



Agenda Item # \_\_\_\_\_

# Staff Report

## City of Manhattan Beach

**TO:** Honorable Mayor Ward and Members of City Council

**THROUGH:** Geoff Dolan, City Manager

**FROM:** Rod Uyeda, Chief of Police  
Derrick Abell, Lieutenant

**DATE:** August 15, 2006

**SUBJECT:** Update of City Council's Work Plan Item Regarding Bicycle Safety Awareness with the Introduction of Ordinance No. 2091 Prohibiting Luge and Destructive Skateboarding throughout the City

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**RECOMMENDATION:**

Staff recommends that the City Council introduce and waive further reading of Ordinance No. 2091 prohibiting luge and destructive skateboarding throughout the City.

**FISCAL IMPLICATION:**

None

**BACKGROUND:**

In June of 2005, the City Council decided on 28 items to focus on during the fiscal years of 2005 – 2007. One of the items was Bicycle Safety Awareness which was to include safety awareness outreach targeting bicyclists, pedestrians, skateboarders, and rollerbladers. This report will address skateboarders.

Luge skateboarding is a gravity-powered activity that involves riding a skateboard in the seated, lying or prone position down a paved road, sidewalk or organized course. Luge skateboarding is most often conducted on surface streets that have more than a 3% grade for the purpose of generating speed quickly. Manhattan Beach has many streets that exceed the 3% grade and some streets that exceed 19%.

Some skateboarders also find it challenging to “jump” their skateboards on various objects in public places such as benches, planters, handrails and other solid structures, often causing damage in many cases (i.e. scuff marks, surface gouges and paint damage). In addition, riding skateboards in this manner is inherently dangerous.

Recognizing the potential dangers and damage associated with luge and destructive skateboarding, the Police Department is taking a proactive approach by providing safety awareness information and education to the residents of Manhattan Beach at community meetings and through their

School Resource Officer. The Police Department is also recommending prohibiting this dangerous and destructive activity.

**DISCUSSION:**

Over the years, skateboarding has become a popular source of activity in Manhattan Beach. Skateboard riders in Manhattan Beach skateboard on residential streets, in public parking lots, and other areas that are not designated by the Chief of Police as being closed to such activities. Skateboarders also have the option of going to “skateparks” located in Hermosa Beach, El Segundo, Hawthorne and Torrance. Although Manhattan Beach skateboarders have a number of locations to ride their skateboards, there are currently no restrictions on luge or destructive skateboard riding.

Luge skateboarders lay flat on their skateboards, or sit, and attempt to ride down an incline placing themselves, pedestrians and motorists in danger. The skateboard is maneuvered by shifting one’s weight and the skateboard is stopped by placing both feet on the ground. Even though many skateboard riders wear safety equipment (helmet, elbow and knee pads and wrist guards), this activity is very dangerous outside of a controlled environment because the rider is at such a low angle that they become virtually invisible for automobiles.

In June of 2001, an eleven year old boy was run over and killed in El Segundo while riding his skateboard. The young boy was lying down on his back on his skateboard while riding through a store parking lot. A motorist driving a Chevrolet Suburban backed out of a parking stall and pulled forward to drive to the store’s exit when he ran over the boy. The motorist stated that he did not even see the child. This tragic accident was the result of the motorist not being able to see the boy riding his skateboard in a luge position.

According to statistics compiled by Skaters for Public Skateparks, an average of one young person per week dies in a skateboarding accident outside of a skatepark in the United States. Of the 14 fatalities of skateboarders reported in the United States in the first quarter of this year, all involved colliding with a motor vehicle.

