

CLV Copper Wire Theft Assessment

City Council Briefing
February 27, 2024



Submitted after Final Agenda
Date 8/19/2024 Item 46
by Staff

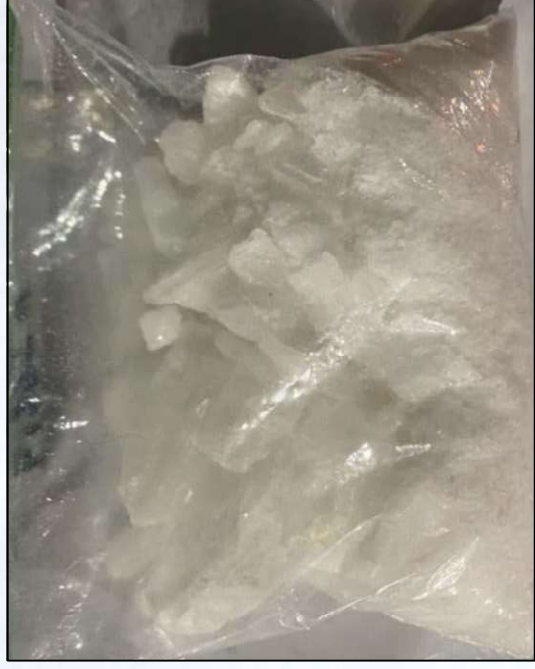
Submitted at Recommending Meeting
Date 8/19/2024 Item 5
by Staff

Other Factors

- Moderate climates
- Densely populated areas



Contributing factors



Drug use

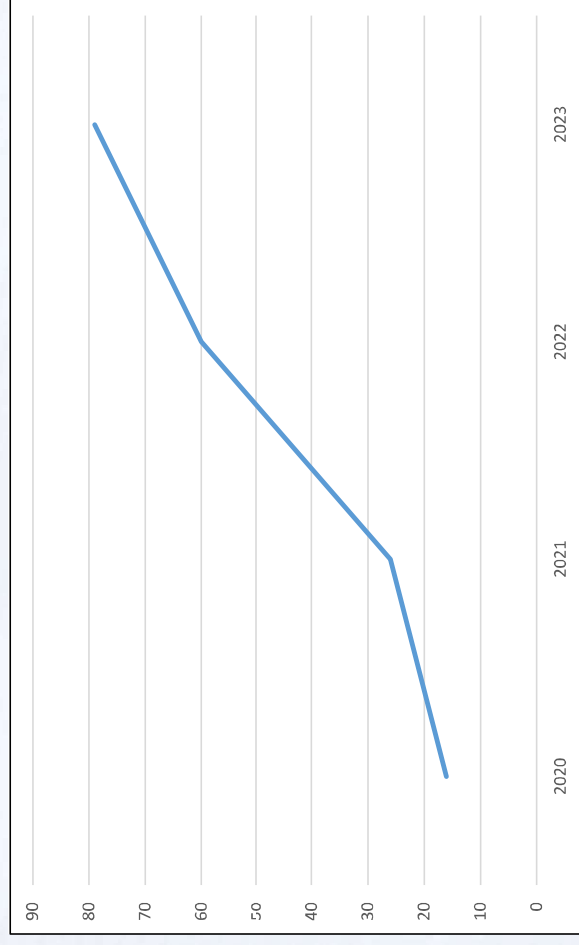
Supply of crystal meth & fentanyl on streets is high - fueling addiction, mental illness and homelessness



