



# Museum of Riverside Board Memorandum

*City of Arts & Innovation*

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**TO: MUSEUM OF RIVERSIDE BOARD** **DATE: OCTOBER 27, 2021**

**FROM: MUSEUM DEPARTMENT** **WARDS: ALL**

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

## **ISSUE:**

Receive and file the Museum Director Update regarding strategic planning, 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 the Museum Director Update regarding strategic planning, advisory teams, COVID-19 impacts, historic houses, staffing, collections, exhibitions and programs, and volunteer and support opportunities.

## **DISCUSSION:**

### **Strategic Planning**

Museum staff are making progress on renewal of the Museum-specific strategic plan. The current plan covers 2019-2024 but recent unanticipated events have made it necessary to revise the plan early. The revised plan will encompass a five-year period, from 2022-2023 through 2026-2027. Stakeholders including the Board, fundraising support groups, advisory teams, and neighborhood groups play an important role in articulating the future direction of the Museum.

### **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 may be in hybrid format, except for the Collections Committee, which must physically examine objects proposed for accession or deaccession.

- Collections Committee – The committee has regular meetings scheduled for October 13, 2021 and November 10, 2021. The Museum has been requested to batch requests to the Council to consider recommendations to accession or deaccession objects into or out of

the permanent collection. Staff may follow a similar pattern in bringing recommendations to the Board.

- Harada House Project Team – The committee met on Friday, October 1, 2021, and the next meeting is scheduled for December 3, 2021. This team is examining the preliminary designs for the panel exhibition about the Harada case that is in development for the Riverside County Courthouse.
- Branding and Marketing Team – This committee will be convened at a date to be determined (not before mid-November) to discuss the incremental rollout of the new brand and marketing for programs and events.
- Design Team – Activity suspended. This team will be convened again when the Museum is able to resume work with its architect.
- Program Team – Now that in-person programming has resumed, and a calendar is filling up for 2021-2022, this team will be convened at a date to be determined (not before mid-November). At present, program ideas exceed staff capacity to execute, and this advisory team may assist in solving that problem.

### COVID-19 Impacts

Heritage House reopened on September 10, 2021, after an 18-month closure. Museum staff were diligent in observing City-required protocols, and no significant COVID-19-related impacts had occurred as of the writing of this report. The public has complied with the City's face covering rule. Staff will continue to create Eventbrite links for advance registration for tours and programs, although to date crowds have not exceeded site capacity and no one has been turned away for failing to pre-register.

### Historic Houses

Staff are pleased with the response to the Requests for Proposals (RFPs) issue in July for the Harada House Rehabilitation and the Harada House Interpretive Center (f.k.a. Robinson House). Review committee examination of the responsive proposals has begun.

Preliminary work to secure bids for the repainting of Heritage House is under way. Two person doors on the carriage house are also due for replacement.

### Staffing

Temporary half-time staffer Paige Kuster has started assisting Collections Registrar Katie Grim. Temporary part-time seasonal staffer members at the Heritage House include Ciriaco Garcia and Alex Gamez.

Profiles of Museum staff will continue with Toni Kinsman, Senior Office Specialist, at the Board meeting after the current meeting. Curator of Historic Structures Lisa Masengale is scheduled to present at the January meeting.

### Collections

The collections update in this report is always brief, which it does not reflect the tremendous amount of work staff are doing to improve collection documentation, rehouse at-risk collections, and respond to public requests for research materials. This is an ongoing effort that significantly occupies the curators and Collections Registrar, and to a lesser degree all other staff.

### Exhibitions and Programs

*Catharine's Closet* opened successfully at Heritage House on September 10, 2021. The exhibit has drawn entirely from the Museum's collections and will be on display through November 21, 2021. Education Curator Teresa Woodard will provide an update at this meeting on how well the reopening went, along with other September programs and events.

