



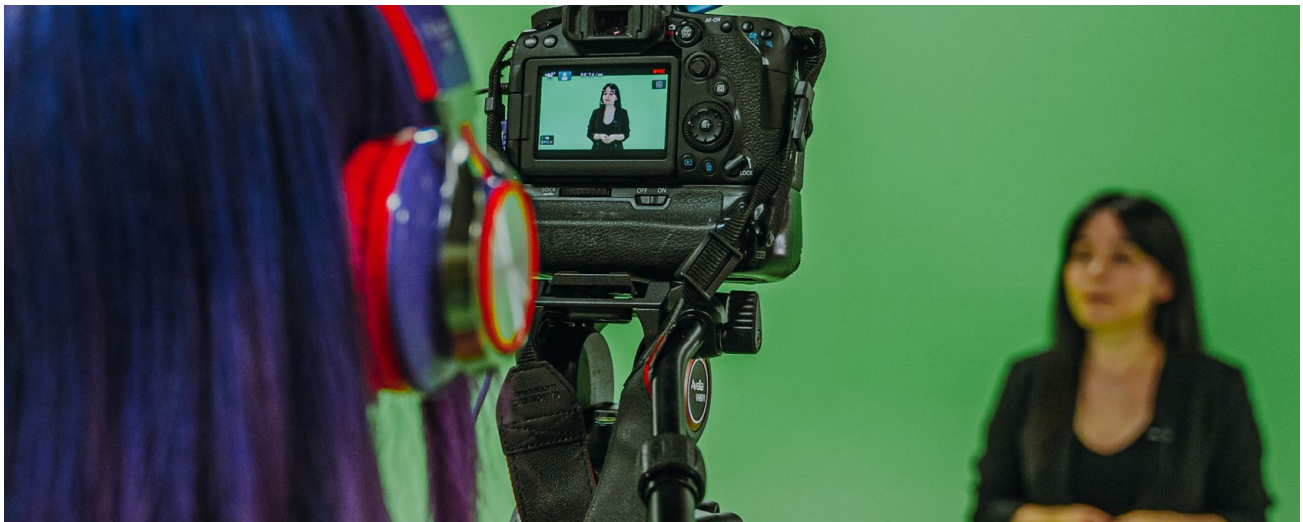
Strategic Plan for Film Palmdale

A script to grow Palmdale as a filmmaking destination and setting the stage for a creative future.

CONTENTS

- 3** Introduction
- 6** Background and Context
- 9** Goals, Strategies and Implementation Actions

- GOAL 1**
 - Market Film Palmdale9
- GOAL 2**
 - Make Filming Attractive and Easy12
- GOAL 3**
 - Involve the Community14
- GOAL 4**
 - Develop Film Infrastructure and Assets16
- GOAL 5**
 - Build Industry Networks.....18
- GOAL 6**
 - Track Progress.....19



INTRODUCTION

The City of Palmdale has the exciting opportunity to build off its rich history of cinema and develop as a film industry hub for Los Angeles County.

Since the silent film era, film producers have sought out the Antelope Valley for its spectacular desert setting and close proximity to Hollywood, often stationing in Palmdale as base camp. In the years since, even without the infrastructure of a major studio city, Palmdale has built a reputation as a unique and welcoming location to shoot movies, TV shows, commercials and more.

In light of recent macro-level changes in the film and entertainment industry, including the expansion of Hollywood’s studio zone and increased funding for the state’s film tax credit program, Palmdale is in a prime position to chart a bold vision for its future — one that puts the City at the center of a growing Antelope Valley film economy and uplifts the community through investments in arts and culture, workforce development and infrastructure. This **Strategic Plan for Film Palmdale** is the roadmap to achieving that objective.


Anchoring the City’s future ventures will be its core strengths: proximity to the industry, ease of access for film crews, cost effectiveness, distinctive scenery and ample space for development in a film friendly environment.



GOALS

Taking a 10-year time horizon of 2023-2033, this strategic plan explores six goals the City can focus on to drive and guide growth in the film sector.

