



City of Richmond

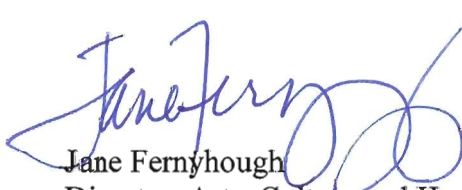
Report to Committee

To: General Purposes Committee
From: Jane Fernyhough
 Director, Arts, Culture and Heritage Services
Re: 2013 Richmond Film Office Annual Report

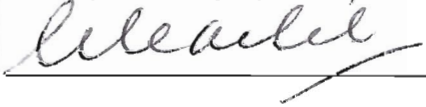


Date: March 3, 2014
File: 08-4150-09-01/2014-
 Vol 01

Staff Recommendation

That the attached "2013 Richmond Film Office Annual Report", dated March 3, 2014 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. The mandate of the Richmond Film Office (the “Film Office”) is to increase film production in Richmond by providing centralized services to the film and television industry as well as to Richmond businesses and residents affected by filming activity in Richmond.

Specifically, the Film Office processes filming applications, and provides permits for filming activity on City-owned properties. The Film Office also coordinates invoicing for any City services required for filming, such as policing, signage, building liaisons, fire hydrant use, and other services. Further, the Film Office representatives liaise with film industry and community stakeholders on film-related matters.

Film Office activities support the following Council Term Goal 3.9:

Economic Development - Build on filming opportunities in the City.

The purpose of this report is to provide a 2013 Film Office update. Forecasts and initiatives for 2014 are also discussed.

Analysis

Richmond Billing and Filming Days in 2013

Over \$287,000 in service and location charges were processed through the Film Office in 2013, which is an increase of \$39,000 over adjusted figures for 2012. Although the City charges filming fees based on service cost recovery and property rentals (and not for profit), the City’s 2013 revenue exceeded its costs with a total revenue of approximately \$113,000 being allocated directly to City departments, \$104,000 to recover service costs and \$70,000 separately to the RCMP for policing services. In addition to the revenue realized by the City, filming provides additional economic benefits to the community and raises the City’s profile; this is discussed further in subsequent sections of this report.

Within Richmond there are many publicly-owned jurisdictions used for filming; these include the Steveston Harbour Authority, YVR, Metro Vancouver (Iona Regional Park) and the Gulf of Georgia Cannery. Public jurisdictions and private property owners are not obligated to report revenue or filming days to the Film Office. As a courtesy, however, film production companies generally do complete a Richmond film application when shooting on non-City owned property, which the Film Office files and keeps for data.

In 2013, 186 days of filming within Richmond’s environs took place, approximately 30 of which were at YVR and 147 of which were on City-owned property and managed by the Film Office.

Film Locations and Productions 2013

Television series and feature films made up the majority of productions filmed in Richmond in 2013. Productions filmed in Richmond in 2013 are listed below:

Figure 1

Feature Films	Television Series	Commercials
50 Shades of Gray (YVR)	Almost Human	Toll House Cookies
Godzilla (2014)	Amazing Race	Chobani Yogurt
Grace	Arrow	Suddenlink Communications
Fairly Odd Summer	Bates Motel	
If I Stay	Bizarre Foods with Andrew Zimmern	
Pale Green	CBC Kids – Will’s Jams	
Parked	Cedar Cove	
Robocop	Continuum	
The Interview	House Hunters International	
Various Student Films	Intelligence	
	Once Upon a Time	
	Once Upon a Time in Wonderland	
	Psych	
	Rogue	
	Simply Ming	
	Supernatural	

Economic Impact 2013

Beyond revenues generated from City and publically-owned properties, filming continues to contribute significant direct and indirect revenue to local businesses and land owners. The Film Office is not authorized to participate in negotiations between a non-City property owner and a film production company and, therefore, cannot accurately report the amount spent securing non-City property for film locations. Informed discussion with production companies and businesses provide an estimated average spend of \$15,000 to \$20,000 in direct location revenue per filming day. Approximately 40 television episodes were filmed in Richmond in 2013, resulting in approximately \$600,000 paid to private property owners and tenants in popular locations such as Steveston.

