



Museum of Riverside Board Memorandum

City of Arts & Innovation

TO: MUSEUM OF RIVERSIDE BOARD **DATE: DECEMBER 4, 2024**
FROM: MUSEUM DEPARTMENT **WARDS: ALL**
SUBJECT: DIRECTOR'S UPDATE REGARDING THE MAIN MUSEUM RENOVATION, HISTORIC HOUSES, THE 100th ANNIVERSARY, COLLECTIONS, EXHIBITIONS AND PROGRAMS, BUDGET, STAFFING, ADVISORY TEAMS, VOLUNTEER AND SUPPORT OPPORTUNITIES, AND MARKETING AND COMMUNICATIONS

ISSUE:

Receive and file the Director's Update regarding the main museum renovation, historic houses, the 100th anniversary, collections, exhibitions and programs, budget, staffing, advisory teams, volunteer and support opportunities, and marketing and communications.

RECOMMENDATION:

That the Museum of Riverside Board receive and file the Director's Update regarding the main museum renovation, historic houses, the 100th anniversary, collections, exhibitions and programs, budget, staffing, advisory teams, volunteer and support opportunities, and marketing and communications.

DISCUSSION:

Main Museum Renovation

At the time of the preparation of this report, it is expected that the main Museum renovation and expansion project will go to bid by the end of 2024. It will be a private bid, going only to the three pre-qualified contractors. An all-day "page turn" session occurred with Museum and General Services staff and Perkins Eastman / Pfeiffer Partners (architects) on October 21, 2024, to verify late revisions. Staff will continue to examine the drawings to become fully acquainted with the future new facility.

Staff whose offices were still in the downtown building have moved to an office suite at Mission Square. Physical mail to any staff member should be directed to 3900 Main Street, Riverside, CA 92522. Efforts to pack, move, and salvage items from the downtown site will continue until the site is turned over to the eventual contractor.

Public Works is expected to convert Orange Street between Mission Inn Avenue and University to one-way prior to the contractors beginning work.

Historic Houses

Termination of our agreements with IS Architecture for Harada House, Phase I, and the Harada House Interpretive Center was formalized by City Council on September 17, 2024. A Request for Proposals (RFP) to identify a new architectural design team was issued with a due date for proposals of November 6, 2024. An RFP for a documentarian for the Harada story and Harada project was also issued at the same time, with a due date for proposals of November 19, 2024. Both RFPs garnered strong interest from potential bidders. Harada House participated in the statewide Doors Open event (attendance of 51). It was also part of a civil rights-related tour during a large conference of city planners.

Regarding the project to extend and improve the site fencing at Heritage House, all bidders were deemed unresponsive, and the bid is being reissued. Regarding the improvements to the carriage house kitchen, the new countertops were rejected due to quality issues, so completion of the project has been delayed by several weeks to permit the countertops to be refabricated. A fairly long list of small projects for Heritage House is being addressed bit by bit, as staff are able to complete prior tasks.

The 100th Anniversary

All 100th anniversary initiatives have proceeded well. *Dear Riverside, A Letter to Our First Love* remains on view at the Center for Social Justice & Civil Liberties through January 5, 2025. It has been much praised by visitors, although visitation at this location has been modest. Gala plans are going well, and staff are delighted by the response from sponsors and interested ticket-buyers. Gala sponsors as of the drafting of this report are as follows:

- City of Riverside
- Dwight Tate & Kathy Wright – Challenge Sponsor
- Riverside Museum Associates – Speakeasy Sponsor
- Rich and Amy Cardullo – Silver Sponsors
- Erin Christmas – Silver Sponsor
- Athens Services – Bronze Sponsor
- Perkins Eastman – Bronze Sponsor
- Southern California Edison – Bronze Sponsor
- UCR School of Education – Bronze Sponsor

The “100 Programs for 100 Years” initiative has also gone well. As of the preparation of this report, staff have completed 88 of 100 programs. Eight programs on our published calendar were cancelled for a variety of reasons, but an additional eight were done to make up for them. Make-up events originated through a combination of staff’s own nimble creativity and accepting invitations to participate in other organizations’ events.

Collections

Collections projects have taken a back seat to the task of managing the challenge of shoe-horning all the remaining collections, exhibitry, education materials, furnishings, and institutional archives into our offsite warehouses and offices. This task, which has been going on since 2017, has been slowed by staff repeatedly discovering objects and specimens whose collection status cannot easily be determined, due to unhelpful past practices in documentation, numbering, and storing. Staff must now accept the need to move items now and do the research later.

