in the basement, and our headquarters, our administration, fire chief, battalion chiefs, our staffing office, all of that was in that building, so when that building went away, everybody had to find a new home, and it went away in a hurry. It wasn't like we had two or three years to plan this; we had several months.

The firefighters, myself included, worked with the administration, trying to find the best location to put the new headquarters fire station, meaning it had to be out of the flood plain. The city owns quite a bit of property downtown as a result of the train trench, but none of that property that was, quote, "free" to build something on was ever deemed to be the best place to put your downtown fire station. It was either in a flood plain or it was too far away or it didn't have good access to Virginia Street or to the freeway. A lot of the calls from downtown end up on the freeway, as well.

So with that said, the city decided that the cheapest thing for them to do was to build some temporary stations that were relatively close—the main station on Valley and Fourth that has an engine and a truck in it, and then they also added another temporary station in the parking lot of the Grand Sierra Hotel and Casino.

Magee: So that was all part of Station 1.

Iveson: Yes, right. Not the best, but better than the original plan—initially, the city was not going to replace any fire protection downtown, and obviously, as the firefighters, we had an issue with that. If we don't have firefighters nearby and we do have a fire, the longer it burns, the more dangerous the structure becomes and the more dangerous it is for firefighters.

Magee: I'm just trying to get this straight. So Station 1 has been divided into two locations. Does that include dispatch and the administrative, or is that simply the equipment part?

Iveson: Simply the actual firefighters and some of the equipment. Administration originally moved to a business building on the corner of Holcomb and Liberty. They have since moved out of that building and now they are on the fourth and fifth floor of City Hall downtown, and that includes the battalion chiefs, who also run calls, so it's difficult for them to be in the office and get a fire call, have to find the elevator, get on the elevator, ride it down, then park their apparatus. Obviously, they can't just park it on the sidewalk nearby, so they're a half a block away. So by the time they end up getting to their vehicle to respond to the fire, they've had a fairly lengthy delay.

You asked about dispatch. Prior to the [Reno Aces] ballpark, dispatch had already moved out. They had probably been out for a year and a half or so, and they're up at a regional dispatch. Up by Truckee Meadows Community College is where they are now, regional with police and with fire, not with REMSA. They have their own dispatch but also with Washoe County Sheriff's Department.

Magee: I'd like to touch back on a couple of different subjects that seem to be centered on the original question of the impact of developing the downtown area. It seems like this development has had a really big impact on the fire protection services, and one thing you mentioned was the train trench and property that may have been examined that would be something that you guys could have built something on. Could you talk a little bit about the train trench? Because that occurred while you were a fireman, didn't it?

Iveson: Yes, it did. It's interesting that you say that, because back in the sixties, the idea of building a trench through downtown was talked about, and also the idea of taking the train around Reno. There always has been a mentality from some business owners downtown that having a train go through the downtown corridor is hurting business, so to speak. Myself, I always like to stop and watch the train.

The idea resurfaced maybe ten-plus years ago, when the Council, at that time with Bob Cashell as the mayor, really wanted to build this trench. Funding was coming through bonds, and they felt that it would clean up the downtown corridor. They also argued that when the train comes through and it stops—because Amtrak will stop in downtown and pick up people—the firemen can't get from one side of the track to the other.

So the city tried to say that the firefighters were hampered and they wanted us on board with them, when, in reality, the trench, in our opinion—in my opinion especially—is a lot more dangerous because of the aspect of fighting fire underground, because part

of the trench has now been enclosed, so it's no longer a trench; it's now a tunnel.

At any rate, I believe it was the Council's idea to put it on a ballot and see if the citizens of Reno wanted the train trench. Well, overwhelmingly no, the citizens did not want the train trench, but we got it anyway, and today we're having some real issues paying for it. I believe the city, because they're currently having a lot of cutbacks, and taxes have dropped and so their revenue has dropped, is having trouble making the payments on the bonds that were issued for the train trench, as well as one or two other bonds downtown. With the impact of real estate doing what it did and everybody kind of being hurt, it's caused some financial issues, and I don't know how much longer the city is going to be able to pay what little bit they're paying without trying to restructure the bonds, if they can restructure the bonds.

Magee: And I understand the ballpark, in that area as well, was a bond issue, a STAR bond. That was not part of the train trench project.

Iveson: No, no, definitely not. There are a couple of projects in Reno that I know of that are STAR bonds. STAR bond, I believe means Special Tax Abatement something. A number of years ago, the lawmakers allowed for this to happen and it was an incentive to bring companies, businesses to the area. Cabela's is a perfect example, up by Boomtown, of a STAR bond. The baseball park is another one in the Freight House District, and I believe it encompasses more than just the ballpark. I believe all the retail around it, as well, is all part of that.

