



MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY  
**BOARD OF TRUSTEES**  
Executive Action Summary

**Committee Name** Budget and Finance

**Date** December 15, 2023

**Agenda Item:** Authorization to Proceed – MSU Museum – Infrastructure Improvements - Accreditation

**Information**

**Review**

**Action**

**Resolution:**

BE IT RESOLVED, that the Board of Trustees of Michigan State University hereby authorizes the Administration to proceed with the project entitled “MSU Museum – Infrastructure Improvements - Accreditation.”

**Recommendation:**

The Trustee Committee on Budget and Finance recommends that the Board of Trustees authorize the Administration to proceed with infrastructure improvements at the MSU Museum including new heating, ventilation, air conditioning, and humidity controls necessary for the MSU Museum to retain its accreditation, with a project budget of \$28 million.

**Prior Action by BOT:** The Board authorized planning for this project on December 17, 2021.

**Responsible Officers:** Daniel Bollman, Vice President for Strategic Infrastructure Planning and Facilities  
Barbara Kranz, Assistant Provost, Institutional Space Planning and Management

**Summary:** This project will provide new heating, ventilation, air conditioning, new windows, building vapor barrier, ADA restroom upgrades, capital renewal including lighting and domestic sewer upgrades. These upgrades are necessary for the MSU Museum to maintain its American Alliance of Museums (AAM) accreditation by bringing temperature and humidity environmental controls in alignment with industry standards for collections stewardship, storage and exhibition.

The MSU Museum is on West Circle Drive in the north academic district.

## **Background Information:**

The MSU Museum opened in 1857 and is one of the earliest established museums in the nation. It is accredited by the American Alliance of Museums, the gold standard for all museums in the United States. The MSU Museum is also one of only four Smithsonian Institute Affiliates in Michigan, which allows them to borrow objects from the Smithsonian collection and to collaborate on exhibitions, public programs, and research efforts. The Department of Anthropology and its archeology program require access to accredited museum collections for teaching and research, as do science programs such as Integrative Biology and Ecology, Evolution and Behavior.

- The science and cultural collections support over 100 scholarly articles a year by faculty at MSU and around the world, with emphasis in the areas of evolution, biodiversity, climate change, and cultural history.
- The museum collections support individual faculty competitiveness for NSF grants through two galleries dedicated to broader impacts exhibitions.
- The Mammal Research Collection ranks 25th in the Western Hemisphere and is accredited by the American Society of Mammalogists.
- The Museum is a registered scientific institution with the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species. It is a registered scientific institution with the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species.
- Approximately 6,000 MSU students utilized the museum through formal coursework in 2022-23. Thirteen classes from 16 of MSU's 17 colleges were hosted on-site to use collections and exhibitions in experiential learning.
- Science on a Sphere (SOS) technology (from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration) is used for geophysical, environmental, and cultural data visualization. Over 500 students created custom data visualization for SOS in coursework. Science on a Sphere technology is also used for faculty and doctoral student data to support original research that can be shared throughout the 162 institution SOS network (serving over 70 million visitors a year).
- The new CoLab studio supporting innovations in museum research, exhibitions and student experiential learning received a \$2 million endowment from the MSUFCU in 2022.

The Museum will lose its American Alliance of Museums (AAM) accreditation without investment that provides temperature and humidity environmental controls in alignment with standards for collections

stewardship, storage, and exhibition. Accreditation helps the Museum secure federal agency grants (NSF, NEH, NEA, IMLS) that support continued collections care and maintenance and investment in educational programming. It is critical to respond to these infrastructure needs by 2024 as the AAM will conduct a mid-cycle review to determine if these requirements for accreditation have been addressed.

**Source of Funds:**

The project will be funded by general funds, capital reserves and philanthropy and may include debt financing.

**Resource Impact:**

Investment will ensure that the MSU Museum retains its accreditation. This enables the MSU Museum and Colleges that utilize its collections and resources to be competitive for federal grants. The project will address priority capital renewal needs in the building and bring it up to modern standards.