Film Palmdale Goal 1



**MARKET
FILM
PALMDALE**

Film Palmdale Goal 2



**Make Filming
ATTRACTIVE
& EASY**

Film Palmdale Goal 3

***Involve the
Community***




Film Palmdale Goal 4



**DEVELOP
ASSETS &
INFRASTRUCTURE**

Film Palmdale Goal 5

**BUILD
INDUSTRY
NETWORKS**





Film Palmdale Goal 6



**TRACK
PROGRESS**

STRATEGIES AND ACTION ITEMS

Informed by research and stakeholder interviews, the plan details specific strategies and action items to help the City achieve its goals over the short ( 1-5 years) and long terms ( 6-10 years).



PALMDALE 2045

This strategic plan is in alignment with the City's mission to provide world-class service to its residents through innovation, passion, engagement and collaboration. The goals and strategies within also correspond with those in the Palmdale 2045 General Plan update, which aims to facilitate long-term film industry growth in the City.

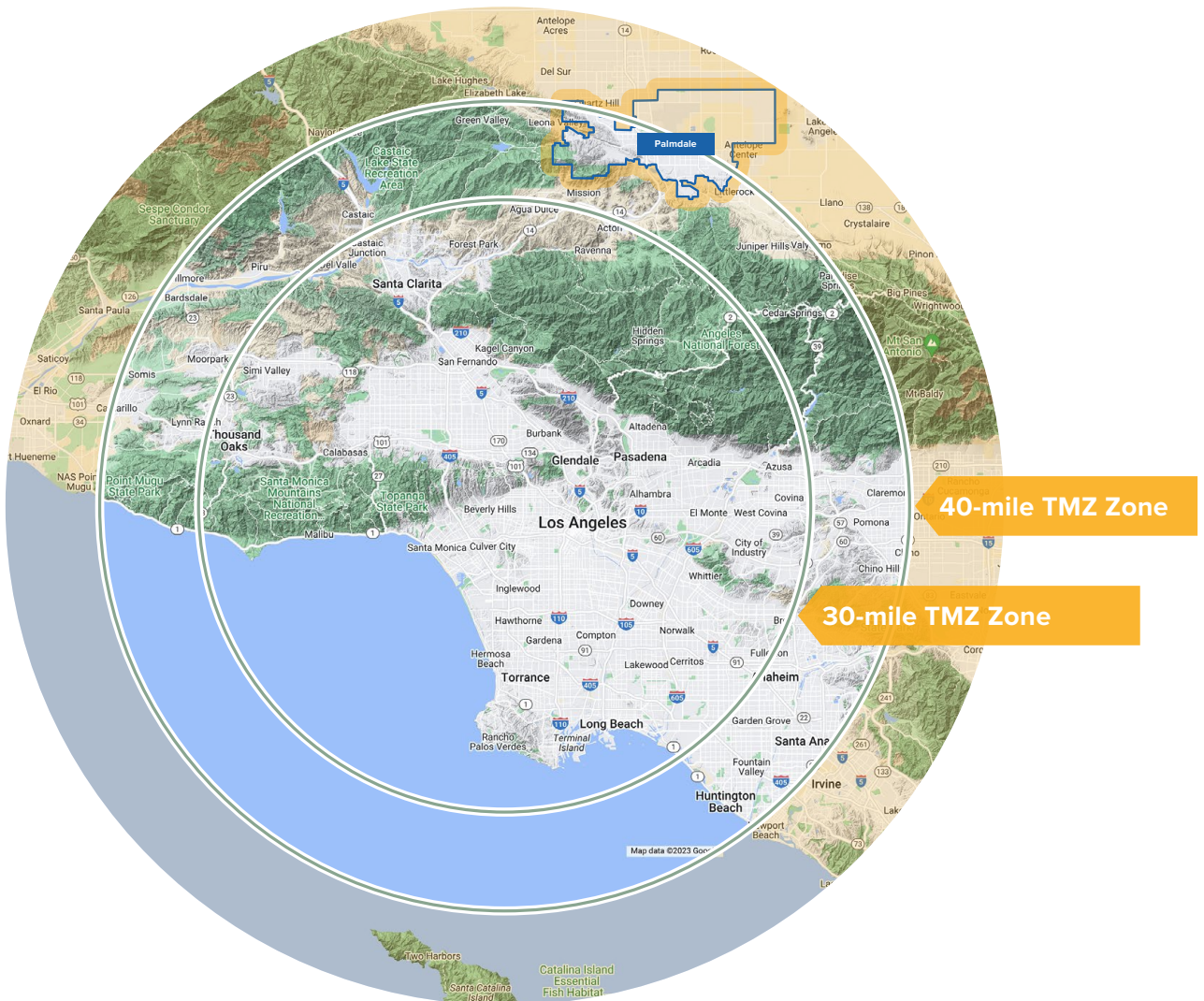


BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

Situated less than 40 miles from downtown Los Angeles as the crow flies, Palmdale is the nearest “desert city” to Hollywood. Its unique natural landscapes and “old west” charm have drawn film makers across genres. The catalog of films that shot in or based their operations out of Palmdale is extensive. Productions that shoot on film sets outside of City limits still often stay in Palmdale, spending their dollars at local hotels, restaurants and stores.

Recent film industry dynamics and policy changes have opened up new and exciting opportunities for Palmdale. In 2015, film unions approved an expansion of Hollywood’s 30-mile studio zone (TMZ Zone), where film making is most cost effective. A meaningful adjustment for Palmdale, the expansion put most of the City limits inside

the new “secondary zone.” In parallel to that, the state also bolstered its Film & Television Tax Credit program to \$330 million per year to incentivize more in-state productions, creating an expensive bottleneck for existing studio space within the TMZ Zone.

