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Subject: Memo - Film Industry Strategic Collaboration - RTS 12634

Attachments: Memo - RTS 12634 Update on City of Vancouver and Film Industry Strategic....pdf

Greetings Mayor and Council,

Please see the attached memo from Jerry Dobrovolny. A short summary of the memo is as follows:

- This memo provides an update on work under way to strengthen the strategic collaboration between the City of Vancouver and the film and television industry in order to support long-term industry sustainability.
- The motion picture industry brings significant social, economic and cultural value to Vancouver.
- Many film-centred cities have formalized a relationship with the film industry (e.g. in the form of an advisory body or board) that ensures the short and long-term needs of the industry are understood and accounted for in City processes decisions.
- In Vancouver, there is a strong relationship between the film industry and the City which has been focused on permitting and operational support.
- Recent feedback from the industry has emphasized that regular engagement on strategic issues between the City and Industry is essential to supporting long-term success.
- Accordingly, City staff have been engaging with industry stakeholders which included identifying key themes and a statement of collaboration to guide the work going forward.
- To advance next steps, staff will convene an interim Film Working Group to develop a framework for collaboration, identify and advance strategic priorities and create an ongoing forum for collaboration.
- It is anticipated that findings coming out of this working group will be reported back to Council in late 2019.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact Margaret Wittgens, Director of Public Space & Street Use, at 604-673-8227 or margaret.wittgens@vancouver.ca.

Best,
Sadhu

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MEMORANDUM

September 20, 2018

TO: Mayor and Council

CC: Sadhu Johnston, City Manager
Paul Mochrie, Deputy City Manager
Katrina Leckovic, City Clerk
Lynda Graves, Administration Services Manager, City Manager's Office
Rena Kendall-Craden, Communications Director
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Malcolm Bromley, General Manager, Vancouver Board of Parks and Recreation
Margaret Wittgens, Director, Public Space & Street Use, Engineering Services

FROM: Jerry Dobrovolny
General Manager, Engineering Services

SUBJECT: RTS 12634 Updates on City of Vancouver and Film Industry Strategic Collaboration

This memo provides an update on work under way to strengthen the strategic collaboration between the City of Vancouver and the film and television industry in order to support long-term industry sustainability.

Background

The motion picture industry brings significant social, economic and cultural value to Vancouver. Vancouver has built an excellent reputation for motion picture production over the years, becoming the third-largest film production centre in North America and home to the world's largest visual effects and digital animation sector. The past two years set record numbers of permits and productions in the City of Vancouver, with 2018 on par with this growth (see Appendix A).

Many film-centred cities have formalized a relationship with the film industry¹ (e.g. in the form of an advisory body or board) that ensures the short and long-term needs of the industry are understood and accounted for in City processes and decisions. In Vancouver, there is a strong relationship between the film industry and the City which has been focused on permitting and operational support. However recent feedback from the industry has emphasized that regular engagement on strategic issues between the City and Industry is essential to supporting long-term success.

Accordingly, City staff have been engaging with industry stakeholders since April 2018 to build a better understanding of each other's roles in facilitating the ongoing success of the film industry and to identify opportunities and methods for ongoing collaboration.

Initial Engagement Findings

Through the initial phase of engagement the following statement of collaboration has been developed which will guide upcoming work with the industry:

The City of Vancouver recognizes its film and television industry for its significant contribution to the local economy and creative industries, and to increasing Vancouver's global profile.

Building on successes to date, the City will strengthen collaboration with the film industry, creating a sustainable future for film, visual effects, and digital animation in Vancouver, and fostering community support.

Several themes for ongoing collaboration have been identified which are summarized below and detailed in Appendix C. These themes will be further advanced in the next phase of work.

Making Space for film Production: As the city develops, spaces available for production change. For example, the loss of large open sites creates challenges for film production. There is an opportunity for the City to engage the film industry to better understand its spatial needs and important assets and consider them in planning and development processes and management of city-owned facilities.

Facilitating Film - Permits and Processes: Film production relies on the City to provide permits. Growth in volume of film-related applications puts pressure on staff capacity and current systems. There is an opportunity to engage with the industry on how to accommodate growth and achieve optimal service levels, through for example, increased staff resources or permitting efficiencies and systems.

¹ In this memo, *film industry* refers to both film and television.

Community Engagement and Outreach: Public support for industry activities is integral to the reputation of Vancouver as a film-friendly city. As film activity intensifies, it becomes increasingly important to manage public impacts (e.g. noise, traffic, parking restrictions) to maintain community goodwill. There is potential to explore new models for enhanced community outreach and liaison to understand and respond to community questions and concerns over production activities and support integration of filming activity in the community.

Strategic Alignment and Collaboration: The City of Vancouver and the film sector share a number of goals and interests. For example, the film industry's practice of hiring local designers and artists aligns with the capacity-building objectives of the Creative City Strategy. The film sector is guided by strong sustainability values which align with the City's Greenest City objectives. There is an opportunity to foster connections with industry across City departments to enhance collaboration on these shared goals and interests. There is also an opportunity to formalize the relationship with the film industry as has been done in other film-centered jurisdictions.

