



# Museum of Riverside Board Memorandum

*City of Arts & Innovation*

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**TO: MUSEUM OF RIVERSIDE BOARD**                      **DATE: MARCH 22, 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**

Pfeiffer Partners' architect team meets twice monthly with Museum/City staff. Progress has been made in the "schematic design" phase, which is the stage during which the greatest flexibility to make changes remains. As the design begins to develop, changes will become more costly. Museum staff are continuing to work to move forward with a range of ancillary work that must occur, including a geotechnical survey, exhibition design, consultants' assessments of the painted diorama backdrops from the first floor, a hazardous materials survey, and signing on a conservator who will bring a focused preservation perspective to examination of the architectural drawings. A public "open lobby" event will likely be scheduled mid- to late spring. Board member attendance at this future event will be encouraged.

### **Historic Houses**

Progress continues with the architects, who are at work on the "design development" stage of drawing preparation. New site surveys are to be undertaken, and both plaster and wallpaper specialists are being recruited. A report from an architectural historian is in development and will ensure the Museum is in compliance with historic preservation legal requirements affecting the Interpretive Center site.

Upcoming Heritage House projects include the summer 2023 path resurfacing, additions to perimeter fencing and security, replacement and protection of the air handling units, and a reexamination of our options for the minimally developed area in front of the barn.

### Collections

Staff continue to make progress on the long-term projects and make selections for the monthly recordings of "Inside the Vault." Katie Grim fields a number of time-consuming archival requests from the public. Work to locate and examine the condition of objects intended for the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary exhibition has continued.

### Exhibitions and Programs

Preparations are wrapping up for *In Tents Moments: Risk to Life and Limb in Victorian Camping*, which opens at Heritage House on March 18, 2023, with an afternoon of special programming. Staff forge ahead with Cal State San Bernardino museum studies students on an exhibition on obsolete objects to be installed in Heritage House during the fall of 2023. Brenda Focht and Teresa Woodard focused on completion of the documentary, *These Are Not 'Stories': American Indian Boarding Schools in Southern California*, which premiered at Sherman Indian High School on February 25, 2023, and will screen again at The Box on March 25, 2023, at 2:00 p.m.

Artswalk and First Sundays resumed after a holiday hiatus. Please save one of the dates for the screening of the Museum's grant-funded documentary on Indian boarding school experiences. These and other upcoming programs are listed below.

Date	Program	Volunteer opportunity?
April 2, 2023	First Sunday, 1 – 4 p.m. – Earth Day, Natural Dyes	Yes
April 6, 2023	Artswalk, 6 – 9 p.m.	Yes
April 7, 2023	Nights with the Museum featuring Brittney Elizabeth Stoneburg, "Doll Ponies: The Tiny Three-Toed Fossil Horses of Ancient California"	No
April 15, 2023	"Survival 101, the Victorian Way," 1 – 3 p.m. – special program at Heritage House	Yes
April 22, 2023	Insect Fair behind the Main Library, 10 a.m. – 4 p.m.	Yes

### Staffing

Recruitment continues for the following vacancies: Curator of History, Exhibition Designer, and Associate Educator. The Museum will host two interns UC-Riverside's History Department during the 2023 Spring term, and staff are looking forward to welcoming at least one new volunteer with a special interest in Harada House and related education.

### Advisory Teams

The staff-level advisory teams are open to new members, who need not be Board members.

- Collections Committee – The committee meets every other month, although did not have sufficient content for a meeting in February. It is scheduled for a regular meeting on April 12, 2023.
- Harada House Project Team – This team meets virtually and focuses on programming and public communications regarding Harada House and its forthcoming Interpretive Center. Recent meetings have been well attended as progress has been occurring with the architects. The next regularly scheduled meeting is April 7, 2023.

- Branding and Marketing Team – There has been no progress during this reporting period from the City's Marketing Department regarding the website. A joint meeting of the Branding and Marketing Team and the Design Team has been scheduled for April 6, 2023.
- Design Team – This Team's role is bringing community members' perspectives to the redesign of the main museum. A joint meeting of the Design Team and the Branding and Marketing Team has been scheduled for April 6, 2023. Members of the Design Team will be encouraged to take part in the "open lobby" event mentioned above.
- Program Team – This Team provides input on future exhibitions, education programs, collaboration with the school districts, and mission-based events. Its next regular meeting will be May 3, 2023.

#### Volunteer and Support Opportunities

Volunteer assistance is encouraged and appreciated. Some of the Museum's programs cannot be accomplished well or at all without volunteer support. Insect Fair is a good example, and staff would be grateful for volunteer assistance either for a two-hour shift or longer on Saturday, April 22, 2023.

#### Marketing and Communications

The Museum's biennial report for the period July 1, 2020, through June 30, 2022, is now available as a link on the homepage of the Museum's website

Staff continue to post programs on social media and community calendars, distribute flyers, and place features and listings in online and print publications. Board members' assistance in distributing flyers is appreciated. An RPU bill insert and spring paid ad in *The Riverside* will be assessed for repeats in the future.

### **STRATEGIC PLAN ALIGNMENT:**

The activities of the Museum of Riverside align with 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 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, 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