



Museum of Riverside Board Memorandum

City of Arts & Innovation

TO: MUSEUM OF RIVERSIDE BOARD **DATE: SEPTEMBER 22, 2021**

FROM: MUSEUM DEPARTMENT **WARDS: ALL**

SUBJECT: MUSEUM DIRECTOR UPDATE REGARDING ACCREDITATION, STRATEGIC PLANNING, 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 the Museum Director update regarding accreditation, strategic planning, 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 the Museum Director update regarding accreditation, strategic planning, 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. This report was filed, received by AAM, and has been scheduled for review by the Accreditation Commission at their October 15, 2021 meeting. Museum staff were advised that a response will only be received if the Commission is dissatisfied with the report, which is not anticipated. The next reaccreditation cycle has a self-study submission deadline of July 1, 2027. The Museum should begin self-study planning in early to mid-2026.

Strategic Planning

The Museum is just over two years into the 2019 - 2024 Strategic Plan. Strategic plans are often ready for a refresh at about the halfway point, but the pandemic had unforeseen impacts that have led staff to begin the process early to renew and extend the plan toward a new five-year horizon. A draft of possible goals, informed by known resources and limits, as well as the introduction of the Envision Riverside 2025 Strategic Plan will be developed prior to stakeholder discussions, which will include the Board, support groups, advisory teams, and neighborhood groups.

Advisory Teams

The following activity occurred in the staff-level advisory teams, which meet on varying schedules. The pandemic is no longer an obstacle to scheduling meetings. Meetings are generally in hybrid format, except for the Collections Committee, which must physically examine proposed accessions and deaccessions.

- Collections Committee – The committee met on September 8, 2021. Recommendations from that meeting will come to the Board, as required, at later dates.
- Harada House Project Team – The committee met on Friday, August 6, 2021, when it shared reactions to the state funding news. The team's next meeting is October 1, 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.

While not a Museum-led advisory team, the informal consortium of area cultural directors has resumed meeting. It's planning a coordinated array of programs for winter-spring 2022 entitled "in/VISIBLE, un/HEARD: Riverside's Civil Rights Stories," which will center on the theme of moving from invisibility to visibility through the exploration of specific moments in local history. The Museum expects to participate with three programs: 1) a performance relating to the 19th Amendment granting women the right to vote, 2) a short performance piece at Harada House as part of a coordinated historic site bus tour, and 3) an original dance performance staged along Mission Inn Avenue, initiated by the Museum facilitating four local choreographers.

COVID-19 Impacts

While circumstances could alter at any time, at this point, it is expected that every effort will be made to avoid future shutdowns of City sites. The City continues to encourage and facilitate vaccinations. Staff have followed up diligently to ensure that all advised protocols will be followed for the reopening of Heritage House. While record attendance at Heritage House is not expected, the staff are taking the step of establishing Eventbrite registration for all tours and events, even though all of them at this point are fee-free. Preparations include issuing reminders at all levels, including to volunteers and Board, of the City's policy and expectation of civil discourse in the event of disagreements regarding vaccinations, masking, and similar issues.

Historic Houses

Staff have responded to architectural firms' questions in response to the Requests for Proposals (RFPs) for historic preservation architectural services that were released in mid-July 2021 for Phase I of Harada House and for the demolition and reconstruction of Robinson House to become the Harada House Interpretive Center. There is strong interest in both projects. The deadline for prospective bidders to submit their proposals was September 9, 2021. Review of proposals for eligibility will be conducted by the Purchasing division before initiating committee review. Interviews for short-listed candidates are anticipated this fall. The selected architect(s) will be announced as soon as the review process permits.

Visitors to Heritage House will experience a resurfaced driveway and parking lot. Completion of this project that eliminates trip hazards, tire damage, and poor drainage. The project was accomplished with Measure Z funds. Repainting the house will likely occur this fall. The repainting project will also include minor repairs to exterior surfaces.

Staffing

Temporary staff on board include two seasonal staff whose job is to assist during the open hours at Heritage House and a half-time staffer who will assist Katie Grim with collections management.

Curator of Historic Structures Lisa Masengale is expected to return in late September from the extended leave she took for family reasons.

Profiles of Museum staff continue this month with Museum Curator Brenda Buller Focht. Toni Kinsman, Senior Office Specialist, will be the next staff member to give a presentation to the Board. She will present at a future Board meeting to be determined.