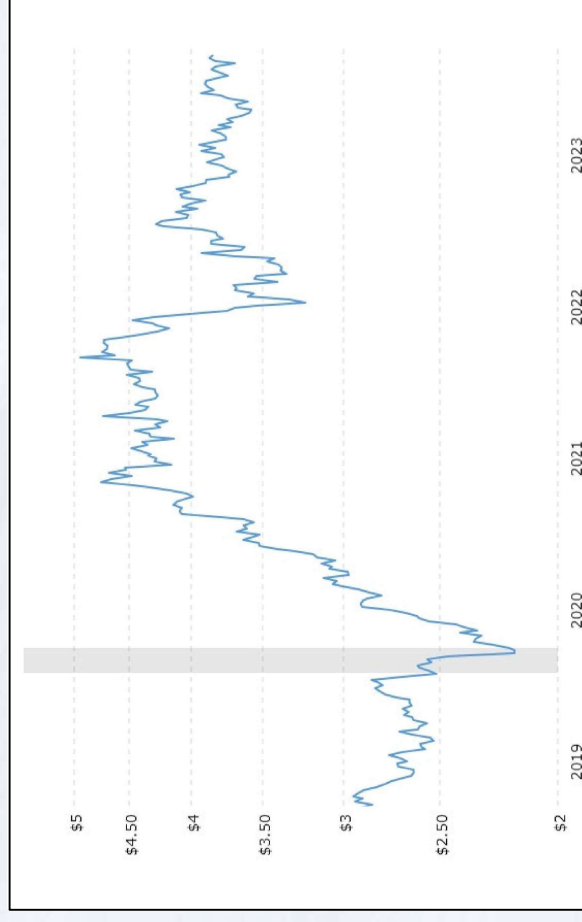
Proximity to scrap metal yards



Effect of price of copper



LVMPD-tracked copper theft occurrences



Copper cost (per lb)

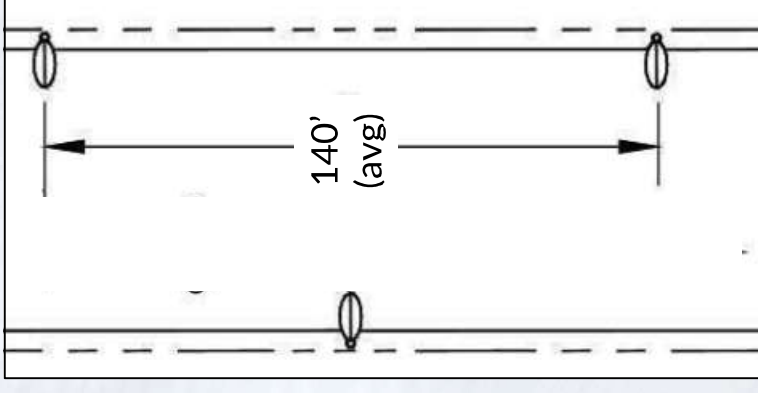
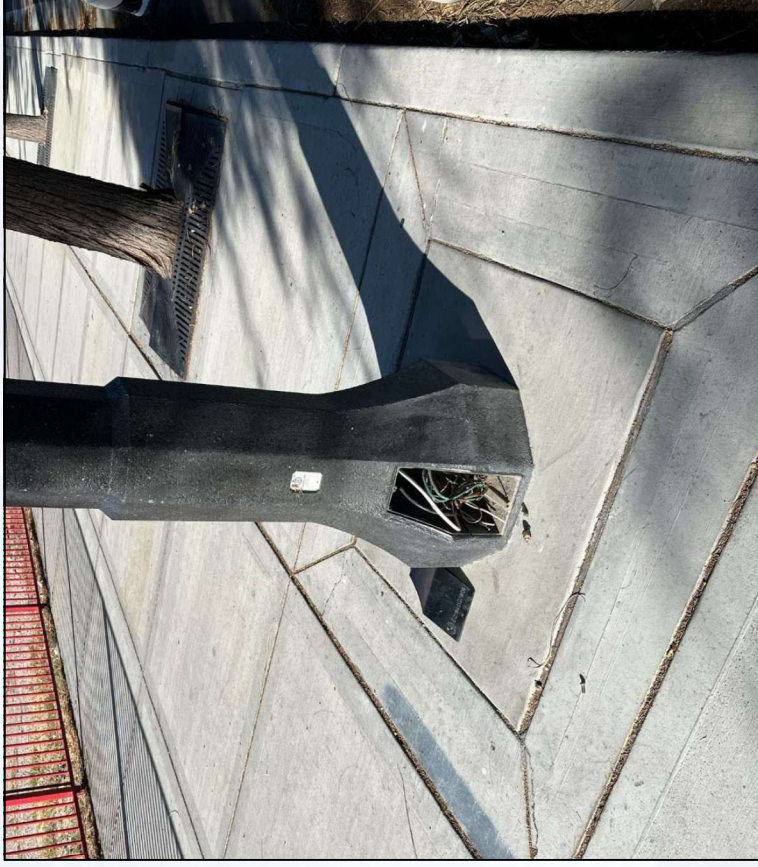


