



Museum of Riverside Board Memorandum

City of Arts & Innovation

TO: MUSEUM OF RIVERSIDE BOARD **DATE: AUGUST 28, 2024**
FROM: MUSEUM DEPARTMENT **WARDS: ALL**
SUBJECT: DIRECTOR'S UPDATE REGARDING THE MAIN MUSEUM RENOVATION, HISTORIC HOUSES, COLLECTIONS, EXHIBITIONS AND PROGRAMS, BUDGET, STAFFING, ADVISORY TEAMS, VOLUNTEER AND SUPPORT OPPORTUNITIES, MARKETING AND COMMUNICATIONS, AND FUNDRAISING

ISSUE:

Receive and file the Director's Update regarding the main museum renovation, historic houses, collections, exhibitions and programs, budget, staffing, advisory teams, volunteer and support opportunities, marketing and communications, and fundraising.

RECOMMENDATION:

That the Museum of Riverside Board receive and file the Director's Update regarding the main museum renovation, historic houses, collections, exhibitions and programs, budget, staffing, advisory teams, volunteer and support opportunities, marketing and communications, and fundraising.

DISCUSSION:

Main Museum Renovation

The bid set for the new main Museum is due imminently from Pfeiffer Partners, our architects. Their schedule has the Museum issuing the bid before the end of the summer and issuing a notice to proceed to the successful general contractor before the end of 2024. As of the drafting of this report, the City is within days of communicating with the pre-qualified panel of general contractors who will be invited to bid on the project. Close examination of the drawings continues, as well as inventorying building salvage intended for donated or retention in the collection. Staff in the downtown building may all be moved to the temporary Mission Square offices by the time of this Board meeting.

Historic Houses

The bid set for the first phase of the Harada House Interpretive Center is expected by fall. A panel of pre-qualified contractors is also nearing finalization for this project. Staff continue to await a complete 80% construction drawing set from the architect for Harada House, Phase I, which will trigger examination by the National Park Service (administrator of the Museum's Save America's Treasures grant) and a new round of independent peer reviews. The Museum was

fortunate to secure a further extension on the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG), which is partially funding the Interpretive Center, but no additional extensions will be possible. Both drawing sets are behind schedule.

At the time this report was drafted, improvements to the Heritage House carriage house kitchen and installation of bike racks are being scheduled. Both projects should be completed by the time of the Board meeting. Staff work to pursue as many of these small projects as possible during the summer closure of Heritage House. The House will reopen on September 6, 2024.

Collections

Nearly the entirety of the collections stored at the main Museum have been relocated to the collection storage facilities. Logistical challenges around moving the largest geology specimens have meant they have been saved for last. Old collection storage cabinets, as well as other outdated equipment, are in the process of being surplus.

The 100th anniversary exhibition provided an opportunity to upgrade records, including rephotographing nearly all of the original Rumsey gift, and updating condition reports, general descriptions, and photo-documentation of the approximately hundred objects that will be in the exhibition *Dear Riverside*.

The hire of a new archivist by the Riverside Public Library is good news, and Museum staff will be meeting this individual soon to reaffirm our shared duties regarding preservation of the region's archival assets.

Exhibitions and Programs

Dear Riverside: A Letter to Our First Love opened **very successfully** on July 25, 2024, at the Center for Social Justice & Civil Liberties **with a standing-room-only crowd**. The exhibition has been a notable staff effort—from concept to installation at a site not our own—and we thank Board members in advance for encouraging as many as possible to visit the exhibition prior to its last day on January 5, 2025. It's a unique reflection of the Museum's and the community's history, and it continues a century-long conversation about what Riverside holds dear. The exhibition is supported by the City of Riverside, Dwight Tate & Kathy Wright, and the Riverside Museum Associates.

