

TO:	CHAIR AND MEMBERS COMMUNITY AND PROTECTIVE SERVICES COMMITTEE MEETING ON AUGUST 13, 2019
FROM:	SCOTT STAFFORD MANAGING DIRECTOR, PARKS AND RECREATION
SUBJECT:	LONDON’S FILM AND MULTI-MEDIA INDUSTRY UPDATE

RECOMMENDATION

That, on the recommendation of the Managing Director, Parks and Recreation, the following actions **BE TAKEN**:

- a) This report **BE RECEIVED** for information; and
- b) That Civic Administration **BE DIRECTED** to submit a business case as part of the Multi-Year Budget process to support the completion of a Film and Multi-Media Strategy as outlined in Phase 2 of this report

PREVIOUS REPORTS PERTINENT TO THIS MATTER

- London’s Cultural Prosperity Plan, March, 2013
- City of London Strategic Plan 2015- 2019, March, 2015
- London’s Community Economic Road Map, November, 2015
- The City of London Special Events Manual Annual Review, March, 2017
- Growing London’s Film and Multi-Media Industry, May, 2017
- Strategic Plan for the City of London 2019 – 2023, April, 2019

BACKGROUND

STRATEGIC PLAN FOR THE CITY OF LONDON 2019 - 2023

The Vision in the Strategic Plan 2019 – 2023 is for London to be a leader in commerce, culture and innovation – our region’s connection to the World.

The Strategic Area of Focus “*Growing our Economy*” has an outcome of “*London is a leader in Ontario for attracting new jobs and investments*”, which includes the strategy, “*Work with multi-sector stakeholders to develop a Screen-Based Industry Strategy*”.

BACKGROUND

In May 2017, City Council resolved the following with respect to “Growing London’s Film and Multi-Media Industry”:

That the Civic Administration BE DIRECTED to:

- i. Work with the City’s service partners including, but not limited to: the London Economic Development Corporation (LEDC), the London Arts Council, Tourism London, and the London Public Library to build stronger relationships with the film and multi-media industry locally and regionally by engaging in a series of consultations, which would result in the development of a Film and Multi-media Industry Strategy for London;*
- ii. Work with the Ontario Media Development Corporation¹ (OMDC) to better understand the economic impact and benefits of the film and multi-media landscape in London and Ontario;*

¹ OMDC: The Ontario Media Development Corporation (now referred to as Ontario Creates) is an agency

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- iii. *Enhance the showcasing of the City of London film and multi-media locations and by telling the community story through photos of the Ontario Media Development Corporation film and multi-media location database;*
- iv. *Leverage existing resources within Community and Economic Innovation (Culture and Economic Partnerships) and Parks and Community Sports (Special Events) Divisions to complete this work; and,*
- v. *Report back to Committee and Council in 2018 with findings and recommendations as to next steps.*

Ontario Creates (formerly OMDC) works with several streams of focus including: Film and Television, Interactive Digital Media, Magazine Media and Music. The City of London Screen Industry Service Partner Committee was created to learn more about the future state of the “Screen Industry of Ontario” including the distinct streams of which there is current activity and expertise in London; Film and Television, Interactive Digital Media (IDM) and Gaming.

During the consultation process, members of the Interactive Digital Media (IDM) and Gaming industries were consulted. These streams of the Screen Industry will continue to be supported through the London Economic Development Corporation in the aspects of talent and attraction of skilled labour.

The purpose of this report is to provide an update of the activities completed to date by Civic Administration to address the 2017 Council direction and to provide insight into potential next steps.

Prior to providing this detailed listing, and recognizing the time that has elapsed since this previous Council direction, it is important to re-introduce the topic and to provide some updated data points where new information has become available.

CURRENT FILM AND MULTI-MEDIA LANDSCAPE

Film and multi-media is recognized as an economic driver for the cultural sector, bringing direct employment opportunities to communities through industry specific jobs in the cultural sector. Film and multi-media also creates compound spending through spinoff industries in the hospitality and service sectors (restaurants, hotels, retail, caterers, transportation, and stylists) and contribute to a community’s brand, vibrancy and quality of life.

Ontario is home to Canada’s largest film, multi-media and television sector. These industries include many components at all stages of audiovisual content production and the delivery value chain. Film, multi-media and TV production in Ontario is mainly made up of small to medium sized companies, and has shown considerable growth in recent years.

