



## THREE YEAR SHUTTER OF THE RIVERSIDE METROPOLITAN MUSUEM

Office of the City Manager

City Council  
July 11, 2017

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### MUSEUM BOARD RECOMMENDATION

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

1. First motion by board member Wilson to send the report back to staff for more information and a timeline – motion did not receive a second.
2. Second motion by board member Hughes, with a change from "three years" to "up to three years." Friendly amendment by board member Evans to change "shutter" to "temporary closure." Board voted 3 – 3.
3. Third, substitute motion, suggested by Chair Palacios, motioned by board member Wilson, to reject the staff report outright. Board voted 4 – 2.



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## THE PLAN

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



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## THE PLAN

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 following will be available at the Main Library:

- a. Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps
- b. Frank Miller Collection
- c. Jekel Collection
- d. Clinton Marr collection
- e. Tax Assessor's scrapbook from 1933
- f. Historic Planning and Mapping Documents



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## THE PLAN

3. The **Heritage House** will remain open. Staff will work closely with the Riverside Museum Associates and support their efforts to enhance programming at Heritage House.
4. The **Museum Gift Shop** will also be closed during this period.



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## THE PLAN

5. The **Sycamore Canyon Nature Center** will remain open, but will now be supervised by the Parks, Recreation and Community Services Department.
6. Staff will partner with the Riverside Art Museum for the **Tlatilco Exhibit in 2018**.
7. The entire **Cultural Affairs Division** will transfer to the Community and Economic Development Department.



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## THE PLAN

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.



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## THE PLAN

10. While the main museum building is closed to the public, staff will focus on:
  - a. Harada House
  - b. Collections Inventory
  - c. Fixing fundamental internal systems and processes
  - d. Initiate a national search for a museum director
  - e. Begin planning for museum renovation, programming and possible expansion after the new Director is on the job



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## THE PLAN

11.The monthly Museum Board meetings will continue.



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## HOW DOES SHUTTERING IMPACT 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."*



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## TEMPORARY MUSEUM CLOSURES

Asian Art Museum	Hood Museum	Peterson Automotive Museum
Bowers Museum	Idaho State Historical Museum	Randall Museum
California Academy of Sciences	IU Eskenazi Museum of Art	San Francisco Museum of Modern Art
Cooper Hewitt, Smithsonian Design Museum	LDS Church History Museum	Southern Illinois University Museum
Delaware History Museum	Museum of Ventura County	Speed Art Museum
Dumbarton Oaks Museum	National Museum of American History	The Bass
Fredericksburg Area Museum	Nebraska History Museum	The Menil Collection
Freer Gallery	Nixon Presidential Library and Museum	Tongass Historical Museum
Hispanic Society of America Museum	Peter J. Booras Museum	Utah Museum of Fine Arts



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## TEMPORARY MUSEUM CLOSURES

"In 1989, the (Bowers) Museum closed for a period of self-study and community input, hiring a new Director in 1991. In 1992, after a three year closure, the Museum reopened in a renovated and enlarged facility (63,000 square feet) as a new cultural center."



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## AAM ACCREDITATION REPORT

The **AAM accreditation report** raises many concerns over how the Museum operates.

1. "Serious deficiencies in collections stewardship."
  - a. Deterioration of Harada House.
  - b. Storage conditions of collections in the basement remain substandard despite having been identified in last accreditation review.
  - 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.



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## AAM ACCREDITATION REPORT

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.
4. Harada House solution "lies with political leadership."



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## AAM ACCREDITATION REPORT

5. Collections policy calls for an Integrated Pest Management (IPM) program; yet the museum has not implemented the IPM program.
6. "RMM's Board and Collections Committee is not rigorous enough in adhering to the existing collections policies for acquisitions."
7. Scope of Riverside history collections is "not inclusive enough."



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## AAM ACCREDITATION REPORT

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.



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## AAM ACCREDITATION REPORT

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.



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## AAM ACCREDITATION REPORT

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.



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## AAM ACCREDITATION REPORT

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.
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.



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## MUSEUM MANAGEMENT CONSULTANTS' ASSESSMENT

The Assessment produced 29 recommendations to improve the museum and bring it into the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

MMC provided a detailed presentation to the City Council on May 23, 2017.



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## OTHER SERIOUS PROBLEMS

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.



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## OTHER SERIOUS PROBLEMS

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.



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## OTHER SERIOUS PROBLEMS

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.



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## THE PLAN

Shuttering the museum for a three-year period will provide the time needed to:

1. Fix most of these fundamental problems,
2. Complete the re-accreditation efforts,
3. Focus on the Harada House and the Collections inventory, and
4. For the staff and the new Museum Director to begin planning with the community (Neighborhoods, Museum Board, and City Council) for what the museum will be when it re-opens.



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## RECOMMENDATIONS

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.



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