



City of Arts & Innovation

Museum Board Memorandum

TO: METROPOLITAN MUSEUM BOARD **DATE: JUNE 14, 2017**

FROM: ALEXANDER T. NGUYEN, ASSISTANT CITY MANAGER/ACTING MUSEUM DIRECTOR

SUBJECT: NEED TO SHUTTER THE MUSEUM FOR THREE YEARS TO REORGANIZE, RE-TOOL AND RE-TRAIN STAFF, FOCUS ON THE HARADA HOUSE, BEGIN FULL COLLECTIONS INVENTORY, AND PLAN AND CONSTRUCT MAIN BUILDING RENOVATION AND POSSIBLE EXPANSION

ISSUE:

Need to shutter the museum for three years to reorganize, re-tool and re-train staff, focus on the Harada House, begin full collections inventory, and plan and construct main building renovation and possible expansion.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

Receive, provide feedback, and forward this report to the City Council.

BACKGROUND:

In 2016 the Riverside Metropolitan Museum (RMM) was reviewed by the American Alliance of Museums (AAM) for re-accreditation as an AAM-accredited museum. According to AAM, "accreditation offers high-profile, peer-based validation of your museum's operations and impact. Accreditation increases your museum's credibility and value to funders, policy makers, insurers, community and peers. Accreditation is a powerful tool to leverage change and facilitates loans between institutions."

Accreditation is based on a set of core standards for museums known as the Characteristics of Excellence. The extensive reaccreditation process included a self-study by RMM, review by the Accreditation Commission of supporting documents, a site visit, and interviews. After conducting this process, AAM elected to table its decision for RMM reaccreditation, and notified the Museum of its decision on November 1, 2016.

A museum whose accreditation application has been tabled may submit a Progress Report to the Accreditation Commission approximately six months into the tabling period and a Final Report approximately twelve months after the original tabling date. The AAM will make its final decision for the RMM's accreditation in February 2018.

That RMM was not simply re-accredited prompted the City to hire Museum Management Consultants, Inc. (MMC) for a broader and deeper assessment of the museum and its

deficiencies. MMC's Assessment Report and Benchmark Report were completed in April 2017 and presented to the City Council on May 23, 2017. The two reports contain 29 recommendations and provide benchmarks against four other museums -- the Bowers Museum, the Longmont Museum, the Pacific Grove Museum of Natural History, and the Whatcom Museum. These reports are available online at the RMM webpage.

DISCUSSION:

WHY THE NEED TO SHUTTER

Business-As-Usual has resulted in the City having a museum that cannot even get re-accreditation. In addition to the significant problems raised by the AAM report, and the many challenges raised in the MMC assessment, the Acting Museum Director has discovered a shocking number of systemic problems inside the museum, some of which are discussed below.

In essence, the museum needs to stop failing at almost everything it has been doing in order to reorganize; re-tool; re-train staff; to focus on the Harada House and begin the collections inventory which includes an upgrade to collections storage through immediate removal of the archives from the basement; and, to begin planning for the main museum building's renovation and possible expansion, which will begin when the new Museum Director is on board.

WHAT WILL OCCUR DURING THE SHUTTERING

The Main Museum will be **closed to the public** during the shuttering period, which will begin July 2017.

The **Museum Archives** will be moved to the collections facility for safe and proper storage -- the bulk of it will be unavailable to the public during the shuttering period. The need to relocate the archives was raised by the AAM back in 2002, and at that time museum staff assured AAM it would be done. Fourteen years later the AAM found the archives still in the museum basement, exposed under a 105 year-old sewer pipe as well as being in the basement without the proper climate control for keeping the archives safe. Also, the archives have not been properly inventoried or digitized to improve and enhance public use. After the archives are relocated to the collections house, staff will work with expert archivists from UC Riverside to develop and execute a plan going forward.

The Heritage House will remain open. Staff will work closely with the Riverside Museum Associates (RMA) and support their efforts to enhance programming at Heritage House.

The **RMA Museum Gift Shop** will also be closed during this period. Staff will work with the RMA to explore alternative locations but it will be difficult and, most likely, the gift shop will have to reopen when the Museum does.

The **Sycamore Canyon Nature Center** (Center) will remain open, but will now be supervised by the Parks, Recreation and Community Services (Parks) Department. The Center was built with approximately \$780,000 in grant funds for construction and programming. That grant requires the City to provide at least 32 hours per week of programming. The program funding was scheduled to sunset in March 2017. Unfortunately the museum staff did not make budget or program plans to continue providing the required 32 hours per week. The Parks Department has agreed to take

over the programming of the Center in order to avoid violating the grant requirements.

Staff will partner with the Riverside Art Museum for the **Tlatilco Exhibit in 2018**. This exhibit presents museum staff with the opportunity of not only partnering with a highly regarded museum, it also challenges us to engage the Riverside community, especially the Latino community, to participate with the exhibit and provide added programming by local artists, musicians, dancers, and educators.

The entire **Cultural Affairs Division** will revert back to the Community and Economic Development Department.

The Museum will continue outdoor events such as the **Insect Fair**.

All other programs will cease, and appropriate planning will be conducted to wind them down.

While the main museum building is closed to the public, staff will focus on:

- Harada House
- Collections Inventory
- Fixing fundamental internal systems and processes
- Initiate a national search for a museum director
- Begin planning for museum renovation, programming and possible expansion after the new Director is on the job

The monthly Museum Board meetings will continue.

HOW DOES SHUTTERING IMPACT RE-ACCREDITATION?