The following statistical information has been provided by Ontario Creates www.ontariocreates.ca:

- 2017 was a stable year for the film and television production industry in Ontario, contributing \$1.6 billion to the economy;
- The film and television production industry accounted for approximately 32,800 full-time direct and spin-off jobs in 2017; and
- Ontario’s domestic production was consistent and domestic feature films continued to show a pattern of steady growth in both number and budget of productions. The 16% increase saw expenditures rise to \$80.6 million from \$69.7 million.

Production statistics for the Ontario Film and Television Production (2015-2017)

Ontario Film and Television Production 2015-2017

By Format	2017		2016		2015	
	Number of Projects	Production \$ left in Ontario	Number of Projects	Production \$ left in Ontario	Number of Projects	Production \$ left in Ontario
Production in Millions of Dollars						
Domestic						
Feature Film	38	80.6	27	69.7	27	57.1
Television Series	120	622.7	120	684.5	113	641.4
Television Movies, Mini-series, Specials, Pilots	76	69.6	77	88.4	64	63.4
Total Domestic	234	772.9	224	842.6	204	761.9
Foreign						
Feature Film	23	121.9	23	242.4	28	209.1
Television Series	53	653.3	31	514	44	465.7
Television Movies, Mini-series, Specials, Pilots	13	46.3	25	91	26	88.2
Total Foreign	89	821.6	79	847.3	98	763
Total	323	1594.5	303	1689.9	302	1524.9

SCAN OF FILM OFFICES IN CANADIAN MUNICIPALITIES

‘Appendix A’ of this report provides a summary of twenty (20) Canadian municipalities with and without film resources. This was first introduced in the staff report dated May 29, 2017 and has been updated to reflect current information.

Of the municipalities examined, 45% have an internal film office (Toronto, Mississauga, Hamilton, Halifax, Quebec City, Winnipeg, Vancouver, Sudbury, Surrey, Brampton), 20% have an external film office (Montreal, Calgary, Ottawa, Saskatoon) and 35% have no film office (Kitchener, Regina, London, Markham, Vaughn, Edmonton, Windsor).

Notably, film offices are most common in Canada’s largest cities such as Toronto, Montreal, Vancouver, Calgary and Ottawa. Some cities of London’s population size have dedicated resources to supporting film, while others have not.

CITY OF LONDON MANDATE FOR FILM AND MULTI-MEDIA

The City of London, and more specifically, Parks and Recreation has a mandate to permit filming on public property (owned by City of London). The process of permitting is governed and directed by both Special Event Council Policies and Filming Production Guidelines, which is part of the Special Event Administrative Procedures Manual. These established policies and procedures are in place to protect film producers, City employees and assets from accidental injury, loss or damage.

These policies and procedures provide information for those seeking to produce a film in London about street closures, filming on city property, resident notification, parking permits, the use of helicopters, and more.

The City of London also annually funds community film and multi-media organizations through the Community Arts Investment Program (CAIP) which is administered by the Culture Office through a purchase of service multi-year Agreement with the London Arts Council.

ACTIVITIES COMPLETED BY THE SCREEN INDUSTRY PARTNER COMMITTEE

The following is an update of the activities completed to date by the Screen Industry Partner Committee to address the 2017 Council direction.

COUNCIL DIRECTION	ACTIVITIES COMPLETED
Work with the City’s service partners including, but not limited to: the London Economic Development Corporation (LEDC), the London Arts Council, Tourism London, and the London Public Library to build stronger relationships with the film and multi-media industry locally and regionally by engaging in a series of consultations, which would result in the development of a Film and Multi-media Industry Strategy for London	<p>The Screen Industry Partner Committee includes: the London Public Library, London Economic Development Corporation (LEDC), London Arts Council, Tourism London, Fanshawe College and City Staff from Economic Partnerships, Culture and Special Events to discuss activities, roles and responsibilities, engagement and future direction.</p> <p>Cobalt Connects (Consultant) was awarded an engagement contract to undertake a series of consultations with the industry (further summary of findings located in the Findings Section of this report).</p> <p>The Partner Committee toured other jurisdictions and held meetings with Ontario Creates and the Film Commissioner of the Province of Ontario.</p> <p>Held meetings with peer municipalities who have experience in film/multi-media strategies (Hamilton, Kingston, Sudbury and Mississauga).</p> <p>Scan and review of other jurisdictions where specific film strategies have been created, discussed and/or implemented was completed by the Partner Committee (See ‘Appendix A’ of this report)</p>
Work with the Ontario Media Development Corporation (OMDC) to better understand the economic impact and benefits of the film and multi-media landscape in London and Ontario	<p>Ontario Creates does not have localized data for London related to the film and multi-media landscape, and localized data is often the responsibility of the jurisdiction. For example, the City of Hamilton works with interested production companies to track local spending throughout the life of a production and play a role in both private and public property.</p> <p>The Culture Office participated in Regional Film Forum of Ontario Creates in January of 2019. This Forum assisted in identifying barriers to industry growth for Southern Ontario:</p> <div><div>i.</div><div>The Union Travel Zone is only within the GTA;</div></div> <div><div>ii.</div><div>Geographical tax advantages exist for Northern Ontario;</div></div> <div><div>iii.</div><div>There is a lack of experience and credit of the production workforce;</div></div> <div><div>vi.</div><div>The Union requires mandatory 1-year of apprenticeship in film industry, that must occur in GTHA; and</div></div> <div><div>vii.</div><div>Ontario Creates has a production guide for services that must have 3 production credits in film, it is difficult to obtain the 3 credits (florists, caterers, hotels, post-production).</div></div> <p>Ontario Creates assisted with identifying trends and Ontario statistics, potential actions related to workforce supply, and their production guide for film related businesses.</p>
Enhance the showcasing of the City of London film and multi-media locations and by telling the community story through photos of	Collaboratively, all Partner Committee members provided ideas and potential locations for consideration by Ontario Creates for their location database.