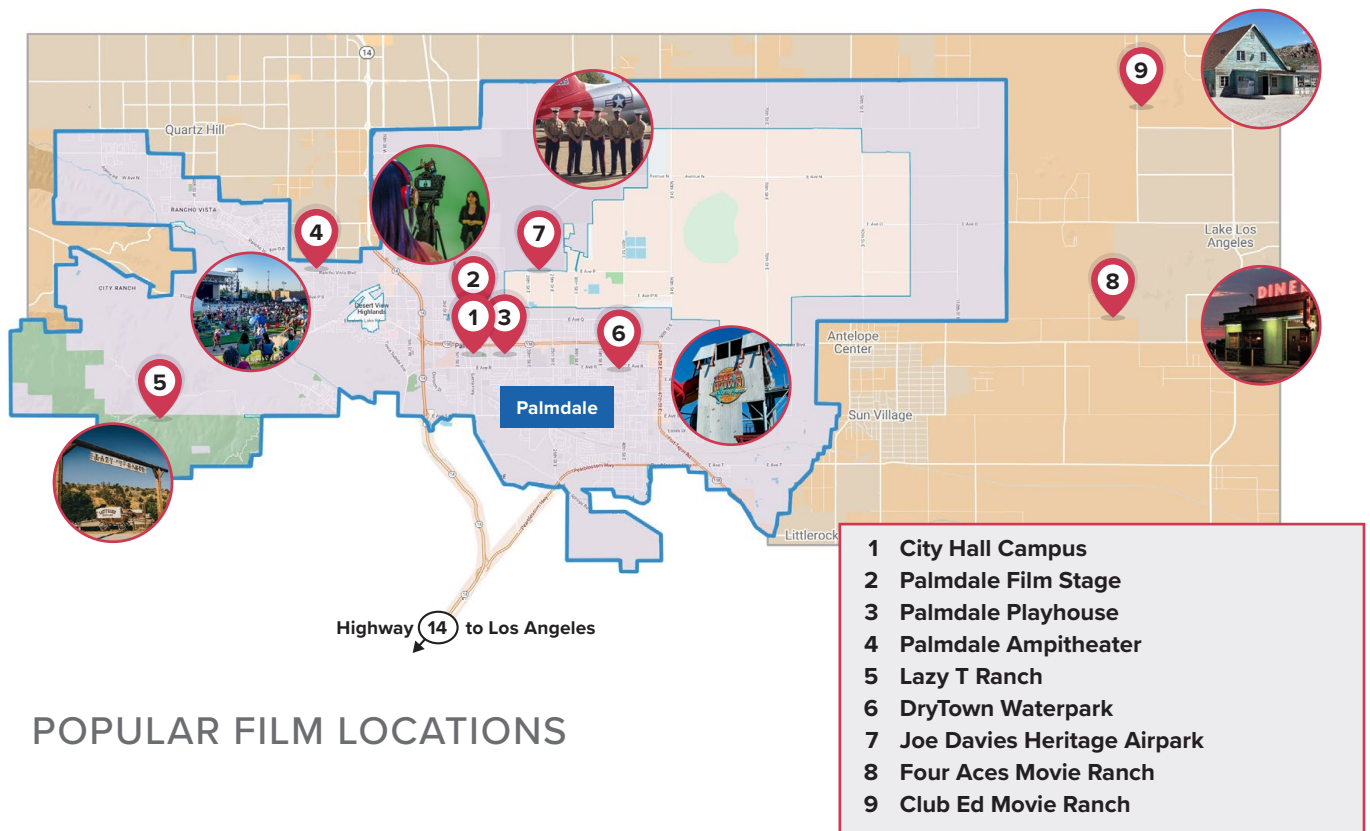


As a result of those factors, Palmdale is an emerging candidate for future sound stage and studio development. According to Paul Audley, president of FilmLA, the contracted nonprofit film office for numerous public agencies in Southern California, Palmdale is “ripe for [development] as we look at the cost of building in Los Angeles, the lack of property to do it in [and] the incredibly difficult process to get approvals.” Palmdale’s proximity to Hollywood, relatively affordable real estate, ample supply of appropriately zoned property and friendly stance toward the industry all make it a viable and attractive future hub.

If Palmdale succeeds at that goal, City residents in the film industry could find more career opportunities closer to home and reduce their need to commute long hours outside the City. In addition to the already sizable film industry workforce that resides in Palmdale, the field is garnering increasing interest from a new

generation of Antelope Valley youth. According to Duane Robertson, career technical education coordinator at Antelope Valley Union Valley High School District, the District recently introduced new film and digital media academic pathways that are seeing upticks in enrollment.

Over the past several years, the City of Palmdale has taken strides to build up its own film resources and incorporate the industry into its long-range planning. The City retained a local film liaison, David Halver, to enhance existing partnerships with FilmLA and the Antelope Valley Film Office for location and