Staff asked the AAM what shuttering would mean for re-accreditation. AAM responded that

“Generally, a museum’s closure does not negatively impact its accredited status when the closure is strategic, planned as a proactive step towards overall improvement, and funded. Riverside Metropolitan has the benefit of additional sites that can remain open to deliver on its mission if/when the main museum is closed.”

During the re-accreditation period, staff has submitted The Museum’s progress report addressing AAM’s concerns. In summary, the progress report states that the museum will:

1. Immediately pursue a comprehensive and orderly plan regarding the Harada House that begins with a complete structural engineer’s assessment of the entire Harada House which involves “destructive testing and evaluation” to determine the extent of structural deterioration.
2. Organize a capital campaign to save the Harada House, to take advantage of the 100th anniversary of *California vs. Jukichi Harada* in 2018.
3. Move the archives and bulk of collection items from the Museum basement to the collection facility.
4. Inform the AAM of the significance of the Museum’s basket collection and how it is

acknowledged in exhibits, programming, and research.

RATIONALE FOR SHUTTERING

The City now has two current third-party objective assessments that reveal significant problems and challenges facing the Museum: the American Alliance of Museum's accreditation report of November 2016, and the Museum Management Consultants, Inc. report of April 2017. In addition, the Acting Director has uncovered a host of other, deeper problems in the museum.

The City's general fund expends approximately \$2,000,000 annually on the Metropolitan Museum and it is failing. That is a harsh assessment but true; Riverside deserves better and the museum must be fixed. And to do so requires a shuttering period to reorganize, re-tool, and re-train staff, to focus on the Harada House, and to begin the proper care for and inventory of the collections – a task not only necessary for re-accreditation, but for the proper operation of any museum. Also, because the City Council has made the choice to fund the museum's renovation and possible expansion, **the construction will require shuttering as well.**

The AAM accreditation report raises many concerns over how the Museum operates. Below is a summary of their concerns:

1. "Serious deficiencies in collections stewardship."
 - a. Deterioration of Harada House. AAM wants to see plans to stabilize, conserve, and then open Harada House.
 - b. Storage conditions of collections in the basement remain substandard despite having been identified in last accreditation review. AAM wants to see plans, and initial steps taken, to remove collection items from the basement.
 - c. Basketry collection's exhibit and programming not fully exploited and museum's planning does not adequately acknowledge the importance of this relative to other collections. AAM wants steps or plans to make better use of baskets.
2. "It is imperative to get all storage out of the main building immediately and concentrate on education, exhibits and interpretation in general as well as revenue generation."
3. Lack of climate control at Heritage House is unacceptable. AAM wants HVAC system.
4. Harada House solution "lies with political leadership."
5. Collections policy calls for an Integrated Pest Management (IPM) program; yet the museum has not implemented the IPM program. AAM states this is an immediate priority.
6. "RMM's Board and Collections Committee is not rigorous enough in adhering to the existing collections policies for acquisitions." Museum is regularly accepting things not germane to RMM mission. Some of which is "much more difficult to care for them in perpetuity at public expense, or to dispose of them later through deaccessioning."
7. Scope of Riverside history collections is "not inclusive enough." Museum is not actively

- collecting recent and current Hispanic/Latino materials that reflect shifting demographics of US and region.
8. Harada House would be a “signature driver” of Riverside tourism. Completion of Harada House may require “RMM prioritizing Harada House over other projects and even other parts of its mission.”
 9. Collections storage must be maintained at Museum standards.
 10. Funding for Museum is almost entirely supplied by the City. Not good for long-term financial model. Need to diversify funding sources.
 11. Anthropology collections outside of mission.
 12. Director of Museum is also Director of Cultural Affairs.
 13. Going forward, RMM needs to focus fundraising efforts and staffing resources on completing the projects it currently has, rather than expanding to do more.
 14. Museum does not have a coherent brand strategy.
 15. Staff are in danger of burnout.
 16. The current organizational structure seems heavily aligned to RMM’s past than with the challenges in its immediate future. Staffing is weighted toward curatorial and collections, while areas such as fundraising, marketing and programming are understaffed or understaffed.
 17. The institution is often underutilized by many citizens.
 18. Given Riverside’s demographics, more attention must be paid to diversify the programming and board makeup.
 19. RMM Leadership needs to narrow their focus to what the institution can do uniquely and well in order to truly succeed. RMM is currently trying to do a little bit of everything.
 20. Deciding what RMM should be – and executing that plan – will be critical to moving from a “nice to have” museum to a “must have” institution for the community.

Museum Management Consultants’ assessment of the museum produced 29 recommendations to improve the museum and bring it into the 21st century. A summary of their findings and the recommendations follows.

INTRODUCTION

In January 2017, the City of Riverside retained Museum Management Consultants, Inc. (MMC) of San Francisco to conduct an *Organizational Assessment* of the Riverside Metropolitan Museum (RMM), which operates within the City of Riverside Museum & Cultural Affairs Department. This report summarizes the

findings from MMC's *Assessment*, which was conducted by Adrienne Horn, MMC President; Katie Sevier Potter, MMC Senior Vice President; and Georgianna de la Torre, MMC Vice President.

Background

The Museum opened in the basement of City Hall in 1924, when Cornelius Earle Rumsey donated his collection of Native American artifacts to the City of Riverside. The Riverside Municipal Museum was established in the City Charter in 1925 and moved to its current location (referred to as the Main Museum), a former U.S. Post Office, in 1948. The collections have grown over time to include local history, natural history, and anthropology; today, the Museum collections include over 200,000 objects. A name change in 2005 established the Riverside Metropolitan Museum, and today, RMM's mission is:

“As a center for learning, Riverside Metropolitan Museum interacts with the community to collect, preserve, explore, and interpret the cultural and natural history of Riverside and its region.”

