



City of Richmond

Report to Committee

To: Parks, Recreation and Cultural Services Committee **Date:** March 7, 2018

From: Jane Fernyhough, Director, Arts, Culture and Heritage Services **File:** 08-4150-09-01/2018-Vol 01

Re: 2017 Richmond Film Office Annual Report

Staff Recommendations

1. That the staff report titled "2017 Richmond Film Office Annual Report", dated March 7, 2018, from the Director, Arts, Culture and Heritage Services, be received for information; and
2. That a communications plan be developed and implemented to provide ongoing information to the public about the level of filming activity within Richmond and its benefits to the community.

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Per:

Jane Fernyhough
 Director, Arts, Culture and Heritage Services
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REPORT CONCURRENCE		
ROUTED TO:	CONCURRENCE	CONCURRENCE OF GENERAL MANAGER
Finance Division Economic Development Corporate Communications	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<i>[Signature]</i>
REVIEWED BY STAFF REPORT / AGENDA REVIEW SUBCOMMITTEE	INITIALS: <i>aj</i>	APPROVED BY CAO <i>[Signature]</i>

Staff Report

Origin

In 2007, Council adopted an official 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 2017 film activity in the City, as well as to advise of early indicators for 2018.

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 facilitates all City services required for filming and coordinates invoicing for those services; the most common services include policing, staff liaisons, location rentals and use of city streets.

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.

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

This past year was another busy year for filming in Richmond with a considerable amount of revenue and number of filming days. In contrast to 2015 and 2016, the focus for 2017 was episodic television with a lower volume of feature films working in the City.

The productions filmed in Richmond for 2017 included:

- **Feature Films:** Ollie (Predator), Hard Powder, Psych the Movie, Overboard and Skyscraper.
- **TV:** Arrow, Beyond, Colony, Frequency, Hit the Road, Ice, iZombie, Legends of Tomorrow, Life Sentence, Lost in Space, One of a Kind, Once Upon a Time, Siren, Supernatural, The Crossing, The Hunt, The Magicians, Travellers and Unreal.

- **Commercials:** Air Canada, Toyota, Coast Capital Savings, Entyvio Pharmaceutical, Jaguar/Land Rover, Lucky Charms, Loblaws and Entyvio Pharmaceutical.

Filming Revenue

\$391,725 in service and location charges were processed through the Richmond Film Office in 2017. The breakdown of revenue was as follows:

- \$138,679 in location rental fees (e.g., parks, heritage buildings, etc.);
- \$50,146 in street use and parking fees (revenue to Transportation and Bylaws);
- \$60,234 in various cost recoveries (e.g., staff time cost recovery, fire hydrant permits, special effects permits, etc.);
- \$86,497 to the Richmond RCMP Detachment; and
- \$56,169 to the Richmond Film Office for administration fees.

Total: \$391,725.00

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.

Film revenue collected by the City in 2017 is lower than in 2016 mainly due to a City owned lot which was previously used for set builds not being available and renovations at two popular heritage sites (Britannia Shipyards and Minoru Chapel). However, the filming market remains strong in Richmond with at least two privately owned warehouses being converted into studio space for regular film activity and one city owned property being used as a studio temporarily.

A notable loss for Steveston in 2017 is the departure of the ABC television series *Once Upon a Time*. The show has shifted plots in its seventh season and the new setting is Seattle, which is now filmed elsewhere in Metro Vancouver. *Once Upon a Time* was a major player in the Richmond film market and filmed over 100 episodes in Steveston over six seasons. A number of shows express interest in filming in Steveston Village, and two (*Siren* and *The Crossing*) filmed regularly between July and December. Those shows have yet to air and potential renewals will be determined towards the summer.

Richmond continues to be a popular location due to its variety of locations, generally cooperative merchants and residents and the support of Council.

