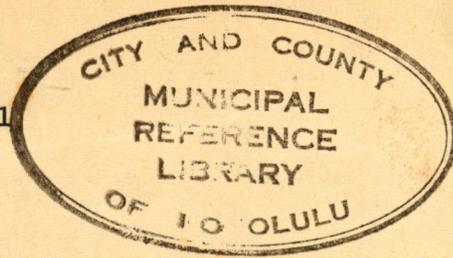


*Drag Racing in Honolulu*  
*Drag racing X Honolulu*  
May 26, 1960

*Honolulu, Mayor.*

Honorable Members of the City Council  
City and County of Honolulu  
Honolulu, Hawaii



GV1029.3  
H6  
1960

Gentlemen:

Relative to the communication of April 12, 1960, please be informed that the Honolulu Police Department and the Department of Parks and Recreation investigated the pros and cons setting aside an area for drag-racing. I am now in receipt of the Police Department's findings and recommendations with which the Parks and Recreation Department is in accord. Attached is a copy for your information.

I concur with this report and strongly recommend that your Honorable Body give serious consideration to the recommendations in the said report.

Sincerely,

(S) NEAL S. BLAISDELL  
NEAL S. BLAISDELL  
Mayor

City and County of Honolulu

Enc.

MAYOR'S MESSAGE NO. 359

GV1029.3  
H6  
1960

**For Reference**

**Not to be taken from this room**

May 12, 1960

485.1  
5/12/60

Honorable Neal S. Blaisdell, Mayor  
City and County of Honolulu  
Honolulu, Hawaii

Attention: Mr. Charles G. Clark  
Managing Director  
City and County of Honolulu

Dear Sir:

In compliance with your directive of April 25 requesting recommendations in the matter of setting aside an area to provide for drag-racing, we submit the following article published in the Traffic Digest and Review issued by the Traffic Institute of Northwestern University, Vol. 5, January, 1957, on the subject of "Against Hot Rodding and Drag Strips" by Pierce J. Fleming, Deputy Chief of Police, Chicago Park District Police, as it clearly reflects the views and the position of this Department in this matter.

"The duty of police officers, as stipulated by state law, is to arrest offenders, preserve the peace, and protect life and property.

The channeling of police interest, personnel and planning into so-called crime prevention activities such as drag strips is a perversion of public funds and deprives the public of the police protection they have the right to expect. We are paying the price of increased crime rates in just about every community in the United States for the practice of reducing the effective patrol power of the police department by using officers on duties that do not prevent crime nor do they cause apprehension of offenders after a crime has been committed.

The treatment of psychotic individuals, the studying of causes of crime and the leadership of juvenile activities belong with the people who have special training in these fields. It matters little to the man or woman who is assaulted or robbed on a public street or the pedestrian who is struck by a hit-and-run driver, that the police officer who should have been on patrol in the area is doing a find job of so-called crime prevention by organizing undisciplined teen-agers or immature adults so that they can main themselves on a drag strip.

Our next consideration is that public agencies must not be used to further the interests of commercial money-making projects.

Hot rod strips, stock car racing and midget car racing have all been lucrative sources of income for promoters. The magazine "Speed Age" in its June, 1956 issue tells us that the drag strip or hot rodding field is controlled and dominated by two association, The National Hot Road Association with the editor of

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the lucrative "Hot Rod" magazine as president, and the Automobile Timing Association of America sponsored by an automotive products company to the tune of \$40,000 annually. The latter association also is assisted with money from a spark plug company, a carburetor company, a tool company and a growing list of automotive specialty manufacturers interested in developing the big money hot rod special parts market.

On the West Coast commercial organizations such as automobile dealers, garages, filling station operators, and oil companies have entered the field with sponsored vehicles developed to the point that the amateur has little chance of winning a prize or trophy. Therefore, he moves his activities to the street or highway. A friend of mine recently contacted me and tried to change my viewpoint as he was part of a group which had invested \$150,000 in a drag strip from which they expect to make a fortune.