One of the things that happens with that is that when you go in and buy a soda or buy a ticket to a ballgame, the taxes that would normally go to the General Fund to pay for essential services like fire and police protection, like parks and rec, education for our schools throughout Washoe County and through the City of Reno, those taxes no longer go to the General Fund. Part of it goes back to pay for the construction and part of it stays in the district, but it does not go to the General Fund, and that also causes an issue when you're trying to pay for essential services. When you have special tax districts that no longer pay into the General Fund, the General Fund is certainly losing money.

Magee: You mentioned that the firemen didn't have a lot of notice about Station 1 being closed. I'm a little confused about how that could be, because it seems that if there's a redevelopment plan, that would have taken a long time to happen. But you mentioned that the Fire Department didn't know that Station 1 was going to be affected. Do you know how that came about?

Iveson: Well, I don't know the ins and outs of SK Baseball—and that's the group that has the ballpark. I was told that one of the things that had happened was this group, SK Baseball, runs a minor league team that is affiliated with the Arizona Diamondbacks, so it's their Triple-A baseball team, which is their highest level before they make it into the major leagues. They were moving out of Tucson and they were looking for someplace to go. Whether Reno approached them or they approached Reno, I don't know, but the time constraints were so tight that they had only a certain amount of time to get this ballpark built before the opening of the season.

That was kind of how it came about, but, of course, our fire station, our

headquarters station had to be demolished prior to the ballpark being built. So when I say we didn't have a lot of time, we didn't have two or three years to plan, which would have been nice for a project like this. The projects downtown are nice. They bring people in. But by the same token, the more people, the more police and more fire protection you need. At any rate, we did not have a lot of time. We worked as hard as we could as firefighters to try to come up with locations, like I was talking about, and alternatives to providing fire protection downtown.

At one point we were going to live in the bowling stadium and we had most of that worked out, and then, for whatever reason, that fell through. There's a police substation downtown, as well, and we were going to move in there with just one tiny crew to keep our presence directly in the downtown core. For whatever reason, that fell through and eventually we had doubled up at Station 4, which is off of Ralston up by UNR. It's the other station that is part of the downtown core, so we ended up having two crews run out of that station. It's a pretty small station to do that, but that was about the only way we could still provide timely, adequate fire protection to downtown prior to having the temporary stations built.

Magee: Another thing you mentioned with the train trench is that the City Council had this idea of cleaning up the downtown area, and I guess I'm a little confused about how a train trench would clean up the downtown. Could you explain that to me?

Iveson: Maybe that's not the right term to use, but, like I say, there was a push by some of the businessmen downtown to get the unsightly train and the tracks and everything that goes along with that, below ground. Anybody who has lived next to a train track realizes that it becomes a walking corridor for a lot of people, and I think some of the businessmen downtown just didn't want that, so they wanted to lower it. Then they can build bridges over it and travel freely, as well as enclose part of it, and then use that as extra real estate. So that was part of the idea.

Certainly from a safety aspect of being a firefighter, we had never envisioned them enclosing any part of the trench, other than where the roads went over it. I know when I was there we did have a game plan of how we would attack an emergency, whether it was a spill or a crash. The train carries so many things, everything from nuclear waste to toxins to fuel, so it is an issue to have that in a tunnel, enclosed.

Magee: Would that something that would involve consultation with the Fire Department or is this more of a planning issue where they don't need to discuss potential hazards with the Fire Department or other public service providers?

Iveson: There were a lot of open meetings on the train because the trench was something, unlike the Freight House District, that didn't go up overnight. The trench was something that was planned out ahead of time, as well as all the access of how emergency services were going to get over the trench as it was being built before the roads and the bridges went through, so I'm sure there were discussions with the Fire Department about it. Like I say, I don't ever remember them coming to the Fire Department and saying, "Well, now that we have it built, we want to enclose part of it," because that would certainly have been an issue with the firefighters at the time.

But as firefighters, whatever challenge they put in front of us, that's what we're going to deal with and we're not going to have a lot of say about whether there's a trench or not, so we can explain some possible hazards to it, the downside and the upside, and certainly there's an upside to having the trench there. We don't have people lying on the tracks anymore committing suicide downtown, which we had a lot of. I shouldn't say a lot, but enough that you remember those calls. And a small leak was contained inside the trench. So there are some upsides to having the trench.

Magee: Are there any memorable events other than the suicides that you recall when you were working as a fireman in the city?

Iveson: Just a lot of calls in that corridor. East Fourth Street, off and on since I can remember, has been a magnet for drugs and prostitution. When you start to leave the downtown corridor itself and you get east of, say, Lake Street, east of Valley Road, the hotels turn into motels, and the vast majority of those motels are weekly or monthly rentals. They're not for tourists or they're not being used by tourists. They're being used by folks who are down and out, and that encourages the drug traffic and the prostitution.

