

CITY OF LOS ANGELES
INTER-DEPARTMENTAL CORRESPONDENCE

DATE: August 6, 2026

TO: The Honorable City Council

FROM: Steve Kang 
President, Board of Public Works
Chief Film Liaison

SUBJECT: CF 25-1512: KEEP HOLLYWOOD HOME – REGIONAL MOUs and COG ALIGNMENT

RECOMMENDATION

That the City Council receive and file this report, as it is provided for informational purposes only.

DISCUSSION

Recognizing that film and television production is regional, and not strictly confined to one municipality or another, this Motion instructed the Economic and Workforce Development Department (EWDD) to partner with FilmLA on developing and negotiating regional Memoranda of Understanding (MOUs) with neighboring film jurisdictions, including (but not limited to) the following criteria:

- Coordinating rules related to production categories and permitting thresholds;
- Sharing best practices for the use of public facilities, parking lots, civic spaces, and staging areas;
- Aligning business-development strategies to support film-related vendors and small businesses;
- Improving regional workforce training and placement efforts; and
- Collaborating on soundstage expansion, Certified LA Stage standards, and adaptive reuse opportunities within regional production corridors.

This report provides an initial status update, as requested.

Economic and Workforce Development Department

While CF 25-1512 reflects a commitment by the City of Los Angeles to strengthen regional filming competitiveness through formal Memoranda of Understanding, the Economic and Workforce

Development Department (EWDD) faces significant practical constraints in delivering on its directives within the prescribed timelines.

Legal Limitations

From a legal standpoint, MOUs with neighboring jurisdictions are **intergovernmental agreements** that must be reviewed by the City Attorney for form and legality before execution. Depending on their scope, particularly provisions touching on permitting authority, fee structures, or public facility use, individual agreements may require approval from the governing bodies of each participating city, adding layers of external approval processes entirely outside the control of EWDD, and in some cases, the City itself.

Timeline Constraints

On timing, the motion establishes a 180-day horizon for fully negotiated MOUs and a 120-day interim report-back, reflecting the Council's appropriate sense of urgency around regional competitiveness. Establishing MOUs demands coordination across several independent municipal partners, each operating on its own legislative calendar, internal approval process, and staffing timeline. As these factors are beyond the control of the City, in addition to a lack of staffing capacity, the timeline for fulfilling this request is unrealistic.

Insufficient Staff Capacity

Most critically, EWDD, like many City departments, is managing the effects of staffing and funding shortfalls that cause significant strains on current capacity. For at least the past three budget cycles, EWDD has been unable to restore or add positions to staff the Business Response Unit (BRU), which was designated to support projects such as these.

Los Angeles Fire Department

Within the City of Los Angeles, the Fire Department (LAFD) Film Unit works well with its counterparts in other departments, including monthly meetings with FilmLA and LAPD. LAFD is amenable to collaborating with neighboring cities more often to ensure greater regional alignment across Southern California. The LAFD Film Unit does participate in quarterly S.A.F.F.E. (Safety Advisory for Fire & FX in Entertainment) meetings with the California State Fire Marshal office, special effects operators, and many other film industry professionals. These meetings are important opportunities to discuss challenges, successes and any new upcoming technology of which the Department must be aware.

FilmLA

FilmLA is the City's contractor with regards to film permitting, serving as the conduit between City departments and film productions, location managers and crew. FilmLA supports the widely shared vision of regional permit-process consistency and welcomes the City's partnership in advancing that goal, consistent with the County-endorsed Model Film Ordinance (MFO) and Best

Practices. FilmLA affirms the guidance of EWDD that bringing about real change is a complex undertaking. This will take much longer than 180 days and will require staffing resources to support this effort through ongoing outreach.

To avoid duplication of effort, FilmLA recommends that the City develop regional MOUs through existing Council of Governments (COG) forums, with the MFO serving as a practical foundation for these discussions, and the County of Los Angeles and California Film Commission (CFC) continuing in their existing leadership/convening roles.

In 2014, the County of Los Angeles officially adopted the California Film Commission's Model Film Ordinance and Best Practices. FilmLA encourages the City of Los Angeles to do the same. The MFO largely reflects the methodologies FilmLA uses to administer film permits for its municipal clients, including the City of Los Angeles.

Following the County's MFO adoption, FilmLA supported regional film education through Councils of Governments (COGs), contract-city and independent-city forums, and one-on-one conversations. The goal was to encourage alignment by incorporating core best-practice requirements into FilmLA's contracting framework. Since FilmLA's inception, the agency has educated, partnered, and extended our services to like-minded film-friendly jurisdictions.

FilmLA supports moving forward with regional alignment work, particularly where it advances consistent permitting thresholds, neighborhood notification expectations, and safety practices.

Where the motion extends to essential work beyond MFO permitting standards (e.g., vendor support, workforce training, and soundstage development), the City should bring in the departments and/or partners in private industry best positioned to lead those components.