the Ontario Media Development Corporation film and multi-media location database	<p>The Partner Committee worked with potential property owners to ensure that they could complete the criteria required by Ontario Creates to be an approved filming location.</p> <p>‘Appendix B’ of this report represents the April 2019 ‘In The Loop’ newsletter, issued by Ontario Creates that highlights London’s updated photo library for potential film locations.</p>
Leverage existing resources within Community and Economic Innovation (Culture and Economic Partnerships) and Parks and Community Sports (Special Events) Divisions to complete this work	<p>Restructuring has positioned Culture Office within Parks and Recreation. Both Economic Partnerships Office and Culture Office meet on a regular basis to advance the work of the Screen Industry Service Partner Committee.</p> <p>Adam Caplan, of web.isod.es, and a member of the Board of Ontario Creates served as the volunteer Chair of this Committee. Adam Caplan has given his expertise to help identify the current terminology and future landscape of the Screen Industry.</p>

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

Through all of the above activities, the Partner Committee members, learned a lot from Industry representatives, other municipalities, and each other. Below is a summary of these key findings.

COBALT CONNECTS

Cobalt Connects (Consultant) was awarded an engagement contract to undertake a series of consultations with the Industry. An online survey was selected as the first wave of engagement as it was an easily sharable, accessible format for those working in this Industry, and would ideally give the process some bulk data to respond to and share at the large *London Screen Shots* launch event held on May 16, 2018. Cobalt Connects also engaged in individual interviews to give the Consultant a chance to fill in some missing participant information from the large event through a longer format dialogue. The following key highlights are noted below from this engagement:

- Top priorities for developing the local sector from the Cobalt Report were (not in priority order):
 - Accessible pro equipment rentals; City film office/political support; Educational opportunities/mentorship; Film locations database; Keeping talent in London/work opportunities; Networking, collaboration and connecting; Outward promotion/communication; Permits; Screenings; Tax incentives
- London’s current strengths from the Cobalt Report include:
 - Affordable/accessible; Brand new scene; Community; Digital innovation; Diverse local talent; Excited and eager; Potential; Small city with big city feel; Standard of living; Support for emerging creators and content;
- Collaboration and Facilitation – *“the need for the industry to come together more often with a purpose. Training, mentorship, collaboration, online portals, and information sharing are all calls to spend more time together and share resources.”*
- Locations for Film – *“London and the surrounding community have significant treasures with its range of locations, which are relatively undiscovered.”*

PRIORITY THEMES EMERGING FROM INDUSTRY CONSULTATION

Specifically the following preliminary themes have emerged from the consultation to make London and Region a desirable location for domestic and international Film and Television Production:

