



Legislation Text

File #: 13-0853, **Version:** 1

Recommendation to, by motion of the City Council, request City Manager to report back within 30 days with an assessment of the feasibility of Mr. Osterhoudt's proposal to locate a cyclone roller coaster in Long Beach.

Early History of Long Beach and Its Love of Roller Coasters: In 1902, Long Beach set about to become a major tourist destination in Southern California with the opening of the Pine Avenue Pier, Pacific and Electric Trolley, a Walk of a Thousand Lights and a grand public bathhouse. In 1907, Long Beach got its first roller coaster, followed in 1915 with the opening of the Jackrabbit Racer near the foot of Cedar Avenue adjacent to the area known as Silver Spray Pier. The roller coaster extended over the ocean.

Always the competitor with Coney Island amusements in Brooklyn, New York, which introduced the cyclone race in 1927, Long Beach soon had its own Cyclone Racer in 1930. Thousands flocked to this wooden dual-track roller coaster, built on wood pilings over the ocean. It was considered the largest and fastest in the US. The ride was called "racer" because there were two cars on two separate tracks that raced each other. It is estimated that by the time the Cyclone Racer was closed in 1968, more than 30 million had taken rides on it.

The World's Greatest Ride: Larry Osterhoudt, a Cyclone Race Project Designer, is proposing to re-create the Silver Spray Pier and the Cyclone Racer with a construction he has named "The World's Greatest Ride". Recently, Mr. Osterhoudt released Google Earth maps outlining potential locations for this 2.5 acre project: adjacent to the Lighthouse south of the Aquarium or by the Queen Mary. Mr. Osterhoudt has indicated that he has secured investors for this project. Either location would generate considerable tourism dollars for the City of Long Beach. (The Economic Development Corporation of New York has announced it is rebuilding the "Thunderbolt" roller coaster on Coney Island as a way to help bring Coney Island back to being one of the top tourist destinations in the world.)

Lost Opportunities: Long Beach has failed to seize many economic opportunities offered in the past years: Port Disney, Tesla Motors and the porting of the U.S.S. Iowa. Bringing back a cyclone roller coaster could potentially revitalize the Queensway Bay development and provide additional synergy for the Aquarium, Shoreline Village and Pine Avenue establishments.

To be determined by the City Manager.

Approve recommendation.

GERRIE SCHIPSKE
COUNCILWOMAN, FIFTH DISTRICT

