



# City of Richmond

## Report to Committee

**To:** Parks, Recreation and Cultural Services  
Committee

**From:** Jane Fernyhough  
Director, Arts, Culture and Heritage Services

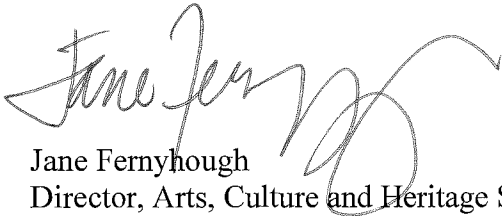
**Re:** 2015 Richmond Film Office Annual Report

**Date:** February 5, 2016



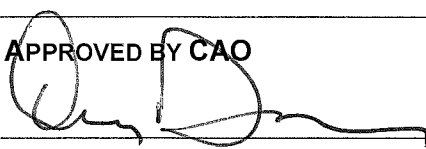
**File:** 08-4150-09-01/2016-  
Vol 01

### Staff Recommendation

That the staff report titled, "2015 Richmond Film Office Annual Report", dated February 5, 2016 from the Director, Arts, Culture and Heritage Services, be received for information.



Jane Fernyhough  
Director, Arts, Culture and Heritage Services  
(604-276-4288)

REPORT CONCURRENCE		
<b>ROUTED TO:</b>	<b>CONCURRENCE</b>	<b>CONCURRENCE OF GENERAL MANAGER</b>
Finance Division	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
<b>REVIEWED BY STAFF REPORT / AGENDA REVIEW SUBCOMMITTEE</b>	<b>INITIALS:</b> 	<b>APPROVED BY CAO</b> 

## Staff Report

### Origin

In 2007, Council adopted an official City of Richmond Film Strategy, which resulted in the establishment of a dedicated film office. One of the key mandates of the Richmond Film Office is to provide a “one stop shop” resource for film productions, as well as provide centralized services to Richmond businesses and residents affected by filming.

The purpose of this report is to provide an overview of the 2015 film activity in the City, as well as to discuss early indicators for 2016.

### Background

The Major Events and Film Section oversees the production of major events and facilitates filming activities in Richmond. The Richmond Film Office is a function within that section. The office processes filming applications, provides permits for filming activity on City-owned properties and assists with location scouting within the city. Staff facilitate all City services required for filming and coordinate invoicing for those services; the most common services include policing, staff liaisons, location rentals and street use.

A core initiative of the Richmond Film Office is to liaise with film industry and community stakeholders on film-related matters in order to promote the growth of Richmond’s Film Sector. The key objective of these efforts is to attract production crews to shoot on location in Richmond on both public and private property. The Richmond Film Office has one dedicated staff member.

This report supports Council’s 2014-2018 Term Goal #8 Supportive Economic Development Environment:

*Review, develop and implement plans, policies, programs and practices to increase business and visitor appeal and promote local economic growth and resiliency.*

*8.2. Opportunities for economic growth and development are enhanced.*

### Analysis

2015 was a record setting year for the Richmond Film Office with revenues and filming days hitting new levels. Television and feature films, including two major motion pictures, made up the majority of productions filmed. The productions filmed in Richmond for 2015 included:

- **Major Motion Pictures:** Planet of the Apes and Deadpool
- **Feature Films:** A Century in November, Christmas Confessions, Come and Find Me, Corrupt, Finding Mr Right 2, Further Adventures in Babysitting, Looking Glass, Midnight Sun, Monster Fishing, Run Along Robert, Swerve, The Shack, and Untitled Kelly Fremon Craig Project

- **TV:** Chesapeake Shores, Impastor, iZombie, Journey of Love, Lucifer, Once Upon a Time, Shooter, Supernatural, and The Man in the High Castle
- **Commercials:** Autotrader, Carrabas Commercial, and Zorvirex

### Filming Revenue

Approximately \$457,000 in service and location charges were processed through the Richmond Film Office in 2015. This amount is more than double the previous year (2014) and approximately \$180,000 more than the previous record breaking year in 2013.

