

REPORT

Parks and Recreation

To: Mayor Johnstone and Members of Council
Date: April 8, 2024

From: Dean Gibson
Director of Parks and Recreation
File: 2015409

Item #: 2024-167

Subject: **2023 Filming Activity and Proposed Updates to Filming Policies and Procedures**

RECOMMENDATION

THAT Council direct staff to update the Filming Policies and Procedures as outlined in this report.

PURPOSE

The purpose of this report is to provide Council with the annual overview of filming activity and accomplishments for 2023, and to propose updates to the filming policies and procedures.

SUMMARY

For many years, New Westminster has been a desirable filming location in the Metro Vancouver area which has resulted in a steady source of annual revenue for the City.

In 2023, there was a decrease in film permits issued due to the Motion Picture Industry's Screen Writers Guild and Screen Actors Guild strike which lasted from May to November. In addition to this suspension in filming productions, a number of significantly sized construction projects were taking place in the City that limited the amount of available filming locations. Limited availability of off-street parking locations large enough to accommodate filming trucks, catering, actor trailers, equipment, etc. also presented a challenge. The majority of the productions that did take place were TV series, movies and independent films which is summarized in Attachment "A".

During the year, staff had the opportunity to review the filming policies and procedures and are now recommending changes that better align the City's policies, procedures and filming expectations with film industry standards and regional practices.

BACKGROUND

In 1998, the City started to actively manage filming activity in recognition of the significant benefit of filming in the city as it creates meaningful economic spin-offs (non-film permit revenues) which include indirect spending and supplemental income to residents and merchants. A Film Coordinator position was created to support filming requests, coordinate city services, manage neighbourhood impacts through communication and mitigation efforts with residents and businesses, and apply filming policies and permit fees.

EXISTING POLICY

Film Permit Bylaw No. 7793, 2016, regulates filming activity in New Westminster. Applicable filming permit fees are accounted for in the Parks and Recreation Fees Bylaw No. 6673, 2001. The City has additionally adopted Filming Policies and Procedures that accompany related filming bylaws. In addition, Creative BC's Filming Code of Conduct, applicable law, and industry standards also governs filming across the province. To date, all filming within New Westminster is managed through the City's Filming Coordinator.

DISCUSSION

2023 Filming Activity

Good news stories related to filming are frequent but mostly unrecognized by the general public. Examples of unique filming stories that benefitted local residents and organizations included:

- A resident of Queensborough says that "filming was the most exciting thing to have happened since the Olympic torch!"
- A production company donated \$3,500 to a local youth sport organization in recognition of disruption to practice and league play schedules.
- A local community based event received a \$1,500 donation for the temporary displacement of event parking
- Creative BC's Motion Picture Community Initiative Program provided \$3,500 to sponsor a "Movie by the River" event at Westminster Pier Park where 1800 people attended.
- New West Movie Trivia feature created for "Music by the River" event that provided interesting film facts in New Westminster. This feature has been widely shared via the City's social channels, Tourism New West and Creative BC.
- Creative BC included New Westminster on the [Netflix in Your Neighbourhood](#) interactive map where residents could learn about TV Series and Films that were produced in New Westminster.

Filming Policy and Procedure Amendments

The filming office conducts an extensive analysis every few years to ensure the City of New Westminster's practices and policies are aligned with film industry standards in British Columbia. Staff have conducted a policy and procedure review and are recommending minor revisions to the Filming Policies and Procedures that will provide clarity and align the City of New Westminster with current municipal and provincial industry standards.

New Westminster Filming Policies and Procedures revisions are highlighted in red in Attachment "B". Key highlights of the policy amendments include:

- New certification requirement for catering and craft service food trucks (must now have a valid Greater Vancouver Fire Chief association decal)
- Clarification when dealing with Special Effects in regards to when New Westminster Police Members are required to be on location when the following is present: Use of Replica fire arms exposed or discharged, exposed weapons on location and, Actors dressed as police or military, Police or military vehicles on location, Moving picture cars, camera cars and process trailers, Complicated stunts or gags.
- Implementing International Production company procedures where production companies are required to register with Creative BC/The BC film commission and The Directors Guild of Canada, Insurance must be provided by a Canadian based Insurance company with a local address, Utilizing local production staff (Location managers, scouts, and production assistants with sound knowledge of the British Columbia film and television industry standards and practices)

FINANCIAL IMPACTS

Due to the motion picture industry union's strike and limited access to filming locations due to construction, the film office processed less permits than in previous years and these were mostly for television commercials, student films and independent productions.

The following table summarizes the past five-year period of filming activity in New Westminster.

Year	Permits	Film Days	Permit Value*	Net Operations**
2023	40	53	\$286,626	\$47,469
2022	64	86	\$1,047,517	\$353,201
2021	60	76	\$593,494	\$173,255
2020	54	76	\$730,886	\$220,966
2019	95	140	\$795,151	\$324,960

*Includes all city services costs and fees associated with issuing a film permit

**Net operations after accounting for all filming operating revenues and expenditures

Film Permit revenue sources include civic location fees, administration charges, license fees, inspection fees and 'purchased' civic services (i.e. Police Services). It is anticipated that in 2024, the city will issue film permits at the same levels of 2022 which will support a continued economic benefit to the City, its residents and its businesses.

OPTIONS

The following options are provided for Council's Consideration:

1. Direct staff to update the Filming Policies and Procedures as outlined in this report.
2. That Council provide staff with alternative direction.

Option #1 is recommended.

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment A: 2023 Filming Activity

Attachment B: 2024 Filming Report to Council Policy and Procedures Update

APPROVALS

This report was prepared by:

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