permitting services. In early 2023, the City opened the Palmdale Film Stage, a 6,000 square-foot converted studio space with a 2,500 square-foot Cyclorama and green screen. Additional steps to support industry growth include partnering with local hoteliers to subsidize film crew stays and setting goals for the industry in the City’s recent General Plan update.



Resilience

Film in Palmdale has rebounded since the COVID-19 pandemic. According to data provided by the City's film partners, Palmdale hosted 184 permitted film days in Fiscal Year (FY) 2021-22, a significant increase from a few dozen during the 2020 calendar year and 39 during FY 2018-19. In FY 2021-22, film productions throughout the Antelope Valley generated more than 3,000 hotel room stays in the City of Palmdale — about double the number of stays in 2020.

Looking to the future, Palmdale is poised to take advantage of continued growth in its film economy. The City can maximize future opportunities by advancing the goals and strategies outlined in this plan. Strategic investments in marketing, customer service, community relations, networking, infrastructure and data keeping can all help the sector blossom as a staple of the City's economy.

> Some of the movies filmed in the Antelope Valley.



GOALS, STRATEGIES AND IMPLEMENTATION ACTIONS

Film Palmdale will reach its 6 goals by pursuing specific strategies for each. Each strategy has a series of associated Implementation Actions that provide a practical timeline for the short-term and long-term steps that will transform Palmdale’s role in filmmaking.