Although a number of surrounding cities have adopted municipal codes that generally regulate the use of skateboards, none of the cities researched have specific language that addresses luge or destructive skateboarding. The County of Los Angeles has adopted a municipal code that specifically addresses the use of skateboards on streets that have a grade of more than three percent. This municipal code section reads as follows: LACMC section 15.54.010 (Skateboards – Prohibited on greater than three-percent grade)

*No person shall ride on or propel any skateboard, as defined in section 15.08.185 LACMC, on any county road, street, highway, lane or alley which has a grade in excess of three percent, nor shall any person ride or propel any skateboard on any county road, street, highway, lane or alley in excess of 10 miles per hour.*

In Manhattan Beach, skateboarding is legal except in places designated by the Chief of Police in which appropriate signs have been posted. In order to specifically address luge and destructive skateboarding, the City Attorney has proposed language that would prohibit luge and destructive skateboarding throughout Manhattan Beach. The additional language added to MBMC section

14.28.160 (Skateboarding) reads as follows:

*(b) Notwithstanding the forgoing it shall be prohibited throughout the City, whether on public or private property, for any person to ride or propel a skateboard in a luge, prone or seated position or ride or propel a skateboard in such a way as to make contact with a planter, retaining wall, wall, railing, or decorative architectural feature of any kind. Signage shall not be necessary for enforcement of this subsection.*

This proposed municipal code section addresses skateboarding on public or private property that results in damage to said property. It specifically addresses destructive skateboarding in cases where property has been damaged as a result of the skateboarder riding on or against the property. For example, skateboarders have been known to lay their skateboard on top of a handrail and attempt to ride on the skateboard down the handrail causing scuff marks and paint damage.

Enforcement of luge and destructive skateboarding in Manhattan Beach is just one of many tools to address this activity. The Police Department believes it is also necessary to educate the residents of Manhattan Beach about the dangers and hazards associated with luge and destructive skateboarding. By educating our community, we also provide an opportunity to create open dialogue with neighbors to report any luge or destructive skateboarding they might observe. We also believe that parents of young skateboarders will also become informed and talk to their children about the dangers and consequences of luge and destructive skateboarding.

It should be noted that the Police Department has not received any complaints regarding destructive rollerblading or rollerskating. Hence, rollerbladers and rollerskaters were not included in this ordinance.

The Police Department has prepared an educational flyer regarding luge and destructive skateboarding to be distributed to the community and schools, prior to actual enforcement, in an effort to continue our educational safety awareness campaign. The flyers will be distributed by our Neighborhood Watch program coordinators and Manhattan Beach schools at the beginning of the school year (fall 2006). This educational flyer provides information about the dangers and hazards associated with luge and destructive skateboarding and local laws that prohibit this activity.

The goal of the Police Department is to provide the youth of Manhattan Beach with an environment where their riding experience is safe and enjoyable. The addition of the proposed City Municipal Code and educational safety awareness campaign information will assist the Police Department and our community in accomplishing this goal.

**ATTACHMENTS: a. Proposed Ordinance Prohibiting Luge Skateboarding  
b. Luge Skateboarding Educational Flyer**

- c: Robert Wadden, City Attorney
- Neil Miller, Public Works Director
- Richard Gill, Parks and Recreation Director
- Dennis Groat, Fire Chief

ORDINANCE NO. 2091

AN ORDINANCE OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF MANHATTAN BEACH, CALIFORNIA, AMENDING SECTION 14.28.160 OF CHAPTER 14.28 OF TITLE 14 OF THE MANHATTAN BEACH MUNICIPAL CODE TO PROHIBIT LUGE AND OTHER DESTRUCTIVE SKATEBOARDING

THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF MANHATTAN BEACH, CALIFORNIA, DOES ORDAIN AS FOLLOWS:

SECTION 1. The City Council hereby makes the following findings:

- A. Presently skateboarding is legal throughout the City except in places designated by the Chief of Police in which appropriate signs have been posted. There is no prohibition against luge skateboarding (where a skateboarder rides his or her board in a prone or sitting position) or against riding a skateboard on planters, railings, walls, retaining walls or other architectural features.
- B. Luge skateboarding, whether on public or private property is highly dangerous because the profile of the rider is so reduced that drivers of vehicles have a much more difficult time seeing and avoiding the rider. Luge skateboarding has resulted in fatalities in other jurisdictions. The practice of jumping skateboards onto planters, retaining walls, walls, railings or other architectural features is highly destructive of those elements.
- C. It is in the interest of the public health, safety and welfare to adopt an ordinance which will ban the practice of luge skateboarding and jumping or making contact with walls and other architectural features.

