



City of San Antonio

Agenda Memorandum

File Number: 16-5160

Agenda Item Number: 18.

Agenda Date: 10/13/2016

In Control: City Council A Session

DEPARTMENT: Department of Arts & Culture

DEPARTMENT HEAD: Debbie Racca-Sittre

COUNCIL DISTRICTS IMPACTED: All Council Districts

SUBJECT:

Adoption of the San Antonio Film Commission Strategic Plan

SUMMARY:

This item adopts the San Antonio Film Commission Strategic Plan to increase film production in San Antonio. It also updates City Code Section 2-3 to establish the San Antonio Film Office as the designated film liaison agency and authorizes the waiver of fees associated with the use of City-owned facilities for filmmaking upon approval by the San Antonio Film Office and the director of the Managing City Department.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

Established in 1985, the San Antonio Film Commission has been dedicated to promoting film making in San Antonio for over three decades. Providing various services such as film permitting, calls for cast and crew as well as liaison services, the Commission seeks to act as a resource to the film industry and assist in its positive impact on San Antonio's economy.

Following the Texas Legislature's 84th regular session in 2015, film production in San Antonio and Texas as a whole faced an uphill battle in the efforts to attract and support projects. With a budget cut of roughly two-thirds, the Texas Film Commissions incentive fund was quickly depleted and could no longer incentivize film production in the State. Without a competitive state incentive program, the San Antonio film industry realized it was time for change.

In early 2016, the City of San Antonio and a group of film industry stakeholders began discussions focused on

reviving the industry locally. Paired with staff transitions within the San Antonio Film Commission, the summer of 2016 was the prime opportunity to develop a strategic plan for the San Antonio Film Commission and redefine its direction and role to support the film industry.

On June 25, 2016 the Department of Arts & Culture hosted a half-day visioning session with over 80 film industry stakeholders to develop a vision and key strategies for what the San Antonio film industry and the City of San Antonio Film Office will accomplish in the next five years. This vision was refined in two additional public meetings with over 150 stakeholders providing input.

Additionally, staff has identified City Code section 2-3 titled “Commercial Filming of City-Owned Facilities” as a barrier to filmmaking in San Antonio. This section of the code was adopted October 25, 1984 and designates the Convention & Visitors Bureau as the film liaison agency. Additionally, this code sets a \$200 fee for filming.

ISSUE:

The San Antonio Film Commission Strategic Plan includes a winning proposition, practical vision and three key strategy areas:

Winning Proposition: San Antonio will be the most production friendly city in the United States; celebrating our locations and cultural diversity while supporting the film industry with effective infrastructure, funding, marketing and professional development opportunities.

Practical Vision: The San Antonio film industry will have robust job creation; seamless interaction, collaboration and leadership with the City; a globally recognized film industry presence; state of the art online presence; and abundant opportunities for continuing education and professional development.

Three Key Strategies were identified to achieve this vision and within each of the strategies participants developed success indicators that should be in place in five years if the vision is achieved.

- Strategy #1: Ensure state and local film incentives are nationally competitive
- Strategy #2: Invest, develop and maintain workforce and infrastructure needs
- Strategy #3: Enhance marketing to increase business opportunities and build a strong film culture

In collaboration with film industry stakeholders, six actionable steps have been identified, which will be implemented over the next 24-months:

1. Revise the current Supplemental San Antonio Incentive program
2. Redefine and fully staff the San Antonio Film Office positions
3. Develop a new San Antonio Film Commission website
4. Develop a comprehensive inventory of local film resources
5. Conduct a film industry workforce needs assessment
6. Develop and launch a comprehensive marketing campaign

Additionally, staff has identified three recommendations for implementation within the City organization:

1. Develop a Film Commission subcommittee of the San Antonio Arts Commission
2. Engage in a Film Friendly San Antonio educational program for City departments

3. Identify and support legislative changes to the Texas Moving Image Industry Incentive Program funding mechanism

As a part of making San Antonio a film friendly city, Section 2-3 of the City Code titled “Commercial Filming of City-Owned Facilities” is hereby revised to remove the designation of “film liaison agency” from the Convention and Visitors Bureau to the San Antonio Film Office. If a permit is issued by the San Antonio Film Office, fees will not be assessed for noncommercial filming activities designed solely to promote San Antonio as a tourist destination. Fee assessments and waivers will be a joint decision with the city's film commission and the director of the managing city department.

ALTERNATIVES:

City Council could choose to not approve the strategic plan. As a result, the San Antonio Film Commission would not be able to support the enhancement or growth of the San Antonio film industry, resulting in a loss of potential economic impact to the community.

FISCAL IMPACT:

The FY 2017 Hotel Occupancy Tax Fund includes \$200,000.00, to support the implementation of the San Antonio Film Commission Strategic Plan.

RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends approval of this item to adopt the implementation of the San Antonio Film Commission Strategic Plan, and to update City Code Section 2-3 to establish the San Antonio Film Office as the designated film liaison agency and authorize waiver of fees associated with the use of city-owned facilities for filmmaking upon approval by the San Antonio Film Office and director of the managing city department.