The Implementation Actions focus on two timeframes:



SHORT TERM (ST)
1-5 year







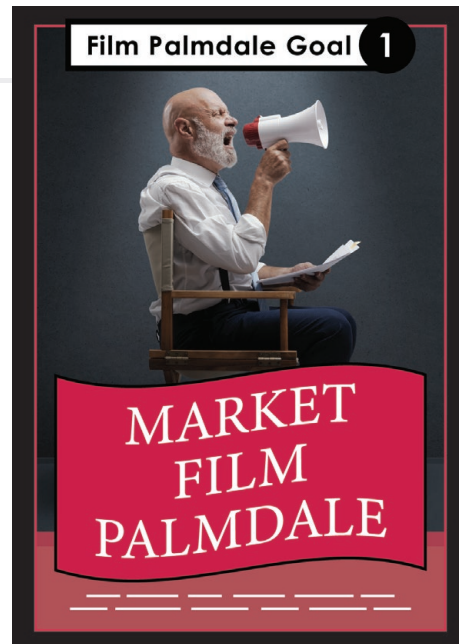
LONG TERM (LT)
6-10 year

GOAL 1 MARKET FILM PALMDALE

STRATEGIES

DEFINE THE FILM PALMDALE BRAND AND STRATEGIC MESSAGING

-  1 Define a brand that captures the City’s filmmaking history, spirit and strengths.
-  2 Craft strategic brand messaging, including key points of emphasis (i.e., top filming locations, inclusion in the Secondary Zone, reverse commute, film-friendly policies, affordable real estate, local workforce, state and City incentives).
-  3 Develop marketing assets, including stock photography, video, drone video and new animated logo.
-  4 Produce an “About Film Palmdale” video for website and other channels.



“ You don’t need a massive marketing budget. You just need a coordinated marketing campaign about who you’re going to reach, with what and then sustain that.”

– Paul Audley, FilmLA President

REFRESH FILM PALMDALE WEBSITE



1 Improve Search Engine Optimization across the site.



2 Deploy strategic messaging to tell Film Palmdale’s story and generate excitement around key brand strengths: film friendliness, diversity of locations, easy access, logistical flexibility, cost effectiveness, City incentives, history and vision for the future.



3 Provide up-to-date and easily navigable directories of film locations, lodging options, other amenities and crew members.



4 Highlight City’s interest in developing film infrastructure through public-private partnerships. Communicate key selling points and offer action steps to interested parties.



5 Create engaging and visually exciting content for the website, including original video, drone video and photos. Incorporate positive testimonials from film production customers. Prominently feature digital materials such as a Creative Handbook (see Goal 2).



6 Strategically incorporate prompts into the website for visitors to “take the next step” with Film Palmdale, such as including a web inquiry form, links to City facility reservation pages, hotel websites, FilmLA permit forms, an avenue to apply for City rebates and discounts and other prompts.






7 Encourage visitors to keep up with Film Palmdale by prominently featuring a film news subpage, social media profiles, digital newsletter and other potential channels to follow Film Palmdale activities.






8 Showcase economic impact and film activity data (see Goal 6) on the website to promote Palmdale’s success and celebrate the industry’s community benefits.






ESTABLISH A SOCIAL MEDIA PRESENCE

-  1 Create social media accounts on various platforms targeting regional decision-makers and industry associations.
-  2 Assign a responsible party to manage the accounts and plan a social media calendar.
-  3 Leverage social media to promote Film Palmdale and industry-related activities and events.

AMPLIFY FILM PALMDALE NEWS

-  1 Identify a location on the Film Palmdale website to amplify film news, events, local productions and insights. Tie-in to social media channels and assign staff member to manage.
-  2 Build a template, schedule and roles for a periodic digital newsletter sharing latest news about Film Palmdale.
-  3 Identify technical strategy for distribution and list-management for Film Palmdale news, including a subscription system, email platform, web content, list management and categories.