The Riverside Museum Associates (RMA), a private, 501(c)(3) organization incorporated in 1963, provides volunteer services and financial support for the RMM. In 1969, the RMA purchased Heritage House, an 1891 Queen Anne-style home, restored the home for use as a house museum, and eventually transferred ownership of the property to the City. In 1987, both Heritage House and the Main Museum were placed on the National Register of Historic Places.

In 2004, the Museum acquired the National Historic Landmark Harada House, and 10 years later, Robinson House, the home next door to Harada House, to serve as an interpretive center. The Museum's latest expansion was the opening of the Ameal Moore Nature Center at Sycamore Canyon Wilderness Park, which opened in 2014 as a partnership with the City's Parks & Recreation Department.

The RMM Director also serves as Director of the City's Museum & Cultural Affairs Department (MCAD); in this role, the MCAD Director serves as the Director of both the RMM and the Arts and Culture team. RMM is governed by the Riverside City Council and an appointed Museum Board that serves in an advisory capacity. In FY16, the Museum had an operating budget of almost \$1.7 million and 14.25 FTE. Admission to the Museum and program participation is free of charge. Total attendance to the Main Museum, Heritage House, and Nature Center in FY16 was 51,631 and with the exception of Heritage House, has been increasing over the last three fiscal years (see Figure 1). Audiences were described by stakeholders as mostly families with children.

MMC was retained by the City upon the departure of the RMM Director and shortly after the Museum's application for reaccreditation by the American Alliance of Museums (AAM) was tabled due to “some

Figure 1. RMM Attendance FY14-FY16

	FY14	FY15	FY16
Main Museum	26,906	31,425	38,668
Heritage House	8,325	5,586	6,107
Nature Center¹	74	5,710	6,856
Total Attendance	35,305	42,721	51,631

¹ Nature Center opened June 2014

serious deficiencies in collections stewardship.”¹ Accreditation by AAM is a voluntary program that signifies a museum is committed to excellence, accountability, high professional standards, and continuous institutional improvement. AAM accreditation is recognized as an industry “seal of approval” and can open the door to certain funding and access to collections from other institutions. RMM was first accredited in 1972 and was last re-accredited in 2001. During its last reaccreditation 16 years ago, many of the issues confronting RMM today were identified by the AAM Visiting Committee, such as the need to diversify funding and improve storage space for collections. In tabling RMM’s re-accreditation in 2016, the Accreditation Commission identified three key concerns:

- The physical condition of Harada House
- The storage conditions of collections in the basement of RMM
- Insufficient exhibition and programming for the basketry collection

These issues must be addressed through planning prior to review by the Accreditation Commission in February 2018, when reaccreditation will or will not be granted.

Given the concerns raised by AAM, as well as the upcoming search for RMM’s Director and underlying concerns felt by City staff, MMC was tasked with conducting an overall assessment of RMM. This report does not respond to the *AAM Accreditation Site Visit Report*, as the Museum has developed its response to the issues above in a thorough manner prior to the submission of MMC’s report. This *Organizational Assessment* intends to supplement the AAM report by identifying areas of organizational strength and challenge, as well as offering recommendations for organizational change. Together, this analysis will position the Museum to find its next Director.

Methodology

MMC began its work by reviewing organizational documents including AAM reaccreditation materials from 2001 and 2016, long-range plans, recent grant applications, RMA by-laws and background material, financial reports, job descriptions, and other background information. The MMC team made a site visit to Riverside February 6-8, 2017 to tour the facilities and conduct individual and group interviews with City Administration, the RMA Executive Board, and Museum Board, and to facilitate a brainstorming session about the future of RMM with a small group of community leaders. Before and after this site visit, MMC conducted additional one-on-one, confidential phone interviews with City Council members, previous RMM Directors, and key staff. Altogether, MMC spoke with 48 individuals about the Museum. See the Appendix for a full list of participants.

MMC researched four Benchmark Museums in order to view RMM in a broader context. Figure 2 provides an overview of the Benchmark Museums. Each is a city-owned, regional museum located in the Western United States, and is governed and operated through a public-private partnership. These museums were selected to represent a spectrum of public-private partnerships, with the Longmont Museum receiving the most support from the City, and the Pacific Grove Museum of Natural History receiving the least. Detailed

¹ American Alliance of Museums, *Reaccreditation Letter*, November 1, 2016.

profiles of each museum and notable trends within the Benchmark Museums can be found in the full *Benchmark Report* submitted under separate cover. Findings from the study are cited in this *Organizational Assessment* when appropriate.

Figure 2. Overview of Benchmark Museums Compared to RMM

Organization	Location	Metro Area Population ¹	Operating Budget ²	% City Funding	Annual Attendance	Staff FTE
Riverside Metropolitan Museum	Riverside, CA	4,224,851	\$1,684,901	97%	51,631	14.25
Bowers Museum	Santa Ana, CA	12,828,837	\$5,484,791	25%	150,000	53
Longmont Museum	Longmont, CO	294,567	\$1,129,224	78%	62,652	12
Pacific Grove Museum of Natural History	Pacific Grove, CA	415,057	\$736,590	18%	50,000	12.25
Whatcom Museum	Bellingham, WA	201,140	\$2,264,231	68%	71,900	23.5

¹ Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Population for 2010 Metropolitan Statistical Areas in the United States, accessed at <https://www.census.gov/population/www/cen2010/cph-t/cph-t-5.html>

² RMM financial data is FY16 while the Benchmark Museums is FY15

Financial data from the four Benchmark Museums presented in this report, as well as the *Benchmark Report*, is from FY15. This was the most recent complete fiscal year data available from all four organizations and allowed MMC to present revenue and expense actuals, which were approved by each museum. By contrast, the RMM financial data represents FY16 budgeted figures (not actuals); all RMM financial figures in this *Organizational Assessment*, no matter the fiscal year, are budgeted figures, and as a result, may differ significantly from the actuals. The one exception is the contributed revenue from the RMA, which is actual revenue. The inclusion of budgets instead of actuals was made in discussion with the Museum and is due to a lack of accurate expense tracking at RMM; this is further discussed in the Business Model section of this report. MMC chose to look at FY16 at RMM, even though the Benchmark Museums show FY15, because not only is it a more recent fiscal year, but also it represents a more accurate picture of the Museum's budget, which changed in significant ways from FY15 to FY16 with a new staff member dedicated to budgeting and financial oversight.

