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**MARITIME AQUARIUM ANNOUNCES NEW MASTER PLAN  
FOR EXPANSION AND TRANSFORMATION**

**NORWALK, CT (October 17, 2007)** - The Maritime Aquarium in Norwalk, Connecticut announced today a Master Plan for the future at a press conference held on the SeaFair Art and Antiques yacht docked in Norwalk, Connecticut. The plan sets forth a strategy that will transform the Aquarium's physical spaces and its programs, further increasing its impact on the conservation of Long Island Sound. New exhibits, exciting, immersive experiences, cutting edge "green" technologies, and renovations to existing areas are key elements to the plan. Already a beloved place for family fun and a highly respected informal science education institution, the transformation will position the Aquarium as one of the finest family destinations and a national innovator among aquariums and centers of conservation.

The Master Plan builds upon the Maritime Aquarium's core strength in connecting visitors directly to living organisms and presents them as actors and protagonists, along with humans, in dynamically shaping and conserving the Sound and its watershed. New live animal exhibits will help to build connections between visitors and the animals on exhibit, through the common themes of home, safety and survival, ideally leading to action in shaping the Sound's future.

"This plan will not only transform the Aquarium, it aspires to transform people's relationship with Long Island Sound and its watershed. We want to make people fall in love with the

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Sound, so they will value the amazing ecosystem we call home and protect it for future generations”, said Jennifer E. Herring, President and CEO of The Maritime Aquarium.

Planning for the Aquarium’s future has been underway since the appointment of Ms. Herring as President and CEO in 2004. A new mission was adopted in 2005, and a strategic plan was adopted in 2006, both of which informed the Master Plan. The Aquarium conducted an international search for a company to create and design the Master Plan and selected Thinc Design for its extensive expertise in innovative exhibit design for aquariums and maritime centers, natural history museums, science centers, and heritage museums. Thinc, along with Local Projects, was recently named the lead exhibition design team for the National September 11 Memorial Museum at the World Trade Center.

The plan for the Aquarium calls for three phases that will allow it to remain open during construction. The first phase, which will likely take five to six years to complete, encompasses dramatic enhancements including a new entrance and orientation area, the introduction of two new galleries – “Shores of the Sound” and “Winter in the Sound” -- revisions to the Great Hall, and new interpretation throughout. Additionally, the IMAX Theater will be renovated and upgraded to handle feature films. *Gallery descriptions for the first phase of the Master Plan are included in this press material.*

### **THE MARITIME AQUARIUM’S COMMITMENT TO EDUCATION**

As a preeminent informal science learning institution, it is incumbent upon The Maritime Aquarium to convey a message about creating a future for the Long Island Sound that nurtures and sustains its inhabitants. The Master Plan is designed to continue elevating the Aquarium’s standing as a vital learning institution through a foundation of exciting, fun exhibits and interactions. With the evolution of the plan, the Aquarium will increase its reach in educating all visitors about science, conservation and the environment, with a special focus on children from underserved school districts.

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### **ECONOMIC IMPACT**

It is projected that a transformed Maritime Aquarium will also increase its economic impact on the State of Connecticut to \$53.5 million annually. As an anchor for SoNo and Fairfield County, the new Aquarium will not only continue to serve as a center for the community, but it will grow as an important tourist destination. A formal economic impact study is forthcoming.

When the first phase of the Master Plan is completed, there will be a monumental change to the Aquarium. The second and a third phases will provide additional dramatic improvements to the visitor experience. Subsequent exhibit and physical changes to the Aquarium building will include new animal exhibits, such as beavers, as part of a dynamic watershed gallery, an outdoor, interactive water exploration experience, and state-of-the-art habitats for the sharks and sea turtles.

For more information, call The Maritime Aquarium at 203-852-0700 or visit [www.maritimeaquarium.org](http://www.maritimeaquarium.org).

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