



# Museum of Riverside Board Memorandum

*City of Arts & Innovation*

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**TO: MUSEUM OF RIVERSIDE BOARD** **DATE: MAY 25, 2022**  
**FROM: MUSEUM COLLECTIONS COMMITTEE** **WARDS: ALL**  
**SUBJECT: LIFT COLLECTING MORATORIUM ESTABLISHED IN FEBRUARY 2017**

## **ISSUE:**

To approve lifting a collecting moratorium established in February 2017.

## **RECOMMENDATION:**

That the Museum of Riverside Board approves lifting a collecting moratorium established in February 2017.

## **BACKGROUND:**

On February 8, 2017, Acting Director Alex Nguyen placed a receive-and-file item on the Museum Board agenda to establish a collecting moratorium until completion of a collection inventory.

## **DISCUSSION:**

In early 2018, new leadership at the Museum resulted in a modified approach to the collecting moratorium. Since then, unsolicited donations of objects that aligned with the Museum's mission and collecting goals have been judiciously accepted so the Museum would not lose one-time opportunities to enrich the collection resources for the community. These accessions were pursued alongside a considered process to accelerate deaccessions of objects misaligned with the mission.

A collection inventory—even under the best of documentation and storage conditions—is typically a standing project that occurs on a revolving multi-year schedule. It is not unusual for a museum's collection inventory to be conducted on a rolling ten-year cycle. At the Museum of Riverside, inventories of selected parts of the collection are currently under way as the multi-year process of bringing documentation and storage up to standard continues. The process of improving management of the collections is moving steadily forward on all fronts, and when a majority of the objects are physically accessible, a rotating inventory schedule can be established as a matter of routine. This process can continue alongside careful consideration of proposed new donations to the collection.

It is expected that lifting the moratorium will not change the current approach; that is, staff will not actively seek additions to the collection until additional milestones in the multi-year process of improving collections management are passed. Only unsolicited donations will be examined for fit to mission and goals, and subsequent recommendation for inclusion in the collections.

In considering potential new accessions, staff now apply a more rigorous process of considering fit to mission and ensuring compliance with both the Museum's revised Collections and Exhibitions Management Policies and its Collections Development Plan. This process resolves one of the issues that led to establishment of the moratorium.

## **STRATEGIC PLAN ALIGNMENT:**

Lifting a collecting moratorium to build the Museum of Riverside's collection aligns with the Strategic Priority No. 1 *Arts, Culture and Recreation* and supports Goal No. 1.5 - support programs and amenities to further develop literacy, health, and education of children, youth and seniors throughout the community.

1. **Community Trust** – The Museum's collection is one of the primary reasons for the Museum's existence. The Museum was established in 1924 in the Municipal Code in part to steward the community's collections of historic and scientific importance.

2. **Equity** – Full latitude to accept relevant collections, in accordance with policy, across all disciplines helps ensure that the Museum can represent as broad a range of the community's constituencies as possible.

3. **Fiscal Responsibility** – Procedures will continue to be limited to consideration of unsolicited donations that can be managed with existing resources.

4. **Innovation** – A collection aligned more closely with the Museum's locally rooted mission improves the range of resources available to staff when developing insightful exhibitions and public programs that will appeal to residents.

5. **Sustainability & Resiliency** – Sustainability includes cultural sustainability. Refinement of the collection—including growth—permits staff to meet collecting goals relating to a broader representation of the community.

## **FISCAL IMPACT:**

There is no fiscal impact associated with this report.

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