Overview of MMC Assessment Findings

MMC's interviews revealed numerous organizational strengths. RMM staff was described as dedicated, and the previous Director was complimented for making positive changes in programming and leading the merged MCAD effectively. The current City Manager and City Council are seen as supportive of the Museum and their funding of a municipal museum is noted as one of RMM's greatest strengths. Many pointed to the Main Museum building as historic and beautiful, despite its limitations. The Heritage House was often described as a gem, being well maintained and supported by loyal volunteers; those volunteers,

who make up the core of the RMA, are seen as tremendous assets to RMM, and their membership of over 450 is seen as significant. Many interviewees pointed to RMM's outreach programs as strengths, and a large number of stakeholders said the Nature Center is doing innovative, relevant, and popular programming. Finally, RMM's status as a Smithsonian Affiliate is seen as an asset to the community, with the potential to be utilized and promoted further.

While interviewees see the Museum's strengths and opportunities, they also noted significant challenges. Primary among those challenges is the visitor experience at the Main Museum, which was described as static and unchanging, as well as the Museum's low profile in the community and lack of branding. The building itself is seen as a strength, but it was also described as in need of expansion and improvements. The size and condition of collections storage, incomplete inventory, and the size of the collection are all pressing issues. The Museum has expanded over time to include new facilities that have great potential, including Harada House, Robinson House, and the Nature Center, but RMM has done little to develop or restore the historic facilities and does not have the funds to make them accessible.

Many of the Museum's challenges began, or were heightened, by the recession, which led to budget cuts and staff reductions. RMM remains understaffed and tied to an organizational structure that limits the Museum's ability to be nimble and focus on the visitor. At the same time, the Museum's loyal volunteers are aging and a new corps of volunteers is not in place to continue their efforts. And finally, one of the RMM's greatest strengths – its consistent and significant funding by the City – is also a liability if that funding is not expanded and diversified to provide greater financial security.

The tabling of a decision by AAM to reaccredit the Museum was discussed by interviewees as a roadblock, but most said it provides an opportunity to address ongoing issues and rethink what the Museum can be. MMC was told by interviewees that Riverside is a community with great pride in its history, and the RMM has a unique role in telling that story. RMM is at a transitional moment in its history, with a supportive City Administration, an upcoming search for its next Director, and detailed input through AAM and this *Assessment* as to where improvements can be made. All who were interviewed expressed the sincere hope that the Museum will take this opportunity to enhance the way it operates to provide truly impactful experiences for its visitors.

The following pages present further detail on the key issues facing RMM and MMC's recommendations to address those issues and position the Museum to find its next Director.

SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendation #1: When hiring the next RMM Director, seek out candidates with a depth of experience in the museum field. In specific, recruit visionary leaders who are experienced in implementing change and establishing a vision that is relevant to target audiences.

Recommendation #2: Once a new Director is hired, engage in a strategic planning process that builds on the current *Institutional Plan* to establish a broader context for Museum activities. The updated plan should include a vision statement as well as a brief context for each goal that speaks to the vision in individual areas of operations, followed by objectives with accountabilities attached. In defining the future vision, the planning process should result in a clarification of target audiences so that exhibits and programs can be developed in response to their particular needs. Given the need to better understand RMM's value and place in the community, the planning process would benefit from the participation of all stakeholder groups including representatives of target audiences, Museum staff, City Administration, Board, RMA, and community leadership. MMC spoke with many people who have high hopes for the Museum and their ideas and enthusiasm should be tapped in developing a future vision.

Recommendation #3: Contract with exhibit designers and architects to develop a *Visitor Experience Plan* that rethinks the Main Museum in terms of permanent exhibits, changing exhibitions, program space, retail space, café or other gathering space, and a more logical distribution of staff offices. As part of the planning process, consider opportunities for expansion to determine their viability. Work with the City Manager's office to determine the City's potential financial support for this project and develop and implement a capital campaign to raise remaining funds.

Recommendation #4: Establish an exhibitions calendar that formalizes changes in exhibits on a regular basis to create something new to see at the Museum. Temporary exhibitions and rotations in the permanent exhibit space can pull from the RMM collections while bringing in loans from the Smithsonian Affiliate program more often. Consistent marketing through free channels, and targeted paid channels as funds allow, should be used to promote these changes more vigorously.

Recommendation #5: As part of an overall revamping of the organizational chart (discussed further in the section entitled, *Organizational Structure*), hire a staff member who will focus on exhibition development and implementation to aid in RMM's renewed focus on changing exhibits more often.

Recommendation #6: Launch an experimental space within the Museum to test new ideas with visitors. This will be most helpful while RMM is in the process of planning for its future visitor experience, as it provides valuable formative evaluation feedback prior to committing to fabrication and installation.

