



Museum of Riverside Board Memorandum

City of Arts & Innovation

TO: MUSEUM OF RIVERSIDE BOARD

DATE: OCTOBER 28, 2020

FROM: MUSEUM DEPARTMENT

SUBJECT: DIRECTOR'S UPDATE REGARDING COVID-19 IMPACTS, HISTORIC HOUSES, STAFFING, COLLECTIONS, EXHIBITIONS AND PROGRAMS, MARKETING AND COMMUNICATIONS, AND VOLUNTEER AND SUPPORT OPPORTUNITIES

ISSUE:

Receive and file the Director's Update regarding COVID-19 impacts, historic houses, staffing, collections, exhibitions and programs, marketing and communications, and volunteer and support opportunities.

RECOMMENDATION:

That the Museum of Riverside Board receive and file the Director's Update regarding COVID-19 impacts, historic houses, staffing, collections, exhibitions and programs, marketing and communications, and volunteer and support opportunities.

DISCUSSION:

COVID-19 Impacts

There has been no change since last report in the manner in which COVID-19 is affecting the operation of the Museum. Virtual meetings are the norm, with on-site meetings occurring under recommended social distancing and sanitation requirements only when the examination of physical objects or confidential documents is required.

As the Museum's already prolonged closure of its main site continues—now compounded by COVID-19—the ability to demonstrate public service through participation numbers is hampered. This in turn negatively impacts the Museum's eligibility for certain funding sources that require recent demonstration of impactful public service.

Historic Houses

The good news about the \$500,000 Save America's Treasures grant in support of Harada House has energized staff. Staff begins a demanding new effort to 1) begin the processes that will result in work on the ground and 2) raise the required 1:1 match. The Museum is honored by the attention given to the house by the City's elected officials and, in the wake of the grant announcement, the media. Harada House was also named to the National Trust for Historic Preservation's 2020 11 Most Endangered Historic Places list, a designation that raises awareness nationwide for properties accepted to the list.

Heritage House has been appraised by a specialist in historic properties. Staff believe it is the first time that the house has been accurately assessed. An accurate appraisal will assist the City in insuring it adequately against losses.

Staffing

The Museum was unsuccessful in its bid for a grant from the federal Institute of Museum and Library Services. As a result, the Museum will not be able to proceed with the temporary collections support position that the grant would have funded in full.

Collections

Staff have trained on the new software platform (TMS Collections) and are working through a few final technical challenges in order to establish the authority levels that will allow immediate and ongoing customization of the program. It is anticipated that full functionality will occur shortly and are aiming to operate the program for at least a year before launching the module that would permit online access to selected collections records.

The Museum continues to welcome submissions to the collection documenting the City's COVID-19 experience. Find out more here, including an upload page for digital records:

<https://riversideca.gov/museum/collections/>

Exhibitions and Programs

Programs are cancelled through December at this point, and future cancellations will be announced if and when they're determined. This includes the Moon Festival at Heritage House, the fall tea, Black Veil, First Sundays, school tours, Christmas Open House, and the Multicultural Council's Day of Inclusion. Education Curator, Teresa Woodard Belding, ran an online quiz on the occasion of the centenary of the ratification of the 19th Amendment that was promising, so another is planned in conjunction with what would have been the Moon Festival date. The Multicultural Council of the Riverside Museum Associates is exploring an alternative celebration of the Day of Inclusion, but details are not yet available.

Marketing and Communications

The core members of the Advisory Branding and Marketing Team will begin work imminently with Hannah Jones, the California Baptist University student whose brand concept was the clear front-runner after examination by several internal and external groups. Simultaneously, staff are reviewing a new script for the Museum website. The aim is that the new graphic standards manual and templates, the website script, and the first of the digitized programs will be ready by the end of the calendar year. The timetable for redesign of the website, which will occur through the City's Marketing Department, is unknown at this time.

Both staff and the Harada House Foundation have increased the pace of releasing content on social media, which remains the primary mode of public communication.

Volunteer and Support Opportunities

Authorization was issued Citywide to permit the return of selected volunteers to their roles. Volunteers are being invited back as the Museum is able to ensure safe working conditions, as well as offer them work to do. The continued cancellation of public programs means that many volunteers cannot return yet to their regular roles.

FISCAL IMPACT:

There is no fiscal impact associated with this report.

Prepared by:	Robyn G. Peterson, Ph.D., Museum Director
Certified as to availability of funds:	Edward Enriquez, Chief Financial Officer/Treasurer
Approved by:	Moises Lopez, Deputy City Manager
Approved as to form:	Gary G. Geuss, City Attorney