Exhibitions and Programs

Roaring Riverside: 1920s Fashion, in honor of the 1920s era when the Museum was founded, opened in September when Heritage House reopened for the season. Reopening was delayed by a week due to unseasonably high temperatures in early September. The exhibition was curated by Brenda Buller Focht and will be on view through January 26, 2025.

Staff are at work with our contract exhibition designer, Riggs Ward Design, to develop the exhibitions that will reopen the main museum. The exhibition about how immigration shaped the City is currently requiring the most time and effort. A compensated Community Advisory Team will be constituted to assist with this exhibition.

Staff have mapped out a program plan for 2025. We will offer about 65 programs so will still be quite busy although we are stepping back from the very busy pace we have pursued throughout our 100th anniversary year.

Show your support for all Museum programs by attending them, telling others about them, and sharing our posts announcing them. Please note that the Center for Social Justice & Civil Liberties will be closed for the entire week of December 23, 2024, through January 1, 2025.

Date	Program	Volunteer opportunity?
December 6, 2024	Nights with the Museum, 6:30 – 8:00 p.m., featuring Doug Yanega, “Unwelcome Guests: Exotic Insects Established in California”	No
December 8, 2024	Christmas Open House at Heritage House, noon – 4:00 p.m.	Yes
December 12, 2024	100th Anniversary Gala! Starts at 5:30 p.m., Riverside Municipal Auditorium	No
December 20, 2024	Movies on the Lawn at Heritage House, <i>Double Dynamite</i> (1951), gates open at sunset, movie screens at dusk	No
December 21, 2024	THE LAST SCHEDULED EVENT OF OUR 100 PROGRAMS! A winter solstice event at Heritage House, 5:00 – 7:00 p.m.	Yes
January 2, 2025	Artswalk on Main Street and at the Center for Social Justice & Civil Liberties, 6:00 – 9:00 p.m.	Yes
January 3, 2025	Nights with the Museum, 6:30 – 8:00 p.m., Main Library Community Room, speaker TBD	No
January 5, 2025	First Sunday, 1:00 – 4:00 p.m., “The Next 100 Years”	No
January 5, 2025	Last day to see <i>Dear Riverside, A Letter to Our First Love</i>	No

Budget

The chart below reflects the Museum’s General Fund operating budget for the current fiscal year and does not include Measure Z, grant-funded projects, or projects that are funded directly by the Riverside Museum Associates.

The following are the Museum’s preliminary year numbers through FYE September 30, 2024:

Expenditure Category	Original Appropriation	Appropriation Adjustments	Total Appropriation	Encumbered	Expenditures through FYE September 30, 2024
Personnel	\$1,733,188	\$0	\$1,733,188	\$0	\$416,563.22
Non-personnel	\$716,356	\$49,454.25	\$765,810.25	\$196,701.46	\$171,895.47
Special Programs	\$55,000	\$31,934	\$86,934	\$24,784.00	\$8,691.36
Charges from others	\$287,942	\$0	\$287,942	\$0	\$70,034.49
Museum Debt	\$34,093	\$0	\$34,093	\$0	\$8,523.24
Total	\$2,826,579	\$81,388.25	\$2,907,967.25	\$221,485.46	\$675,707.78

Staffing

Curator of History Taylor Bythewood-Porter began her duties on October 25, 2024.

Recruitment for the new Exhibition Designer continues.

Longtime curator Brenda Buller Focht announced her retirement. Her last day will be December 19, 2024. After a short interval, she plans to return as a volunteer.

We have one intern for the fall term, from California Baptist University.

Advisory Teams

The standing staff-level advisory teams are open to new members, who need not be Board members. Staff are always interested in new members for these teams who can bring expertise aligned with the goals of the team. After she gets up to speed, new Curator of History Taylor Bythewood-Porter will take over as chair of the Harada House Project Team.

A process to interview and select members of the Community Advisory Team for the immigration exhibition is under way. This team will *not* be open to new members once it is established.

Committee / Team	Meeting interval	Role	Chair	Next meeting
Collections	Every other second Wednesday	Advising on collections activity	Jennifer Dickerson	Next meeting January 8, 2025
Harada House Project Team	Every other first Friday	Programs and communications regarding Harada House	Interim lead: Robyn G. Peterson	December 6, 2024
Branding and Marketing	Irregular – to revive in 2025	Public communications, PR, website	Chantal Downing	TBD
Programs	Every other first Wednesday	Program development, implementation, and coordination with partners	Jennifer Dickerson	January 1, 2025 – cancelled due to holiday
Immigration exhibition Community Advisory Team	TBD	Advising during planning for the immigration exhibition, estimated to be two years	Robyn Peterson	TBD

Volunteer and Support Opportunities

A strong need for volunteers continues in these areas: event support, touring docents, behind-the-scenes with collections, marketing and social media support, and other areas. Please ask interested individuals you may encounter to start their inquiry with Teresa Woodard Belding, twoodard@riversideca.gov. A volunteer handbook will soon be available.

