



Museum of Riverside Board Memorandum

City of Arts & Innovation

TO: MUSEUM OF RIVERSIDE BOARD **DATE: DECEMBER 2, 2020**
FROM: MUSEUM COLLECTIONS COMMITTEE
SUBJECT: APPROVAL OF COLLECTION DEVELOPMENT PLAN

ISSUE:

Approve a Collection Development Plan for the Museum of Riverside's permanent collection.

RECOMMENDATION:

That the Museum of Riverside Board approve the proposed Collection Development Plan for the Museum of Riverside's permanent collection.

BACKGROUND:

Policy documents relating to the formation, management, use, and care of collections are among the documents most distinctive to the operation of museums. Understanding that zoos and gardens are also included in the definition of "museum," no other type of institution holds physical objects, specimens, and living organisms in growing and/or managed collections. Collection management policies and collection development plans are, thus, unique in most respects to the museum field.

The Museum Board approved a revised policy document, Collections and Exhibitions Management Policies, on June 12, 2019, which was subsequently approved by City Council on August 6, 2019. Collection management policies are required by the American Alliance of Museums (AAM) as one of the field's "core documents" that must be approved by any accredited museum's governing body. Collection development plans, on the other hand, are advised by the AAM but not required. The proposed Plan does not require governing body approval, but the City Clerk advises approval by the Museum Board because the Collection Development Plan serves as a policy document unique to the Museum Department's operation that will guide a pivotal function.

DISCUSSION:

Preparation of a Collection Development Plan (Plan) is a goal included in the Museum's strategic plan. The Museum has not previously had a comprehensive collection development plan as

they are increasingly understood by the museum field. A document that partially served the purpose was prepared for the 2015-2016 application for reaccreditation. Prior to that, descriptions of the collection or aspects of it have been prepared on several occasions in the past. These previous documents informed the preparation of the new plan.

Collection development plans differ from management policies. Management policies define *how* practical and logistical matters that pertain to collections will be handled. Development plans define *what* a collection will comprise and how a museum will pursue reasoned collection growth and refinement. The proposed Plan satisfies the purpose of such plans to describe, delimit, and establish goals for collecting:

1. Establishes the basis on which Museum functions as a collecting institution
2. Describes the history and scope of each of the collections by discipline (historic structures, history [including the archives], Southern California Indigenous peoples' resources, and natural history)
3. Assesses strengths in the collections
4. Assesses gaps and weaknesses in the collections, including sufficiency or over-representation of certain categories of objects or specimens
5. Describes and justifies collecting goals

While its focus is on the permanent collection, the Plan makes brief reference to the goals for the community, teaching, living, and library collections.

The Plan will aid staff in refining the collection, maintaining rigorous adherence to the Museum's mission, and establishing and building areas of strength that will distinguish the Museum and build its reputation.

The Plan has undergone thorough review by the curatorial and education staff and Collections Committee over the course of meetings that began in 2019. At its meeting on October 28, 2020, the Collections Committee, with nine (9) members present and one (1) member absent, voiced its approval for the Plan and voted to forward it to the Museum of Riverside Board for adoption. The Collections Committee includes Board members, curatorial and education staff, and community members. Staff also consulted peers and published resources.

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/City Treasurer
Approved by:	Moises Lopez, Deputy City Manager

Attachment:	Collection Development Plan
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