Hot rodding, with its exhibition field, the drag strip, has for its purpose the placing of emphasis on unrestricted speed. The police know speed to be our number one traffic accident killer. Our safety themes of "Speed Kills" and "Slow down and Live" have no meaning if we support drag strips with their emphasis on competition as opposed to the police programs of cooperation in the operation of motor vehicles. Enforcement of traffic laws by the police and leadership in traffic safety programs are inconsistent and incongruous if the police become part of a mania for speed and self-expression. We of the police profession are concerned with the development of constructive activities for the youth of our country. We cannot and must not approve or be a part of destructive activities. The police cannot encourage by lip service or actual participation that which is decadent and built on a disregard for public safety.

No small amount of attention should be directed to the effect of hot rod exhibitions on the spectators who attend these affairs. The police know from experience that exposure to scenes of high speed driving influences the conduct of observers when they themselves get behind the wheel of an automobile. The result is that the break of a drag race crowd unleashes on the highways a horde of reckless drivers that must be seen to be believed. The police thus instead of eliminating reckless driving by sponsoring drag races simply multiply their problem by one thousand per cent.

Some chiefs of police have said drag strips are the answer to the problem of hot rodding. Let's examine this statement. Drag strips encourage the development and building of these engines of destruction. Many who are not now interested become interested when a drag strip is publicized and made available. Rather than removing the hot rod from

the street, drag strips result in more of these vehicles using our roadways 98 per cent of the time while using drag strips 2 per cent of their driving time.

Newspaper headlines, personal observation, and accident experience tell us the hot rod and its companion evil, the drag strip, encourage and develop unsocial attitudes in the operation of a motor vehicle. This unsocial attitude, which starts with a disregard for the laws of safe driving, later extends into other fields such as auto thefts gang rioting with automobiles in towns and on highways and in general a mounting disrespect for all social restrictions.

The development of sanctioned drag strips promotes the growth and development of wildcat strips with no notion of regulation, safety or otherwise. This is the condition at this time with only 75 sanctioned tracks in the U. S. and 502 drag strips in operation.

Add the stamp of police approval to such activities and you will find drag racing more prevalent than ever. With the increase we will find that many of the addicts will not be satisfied with regulation so they will move out on the public highways.

Most serious is the glorification of the motor vehicle as an instrument of competition, whereas for safety sake the automobile should be used as part of a cooperative public program of transportation and never as an outlet for emotional impulses.

The police attitude on drag strips sponsored or otherwise is well spelled out for any individual chief who has doubts as to what his position should be. In a strongly worded resolution adopted as its 63rd Annual conference in Chicago, the International Association of Chiefs of Police roundly condemned drag strips as a major contributor to the traffic accident problem. (See October 1956 Traffic Digest & Review)

If the police official is still in doubt, let us consider the statement issued by the American Automobile Association on August 4, 1955 when it disassociated itself from all types of auto racing. "Auto racing as now conducted in this country with emphasis on speed, power and human endurance is not compatible with one of the A.A.A. main objectives, namely the day to day promotion of street and highway safety."

Can the police say any less than the A.A.A. and still continue with the programs of enforcement against speed and the toll it takes of human life and property?

The police position on hot rodding and drag strips, whether sponsored or not, must be one of disapproval and absolute refusal to sponsor or organize such anti-social activities.

Supporters of this dangerous foolishness are absolutely right when they say that hotrodding provides an outlet for the emotions of our young people. Their error is in not understanding that young people have many emotions that are not compatible with community living. If we surrender the world of mature young people and experienced adults to the disturbed elements of our population, we are indeed in for a wild time of stabbing, shooting, gang wars, etc.

There certainly is no evidence that drag strip racing improves one's driving. Police Departments in fulfilling their designated responsibility of protecting life and property have directed their traffic safety activities toward the elimination of excessive speed and unsafe motor vehicle operators in highway traffic. This position would be incompatible and incongruous with participation or approval of drag racing." Unquote.

It should be pointed out also that the Police Department will be placed in an untenable position if it becomes necessary to place a criminal charge against one or more of the participants in a drag race when death occurs on a drag strip which has had a prior stamp of approval from the Police Department.

Further we do not feel that the setting aside of an area to provide for drag racing activity would greatly assist in the training of youths along certain mechanical lines. It would seem that the proper approach towards this end would be to expand the now existing vocational training facilities of the Department of Public Instruction to meet such need.

Respectfully submitted,

(S) DAN LIU  
DAN LIU  
Chief of Police

I concur with the view of the  
Honolulu Police Department.

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THEODORE F. NOBRIGA  
Superintendent of Parks & Recreation