IDENTIFY OPPORTUNITIES FOR ADVERTISING, SPONSORSHIPS AND STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIPS

-  1 Create and manage paid advertisements for Film Palmdale in select industry publications, directories and digital platforms.
-  2 Sponsor arts, culture and film-related events in the Antelope Valley.
-  3 Establish strategic partnerships with key organizations, such as Antelope Valley College, Visit Palmdale, Film Liaisons in California Statewide, the California Film Institute, FilmLA and LA County, and develop marketing strategies to promote Film Palmdale.








GOAL 2



MAKE FILMING ATTRACTIVE AND EASY

STRATEGIES

PURSUE WAYS TO STREAMLINE PERMIT AND APPROVAL PROCESSES

-  1 Meet regularly with City Film Liaison, Antelope Valley Film Office and FilmLA to discuss strategies to improve overall service to the industry.
-  2 Routinely review film permit fee levels and identify opportunities to reduce costs and streamline processes.
-  3 Leverage available funds to establish a program to offset film costs for small- to medium-sized budgets.
-  4 Identify unique strategies to offset the practical challenges of filming, such as creating a list of “turnkey” locations in the City that have minimal costs and requirements.
-  5 Develop and identify a funding source for a sustained City rebate or grant program aimed at offsetting film costs.

ENSURE KEY FILM INFORMATION IS UP TO DATE AND ACCESSIBLE

-  1 Optimize customer service by developing useful, practical content and graphics that can be posted online. Examples include a map of City and Antelope Valley film locations, a map of available City parking lots, a list of “turnkey” locations, a breakdown of City and State incentives and estimated permit costs.
-  2 Partner with the Antelope Valley Film Office and FilmLA to ensure key film information, including location and crew directories, are up to date, accurate and posted on the Film Palmdale website.



PRODUCE A CREATIVE HANDBOOK FOR FILMING IN PALMDALE



- 1 Create an informative and visually engaging Creative Handbook for filming in Palmdale and update it as needed. Promote the handbook on marketing platforms and distribute to film producers, location managers and commercial production houses.

ASSESS STAFF CAPACITY TO SUPPORT FILM PALMDALE



- 1 Establish and update the organizational chart identifying key roles and responsibilities for Film Palmdale.



- 2 Update the City Film Liaison's roles and responsibilities to best meet the goals and strategies of the Strategic Plan.



- 3 Regularly evaluate staff resources as needed to implement the Strategic Plan and consider adding a full-time Film Palmdale position.



- 4 Consider establishing a Palmdale Film Office to provide more robust service to a growing industry and evaluate future roles for the City Film Liaison and Antelope Valley Film Office.






GOAL 3



INVOLVE THE COMMUNITY

STRATEGIES


CELEBRATE FILM CULTURE IN PALMDALE

-  1 Host regular “Palmdale Movie Nights” emphasizing “Made in the AV” films.
-  2 Hold community roundtables or pop-up events to educate residents about the City’s film history, vision for the future and progress on the Strategic Plan goals and strategies.
-  3 Develop strategies for building community excitement and a volunteer base to support future Film Palmdale events, festivals and functions.

ENCOURAGE COMMUNITY USE OF PALMDALE FILM STAGE

-  1 Organize tours of the Palmdale Film Stage for high school and college students and encourage student use of the facility for course work and filming.
-  2 Establish a “community use” rate for the Palmdale Film Stage that allows discounted access for local nonprofits, businesses and Antelope Valley filmmakers. Incorporate flexibility into the community use program to give professional productions scheduling priority.

CREATE A PALMDALE FILM NETWORK

-  1 Establish a network of local and regional partners to identify opportunities to advance and promote the City of Palmdale’s film-related offerings and encourage community participation in local film activities.



FACILITATE CAREER DEVELOPMENT AND APPRENTICESHIP PROGRAMS



1 Connect with local stakeholders, including high schools and colleges, to promote and discuss available funds in the California Film & TV Tax Credit Program.



