



City of Arts & Innovation

City Council Memorandum

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TO: HONORABLE MAYOR AND CITY COUNCIL DATE: AUGUST 6, 2019

FROM: MUSEUM DEPARTMENT WARDS: ALL

**SUBJECT: REVISED MUSEUM OF RIVERSIDE COLLECTIONS AND EXHIBITIONS
MANAGEMENT POLICIES**

ISSUE:

Approve the revised Museum of Riverside Collections and Exhibitions Management Policies for the Museum of Riverside.

RECOMMENDATION:

That the City Council approve the revised Museum of Riverside Collections and Exhibitions Management Policies.

BOARD RECOMMENDATION:

On June 12, 2019, the Metropolitan Museum Board, with eight (8) members present, voted unanimously to recommend that City Council approve the revised Collections and Exhibitions Management Policies.

BACKGROUND:

Policy documents relating to the formation, management, use, and care of collections are among the documents most distinctive to the operation of museums. Understanding that zoos and gardens are also included in the definition of “museum,” no other type of institution holds physical objects, specimens, and living organisms in growing and/or managed collections. Collections management policies and collections development plans are, thus, unique in most respects to the museum field.

As the museum field has steadily professionalized over the past decades, the factors affecting collections management have grown more complex, encompassing such topics as cultural repatriation, legal issues relating to loans, antiquities trafficking, intellectual property, conservation and care, and many other considerations. Thus, museums have developed collections management policies to capture standards that apply in their individual cases, codify unique positions, and ensure that evolving standards are met.

The American Alliance of Museums (AAM) now considers a collections management policy to be one of the field's five (5) "core documents," and one (1) of the four (4) of these five (5) that must be approved by any accredited museum's governing body. The Museum of Riverside (MoR), whose governing body is City Council, is an AAM-accredited institution; it is thus obliged to comply and, furthermore, desires to comply with the field's standards even as they become ever more demanding.

The document recommended today has undergone thorough review by the Collections Committee over the course of several meetings held from August 2018 through March 2019. The Collections Committee includes Board members, curatorial and education staff, and community members with disciplinary specialties relating to the MoR's collections. Committee members also consulted peers and published resources during the document review process.

DISCUSSION:

As part of ongoing efforts to align the MoR's operations with industry standards, staff have conducted research to revise and augment the Collections and Exhibitions Management Policy document to:

1. Include sections previously not included
2. Enhance sections that lacked detail
3. Apply more rigorous standards
4. Clarify the treatment of loans
5. Detail all steps in the important processes of accessioning (adding an object to a permanent collection) and deaccessioning (removing an object from a permanent collection)

The revised Collections and Exhibitions Management Policies now include:

1. Clear definitions of the kinds of collections the Museum will hold
The policy now defines five (5) categories of collection (permanent, community, education / teaching, live collections, and library). Each of these kinds of collections may hold objects or specimens relating to any of the MoR's disciplines (for example, anthropology or geology).
2. Individual staff and committee responsibilities and oversight relating to collections decisions
3. A section that pertains specifically to public exhibition
4. Policies that were previously stand-alone policies (e.g., live animal policy) but should have been part of the Collections & Exhibitions Management Policies
5. Additional matters that were previously absent, including guidelines on handling objects donated for sale, object-specific ethical considerations, rights and reproductions, physical access to collections, publication of collections, key reference resources that support collection-holding institutions, and similar

Collections management policies differ from collections development plans. Management policies define *how* practical and logistical matters that pertain to collections will be handled. Development plans define *what* a collection will comprise and how a museum will pursue reasoned collections growth and refinement. A new Collections Development Plan for the MoR

is in preparation and will be presented for Museum Board consideration at a later date. Collections development plans are advised but not required by the AAM.

FISCAL IMPACT:

There is no fiscal impact associated with this report.

Prepared by:	Robyn G. Peterson, Ph.D., Museum Director
Certified as to availability of funds:	Edward Enriquez, Chief Financial Officer/Treasurer
Approved by:	Lea Deesing, Assistant City Manager
Approved as to form:	Gary G. Geuss, City Attorney

Attachments:

1. Collections and Exhibitions Management Policies
2. Metropolitan Museum Board Minutes – 6-12-2019