

COUNCIL MEMBERS' MOTION

For consideration at the Standing Committee meeting of City Council on July 23, 2025

3. Building BC's Creative Advantage: A New Immigration Pathway for Cultural Entrepreneurs

Submitted by: Councillor Montague

WHEREAS

1. British Columbia is a national leader in the cultural and creative industries, with over 89,000 people working in the sector and a GDP contribution exceeding \$6.7 billion in 2022, surpassing traditional sectors such as forestry and hospitality;
2. Vancouver's creative economy — including live events, music, nightlife, film, visual effects (VFX), gaming, and digital media — is a cornerstone of the city's cultural identity and contributes billions annually to British Columbia's economy, supporting tens of thousands of skilled, well-paying jobs;
3. Cities such as Los Angeles and London have surged ahead by leveraging targeted international talent strategies — including specialized designations for globally recognized creators and entrepreneurs — leading to job creation, new businesses, and strong returns on investment;
4. Canada currently lacks a dedicated and modern immigration stream for exceptional creative professionals and/or culturally innovative entrepreneurs, forcing them to navigate general skilled-worker pathways that often disadvantage individuals with non-traditional education, freelance careers, or project-based work histories;
5. This lack of an immigration stream for exceptional creative professionals has led to missed opportunities in talent recruitment, retention, and long-term cultural investment, as foreign creative professionals often enter Canada on temporary work permits without a clear path to permanent residence, and many Canadian-trained creatives leave the country for more supportive jurisdictions;
6. Creating a specialized immigration pathway for people with exceptional creative talent would help grow local industries, support new businesses, boost tourism, and strengthen cultural exchange. It would bring long-term social and economic benefits by connecting world-class creative leaders with communities across Canada; and
7. In B.C., the Provincial Nominee Program (PNP) framework offers an effective mechanism for piloting a new immigration stream aligned with provincial needs and economic development strategies, where the infrastructure and networks to support such a program are already well established through organizations such as Creative BC, the BC Arts Council, and industry associations.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED

- A. THAT Council request the Province to develop a pilot Creative Talent Stream under the British Columbia Provincial Nominee Program (BC PNP), that would allow world-class creative professionals and cultural entrepreneurs to establish long-term economic roots in British Columbia and contribute to the province's creative economy;

FURTHER THAT Council request the Province to design the pilot program in consultation with Creative BC, Music BC, DigiBC, and other relevant cultural sector partners to create an industry-informed nomination mechanism for global creative leaders.

- B. THAT Council urge the Province to work in partnership with the federal government, particularly Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC), to secure a dedicated allocation of nomination spaces under the BC PNP for extraordinary creative talent, with a view to expanding the program nationally based on pilot outcomes.
- C. THAT Council request that the Mayor write to the Province of British Columbia (Ministers of Housing and Municipal Affairs; Tourism, Arts, Culture and Sport; and Jobs, Economic Development and Innovation), expressing Council's support for the development of a pilot Creative Talent Stream under the British Columbia Provincial Nominee Program (BC PNP) to enable creative industries to identify and retain globally recognized talent crucial to B.C.'s and the City of Vancouver's economic resilience, export growth potential, and domestic job creation.
- D. THAT Council direct that a resolution be submitted to the Union of BC Municipalities (UBCM) advocating for the Province to develop a pilot Creative Talent Stream under the British Columbia Provincial Nominee Program (BC PNP), aimed at attracting and retaining individuals with demonstrated extraordinary ability or high potential in creative industries as per the intent of this motion:

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT the City of Vancouver submit the following resolution for consideration at UBCM's 2026 Policy Convention.

Establishing a Creative Talent Stream under the BC Provincial Nominee Program

WHEREAS British Columbia's creative sector – including music, live events, film, television, visual effects, digital media, and gaming – is a major driver of the provincial economy, supporting tens of thousands of skilled jobs and contributing over \$6.7 billion in GDP annually, yet Canada currently lacks a dedicated immigration stream to attract and retain exceptional creative professionals and cultural entrepreneurs; AND

WHEREAS other jurisdictions such as Los Angeles and London have successfully leveraged targeted immigration pathways to grow their creative economies, and British Columbia is uniquely positioned to pilot a similar initiative through the Provincial Nominee Program in collaboration with organizations like Creative BC, Music BC, and DigiBC.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT UBCM call on the Province of British Columbia to develop a pilot Creative Talent Stream under the BC Provincial Nominee Program to attract and retain globally recognized creative professionals and cultural entrepreneurs who can contribute to the province's creative economy, tourism sector, and global competitiveness;

FURTHER THAT UBCM urge the Province to design this pilot in close consultation with cultural industry partners and seek federal partnership and dedicated nomination allocations through Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada, with the potential for national expansion based on pilot results.

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