



Museum of Riverside Board Memorandum

City of Arts & Innovation

TO: MUSEUM OF RIVERSIDE BOARD **DATE: JUNE 22, 2022**
FROM: MUSEUM DEPARTMENT **WARDS: ALL**
SUBJECT: DIRECTOR'S UPDATE REGARDING THE MAIN MUSEUM RENOVATION, HISTORIC HOUSES, COLLECTIONS, EXHIBITIONS AND PROGRAMS, BUDGET, ADVISORY TEAMS, VOLUNTEER AND SUPPORT OPPORTUNITIES, MARKETING AND COMMUNICATIONS, AND STAFFING

ISSUE:

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

RECOMMENDATION:

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

DISCUSSION:

Main Museum Renovation

Staff move closer to seeking City Council approval for an amendment to the Museum's agreement with Pfeiffer Partners for services to complete the architectural design of the Museum's renovation and expansion. An important task remaining is correctly including an allowance to address design and implementation of sustainable features that will reduce operating costs for the reopened Museum.

Historic Houses

The agreements for architectural design services for Harada House, Phase I, and the Harada House Interpretive Center are anticipated to go before City Council in July. While no opposition is expected, statements of support for the projects the Museum presents to City Council are always appreciated. At both properties, hazardous materials testing is under way pursuant to developing salvage and abatement plans.

The Museum acknowledges the passing of Harada House Campaign honorary co-chair Norman Mineta. A leading figure and role model in the Japanese American community, Mr. Mineta agreed to lend his name to the Harada House Campaign at the behest of Congressman Mark Takano.

The project to repaint Heritage House and complete minor repairs to woodwork, which was approved by Council on May 17, 2022, is expected to occur in August. This project is funded by a combination of Measure Z funds and an allocation in the Museum operating budget for maintenance of Heritage House. The project to repave the pathways, supported by Community Development Block Grant funding, has been postponed and will now occur during the summer of 2023.

Collections

Progress continues with many collections management tasks: anchoring the new collection storage cabinetry, reconfiguring space, rehousing selected collections, improving documentation (including photo-documentation), and locating objects and specimens that relate to exhibitions that are calendared for the next couple of years.

Exhibitions and Programs

Common Threads: Quilts, Clothing, and Textiles from the Hayes Family Collection will close when Heritage House closes for the summer on June 26, 2022. Collections Registrar Katie Grim is the lead for a temporary exhibition in the works, which will focus on vintage games in the permanent collection. It will debut when the house reopens in September.

The Museum continues to work toward our revised schedule of summer 2022 for installation of the mini-museum about Casa Blanca in the neighborhood's branch library. Design work has been out-sourced and is under way. The fact that artifacts proved unexpectedly difficult to borrow or obtain has complicated the design of this mini-museum.

Program offerings will be minimal during the summer due to the regular closure of Heritage House, adaptations to short-staffing, and staff time redirected to researching the 100th anniversary exhibition and programs. The following programs will take place this summer:

- July 1, 2022 – Nights with the Museum featuring the Museum's own Dr. Douglas J. Long speaking on "The King of Snakes, or, How to Eat a Rattlesnake Larger Than You," 6:30 p.m. at Back to the Grind
- July 7, 2022 – Artswalk, 6-9 p.m., theme to be decided
- August 4, 2022 – Artswalk, 6-9 p.m., theme to be decided
- August 5, 2022 – Nights with the Museum featuring the City of Riverside's historic preservation officer Scott Watson speaking about "The Mid-century Modern Marvels of Clinton Marr," 6:30 – 8:00 p.m. at Back to the Grind

Other programs in preparation include videorecording of Indigenous individuals' recollections of their boarding school experiences, and a talk on Nisei veterans. Victorian teas in the Heritage House gardens resumed after their two-year pandemic hiatus, with sold-out participation. Thank you to the tea volunteers of the Riverside Museum Associates for making these events possible.