CLV assets

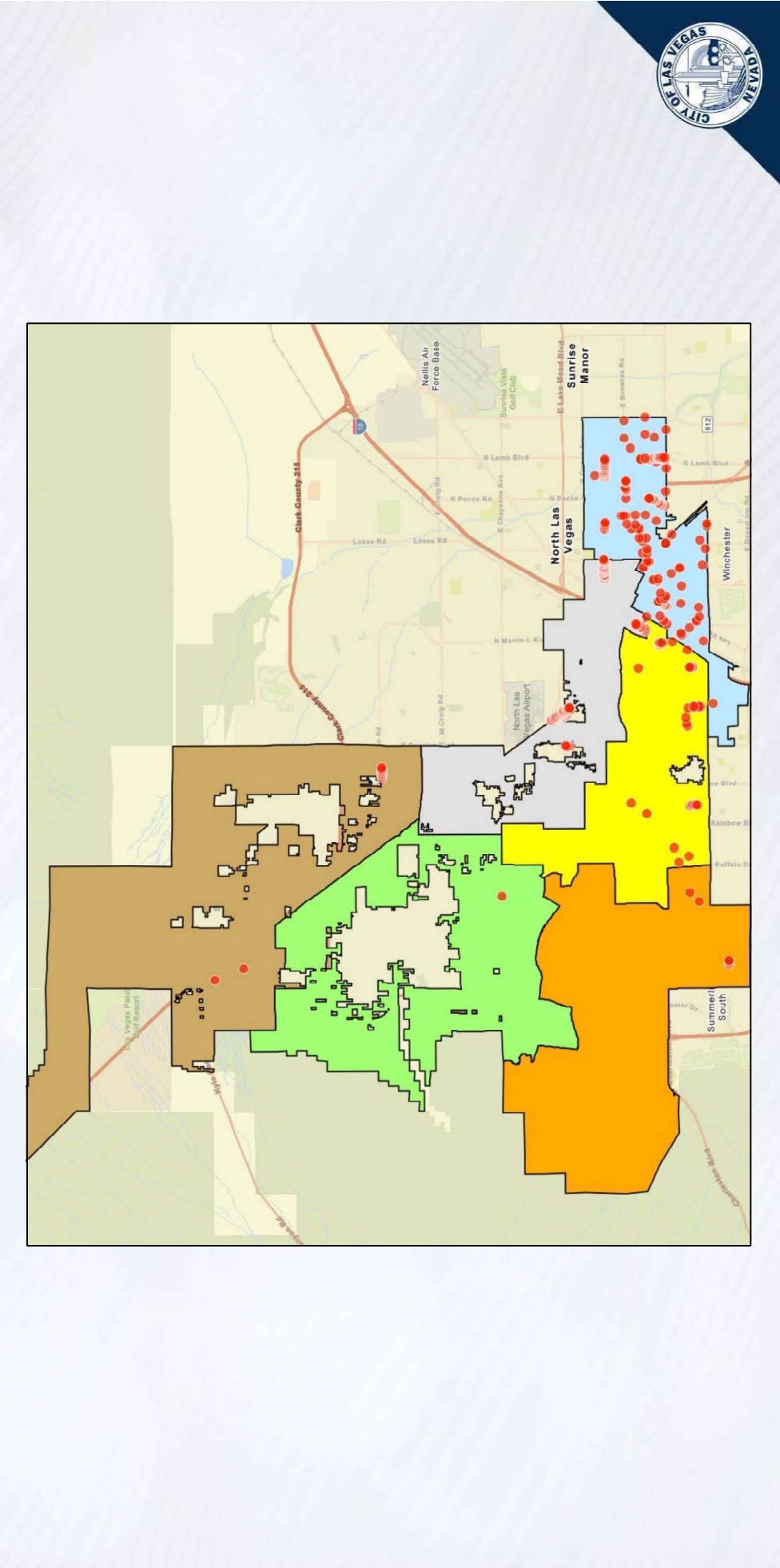
- 61,000 streetlights
- 10,000 park and area lights