Budget Updates

The following indicates the Museum's preliminary numbers through the end of FY2020/21:

Expenditure Category	Original Appropriation	Appropriation Adjustments	Total Appropriation	Encumbered	Expenditures through June 30, 2021
Personnel	\$1,358,480	(\$107,325)	\$1,251,155	\$0	\$1,192,554
Non-personnel	\$452,506	\$134,037	\$586,543	\$94,656	\$368,416
Grants and Capital Projects	\$0	\$26,670	\$26,670	\$18,520	\$5,059
Special Programs	\$94,670	\$69,460	\$164,130	\$10,614	\$31,473
Capital Purchases	\$0	\$142,855	\$142,855	\$38,571	\$104,284
Charges from others	\$222,556	\$0	\$222,556	\$0	\$219,031
Museum Debt	\$40,390	\$0	\$40,390	\$0	\$40,390
Total	\$2,168,602	\$265,697	\$2,434,299	\$162,361	\$1,961,207

Collections

Progress has occurred toward establishing a movable workstation that will permit photo-documentation, rehousing, and inventory work surfaces to be set up in many parts of the storage warehouse. Work continues on rehousing certain collections, locating a public sale outlet for the deaccessioned Brendel tool collection, customizing the TMS Collections software, reformatting and enhancing collection forms, and segregating certain reference materials (documents, ephemera, photographs) to ensure that they are not confused with accessioned archival material.

Exhibitions and Programs

The Museum's temporary exhibition activity resumed after its year-and-a-half hiatus with the opening of *Catharine's Closet* at Heritage House on September 10, 2021. This exhibition of historic clothing is accompanied by an attractive bilingual brochure included as an attachment to this report. A reconsideration of Fall programming needs at Heritage House has led to extending this exhibition through November 21, 2021. The exhibition was curated by Museum Curator Brenda Focht, with the support of Teresa Woodard Belding, Education Curator; Katie Grim, Collections Registrar; Lisa Masengale, Curator of Historic Structures; and Cesar Mendez, Museum Maintenance Worker.

The mobile “mini-museum” featuring a chapter of the Casa Blanca neighborhood’s history continues to take shape. Carlos Cruz, a graduate student at UCR, is our guest curator and has been deeply engaged in field research. It will be installed in the Casa Blanca library. Mid- to late fall remains the anticipated completion date.

The Museum is in the design phase of the panel exhibition for the Riverside County Courthouse focused on the Harada case, which was pursued in their chambers in 1916-1918. Lisa Masengale prepared the content. This mini-exhibition will be based only on photographs and documents and will not include objects.

Please calendar the following upcoming program dates:

- September 25, 2021, 9 a.m. – 2 p.m. – Museum participates in Explore Riverside Together on the front steps of the main museum
- Sunday, October 2, 2021 – First Sunday, Indigenous People’s Day theme
- Thursday, October 7, 2021, 6 – 9 p.m. – Museum resumes participating in Artswalk
- Monday, October 11, 2021 – Indigenous People’s Day online storytelling event
- Most Fridays, Saturdays, and Sundays in October – Behind the Black Veil special tours
- November 21, 2021 – Last day to see *Catharine’s Closet* exhibition

Marketing and Communications

Staff are slowly rolling out the Museum’s new brand, limited initially to reformatting of internal documents and forms. The new logo was incorporated on the brochure for *Catharine’s Closet*. Overhaul of the website is a key component of the process to implement the brand, and staff are working with the Marketing Department to move this along as quickly as feasible.

Social media communications—increasingly enhanced with short videos—remain central to our ability to reach our audiences.

Volunteer and Support Opportunities

Staff sincerely thank Board members who helped advocate for the Museum at the Board’s own table at Moon Festival on September 21, 2021 and hope the Board will be up for similar undertakings in the future.

Beyond working at Heritage House, volunteer opportunities exist in collections and in assisting with family and children’s activities at events and in the classroom. The number of people the Museum reaches is proportionate to the resources available to deliver programs, and those resources include volunteers. Staff encourage Board members to consider signing up as a City volunteer if you have not already. Immediate opportunities include assisting on First Sundays, at Artswalk, or when the Museum joins in with community-wide events like the Tamale Festival. These are good opportunities for those who like to serve all ages and see the immediate impact of their involvement. To support these programs, please contact Danielle Leland, 951-826-5124 or dleland@riversideca.gov.

STRATEGIC PLAN ALIGNMENT:

The activities of the Museum of Riverside align with the Strategic Priority 1 - *Arts, Culture and Recreation* and Goal No. 1.5 Support programs and amenities to further develop literacy, health, and education of children, youth, and seniors throughout the community.

This item aligns with each of the five Cross-Cutting Threads as described below:

1. **Community Trust** –The Director's Report builds community trust by identifying the range of collaborations and partnerships the Museum is pursuing.
2. **Equity** – The monthly Director's Report describes the diverse range of programs Museum staff and partners are planning and implementing to examine, share, and celebrate the full diversity of Riverside.
3. **Fiscal Responsibility** – This item highlights transparent expenditure processes used to secure contractors to complete projects associated with museum facility renovations.
4. **Innovation** – The monthly update reflects the development of original, locally relevant programming and methods used to achieve programmatic ends through proactive cultural partnerships.
5. **Sustainability & Resiliency** – The Director's Report outlines programs that are all designed to illuminate the thread that runs from the past to the present and on to the future.

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: Kris Martinez, Interim Assistant City Manager
Approved as to form: Phaedra Norton, City Attorney

Attachment: Catharine's Closet exhibition brochure