



# RIVERSIDE METROPOLITAN MUSEUM ORGANIZATIONAL ASSESSMENT SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

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PRESENTED BY

Museum Management Consultants, Inc.

**MMC**

## INTRODUCTION

- Introduction to **MMC**
- **Purpose** of *Organizational Assessment*
  - Departure of RMM Director, **upcoming search**
  - One-year tabling of **reaccreditation** by American Alliance of Museums (AAM) due to 3 key concerns:
    - The physical condition of Harada House
    - The storage conditions of collections in RMM basement
    - Insufficient exhibition and programming for RMM basketry collection

2

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## METHODOLOGY

- Document **review**, background **research**
- **Benchmark Report** to compare RMM to peer museums
- **Site visit** and confidential **interviews**

3



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## RMM STRENGTHS

- Main Museum **building** is historic, beautiful
- **Heritage House** is a “gem,” well maintained and volunteer run
- **Riverside Museum Associates (RMA)** has loyal volunteers and significant membership base
- RMM **outreach programs** are strong
- **Nature Center** offers innovative, relevant, popular programming
- Status as **Smithsonian Affiliate** is a community asset
- RMM **staff** is dedicated
- **City leadership** is supportive and provides consistent, generous funding

4



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## CORE ISSUE: RMM VISION

- RMM includes 5 museum **facilities**, 2 storage facilities
- Expansion has not been led by a strong organizational **vision** or **strategic planning**
- There are **insufficient funds** to fully restore Harada House, address challenges of the Main Museum

5



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## RECOMMENDATIONS: RMM VISION

- In recruiting RMM's next **Director**, seek out candidates with **experience**:
  - Leading museums
  - Providing visionary leadership
  - Implementing change
  - Establishing a vision relevant to target audiences
  - Growing contributed and earned revenue
- Engage in an inclusive **strategic planning** process that results in a new vision for RMM

6



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## CORE ISSUE: VISITOR EXPERIENCE

- Main Museum experience needs **updating**
  - Facility space is small, layout is confusing
  - Exhibits are static, change infrequently, lack relevancy to the public
  - Most exhibits do not reflect contemporary visitor engagement (interactivity, personal engagement)
- **Education programs** for children and families are popular, but limited by funding
- **Community awareness** of RMM is low
- ***Who does RMM serve?*** *How can experiences be tailored to those audiences?*

7



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## RECOMMENDATIONS: VISITOR EXPERIENCE

- Develop a ***Visitor Experience Plan*** to rethink the Main Museum; consider expansion
- Establish **exhibitions calendar** that changes exhibits on a regular basis (e.g. quarterly, 3 times per year)
- Through Museum Board, create an **advisory group** of community members
- **Pool resources** with local museums for marketing, social media, fundraisers, etc.
- **Rebrand** RMM based on new vision for the future

8



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## CORE ISSUE: COLLECTIONS

- Collections have grown beyond a **sustainable level**
- Yet there are **gaps** in the collections to be filled
- Collections storage in Main Museum basement is not up to **industry standards**
- **Full inventory** of all collections has not been completed

9



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## RECOMMENDATIONS: COLLECTIONS

- Ensure timely completion of collections **inventories**
- With inventories complete, evaluate collections for **de-accessioning**

10



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## CORE ISSUE: HISTORIC STRUCTURES

- **Heritage House** is beautifully restored
  - Historic houses face challenges attracting younger audiences, volunteers
- **Harada House** tells a compelling story, but its physical condition makes it inaccessible to visitors
  - Accepted by City in 2003 without environmental assessments, fundraising plan, or restoration plan
  - Little has been done to make Harada House accessible to the public
  - Cost to restore House will be in the millions
- **Robinson House** was purchased in 2014 to be Harada House interpretive center; awaits Harada House plans

11



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## RECOMMENDATIONS: HISTORIC STRUCTURES

- Restore Harada House in a way that **preserves the story** and makes it **accessible** to the general public; options include:
  - Full preservation, keeping National Historic Landmark status
  - Replica restoration, likely losing Landmark status
  - Move inscription wall to RMM as exhibit, tear down House
- Consider the future of **Robinson House** based on Harada House plan
- Develop **Business Plans** for all satellite facilities to address financial sustainability

12



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## CORE ISSUE: ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

- RMM had significant **staff cuts** during the recession; Museum is rebuilding slowly
- In FY13, RMM and Cultural Affairs were **joined together**
  - Director of RMM is also Director of Cultural Affairs
- RMM organizational chart reflects an **outdated approach**
  - Heavily weighted to curatorial

13



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## RECOMMENDATIONS: ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

- Divide Museum & Cultural Affairs Department; hire **full-time Museum Director**
- Rethink RMM organizational chart to reflect contemporary, **visitor-centered operations**



14



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## CORE ISSUE: BUSINESS MODEL

- RMM has a **lean budget** (\$1.7M FY16)
- **Lack of diversity** in revenues
  - Over-reliance on City
  - Limited contributed income (through Riverside Museum Associates)
  - No earned or investment income

	RMM	Benchmark Museums (Median)
City	97%	47%
Contributed	3%	28%
Earned	0%	16%
Investment	0%	2%

15



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## RECOMMENDATIONS: BUSINESS MODEL

- Establish a **Foundation** to provide significant financial support for RMM
  - Utilize and rename Riverside Museum Associate's 501(c)(3)
  - Maintain RMA as a Foundation committee focused on Heritage House
- Build **earned revenue** for RMM (i.e. admissions, program fees, facility rentals)

16



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## CORE ISSUE: GOVERNANCE

- With competing priorities facing City Council, many **governing responsibilities** are **delegated** to Museum Board
  - City Council and Museum Board do not interact often
  - Board feels their role is not clear
- Effectiveness of governing structure relies on **relationships** between City, Board, and RMM Director

17



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## RECOMMENDATIONS: GOVERNANCE

- Revisit and further define Board member/ officer **job responsibilities**
- Board and Director work together to plan **advocacy work** in the community

18



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## IN CLOSING

- RMM is at a **turning point**
- Opportunity to **rethink the Museum** and become more relevant to its community
- Become a key player in Riverside's **growing arts district**
- Unique opportunity for **new leadership** to reshape the Museum

19



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