



# Museum of Riverside Board Memorandum

*City of Arts & Innovation*

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**TO: MUSEUM OF RIVERSIDE BOARD** **DATE: DECEMBER 2, 2020**

**FROM: MUSEUM DEPARTMENT**

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

## **ISSUE:**

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

## **DISCUSSION:**

### **Advisory Teams**

The following activity occurred in the staff-level advisory teams. These teams meet on varying schedules, aiming to achieve the intervals reported at the October Board meeting. Note that delays caused by COVID-19 have suspended some activities within the scope of the advisory teams. This has affected the Design Team in particular.

- Collections Committee – This team resumed regular meetings in July. Its recommendations regarding accessions, deaccessions, and new or revised policy documents are moved forward promptly for the Board's consideration. Two accession recommendations, two deaccession recommendations, and a new Collections Development Plan are included on this month's agenda.
- Harada House Project Team – This team held its first meeting in October—a virtual meeting—since the start of the pandemic shutdown. This team continues to monitor and advise on the interpretive plan and communications about the house. This team is valuable to the staff as rehabilitation work is poised to begin, ushering in a new phase of public awareness and communication potential.

- Branding and Marketing Team – A subgroup of this team has been meeting approximately weekly with Hannah Jones, the former CBU student whose design was chosen after much review to be the basis of the Museum's new brand.
- Design Team – Did not meet. Activity suspended until planning with renovation architects can resume.
- Program Team – Did not meet.

### COVID-19 Impacts

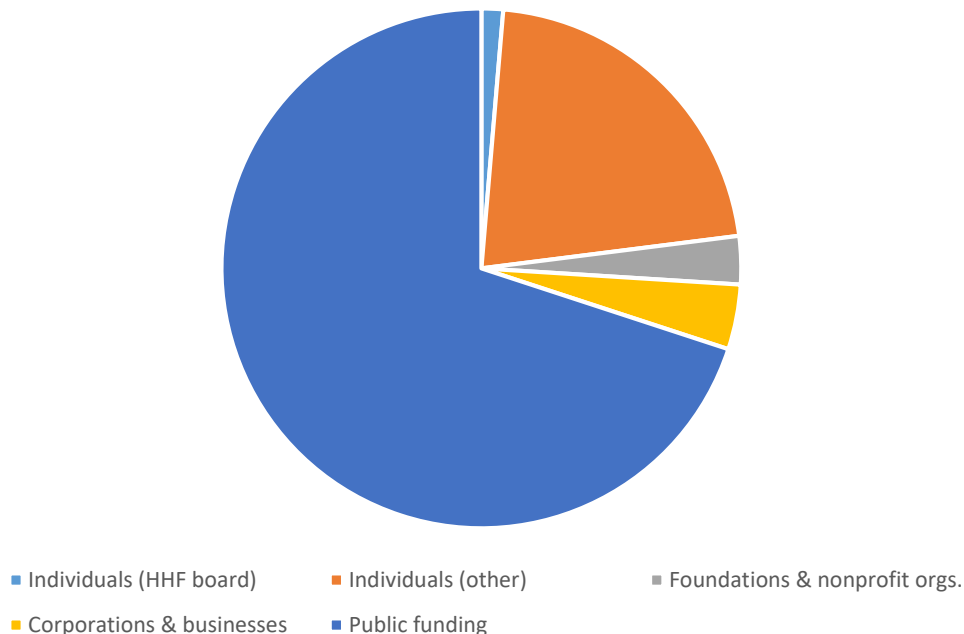
There has been no change since the last report in the manner in which COVID-19 is affecting the operation of the Museum. A date has not been set for reopening of Heritage House.

### Historic Houses

The \$500,000 Save America's Treasures grant in support of Harada House awarded in August has prompted staff to engage in fundraising for the match and a high level of media activity. The National Trust for Historic Preservation's inclusion of Harada House on the 11 Most Endangered Historic Places list in September led to still more media activity. Notice has appeared in the *Los Angeles Times*, *Smithsonian Magazine*, *Forbes*, *Architectural Digest*, and many other publications. Staff are drafting the Request for Proposals (RFP) for architectural services for Phase I.

