



City of Richmond

Report to Committee

To: Parks, Recreation and Cultural Services
Committee

Date: March 6, 2015

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

File: 08-4150-09-01/2015-
Vol 01

Re: 2015 Richmond Film Office Annual Report

Staff Recommendation

That the staff report titled, "2015 Richmond Film Office Annual Report", dated March 6, 2015 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		
ROUTED TO: Finance Division	CONCURRENCE <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	CONCURRENCE OF GENERAL MANAGER
REVIEWED BY STAFF REPORT / AGENDA REVIEW SUBCOMMITTEE	INITIALS: 	APPROVED BY CAO

Staff Report

Origin

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

The RFO processes filming applications, provides permits for filming activity on City-owned properties and assists with location scouting within the city. The RFO also coordinates invoicing for any City services required for filming; the most common charges include policing, staff liaisons, location rentals and street use.

A core initiative of the RFO is to liaise with film industry and community stakeholders on film-related matters in order to promote the growth of Richmond’s Film Sector.

This report supports Council’s Term Goal #3 Economic Development:

To enhance the City’s economic well-being and financial sustainability through the development and implementation of strategies and initiatives that lead to long-term business retention, expansion and attraction by clearly defining the businesses and industries we want to attract and retain; placing a stronger focus on tourism and Asia Pacific Gateway business development opportunities; and incorporating a broad business community engagement model.

3.9. Build on the filming opportunities in the City.

The purpose of this report is to provide an overview of the 2014 film activity in the city, as well as to discuss early indicators for 2015.

Analysis

Richmond Billing and Filming Days in 2014

Over \$183,000 in service and location charges were processed through the RFO in 2014. This amount is approximately \$100,000 less than 2013 (a record breaking year for the City), and comparable to the totals in 2011 and 2012 totals.

Of the \$183,000, \$109,000 went towards a variety of City services including street use, staffing, signage, rental of civic spaces and parks and \$74,000 went to the RCMP for policing services.

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 RFO. As a courtesy, film production companies generally alert the RFO 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 2014, there were 133 days of filming within Richmond, including 21 days on Metro Vancouver property and 22 days at YVR; the remaining 88 were on City-owned property and they were managed by the RFO.

Film Locations and Productions 2014

Television series and feature films made up the majority of productions filmed in Richmond in 2014. Productions filmed in Richmond in 2014 are listed below:

Figure 1

Feature Films	Television Series	Commercials
Formula M	Agent X (pilot)	Lemonade Films - Project 21
My life as a Dead Girl	Almost Human	Lululemon
Screamers	Arrow	Worksafe BC
	Backstrom	Wrangler Jeans
	Bates Motel	
	Cedar Cove	
	Continuum	
	House Hunters International	
	Intelligence	
	Impastor	
	iZombie	
	Motive	
	Once Upon a Time	
	Only Human (pilot)	
	Psych	
	Rush	
	Supernatural	
	The 100	
	The Killing	
	The Tomorrow People	
	Wonderland Tours Inc. - Business Navigation News in Hokkaido	

Economic Impact 2014

Beyond revenue generated from City and publically-owned 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 up to \$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.

The film sector is a major employer in the City of Richmond with over \$15 million dollars in wages earned by residents employed in 2013 (most recent year that data is available).

Film tourism continues in Richmond, particularly for fans seeking pilgrimage to the filming locations of *Once Upon A Time*. In 2014, Tourism Richmond created a promotion titled “2 Days in Storybrooke,” which promoted visits to Steveston for fans of the hit show. This campaign was a success and a number of visitors took advantage of the “Once” themed trip. Anecdotal

evidence from staff at Tourism Richmond indicate that a large percentage of visitors to their Visitors Center are interested in the area because of its ties to *Once Upon a Time*.

The following table summarizes filming activity over the past two years.

Year	Filming Days		Comments
	Shoot Days	Prep/Wrap/ Hold Days	
2012	63	35	Film data from YVR and Metro Vancouver are not included in these totals.
2013	147	52	Filming events in 2013 included television shows as well as a major motion picture filming on location for a month. (*record breaking year)
2014	133	65	Filming events in 2014 did not include any major motion pictures, but did include a considerable amount of television shows.

Community Engagement

The RFO continues to be a well-utilized community resource as residents and merchants frequently contact the office with comments and questions regarding filming. In heavily-used areas such as Steveston, RFO staff meet with businesses, organizations, associations and residents to ensure their needs are balanced with those of the production company.

Filming can cause disruptions to an area and it is vital that it is managed appropriately. Prior to issuing film permits, the RFO requires that production companies notify, and in some cases, poll affected businesses and residents to ensure a high level of support for the proposed filming activity. This notification is done in the form of a door to door process, which allows for direct interaction by all parties. Notification letters are 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.

Film Office staff conduct site visits to locations being used for filming to ensure that guidelines are being adhered to and to gauge the overall atmosphere of the event.

While it is not always practical or appropriate, there are times when film productions provide an exceptional opportunity for the community they film in. In the fall of 2014, the television series *Falling Skies* provided a noteworthy experience for the grade 6 students at Hamilton Elementary School. The TV series invited the class to attend the rehearsal of a stunt for the TV series. The students were given a tour of the set, a presentation by the lead actor in the series and the experience of holding some of the “post apocalyptic” prop pieces. The experience was a rare opportunity that teachers and students thoroughly enjoyed.

2015 Forecast and Initiatives

In January 2015 the Canadian dollar dropped below 80 cents American for the first time in five years. Our lower dollar is an additional incentive for American studios to film in Canada as the cost of producing becomes more cost effective. It is anticipated that the lower Canadian dollar will increase demand for 2015 as studios seek better and less expensive options for filming. The RFO has had a number of inquiries this year from pilot television shows, which were moved from Los Angeles to Vancouver – due in part to the lower Canadian dollar.

Locally filmed shows such as *Once Upon a Time*, *Bates Motel* and *Motive* appear on track for renewal of additional seasons; the RFO looks forward to working with these productions again.

2015 Initiatives

The RFO will also continue to position Richmond as a preferred place to conduct film business. Some initiatives include:

- Develop a formal Richmond Film Strategy and Implementation Plan. This strategy will include a review of current policy and procedures.
- A review of the existing Film Regulation Bylaw and any amendments if necessary.
- Ongoing community outreach with merchants in Steveston and other areas.
- Continued work with the Creative BC (formerly known as the British Columbia Film Commission) and other Lower Mainland film offices to attract filming to the region.

The RFO will continue to consult with local stakeholders and the film industry to find ways to share information that will help provide a more detailed financial picture of filming in Richmond. Much of this work will inform or be included in the updated Film Strategy and Implementation Plan.

Financial Impact

There is no financial impact.

Conclusion

The Richmond Film Office continues to provide timely and responsive customer service to community and business stakeholders. Staff work towards sustainably increasing filming activity in Richmond by partnering with Creative BC 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.



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