

## Staff Report

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**Report To:** Tom Thomson Art Gallery Advisory Committee

**Report From:** Aidan Ware, Director and Chief Curator –  
Art Gallery, Culture, Tourism

**Meeting Date:** May 7, 2025

**Report Code:** AG-25-005

**Subject:** Standard Operating Procedure for Attendance Tracking

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### Recommendations:

THAT in consideration of Staff Report AG-25-005 respecting Standard Operating Procedure for Attendance Tracking, the Tom Thomson Art Gallery Advisory Committee recommends that City Council receive the report for information purposes.

### Highlights:

- Staff have developed a Standard Operating Procedure in order to create consistent methods of tracking, recording and reporting the attendance data for in-person visits to the Gallery and at offsite exhibitions, art installations, programs and events.
- The Gallery has been tracking attendance data for more than 25 years and is required to submit attendance data to the Canadian Arts Database (CADAC) as part of provincial and federal operating grant cycles. These funding bodies use CADAC provided data to gauge trends and measure the health of the sector.
- A key focus is front desk staff training to ensure consistent use of the forms and accurate recording of data.

### Strategic Plan Alignment:

[Strategic Plan](#) Priority: This report supports the delivery of Core Service.

## **Climate and Environmental Implications:**

There are no anticipated climate or environmental impacts.

## **Previous Report/Authority:**

[February 2025 Update Report](#)

## **Background:**

The Tom Thomson Art Gallery has been tracking attendance for more than 25 years, and is required to submit attendance data to the Canadian Arts Database (CADAC) as part of provincial and federal operating grant cycles. These funding bodies use CADAC provided data to gauge trends and measure the health of the sector as well as identifying where funds could be most successfully allocated. Tracking attendance data is inconsistent among institutions, however many use laser door trackers as an industry standard.

Broadly, the attendance data helps us understand both the areas where the organization is growing, and the areas where it's experiencing less growth or declining engagement - this information helps to plan and deliver exhibitions and programming.

In the past, Gallery attendance has been tracked using different methodologies which have resulted in inconsistencies in reporting total attendance (such as the inclusion of offsite project attendance estimates). To address this, staff have drafted a Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) for the collection methodology and reporting of attendance data for the Art Gallery. This SOP relies on a series of forms for collecting data which are included with this report for Committee feedback. This will help to ensure that tracking is standardized, consistent, and prevents/limits human error. In May 2024, new bi-directional automatic people counters were installed at the front entrance and also at the upper-level exhibition doors (eliminating the need for staff to manually divide the counter number). The counters at the upper-level exhibition space allow tracking of visitors specific to exhibitions.

Staff have identified ways to better collect attendance data in person through updated data collection sheets. These include a Daily Visitor Tracking Form, Offsite Program Event Attendance Form, and Program Event Attendance Form (see attachments). The Monthly Attendance Tracking Form has been streamlined to make it clearer for staff to use.

## **Analysis:**

Along with the updated forms is a Standard Operating Procedure that will establish consistent methods of tracking, recording and reporting the attendance data for in-person visits to the Gallery and at offsite exhibitions, art installations, programs and events.

Key benefits of accurate data collection and standardized methodology include: effective allocation of staff and resources based on peak visiting times; quantitative data to identify trends, popular exhibits, and visitor demographics which aid in strategic planning and exhibition development; supports partnerships by allowing partners to see the benefit of the Gallery; helps staff to monitor visitor numbers for capacity management to ensure safety protocols are met and for emergency preparedness; assists in tailoring marketing efforts by understanding visitor patterns and preferences.

A key focus is front desk staff training to ensure consistent use of the forms and accurate recording of data.

## **Financial Implications:**

N/A

## **Communication Strategy:**

The Operations Coordinator will work with staff to provide proper training on the implementation of these forms and attendance tracking. All staff will be trained on the Standard Operating Procedure.

## **Consultation:**

Pamela Coulter, Director of Community Services

## **Attachments:**

Standard Operating Procedure for Attendance Tracking (Draft)

## **Recommended by:**

Pamela Coulter, Director of Community Services

Aidan Ware, Director and Chief Curator – Art Gallery, Culture, Tourism

**Submission approved by:**

Tim Simmonds, City Manager

For more information on this report, please contact Aidan Ware at [aware@tomthomson.org](mailto:aware@tomthomson.org) or 519-376-1932 Ext. 5001.