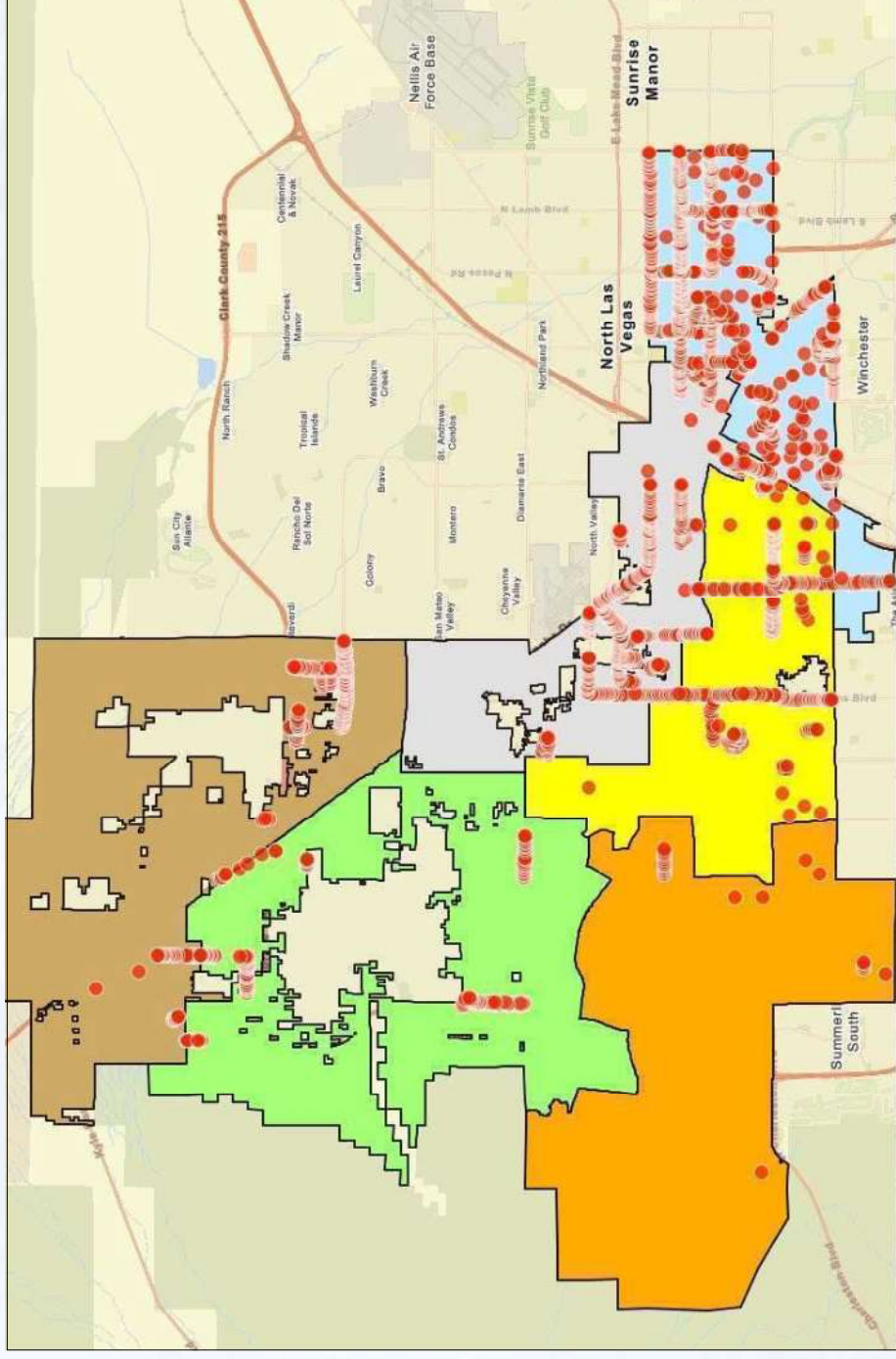
Streetlight basics



Wire theft locations - 2023



Wire theft locations - 2024





\$1,500,000
in materials
and labor
expended since
January 2022

Impact to CLV operations

- **500,000 LF (~100 miles!) copper wire stolen**
 - ~3,200 spans between light poles affected
 - Street value exceeding \$500,000
- **800+ work orders/tasks completed**
 - Averaging nearly 300 man-hours per month