Recommendation #7: Establish a formal evaluation program for exhibits and programs. Evaluation options range in complexity, and given RMM's staffing levels and resources, highly complex evaluations might not be realistic in the short-term. But this is an area in which volunteers can be highly useful, and in MMC's experience, an area that many volunteers find interesting. Evaluation efforts can increase over time, but basic information gathered on a consistent basis will help the Museum to understand whom it serves and how they feel about their experience.

Recommendation #8: Create an advisory group of community members, representing the diversity of the

population, to give feedback to the Museum on its current visitor experience and future plans for changes to that experience.

Recommendation #9: Place new emphasis on collaboration and pooling of resources with local organizations to get greater “bang for the buck.” Through MMC’s conversations, the Riverside Arts Council expressed enthusiasm for the idea of leading efforts to convene the cultural organizations in Riverside (i.e. ARTSblock, Riverside Art Museum, Center for Social Justice and Civil Liberties) and brainstorm ways in which they can work together. Ideas generated in MMC’s discussions with community leaders include pooling resources for marketing, social media, and fundraisers. Another compelling idea is to work on a theme together, with each organization developing programming around that theme. There are a number of small nonprofit, cultural organizations in Riverside who face the same issues as RMM and could benefit from working together toward a common goal.

Recommendation #10: Seek out marketing expertise to redevelop the RMM brand, based on its vision for the future of the Museum. This brand should consider how best to position the Museum umbrella as well as all of its component parts. The exercise should also consider the Museum name. Changes should be reflected in signage, a revamped website, and all collateral materials.

Recommendation #11: As part of the Museum’s efforts to grow the budget, commit funds and staff to marketing and communications campaigns to build awareness about the Museum in general and the vision for the future in specific.

Recommendation #12: Implement the plan RMM sent to AAM in response to the concerns outlined in the *Reaccreditation Letter*. The Collections Committee of the RMM Board should take a strong role in holding the Museum accountable for implementation of this plan, as well as the action plans detailed in the *Institutional Plan*.

Recommendation #13: With inventories complete, evaluate the collections for deaccessioning. The RMM Collections Management Policy outlines the process by which deaccessioning should occur, from staff recommendation to approval by the Board Collections Committee, approval by the full RMM Board, and final approval by the City Council. As per museum industry standards for ethics, any proceeds derived from deaccessioning should be used to further the Museum’s collections; funds should not be used for Museum operations.

Recommendation #14: In collaboration with the RMA, develop a long-range plan to enhance the Museum’s volunteer program, including proactive outreach to new, younger, and more diverse demographics; diversifying the volunteer opportunities available; and ensuring volunteers feel appreciated and invested in the Museum’s future.

Recommendation #15: After gathering feedback from the Harada family and key supporters, restore Harada

House in a way that makes it accessible to the general public, even if this means losing National Historic Landmark status. Conduct due diligence through long-range planning and the hiring of fundraising counsel, and develop a *Visitor Experience Plan* for Harada House that will provide a dynamic visitor engagement with the site, the story of the Harada Family, and the larger story of immigration and civil rights. Given that “the story is the thing,” interpretation should focus on that story, but there is also an opportunity to open Harada House to other nonprofit organizations as a community meeting place. Nonprofits are lacking in places to meet in Riverside and dedicating a piece of the Harada House function to this role would reflect the fundamental story of inclusion and community that is woven throughout the Harada narrative. This is not to say that Harada House should be a meeting place first and foremost, but rather that it could be a purposeful element of the overall experience.

In developing a *Visitor Experience Plan* for Harada House, consider the future of Robinson House through a cost-benefit analysis. If Harada House becomes fully accessible, Robinson House may not be necessary for interpretive space. In that case, sale of Robinson House should be considered.

Recommendation #16: As part of a strategic planning process, develop business plans for RMM’s historic structures and other satellite facilities. The satellite facilities are true assets to RMM, but as stewards of these sites, the Museum must maintain them and ensure their accessibility to the public. This is a fundamental role of museums in general, but as a municipal museum that is funded almost entirely through public funds, this obligation must live up to public scrutiny. If RMM cannot operate these facilities, long-term discussions need to be had about the future of each site. For example, the Nature Center is a valuable asset for RMM and receives wonderful reviews, but if it cannot be sustained by RMM, the Parks & Recreation Department might be better suited to fully operate the program. It is not MMC’s position that facilities should be shed, but rather that a culture of planning and operational sustainability must begin to infuse the organization.

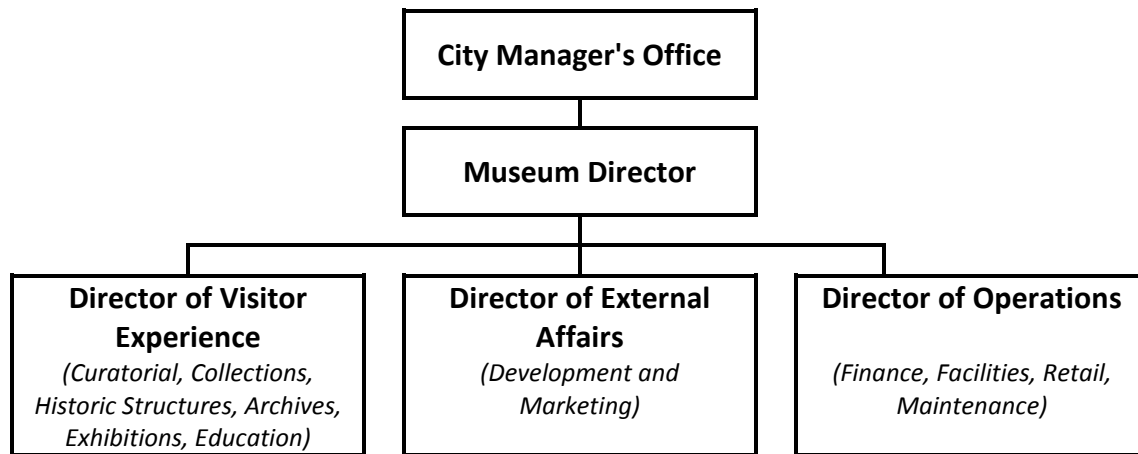
Recommendation #17: Divide the role of MCAD Director to dedicate a full-time staff position to leading the Museum. This does not require the Department to be dissolved; the Museum can continue to function within MCAD, but either way, the RMM Director should report directly to the Assistant City Manager.

