



City of Arts & Innovation

News Release

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City of Riverside Takes Step Forward with Cheech Marin Center

Approval of management agreement with Riverside Art Museum sets out terms for next 25 years

RIVERSIDE, Calif. – The Cheech Marin Center for Chicano Art and Culture took a step closer to opening Tuesday (1/20) when the City Council approved a 25-year management agreement with the Riverside Art Museum (RAM) and awarded a \$10.7 million contract to renovate the building that until recently housed the Main Library.

The Cheech, as it is commonly called, is expected to open in the latter part of this year featuring works from the 700-piece collection of the famed comedian and actor. It is designed as a center for Chicano art, including paintings, sculpture, photography, and video arts.

“Riverside is the City of Arts and Innovation, and the opening of The Cheech later this year will be another reason for visitors from around the world to visit our historic downtown,” Mayor Patricia Lock Dawson said. “I look forward to seeing our local business community and our convention center benefit from this exciting development in a post-COVID-19 world.”

The project represents a significant investment. The City will pay to RAM a management fee of \$800,000 per year, with the fee increasing each year by \$25,000. The City also will pay all utilities, estimated at \$120,000 per year and retain ownership of the site. The parking lot adjacent to the building will remain open to the public with 14 parking spaces reserved for RAM use.

The building will become available very soon, when the Main Library completes its move to a new facility a few blocks away, and the renovation of the building for use as The Cheech will begin soon after. The \$10.7 million construction contract for renovating the building will come from state funds previously approved for the project.

The Cheech is expected to become a major tourist draw, bringing thousands of people each year to Riverside to view Marin’s collection, which is one of the most renowned in the world. Marin already has given nearly a dozen works to RAM and will continue gifting art to the museum during the year.

“The Cheech is an investment in the future of our city,” Mayor Pro Tem Jim Perry said. “This unique museum will be an economic driver for Riverside, and I look forward to its opening.”

Among the other terms of the management agreement:

- the City and RAM agree to actively work towards making The Cheech financially independent and self-sustaining beyond the initial term of the agreement.
- following the initial term, the City and RAM have the option to renew the Agreement for two additional terms of five years each.
- the City and RAM will meet annually to discuss various obligations and responsibilities, including but not limited to admissions, revenues, expenditures, concessions and facility fees.

For the latest information and resources regarding COVID-19 -- www.RiversideCA.gov/COVID-19