



REPORT FOR ACTION

Update on Implementation of Spotlight on Toronto: A Strategic Action Plan for the Film, Television and Digital Media Industry

Date: March 27, 2018

To: Economic Development Committee

From: General Manager, Economic Development and Culture

Wards: All

SUMMARY

In July 2017, City Council approved *Spotlight on Toronto*, the Toronto Film, Television and Digital Media Board's strategic action plan for the film, television and digital media industry.

The plan identified goals and recommended actions to enhance the partnership between the City and the film, television and digital media industry and seize opportunities to foster growth across five pillars of strategic focus.

This report provides an overview of the action items that have been completed and identifies priorities for the short and long term. 2017 will have marked a year of outstanding film and television productions, the likes of *The Handmaid's Tale* (winner of five Emmy Awards including Best Drama Series) and *The Shape of Water* (winner of four Academy Awards including Best Picture). As of the publication of this staff report, the 2017 production numbers were not finalized but will be presented on April 13th, 2018.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The General Manager, Economic Development and Culture recommends that:

1. Economic Development Committee receive this report for information.

FINANCIAL IMPACT

Resources required to implement *Spotlight on Toronto: A Strategic Action Plan for the Film, Television and Digital Media Industry* as described in Appendix A are included within the Approved 2018 Operating Budget for Economic Development and Culture (EDC).

EDC will continue to monitor demand for services from the film, television and digital media industry. Should additional resources be required in response to industry growth, EDC may request them in a future year's budget submission.

The Acting Chief Financial Officer has reviewed this report and agrees with the financial impact information.

DECISION HISTORY

In February 2015, City Council established the terms of reference for the Toronto Film, Television and Digital Media Board as an advisory body to City Council.
<http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2015.EX2.1>

At its June 2016 meeting, City Council adopted a report outlining immediate actions to strengthen the film, television and digital media industry developed following a trade mission to Los Angeles led by Mayor Tory. *Spotlight on Toronto* builds on the five-point plan adopted in this report to develop a longer-term strategic action plan for the growth of the sector.
<http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2016.ED12.1>

In July 2017, City Council adopted *Spotlight on Toronto: A Strategic Action Plan for the Toronto Film, Television and Digital Media Industry*. Council directed the General Manager, Economic Development and Culture to report to the Economic Development Committee in the first quarter of 2018 with an implementation plan for Spotlight on Toronto.
<http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2017.ED22.4>

COMMENTS

Toronto's film, television and digital media industry is recognized globally for its innovation, creativity and talent. The sector is a key economic driver for Toronto and continues to experience growth. Home to a diverse array of filming locations and a widely respected pool of on- and off-screen talent, Toronto has many of the key market fundamentals needed to thrive as one of the leading centres for film, television and digital media.

Despite Toronto's strong position, competing jurisdictions like Vancouver, Chicago and Atlanta, on top of the established greats, Los Angeles and New York City, are doubling

their efforts to attract business. The City and industry partners' actions are key in sustaining the city's long-held position as one of the premiere production centres in North America.

Spotlight on Toronto charts a path for growth across the following five pillars. Appendix A provides more detail on each of the five pillars, including updates on EDC staff work with other City Divisions, other governments and industry stakeholders on priorities and actions for 2018, 2019 and 2020. Below are key highlights of achievements and ongoing activities within each pillar:

1. Active Advocacy: The City must assume the role of a leading advocate and champion for the screen industry and encourage all orders of government to adopt policies and programs that support the continued growth of the sector. Key activities:

- Working with the Province to ensure strong incentive support for the screen industry (frequently)
- City staff to develop educational tools on best practices for working with the film industry and the value of the screen industry to Toronto's economic and cultural fabric (underway for 2018)

2. Strong Fundamentals in Physical Infrastructure and Workforce Development: Expanded physical and human infrastructure is essential to the growth of the screen industry. The Board also called on the City, sector and education partners to create a new workforce development strategy. Key activities:

- Ongoing collaboration between EDC, CreateTO, City Planning and Waterfront Toronto on studio relocation and growth. (A report on studio capacity replacement in the Port Lands will be considered by the Economic Development Committee at the same time as this report.)
- Working with City Planning to develop film-friendly policies through TOCore and local precinct plans (underway)
- City staff to create inventory of temporary and permanent parking options in the downtown core for productions (underway for 2018)
- Working with film/television unions and guilds to assess gaps in employment needs to match growing industry demands (2019 priority)

3. Exceptional Customer Service Enhancements: Geared at production companies working in Toronto, and residents and community members who live and work around production locations to achieve a vision of Toronto as a film-friendly city for all. Key activities:

- xoTO Schools Pilot Project City/TDSB Agreement, to grant easy, welcome and affordable access to schools for productions in the city (Spring 2018 Launch)
- Easy Permitting (Film Office is launching its electronic permitting system in Spring 2018)
- The xoTO Neighborhood Give-Backs Program to guide and encourage productions to contribute to the communities they shoot in and further connect residents to the screen industry (Upcoming Summer 2018)

4. Globally-recognized, Innovative Digital Media Sector: In this rapidly changing landscape, the City's strong foundations in research institutions and advanced technology companies lay ground for the growth of digital media in the screen sector (note: Digital media is here defined as screen-based content, visual effect technologies and animation). Key activities:

- Strategic Planning (Film & Entertainment Industries is co-financing a province-wide business intelligence paper on the digital media sector and its growth potential in animation and VFX for 2018 delivery)

5. Dynamic Branding and Strong International and Business Partnerships: the city's global media profile is strengthened by the film industry's presence and successes. While film events are well established in the public's eye, there is a need to better promote Toronto's on-screen successes and brand the city as a leading production center. Key activities:

- xoTO International marketing (Upcoming Los Angeles Business Mission – Led by the Mayor, alongside Councillors, City Staff and over 21 industry sponsors, the L.A. Mission will take place on Thursday April 19th with key industry stakeholders meetings)
- xoTO local brand campaign marketing (features key 2017 productions included in: TTC Shelter campaign March 26-April 22, at Doors Open 2018, on all L.A. Mission collateral and messaging, on all xoTO Lounge collateral and messaging, and in all City-led industrial advertisement)

CONTACT

Magali Simard
Film Sector Development Officer
Film & Entertainment Industries
Economic Development and Culture
Email: magali.simard@toronto.ca
Phone: 416-338-3253

SIGNATURE

Mike Williams
General Manager, Economic Development and Culture

ATTACHMENTS

Appendix A: Spotlight on Toronto Implementation Update