It is worth noting that some interviewees were concerned about the logistical support provided by Arts & Culture to the Museum’s programs and activities and what might happen if MCAD is split. On the contrary, MMC also heard that Arts & Culture provides these services to other departments, and as such, would continue to do so if the Museum is not directed by the MCAD Director. One exception is marketing for the Museum, which is provided through a staff member from the Arts & Culture side of MCAD; this is an area that the Museum needs to improve and dedicate more funds to whether or not MCAD remains one staff. In general, these issues must be studied further to ensure that the Museum is not burdened with significant costs if separated from Arts & Culture.

Recommendation #18: Rethink the RMM organizational chart to better reflect contemporary, visitor-centered operations. Such a re-organization might look like the chart below, creating Museum departments

around the visitor experience, external affairs, and operations.

RMM Proposed Organizational Structure



Work with the City Manager’s office to consider the implications of restructuring curatorial staff, with the goal of having fewer content-based curators, and more generalists. Prior to staff reductions, the Museum had full-time staff dedicated to collections, and doing so again would address the collections stewardship issues described previously. While maintaining some content curators might be desirable, greater emphasis should be placed on the visitor experience by hiring staff dedicated to exhibitions, registration, and the visitor experience, and utilizing contract curators when needed.

Recommendation #19: As part of any facility changes that result from the *Visitor Experience Plan* (see Recommendation #3), bring staff offices into closer proximity to one another to encourage creativity, collaboration, communication, and collegiality.

Recommendation #20: The next RMM Director should manage the staff with a greater sense of transparency, accountability, and collaboration, with open communications at its core. In searching for the next Director, the City should prioritize experience in managing teams and breaking staff out of silos to ensure they are working most effectively as a team toward the Museum’s future vision.

Recommendation #21: With a new or updated *Institutional Plan*, establish an Oversight Committee of Board and staff members to increase communication about organizational priorities and hold personnel accountable for meeting deadlines and completing objectives. Include more than senior staff in this committee to create a greater sense of investment and a greater sense of appreciation with the whole staff.

Recommendation #22: Ensure full implementation of expense tracking by staff to better understand the Museum’s costs and to ingrain a culture of financial responsibility at every staff level.

Recommendation #23: Build a robust public-private partnership by establishing a Foundation to provide significant financial support for the RMM. MMC’s recommendation is to utilize the RMA’s 501(c)(3) and

rename it as the RMM Foundation, maintaining the RMA as a committee of the Foundation focusing on Heritage House. In no way does the Museum want to lose the RMA, and those in the group who would like to step into a more dynamic fundraising role could serve beyond the RMA (or Heritage House) Committee; this approach is intended to preserve the passion of the RMA while acknowledging the need for new individuals to spearhead fundraising. Another option is to create a separate 501(c)(3), but that merely creates another entity and the Museum should endeavor to consolidate efforts and increase communication and collaboration. Either way, a *Memorandum of Understanding* should be developed between the City and the 501(c)(3) to formalize the partnership and outline the specific roles and responsibilities of each party.

The Foundation should be tasked with developing a fundraising program to benefit the Museum, including annual giving, major gifts, sponsorships, grants, planned giving, and long-term goals of raising an endowment or reserve fund, and possibly conducting a capital campaign to fund future projects. As part of this program, the Foundation should work with the Museum to rethink the membership program as a Museum membership (instead of an RMA membership), developing financial incentives for membership such as discounts on admissions and programs, and other attractive benefits that will provide an economic driver for becoming a member as well as joining to support RMM in general. The table below provides an overview of membership data from the Benchmark Museums. Although these are not direct parallels, it offers a glimpse of the potential membership provides.

RMA Membership Program Compared to Benchmark Museums

	RMA	Bowers	Longmont	Pacific Grove	Whatcom
Member Households	460	7,500	650	550	2,000
Basic Membership Fee	\$30	\$50	\$40	\$45	\$50
Total Member Revenue	\$7,998	\$522,265	\$13,000	\$36,050	\$121,272
Average Revenue per Member	\$17	\$70	\$20	\$66	\$61

Museum fundraising efforts should be led by professional staff and supported through the recruitment of Foundation Board members who have the financial capacity or connections to build significant financial support. The next Museum Director is expected to have experience in raising contributed revenue, and this should be supplemented by hiring additional staff dedicated to fundraising. The Museum has discussed the idea of hiring a Development Officer for some time, but it has never happened. MMC recommends channeling these funds into hiring a Development Director for the new Foundation to work in tandem with the Museum Director at a high level to establish a fundraising program.

