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May 31, 2023

Planning and Housing Committee
City of Toronto
c/o Electronic Submission at www.toronto.ca

RE: ENDORSEMENT OF RECOMMENDATIONS RE PROPOSED CHANGES TO PROVINCIAL PLANNING STATEMENT 2023

Dear Members of the City of Toronto Planning and Housing Committee,

The Directors Guild of Canada – Ontario (“DGC Ontario”) is a provincial labour organization representing key creative and operational specialists in the film and television production industry. We represent Directors, Assistant Directors, Production Managers, Location Managers, Production Designers and Art Directors, Production Accountants, Picture & Sound Editors, Post Production Supervisors, and all their respective departmental assistants.

In 2014, DGC Ontario Membership stood at 1,560. It now sits at 3,717, including Full Members, Associate Members and Apprentices, representing an overall growth rate of 138% in just under one decade. This growth rate is attributable to the reputation of Toronto as a centre of excellence in the film industry, and is the result of years of work establishing the skills and reputation of our workforce, now recognized globally. Production numbers have increased, the scale, scope, quality and recognition of our shows has increased, the number of people employed per show has increased, and our workforce is creating globally successful productions, receiving Oscar, Emmy and BAFTA award wins and nominations, along with countless other craft award wins and nominations. In 2022 alone, DGC Ontario hosted over 158 professional development and training courses with over 3,500 participants, not including our outreach and training courses for non-Members, which are programs we develop constantly in response to requests from various levels of government to ensure sustained growth to meet workforce demands in our sector.

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Premier Doug Ford has said repeatedly that he would like to see the film and television industry in Ontario reach \$5B in budget expenditures, and this cannot be achieved without Toronto as the major player. Given the important role Ontario's provincial tax credit program has played in building our worth in the global film and television production industry, it would be a shame to lose any traction in that positioning. Loss or limitation of employment lands for studio and related workspaces to other types of development will hurt our industry and will create far less certainty that Toronto can remain a leading destination for producers. If the industry has to diversify its geographical base and move to other jurisdictions due to loss of studio lands and the related requisite workforce, this could result in substantial economic loss to the City, and subsequently the return on investment to the Province.

Many of our Members choose to live and work in Toronto's downtown and in the Kipling cluster. According to our data, as of this week, we have 2,568 Members and Apprentices out of 3,717 living in the City of Toronto, which represents 69.1% of our total Membership across Ontario. Access to work for those workers is important. As we have seen many of Toronto's former converted warehouse and factory studios disappear, private investors have stepped up to the plate to create purpose-built studios to meet the industry's needs to accommodate the demand for content creation here. **We are manufacturers of entertainment, and we need to retain as much factory floor as possible, both in studio space and location access. As such, DGC Ontario strongly supports the recommendations contained in the Report from the Chief Planner and Executive Director, City Planning regarding the proposed changes to the Provincial Planning Statement 2023.**

Prior to the pandemic, DGC Ontario secured new premises at 65 Heward Avenue, moving from our previous downtown location into the "studio district"/employment lands on Eastern Avenue in order to achieve closer proximity to the studio workplaces of our Membership. We created a convenient "Members Hub" for meetings and other gatherings, which also functions as a communal workspace for Members working independently. This space alone represents approximately 1/3 of our square footage. Since moving in, we have faced uncertainty due to rezoning applications on a property we invested in heavily after securing a 15-year lease, which is extendable to 20, then 25, years. Conversion of the employment lands on which we are situated for convenience and ease of access to and for our Membership could completely negate our purpose in moving to this cluster, along with the significant financial investment we made to gain that proximity.

Our industry has also heeded the calls to address climate change and to diversify our workforce to better represent the multiculturalism for which we are renowned. DGC Ontario has undertaken to support these goals wholeheartedly, establishing both a Diversity & Inclusion Committee and a Sustainability Committee to work with industry partners, our national organization, and with our local fellow unions and guilds. If employment lands downtown that have traditionally been occupied by film production and related businesses are lost from centralized and accessible locations, this will result in

more cars on the road as our workforce is forced out into the extremities of Mississauga, Pickering and Markham to access their workplaces. Additionally, we have worked hard to create more opportunity for future film workers from underrepresented communities in Toronto, and need to acknowledge that for many young people from these communities, accessibility to their workplaces is key. How do they get to the outer limits of the GTA and back every day after putting in a long day (up to 16 hours sometimes) when transit may or may not be running? This creates an absolute barrier to work access for youth and other workers from underrepresented communities, and limits opportunities for remunerative employment in the film industry.

Our workforce wants to live and work here. We want to work sustainably. We want to diversify our workforce and reflect the pride we feel in our multiculturalism. We want to continue our contribution to the cultural fabric of this city, but to do so, we need your support. We often hear that our business is valued as one of the largest local economic drivers, and the skilled workforce here has made Toronto a juggernaut in the film and television industry. To maintain that status, we need active support from the City and the Province, so with great respect, we ask that you support the recommendations contained in the Report from the Chief Planner and Executive Director, City Planning regarding the proposed changes to employment lands in the Provincial Planning Statement 2023.

Sincerely,



Victoria Harding
Executive Director
DGC Ontario

cc Annie Bradley, Chair, DGC Ontario