2 Develop and facilitate a plan to promote investment of California Film & TV Tax Credit Program funds in Palmdale. Identify strategies for film producers to invest tax credit program contributions in Antelope Valley high school or college film programs or through on-the-job training opportunities on Palmdale film sets.



3 Explore opportunities to establish film technical training programs, coordinating with Antelope Valley College and industry unions, such as Teamsters and IATSE, and explore facility options to house training programs.



4 Formulate a communications plan aimed at connecting Palmdale residents with available film career development and training opportunities, partnering with film industry unions to facilitate pathways to membership.








GOAL 4




DEVELOP FILM INFRASTRUCTURE AND ASSETS

STRATEGIES

SEEK PUBLIC-PRIVATE PARTNERSHIPS FOR SOUND STAGE DEVELOPMENT

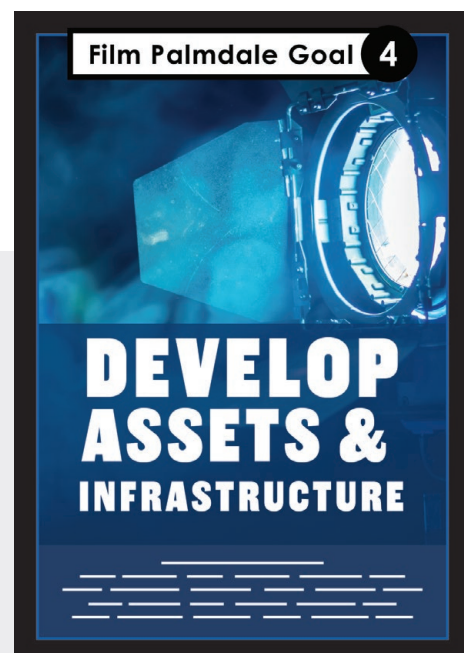
-  1 Create a living spreadsheet of prospective investors, funding sources and properties suited for developing certified sound stages, post-production facilities and supportive infrastructure.
-  2 Identify specific measures, policies and incentives the City can adopt to make Palmdale a more attractive destination for studio development.
-  3 Develop a communications plan for outreach to major film studios, investors and developers focused on the City's interest in bringing a production center to Palmdale.
-  4 Create a strategy for pursuing a City-owned sound stage, which may include a public-private partnership component. Leverage research already completed by the City that identified a future sound stage as an important industry driver.
-  5 Identify the complementary services and infrastructure that should serve a new production hub (i.e., a commercial center with retail and dining, capital improvements such as roads, parks or pedestrian amenities).

OPTIMIZE CITY'S CURRENT FILM ASSETS AND IDENTIFY OPPORTUNITIES TO EXPAND INVENTORY



-  1 Take inventory of current City-owned properties and assets and determine how those currently used as film locations could be better managed and promoted for industry use.
-  2 Develop plans for City properties and assets that are currently underutilized for film purposes, consider gaps in existing services and portfolio of locations and sets.
-  3 Identify private properties that are currently used as film locations or have high potential as film locations and engage property owners about City's interest in acquiring land.

“ If you look at the model that has worked, the model that works is concentrated areas of a lot of service and stage space. If you do a couple standalone [stages] here and there, it doesn't have the impact you want, which is really to create a new production center.”

– Paul Audley, FilmLA President



EXPAND BUSINESS AND PROPERTY OWNER AWARENESS ABOUT OPPORTUNITIES TO RENT LAND AND FACILITIES FOR FILM

-  1 Host periodic training sessions for local property owners and businesses that offer helpful information on what steps are necessary to make their properties available to the film industry.
-  2 Produce a “location guide” for local property owners and businesses that details the process to rent facilities for film (i.e., FilmLA permitting, standard film agreements, insurance basics, marketing strategies).

CREATE PARTNERSHIPS TO ADVOCATE AS A REGION FOR FILM INDUSTRY GROWTH

-  1 Initiate dialogue with the City of Lancaster and County of Los Angeles about forming a partnership centered around a shared interest in developing the film economy in the Antelope Valley.
-  2 Identify ways the County and State can facilitate film industry growth in both cities and the unincorporated areas of the Antelope Valley, including expanding the Secondary Zone, and start a coordinated advocacy campaign.