Marketing and Communications

Significant progress on the website is not expected until the Office of Communications recruits its new Web Developer who will be shared by the Museum and the Library. Staff continue to work to load content but are stymied by format and layout challenges.

A push to market through the *Raincross Gazette* will launch in 2025. This growing news and cultural information outlet appears to be a strong platform to get the word out for our programs. The Tyler Mall kiosk ads will expire at the end of 2024. We will continue to advertise intermittently in the *Riversider Magazine*. Riverside Public Utility bill inserts are very expensive, and we will be unlikely to do those so often going forward.

Please share Museum program news with your Council members. You can sign up for ward newsletters on the webpage for each Council member: <https://riversideca.gov/council>. The chart below includes Council Assistants' contact information. Note that Council members now have the option to hire more than one assistant, so calls to determine the best route to share information are encouraged.

Council Member	Assistants	Assistants' emails	Assistants' phones
Ward 1 – Phil Falcone	Sarai Arellano, Matthew Maldonado	sarellano@riversideca.gov mmaldonado@riversideca.gov	951-826-5242
Ward 2 – Clarissa Cervantes	Melanie Bruns, William Kester	mbruns@riversideca.gov wkester@riversideca.gov	951-826-5419
Ward 3 – Steven Robillard	Sol Garay, Kareem Gongaga	sgaray@riversideca.gov kgongaga@riversideca.gov	951-5905
Ward 4 – Chuck Conder	Frank Arreola	farreola@riversideca.gov	951-826-2318
Ward 5 – Sean Mills	Damian Fussel, Xitlaly Ayala	dfussel@riversideca.gov xayala@riversideca.gov	951-826-5328
Ward 6 – Jim Perry	Sandy Garcia Vazquez	sgarcia@riversideca.gov	951-826-2528
Ward 7 – Steve Hemenway	Lizeth Vega, Linda Lagunas	lvega@riversideca.gov llagunas@riversideca.gov	951-826-5024

STRATEGIC PLAN ALIGNMENT:

The activities of the Museum of Riverside align with the Strategic Priority, “Arts, Culture and Recreation.” Specific programs and activities mentioned in this report support, in particular, goal 1.1 (strengthening Riverside’s portfolio of arts, culture, recreation, senior, and lifelong learning programs and amenities), goal 1.2 (enhancing equitable access to arts, culture, and recreational service offerings and facilities), and goal 1.5 (supporting programs and amenities to further develop literacy, health, and education of children, youth, and seniors throughout the

community).

Museum programs further support the Strategic Priority, "Community Well-Being." Specific goals supported by Museum programs and partnerships include goal 2.3, which includes strengthening neighborhood identities, and goal 2.5, which points to fostering relationships between community members and partner organizations.

1. **Community Trust** – The Director's Report comprehensively familiarizes the Board with operating conditions, invites Board input, provides information on volunteer opportunities, and describes partnerships the Museum is pursuing. Progress on the Harada House main museum projects restore trust in the City's commitment to open these important cultural resources for the public.
2. **Equity** – The Director's Report describes the programs Museum staff and partners are implementing to celebrate and serve the full diversity of Riverside. Programs strive to emphasize equity and access. Marketing reaches into all neighborhoods. Community engagement efforts strive to reach a variety of demographic groups.
3. **Fiscal Responsibility** – The Director's Report updates the board on ongoing efforts to operate within the Department's budgets and apply a transparent and rigorous process when selecting contractors and expending resources. The Museum seeks non-City funding regularly and as practical. Museum budgets consistently run in the black, demonstrating responsible use of taxpayer dollars.
4. **Innovation** – The Director's Report reports on the development of original, locally relevant programming, as well as methods to achieve programmatic ends through proactive cultural partnerships and efficient promotions. Projects designed to extend the Museum's reach beyond its walls during the main museum closure employ innovative techniques and designs.
5. **Sustainability & Resiliency** – The Director's Report reflects staff emphasis on cultural sustainability. The Report includes efforts to streamline operations, preserve Museum assets, deliver value to the taxpayer, model and teach cultural and environmental preservation, and develop solidly researched and affirming interpretation.

FISCAL IMPACT:

There is no fiscal impact associated with this report.

Prepared by: Robyn G. Peterson, Ph.D., Museum Director