The \$6.5 million fundraising campaign for Harada House continues. Combining the impact of contributions to the campaign since its start to all funds (Harada House Foundation, Riverside Museum Associates, and the Museum's own restricted Harada accounts), the goal is 11.54% achieved. Totals include in-kind gifts. Lead donors to all funds are included on the Harada House Foundation's "Impact" page ([www.haradahousefoundation.org](http://www.haradahousefoundation.org)).

Contributions by Source, All Funds



The Museum presented at a workshop about Robinson House to the Cultural Heritage Board on October 21, 2020, outlining the plan that has recently been adopted to demolish the structure and reconstruct it to its documented 1930s appearance. Alterations to the structure over many decades have virtually destroyed its historic integrity, adding to the challenges presented by its loss of structural integrity. It was challenging to arrive at this decision, but staff believe it is the best path forward, and the Cultural Heritage Board agreed. An RFP for architectural services is also in draft for this project.

The Museum's historic properties were modestly affected by late October windstorms. Trees and branches fell nearby, but not onto, all of our sites. A large jacaranda across the street from Robinson House fell across Lemon Street, blocking the entire street, but fortunately had no impact on either historic house. The tarp on Harada House appears to have held but will be checked from above in November. A palm tree fell in the parking lot at Heritage House but not near structures.

### Staffing

COVID-19 continues to prevent the Museum from reengaging university interns or temporary staff. Ann Lovell and Toni Kinsman continue to telecommute.

### Collections

Collections activity has centered in recent weeks on rehousing the basket collection, spot inventories, retrieving long-term loans, working to resolve "found in collections" issues,<sup>1</sup> customizing TMS Collections (the new software for the collections), and research in aid of deaccession recommendations. The Museum moves closer to formal participation in a new region-wide collections sharing platform, Inland Empire Memories, which is being coordinated by UC-Riverside's libraries. The new software will greatly facilitate our ability to take part in this initiative and begin to offer digital access to the collections.

### Exhibitions and Programs

On-site and in-person programs and events continue to be cancelled. A date has not been set to resume scheduling them. Staff work to fill the programming gap creatively with social media / online live quizzes, games, fun and informative posts, and calls to action to observe seasonal natural phenomena and mark important historic moments. Curator of Historic Structures Lisa Masengale posted a series of micro-programs to replace Black Veil at Heritage House and Education Curator Teresa Woodard prepared a live quiz to replace Moon Festival at Heritage House. Staff encourages Board members to follow the Museum's posts. Noteworthy in December will be what would have been the Multicultural Council's 10<sup>th</sup> Day of Inclusion celebration; the history of this day will be acknowledged on social media, and a celebration planned at a later date.

The Museum Department received a small allocation (0.1%) from the \$28 million federal CARES Act grant awarded to the City. The purpose of the Museum's share was to acquire equipment and training to support staff's direct development of digital programs and virtual tours, augmenting resources available to educators who are working hard to provide effective distance learning content. Staff have completed a digital filmmaking course offered through UC-Riverside and have

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<sup>1</sup> "Found in collections" (FIC) refers to un- or under-documented objects that are discovered in a Museum's storage, workspaces, or galleries. The circumstance results from poor documentation practices, physical acceptance of objects that are not appropriate for the collection, or unfinished decision-making / approvals processes, all of which may have occurred decades in the past. The Museum is working to identify undocumented and unprocessed objects and eliminate this problem from the Museum of Riverside.

developed a first phase of programs to be released early in 2021. Benefits of this funding will extend beyond the duration of the pandemic. The Museum's new online programs will extend our educational reach and impact during the downtown site's continuing closure and will enrich traditional programming after the downtown reopens.

### Marketing and Communications

Finalization of the rebrand and preparation of the Museum's graphic standards manual continues to be expected by the end of 2020. This is the necessary prelude to revamping the website. Amplified social media communications by the Harada House Foundation supplement the Museum's own social media presence. In the first quarter of the fiscal year, the Museum reached an online audience of 95,090.

### Volunteer and Support Opportunities

Selected behind-the-scenes volunteer roles are available to those who are registered as volunteers with the City's program. A limited number of tasks—particularly in the gardens and main house at Heritage House and in collections storage—can be done in a safe and socially distanced way. If you are interested in helping in this way, please contact Toni Kinsman to confirm your existing volunteer status or learn how to establish it.

### **FISCAL IMPACT:**

There is no fiscal impact associated with this report.

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