The breakdown of filming is as follows:

- \$309,105.51 in location revenues/rentals.
- \$33,121.00 in street use fees
- \$40,328.36 in various cost recoveries (staff time, fire hydrant permits, special effects permits)
- \$35,342.64 to the Richmond RCMP Detachment
- \$39,942.39 to the RFO for administration fees

Total = \$457,839.90

As per the Community Charter, the City bills on a cost recovery basis for the majority of charges, however location rentals are billed at market rate.

There were a number of factors which contributed to the major surge in filming:

- **One Stop Shop for productions:** The Richmond Film Office acts as a conduit to all City departments which streamlines the services needed by productions. Staff work closely with a variety of other departments which provide the necessary services to film on City property. Departmental costs are covered by the film productions for a diverse range of services including parking on city streets, banner removal and return, traffic management, RCMP services and use of City parks, just to name a few.
- **The low Canadian dollar:** The dollar continues to hover around the 70 cent range against the American dollar. This is a major financial incentive for American studios as they can extend their budgets dramatically by filming in Canada.
- **Provincial tax credits:** The Province offers a 33% tax credit on labour hired within the lower mainland, provided the individual being hired is a resident of BC. This tax credit is extended by up to an additional 12% if productions work in more remote areas. There is also an additional 17.5% tax credit for digital animation and visual effects labour.
- **Positive experiences by film productions with City of Richmond staff:** The financial incentives for film companies mentioned above are extremely important; however productions would not film here if they did not have overwhelmingly positive

experiences with City staff. The Film Office regularly coordinates with other City departments in order to facilitate filming

- **Community Support:** Support from merchants and residents in key areas such as Steveston have made filming in the City predictable and pleasant.
- **Council Support:** Richmond City Council continues to include film growth within their term goals relating to economic development. This recognition empowers staff to provide high levels of service and develop film friendly initiatives.

Filming Days

**Filming activity by total number of days:**

Year	Filming Days		Comments
	Shoot Days	Prep/Wrap/ Hold Days	
2015	189	380	Included two major blockbuster films which required several months of preparation.
2014	133	65	Included numerous feature films and TV productions
2013	147	52	Included one major blockbuster film which required a month of preparation.
2012	63	35	Included numerous feature films and TV productions. (Film data from YVR and Metro Vancouver are not included in the 2012 totals.)

Within Richmond there are many publicly-owned jurisdictions used for filming. These include the Steveston Harbour Authority, YVR, Metro Vancouver and the Gulf of Georgia Cannery. Public jurisdictions and private property owners are not obligated to report revenue or filming days to the City. As a courtesy, film production companies generally alert the Richmond Film Office regarding filming to ensure compliance with bylaws, to avoid any traffic or other conflicts in the area and so that staff can record the filming days for our records.

In 2015, there were 168 days of filming managed by staff on City owned property, seven days of filming on Metro Vancouver property and fourteen days at YVR.

Benefits of Filming:

1. **Economic Impact:** According to Creative BC data, film production expenditures in BC were \$2 billion dollars in the 2014/2015 fiscal year. In Richmond, beyond the revenue generated from City and public properties, filming continues to contribute significant direct and indirect revenue to local businesses and land owners. Location fees paid directly to merchants and homeowners can be upwards of \$20,000 per day of filming depending on the scope of the production. In addition, the temporary influx of production staff and filming spectators in an area can generate additional sales revenue for merchants.

2. **Employment:** The film sector is a major employer in the City of Richmond with over \$24 million dollars in wages earned by residents employed in 2015. Major blockbuster films are also major employers. For example, *Deadpool* employed 2000 British Columbians.
3. **Tourism:** Film tourism continues in Richmond, particularly for fans making a pilgrimage to the filming locations of *Once Upon A Time*. The show regularly films in Steveston Village and an average of 300 fans come out on each filming day to catch a glimpse of their favourite characters.
4. **Community Outreach:** Film crews in Richmond often engage with the community as part of their activities. A few examples from 2015 include:
  - a. **Deadpool:** The production worked with the Make a Wish Foundation to grant a wish to a child battling Hodgkin's Disease. The young fan was given the opportunity to meet his favorite character *Deadpool* (Ryan Reynolds). He was given a tour of the Richmond based set, participated in meet and greets with cast members and had the opportunity to wear costumes and play with set pieces.
  - b. **Lucifer:** During filming of the first season of *Lucifer* the production donated \$2,800.00 dollars to the Hamilton Community Association when they filmed at the Hamilton Community Centre. The production also arranged for a high quality live performance at the Hamilton Elementary School.
  - c. **Once Upon a Time:** The production donates \$100 to a local children's charity store and \$400 to a bank which donates to a charity on the show's behalf each time they film.

