



# Museum of Riverside Board Memorandum

*City of Arts & Innovation*

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**TO: MUSEUM OF RIVERSIDE BOARD                      DATE: SEPTEMBER 27, 2023**

**FROM: MUSEUM DEPARTMENT                              WARDS: ALL**

**SUBJECT: RECOMMEND CITY COUNCIL APPROVE THE DESIGN APPROACH FOR THE  
RENOVATION AND EXPANSION OF THE MUSEUM OF RIVERSIDE'S  
DOWNTOWN SITE**

**ISSUE:**

Recommend City Council approve the design approach for the renovation and expansion of the Museum of Riverside's downtown site.

**RECOMMENDATION:**

That the Museum of Riverside Board recommend City Council approve the design approach for the renovation and expansion of the Museum of Riverside's downtown site.

**CULTURAL HERITAGE BOARD RECOMMENDATION:**

At its meeting on August 16, 2023, the Cultural Heritage Board voted in support of staff recommendations, with one abstention, as follows:

1. To determine that the project is exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) review pursuant to Sections 15301 (Existing Facilities), 15331 (Historic Resource Restoration/Rehabilitation, and 15332 (In-fill Development), as it constitutes rehabilitation and less than 10,000-square-foot increase in the size of an existing historic resource within an urbanized area that is consistent with the Secretary of the Interior' Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties; and
2. To approve Planning Case DP-2023-01018 (Certificate of Appropriateness), based on the facts for findings outline and summarized in the staff report, and subject to the recommended conditions of approval.

## **BACKGROUND:**

The main facility of the Museum of Riverside (Museum) is located at 3580 Mission Inn Avenue in a building designed in 1912 as a U.S. Post Office by James K. Taylor, a principal draftsman at the United States Architects' Office. The Neo-Classical style of the building was common for early twentieth-century government structures; the building also reflects the Mission Revival materials and details typical of its Southern California location. The Museum has operated this facility since 1948, when it occupied the basement and shared the facility with the Police Department. In 1965, after the departure of the Police Department, the Museum began to maintain and operate the entire structure. The building was augmented or altered in 1928, 1954, and 1967.

Since September 5, 2017, the structure at 3580 Mission Inn Avenue has been temporarily closed to the public in preparation for the proposed renovation and expansion. On August 30, 2018, Request for Proposals (RFP) No. 1851 was issued for Phase I Conceptual Design Services for the Museum of Riverside to be used as a basis for planning the renovation and expansion of the structure and providing cost estimates for Phase II design and construction. This process resulted in the selection of the then-named Pfeiffer Partners Architects, Inc., Los Angeles office. On April 23, 2019, City Council approved a Professional Consultant Services Agreement with Pfeiffer Partners Architects, Inc., in the amount of \$99,220. The outcome of Phase I design concept work was presented to the Budget Engagement Commission in February 2020, resulting in their support for the staff-recommended option of renovation of the historic 1912 Main Museum with a two-story addition.

After several iterations of budget allocations, borrowing authority for the project at \$35 million was approved by City Council on October 4, 2022. Architectural design work has proceeded on schedule throughout the first half of 2023, and the architect has begun preparation of construction documents.

## **DISCUSSION:**

The main Museum project was born of a desire and perceived need to create a dynamic space for 21<sup>st</sup>-century programming in Riverside centered on the Museum of Riverside's mission, which emphasizes nature, culture, and history. Envisioned as a place to attract tourism to Riverside, the new facility will also be a stellar example of a vibrant community museum, earning many repeat visits as its exhibitions and programs change throughout each year.

The approach to the project to renovate and expand the downtown combines the twin goals of preserving the core 1912 structure and creating a stylistically compatible, purpose-built expansion within the existing downtown footprint. In the schematic design phase, the concept that ultimately met with approval and supported the Museum's entire program included a two-story addition with a roof terrace, flexible galleries able to meet professional climate-control and security standards, a dedicated classroom, and other functional features not previously part of the Museum's facility.

The design includes:

1. Sustainable features, such as a photovoltaic array forming the roof terrace shade structure,
2. A loading dock and freight elevator,

3. Non-collections storage,
4. An expanded Nature Lab, including a fenced outdoor teaching space,
5. Retail space, and
6. Careful preservation of such historic elements as the Mission Inn Avenue entrance lobby, the northwest stairwell and spiral staircase, and the skylight.

In keeping with historic preservation guidelines, the new structure does not copy or mimic the historic structure, but it echoes it in such features as recessed windows and exterior finishes. The project includes new site landscaping and improved signage aligned with the Museum's new brand adopted in 2020. It is anticipated that the project will require three of the parking spaces in the City's Lot 16 behind the building, but in all other respects stays within the existing footprint. The interior gallery spaces will be opened up to maximize flexibility for changing exhibitions. The new entrance lobby off Orange Street will feature a double-height glass wall that will permit exhibition of numerous objects illustrating Riverside's many distinctive stories.

### **STRATEGIC PLAN ALIGNMENT:**

The activities of the Museum of Riverside align with the Envision Riverside 2025's 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), specifically 1.1.3 (Complete the Museum of Riverside renovation and expansion project to enrich the Mission Inn Avenue cultural corridor). Museum programs also support 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** – Progress on the renovation and expansion demonstrates the commitment to complete a long-awaited project specifically called out in Envision Riverside (1.1.3) following a process that provides multiple opportunities for community input and a demonstration of respect for community needs.
2. **Equity** – The Museum renovation and expansion project will result in a fully accessible facility designed for everyone, both in its site features and its diverse programming.
3. **Fiscal Responsibility** – The Museum renovation and expansion project has been identified since inception as a quality-of-life project within the scope of the voter-approved Measure Z initiative. At every stage of project development, critical analysis of cost is taking place by means of publicly transparent processes.
4. **Innovation** – Drawing upon the award-winning experience of the Museum's national peers, Museum staff are guiding the project toward an outcome that incorporates both proven program strategies and inventive new ways to retell the region's stories.

- 5. Sustainability & Resiliency** – The Museum’s renovation and expansion project incorporates a high percentage of green building elements that lend themselves to educational interpretation for the public. Thoughtful consideration to the operating impacts of design choices addresses economic sustainability.

**FISCAL IMPACT:**

There is no fiscal impact associated with this report.

Prepared by:                      Robyn G. Peterson, Ph.D., Museum Director

Attachment:                      Presentation, Museum design approach  
Draft CHB Minutes 8-26-2023