



TORONTO STUDIOS™

December 5, 2017

Delivered via E-mail

Mayor Tory and Members of Council
12th floor, West Tower, City Hall
100 Queen Street West
Toronto, ON M5H 2N2
Attention: Marilyn Toft, Secretariat, City Council

Dear Mayor Tory and Members of the City Council,

RE: 7 Reasons Why Pinewood Toronto Studios Is Not Supporting the Port Lands Framework Plan

We at Pinewood Toronto Studios ('PTS') very much appreciate your dedicated advocacy and support of the film and television Industry in Toronto; however, we do not support the Port Lands Framework Plan now before you for the following reasons:

Seven: The Framework Plan ignores the PTS Master Plan which is based on sound and sustainable business principles. PTS has built and continues to build 'best in class' facilities. This requires considerable investment and is not modelled on other film studio operations in Toronto which have not, to date, constructed 'purpose built' studios. Our Master Plan is designed to respond to the unpredictability of currency fluctuation and tax credits, which we do not control. What we can control is the creation of sustainable revenue streams on our lot. This includes 'best in class' stages and workshops, but we also need flex production spaces, offices, hotel and long and short term stay rental apartments, including 'workforce affordable housing.'* These mix of uses will ensure a dependable revenue base and a sustainable, globally competitive film and television studio in otherwise unpredictable circumstances.

Six: The Framework Plan assumes mixed-uses are not compatible with film and television studios — this is completely false. Film and television studios are not to be confused with location shoots randomly found throughout the City. Purposed built stages are sound proofed, controlled environments, built to keep noise out and so it also keeps noise in. We do not emit odours, and our truck traffic is minimal by comparison to other industries. So called 'sensitive land uses' exist and are even encouraged around some of the best film and television studios in North America. — Tin Cup and Kaufman Astoria Studios in Queens, NY and Sony Columbia in Culver City are fine examples.** Rather than being sequestered from the urban fabric, the modern studio campus is a base and catalyst for great mixed-use neighbourhoods, leveraging a creative cluster and amenities to sustain jobs.

Five: The critical mass in the Framework Plan is too low to justify the significant infrastructure investment required in the Port Lands. Approximately two times coverage will not sustain an urban district. Interestingly, the City owns much of this land and is in the midst of a prolonged housing shortage. There has been and will continue to be requests from area landowners for significantly more density than the City is granting itself — with land at a premium, this is not serving the City's best interests.

Four: The best and the brightest are locating their work places in flexible and mixed use environments. We surveyed over fifteen of the most recent job creators in the digital/web industry both by employee size and market cap and where they located in the City of Toronto. Not one of them located in an Employment District — what is now being called a 'Productions, Interactive and Creative' area in the Port Lands. Instead, they located in vibrant neighbourhoods connected to amenities, including public transit, and resources that both employers and employees now require in the City.***

Three: The Framework Plan will do very little to encourage new film and television studio facility builds, despite the best of intentions. Painting lines on a map does not begin to solve the real issue of building new studios. The City's own report conducted by Hemson in July 2017 makes a very critical observation: film studios are extremely difficult to finance (Page 34 of the Hemson report). At PTS we can attest to that. Despite these difficulties, our partnership continues to invest in new builds - our fourth new stage over as many years will be completed in May along with new workshop and support spaces. With 11 purpose built sound stages on the lot, we remain the largest of its kind in Eastern Canada. Our Master Plan calls for 16 stages when complete and several hundred thousand sq. ft. of flexible support space both inside and outside our secured lot. This is a carefully considered balance of spaces and a sustainable critical mass for one studio operator and will easily accommodate two tent pole productions and much more at any given time. Our partnership is to be commended for its commitment to this investment; contrary to some who say that we are heavily subsidized, we have invested tens of millions of dollars in PTS, without taking out a cent over the term of our investment, now 8 years on. To actually serve the film and television industry, the City needs to actually make land available on a long-term basis to others to build studios. Vancouver is leading the country in film and television activity by a wide margin. They had four major studio operators for the past couple of decades and now recently have grown to six. We have two in Toronto and until very recently, only PTS with purpose built stages for film and television.