Wire theft Damage



Current theft mitigation measures



Public Works

- Aluminum wire replacement
- Welding of hand hole covers
- Use of lockable hand hole covers
- Gluing pull box lids
- Participation in LVMPD's Metal Task Force



Current theft mitigation measures

DPS

- Reporting
 - Tip line: (702) 229-3223
 - <https://scraptheftalert.com>
 - Reward program – lead to arrest and conviction
- Coordination with recycling centers
- Copper wire theft signage
- Proactive policing



Next steps & potential solutions

- Metal Task Force participation
- **Proactive police work**
 - Target hardening – CPTED (alarms, welding shut hole covers and caps)
 - Security cameras (covert/overt) and LPRS in hot locations
 - Data-driven assessments – hot people, locations and times
 - Encampments around recycling yards
 - GPS bait/trackers in copper spools of wire
 - Recruiting street recyclers as **informants**
 - Consider utilizing **undercover officers** to target nefarious recyclers
 - Revising **LEADS online** to ensure that they partner with recyclers on type of copper wire brought in, ID etc.



Next steps & potential solutions

- **Legislative efforts**

Legislation similar to drug stores and pseudoephedrine (Sudafed) – requiring license and/or identification, fingerprint & signing a log – **NRS 647** addresses many below with exception of:

- NO cash transactions over 30 dollars or consider no cash transaction at all
- Maximum one transaction per day
- Checks mailed to street address not less than ten days later
- No acceptance of burned wire
- Also a crime if recycler makes multiple transactions to keep values under \$30 threshold
- Must have a vehicle – no shopping carts or walk-ins

Also, further emphasis with what 647NRS presently addresses:

- Proof of contracting business license if bringing in copper wire
- Proof of residency, employment, and vehicle



Value of Proposed Ordinance

- **Slowing Down Low Level Thieves**
 - Seller transported metal by means of a motor-vehicle – and prohibited to walk up or with shopping cart.
 - Metal not burned in whole or part – unless seller identifies where it was obtained from with documentation lawfully obtained and burned. Documentation may include an affidavit.
 - Payment is made by check or money order and payment not made less than 10 days – unless holds a business license.
 - Specified metallic wire – solid, single strand or multi-strand wire made of non-ferrous metal- diameter greater than AWG#10 – used in municipal or utility operations





Fisher Brothers
2950 S. Rancho Drive, Suite 204
Las Vegas, NV 89102
P: 702-899-3037

July 29, 2024

Mayor Carolyn Goodman
Mayor Pro Tem Brian Knudsen
City of Las Vegas
495 South Main Street
Las Vegas, Nevada 89101

Re: Copper Theft and Public Safety Issues Surrounding Metal Recycling Facilities

Dear Mayor Goodman and Mayor Pro Tem Knudsen,

Thank you both for your efforts to develop commonsense reforms to combat the increasingly dangerous and costly issue of copper theft and associated crimes in the Las Vegas valley. As you are aware, this criminal activity is largely concentrated in areas surrounding metal recycling facilities, where illegally obtained copper and other materials are sold. We have experienced the financial and public safety effects of these crimes firsthand which have also strained government services and created an environment where crimes of opportunity flourish despite best efforts of law enforcement.

In addition to the documented copper theft from city light poles, businesses like ours are also experiencing theft of copper installed in buildings and other recyclable material on a regular basis. As we work to enhance the economy and quality of life in Las Vegas by creating unique immersive and experiential attractions for both locals and visitors, these crimes are particularly harmful. We sincerely appreciate and fully support your ongoing efforts to identify the source of this illegal activity and establish commonsense solutions to the growing problem.