The next exhibition to be installed at Heritage House will be *Roaring Riverside: Fashions of the 1920s*, a nod to the 1920s era when the Museum was founded. The exhibition has been curated by Brenda Buller Focht. It will be on view September 6, 2024 – January 26, 2025; accompanying programs will be announced. The exhibition is supported by the City of Riverside.

Staff are, as of this writing, more than halfway through the 100 programs calendar. Strong attendance at some of these programs has been very encouraging. Recent successes included the screening of "*Pá'Čapa': A Mt. Rubidoux Story*," a short documentary by Riverside City College's Rosy Aranda, which drew a crowd of over 100 on July 5, a record for the Nights with the Museum series. We again pushed the capacity of our host location on July 16, World Snake Day, when we were surprised to find ourselves turning away visitors at the Arlanza branch of the library. The size of the crowd greatly exceeded our expectations.

Mark your calendars for the programs listed below, in particular, Moon Festival on September 17, from 6:00 – 8:00 p.m. at Heritage House.

| Date | Program | Volunteer opportunity? |
|--------------------|--|------------------------|
| August 29, 2024 | Conversations with a Curator (Jennifer Dickerson), noon, in the <i>Dear Riverside</i> exhibition | No |
| September 1, 2024 | Mountain Lion Love, a 100 th anniversary program at the Center for Social Justice & Civil Liberties (CSJ&CL), 1:00 – 4:00 p.m. | No |
| September 5, 2024 | Artswalk, Main Street and CSJ&CL, vintage photographs, cyanotypes, 6:00 – 9:00 p.m. | Yes |
| September 6, 2024 | Heritage House reopens with <i>Roaring Riverside: Fashions of the 1920s</i> | No |
| September 6, 2024 | Nights with the Museum, 6:30 – 9:00 pm., featuring Dr. Kelli Shapiro, speaking about cinema history in the Inland Empire and San Gabriel Valley, Main Library Community Room | No |
| September 13, 2024 | Special tour of <i>Roaring Riverside: Fashions of the 1920s</i> with exhibition curator Dr. Brenda Buller Focht, 4:00 p.m. | No |
| September 14, 2024 | Jose Alamillo speaks on Latino sports, 2:00 p.m., Main Library Community Room | No |
| September 17, 2024 | Moon Festival, 6:00 – 8:00 p.m., Heritage House | Definitely |
| September 20, 2024 | Movies on the Lawn, featuring <i>Eagle Eye</i> (2008), screening starts at dusk at Heritage House | No |
| September 21, 2024 | Special 100 th anniversary program at Heritage House with Riverside Arts Academy and 1920s dance – more information to follow. | Yes |

Budget

The 2024-2026 biennial budget was approved by City Council on June 25, 2024, without revision.

Staffing

Interviews for the Curator of History are under way. The Exhibition Designer position is also in recruitment, as Elise (Burgos) Heath will shortly be concluding her special arrangement to stay with us through the opening of *Dear Riverside*.

Staff expect at least one intern for the fall term from California Baptist University's anthropology department. Capacity to host interns continues to be three per term.

Advisory Teams

Several of the staff-level advisory teams are adjusting to new chairs. The Rebranding and Marketing Advisory Team is being retooled to function as a Marketing and Fundraising Advisory Team.

| Committee / Team | Meeting interval | Role | Chair | Next meeting |
|------------------|------------------------------|----------------------------------|--------------------|-------------------|
| Collections | Every other second Wednesday | Advising on collections activity | Jennifer Dickerson | November 13, 2024 |

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|---------------------------|-----------------------------|---|---------------------------------|-------------------|
| Harada House Project Team | Every other first Friday | Programs and communications regarding Harada House | Interim lead: Robyn G. Peterson | October 4, 2024 |
| Marketing and Fundraising | Irregular | Public communications, PR, website | Chantal Downing | TBD |
| Programs | Every other first Wednesday | Program development, implementation, and coordination with partners | Jennifer Dickerson | September 4, 2024 |

Volunteer and Support Opportunities

For the duration of *Dear Riverside*, docents have a touring opportunity in addition to Heritage House, and that is to lead tours of this special exhibition. Training is available from the Museum’s educators. Representatives of our current docent and volunteer corps have been meeting quarterly with staff to keep abreast of programming needs during the ambitious 100th anniversary year. The Museum would benefit from additional event volunteers as well as more individuals wishing to be trained as touring docents for Heritage House. Please encourage interested individuals you may know to contact Teresa Woodard, twoodard@riversideca.gov. A volunteer handbook will soon be available.