The police will come in and clean things up for a little bit. They'll do their stings and they'll arrest a half a dozen people in one night, and then you read about it in the newspaper and it kind of slows down for a little bit. They'll do a sting for a week or two and pretty soon the prostitution has kind of moved away, and then six months later it comes back, and with the prostitution comes a lot of drugs, a lot of violence.

That part of the corridor has a lot of small liquor stores which tend to lead to robberies. There's a little liquor store near Fourth and Lake, and as a firefighter downtown in our old station before the ballpark, we could count on at least once, maybe twice on a Friday and Saturday night going just to that location because there was a fight in the parking lot or there was a knifing or there was a robbery or gunshots. It's kind of Reno's little ghetto, I guess, is one way of putting it.

Magee: As you probably know, with these projects and things they're trying to change the character of downtown. Have you noticed anything happening with the transition of downtown, say with the new Freight District or the relocation of the homeless shelter or even the new bus terminal, the new transit area? Have you noticed any positives or negatives that have impacted downtown in that way?

Iveson: Both positive and negative. The more people, the more things happen, and certainly the businesses that have started to build out on East Fourth Street, down around to Valley Road, they're bars and they're restaurants. They bring in a lot of people, which brings in some undesirables, a lot of drinking. I haven't worked out of that station on Valley and Fourth because I retired by the time it was built, but talking to the firefighters who work out of it, they spend a lot of time across the street at a couple of the bars on Friday and Saturday nights. The fire marshal will come in from time to time because the occupancy load is being exceeded. In other words, there are too many people in the bar for what the municipal codes say they can have.

I think it's a good thing to bring businesses back into that corridor and encourage them, and if they can continue on east, I think that would help as well. At some point, like

I say, these buildings will either fall down or be torn down, and that's not necessarily a bad thing, and then maybe a new business will step in, but there are pluses and minuses to having those types of establishments.

Magee: Part of the funding or the funding for this project is from the Regional Transportation Commission, and the RTC is interested in getting input for this corridor between Reno and Sparks. That was the old Lincoln Highway and old Highway 40. And they want to do some revamping of the streets, so I'd like to ask your opinion in two facets. One, as a fireman in protection services, what do you think you'd like to see on that street as far as revamping lanes, sidewalks, lighting, etc. and then I'd ask you the same question as a citizen—what might draw you down there as well? Let's start off with the fire protection services aspect.

Iveson: Strictly as a firefighter, you always want to deal with aspects that make our jobs safer. When we go to a fire or we go to a call, if I get hurt before I get there, then I become part of the problem and not part of the solution, so our safety always starts with us. Once we're safely on the scene, hopefully then we can help. Getting there sometimes proves to be a challenge, and I believe as many firefighters are killed every year in wrecks responding to fires as are killed by fire.

I did spend a lot of my career dealing with driving and operating fire equipment, so for me it does hit home to be safe as a fire equipment operator. Driving in those conditions with lots of people on the sidewalk, at special events, with maybe some impaired drivers on the street because there are special events and the booze is flowing freely—that's just the way things are.

Probably one of the key things that would help firefighters get through that corridor as you're running up and down Fourth Street or you're on Fifth Street or any of the parallel streets, is something that attaches to the streetlight itself. On the fire trucks, we have a switch that we can throw that will throw a beam of light and it will activate that and it will turn the light green.

If they're not there already, and I don't believe they are, at the major intersections, Sierra and Fourth, and Center and Fourth, and Virginia and Fourth, and Valley and Fourth, Lake and Fourth, if we can have those instruments installed so our lights turn green, that does more than just allow us to move. It allows the cars ahead of us that get bottled up because the light is red, and then here comes a fire truck behind them with red lights and sirens. They don't know what to do. It'll turn the parallel streets red and it will turn our thoroughfare green. So as a firefighter, those are the types of things that we try to encourage the city to do.

Magee: Are there other aspects with buses, like turnout lanes or things like that, that you'd like to see? Bike lanes, I think they're talking about. Do you have any opinions about those?

Iveson: The bus turnouts are obviously needed. Wherever you have a lot of foot traffic and you have a lot of buses, it's nice to have those, not just for emergency vehicle operations, but just for the everyday driver.

Bicycle lanes would be an interesting thing on Fourth Street. The City of Reno has

installed a lot of bike lanes around town, and typically what they have are two lanes in each direction, so it will be four lanes. They will turn it into one lane in each direction with a center median and then the bike lanes on either side.

