



University of Nevada Clark County Cooperative Extension

University of Nevada
Cooperative Extension

June 2014

Community Connection

Walkability

Ellen DeGeneres was once quoted saying “My grandmother started walking five miles a day when she was sixty. She’s ninety-seven now, and we don’t know where the heck she is!” Ellen’s grandmother must live in a pretty walkable neighborhood. But not all neighborhoods, communities or even cities walker-friendly. Transportation for America

rated Las Vegas the 6th most dangerous city in America for pedestrians. If you watch the news on any given day, you would agree that our communities are unsafe to walk in. Older adults have a higher rate of pedestrian injuries and fatalities than any other age group because, among other

What makes a city safe to walk in? There is a well-known index in the research community called “walkability.”

that walking is important to our health and considered the most common, least expensive, easiest way to be physically active.

There are two basic reasons that people walk. The first is *recreation* which includes walking for daily exercise. The second, though not a common practice in southern Nevada, is *active transport*.

Active transport is physical activity you may get while completing another task such as walking to the grocery store, work, school or to the bank. Incorporating active

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reasons, they take longer to cross the street (especially wide streets), have a slower reaction time and are more vulnerable to the severity of an injury. The sad irony is

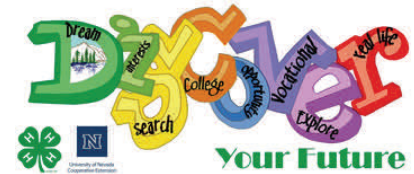
Discover Your Future



All youth, 14-19 years of age, are invited to have the University of Nevada-Reno experience! Find out about educational opportunities a Research University has to offer. Live in the dorms, meet professors and students. Make new friends from across the state. Learn about different University majors available to you and participate in other great, fun activities.

Sunday, June 22 through Thursday, June 25

For more information, contact: [Lisa Boldman](mailto:Lisa.Boldman@unr.edu) 775-3369-0273; [Sarah Chvilicek](mailto:Sarah.Chvilicek@unr.edu) 775-336-0236; or [Sam Mitchell](mailto:Sam.Mitchell@unr.edu) 775-336-0259.



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We're on the Web

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www.unce.unr.edu/blogs/southernarea

www.YouTube.com/UNRextension

Walkability

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transport into daily living is great for overall health and fitness. Research shows, however, that most people are only willing to walk for active transport if the distance is less than a quarter to a half mile away. For this reason, Las Vegas poses some unique challenges for people desiring to walk as a form of transportation.

What makes a city safe to walk in? There is a well-known index in the research community called “walkability.” Walkability tells us how conducive an area is to walking and performing activities of daily life. There are several factors that can encourage or prevent walking as a suitable form of transportation within a community. Many of these factors revolve around how walker-friendly the streets are. High walkability features include a good mix of residential, retail, restaurants, schools and entertainment within close proximity to each other. Cities like New York or San Francisco are a walker’s paradise! Las Vegas, on the other hand, is an example of “urban sprawl” which is an uncoordinated, spread out growth of residential communities, far from local businesses requiring the use of automobiles for transport.

Other factors that affect walkability include posted street speeds; shaded areas for walking; access to public transit; available sidewalks; crosswalks with sufficient distance in between (less than ¼ to ½ mile); street connectivity; and limited entry points. Personal safety is also a barrier to walking and explains why many people live in gated communities. If a community, however, has only one entry point and many of the streets don’t connect, there are few direct routes (“as the crow flies!”). Instead you have to walk all the way around the community making it difficult to get where you are going.

Dr. Courtney Coughenour, a local public health expert in walkability, recently conducted a study in 4 Las Vegas communities. In her findings, the top four barriers to walkability in

those communities were lack of shade (50 percent), poor land use mix (39 percent), poor street connectivity (32 percent) and poor access to transit (27 percent). Dr. Coughenour offers great advice for anyone who is retiring, downsizing their home or relocating and wants to stay physically active. Find a community with high walkability features including:

- Close proximity (walking distance) to retail, food and entertainment
- Few high speed streets
- Adequate number of crosswalks
- Numerous sidewalks
- High street connectivity
- Shaded areas (desert trees)
- Opportunities for a “chance encounter” (meeting people and creating social ties)
- Access to transit (which many Las Vegas age-restricted communities lack)
- Avoid neighborhoods with lots of single-entry communities

If you are not planning to move anytime soon and don’t live in a walkable neighborhood, find a good social network and create ways to be more active. Or just consider a backup plan such as that of comedian Steven Wright who says, “Everywhere is within walking distance if you have the time.”

Anne Lindsay, Exercise Physiologist



City Hall community garden

Tom Perrigo, Chief Sustainability Officer at the City of Las Vegas, contacted Angela O’Callaghan and Elaine Fagin for information on how to start a Community Garden at City Hall for their employees.

Perrigo said outside the cafeteria they have bushes planted and felt that was not the best use of the space. He wants to use that space for the employees to grow their edibles.

O’Callaghan and Fagin have been instructing the Las Vegas City employees at City Hall on how to establish a community garden. Their classes are directed at teaching the potential gardeners how to be successful gardeners in the

Mojave Desert.

On March 24, the employees along with the assistance of Angela and Elaine planted their edible garden! Angela & Elaine are now teaching a monthly class at City Hall for their gardeners.



Flowers & pollinators



Pollen on flower

We distinguish between flower gardens and vegetable gardens which is an unnecessary differentiation, since so many flowers are edible and so many vegetables are lovely.

Flowers are often the indicator that our vegetables are on the way: many of the yellow tomato flowers will become pollinated and

produce fruits, likewise the hibiscus-like flowers of okra. Even those who do not like eating that vegetable admire its cream colored blossoms.

