



*City of Arts & Innovation*

# News Release

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## **City Council Endorses Museum of Riverside Downtown Museum Design and Project Budget**

**Riverside, CA** – City Council members on Tuesday (12/12) unanimously approved the design approach for the renovation and expansion of the Museum of Riverside’s downtown site, paving the way for a grand re-opening in 2026.

Museum of Riverside Director Robyn G. Peterson presented the design for the facility at 3580 Mission Inn Ave. Members of the Museum of Riverside Board and the public spoke in support of the project before the Council vote.

“The new Museum of Riverside blends old and new, allowing us to learn about our past in an inviting and modern setting,” Mayor Patricia Lock Dawson said. “Riverside residents, students and visitors will now have a chance to experience our city’s history with engaging exhibits and meaningful storytelling.”

The new Museum of Riverside will incorporate the 1912 historic structure that currently faces Mission Inn Avenue, which was originally built as a U.S. Post Office. A two-story addition on the back of the building will replace multiple later additions. The new museum will include new galleries with high standards of environmental and security controls as well as flexible-use galleries in the historic structure.

An expanded new Nature Lab with both indoor and outdoor space will greet visitors upon entry. A dedicated classroom and a roof terrace will be entirely new features of the building. Green

building technologies are part of the design. After reopening, the approximately 32,000-square-foot Museum will host changing exhibitions, public programs and events, and curriculum-based educational programs.

The Museum's downtown Riverside site has been closed since September 2017. Following peer-led operational assessments in 2016-2017, City leadership determined at that time to close the downtown site to address necessary operational improvements and prepare for an eventual renovation and expansion of the facility.

Pfeiffer Partners' Los Angeles office was chosen as project architect in 2019, and conceptual designs were completed when the COVID-19 pandemic halted work on the project. Work resumed late in 2022.

"The Museum of Riverside is firmly on the path to re-opening better than ever after weathering an unprecedented closure worsened by a worldwide pandemic," Mayor Pro Tem Erin Edwards said. "We can now look forward to witnessing the best version ever of the Museum of Riverside."

The City Council's endorsement this week of both the design approach and supplemental funding greenlights the Museum to complete the architectural design process and issue a bid for construction of the project.

In October 2022, the City Council had previously approved up to \$35 million in Measure Z funding for the Museum of Riverside's project. Approval of an additional \$10 million was part of the Council's latest decision, which City staff requested due to steeply escalating labor and materials costs for construction projects. The Museum's overall project costs are currently estimated at \$45 million.

"The new museum design is a creative solution to the use of our downtown site," Peterson said. "The staff of the Museum of Riverside are working excitedly to prepare exhibitions for the grand reopening that will delight and enrich our local and visiting audiences. We'll be able to offer so much more to our community in this place where Riverside's own stories will be told and Riverside's own treasures preserved and presented."

Follow the Museum of Riverside on Facebook and Instagram for more information.



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### **ABOUT THE MUSEUM OF RIVERSIDE**

The Museum of Riverside, a department of the city of Riverside, holds a large multi-disciplinary collection relevant to the history, culture, and natural science of the region. The Museum has a proud history of exhibitions, programs, and publications foregrounding local and regional achievement. Sites include the downtown Riverside main museum, Heritage House, Harada House, and the Harada House Interpretive Center (forthcoming). All sites except Heritage House are temporarily closed for renovation or rehabilitation. Heritage House is open Friday-Sunday for guided tours; pre-registration for tours is requested via Eventbrite.