It is our understanding that the recycling industry has expressed an apparent burden in ensuring they do not purchase stolen goods and in vetting potential sellers as legitimate purveyors of legally obtained materials. We further understand that a recycling center denying entry to anyone who might be selling stolen goods or who might have a criminal background may pose a threat to employees. While these concerns might warrant some consideration, we do not believe they supersede implementing commonsense reforms or justify fostering an underground market for stolen copper and other materials at great expense to the local business community and taxpayers, in addition to creating a significant public safety risk.

To support our position, I respectfully submit the attached materials which contain photographs of the environment within our property and on neighboring public streets as well as a list of contact with law enforcement to combat these crimes.

Submitted after final agenda

Date 8/19/24 Item 46
By: Tony Celeste

Submitted At
Recommending Meeting

Date: 8/19/24 Item: 5
By: Tony Celeste

Without reservation, we stand in support of your proposed ordinance to remedy this situation. We commend your stance on this issue and remain available to discuss the matter further at your convenience.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'KS', with a stylized flourish extending to the right.

Kyle Sutherland
Fisher Brothers
Director of Development

SAMPLE OF INCIDENTS REPORTED TO LAW ENFORCEMENT

DATE	PROPERTY/ ADDRESS	DESCRIPTION OF INCIDENT
3/6/23	Palms North/ 2901-2919 Meade Ave	The locks to the gates and all utility rooms had been cut. All electrical meters and wiring ripped off the exterior of the buildings leaving no power. HVAC units on roof torn apart. Walkie talkies and needles were also found on the roof.
3/30/23	Kelesis Builing/ 2880A Meade Ave	Someone broke into building, broke off plastic water line cap and flooded the entire first floor.
4/1/23	Kraft Building/ 2900 Meade Ave	Someone broke a water line in the irrigation causing water to flood the parking lot.
4/7/23	Meyers Building/ 2950 S. Rancho Dr	Break in occurred and caused broken water line upstairs that caused water to flood the upstairs and downstairs.
4/26/23	Kelesis Building/ 2882 Meade Ave	Vagrants broke into the back warehouse of 2882 and ripped out part of the electrical lines to steal the copper, back door was also removed.
4/24/23	Meyers Building/ 2950 S. Rancho Dr	Kicked in glass doors to suite 201, glass shattered. Two days later after boarding up the door they came back and kicked in the wood opening up the shattered doors again.
4/30/23	Kelesis Building/ 2880B Meade Ave	Front glass doors shatter after a rock thrown through it. Come to find out they stole a number of items from the tenant including 2 Flat screen TV's, Epson Over head projector, 12 kids bikes, Phone charger, a pair of brand-new Nike sneakers and a safe/lockbox with a keycard in it to the tenant space
5/1/23	Palace Warehouse/ 2800 S. Rancho Dr	All the electrical conduit to the south billboard removed causing the billboard lights to be non-operational.
5/3/23	Kelesis Building/ 2882 Meade Ave	Break in occurred, removing the water heater in the warehouse causing a broken water line to flood the warehouse and the back offices. They also started pulling all the electrical conduit from inside the suite.

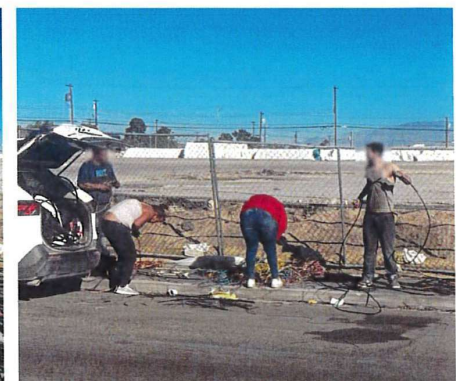
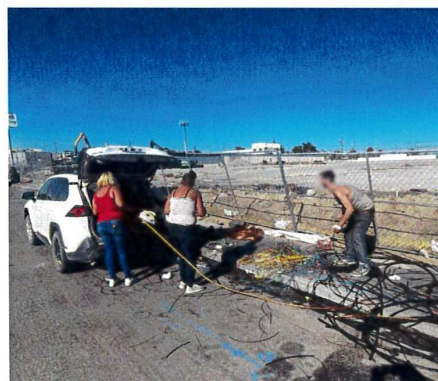
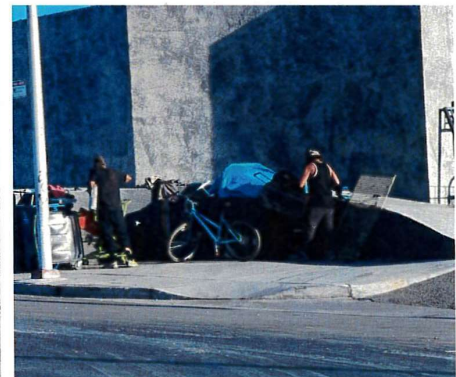
SAMPLE OF INCIDENTS REPORTED TO LAW ENFORCEMENT

