



City of Arts & Innovation

City Council Memorandum

TO: HONORABLE MAYOR AND CITY COUNCIL **DATE: JULY 7, 2020**
FROM: CITY MANAGER'S OFFICE **WARD: 1**
SUBJECT: THIRD AMENDMENT TO MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING FOR THE CHEECH MARIN CENTER FOR CHICANO ART AND CULTURE WITH THE RIVERSIDE ART MUSEUM AND RICHARD "CHEECH" MARIN

ISSUE:

Approve the Third Amendment to Memorandum of Understanding for the Cheech Marin Center for Chicano Art and Culture with the Riverside Art Museum and Richard "Cheech" Marin.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

That the City Council

1. Approve the Third Amendment to Memorandum of Understanding for the Cheech Marin Center for Chicano Art and Culture with the Riverside Art Museum and Richard "Cheech" Marin; and
2. Authorize the City Manager, or his designee, to execute the Third Amendment to Memorandum of Understanding, including making minor non-substantive changes.

BACKGROUND:

Richard "Cheech" Marin (Cheech Marin) is a well-known comic actor who grew up and still lives in Southern California. Over the past 30-35 years, he has accumulated what is widely believed to be the world's largest collection of Chicano art pieces – over 700 works of art. However, it would be a mistake to regard Cheech Marin merely as a major Chicano art collector; more importantly, he is a passionate advocate for this emerging genre of American art. Cheech Marin has shared various parts of his extensive collection for specific exhibitions with dozens of museums around the nation. His purpose: to promote Chicano artists and to validate Chicano art and culture as a legitimate and vital creative reflection of the American experience.

On February 2, 2017, Cheech Marin and the Riverside Art Museum (RAM) collaborated to open an exhibition called "Papel Chicano Dos: Works on Paper." The opening night of this show, which featured a small portion of Cheech Marin's collection, had the largest crowd RAM has seen for an exhibit's opening night. Following the opening night, the museum experienced attendance triple the average for a RAM exhibit. Over the previous decade, RAM has become much more

active in promoting the role of art and culture in many of Riverside's historically underserved communities.

The threefold increase in attendance at RAM for the Cheech Marin show, the City's desire for an appropriate and economical cultural reuse of the Main Library, and Cheech Marin's long held desire to find a permanent home for his historically significant Chicano art collection; together with the fact that more than half of Riverside's population is of Chicano/Latino heritage, prompted City staff to approach RAM and Cheech Marin with a proposal to establish the Cheech Marin Center for Chicano Art (The Cheech).

On May 16, 2017, the City Council approved a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) among the City, Cheech Marin, and RAM to complete a feasibility analysis of the Main Library building located at 3581 Mission Inn Avenue to repurpose the facility into a public center for The Cheech. The staff report and MOU identified, among other items, the creation of a \$3 million fundraising campaign to pay for the conversion of the Main Library into The Cheech, as the City was not obligated to pay for any of the costs of the conversion; contemplated a long-term management agreement through which the City would contract RAM to operate all aspects of The Cheech; and retained the services of consultants to assist with developing a facility assessment, determine art center programming, complete conceptual plans, and develop conceptual cost estimates for the future renovation of the Main Library to the Cheech Center.

On June 30, 2017, the Purchasing Division of the Finance Department issued a Request for Qualifications No. 1728 (RFQ) seeking professional architectural design services from experienced firms for the development of Phase 1 conceptual plans and drawings for The Cheech. A Screening and Selection Committee (Committee) was formed to evaluate and score all responsive Statements of Qualifications based on the evaluation criteria set forth in the RFQ. Following interviews, the Committee determined Page and Turnbull to be the most qualified firm. Page and Turnbull's design team includes wHY, a highly experienced and recognized company that designs art centers and museum exhibits.

On October 24, 2017, the City Council approved a Professional Consultant Services Agreement (PCSA) with Page and Turnbull for Phase 1 architectural and art center conceptual design services for the Cheech Center. Page and Turnbull, City staff and RAM worked diligently to complete the Phase 1 facility analysis, determine art center programming, complete conceptual designs, and finalize preliminary cost estimates for the Cheech Center. In an effort to obtain broad community feedback, Page and Turnbull held three community/visioning workshops on November 28 and December 15, 2017, and February 1, 2018. At the February 1st meeting, Page and Turnbull presented preliminary conceptual plans to the RAM board members. The conceptual designs received majority approval, with minor overall questions and comments from meeting attendees. Public feedback has been integrated into the final conceptual ideas presented herein to the City Council.

On March 13, 2018, the City Council received an update on The Cheech, approved conceptual designs for the project and adopted a resolution authorizing the submittal of a \$1 million grant application to the California Natural Resources Agency (CNRA). Although the \$1 million allocation was set aside specifically for this project – through a state budget allocation secured by Assemblymember Jose Medina – the City was still required to submit an application for funding and enter into a grant agreement with the CNRA.

On October 16, 2018 the City Council received an update on The Cheech, authorized the submittal of a second grant application to the CNRA in the amount of \$9.7 million (for a total

revised grant amount of \$10.7 million), approved the first amendment to the PCSA with Page & Turnbull for additional design services, and approved the Second MOU between the City, Cheech Marin and RAM. The submittal of a second grant application to the CNRA was required to reflect the second state budget allocation of \$9.7 million secured by Assemblymember Jose Medina. The Second MOU outlined the next steps and parameters for the continued fundraising efforts by the City, Cheech Marin and RAM, as well as identified a forthcoming Renovation Agreement and Management Agreement for operation of The Cheech.

On February 12, 2020, the Community Services and Youth Committee received an update from RAM on The Cheech and outlined critical next steps to realize a successful opening.

DISCUSSION:

With a planned opening in Fall 2021, The Cheech will explore Chicano culture from the barrio to the bay, cholos to Cesar Chavez, and pre-Columbian to modern murals. As Cheech says, it will be the “center of Chicano art, not for only paintings, but sculpture, photography, and video arts.” The Cheech will occupy the building currently occupied by the Main Library, once the New Main Library’s construction has been completed. The Cheech is an ideal adaptive reuse of this 61,420-square-foot mid-century building with the transformation from library to art center preserving many of its historic aspects.

Consistent with what was contemplated in May 2017, City and RAM staff have worked diligently to develop a proposed Management Agreement for The Cheech. City staff intended to present the proposed Management Agreement for City Council consideration but delayed the report considering the challenges presented by COVID-19 and the timing of the City’s annual budget process, which forecast a \$28 million decline in revenues. To this end, the proposed Third Amendment to Memorandum of Understanding is intended to reaffirm the parties’ commitment to the project as well as outline a tentative schedule for the project moving forward.

The proposed Amendment anticipates consideration of a Management Agreement by the City Council to tentatively occur in Fall 2020 or prior to awarding of the construction bid, whichever occurs first. City staff began the construction bid process for The Cheech in mid-June 2020 to solicit feedback and verify the projected costs of the project. This would allow the City and RAM team to make appropriate adjustments to the proposed design of the project to reflect the market’s response. The awarding of the construction bid would tentatively occur in Fall 2020.

FISCAL IMPACT:

There is no fiscal impact associated with this Memorandum of Understanding.

Prepared by: Moises Lopez, Deputy City Manager
Certified as to
availability of funds: Edward Enriquez, Chief Financial Officer/Treasurer
Approved by: Al Zelinka, FAICP, City Manager
Approved as to form: Gary G. Geuss, City Attorney

Attachment: Memorandum of Understanding