



# Museum of Riverside Board Memorandum

City of Arts & Innovation

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**TO: MUSEUM OF RIVERSIDE BOARD**

**DATE: JULY 28, 2021**

**FROM: MUSEUM DEPARTMENT**

**WARDS: ALL**

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

## **ISSUE:**

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

## **DISCUSSION:**

### **Accreditation**

When the Museum earned its reaccreditation in 2018, the Accreditation Commission had concerns that led to their requiring the Museum to file an interim report by August 13, 2021. The Museum is pleased to be able to include in this report progress on Harada House, main museum renovation planning, strategic planning, policy reformulation, rebranding, improvements in collection management and documentation, some staff restructuring, and updates to the approach to programming. The report will be filed on time and is expected to allay the Commission's concerns.

### **Advisory Teams**

The following activity occurred in the staff-level advisory teams. These teams meet on varying schedules. The pandemic is no longer a factor in scheduling meetings.

- Collections Committee – The committee met on June 23, 2021 to discuss potential acquisitions or accessions that posed some challenges. One recommendation to accession comes before the Board at this meeting. The committee reviewed criteria and processes relating to archival collections. The committee changed its regular meeting time to the second Wednesday and will meet next on August 11, 2021.

- Harada House Project Team – The next regular meeting will be Friday, August 6, 2021.
- Branding and Marketing Team – This committee will be convened again upon final approval for the Museum's new brand to discuss its incremental rollout.
- Design Team – Activity suspended. This team will be convened again when the Museum is able to resume work with its architect.
- Program Team – Activity suspended. This team will be convened before long to discuss digital and other programming opportunities while the main site remains closed.

### COVID-19 Impacts

Following the statewide reopening and rollback of many pandemic-related OSHA regulations, the City has also reopened. Physical distancing requirements have been dropped, and masking is required indoors only for those not vaccinated. The Museum awaits full reactivation of the City's volunteer program in order to be certain that Heritage House will reopen on September 10, 2021, as anticipated. Moon Festival is expected to proceed as a ticketed event, with free tickets available through Eventbrite, which will enable the Museum's small staff to proceed with an event when demand is difficult to estimate. The City continues to encourage and facilitate vaccinations.

### Historic Houses

An allocation of \$7 million is in the 2021-2022 California state budget to support the rehabilitation of Harada House and its development into a civil rights "campus." This transformative level of funding ensures the completion of the work without fear of work stoppages due to gaps in fundraising. ***Please join the Museum staff in expressing your gratitude directly to José Medina in particular***, as well as Richard Roth, members of the Asian caucus, and other state legislators who supported this allocation.

<https://lcmspubcontact.lc.ca.gov/PublicLCMS/ContactPopup.php?district=AD61>

District office address:

Assembly Member José Medina  
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Riverside, CA 92507

Review committees are recruited and ready to be scheduled as soon as the two Requests for Proposal (RFPs) are released by the City's Purchasing Division: 1) architectural services for Phase I of the Harada House rehabilitation and 2) architectural services to oversee demolition and prepare design and construction documents for the reconstruction of Robinson House as the Harada House Interpretive Center.

Two applications to private foundations for major funding for Harada House were submitted in June via the Riverside Museum Associates. Neither foundation has funded the Museum's programs in the past. The recent news about the state allocation may affect how these foundations view our applications.

An array of work is in progress at Heritage House. New irrigation around the parking lot perimeter and installation of a new HVAC system are completed. Reattachment of wallpaper separating from the walls has also been completed. Also under way are replacement of back steps, replacement of two disintegrating doors, and resurfacing of the parking lot.

### Staffing

The process has begun to hire the seasonal temporary staff who assist during the open hours at Heritage House. A half-time temporary staffer will also be recruited to assist Katie Grim with collections management.

The new fiscal year budget includes three fulltime positions that will be held vacant at least until the winter. They include the Exhibition Designer, the Manager of Institutional Advancement, and the Curatorial Services Manager.

Profiles of Museum staff continue this month with Danielle Leland, Associate Education Curator (Science). Cesar Mendez, Museum Maintenance Worker, will present at the August meeting.

### Budget Updates

Budgets for fiscal year 2021-2022 were approved by City Council on June 22, 2021, with no revisions to the draft Museum budget that was presented to the Board. A biennial budget cycle will resume in 2022 for the years 2022-2023 and 2023-2024.

The Museum of Riverside Board will receive a report on how the Museum ended the 2020-2021 fiscal year after the City's year-end fiscal processes have been completed.

### Collections

Now over three years into the process of moving the collections from the main museum site to offsite storage, some collections remain onsite as staff continue to finesse storage. Offsite storage is reaching capacity, and measures are underway to consolidate as appropriate and begin to use the new cabinetry as each unit is anchored. Collections that await packing and moving from the downtown site include geological and paleontological specimens, bird nests and eggs, a handful of specimens still to be removed from exhibition cases, and selected artists' backdrops in the dioramas.

Efforts continue to consign the deaccessioned Brendel tool collection to a public sales outlet in order to realize as much of a return as possible for the benefit of the acquisition fund.

Artifacts were physically repatriated to representatives of the Hoopa tribe in northern California on July 7, 2021.

### Exhibitions and Programs

Planning continues on three small exhibitions: *Catharine's Closet*, which will reopen Heritage House; the small "mini-museum" that will eventually be installed in a public site in the Casa Blanca neighborhood with content relating to the Casa Blanca neighborhood; and a panel exhibit about the Harada case for the county courthouse.

Cynthia Zdilor will be contacting all Board members, if she hasn't already, to request participation at a Board information table at Moon Festival on the evening of September 21, 2021, at Heritage House.

Teresa Woodard and Danielle Leland finalized the topics for the upcoming year of First Sundays programs, which will resume in October with a storytelling program honoring Indigenous People's Day. Brenda Focht is also working with tribal elders and storytellers to initiate a two-year program of recording Indigenous storytelling.

Marketing and Communications

The Mayor and Councilmembers have seen and approve of the Museum's new brand. Staff must wait until the new Ward 2 Councilmember Clarissa Cervantes is onboarded on July 13, 2021, before informing her of the new brand. A report on the brand will be part of the August Board meeting packet. Staff have met with City Marketing staff to initiate overhaul of the website. The City is understaffed in this area, and the website overhaul is likely to take several months.

Volunteer and Support Opportunities

The Museum continues to await word that the volunteer program can resume. Should there be an unexpected delay, the open hours for Heritage House will be impacted.

A new Council member for Ward 2, Clarissa Cervantes, was elected in June. Information about how to contact her and her Council assistant will be forthcoming.

**FISCAL IMPACT:**

There is no fiscal impact associated with this report.

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