Recommendation #24: Study potential areas of earned revenue for the Museum, striking a balance between accessibility and financial responsibility. Areas of opportunity for RMM earned revenue include charging a fee for:

- Admission to the Museum
- Special exhibitions
- Programs

- Traveling exhibitions developed by RMM
- Loans of RMM collections to other museums
- Rights and reproductions
- Facility rentals
- Food service

Most notable among these is charging a fee for admission to the Museum. An admission fee does not need to be exorbitant; for example, the Riverside Art Museum charges \$5 for general admission, \$3 for students and seniors, and offers free admission for members, military, and children under 12. The table below shows admission fees for the Benchmark Museums as a point of reference. A modest admission fee should be introduced when the Museum has new and different experiences for the public. The community is accustomed to the Museum being free, and as long as the visitor experience remains the same, there is no logical messaging to the public about a change in admissions. But with a new visitor experience, the introduction of an admission fee can reflect an upgraded experience.

Another key earned income source worth considering now is charging for programs. The RMM Education

Admissions Data: RMM Compared to Benchmark Museums

	RMM	Bowers	Longmont	Pacific Grove	Whatcom
Attendance	51,631	150,000	62,652	50,000	71,900
Basic Admissions Fee	Free	\$13 weekdays \$15 weekends	Free	\$8.95 (Free to County Residents)	\$10
Special Exhibition Admission Fee	N/A	\$23 weekdays \$25 weekends	\$8	N/A	N/A
Total Admissions Revenue	N/A	\$571,643	\$97,371	\$45,130	\$70,700

Policy calls for at least 75% of programs to be free of charge, and adhering to this policy would allow the Museum to begin charging for some programs. The percentage indicated in this policy should be reviewed, but even beginning with fees that allow 25% of programs to break even or have a surplus, would be a building block for the Museum's financial sustainability.

Recommendation #25: The Board has the opportunity to play a central role in the future of the Museum, but to do so, must shore up its foundation. Toward that end, revisit and further define the responsibilities of Board members and officers in written job descriptions and ensure this information is part of a formal Board orientation program for new members. As part of that orientation program, consider developing a mentorship program for new members with established members to guide them through the start of their term.

Recommendation #26: As noted in AAM's "Characteristics of Excellence," "A governing authority is

expected to...reflect the diversity of the communities it serves,”² and the RMM Board could improve in this regard. Riverside and its surrounding region are quite diverse, and this should have a stronger reflection in Board representation. Given that Board members are appointed, there is less control over recruitment, but MMC recommends working with the City to formalize diversity (ethnic, socioeconomic, geographic, etc.) as a key criteria for Board appointment.

Recommendation #27: The RMM Director should work with the Board to strategize their advocacy work in the community, identifying meetings or other opportunities for Board and/or Museum staff to create a higher profile in the community through regular presentations, networking, and attendance at community events.

Recommendation #28: In partnership with the Museum Director, the Board should develop a plan to reach out to Council Members more consistently and effectively. This approach is similar to developing a cultivation plan for prospective donors; cultivating the Council through greater outreach will establish greater rapport and a stronger image of the RMM within the Council.

Recommendation #29: As another way to strengthen the groups affiliated with RMM, build a relationship between the RMA (or Foundation, in the future) and the Board. There is almost no interaction between the groups; not all Board members are members of RMA and not all participate in their fundraisers. This level of participation has not been expected until now, but it makes no sense, as the RMA and Museum Board are the two groups in a position to serve as champions of the Museum, so they should be speaking the same language and strategizing together. The President of the RMA attends Museum Board meetings, but the groups should brainstorm ways to enhance the relationship, such as requiring RMA membership of all Board members, requiring attendance at one RMA event per year, creating a joint committee between the two groups to keep each other informed, and/or designating a Board officer to attend RMA meetings.

In addition, the Acting Director has discovered many serious problems in the museum. Below are eleven:

1. Grant funded projects incomplete and required return of grant funds.
2. Historic Structures documentation and planning incomplete.
3. Harada House accession incomplete.
4. Specimens on exhibit not properly cared for, leading to pest infestations.
5. Divisions in museum do not properly budget for programs or projects.
6. Monetary donations and grants not formally presented to City Council for acceptance.
7. Thank you acknowledgement not provided for many of the donations.
8. Acquisitions of collections items not presented to City Council for acceptance.
9. Lack of proper planning for exhibits, especially outreach.
10. Lack of sufficient reporting to the Museum Board.
11. Not one grant application submitted to Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS) in ten years.

² American Alliance of Museums, “Characteristics of Excellence: Standards Regarding the Composition of the Governing Authority,” accessed at <http://www.aam-us.org/resources/ethics-standards-and-best-practices/leadership>

Shuttering the museum for a three-year period will provide the time needed to fix most of these fundamental problems, complete the re-accreditation efforts, focus on the Harada House and the Collections inventory, and for the Museum Board, staff, and the new Museum Director to begin planning with the community for what the museum will be when it re-opens.

MUSEUM DIRECTOR SEARCH TIMELINE

The **Museum Director search** will be conducted by MMC. Below is the detailed timeline. Staff expects to begin this process mid-June.

MMC SCOPE OF SERVICES

Task One: Job Definition [1 - 2 weeks]

The first step in conducting an effective search is the development of complete job specifications. MMC will begin its work by having a discussion with you by telephone to review the traits and characteristics sought in the next Executive Director. Usually MMC makes a site visit to conduct an assessment of the organization; however, in this case, that task has been accomplished through the *Organizational Assessment* submitted in April. Therefore, the primary goal is to discuss with you the Executive Director's attributes and how those attributes are reflective of RMM's future. As part of the Organizational Assessment, MMC outlined some of the expertise needed for the next Executive Director.

The outcome will be the job description and candidate profile developed by MMC. This job description will provide the basis upon which MMC will recruit appropriate candidates. The job description is a marketing tool that will be designed to not only provide candidates with an explanation of the necessary qualifications and experience needed, but also to "sell" RMM, the desirability of the position, and the attractiveness of living in Riverside.

