

Plan for Disposition of the Milwaukee Public Museum's Surplus Personal Property and Milwaukee County fixtures

Prepared by: Milwaukee County and the Milwaukee Public Museum (MPM)

Purpose: To establish a transparent and orderly process for the responsible disposition of surplus personal property and fixtures not moving with MPM.

I. Background and Authority

Milwaukee Public Museum (MPM), a nonprofit organization, operates the current museum building under the 2013 Lease and Management Agreement with Milwaukee County. In accordance with this agreement:

- MPM retains ownership of all personal property not affixed to or integrated into the building structure and not part of the Collection.
- MPM has the authority to sell, lease, transfer, or otherwise dispose of such property in the best interests of the Museum.
- Milwaukee County retains ownership of all building-integrated fixtures and accessioned collection items.

This plan defines the process by which surplus MPM-personal property and County-owned fixtures attached to the property will be reviewed, offered, transferred, or disposed of prior to MPM vacating the current facility.

II. Definitions

- **Accessioned Collections:** Objects officially accepted according to the Board of Supervisors approved MPM Collection Policy into Milwaukee County's permanent collection, owned by Milwaukee County as a municipal corporation and held in trust by MPM and the Wisconsin Museum of Nature and Culture for the benefit of the community as a whole.
- **MPM-Personal Property:** Non-accessioned objects, such as non-collection exhibit items, office furniture, equipment, tools, storage units, or built environments not attached to the building, which under the 2013 lease are the personal property of MPM and Milwaukee County has no authority over its disposition.
- **Attached to the Building:** Items requiring damage to remove or that are permanently integrated into the structure.
- **Disposition:** The process outlined in this document.

- **Disposal:** Final removal of property by discard, destruction, or contracted haul-away, used only after all other avenues are exhausted.
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III. Guiding Principles

- **Transparency:** The disposition process will be public, fair, and well-documented with a final report to the County Board.
 - **Public Benefit:** Priority will be given to reuse by County agencies, cultural institutions, and local nonprofit organizations.
 - **Efficiency:** The process will be time-bound and coordinated to avoid delaying the transition.
 - **Public Safety** – all items must be able to be moved safely.
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IV. Disposition Process

MPM will offer personal property through a tiered priority system. The cost of moving the items will be borne by the entity or person receiving the item. Availability will be communicated in advance:

1. Repurposed by MPM

2. Milwaukee County Departments (Zoo, Mitchell Park Domes, etc.)

- County agencies will receive the first opportunity to claim surplus items.
- A dedicated walkthrough period will be scheduled for departments to identify and tag items.
- Departments are responsible for coordinating removal within a prescribed timeline.
- Cost of moving paid by Milwaukee County.

3. Museums and Tribes

- Following County selection, peer institutions will be invited to review, claim, and purchase items for reuse.
- Includes institutions such as Milwaukee Art Museum, Discovery World, Tribal Museums, America's Black Holocaust Museum, and others.

4. Nonprofit Organizations and Educational Institutions

- Eligible 501(c)(3) organizations, educational institutions and tribes may request access to surplus property.
- MPM may ask organizations to submit a brief expression of interest to participate.

5. Exhibit Fabrication / Traveling Exhibit Production Companies

6. Public Offering

- Remaining personal property of MPM will be sold via public auction, online platform, sealed bid, or other public process.
- Milwaukee County may offer fixtures by public auction, online platform, through a Request for Proposals, or other public process.
- Public notice of sale details will be posted broadly and in compliance with any applicable rules.

7. Final Disposal

- Items not transferred through the above phases will be removed and discarded appropriately.

V. Methods of Transfer

The recipient of any surplus property will be responsible for all costs associated with its safe removal and must execute an affidavit of non-liability in favor of both MPM and Milwaukee County. Surplus property may be transferred through the following methods:

- **Sale:** Items sold to the highest bidder or through fair market value methods. Buyer must remove items in accordance with agreed timeframes.
- **Gift:** Items may be gifted if they cannot be sold or if deemed in the Museum's best interest (e.g., to an educational nonprofit). Recipient must remove items timely.
- **Disposal:** Final step for unclaimed items, including landfill, recycling, or contracted removal.

VI. Revenue and Reporting

- Proceeds from the sale of surplus items will be retained by MPM, in accordance with the Lease Agreement, to support transition costs.
 - MPM will provide Milwaukee County with a final report.
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VII. Timeline and Public Communication

- Due to the nature of moving such a large facility it is difficult to put exact dates on each transition period. A more detailed timeline will be presented to the County Board in the first quarter of 2026 prior to the start of this process, including:
 - Tour and selection dates for each eligible group (this will likely start in the first half of 2026)
 - Auction dates and platform (this will be after the move to the new museum and after the museum has moved all items out of the old building, approximately 4th quarter 2027) MPM will notify Supervisors in advance of the public offering.
 - Final clean-out deadlines (approximately end of 2027)
- MPM and Milwaukee County will issue a joint press release and FAQ to notify the public about the process.