



City of Arts & Innovation

City Council Memorandum

TO: HONORABLE MAYOR AND CITY COUNCIL **DATE: JULY 11, 2017**

FROM: OFFICE OF THE CITY MANAGER **WARDS: ALL**

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.

RECOMMENDATION:

That the City Council:

1. Approve to shutter the Riverside Metropolitan 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; and
2. Direct staff to return the City Council with subject specific updates, such as Harada House, Archives, and Inventory.

BACKGROUND:

The Riverside Metropolitan Museum may arguably be the most significant municipal building of Riverside. Aside from being a historic government building, as the City's museum, it serves as the embodiment and reflection of Riverside's community, culture and history. And as a museum, its primary purpose is to collect, preserve, care for, exhibit, and make available for education and research, the artifacts and archives in its collection.

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.

MUSEUM BOARD RECOMMENDATION:

On June 14, 2017, the Museum Board deliberated staff's recommendation, and took the following steps:

1. 1st motion, made by C. Wilson, was to return the report to staff for more information and timelines. No second.
2. 2nd motion was made by M. Hughes, to approve the temporary closure of the Museum for up to 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, and accept the report with the change from “3 years” to “up to 3 years”. H. Evans made the friendly amendment to change “shutter” to “temporary closure”.

Motion: M. Hughes Second: T. Carpenter

Votes: C. Wilson- NO T. Carpenter- YES

 R. Monge- NO M. Hughes- YES

 E. Palacios- NO H. Evans- YES

The motion was tied 3-3, and failed to carry.

3. 3rd motion, suggested by Chair Palacios, and motioned by board member Wilson was made to reject the report as currently written.

Motion: C. Wilson Second: R. Monge

Votes: C. Wilson- YES M. Hughes- NO

 R. Monge- YES H. Evans- YES

 T. Carpenter- NO E. Palacios- YES

The motion carried with Yes- 4 and No- 2.

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 – THIS IS THE PLAN

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

2. 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. The 2016 AAM report stated "The storage conditions of collections in the basement of the main museum building remain substandard despite having been identified in last accreditation review."

Not only has it remained in the basement, 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. Meanwhile, the following archive collections will be available at the Main Library:

- A. *Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps* – These maps are fire insurance maps prepared by the Sanborn company extending back to the time prior to the founding of the City. These are key documents in doing research of building history, building footprint and layout, as well as construction materials. The Sanborn maps are used within the Planning and Neighborhood Engagement divisions on a daily basis.
- B. *Frank Miller Collection* – Frank Miller was integral in the founding and establishment of the City, and this collection helps in conducting research of historic buildings for the purposes of development projects.
- C. *Jekel Collection* – Scrapbook of Henry Jekel, prepared by his wife during the course of his career. Jekel has been identified as a significant architect and his buildings have been the largest category of nominations for City landmark status.
- D. *Clinton Marr Collection* – Drawings, photographs and blueprints donated by Architect

Clinton Marr prior to his death. Clinton Marr has been identified as a significant architect during the modernist period in Riverside. Many of Marr's projects have been part of development projects as of late and access to original drawings is helpful in determining character defining features and other key elements of a building going forward.

- E. *Tax Assessors scrapbook from 1933* – In 1933 a tax assessor made a scrapbook with photographs of all of the downtown buildings. This is a remarkable collection because it has an image of many properties at a specific point in time (1933) which is critical in doing historical research and determining character defining features.
- F. *Historic Planning and Mapping Documents* – Over the last decade the City's planning department has donated to the Museum's archival collection historical maps that recorded land use and specific historic moments in the planning history. These documents are important in determining historic uses for purposes of land use inquiries/consistency findings and for historic research of a property for development type projects.

3. 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.

4. 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.

5. 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.

6. 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.

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

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

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

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

- Harada House – staff is conducting, for the first time, a comprehensive structural engineering assessment to determine all the requirements for saving Harada House.

- Collections Inventory – the museum does not have a proper inventory of its collections. This is not only a violation of museum standards, it prevents the museum from organizing complete exhibits, provides uncertainty for research, and it jeopardizes the city’s ability to make proper insurance claims if needed.
- Fixing fundamental internal systems and processes.
- Initiate a national search for a museum director – started mid-June, 2017.
- Begin planning for museum renovation, programming and possible expansion after the new Director is on the job.

11. 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:

“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.

Furthermore, the following are museums that have been through a successful shuttering period:

Temporary Museum Closures

Museum		Location	Closure	Reason
1	Asian Art Museum	Seattle, WA	2 years	Renovation/Expansion
2	Bowers Museum	Santa Ana, CA	3 years	Self-Study/Community Input

3	California Academy of Sciences	San Francisco, CA	3 years	Renovation
4	Cooper Hewitt, Smithsonian Design Museum	New York, NY	3 years	Renovation
5	Delaware History Museum	Wilmington, DE	2 years	Renovation
6	Dumbarton Oaks Museum	Washington, DC	1 year	Renovation
7	Fredericksburg Area Museum	Fredericksburg, VA	1 year	Relocation
8	Freer Gallery	Washington, DC	2 years	Renovation
9	Hispanic Society of America Museum	New York, NY	Jan 2017 – (Fall 2019)	Renovation
10	Hood Museum	Hanover, NH	2016 – (Jan 2019)	Renovation/Expansion
11	Idaho State Historical Museum	Boise, ID	4 years	Renovation/Expansion
12	IU Eskenazi Museum of Art	Bloomington, IN	May 2017 – (Spring 2020)	Renovation
13	LDS Church History Museum	Salt Lake City, UT	1 year	Renovation
14	Museum of Ventura County	Ventura, CA	2 years	Comprehensive Revamp
15	National Museum of American History	Washington, DC	2 years	Renovation
16	Nebraska History Museum	Lincoln, NE	1 year	Renovation
17	Nixon Presidential Library and Museum	Yorba Linda, CA	1 year	Renovation
18	Peter J Booras Museum	Rindge, NH	3 years	Renovation
19	Peterson Automotive Museum	Los Angeles, CA	14 months	Renovation
20	Randall Museum	San Francisco, CA	2 years	Renovation
21	San Francisco Museum of Modern Art	San Francisco, CA	3 years	Expansion
22	Southern Illinois University Museum	Carbondale, IL	July 1, 2017 – (TBD)	Budget Impasse
23	Speed Art Museum	Louisville, KY	3 years	Renovation/Expansion
24	The Bass	Miami, FL	17 months	Renovation
25	The Menil Collection	Houston, TX	Feb 26, 2018 – (Fall 2018)	Renovation
26	Tongass Historical Museum	Ketchikan, AK	2 years	Renovation
27	Utah Museum of Fine Arts	Salt Lake City, UT	1 year	Remodel/Reinstallation

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 unstaffed 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' (MMC) assessment of the museum produced 29 recommendations to improve the museum and bring it into the 21st century. MMC provided a detailed presentation to the City Council on May 23, 2017. A summary of their findings follows, and the 29 recommendations are attached.

MMC'S SUMMARY

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 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.

END OF MMC SUMMARY

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.

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** is being conducted by MMC. Below is the detailed timeline. The process began mid-June 2017.

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)						

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 Museum Board as they arise, and to the City Council when necessary and/or appropriate.

Prepared by: Alexander T. Nguyen, Assistant City Manager Acting Museum Director
Certified as to
availability of funds: Scott G. Miller, Chief Financial Officer/City Treasurer
Approved by: John A. Russo, City Manager
Approved as to form: Gary G. Geuss, City Attorney

Attachments:

1. Museum Management Consultants 2017 Recommendations
2. Presentation

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>