Marketing and Communications

The path toward an overhauled website has proven to be less smooth than anticipated. Three staff members continue their periodic training sessions with the Office of Communications. The Museum does not have an update on the timing of the hire of the new Web Developer, a shared position for the Museum and Library departments.

Marketing has gone out through many outlets for *Dear Riverside*. Pole banners are installed on Mission Inn Avenue and Market Street. Direct mail, digital communications, and paid advertising are all part of the mix. Flyers, social media, and other communications are distributed every week and at every program for all other upcoming programs and events.

Fundraising

Returning generous donors Dwight Tate and Kathy Wright have issued a challenge to others to match their \$25,000 gifts in support of the Museum’s 100th anniversary initiatives. With their assistance, the Museum is hopeful of exceeding its 100th anniversary revenue goals. Already on board for Moon Festival sponsorship is the Ransom-McKenzie realty office. Athens Services is on board as a gala sponsor. Board members are asked to introduce to staff any potential sponsors or donors of gala auction items.

STRATEGIC PLAN ALIGNMENT:

The activities of the Museum of Riverside align with the Strategic Priority, “Arts, Culture and Recreation.” Specific programs and activities mentioned in this report support, in particular, goal 1.1 (strengthening Riverside’s portfolio of arts, culture, recreation, senior, and lifelong learning programs and amenities), goal 1.2 (enhancing equitable access to arts, culture, and recreational service offerings and facilities), and goal 1.5 (supporting programs and amenities to further develop literacy, health, and education of children, youth, and seniors throughout the community).

Museum programs further support the Strategic Priority, “Community Well-Being.” Specific

goals supported by Museum programs and partnerships include goal 2.3, which includes strengthening neighborhood identities, and goal 2.5, which points to fostering relationships between community members and partner organizations.

1. **Community Trust** – The Director's Report comprehensively familiarizes the Board with operating conditions, invites Board input, provides information on volunteer opportunities, and describes partnerships the Museum is pursuing. Progress on the Harada House main museum projects restore trust in the City's commitment to open these important cultural resources for the public.
2. **Equity** – The Director's Report describes the programs Museum staff and partners are implementing to celebrate and serve the full diversity of Riverside. Programs strive to emphasize equity and access. Marketing reaches into all neighborhoods. Community engagement efforts strive to reach a variety of demographic groups.
3. **Fiscal Responsibility** – The Director's Report updates the board on ongoing efforts to operate within the Department's budgets and apply a transparent and rigorous process when selecting contractors and expending resources. The Museum seeks non-City funding regularly and as practical. Museum budgets consistently run in the black, demonstrating responsible use of taxpayer dollars.
4. **Innovation** – The Director's Report reports on the development of original, locally relevant programming, as well as methods to achieve programmatic ends through proactive cultural partnerships and efficient promotions. Projects designed to extend the Museum's reach beyond its walls during the main museum closure employ innovative techniques and designs.
5. **Sustainability & Resiliency** – The Director's Report reflects staff emphasis on cultural sustainability. The Report includes efforts to streamline operations, preserve Museum assets, deliver value to the taxpayer, model and teach cultural and environmental preservation, and develop solidly researched and affirming interpretation.

FISCAL IMPACT:

There is no fiscal impact associated with this report.

Prepared by: Robyn G. Peterson, Ph.D., Museum Director
Approved by: Kris Martinez, Assistant City Manager