



# Museum of Riverside Board Memorandum

*City of Arts & Innovation*

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**TO: MUSEUM OF RIVERSIDE BOARD**                      **DATE: JANUARY 25, 2023**  
**FROM: MUSEUM DEPARTMENT**                      **WARDS: ALL**  
**SUBJECT: DIRECTOR'S UPDATE REGARDING THE MAIN MUSEUM RENOVATION, HISTORIC HOUSES, COLLECTIONS, EXHIBITIONS AND PROGRAMS, 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, collections, exhibitions and programs, 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, collections, exhibitions and programs, staffing, advisory teams, volunteer and support opportunities, and marketing and communications.

## **DISCUSSION:**

### **Main Museum Renovation**

A "kick-off" meeting took place on December 20, 2022, involving the architect's team, Museum staff, and General Services staff. The meeting updated all present on the current status of the project and adjustments to the needs assessment that occurred as a result of continuing staff research done during the pandemic. Separate agreements for services for a geotechnical survey, hazardous materials identification and abatement, and exhibition design and fabrication services are in varying stages of preparation.

### **Historic Houses**

Semi-monthly meetings are taking place with the architect's team for both Harada House and its interpretive center. The architect has issued preliminary reports for each project and keeps the Museum updated on project timelines. An architectural historian is on board to conduct research and produce a report to ensure the Museum's compliance with historic preservation legal requirements affecting the interpretive center parcel, formerly known as Robinson House.

The focus at Heritage House remains on preparations for the summer 2023 path work, which is the last major project anticipated to be required at Heritage House for some time. Small projects

in response to emergency needs are also under way. Examples include a vandalized HVAC unit and a broken attic window.

### Collections

Staff continue to make progress on the long-term projects, and eagerly anticipate the long-awaited anchoring of the new cabinets acquired to house the natural history collections, among other sub-collections. Upon completion of this task, the last round of collection relocation from the main museum building can occur. Staff continue working with Riverside TV to produce “Inside the Vault” and will be recording in January for February, March, and April releases.

### Exhibitions and Programs

The next temporary exhibition at Heritage House will be coordinated by Teresa Woodard: *In Tents Moments: Risk to Life and Limb in Victorian Camping*. It will open on March 18, 2023, and feature content drawn almost entirely from the permanent collection. Plans are under way for fun and educational adjunct programs. The Museum is pleased to be collaborating with Cal State San Bernardino museum studies students on a small exhibition that will be installed in Heritage House during the fall of 2023. Good progress has occurred on planning for the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary exhibition, slated to be installed in the first floor gallery of the Center for Social Justice & Civil Liberties in July 2024.

Thanks are due to staff and volunteers who worked under adverse circumstances on a rainy Christmas Open House. In part because of the weather, attendance at about 600 was lower than many prior years (compare, for example, to 2019 when attendance was 1,300), but all those who attended enjoyed the varied activities offered. Any event that includes people getting engaged is a special kind of success. Members of the Board who volunteered for this event are gratefully thanked.

Following the holidays, Artswalk and First Sundays resume. Upcoming programs appear below. The Museum is pleased by the eagerness with which speakers accept Dr. Douglas Long's invitation to be part of the Nights with the Museum series, which is now programmed into 2024.

The culmination of the Museum's grant-funded documentary highlighting Indian boarding school experiences will premier at Sherman Indian High School in February. Please see below for the date of the first of several screenings.

A California Humanities grant recently awarded will support the April 2023 iteration of the In/VISIBLE, Un/HEARD: Riverside's Civil Rights Stories self-guided auto tour. Several organizations are collaborating to execute this program, modeled on the successful April 2022 tour.

Attendance is always appreciated at Museum programs whether in a volunteer or event attendee capacity.

Date	Program	Volunteer opportunity?
February 2, 2022	Artswalk, 6 – 9 p.m.	Yes
February 3, 2023	Nights with the Museum featuring Rosalind Sagara and Judy Lee, “Chinatown, Riverside: Then and Now,” 6:30 – 8 p.m., Riverside Main Library Community Room	No
February 3-5 and 10-12, 2023	Victorian Valentine traditions, décor, tours, and activities at Heritage House	Yes

February 5, 2023	First Sunday, 1 – 4 p.m. – Will You Be My Valentine?	Yes
February 23, 2023	Premier screening of <i>These Art Not Stories: American Indian Boarding Schools in Southern California</i> , Sherman Indian High School	TBD
February 25-26, 2023	Riverside Museum Associates' participation in the Dickens Festival	Yes

### Staffing

Recruitment for the following vacancies is under way: Curator of History, Exhibition Designer, and Associate Educator. The Museum will host two interns UC-Riverside's history department during the 2023 spring term.

