



Museum of Riverside Board Memorandum

City of Arts & Innovation

TO: MUSEUM OF RIVERSIDE BOARD **DATE: FEBRUARY 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, AND MARKETING AND COMMUNICATIONS

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, and marketing and communications.

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, and marketing and communications.

DISCUSSION:

Main Museum Renovation

Pfeiffer Partners, the Museum's main museum architects, are at work on the final stage of document preparation, that is, construction documents. Museum staff continue to meet regularly with them to sift through lists of lingering questions and finalize responsibilities. Key issues are furnishings, signage, IT needs, and other issues where different contractors' work will intersect. An additional cost estimate is anticipated prior to preparation of the bid package. A drawing set has also been submitted for preliminary plan check. Putting the project out to bid in the second quarter of 2024 remains achievable.

Historic Houses

It is necessary for IS Architecture, the Museum's Harada project architects, to accelerate their work pace to bring drawings for both projects (Harada House, Phase I, and the Harada House Interpretive Center) to the 80% CD (construction document) stage. The National Park Service, which administers our federal grant, needs to review the plans at that stage, and the Museum will also solicit a second round of peer reviews. The Museum is working to schedule the architectural conservator who will be excising the inscription wall from the second floor of Harada House.

During the multi-year construction project, this wall section will be securely stored offsite and eventually reinstalled in the house.

At Heritage House, small projects are resuming now that the path resurfacing is done. These include window repairs (high winds recently added another window to the repair list), extension and improvement of site fencing, upgrades to the kitchen in the carriage house, and lighting in the carriage house public space to improve exhibition conditions. Unable to ascertain whether carriages houses were lit historically, staff are testing a couple of different fixtures to determine a path forward. A plan for site signage also continues in development.

Collections

Curators and educators have been focused primarily on continued planning for the 100th anniversary exhibition opening in July, executing the anniversary year lineup of 100 programs, and developing the Heritage House exhibition. Collection objects are slated for several exhibitions, and they are being located, researched, and—if necessary—conserved in preparation for exhibit.

Staff are reviewing revised regulations relating to the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act (1990). The result may be a significant impact on the Museum’s ability to exhibit or publish Indigenous resources. After a 1.5-year wait, a decision has been made by tribal authorities regarding items deaccessioned for return to the Lakota, and the Museum has begun the steps to complete the physical return of these items.

Exhibitions and Programs

As of the drafting of this report, the first four of the 100 programs have successfully taken place, with strong or record attendance. We encourage all Board members to attend as many as possible ... Movies on the Lawn, in particular, promises to attract new audiences for the Museum. New Curator of History Laura Fisher has coordinated the spring exhibition that will be on exhibit in Heritage House, *Chinatown: A Home for All*, which focuses on the role of Chinese immigrants in shaping Riverside and running homes such as Heritage House.

Show your support for Museum programs by attending them, telling others about them, and sharing our posts announcing them.

Date	Program	Volunteer opportunity?
February 29, 2024	Leap Year Event at Heritage House, 4:00 – 6:00 p.m.	No
March 1, 2024	Nights with the Museum, 6:30 – 8:00 p.m., featuring Frances Vasquez on the topic of notable Latinas in Riverside’s history, Main Library Community Room	No
March 2, 2024	Read Across America at Heritage House. Read in the garden from noon to 4:00 p.m. and join reading-aloud tables	Yes
March 3, 2024	First Sunday, 1:00 – 4:00, Hinamatsuri (origami), 3580 Mission Inn Avenue front steps	Yes
March 7, 2024	Artswalk, 6:00 – 9:00, at our new location on Main Street, featuring paper dolls for Women’s History Month	Yes
March 8, 2024	Spring exhibition <i>Chinatown: A Home for All</i> opens at Heritage House	No
March 9, 2024	Sycamore Canyon nature hike with Curator of Natural History Ian Wright, starts at 9:00 a.m.	No

March 15, 2024	Movies on the Lawn: Made in Riverside, <i>Dark Victory</i> (1939), Heritage House gate opens at sunset, film starts at dusk	Yes
March 17, 2024	Quilting Day demonstrations at Heritage House, noon to 3:00 p.m.	No
March 21, 2024	“Experience World Poetry Day: A Multilingual Poetry Experiment,” a program in collaboration with Inlandia Institute, Heritage House, 2:00 p.m.	Yes

Budget

Staff have submitted draft numbers for the General Fund operating budget for the upcoming biennium, as well as updated the Museum’s list of capital improvement projects, many of which are as yet unfunded. As a reminder, the main museum will not open during the next biennium (July 2024 – June 2026) but rather during the following biennium.

Staffing

New Curatorial Services Manager Jennifer Dickerson began her duties on February 16. With her hire, all of the Museum’s 13.5 funded positions are now filled. Additional positions will be needed prior to and at the reopening of the downtown site. Staff are crafting position descriptions in order to be ready well in advance of listing these positions.

Advisory Teams

The staff-level advisory teams are open to new members, who need not be Board members. Staff are always interested in new members for these teams who can bring expertise aligned with the goals of the team. Team chairs may change as new staff are brought up to speed.

Committee / Team	Meeting interval	Role	Chair	Next meeting
Collections	Every other second Wednesday	Advising on collections activity	Robyn G. Peterson	March 13, 2024
Harada House Project Team	Every other first Friday	Programs and communications regarding Harada House	Laura Fisher	April 5, 2024
Branding and Marketing	Irregular	Public communications, PR, website	Chantal Downing	TBD
Programs	Every other first Wednesday	Program development, implementation, and coordination with partners	Robyn G. Peterson	March 6, 2024

Volunteer and Support Opportunities

The Museum’s need for touring docents and event volunteers continues. Please encourage interested individuals you may know to contact Teresa Woodard Belding, twoodard@riversideca.gov.

Marketing and Communications

Staff remain unable to offer news on the schedule for updating the website. With the arrival of new staff, there are more of us to ensure that programs are listed on additional community calendars and other outlets. The Museum’s social media remains active and pivotal to sharing news of repeat and new programs.

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