

London City Council
300 Dufferin Ave
London, ON
N6B 1Z2

August 16, 2020

For the public agenda regarding a film commissioner:

Dear Mayor and Council Members,

I have worked in the film industry for 20 years, often travelling between London and Los Angeles and I have been part of the public engagement on this topic since 2001 back when Wayne Morningstar (Parks and Recreation) started initial work on a film policy for London. I support the proposal for a film commission run through the LEDC, including the budget because I believe London is a perfect location for a new film hub. The opportunity for London may be even greater than that described in the proposal for a number of reasons.

If COVID restrictions continue in some form, cities of our size will be the preferred destination for filming. Smaller cities, like Sudbury, are already open for filming, while Toronto and Hamilton will not be allowed film production until 2021 (at the earliest). Proximity to large urban centers will take longer to open due to population density. Whoever opens first, will get an abundance of film production as all of Toronto, Vancouver and LA are preparing projects for the moment filming is allowed.

The opportunity to leapfrog to the latest technology would allow London to compete on par with any other city. Shows like Disney's "Mandalorian", have a set that consists entirely of 3 large LCD video walls. "Virtual Studios" can save thousands or millions of dollars in production costs. A virtual studio can project a location like Grand Central Station in New York (without having to travel or shoot there) The cost for shooting in such a desired location is traditionally millions. The cost via a virtual studio, is tens of thousands. These savings will redefine the industry. This new technology allows for smaller crews, which is what London would have in the initial growth phase. Once studios like this are established, crew will want to live in London which means we will no longer have the disadvantage of higher budgets do to travel costs.

Because of our present post-production capacity, one studio popping up in London due to the spill over from the COVID will cement the industry here permanently.

The timing could never be better. Please invest in this industry.

Yours truly,

Geoff Hart