Filming Days

Filming activity by total number of days:

Year	Filming Days		Comments
	Shoot Days	Prep/Wrap/ Hold Days	
2017	205	253	Included several major features filming for short periods of time in the City, and numerous TV productions.
2016	276	291	Included one major feature filming on location in Steveston Village, one feature filming on a property owned by the City and numerous on location film and TV productions.
2015	189	380	Included two major blockbuster films which filmed on a property owned by the City and numerous other film and TV productions.
2014	133	65	Included numerous feature films and TV productions.
2013	147	52	Included one major blockbuster film which required a month of preparation.

Within Richmond, there are many non-City owned locations used for filming including Steveston Harbour Authority, YVR, Metro Vancouver and the Gulf of Georgia Cannery. These locations and other 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 the filming can be included in City records.

In 2017, there were 158 days of filming managed by staff on City-owned property, 30 days of filming on Metro Vancouver property and 17 filming days at YVR.

Economic Benefits of Filming

Each year the Canadian Motion Picture Association releases economic impact studies for at least one production filmed in BC. In 2017, a report on the impact of the Metro Vancouver filmed production "Arrow" was released. Highlights from that report include:

- 7,087 full time jobs created over five seasons
- \$360.8 million in direct production expenditures (within BC)
- \$4.3 million in wages for local crew and labour each season
- \$27.9 million on goods and services

While Arrow is not a regularly re-occurring show in Richmond, it does film in the city a few times each season. The report is a good example of the impact one local show can have on our economy.

According to Creative BC data, film production expenditures in BC were over \$2.7 billion in 2017, an increase of over \$500 million from 2016. 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.

Metro Vancouver has 2.5 million square feet of studio space and in 2017 virtually all of it was rented out to film productions. Productions are actively seeking warehouse space and converting them into temporary and permanent studios for filming. In 2017, at least two temporary warehouse conversions and one permanent warehouse studio conversion were constructed in Richmond.

The film sector is a major employer in the City with over \$27 million in wages earned by residents employed in 2016 (2017 data is unavailable). Film production unions are predicting higher numbers for 2017 as a result of increased filming activity in Metro Vancouver.

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 at capacity in most areas and there is no indication of any slowdown occurring. There are several examples of productions previously working in other jurisdictions relocating to Metro Vancouver for both economic and practical reasons.

Staff continue to work strategically with Creative BC, neighboring municipalities and film industry representatives on a variety of initiatives including:

1. Ongoing involvement with the Community Affairs Task Force, a group comprised of municipal staff, union representatives and studio representatives dedicated to the discussion of matters affecting the community as a whole.
2. In an effort to be more user friendly to productions, staff are working with municipal counterparts towards streamlined regulations, fees and bylaws. A project is currently being brought forward by the Metro Vancouver Regional Prosperity Initiative regarding a form of centralised permitting processes. Staff have participated in one information session and concerns from several municipalities were raised about this initiative. The main issue raised was the potential misconception and challenges of implementing a “central permit”. Each municipality will still need to work directly with productions to ensure availability of locations, proper insurance requirements, staffing requirements, intellectual property matters, street parking and other City specific matters. Staff will continue to monitor the project and ensure it aligns with the City’s best interests.
3. Education initiatives for the public and industry professionals. Staff recently partnered with the Richmond Chamber of Commerce to produce an educational lunch event called “Big Screen Big Impact”, which featured a “fireside chat” format with some of the film industry’s biggest local players. The panel included Sandi Cooper, BC Film Commissioner; Kathy Gilroy, Producer, Once Upon a Time; Peter Mitchell, Chair of the

Motion Picture Industry Association of BC and president of North Shore Studios and Kendrie Upton, Director, Directors Guild of Canada BC. As a result of this event the film office has made additional contacts working in the City of Richmond, including a newly established Chinese language film studio.

Staff also participated as a guest speaker at local post-secondary film courses including BCIT and Vancouver Film School. The attendees at these courses are currently training to become film professionals, often in the locations departments and reaching out to them on matters such as filming protocols on location has proved very valuable.

Financial Impact

None.

Conclusion

Filming has increased steadily over the past few years and will continue to be busy in 2018. Filming is an important economic industry in the City. The financial impact through employment and fees for locations is significant and beneficial to the City.



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