

Art Gallery of Alberta

City Funding

Recommendation

That the December 4, 2019, Citizen Services report CR_7765, be received for information.

Previous Council/Committee Action

At the November 5, 2019, City Council meeting, the following motion was passed:

That Administration provide a report to the December 4, 2019, Community and Public Services Committee on the City funding provided to the Art Gallery of Alberta in 2019 to facilitate their free admission initiative, including the effectiveness of the initiative and the current status.

Executive Summary

Since 2017, the City has provided one-time funding each year to the Art Gallery of Alberta to continue to support key elements of its 2016-2020 Strategic Plan. Enhanced funding from the City has contributed to the following successes:

- 2017 attendance was the highest attendance since 2011
- increased youth/student attendance
- a shift in the demographics of the Art Gallery of Alberta audience to be more representative of the diversity of the Edmonton population
- enhanced engagement with Indigenous artists and communities
- increased accessibility for citizens with mobility challenges

Report

In April 2019, City Council approved \$250,000 to continue to support the Art Gallery of Alberta's 2016-2020 Strategic Plan implementation, which provides enhanced access, free admission times, and community programming at the gallery. This additional funding allowed the Art Gallery of Alberta to complete the following:

- free admission initiatives
- new engagement initiatives
- community-focused programming
- accessibility improvements
- Indigenous exhibitions and collection acquisitions

Free Admission Initiatives

In 2019, the Art Gallery of Alberta offered increased access to the gallery for the citizens of Edmonton, including:

- continued free admission for children 18 and under and for all Alberta students
- free public admission on Thursdays (5 pm-8 pm)
- free public admission on five full days throughout the year:
 - Family Day
 - National Indigenous Peoples Day
 - Canada Day
 - Alberta Culture Days (two-day event)
- free admission for public programs such as lectures, artists' talks, film screenings

The impact of offering free admission can be seen in attendance numbers, with more people attending the Art Gallery of Alberta in 2017 than in the five previous years (2012-2016). To date, almost 100,000 people have been able to attend the Art Gallery of Alberta for free, through the enhanced admission program.

	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017 Funded	2018 Funded	2019 (to Sep 30) Funded
Paid Visits	43,112	38,174	41,063	30,680	29,706	23,671	19,401	13,094
Free Admission	14,976	15,776	16,765	14,643	23,042	40,735	33,983	23,927
Programs and Events	24,729	29,689	29,989	26,596	26,202	25,634	23,695	17,227
TOTAL	82,817	83,639	87,817	71,919	78,950	89,967	77,079	54,248

2018 and 2019 Attendance

In 2018 and continuing throughout 2019, visitation to the Art Gallery of Alberta has been impacted by the construction and disruption of the downtown civic precinct. There has been a 20 percent reduction in all admissions (paid and free) as well as collateral revenues from the gift shop, Zinc Restaurant, and catering sales since the project began in 2016. The Citadel Theatre and Winspear Centre for Music report similar results, with a decrease in ticket and subscription sales of approximately 20 percent.

The Art Gallery of Alberta would like to continue to offer free admission for children and Alberta students as well as free admission opportunities every week for as long as possible.

New Engagement Initiatives

With the support of enhanced City funding, the Art Gallery of Alberta has been able to continue engagement initiatives and free admission programs developed to serve Edmonton's new citizens and diverse cultural communities. These include ongoing partnerships with community service organizations such as:

- Mennonite Centre for Newcomers
- ASSIST Community Services Centre
- Newcomers are Lit (Edmonton Chapter of the Canadian Council for Refugees Youth Network)
- Ahlan Canada
- Canadian Cultural Access Pass

Community-focused Programs

With City support, the Art Gallery of Alberta has developed new programs that bring the expertise of Edmonton citizens into the gallery's public programming. These include community tours led by speakers from local organizations as well as exhibitions in our community gallery. Partner organizations include:

- Institute of Sexual Minority Studies and Services
- iHuman Youth Society
- Latin American Community Engagement Network
- Bissell Centre
- Newcomers Are Lit
- Edmonton 2 Spirit Society
- RISE - Reconciliation in Solidarity Edmonton
- Keepers of the Athabasca
- 5 Artists One Love
- NextFest
- Rust Magic
- Winifred Stewart Association
- Nina Haggerty Centre
- Cerebral Palsy Association of Alberta
- Art for Young Stars, University of Alberta
- Boys & Girls Club Edmonton
- Greater Edmonton Teachers Convention Association (GETCA)
- Alberta Labour History Institute

Accessibility Improvements

In 2018 and 2019, the Art Gallery of Alberta improved accessibility throughout the facility with the automation of public restroom doors and a modification to the layout of the gift shop that allows for expanded wheelchair mobility. The exhibition space doors on all levels were also automated, with handicapped access and motion assist movement providing full access for wheelchairs and people with mobility challenges.

Indigenous Exhibitions and Collection Acquisitions

The Art Gallery of Alberta created several new exhibitions and acquired works for its collection that share and preserve the important work of Indigenous, First Nations, and Métis artists in support of the gallery's 2016-2020 Strategic Plan goals. In 2019, the Art Gallery of Alberta featured the following exhibitions to further this goal.

Stretch Mark

(December 1, 2018 – March 24, 2019)

The third in a series of four exhibitions showcasing new acquisitions of art by Indigenous, First Nations, Metis and Inuit artists to the Art Gallery of Alberta collection. Featured Artists: KC Adams, Lori Blondeau, Dean Drever, Skeena Reece.

Boarder X

(January 26 - May 19, 2019)

Boarder X featured artists from Indigenous nations across Canada who surf, skate, and snowboard and use these as vehicles to challenge conformity and status quo, and also demonstrate knowledge and performed relationships with the land.

Fix Your Hearts Or Die

(April 13 - August 18, 2019)

The final exhibition in a series showcasing new acquisitions of art by Indigenous, First Nations, Metis and Inuit artists to the Art Gallery of Alberta collection. Featured Artists: Daniel McCartney, Cheryl L'Hirondelle, Sheri Nault and Adrian Stimson.

Kablusiak: akunnirun kuupak

(March 18 - October 6, 2019)

Manning Hall commission by an Alberta-based Inuvialuk artist.

ISUMA: One Day in the Life of Noah Piugattuk

(September 7 - November 24, 2019)

The installation features the most recent work by the Inuit film and video cooperative Isuma, which recreates an encounter on Baffin Island in 1961 when Inuit life on the land changed forever.

Future Strategic Plan

The Art Gallery of Alberta engages the community in activities that support and enhance the arts ecosystem of the city and contributes to the realization of *Connections & Exchanges: A 10-Year Plan To Transform Arts and Heritage In Edmonton*.

The success of the initiatives that have been implemented will be measured through: attendance numbers, postal code data capture to determine unique/repeat visitation

and geographic use patterns; visitation trends and digital analytics, including from social media. This data will be used for planning and decision-making and will feed into the development of a new strategic plan for 2021-2025, to ensure realistic measures, targets and outcomes are set for sustainable operations to support the gallery’s mission of educating, inspiring and building generations of creative, inspired Albertans.

Corporate Outcomes and Performance Management

Corporate Outcome(s): Edmontonians are connected to the city in which they live, work and play			
Outcome(s)	Measure(s)	Result(s)	Target(s)
Residents and visitors have access to a diverse range of arts and culture experiences in the city	Annual attendance	2019: 54,248 (to Sep 30) 2018: 77,079 2017: 89,967 2016: 78,950 2015: 71,919 2014: 87,817 2013: 83,541 2012: 82,817	Increase attendance year over year

Others Reviewing this Report

- B. Andriachuk, City Solicitor