Indirect spending by film crews also contributes to the local economy. Film crews bring an average of 100 people per day into Richmond filming locations and these workers can spend a considerable amount on food, beverages and other merchandise while on location. Film production crews also often try to source local supplies whenever possible.

Film tourism continues in Richmond, due particularly to the global popularity of *Once Upon A Time* and also due to other productions such as the major feature film *Godzilla*, which filmed in Steveston and other Richmond locations in the spring of 2013. The Film Office often fields

requests from people planning their vacations and wanting to know *Once Upon a Time's* next filming dates. For reasons of confidentiality and security, the Film Office does not disclose such information. These requests still come mostly from North America, but reports of European travelers visiting the set have been mentioned by the film crews and local businesses.

Community Outreach 2013

The Film Office 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, Film Office staff will meet with businesses, organizations, associations and residents to ensure their needs are balanced with those of the production company. Filming, however, inevitably causes some disruption. Therefore, before issuing film permits, the Film Office regularly requests that the production company notify and, in some cases, poll affected businesses and residents to demonstrate that a large majority support the proposed filming activity.

In April, the Richmond Film Office hosted a "Filming in Steveston Information Session", which invited the community to discuss filming sustainability, the community's concerns, the film industry's perspective and marketing opportunities as well as the Film Office's role. Representatives from the film industry and Creative BC were also present at this forum, which saw a full-room attendance of approximately 125 attendees. Members of the community were able to discuss their concerns about filming activities and provide feedback on how to harmonize filming activity around day to day business and how to incorporate filming activity into creative marketing strategies.

As a result, filming complaints are down overall; the majority of inquiries received were redirected to production companies, as the issues were not under Film Office purview.

2014 Forecast and Initiatives

Despite the change from HST to a GST/PST tax combination in April 2013 (which was anticipated to negatively impact film production budgets), 2013 was an unusually busy year for filming in Richmond and the Province, possibly due to BC's existing infrastructure of studios, skilled workers, variety of locations and reputation for providing excellent value. The recent decline in the Canadian dollar (currently at \$0.90 USD) may help to maintain the pace that was seen in 2013.

It is not clear whether the *Save BC Film* movement contributed to the heavy filming activity in 2013, but it brought public awareness to the industry and promoted dialogue around BC's competitive positioning in light of larger tax incentives offered by other jurisdictions, such as Toronto.

Indicators for Lower Mainland filming in 2014 are mixed. Television pilots and series are on par for the first quarter in 2014, and television activity is expected to match that of 2013.

Should the popular television series *Once Upon a Time*, *Bates Motel* and *Almost Human* be renewed for subsequent seasons into 2014, the Film Office looks forward to working with these productions again, should Richmond's locations be featured in these future seasons.

2014 Initiatives

The Film Office will continue to position Richmond as a preferred place to conduct film business. Some 2014 initiatives include:

- General public session on "How to be a Location for Film" for residents and businesses, with a focus on promoting areas other than Steveston for filming. Time and agenda to be set.
- Further community outreach to build on the successful dialogue achieved at the 2013 "Filming in Steveston Information Session".
- Update of Richmond's Film Strategy and Implementation Plan. The creation of a three-year strategy and review of policy and procedures.
- Application for a "Partners on Screen" designation from the BC Film Commission.
- Continued work with the Creative BC (British Columbia Film Commission) and other Lower Mainland film offices to attract filming to the region.

The Film Office 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

Filming in Richmond exceeded projected activity targets in 2013. Film Office community outreach initiatives were well-received and resulted in a decrease in negative perceptions regarding filming. The Film Office continues to provide timely and responsive customer service, and will continue to work with the community and the film industry to sustainably increase filming in Richmond.



Kerry Gillis
Acting Film and Major Events Liaison
(604-247-4689)