Two: The Framework Plan process is flawed. Our concerns have not been adequately addressed. Following PGMC's endorsement of the Framework Plan last Spring, that Committee suggested that dialogue with stakeholders would continue. This did not occur and there was no opportunity provided to clarify certain misconceptions, misinformation and assumptions regarding PTS and its master plan. It is also clear that the Film, Television and Digital Media Board ('Film Board') at the City has had a strong influence on the City's Framework Plan. We have no voice at this table — our participation and request to have a seat at this Board, both formal and informal, have been rejected. Of the some 20 plus members on the Board, only one is a studio operator. PTS is often first contact with major producers in North America, the largest purpose built operator in the City, and yet we have no seat at the City's Film Board. Insofar as the Film Board has influenced this process, it is puzzling that we have had no say through this forum.

One: Toronto's Waterfront is for all. No one industry or class of citizens should be privileged or preempted from enjoying the magnificent resources in the Port Lands. Rather than building on the vision of Waterfront Toronto and the City's own ground breaking 'Regeneration Area' in the 2003 Official Plan, the Framework Plan is a well-intentioned but mistaken step backward to realizing the Port Land's great future. At PTS, we see our industry

and particularly our studio fully integrated into the fabric of the City, not protected, coddled or separate from it. We have to believe our Industry here wants to engage the best practices in North America, not as a privileged class, but as full and active citizens in building a neighbourhood and a great city.



Paul Bronfman,
Chairman, Pinewood Toronto Studios & Chairman/CEO of Comweb Group Inc. and William F. White International Inc.

CC: Blake Steels, PTS; John Langs, Director, PTS; Bill Bryck, Director, PTS; Mike Feldman, Director, PTS; Craig Smith, Director, PTS; John Sterling, Director, PTS; Alfredo Romano, Director, PTS; Elsa Fancello, Castlepoint Numa; Jane Pepino, Aird & Berlis LLP and Sidonia Tomasella, Aird & Berlis LLP

**'Workforce Affordable Housing'* defined here as rental apartments that provide an attractive and affordable home for middle-income industry workers in close proximity to their jobs; in this case the Film, Television and Digital Media industry, is considered when setting rental rates as a reduced factor of market rates.

** As reported in the Crain's New York Business article *'How film studios are transforming two Queens neighborhoods'*, dated February 26, 2017:

'Like many of the businesses currently flocking to the area... LeNoble Lumber... wanted to be closer to the two production studios that have been fixtures in western Queens for decades. Now, on top of a booming production enterprise, those same studios are helping usher in a new wave of commercial and residential development.

'Studio pioneers, like Silvercup and Kaufman Astoria, clearly provided the impetus to make this area the hub of New York productions,' said Matt Dienstag, co-owner of LeNoble. 'It's the New York production version of Field of Dreams: They built it and we came.'

That New York story bears close resemblance to a tale that played out 20 years ago in California, when Sony Pictures served as the linchpin in the renewal of Culver City by moving its Columbia Pictures studios to the well-located but down-on-its-heels Los Angeles suburb. Today, spurred by a boom in film and TV production, Kaufman Astoria and Silvercup studios have upped their investments in once-forlorn areas of western Queens that have helped attract small businesses, restaurants and arts groups making the neighborhoods more attractive residential destinations. Their influence, combined with the city's rezoning efforts, are causing the communities to be transformed by an influx of young couples and families.'

'Among the shows shooting at Silvercup are *Madame Secretary*, *Quantico* and *Divorce*, while *Shades of Blue*, *Orange Is the New Black* and *The Affair* are filming at nearby Kaufman Astoria. Between 200 and 400 people work on a typical television series, studio executives say. That translates to thousands of writers, costume and set designers, location scouts and production assistants, many of whom are well-paid union workers, flooding into the neighborhood every day.'

#	Company	Raised	Employees	Neighbourhood Location
1.	Shopify	Public	1,000+	Art and Design District
2.	Wattpad	\$100M+	100+	St. Lawrence Market
3.	Wealthsimple	\$80M+	100+	Trinity Bellwoods
4.	FreshBooks	\$70M+	200+	Junction
5.	Flipp	\$60M+	300+	Islington Village
6.	TopHat	\$50M+	130+	Yorkville
7.	Borrowell	\$50M+	90+	Art and Design District
8.	Nymi	\$30M+	50+	Art and Design District
9.	Ecobee	\$40M+	100+	Financial District
10.	TouchBistro	\$36M+	100+	Art and Design District
11.	League	\$25M+	70+	Discovery District
12.	Vision Critical	\$40M+	200+	Yorkville
13.	Wave	\$80M+	150+	Leslieville
14.	ScribbleLive	\$60M+	200+	Art and Design District
15.	Nudge	\$10M+	30+	Entertainment District
16.	Tulip Retail	\$40M+	20+	South Core
17.	500px	\$22M+	100+	Entertainment District