### Advisory Teams

The staff-level advisory teams are open to new members. Community members who bring special expertise or interest in the following areas are also sought.

- Collections Committee – The committee meets every other month. It is scheduled for a regular meeting on February 8, 2023.
- Harada House Project Team – This team focuses on programming and public communications regarding Harada House and its forthcoming Interpretive Center. It complements the independent 501(c)(3) nonprofit Harada House Foundation, whose primary role is fundraising. The next regularly scheduled meeting of the Harada House Project Team is February 3, 2023. This team will be invited to assist as the Museum moves ahead with its plans for a Harada documentary. Members of this team are also assisting the Museum in integrating donors to the campaign to acquire Robinson House with the large Harada House Campaign that was launched in 2018, in order to give cumulative credit to all who have assisted with their donations.
- Branding and Marketing Team – Members of this team have commented individually on the earliest, very skeletal iteration of the new website. There has been no additional progress from the City's Marketing Department regarding the website.
- Design Team – This Team's role is bringing public users' perspectives to the redesign of the main museum. It will resume meeting when the main museum architects offer the next stage of design development for review. A meeting shortly after the first of the year is anticipated. This advisory team will sunset upon the grand reopening of the main museum.
- Program Team – This Team provides input on program plans in progress and helps brainstorm potential future programs. "Programs" include exhibitions, education programs, collaboration with the schools, and mission-based events. Its next regular meeting will be January 4, 2023. The team is assisting with 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary and reopening exhibition ideas.

### Volunteer and Support Opportunities

Volunteer assistance is encouraged and appreciated. A few recurring opportunities are:

- **Regular programs:** Artswalk, first Thursday of the month, 6 – 9 p.m., and First Sundays, 1 – 4 p.m. in front of the main museum.
- **Touring docents:** Heritage House (staff provide the required special training)
- **Events:** Upcoming examples include weekend Valentine's activities in the first two weekends of February, and the Ice Cream Social on May 21, 2023. Further, staff are also

better able to participate in other organizations' activities when volunteer assistance is available. Thanks are due to Board members who have recently assisted staff in reaching into the community by means of these events.

- **Collection support:** Staff will provide the required special training to detail-oriented individuals with interest.

### Marketing and Communications

Board members who are on social media are encouraged to share Museum communications. Social media outlets remains the Museum's primary and most regular means of announcing programs. Staff would appreciate knowing when Board members notice Museum programs on calendars or in advertisements. Staff are doing additional postings on community calendars and will be making forays into limited paid advertising. Watch your February utility bill for a flyer promoting the exhibition to be on view at Heritage House in the spring, *In Tents Moments: Risk to Life and Limb in Victorian Camping*.

Staff efforts continue to post programs on community calendars, distribute flyers, and place features and listings in publications.

Board members are encouraged to connect with their respective Council members to share Museum news, including signing up for ward newsletters at: <https://public.govdelivery.com/accounts/CARIVERSIDE/subscriber/new?preferences=true#tab1%22>. The chart below includes Council Assistants' contact information:

<b>Council Member</b>	<b>Assistant</b>	<b>Assistants' emails</b>	<b>Assistants' phones</b>
Ward 1 – Erin Edwards	Paloma Montes	<a href="mailto:pmontes@riversideca.gov">pmontes@riversideca.gov</a>	951-826-5242
Ward 2 – Andy Melendrez	Miguel Lujano	<a href="mailto:mlujano@riversideca.gov">mlujano@riversideca.gov</a>	951-826-5419
Ward 3 – Ronaldo Fierro	Caleb Ragan	<a href="mailto:cragan@riversideca.gov">cragan@riversideca.gov</a>	951-826-5905
Ward 4 – Chuck Conder	Frank Arreola	<a href="mailto:farreola@riversideca.gov">farreola@riversideca.gov</a>	951-826-2318
Ward 5 – Gaby Plascencia	Araceli Ruiz	<a href="mailto:aruiz@riversideca.gov">aruiz@riversideca.gov</a>	951-826-5328
Ward 6 – Jim Perry	Sandy Garcia	<a href="mailto:sgarcia@riversideca.gov">sgarcia@riversideca.gov</a>	951-826-2528
Ward 7 – Steve Hemenway	Lizeth Vega	<a href="mailto:lvega@riversideca.gov">lvega@riversideca.gov</a>	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 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, "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, invites Board input, provides information on volunteer opportunities, and describes partnerships the Museum is pursuing. Progress on the Harada House projects and progress on the main museum renovation and expansion 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 study, celebrate, and serve the full diversity of Riverside. Programs in preparation continue to reflect an emphasis on equity and access. Efforts to reach into neighborhoods and connect with a wide variety of demographics promote access.
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. The Museum seeks non-City funding regularly. 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 during the extended closure, 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
Approved by:	Kris Martinez, Assistant City Manager