



Shipwrecked

By John McLaurin, President,
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The Long Beach City Council is considering the transfer of Pier H, which includes the ill-fated Queen Mary, to the Long Beach Harbor Department.

Operation of the Queen Mary has passed through multiple organizations over the years, resulting in decades of disappointment, bankruptcies, and failure.

According to a 2017 Marine Survey of the vessel/hotel, the Queen Mary needed approximately \$289 million dollars for repairs. The report stated that **“...at this rate of corrosion some internal collapse of the Queen Mary’s structure will occur within 10 years unless major action is taken soon.”**

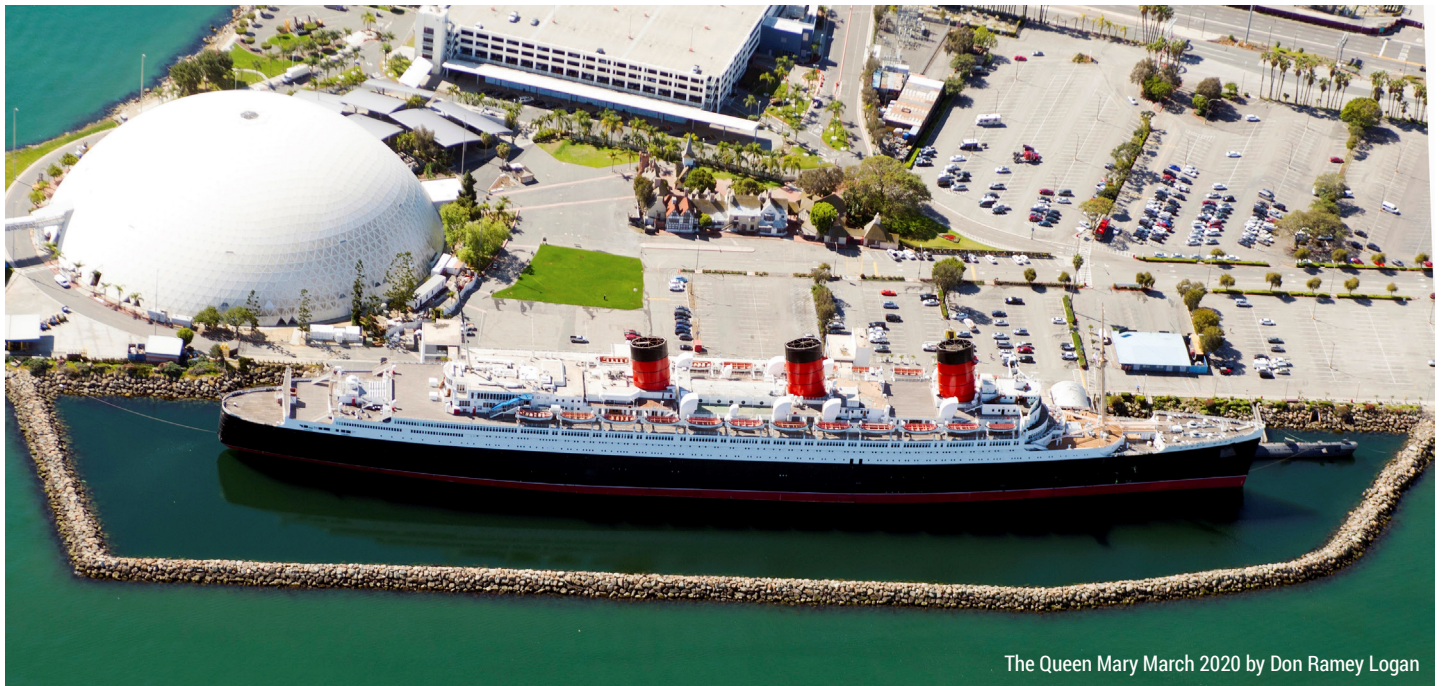
Little has been done to the vessel/hotel complex since that report was written. In fact, in court filings by the City of Long Beach filed on April 9th, 2021, a declaration by the City’s own expert called the 2017 Marine Survey “comprehensive” and stated **“Those issues noted as urgent in 2017 are more urgent now with the passage of time.”**

Ironically, the City of Long Beach requested the transfer of the Queen Mary and associated property from the Port of

Long Beach in 1992. Since that time, the Queen Mary has been an albatross around the City’s neck. In the 30 years since the transfer there have been several bankruptcies by various operators of the vessel/hotel (latest bankruptcy filed this year) and multiple and critical city audits (one currently underway in which a March 31st press release by the City Auditor complained that the operator of the Queen Mary had not provided documentation of \$23 million in repairs – money that was provided by the City).

Instead of debating whether to transfer responsibility of the Queen Mary from the City to the Port of Long Beach, there should be an honest discussion about the viability of the vessel as a hotel and tourist attraction. The preceding decades of failure should guide the discussions.

The Disney Corporation smartly walked away from the Queen Mary in the early 1990’s. A 2017 newspaper story on the structural problems of the vessel had the following quote from former Mayor Kell following the departure of Disney, **“Former Mayor Ernie Kell at the time called the ship a “tombstone in a cemetery no one wants to visit,” and said**



The Queen Mary March 2020 by Don Ramey Logan