Not all plants bloom, but a significant number of garden plants do. Why would plants create a floral display? It takes a large amount of resources to produce a blossom, so there must be a significant benefit. The reason may not be because they want to please us, although Michael Pollan in *The Botany of Desire* states that plants have evolved in a way that encourages humans to propagate them.

Not all flowers are lovely – while it may not be attractive, even Bermuda grass produces a flower. Beautiful or plain, flowers play a unique role in a plant's life. Whether or not we eat a plant's leaves, flowers or fruit, if it produces a blossom, it is doing it for a reason – propagation.

It attracts pollinators, either by its color, scent, or shape, alone or in any combination and catches pollen. The shape makes it easier for some pollen to be transported on the wind, as in Bermuda grass.



Flower with pollinator

Many of our favorite fruiting vegetables result from the efforts of pollinators such as bees. Bees seek out white, yellow or blue flowers with a fresh, mild, pleasant odor. They prefer a shallow bowl shape, providing them a landing platform, but will also fly to tubular flowers.

We usually talk about honeybees as if they were the only important pollinators and many of our food crops grown in large agricultural settings do rely on them. Other creatures, however, also play a role in plant reproduction. The result might not be for our consumption, but that is not the plant's concern.

Different pollinators are attracted to different types of flowers. Night-blooming flowers tend to be duller colors—white, green or purple—but they often have a strong scent, which attracts night flyers like bats and moths.

Bright colorful flowers tend to attract brightly colored pollinators. It is a fact that hummingbirds are drawn to tubular red flowers but their taste is somewhat more expansive than that. In the absence of their favorites, they seek out other blooms that may have nectar

(their sugar source) and minute insects (yes, they are busy insect-eaters), but scent is not important. Butterflies will seek out brightly colored flowers in reds and purples with a slight scent. They prefer an inflorescence that provides a landing pad, hence lantana is a favorite.

When trying to attract butterflies, remember that the juveniles might not look like adults. What people sometimes forget is that butterflies start off as leaf-eating caterpillars which may not eat the same food as adults and may eat nectar. Be prepared to sacrifice some leaves early, to see a beautiful butterfly later.

Dr. Angela O'Callaghan, Social Horticulturist

Rewards of physical activity

5 ways physical activity lowers your risk for heart disease



- 1. Aerobic activities** like brisk walking or jogging can lower blood pressure 5 to 10 mmHg. That translates into a 10 to 20% reduction in heart attack risk.
- 2. Smokers** who become physically active are more likely to stop smoking — or at least smoke less.
- 3. Exercise** helps control blood sugar levels and can reduce the heart-related complications linked to diabetes.
- 4. Physical activity** can increase HDL (good cholesterol) and decrease LDL (bad cholesterol).

5. Calories burned by regular activity help control weight and prevent obesity.

Source: American College of Sports Medicine: HopeHealth~No. 10762

Upcoming 4-H Camps

Day Camps

It's time to register for one of Cooperative Extension's 4-H Science, Technology, Engineering & Math (S.T.E.M.) day camps this summer. The first day camp, open to youth ages 7-11, is scheduled from June 24-26; the second day camp, open to youth ages 9-14, is scheduled from July 15-17. Both camps will start at 9 a.m. and conclude at 4 p.m. and include activities in plant & animal sciences, health & nutrition, computer science, aerospace and more!

Each camp varies, but every participant can expect to have fun doing a variety of hands-on activities such as cooking healthy snacks, viewing and handling some desert animals, launching paper rockets, exploring desert plant life, playing cooperative games and using computer programs. 4-H S.T.E.M. day camps remind youth that learning can be fun!

Cooperative Extension's Lifelong Learning Center is located at 8050 Paradise Road (at I-215 & Windmill Lane). Cost of the day camp is \$60 per person per camp and includes snacks and activities. Sibling registration is \$45 per person per session.

Please note that previous 4-H experience is not required.

Overnight Camp

Cooperative Extension Southern Area's 4-H camp is being held at the Nevada State 4-H Camp at beautiful Lake Tahoe from July 27-August 1, 2014. Registration is open to campers between the ages of 9-15 until the camp is full.

This year's camp utilizes the 4-H Science, Technology, Engineering & Math (S.T.E.M.) program. During the six days, campers will participate in activities centering on nature, healthy lifestyles, alternative energy, Global Positioning Systems (GPS), rocketry, dramatic arts, leadership, creative arts, and much more.

Cost of the camp is \$385 and includes transportation, meals and activities. If you would like your child to attend camp, please [email](mailto:karen.best@unr.edu) Karen Best or call her at 702-257-5538.

Please note that previous 4-H experience is not required.



4-H is an organization that primarily focuses on positive youth development and is open to all youth ages 5 to 19. 4-H is a community of young people across America learning leadership, citizenship, life skills and technical skills through active participation in events, projects and community service. 4-H is the largest out-of-school youth organization in the United States with over 7 million members. There are over 49,000 young people engaged in 4-H programs across the state of Nevada. 4-H is delivered in many different settings including community and project clubs, military and 4-H afterschool programs; special interest groups; school enrichment; faith-based; camping and more.

Cooperative Extension's mission:

Discover: by assessing community needs; understanding emerging issues; *Develop:* science-based programs to help resolve the needs of community residents; *Disseminate:* through evidence-based educational programs; classes and publications; *Preserve:* by publishing findings via curriculum and fact sheets and demonstrate knowledge to strengthen the social, economic and environmental well-being of people.

Southern Area Cooperative Extension has offices and offers programming in Clark and Lincoln counties. Office locations and phone numbers are:

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Las Vegas 702-222-3130

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