Task Two: Candidate Research and Outreach [approximately 6 weeks]

Candidate recruitment will be carried out nationally to identify and contact those individuals who match the candidate profile and job description. While MMC's database and extensive professional contacts provide us with access to top professionals, we will also conduct new research for the candidate pool to identify individuals with backgrounds specific to your needs. MMC recruits these individuals regardless of whether or not they are actively seeking new employment. In order to announce the availability of the position, MMC will place advertisements with suitable industry sources, such as the American Alliance of Museums, the California Association of Museums, Western Museums Association, etc.

MMC will screen candidates through reviewing resumes, Skype and/or in-person interviewing, and early reference checking. MMC typically asks candidates to provide references of individuals they reported to (their director and/or board members), as well as staff members who reported to them. We do not talk to their current employer until they become final candidates.

The most highly qualified candidates will be asked to *respond to two essay questions*. MMC has found that asking candidates to answer an essay question not only demonstrates the candidates' writing abilities, but also helps to build an understanding of the candidates' experiences with issues relevant to the position.

The specific question to be asked will be developed in discussion with you during the first telephone meeting. In addition to the essay questions, we ask each candidate to “curate themselves” by assembling a *digital portfolio of their accomplishments*.

Throughout the recruitment process, MMC will provide you with weekly updates regarding the status of the search.

Task Three: Presentation of Candidate Slate (1 week)

After thorough investigation of each candidate, MMC will recommend a slate of applicants who are the most highly qualified and who are interested in the position. We suggest that you appoint an Advisory Committee for the Search, a small group of 5-7 members that includes one representative from the Museum Board, one representative from the Riverside Museum Associates, one director from a regional museum, and two representatives who head up City departments. Approximately one week prior to our first meeting with the Advisory Committee, we will send each member a binder that contains MMC’s final report on the recruitment process. The binder will include an overview of the slate of candidates, as well as each candidate’s cover letter, resume, responses to the essay questions, and a digital portfolio of the applicants’ past accomplishments for you to review.

We will meet in-person with the Advisory Committee to present this slate of applicants. During our meeting, we will add to the materials presented in the binder by providing findings from our interviews with the candidates and their references.

It is MMC’s objective to bring only the most highly qualified candidates to you and the Advisory Committee’s attention, and MMC will facilitate a discussion with the Advisory Committee to determine which candidates will be invited for an in-person interview.

Task Four: Candidate Interviews (3 days)

MMC suggests that all of the candidate interviews take place over a short period of time (within two to three days) to provide the Advisory Committee with an optimal basis of comparison. In preparation for the interviews, the MMC team will be on-site to meet with the Advisory Committee to discuss interview questions for candidates and methods to evaluate each candidate. We will be present during the interview process.

While the candidates are visiting, we also recommend arranging additional situations (dinner with Advisory Committee members, tour of the museum and branch sites, tour of the area, etc.) that will help you and the candidates get to know each other. MMC will assist you in scheduling and coordinating those arrangements.

After the interviews are completed, MMC will remain on-site to facilitate a discussion with the Advisory Committee to determine which candidates they will recommend to the City for a second visit. Prior to the candidates’ second visit, MMC will do further reference checking (including academic, credit, and criminal checks) to establish a conclusive profile of the final candidate(s).

Task Five: Candidate Finalists and Search Closing (3-6 weeks)

MMC will help facilitate arrangements for the second visit which might include a presentation by the finalists of how he/she will carry out the RMM vision over the next five years. During the second visit the

finalists will meet with the City Manager, who will make the final decision in hiring the Executive Director. Once the final choice has been made by the City Manager, MMC will assist with hiring negotiations.

Timeline Summary

A typical search takes four to six months from the first meeting to the final candidate hire. The following outlines MMC's projected timeframe and flow of the proposed search process.

Task	Month 1	Month 2	Month 3	Month 4	Month 5	Month 6
1. Job Definition (1-2 weeks)						
2. Candidate Research & Outreach (6 weeks)						
3. Presentation of Candidate Slate (1 week)						
4. Candidate Interviews (3 days)						
5. Candidate Finalists and Search Closing (3 - 6 weeks)						

MMC Search Policies

MMC will remain on the job until the search is concluded, or until nine months from the date of a signed agreement, whichever occurs first. If the initial search does not provide a suitable candidate, MMC will begin again, continuing to work on the project until a successful candidate is identified or the MMC signed agreement expires. Should it be necessary for the search to continue beyond nine months, an additional fee will apply.

Once the chosen candidate has begun work, MMC will stay in touch with you regarding the progress of the new Executive Director. In the event that the Executive Director resigns or is terminated with cause within the first 12 months of employment, MMC will continue to provide search services for the replacement at 50% of the quoted fee in this proposal, as well as agreed upon expenses.

It is the policy of MMC not to recruit candidates from organizations for which we have made a placement during the past five years. MMC represents organizations only. Given the current positions of prospective candidates, *it is critically important to do everything possible to protect the confidentiality of any candidate submitted for consideration.*

FISCAL IMPACT:

There is no fiscal impact associated with this report. However, the execution of the plans to remediate the Museum's problems in this report will have budget implications, and those budget details will be presented to the Board as they arise.

Prepared by: Alexander T. Nguyen, Assistant City Manager/Acting Museum Director

Resources:

1. AAM Reaccreditation Decision Letter & Site Visit Report:
<http://www.riversideca.gov/museum/AAMReport.pdf>
2. MMC 2017 Museum Assessment Report & Benchmark Study:
<http://www.riversideca.gov/museum/OrganizationalAssessment.pdf>