SECTION 2. The City Council of the City of Manhattan Beach hereby amends Sections 14.28.160 of Chapter 14.28 of Title 14 the Manhattan Beach Municipal Code as follows:

**“14.28.160 Skateboarding**

(a). No person shall ride or propel any skateboard or similar device along, across or upon any street, sidewalk, school, park, public parking lot, parking facility or structure, public right-of-way, or other public property, designated by the Chief of Police as being closed to such activities.

The Chief of Police is authorized to designate such streets, sidewalks, schools, parks, public parking lots, parking facilities or structures, public rights-of-way, or other public property, and cause the posting as required in this section. This prohibition shall not be effective unless signs are posted on the street, sidewalk, school, park, parking lot, parking facility or structure, right of way, or other public property, so designated by the Chief of Police.

(b). Notwithstanding the foregoing it shall be prohibited throughout the City, whether on public or private property, for any person to ride or propel a skateboard in a luge, prone or sitting position or to ride or propel a skateboard in such a way as to make contact with a planter, retaining wall, wall, railing or other architectural feature of any kind. Signage shall not be necessary for enforcement of this subsection.

(c). Any violation of this section shall be a misdemeanor.”

SECTION 3. If any sentence, clause, or phrase of this Ordinance is for any reason held to be unconstitutional or otherwise invalid, such decision shall not affect the validity of the remaining provisions of this Ordinance. The City Council hereby declares that it would have passed this Ordinance and each sentence, clause or phrase thereof irrespective of the fact that any one or more sentences, clauses or phrases be declared unconstitutional or otherwise invalid.

SECTION 4. Any provisions of the Manhattan Beach Municipal Code, or appendices thereto, or any other Ordinance of the City, to the extent that they are inconsistent with this Ordinance, and no further, are hereby repealed.

SECTION 5. This Ordinance shall go into effect and be in full force and operation from and after thirty days after its final passage and adoption.

SECTION 6. The City Clerk shall cause this Ordinance or a summary thereof to be published and, if appropriate, posted, as provided by law. Any summary shall be published and a certified copy of the full text of this Ordinance posted in the Office of the City Clerk at least five (5) days prior to the City Council meeting at which this Ordinance is to be adopted. Within fifteen (15) days after the adoption of this Ordinance, the City Clerk shall cause a summary to be published with the names of those City Council members voting for and against this Ordinance and shall post in the Office of the City Clerk a certified copy of the full text of this Ordinance along with the names of those City Council members voting for and against the Ordinance.

PASSED, APPROVED and ADOPTED this 5th day of September, 2006.

AYES:  
NOES:  
ABSENT:  
ABSTAIN:

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Mayor, City of Manhattan Beach, California

ATTEST:

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City Clerk



# Luge and Destructive Skateboarding Prohibited in Manhattan Beach

**Luge skateboarding is an extreme gravity-powered activity that involves riding a street luge board down a paved road or course.**

Over the years, skateboarding has become a popular activity in Manhattan Beach. Skateboarders are often seen on residential streets, in public parking lots, and other non-restricted areas. "Luge" skateboarders lie flat on their skateboards and go down hilly streets placing themselves, pedestrians and motorists in danger.

Sometimes skateboarders damage private and public property when riding or landing on planters, hand rails, retaining walls, and other property. The Manhattan Beach Police Department is taking a proactive approach by providing skateboarding safety awareness and education. Manhattan Beach Municipal code section 14.28.160 (skateboarding) **now prohibits "luge" skateboarding** and reads as follows:

*(b) Notwithstanding the forgoing it shall be prohibited throughout the City, whether on public or private property, for any person to ride or propel a skateboard in a luge or prone position or ride or propel a skateboard in such a way as to make contact with a planter, retaining wall, wall railing, or decorative feature of any kind. Signage shall not be necessary for enforcement of this subsection.*

## Together we can promote skateboarding safety.



**Please talk to your child about the dangers of "luge" skateboarding and the City's skateboarding restrictions.**



For questions, please contact Lieutenant Derrick Abell at (310) 802-5165.