That type of a thing on East Fourth Street could pose a problem. The center lane is obviously going to be empty most of the time and that's because it's a turn lane. That would be the lane that the firefighters would end up driving in. The problem with that is if it's plugged because a car is turning—and we get a lot of traffic downtown, especially with these events. So if a car wants to turn into a parking lot or to a restaurant or just down another street and he can't go because of the traffic, then that center lane is plugged and that means the fire engine is plugged. He's not going anywhere.

Police cars are a little bit different. They're smaller and they can move over into the bike lane, I'm sure, and get around, but we're not going to move a seventy-foot fire engine through a bike lane.

So depending upon how the city went about putting bike lanes on East Fourth Street, it could be a very good thing or it could hamper us at times during the peak events.

Magee: Maybe there could be ways where if they do, say, choose a bike lane, if they made that area wider than normal for a bike or a bike and pedestrian lane or something like that, that could be something you could drive through.

Iveson: Sure, yes. Absolutely, yes.

Magee: As a person who has a long family history of going down to restaurants on Fourth Street, what would you like to see, as far as a private citizen? Would you like to see wider sidewalks or more parking or less parking, a pedestrian area? Do you have any ideas that might entice you down there more often?

Iveson: Of course, being a firefighter and having run up and down that corridor to some horrible events, a lot of violence and vehicle accidents, probably for the biggest thing for me would be safety aspects, so lighting, a police presence. Obviously, the drug and the prostitution has to go away.

I remember when my kids were here in high school, they would want to go to events downtown and they thought I was crazy because I would say, "No, you're not going downtown. It is not a safe place, especially once it gets dark." And it wasn't because Reno is a gang-infested, horrible place. It was because in my career I had seen all the bad stuff and I didn't want my kids to be one of the unlucky ones who fell into that.

Obviously, the water park in the middle of the day, those type of concerts are different than nine o'clock at night, ten o'clock at night, dark and wandering in and out of even Louis' Basque Corner. Trying to find your car after you walk out of Louis', there's very little street lighting and it's not the most desirable neighborhood. So I think probably clean the neighborhood up from the drug and prostitution, and the gang aspects, and add more lighting.

Magee: That kind of sparks something I had just seen on the news a couple days ago, where they're contemplating legalizing prostitution in a particular area downtown in Kings Inn, which I think is on the west side of Fourth Street. I didn't look up where that

is. And you mentioned cleaning up the downtown and Fourth Street corridor, in particular, of prostitution. I'm kind of curious. Legal versus illegal, do you think there'd be a difference?

Iveson: I think there'd be a big difference. Legalized prostitution has been in Nevada a long time. We don't hear of a lot of horrible things that happened in or outside of a legal brothel. A number of years ago, there was a shooting out at Mustang. But the Kings Inn—you mentioned that—that has changed names a half a dozen times. It's closed, I believe, right now. My father was a building contractor in town, and I remember when I was in high school, it was called The Reef at that time. He ended up getting a contract to do some work in there, so I did actually work in that as a carpenter at one time. But I have not heard that about legalizing prostitution there. Obviously, Washoe County would have to get involved because it's not legal in Washoe County.

Magee: No, it's illegal.

Iveson: But that would be interesting to have a legalized brothel two blocks off of Virginia Street, three blocks off—

Magee: On Fourth Street.

Iveson: Yes, on the Lincoln Highway. Well, it wouldn't be the first time that there's been a trick or two pulled downtown, so— [laughter]

Magee: I think we've covered a lot of the topics. I want to thank you very much and I just want to conclude this interview, unless you had some other topics that you think we might have missed.

Iveson: Probably not, other than just to mention some of the businesses that that corridor has held over the years. I believe it's a thrift store now, but it was Commercial Hardware, and you probably remember that as a little girl.

Magee: I loved Commercial Hardware.

Iveson: That was our only hardware store. That was before Lowe's and Home Depot and that's where you went. You went there to buy everything from Dutch ovens to duct tape, to furnaces, to screw drivers and hammers and lumber and everything else, so that was a business that we were sorry to see go. That was an anchor for that part of the community, for that part of Fourth Street. That truly was. That was the type of business that you need to bring back, in my opinion, to that area because it's a clean business. It doesn't involve drinking.

Down the street from that was Martin Iron Works, and again, that was a family-owned business and employed a lot of people, a very clean business, open at seven in the morning, closed at six at night, so the nighttime aspect wasn't there. Just some of the businesses along that corridor that are no longer there. I think if you can bring them back, encourage businessmen, whether it's warehousing or it's something similar, like a door

shop or a metal-frame shop, something that is industrialized and that's clean, I think that would help the corridor.

Magee: Yes, having some real anchor businesses, as you've said. I think that's a really valid and insightful comment. Anything else you'd like to say?

Iveson: No, I think that's all. That's all I've got to say.

Magee: Thank you very much.