



City of Arts & Innovation

# City Council Memorandum

**TO: HONORABLE MAYOR AND CITY COUNCIL      DATE: JANUARY 11, 2022**  
**FROM: OFFICE OF THE MAYOR      WARD: 1**

**SUBJECT: APPROVAL OF TRANSFER OF FUNDS FOR HUMAN RELATIONS COMMISSION MONETARY DONATION TO RIVERSIDE AFRICAN AMERICAN HISTORICAL SOCIETY FOR ENHANCEMENT OF MARTIN LUTHER KING JR. MEMORIAL ON MAIN STREET.**

## **ISSUE:**

The issue for City Council consideration, is approval of the remaining funds in the Human Relations Commission's annual budget for the 2020-2021 fiscal year to be granted for upgrades and monument improvements. The approval is for \$3,390 to be issued to the Riverside African American Historical Society for their Martin Luther King Jr. memorial enhancement project.

## **RECOMMENDATION:**

That the City Council:

1. Approve the amount of \$3,390 from the Riverside Human Relations Commission to the Riverside African American Historical Society for the MLK Jr. Memorial enhancement project located on Main Street.

## **BACKGROUND:**

Established in 2000 to preserve the Inland Empire's African American culture, the Riverside African American Historical Society, Inc. (RAAHS) has focused on being true to their mission, culture and historical heritage. Downtown Riverside is a walking museum filled with statues of notable figures, including Martin Luther King, Mahatma Gandhi, Dosan Ahn Chang Ho, Eliza Tibbets, Cesar Chavez, and Ysmal "Smiley" Villegas.

Martin Luther King, Jr. (1929-1968) was the nation's most prominent leader in the 20th century struggle for civil rights. He was born in the segregated south of Atlanta, Georgia and after graduating from Morehouse College, Crozer Theological Seminary, and Boston University he entered the Christian ministry. In 1954, he joined the leadership of the local NAACP chapter, the Montgomery Improvement Association, and helped create the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC), an organization formed to provide leadership for the burgeoning civil rights movement. In 1963, he was one of the organizers for the March on Washington and the following year he received the Nobel Peace Prize. In 1965, King helped to organize the Selma to

Montgomery marches. He worked tirelessly to assure the passage of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and was in attendance when President Johnson signed both that Act and the Voting Rights Act of 1965 into law. In 1968, Martin Luther King was assassinated while in Memphis, Tennessee. His legacy lives on and his writings and speeches, including "I Have a Dream", from the March on Washington and "I've Been to the Mountaintop," given just hours before his death, continue to inspire new generations.

RAAHS plans for the MLK Jr. memorial enhancement to include embedded metal lettering and bench seating surrounding the monument within rising concrete walls at varying angled heights with famous quotes from Martin Luther King Jr. and other Civil Rights leaders. RAAHS intends to have the enhanced MLK Jr. memorial unveiling to coincide with the opening of Riverside's Civil Rights Institute.

## **DISCUSSION:**

On June 24<sup>th</sup>, 2021, Rose Mayes, President of the African American Historical Society was joined by Lis Zuloaga from PCH Architects to present for the Martin Luther King Jr. Memorial enhancement project to the Human Relations Commission. Ms. Mayes' motivation behind the enhancements was to ensure that this 20-year-old MLK monument is kept in good condition and is consistent with the condition of other newly built monuments in the area. Ms. Rose Mayes introduced Lis Zuloaga, Project Manager with PCH Architects to present the concepts for the enhancement project (Attachment 1). Ms. Zuloaga reiterated that the MLK Jr. memorial was commissioned approximately 21 years ago, is showing some signs of aging, and needs to be updated.

Over the past 15 years, about 5 other monuments have been added to the pedestrian mall creating a walking museum. Ms. Zuloaga stated that their design concept is "walls rising from the earth, embracing and uniting people", which can be seen in the design concept presentation. Three telescoping poured in place concrete walls with embedded metal lettering and bench seating would be added, providing the public with a space for reflection. Additional landscaping enhancements are also included. The three Magnolia trees already included in this monument will remain protected and unaffected by the project. Concrete pedestals with bronze plaques including inspirational quotes from both local and national influential African American leaders would be added as well. This enhancement provides a concrete paver pathway that would open up opportunities for sponsored pavers. Ms. Zuloaga ended her presentation with a quote from the artist of the MLK Jr. memorial, who stated that "The sculpture is meant to be a reminder of an inspiration to all of us to think about the kind of world we want to leave our children.

Ms. Mayes expressed a desire for the Human Relations Commission to be a part of this effort as the Human Relations Commission has been part of similar efforts in the past. Ms. Mayes also expressed that, "We as African Americans are only 6% here, but we have been a leader in quite a few areas including the Civil Rights Institute."

The Riverside African American Historical Society is raising funds for this \$200,000 enhancement project.

The Human Relations Commission voted to approve financial support of this project using the remaining funds in the Human Relations Commission account of approximately \$3,900 for the period ended June 30, 2021. Commissioner Kanatzar made a motion to allocate the remaining

funds in the Human Relations Commission budget for fiscal year 2020-2021 to the Riverside African American Historical Society for the MLK Jr. memorial enhancement project on Main Street. The motion passed unanimously with 9 votes.

### **STRATEGIC PLAN ALIGNMENT:**

The item presented in this report contribute to the following Strategic Priority No. 1 *Arts, Culture and Recreation* and Goal No. 1.1 - Strengthen Riverside's portfolio of arts, culture, recreation, senior and lifelong learning programs and amenities through expanded community partnerships, shared use opportunities and fund development.

The item aligns with each of the five Cross-Cutting Threads as follows:

1. **Community Trust** – This item instills community trust as it is a community-initiated effort led by the African American Historical Society and supported by the Human Relations Commission.
2. **Equity** - This item aligns with equity by showcasing the diverse stories and history of local, state, and national leaders of significance in the African American community. Being free and outdoors, it is open and accessible to all, which ensures equitable access.
3. **Fiscal Responsibility** – The Human Relations Commission regularly gives to causes that align with the Commission's focus, permitted by the annual funding allocation to the Commission approved by the City Council.
4. **Innovation** - This item aligns with innovation by enhancing and changing a longtime site on Main Street to spark new ideas, imagination and learning about influential historical figures.
5. **Sustainability & Resiliency** - This item aligns with sustainability & resiliency by incorporating sustainable products, materials, and landscaping in and around the site.

### **FISCAL IMPACT:**

The fiscal impact of this enhancement is the public use of \$3,390.00 which represent the remaining funds in the 2020-2021 Human Relations Commission budget for the Martin Luther King Jr. Memorial project.

Prepared by: Philip Falcone, Assistant to the Mayor

Submitted by:



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Patricia Lock Dawson  
Mayor of Riverside

Certified as to availability of funds: Edward Enriquez, Chief Financial Officer / City Treasurer  
Approved as to form by: Phaedra Norton, City Attorney

Attachments:

1. Design Concepts provided by PCH Architects