Next Steps

Further analysis and engagement is needed to determine the mandate, composition and governance of an industry-government collaboration in Vancouver. To this end, staff will establish an interim Film Working Group who will meet bi-monthly or quarterly over the next year with the initial mandate to:

1. Develop a framework for collaboration;
2. Identify and advance strategic directions and priorities; and
3. Create an ongoing forum for collaboration

Conclusion

There is strong interest from both City staff and the film and television industry in developing a strategic partnership moving forward. Staff will convene an interim Film Working Group to advance the next steps identified above. It is anticipated that findings coming out of this working group will be reported back to Council in late 2019.

Questions can be directed to Margaret Wittgens, Director of Public Space and Street Use, at 604.673.8227 or margaret.wittgens@vancouver.ca.



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APPENDIX A: ECONOMIC SIGNIFICANCE OF FILM PRODUCTION

Vancouver (2017)	Province-wide
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 412 productions (increase from 249 in 2012)• 2,549 filming days• 5,083 permits• \$465 million in direct payroll to residents employed in industry• 19,000 film workers in Vancouver• \$808,000 in application and permit revenue• \$2.5 million in City services, including VPD	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 452 productions qualified for BC Provincial tax credits (2017-2018 fiscal year)• \$3.8 billion in production expenditures (2017)• 42,000 direct and indirect jobs• \$2.1 billion in wages (2017)

APPENDIX B: STAKEHOLDERS FOR INTERIM FILM WORKING GROUP

External Stakeholders (Film and Television Industry Representatives)

- Motion Picture Association Canada
- Motion Picture Production Industry Association of BC
- Commercial Production Association of Western Canada
- Vancouver Film Studios
- Mammoth Studios / North Shore Studios
- Canadian Media Producers Association
- Directors' Guild of Canada, BC
- BC Film Commission and Creative BC
- Actsafe Safety Association
- IATSE Local 891

Internal Stakeholders (City of Vancouver Departments and Agencies)

- Engineering Services
- Development, Building and Licensing
- Real Estate and Facilities Management
- Arts, Culture and Community Services
- Planning, Urban Design and Sustainability
- Vancouver Board of Parks and Recreation
- Vancouver Police Department
- Vancouver Economic Commission

APPENDIX C: KEY THEMES DETAILS

Key Themes	Strengths	Challenges	Opportunities
Making Space for Film Production	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Diversity of buildings, spaces, and scenery Ease of access – suitable filming locations are centrally-located and easily accessible through street networks Geographic proximity, and shared time zone as Los Angeles 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Decreasing number of filming locations due to development pressure and road construction Intensifying use of remaining film sites – concentrating public impacts (e.g. noise pollution, traffic rerouting, loss of parking) Location fatigue – overuse of film sites negatively impacting site attractiveness 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Understanding of industry's spatial needs and opportunities (e.g. city-owned land and facilities) Engagement in City processes shaping land use and infrastructure (e.g. community plans, capital plan, employment land development) Engagement with industry over changes to key production sites
Facilitating Film: Permits & Processes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strong working relationships with City and Park Board Film Office Reputation for being a "can-do" City among industry Established rapport 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Permit volume exceeding City staff capacity Uncertainty around fees and regulations (case by case basis) that creates challenges for pre-production planning and budgeting 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Streamline application process – expand Film Office capacity through additional staffing Explore permit application systems (e.g. FilmLA technology) Transparency over fees and regulations (e.g. publicly accessible information around Street Use By-Law located on Film Office site)
Community Engagement & Outreach	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Residents and businesses largely support film production activities Public pride over Vancouver's status as a film centre Film industry contributes to local non-profit social enterprises and initiatives (e.g. Greater Vancouver Food Bank Reel Thanksgiving fundraiser) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Rising production activities could potentially erode community goodwill, especially as filming becomes more concentrated at available sites due to loss of key film sites Public impacts from production may be amplified in communities with existing sensitivities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> City could champion film industry through public engagement and informational campaigning (e.g. celebrating the industry through seasonal banners and flags, displayed in conjunction with Vancouver Film Fest) Explore community liaisons who bridge production crew with local community – someone from the community with local community knowledge – e.g. FilmLA Monitors
Strategic Collaboration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strong working relationship between Film Office and film industry Alignment in social, cultural, and environmental values (e.g. Creative BC Reel Green Strategic Plan, and mandate to support and hire local talent and artists) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Current relationship is operations-oriented Underdeveloped formalized relationship No existing policy or framework guiding City and industry collaboration 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Create industry relationships across City departments (e.g. explore access to city-owned property suitable for filming, consult industry as stakeholders in neighbourhood planning) Advocate for industry across different governmental agencies.