The mobile "mini-museum" featuring a chapter of the Casa Blanca neighborhood history is advancing, as is a panel exhibition for the Riverside County Courthouse focused on the Harada case, which was pursued in their chambers in 1916-1918.

In late September, the Museum participated in an online Japanese American conference called "Tadama" with a quickly, but effectively, organized conversation program called "Inland Empire Incarceration Experiences." The program featured descendants of incarcerated Naomi Harada and Shirley Sanematsu as well as UCR Librarian Judy Lee who referenced the Fujimoto diaries in the UCR collections. Museum Director Robyn Peterson moderated.

In honor of Indigenous People's Day on October 11, the Museum, in partnership with UCR, launched a short series of Indigenous storytelling recordings. The first recording featured Roseann Hamilton, a Cahuilla culture-bearer.

Planning continues for the multi-organization half-year of programs to be called "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 19<sup>th</sup> 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 and facilitating four local choreographers.

Please calendar the following upcoming program dates:

- Most Fridays, Saturdays, and Sundays in October – Behind the Black Veil special tours
- November 4, 2021 – Artswalk, 6 - 9 p.m., front steps of the main museum
- November 7, 2021 – First Sunday, 1 – 4 p.m., on the theme of "Poppies"
- November 21, 2021 – Last day to see *Catharine's Closet* exhibition
- December 2, 2021 – Artswalk, 6 - 9 p.m., front steps of the main museum
- December 5, 2021 – First Sunday, 1 – 4 p.m., on the theme of "Lino-What? Linocut!"
- December 11, 2021 – Day of Inclusion acknowledged through a video screening at the Main Library's Community Room
- December 12, 2021 – Christmas Open House at Heritage House

### Marketing and Communications

The Museum's new brand now graces several internal documents and forms, and it has been used in two PowerPoint presentations to outside groups. More extensive implementation is pending decisions and involvement cross-departmentally. Overhaul of the website is a high priority for Museum staff.

Some media notices were released in advance of Moon Festival in September, but an informal poll at the event suggests that news of our events travels circuitous paths. We stress that every time the Museum's posts or event notices forwarded, it may be picked up by a radio station or other outlet the Museum had not been able to reach directly. Please continue to spread the word.

### Volunteer and Support Opportunities

The programs mentioned above are opportunities for volunteer assistance to staff. Board members are encouraged to consider meeting the public directly through these programs. To assist with Artswalk or First Sundays, contact Danielle Leland, 951-826-5124 or [dleland@riversideca.gov](mailto:dleland@riversideca.gov). To assist with Christmas Open House, please contact Lisa Masengale, 951-826-5128 or [lmasegale@riversideca.gov](mailto:lmasegale@riversideca.gov).

### **STRATEGIC PLAN ALIGNMENT:**

The activities of the Museum of Riverside align with the Strategic Priority No. 1 *Arts, Culture and Recreation* and Goal No. 1.1 - Strengthening Riverside's portfolio of arts, culture, recreation, senior, and lifelong learning programs and amenities.

1. **Community Trust** – The Museum Director Update comprehensively familiarizes the Board with current operating conditions and invites Board input, providing information on volunteer opportunities and recruiting for involvement on community advisory teams. The report describes the range of collaborations and partnerships the Museum is pursuing.
2. **Equity** – The Museum Director Update 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** – The Museum Director monthly report updates the board on the transparent and rigorous process to select contractors, such as the RFP process noted above under “Historic Houses.” Staff strive to increase work product through the recruitment of volunteers. The Director’s Report reflects staff efforts to secure best value for the City in the selection of both goods and services.
4. **Innovation** – The Museum Director Update reflects the development of original, locally relevant programming, as well as methods to achieve programmatic ends through proactive cultural partnerships.
5. **Sustainability & Resiliency** – The Museum Director Update report reflects staff efforts to streamline operations; conserve the Museum’s assets; model and teach cultural and environmental preservation; and give voice and visibility to those who made Riverside what it is today whether recognized in their time or not. 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
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