



City of Arts & Innovation

City Council Memorandum

TO: HONORABLE MAYOR AND CITY COUNCIL DATE: MARCH 28, 2023

FROM: MUSEUM DEPARTMENT WARDS: ALL

**SUBJECT: DEACCESSION FROM THE MUSEUM OF RIVERSIDE'S PERMANENT
COLLECTION OF FOUR ITEMS ASSOCIATED WITH THE PUEBLO, APACHE,
AND OGLALA (LAKOTA) PEOPLES (A9-15, A9-17, A8-331, A597-101)**

ISSUE:

Approve deaccession from the Museum of Riverside's permanent collection of four items associated with the Pueblo, Apache, and Oglala (Lakota) peoples (A9-15, A9-17, A8-331, A597-101).

RECOMMENDATION:

That the City Council approve deaccession from the Museum of Riverside's permanent collection of four items associated with the Pueblo, Apache, and Oglala (Lakota) peoples (A9-15, A9-17, A8-331, A597-101).

BOARD RECOMMENDATION:

At a hybrid meeting on January 25, 2023, the Museum of Riverside Board, with seven members present for this vote and two absent, unanimously voted to recommend that City Council approve deaccession of four items associated with the Pueblo, Apache, and Oglala (Lakota) peoples (A9-15, A9-17, A8-331, A597-101).

BACKGROUND:

In December 1925, the City of Riverside's Municipal Museum received the donation of a lightning wand, possibly associated with a Pueblo tribe (A9-15), and an Apache headdress associated with the Gaan dance ceremony (A9-17) from Mrs. Mary E. Rumsey, widow of Cornelius Earle Rumsey (1844-1911), who collected these two items prior to 1911.

In December 1951, the City of Riverside's Municipal Museum took possession of and accessioned an Oglala (Lakota) otter skin headdress (A8-331) from Mrs. Mary Hall, widow of Harwood Hall (1866-1929), who collected the headdress prior to 1929.

In 1968, the City of Riverside's Municipal Museum took possession of and accessioned an Oglala (Lakota) otter skin medicine bag (A597-101) from Mrs. Florence A. Purple, widow of Samuel Maus Purple (1878-1965), who collected the medicine bag prior to 1965.

These four sacred items are listed on a November 13, 1995, summary submitted to the National Park Service, the agency overseeing implementation of the federal Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act of 1990 (NAGPRA).

DISCUSSION:

The term "deaccession" refers to the procedure of formally removing an object from a museum's permanent collection, after which the object may be considered for sale, exchange, gift, transfer to another entity, transfer to a collection other than the permanent collection, or – in the case of irretrievably deteriorated objects – disposal.

Based on the donors' records, curatorial research, and tribal consultations, these four items have been identified as sacred following research by Museum of Riverside (Museum) staff. The Museum recommends deaccession and repatriation following the determination that these items are part of the living cultural heritage of their affiliated tribes and, therefore, consistent with the requirements of the federal Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act (NAGPRA). Further explanation of the reasoning behind this deaccession recommendation is in the Museum of Riverside Board reports included as an attachment.

Note: Images of the items have not been included in this report out of respect for the preference of many Indigenous peoples not to photograph or publish their sacred rituals or artifacts.

STRATEGIC PLAN ALIGNMENT:

The activities of the Museum of Riverside align with Strategic Priority No. 1, "Arts, Culture and Recreation" and in particular Goal 1.1 (strengthening Riverside's portfolio of arts, culture, recreation, senior, and lifelong learning programs and amenities), Goal 1.2 (enhancing equitable access to arts, culture, and recreational service offerings and facilities), and Goal 1.5 (supporting programs and amenities to further develop literacy, health, and education of children, youth, and seniors throughout the community).

1. **Community Trust** – Willing compliance with federal legislation protecting Indigenous resources and repatriating according to tribal preference build trust within the Museum's larger national community.
2. **Equity** – The deaccession process leading to repatriation demonstrates equitable consideration of cultures, which reflects through action on a national level the diversity in Riverside's own communities.
3. **Fiscal Responsibility** – Deaccession of Indigenous resources for the purpose of repatriation keeps the Museum in legal compliance and reduces the cost of collection maintenance for items that ethically belong to others and will not be used in Museum programming.

- 4. **Innovation** – Compliance with legal requirements is not innovative, but the Museum’s willing engagement with Indigenous peoples throughout the multi-year repatriation process has earned noted marks of respect from individual tribes, which places the Museum at the leading edge of a national decades-long effort that has not progressed smoothly in all museums.

- 5. **Sustainability & Resiliency** – Repatriation actions support cultural sustainability, streamline Museum operations, and model and teach cultural preservation.

FISCAL IMPACT:

There is no fiscal impact associated with this report. Items deaccessioned for the purpose of repatriation are formally transferred and returned in-person to their tribes of origin.

Prepared by:	Robyn G. Peterson, Ph.D., Museum Director
Certified as to	
Availability of funds:	Edward Enriquez, Interim Assistant City Manager/Chief Financial Officer/Treasurer
Approved by:	Kris Martinez, Assistant City Manager
Approved as to form:	Phaedra Norton, City Attorney

Attachments:

- 1. Museum of Riverside Board Minutes – January 25, 2023
- 2. Museum Board Deaccession Recommendation Report – January 25, 2023