

Economic Impact of the Film and Television Sector

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Report Summary

This report provides an overview of the local film industry's economic impact and the contributions from the Northern Ontario Heritage Fund Corporation (NOHFC)'s Film & Television Program.

Relationship to the Strategic Plan, Health Impact Assessment and Community Energy & Emissions Plan (CEEP)

This report refers to operational matters and has no relation to the Community Energy & Emissions Plan.

Financial Implications

There are no financial implications associated with this report.

Background

At its meeting on November 16, 2021 the Finance & Administration Committee of Council approved Resolution FA2021-77 to provide in-kind support towards New Metric Media's filming of the first season of series Shoresy in light of a funding shortfall from the NOHFC.

At this meeting the Committee directed staff to review and report on the overall economic impact of the local film and television industry. The Committee requested that this report include details on the impact of funding provided to this sector from the NOHFC's Film & Television Program.

This NOHFC program has been a major driver in attracting investments to the North, and Greater Sudbury has benefitted from the fund since its introduction in 2004. Through this program the city has had substantial growth in the industry in terms of films shot in the area, the development of dedicated film infrastructure and services, as well as job creation. Data related to this program indicates that every dollar invested delivers almost \$5 in local spend in the North.

The Economic Development division of the City acts in the capacity of a film office to provide a point contact for productions and investors seeking to shoot or set up businesses in the area. This role includes centralized and coordinated film permitting procedures, working with other departments, hosting film scouts

and prospective investors, participating in provincial and regional efforts to market Ontario and the North as a film destination. Through these interactions staff collect and track data for economic impact reporting.

In addition, through the Greater Sudbury Development Corporation (GSDC)'s Community Economic Development funding program, financial contributions have been provided to Cultural Industries Ontario North (formerly Music & Film in Motion) to support pan-northern initiatives, including crew development, marketing at industry events and hosting tours of the region.

Economic Impact of the Film Industry

Table 1 below reflects the economic impact resulting from film and television productions that have shot in Greater Sudbury from 2012 to 2021. These figures are reported by the productions to staff at the onset of filming. The following observations are worth noting:

- While the number of productions peaked in 2017 (19 productions), the number of filming days was the highest in 2019 (749 filming days). This is a result of longer-running projects, such as series which offer longer term employment and a higher overall economic impact. The decline since then can be attributed to a number of factors, including those noted in Tables 2 and 3. Filming activity has also been affected by the Covid-19 pandemic since 2020.
- Since 2012 local spending from these 141 productions totals over \$200 million, which represents approximately half of the overall production budgets. In Greater Sudbury there has been significant development of new infrastructure and services dedicated to film over these ten years. However, given demand across the province, research and industry feedback indicates there are opportunities to increase the percentage of production budgets spent locally to keep those funds in Sudbury, and staff actively markets Greater Sudbury's unique locations offerings. Additionally, in working closely with the sector to identify gaps in local offerings, there is continued demand for studio space.
- Greater Sudbury is home to a qualified local crew base, which is estimated to total 1,000 people across the North. Many local crew members have benefitted from the training components of the NOHFC Film & Television Program. Local crew members have consistently made up over half of the total crew on productions. While their residence may be in Sudbury, these people will often travel across the North in order to work on contract for film projects.

Table 1: Economic Impact of Filming in Greater Sudbury (2012-2021)

Year	Number of Productions*	Filming Days	Local Spend		Local Crew**	
			Amount	% of Total Budget	Local Crew	% of Total Crew
2021	10	382	\$ 16,756,000	48%	269	57%
2020	12	450	\$ 25,383,186	65%	230	62%
2019	13	749	\$ 24,006,418	55%	438	67%
2018	15	580	\$ 35,667,000	55%	517	55%
2017	19	560	\$ 26,761,381	50%	488	62%
2016	16	714	\$ 22,319,872	43%	417	53%
2015	22	789	\$ 18,196,000	39%	559	53%
2014	15	447	\$ 13,015,000	49%	272	54%
2013	11	229	\$ 9,304,000	37%	175	45%
2012	8	306	\$ 8,634,352	42%	360	68%
Total	141	5,206	\$ 200,043,209	49%	3,725	57%

*Total number includes all production types tracked individually: feature films, short films, television series, single episodes, student projects, documentaries, commercial drone filming, reality shows, television movies, etc.

***Crew member totals do not reflect the indirect jobs created as a result of the film industry. These are only the direct employment numbers from crew members hired on the productions.*

Tables 2 and 3 below provide a breakdown of the projects that received funding from the NOHFC since its inception in 2004, and their funded amounts. These figures were provided by NOHFC. From this information, and in consultation with the NOHFC the following comments can be made:

- The percentage of funded projects that have filmed in Greater Sudbury has dropped in more recent years (29% vs. 40%).
- Similarly, the percentage of funding that has come to Sudbury has dropped in more recent years (31% vs. 50%).
- The NOHFC does not have established criteria that gives preference to projects taking place in any given Northern city. Requirements for funding include filming in the North, hiring and (where applicable) training Northern crew and using companies that are on the Northern vendors list to validate the Northern spend.
- In recent years there has been an increase in the number of producers submitting applications for filming taking place in North Bay. This includes producers who had formerly shot films in Greater Sudbury who have aligned productions in North Bay.
- The City of North Bay has invested in a dedicated staff person to lead strong film investment attraction efforts and has developed excellent marketing of locations, crew and amenities. As well the community of North Bay has embraced filming in its city, providing a welcoming and accommodating experience for film productions.

Table 2: Number of Film & Television Projects Funded by NOHFC

Year	Northern Ontario	Greater Sudbury	
2018-2021	109	32	29%
2004-2018	270	109	40%
2004-2021	379	141	37%

Table 3: Amount of Funding from NOHFC for Film & Television Projects

Year	Northern Ontario	Greater Sudbury	
2018-2021	\$ 54,332,852	\$ 16,573,413	31%
2004-2018	\$ 148,415,344	\$ 74,324,071	50%
2004-2021	\$ 202,748,196	\$ 90,897,484	45%

Conclusion

The City of Greater Sudbury and the Greater Sudbury Development Corporation have recognized the significant economic impact of the film and television industry over the years. The NOHFC Film & Television Program is important for Greater Sudbury and north Ontario as a whole in order to maintain a competitive advantage and attract further film investments.

Greater Sudbury has many film assets, however without an increase in applications from productions for Greater Sudbury to the NOHFC a drop in film traffic is likely to continue. Staff will continue servicing film productions and marketing the city for further investments. By working with provincial partners and other Northern municipalities, staff will leverage existing resources to bring new opportunities to the region and encourage the continued success of the NOHFC film fund.