DATE	PROPERTY/ ADDRESS	DESCRIPTION OF INCIDENT
5/16/23	Kelesis Building/ 2880B Meade Ave	Break into the exterior main electrical panel and fire room, they ripped out all of the electrical conduit causing no power to run to the property anymore. The pump station is also non-operable due to no power
5/21/23	Kraft Building/ 2900 Meade Ave	Some of the front panels to a couple HVAC units were off and appeared to be tampered with.
5/22/23	Humphreys Building/ 2900 S. Rancho Dr	A rock was thrown through a double pane window on the NW side of the building.
5/23/23	Meyers Building/ 2950 S. Rancho Dr	Two of the front glass doors were busted out to ste 102 & 105.
5/24/23	Palace Warehouse/ 2800 S. Rancho Dr	Burglar alarm triggered
5/28/23	Kelesis Building/ 2880 Meade Ave	A subject found inside Masco building stairway. Maintenance stated that subject was stripping cables from building.
6/2/23	Palms IV/ 2960-2972 Meade ave	A lock on the door to our utility room had been cut. The perpetrator chained the door shut and locked himself in the utility room. He was next going to access our roof to steal other metal and our HVAC units. He shut the disconnect switch off and was about to steal electric switches and conduits when we came upon him.
6/8/23	Meyers Building/ 2950 S. Rancho Dr	A man broke into one of the suites in the meyers building through the already boarded up doors.
6/25/23	Meyers Building/ 2950 S. Rancho Dr	Vandalized building, someone broke out multiple glass front doors and attempted to take electrical conduit.
6/30/23	Homeless Encampments	Reported to Marshals, city and county on 6/30/23
7/5/23	Homeless Encampments	Reported to Marshals, city and county on 7/5/23
7/19/23	Homeless Encampments	Reported to Marshals, city and county on 7/19/23
7/20/23	Homeless Encampments	Reported to marshal on 7/20/23
7/21/23	Homeless Encampments	Reported to marshal on 7/21/23
7/25/23	Homeless Encampments	Reported to marshal on 7/25/23
7/28/23	Homeless Encampments	Reported to marshal on 7/28/23
7/31/23	Homeless Encampments	Reported to Marshal on 7/31/23

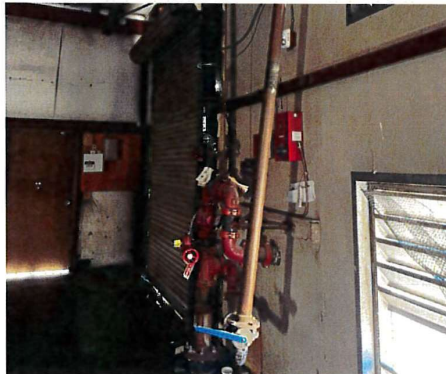
SAMPLE OF INCIDENTS REPORTED TO LAW ENFORCEMENT