Budget

The biennial budget for 2022-2024 was scheduled at the time of this report's preparation for presentation to City Council on June 21, 2022. In the Measure Z portion of the budget, funding for the main museum renovation is identified. The contract for architectural design services for the main museum is anticipated to be presented to City Council this summer.

Advisory Teams

The staff-level advisory teams meet intermittently. All of these teams would benefit from broader community participation, and recommendations for new members are welcome.

- Collections Committee – This Team did not meet in May. The next regularly scheduled meeting is June 8, 2022.
- Harada House Project Team – The Team met on June 3, 2022, to go through a light agenda. The next regularly scheduled meeting is August 5, 2022.
- Branding and Marketing Team – This Team continues to await the opportunity to review the first iteration of the overhauled website. Staff met with the City's Marketing Department, which has been very short-staffed. A new implementation schedule is promised soon, and Museum staff have offered every assistance to move the project forward. By the time of this meeting, new letterhead, business cards, and presentation folders shall have been printed. Board members who attended the Donor Appreciation Reception on May 7, 2022, or Insect Fair on April 30, 2022, have seen the attractive new branded tents and table covers.
- Design Team – A meeting of this Team will be scheduled as soon as architectural design work resumes for the main museum renovation and expansion. A meeting is anticipated by fall. This advisory team may be of assistance when staff begin to schedule community engagement sessions focused on the museum renovation project.
- Program Team – This Team now follow an every-other-month meeting schedule. The next meeting will be July 6, 2022.

Volunteer and Support Opportunities

Two vacancies (Wards 3 and 4) continue on the Museum Board as of the preparation of this report. Interested residents of those wards may make application through the City's website (<https://www.riversideca.gov/cityclerk/boards-commissions>).

Volunteer assistance is always appreciated at Artswalk, which occurs the first Thursday of the month from 6 – 9 p.m. in front of the main museum.

Marketing and Communications

Social media and word-of-mouth continue to be the Museum's primary means of marketing programs. During the summer, staff will compile a brief operational summary—in the manner of an annual report but covering multiple years—which will be direct-mailed to reach many in the Museum's sphere of influence.

Staffing

Recruitment efforts continue for the positions of Curator of Historic Structures, Office Specialist (half-time), and one education position. These processes have been slow due to both internal processes and national-level labor circumstances.

Staff wish to recruit more volunteers, especially Heritage House touring docents, event volunteers, and collection support volunteers.

Staff will host intern Brianna Brizuela, a history student at UCR, for the summer.

STRATEGIC PLAN ALIGNMENT:

The activities of the Museum of Riverside align with the Strategic Priority No. 1 - *Arts, Culture and*

Recreation. Specific programs and activities mentioned in this report support, in particular, Goal No. 1.1 (strengthening Riverside's portfolio of arts, culture, recreation, senior, and lifelong learning programs and amenities), Goal No. 1.2 (enhancing equitable access to arts, culture, and recreational service offerings and facilities), and Goal No. 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 No. 2, *Community Well-Being*. Specific goals supported by Museum programs and partnerships include Goal No. 2.3, which includes strengthening neighborhood identities, and Goal No. 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 and invites Board input, providing information on volunteer opportunities and involvement on community advisory teams. This Report describes partnerships the Museum is pursuing. Advancement of the Harada House site work and the main museum renovation and expansion restores trust in the City's commitment to open these important cultural resources for the public.
2. **Equity** – The Director's Report describes the diverse range of programs Museum staff and partners are implementing to study and celebrate the full diversity of Riverside. Programs in preparation continue to reflect an emphasis on equity and access.
3. **Fiscal Responsibility** – The Director's Report updates the board on the transparent and rigorous process to develop practical budgets, select contractors, and steward the Museum's resources well. The Museum seeks non-City funding regularly, and 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. 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 during the extended closure, model and teach cultural and environmental preservation, develop solidly researched and affirming interpretation, and give voice and visibility to those who made and make Riverside what it is today.

FISCAL IMPACT:

There is no fiscal impact associated with this report.

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