PRIORITY THEMES	POTENTIAL FUTURE ACTIVITIES FOR LONDON
Concierge Service	Develop a concierge service exclusively designed to support the needs of large-scale film & TV productions. Determine how to service demand and be competitive with other film and television communities.
Locations Database	Monitor the Ontario Creates Locations Database and train a local photographer to add to this Database.
Marketing and Promotion	Market London and Region to global film and television producers (e.g. via TIFF and other international marketplaces).
Specialized Services	Build and maintain a public listing of regional specialized human resources (e.g. grips, makeup artists, ACTRA actors, caterers, etc.) available to productions. Determine how many London services are listed on the Ontario Creates Services Database with 3 film credit experiences.
Talent, Networking and Mentorship	Determine local talent that is union registered with a minimum one year apprenticeship and attract talent to come back to London for jobs. Encourage networking and mentorship opportunities for local talent. Approach industry trade unions to develop apprenticeship opportunities for local post-secondary institutions.
Education	Work with post-secondary educational institutions to develop specialty services education and training with film and television productions (e.g. internships).
Jobs and Business Development	Encourage film and television job opportunities for local talent. Encourage business development for local film and television businesses.
Pro Equipment	Work with trusted vendor(s) to create a regional pro-equipment rental and service depot for filmmaking equipment.
Distribution	Explore opportunities to link London producers with global distribution.
Infrastructure	Evaluate the need for large scale film outdoor streetscape and indoor studio/production space available for a period of time. Consider affordable insurance requirements for municipal spaces. Develop more green room spaces and small studio locations for start-ups.
Investment Funding and Advocacy	Advocate for a Provincial Southern Ontario Tax Credit and/or Incentive Program. Advocate for the modification of the union boundary to be bigger than the GTA.

LEARNINGS FROM OTHER MUNICIPALITIES

Below is a summary of learnings about the film and television stream from our consultation with other municipalities (Hamilton, Mississauga, Kingston, and Sudbury):

- Film and Television stream is distinctly different from the IDM and Gaming streams of the Screen Industry and has its own unique challenges of attracting and retaining talent;
- There are federal and provincial location tax credits and incentives, and union GTA travel boundaries that provide greater financial advantage to specific geographic regions of Ontario such as the GTHA and Northern Ontario.
- It is very important to ensure that a municipality is ready before inviting the Film and Television Industry to their city. This Industry is particular to service levels, as usually deadlines and budgets of production are extreme. It is imperative that a municipality and other local stakeholders have all their standard operating processes and procedures optimized prior to marketing itself as a premier location for Film and Television production;
- Data driven decision making is key to developing an understanding of the Film and Television industry in a municipality. Currently the City of London only tracks film permits on public property. To show demand municipalities also have to be able to show how many productions contacted them and were turned away;
- The Film and Television Industry is not the same as the Music Industry, as film is a process driven production with a short timeframe;
- It is very important to continue to consult with the local representatives of the Film and Television Industry to be able to understand both the assets and needs of the community; and
- The role of a municipality is to nurture a supportive environment for the Industry, not to assume this business line itself.

TWO PHASE APPROACH TO FURTHER DEVELOP A FILM AND MULTI-MEDIA STRATEGY

Phase 1 – 2019: Review and Optimize Film Permitting Processes, Procedures and Fees
<div><div>➤ Undertake a review of the City of London’s Special Event Council Policies and Film and Television Production Guidelines. This would include:</div><div><div>- Developing a new/modified process for film permitting with the goal of improving customer experience;</div><div>- Setting fees for film permits that commensurate with other municipalities and based on a value-driven cost recovery model;</div><div>- Consult with the local Film and Multi-media Industry about the design and implementation of proposed new processes and fees;</div><div>- Improving data collection to better understand demand of the industry; and</div><div>- Working with an internal City staff working group to better understand municipal barriers and opportunities for the Film and Multi-Media Industry.</div></div><div>➤ Report back to Committee and Council in 2020 with findings and recommendations</div></div>
Phase 2 - 2020: Development of a Film and Multi-Media Industry Strategy

Upon approval of multi-year budget business case:

- Continue to work with Service Partner Committee to develop a Film and Multi-Media Industry Strategy and nurture a supportive environment.
- Continue to work with the local Film and Multi-media Industry to create and refine strategies under the ‘Priority Themes’ captured above in this report.
- Measure Film and Television Industry demand.
- Work with post-secondary educational partners to develop the workforce infrastructure that will increase attraction and retention of local talent to London.
- Continue to participate in Ontario Creates professional development and learning opportunities.
- Report back to Committee and Council

Financial Implications

All the activities to address this 2017 Council Direction noted above, have been completed by the Civic Administration within existing financial resources.

Phase 1 as outlined above will be completed within existing resources but Phase 2 completion will require additional resources (\$60k-\$75k estimate) that will be outlined in a business case should recommendation b) be approved.

CONCLUSION

The City of London and the Screen Industry Partner Committee will continue to work together and share between partners to support the Screen Industry.

We believe that following this two phase approach is the most reasonable in ensuring an excellent experience for the Film and Multi-Media Industry. Noting experience is critical as the reputation of a host community must be established from the start.

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CC: Screen Industry Partner Committee
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APPENDICIES

Appendix “A” – Summary of 20 Canadian Municipalities with and without Film Resources
Appendix “B” – “In the Loop” Newsletter issued by Ontario Creates