### Community Engagement

The Richmond Film Office regularly liaises with residents and merchants regarding filming matters. In busier filming areas such as Steveston, staff meet with businesses, organizations, associations and residents to ensure their needs are balanced with those of the production company.

Filming can sometimes cause disruptions to an area and therefore must be managed appropriately. Prior to issuing film permits, production companies are required to notify affected businesses and residents to ensure they are aware of the filming. This process allows productions the opportunity to address potential concerns before the filming takes place. Notification is typically done in the form of door to door canvassing which encourages direct interaction by all parties. Notification letters are also distributed in advance of filming and include a contact number for someone who will be on set during all hours of filming as well as the City's Film Liaison's direct contact number.

Site visits to locations being used for filming are conducted to ensure that guidelines are being adhered to and to gauge the overall atmosphere of the event. Staff balance the efforts to increase filming activity with the best interests of the area being filmed. There are times when filming events are not approved in order to ensure the locations are not being overused.

### Forecast and Initiatives

The Canadian dollar remains low when compared to its American counterpart. The low dollar is a major incentive for American studios to film in Canada as the cost of producing becomes more cost effective. Film production in Metro Vancouver is currently at a very high level with industry insiders indicating that the lower Canadian dollar will increase demand for 2016 as studios seek better and less expensive options for filming. The Richmond Film Office has had a number of inquiries this year from major American studios interested in filming large scale movies.

Shows such as *Once Upon a Time*, *Supernatural* and *Impastor* appear on track for renewal of additional seasons.

Large parcels of land owned by the City of Richmond continue to be in high demand for filming. In 2015 major productions such as *Deadpool* and *Planet of the Apes* rented City property for extended periods of filming. Several studios have inquired about the availability of City land for filming in 2016. It has recently been confirmed that a major motion picture will be filming in Steveston during the off season of *Once Upon a Time*. This production is currently in the planning stages and is working with the Steveston Merchants Association to collaborate with the businesses in the area.

### 2016 Film Office Initiatives

There are a number of projects in Staff's work plans for 2016. Some initiatives include:


- Membership in the Community Affairs Task Force. This group was formed by The Motion Picture Production Industry Association (MPPIA) and is tasked with dealing with community affairs relating to film. Members include liaisons from cities, studio executives and industry professionals.  
Action items to come from this group include:
  - Streamlining regulations, fees and bylaws in order to be more user friendly to productions and establishing industry standards for municipal film issues.
  - Coordinated public outreach from the committee on "hot topics" for film.
  - Education initiatives for the public and industry professionals. Richmond Film Office staff have worked with the Directors Guild of Canada representatives to present at post-secondary courses for location managers.
- Ongoing community outreach with merchants in Steveston and other areas.
- Continued work with Creative BC (formerly known as the British Columbia Film Commission) and other Lower Mainland film offices to attract filming to the region.
- Updating the Film Bylaw.
- Development of a film strategy.

### **Financial Impact**

None.

## **Conclusion**

The Film Office is the first line of contact for both the public and the film industry regarding film matters within the City. Staff work towards sustainably increasing filming activity in Richmond by partnering with Creative BC, the Motion Picture Production Industry Association and other local film industry representatives. Filming is an important economic sector in the City; the financial impact through employment and fees for locations is significant and the tourism effect continues to draw visitors to Richmond.



Jodie Shebib  
Film and Major Events Liaison  
(604-247-4689)