DATE	PROPERTY/ ADDRESS	DESCRIPTION OF INCIDENT
8/3/23	Homeless Encampments	Reported to marshal on 8/3/23
8/7/23	Homeless Encampments	Reported to marshal on 8/7/23
8/9/23	Homeless Encampments	Reported to marshal on 8/9/23
8/16/23	Homeless Encampments	Reported to marshal on 8/16/23
8/21/23	Homeless Encampments	Reported to marshal on 8/21/23
8/30/23	Homeless Encampments	Reported to marshal on 8/30/2023
9/6/23	Homeless Encampments	Reported to marshal on 9/6/23
9/11/23	Homeless Encampments	Reported to Marshal on 9/11/23
9/14/23	Homeless Encampments	Reported to marshal on 9/14/23
10/4/23	Homeless Encampments	Reported to Marshal on 10/4/23
10/18/23	Homeless Encampments	Reported to marshal on 10/18/23
10/20/23	Homeless Encampments	Reported to marshal on 10/20/23
10/27/23	Homeless Encampments	Reported to marshal on 10/27/23
12/5/23	Palace Warehouse	Break into the building through the front building ventilation panels
12/6/23	Homeless Encampments	Reported to marshal on 12/6/23
12/6/23	Meyers Building/ 2950 S. Rancho Dr	Break in through boarded up door
12/13/23	Meyers Building/ 2950 S. Rancho Dr	Break in through boarded up door
1/3/24	Palace Warehouse	Electrical Vandalism
1/17/24	Homeless Encampments	Reported to Marshal on 1/17/24
1/19/24	Homeless Encampments	Reported to Marshal on 1/19/24
1/29/24	Homeless Encampments	Reported to marshal on 1/29/24
2/14/24	Homeless Encampments	Reported to marshal on 2/14/24
3/20/24	Homeless Encampments	Reported to marshal on 3/20/24
5/1/24	Homeless Encampments	Reported to marshal on 5/1/24
5/7/24	Homeless Encampments	Reported to marshal on 5/7/24
5/7/24	Palace Warehouse	HVAC Cage Vandalism - stripped wiring
5/15/24	Homeless Encampments	Reported to marshal 5/15/24
5/28/24	Meyers Building/ 2950 S. Rancho Dr	Vandalism of switch gear behind building
7/17/24-7/19/24	2950 Sirius Drive	On three separate days, multiple individuals trespassed onto private property on an active construction site and entered a building. Individuals also seen looking into employee vehicles.

COMMUNITY & PROPERTY PHOTOS



COMMUNITY & PROPERTY PHOTOS



From:

To: 7023824803

08/20/2024 16:48

#022 P.002



RECEIVED

2024 AUG 20 PM 4:44

OFFICE OF THE CITY CLERK

August 15, 2024

City of Las Vegas
495 S. Main St.
Las Vegas, NV 89101

Re: Southern Nevada Home Builders Association (SNHBA) supports Bill No. 2024-22: An ordinance of the City Council of the City of Las Vegas which adopts prohibitions and limitations regarding the purchase of scrap metal, consistent with and supplementary to State law.

Mayor, City Council, and Staff:

SNHBA is in support of the ordinance and appreciates the efforts by the City of Las Vegas to make it more difficult to sell scrap metal by requiring written evidence identifying the seller and requiring the payment of scrap metal be made by check or electronic transfer of money 10 days after the transaction.

However, SNHBA strongly encourages expanding the definition of "scrap metal" to include "12-gauge and 14-gauge Romex." This would benefit the home builders as it would encompass the more common kind of scrap metal being stolen and recycled from home building sites throughout the valley.

The theft of metal construction materials from home building sites impacts our ability to control the cost of new housing. The metal construction thefts result in the cost of replacing the stolen goods and the cost associated with securing our sites, which often is not enough to detour criminals.

In addition to adding to the cost of new housing, the metal construction thefts also result in a strain on emergency services as law enforcement and, in some cases, medical services are needed for homebuilder employees in the aftermath.

Broadening the definition of scrap metal will enhance public safety, help control the cost of building new homes, remove the incentive of stealing from construction sites, and help the consumer overall who ultimately bears the costs of these types of thefts.

Thank you in advance for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Tina Frias, CEO
Southern Nevada Home Builders Association

Submitted after final agenda

Item 46

From:

To:7023824803

08/20/2024 16:48

#022 P.001

RECEIVED

2024 AUG 20 PM 4:45

OFFICE OF THE CITY CLERK

**SNHBA Letter of Support for Bill No. 2024-22- Agenda Item #46
Las Vegas City Council- 8-21-24**