



September 9, 2016

Mr. William Horne, City Manager
City of Clearwater
P.O. Box 4748
Clearwater, FL 33758-4748

RE: CMA Project Financial Support

Dear Mr. Horne:

As you are aware, the City's Community Development Board approved in January a plan for the Clearwater Marine Aquarium (CMA) to expand its facility on Island Estates. This plan met with some opposition and an appeal was filed, heard and ruled in CMA's favor. We are now past all legal hurdles to begin our project estimated to cost approximately \$53 million. When complete, the project will include a 397 space parking garage, 5 dolphin pools (approximately 1.5 million gallons), and two new buildings totaling approximately 69,000 square ft. that will house additional exhibits and guest space, indoor food service, ticketing, a gift shop, additional education classrooms and a theater. Total new facility and guest area will be approximately 103,000 sq. ft.

Our current success has certainly not been a consequence of our existing facility that was originally a tired water treatment plant. We have been successful in spite of our current building. We now have an opportunity to build additional improvements that our community will be proud of and consider as a community asset. Combining our current success with new enhancements to our guest experience, additional capacity to expand and improve our animal care and education capabilities will allow us to sustain the impact CMA has made on the area, including continued job creation for our residents.

To date, the State of Florida Department of Cultural Affairs has awarded us \$4.5 million in Grants to assist us in completing this project. We intend to request a significant contribution from the County to support this project with tourist development taxes.

To help us fund this project, that will provide numerous benefits to the Clearwater community for many years in the future, we are requesting an immediate City contribution of \$3.0 million that we can use to lower our debt requirements and a subsequent \$2.0 million matching grant to be paid upon raising a similar amount from other private donations that will encourage donors to assist us in raising another \$10.0 million.

Below is a summary of some of the many benefits CMA brings to the community. By supporting this project, the City will be assisting CMA in enhancing our ability to continue to provide these and more benefits into the future for years to come.

WE BELIEVE in preserving our marine life and environment while inspiring the human spirit through leadership in education, research, rescue, rehabilitation and release.

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A Florida non-profit 501(c)(3) organization

Tourism

Both prior to and after the release of the Dolphin Tale movies, CMA has enjoyed a tremendous growth in attendance. The two movies, combined with ten years of CMA produced global media coverage, have showcased our wonderful City and beaches to millions in nearly every country of the world, creating an unparalleled economic impact to this City and Pinellas County. In fact, a study conducted in 2012 by USF projected that between 2012 and 2015, the economic impact from the first Dolphin Tale movie would be approximately \$1.6 billion to the local economy. As further evidence, a historical Economic Impact Study was conducted in 2015 by Tourism Economics, a New Jersey firm. These results revealed an actual economic impact from CMA during the same '12 – '15 of more than **\$2 billion** to the economy and created more than **2.2 million room nights** in our County hotels. Additionally, on average during this period, more than **11,000 jobs/year** were created with **labor income exceeding \$648 million**.

Marine Life Rescue & Sea Turtle Nest Monitoring

As a service to the community, the CMA team, both staff and volunteers, oversee all rescue, rehabilitation and release of marine life for our area. This encompasses receiving thousands of calls each year, and hundreds of active rescues, many on our local beaches. CMA does this work without any routine government operational support. Additionally, each year during Sea Turtle nesting season, CMA identifies and monitors sea turtle nests for approximately 26 miles of Pinellas County beaches from April through October to ensure hatchlings appropriately find their way to the water after hatching.

Education

The education benefits we provide the community through our Camp programs have touched more than 2,000 children in the past two years. Our Community Outreach Programs that we conduct primarily in Pinellas County but also in Hillsborough and Pasco counties over the same period, touched more than 45,000 individuals. We have partnerships for after school programs with the following schools:

- Pinellas Academy of Math and Science
- Curtis Fundamental
- Pinellas Primary Academy
- Pinellas Preparatory School
- Curlew Elementary

Additionally, we received an AT&T grant to conduct afterschool STEM focused programs to help improve performance in the following C, D, and F rated schools:

- Largo Middle
- Oak Grove Middle
- Azalea Middle
- Bay Point Middle
- Pinellas Park Middle

CMA is also an associate member of the Florida Institute of Oceanography and our Director of Education serves on the Steering Committee for this organization to identify future meaningful projects and research.

Community Partnerships

Our education department works with "Keep Pinellas Beautiful" each year and participates in coastal clean-ups annually. We partner with the Clearwater Audubon Society to educate students in the "Explorer Program" about our mission and conservation of the marine environment. We also provide a shadowing program for the Largo High School Excel Magnet Program. CMA has sponsored and helped operate the National Ocean Sciences Bowl, a program conducted by USF, St. Pete Campus College of Marine Sciences and we are a part of the National Oceanic & Atmospheric Administration's Dolphin Smart program.

Current Research Projects

Role of the chelonid fibropapillomatosis-associated herpesvirus (CFPHV) in sea turtle fibropapillomatosis (FP)

Mya Breitbart, University of South Florida

This is a two-year project where the overall goals of this work are (1) to sequence the genome of the herpesvirus associated with causing tumors in Florida green and loggerhead sea turtles with fibropapillomatosis (FP) and (2) analyze gene expression to examine the role of latency and active viral infection in the development, progression, and regression of FP. Improved knowledge about the herpesvirus genome and the factors that control its gene expression and replication will be very helpful in understanding and managing this disease in Florida's sea turtles.

Fish Population Comparison of the Clearwater Artificial Reef and a Natural Reef

Dr. Heyward Mathews, Reef Monitoring Inc.; Grant Trier, Reef Monitoring Inc.; Dennis Kellenberger, Reef Monitoring Inc.; Sean Patterson, Reef Monitoring Inc.

The objective of this study is to conduct monthly surveys of the resident fish species on the Clearwater Artificial Reef and a nearby natural reef for one year. The hypothesis is that when an artificial reef is correctly sited and built, it will attract and hold a resident fish population that is not significantly different from an existing natural hard bottom community of the same depth. CMA is providing the dive support for this project.

Fish Populations in Clearwater Harbor: historical trends in abundance and diversity

Dr. Linae Boehme-Terrana, St. Petersburg College; Megan Owens, St. Petersburg College; Lisa Oliver, Clearwater Marine Aquarium

The objective of this study is to establish trends in fish species diversity and abundance in Clearwater Harbor. It is proposed that certain species will show year round abundance while others will show shifts in abundance based on season and life stage. Of particular interest will be shifts that may have occurred around the cold snap of 2009.

Bottlenose dolphin (*Tursiops truncatus*) home ranges, distribution, and ecology from Levy County, FL south to Redington Long Pier, (Pinellas County) and the associated estuarine and coastal waters of the Gulf of Mexico, near Clearwater, Florida

Abigale Stone and Lisa Oliver, Clearwater Marine Aquarium

Little is known about the community of dolphins that utilize the area of Clearwater Bay estuary and the coastal waters north or south of the Clearwater Pass tidal inlet. This study looks to provide a more accurate base of knowledge pertaining to dolphin home ranges, distribution, population abundance, site fidelity, and reproductive success in the estuarine and coastal water of west central Florida with the collection and analysis of current and long-term data. The study will monitor an area of estuarine and coastal habitat.

Conclusion

When looking at CMA's contributions to the community economically through Tourism, our Marine Life Rescue efforts, involvement in Educating students, our Community Partnerships and our Research Projects, one would reasonably conclude that there are few entities that can yield a better return on investment for the City, its Citizens and their families.

Thank you for your consideration.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Frank L. Dame', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Frank L. Dame
EVP/COO