GOAL 5

BUILD INDUSTRY NETWORKS

STRATEGIES




INVITE INDUSTRY STAKEHOLDERS TO PALMDALE TO GROW AWARENESS

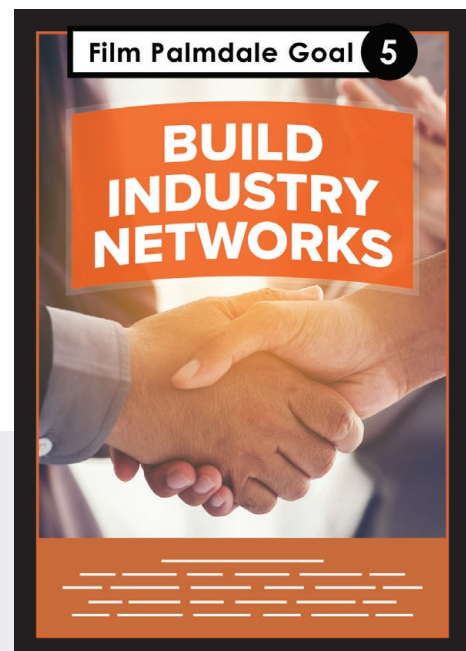
-  1 Maintain a list of key industry contacts, including union leaders, to invite to film events and activities in Palmdale.
-  2 Host at least two “FAM tours” (familiarity tours) per year in Palmdale to increase exposure for location managers and scouts.

HOST FILM FESTIVALS

-  1 Establish a partnership with NewFilmmakers Los Angeles to invite its monthly film festival to the City of Palmdale.
-  2 Engage with the local business community to identify venues and sponsors for a future film festival.
-  3 Host an amateur local film festival showcasing young Antelope Valley filmmakers in high school and college programs.
-  4 Plan and launch an annual Palmdale Film Festival featuring professional, college and high school filmmakers. Partner with Visit Palmdale and other civic groups to organize and promote the festival.

INCREASE PRESENCE AT INDUSTRY EVENTS AND EXPOSITIONS






-  1 Develop a list of key industry events, conferences and expositions.
-  2 Coordinate with FilmLA to attend and speak at industry union events (i.e., Teamsters Local 399).
-  3 Represent Palmdale at key events, conferences and expositions, such as the California on Location Awards and the Location Managers Guild International Awards.



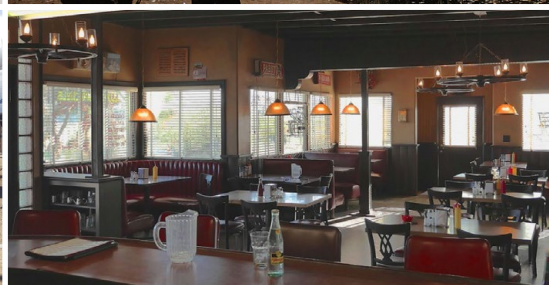
GOAL 6 TRACK PROGRESS

STRATEGY

ESTABLISH METRICS TO TRACK FILM INDUSTRY GROWTH AND REPORT PROGRESS

-  1 Establish a mechanism for identifying the best data points to follow industry activity. Determine how the City can best collect the data, when the data should be collected and how it should be maintained. Standardize the process so that the same data points are tracked over time.
-  2 Develop a calculation for determining the economic impact of the film industry in Palmdale and document that routinely as part of data-keeping.
-  3 Produce annual reports on film activity in Palmdale and the City's progress toward implementing the Strategic Plan.
-  4 Work with Visit Palmdale to generate routine data reports on film crew hotel stays in the City.
-  5 Publish annual data reports on Film Palmdale website.





City of Palmdale
38250 Sierra Highway, Palmdale, CA 93550
661-267-5125 • Film@cityofpalmdale.org

FilmPalmdale.com