



# CITY OF CLEARWATER

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CITY MANAGER

The City Commission  
City of Clearwater  
Clearwater, Florida

June 27, 2003

Honorable Mayor and Members of the City Commission:

I am pleased to present the Fiscal Year 2003/04 Annual Operating and Capital Improvement Budget for your review. This budget reflects our best effort to allocate our resources within the priorities established by the City Commission and funds several new and a few improved facilities and operations throughout our city.

Waves of anticipation and excitement are starting to develop as projects near completion this fall and winter. After months of planning, we are soon to see a colossal transformation in our community that will change the face of Clearwater for years to come, providing the character and strength that will bring us to the forefront of other communities. The new high-span Memorial Causeway Bridge will be open to traffic in just a few short months. This will connect our citizens and visitors with the beach and downtown in a safe and more efficient manner. In addition, the long awaited and much anticipated new Main Library now outlines the bluff overlooking Clearwater Harbor and will open at about that same time. I expect this beautiful facility will be a source of pride for generations of Clearwater residents.

In the Spring of next year we will see the opening of the new Community Sports Complex, the new home for Philadelphia Phillies Spring Training. This state-of-the-art ballpark will bring visitors to Clearwater, and will provide first-class recreation for our residents.

Furthermore, one of our busiest fire stations, Clearwater Mall, will soon be replaced with a new, modern station. This will not only improve service to area residents, but also provide better working and living conditions for our firefighters. And, by next summer we will open a brand new fire station in the northwest area of our community offering a new level of safety to that neighborhood.

Along with the excitement generated by these new and improved amenities comes the behind-the-scenes challenges of their daily operation. "New, Bigger, and Better" unfortunately results in new, bigger and better operational costs associated with these enhanced operations. Many of the new operating and capital cost impacts associated with my proposed budget are a direct result of these new or expanded facilities.

We now face the reality of hard choices in order to provide the most equitable and responsible services to all of our citizens. One of those choices that I have proposed in this budget is the closing of the Beach Library. Development in the beach area will not allow this library to exist in its current home for much longer, and with the opening of a world class facility just a few miles away, it is a fiscally responsible decision to close this facility at this time.

BRIAN J. AUNGST, MAYOR-COMMISSIONER

HGYT HAMILTON, VICE MAYOR-COMMISSIONER  
FRANK HIBBARD, COMMISSIONER

WHITNEY GRAY, COMMISSIONER  
BILL JONSON, COMMISSIONER



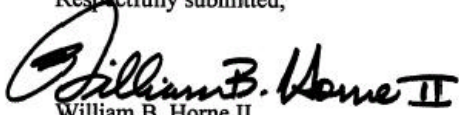
"EQUAL EMPLOYMENT AND AFFIRMATIVE ACTION EMPLOYER"

We must continue to be vigilant, managing escalating operating costs, as we experience growing public demands of a vibrant and changing community. Across the nation, cities are spending more money in three key areas: public safety, health care, and infrastructure. As you will see, when you familiarize yourself with the details of this budget, we too are spending our money primarily in these three key areas.

We can consider ourselves lucky in these trying times. Through strong financial management, we have positioned ourselves to deal with some fluctuations in the economy with relatively minor adjustments while other communities nationwide are struggling with major budget program cuts. Still, the development of this budget within the existing millage rate has been extremely difficult even with the more than 9% increase in property values.

Hopefully, with the uncertainties of the Iraq war now largely behind us, we can look for signs of an improving economy. Clearwater's future remains bright. We have great opportunities ahead, and we have positioned ourselves to move expeditiously into the future.

Respectfully submitted,

  
William B. Horne II  
City Manager