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**To:** "Direct to Mayor and Council - DL" <[CCDTMACDL@vancouver.ca](mailto:CCDTMACDL@vancouver.ca)>

**Date:** 2/18/2016 8:13:38 PM

**Subject:** Memo - 2015 Film Branch Data and Update

**Attachments:** [ENG - 2015 Film Branch Data and Update.pdf](#)

Dear Mayor & Council,

Attached please find a memo from Jerry Dobrovolny, General Manager, Engineering Services providing year end data related to TV and film production in Vancouver for 2015. As you will see from the attached, 2015 was a record setting year for filming permits in Vancouver. The number of productions filming in Vancouver rose more than 40% over 2014.

Please contact Sandi Swanigan, Senior Manager, Film and Special Events at 604-257-8841 or [sandi.swanigan@vancouver.ca](mailto:sandi.swanigan@vancouver.ca) if you have any questions or require more information.

Best,

Sadhu

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ENGINEERING SERVICES  
 Jerry Dobrovolny, P.Eng.  
 City Engineer/General Manager

## MEMORANDUM

February 18, 2016

TO: Mayor and Council

CC: Sadhu Johnston, Acting City Manager  
 Paul Mochrie, Acting Deputy Manger  
 Janice MacKenzie, City Clerk  
 Lynda Graves, Manager, Administration Services, City Manager's Office  
 Rena Kendall-Craden, Director, Communications  
 Mike Magee, Chief of Staff, Mayor's Office  
 Kevin Quinlan, Deputy Chief of Staff, Mayor's Office  
 Lon LaClaire, Acting Director of Transportation

FROM: Jerry Dobrovolny, General Manager of Engineering Services

SUBJECT: 2015 Film Branch Data and Update

This memo provides the year-end data related to TV and film production in Vancouver in 2015<sup>1</sup>.

### Filming in Vancouver 2015

The year 2015 was a record setting year for filming permits in Vancouver. The number of productions filming in Vancouver in 2015 rose more than 40% over 2014. The branch issued 4,678 film and street activity permits in 2015; this is in comparison to 3,323 in 2014.<sup>2</sup> There were 1518 film days in Vancouver in 2015<sup>3</sup>. City film and street activity permit revenue increased from \$480,000 in 2014 to \$710,000 in 2015<sup>4</sup>.

Fuelled by a low Canadian dollar and a growing reputation for being "film-friendly", Vancouver was host to an extraordinary amount of filming activity. Most notable is the return

<sup>1</sup> The data enclosed does not include Vancouver Parks Board film data.

<sup>2</sup> A "street activity permit" is a permit that allows up to 3 contiguous or connected blocks using the same closures times (e.g. 300, 400 and 500 Block Keefer for closure from 7:00 pm March 12 to 7:00 am March 13). It is critical to note that a street activity permit is not synonymous with film permit; each production will have many street use permits issued over their run. Prior to the issuance of a street activity permit, each on-street location must be checked for frequency of use; previous issues or complaints; traffic restrictions; and scheduling conflicts with City construction, development construction, utility work and other filming or special events.

<sup>3</sup> A "film day" is a day where a production is actively filming as opposed to preparing and/or tearing down a location or set. The 1425 film days reported in 2013 were incorrectly reported as they included "prep and wrap" days due to data entry errors.

<sup>4</sup> This revenue figure does not include cost-recovery or service charges, such as City labour or VPD.

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of the feature film - a production type that had been relatively static. Ten more feature films (26) were produced in Vancouver than in 2014. Features such as *Deadpool* garnered international attention for Vancouver; the production brought considerable economic benefits as well. *Deadpool* spent over \$40 million during 58 days of filming in Metro Vancouver. The production hired over 2,000 local cast and crew, spending more than \$19,000,000 in wages.

The commercial industry filmed a record 158 TV commercials in 2015. These ranged from simple location shoots to truly amazing feats of set design such as the Jeep Cherokee Commercial filmed on 400 Granville Street in March 2015. The filming was largely made possible through the cooperation of the Downtown Business Improvement Association and TransLink. The commercial is currently in heavy rotation on TV and in movie theatres. The filming attracted attention from news outlets and generated millions of social media impressions, most of which mentioned Vancouver. The following link explains how the commercial was made and its media impact. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Z81L44pEo60> .

Vancouver is, however, primarily a TV town. Over 309 episodes of television filmed in Vancouver last year. Warner Bros. continues to be Vancouver's biggest TV client with 7 productions filming in 2015, including *Arrow*, *The Flash*, *Supernatural*, *iZombie*, *Lucifer*, the 100 and *DC Legends of Tomorrow*. Warner Bros. spent an estimated 70 million dollars directly in the city of Vancouver on labour, suppliers and locations. Their productions employ over 2,400 local crew and cast who reside in the city. TV filming, however, has become increasingly complex and a single episode now regularly has the "footprint" and intricacy historically related to feature films. This is particularly true of non-network producers such as Amazon who largely film the award-nominated "*The Man in the High Castle*" in Vancouver.

A total of 353 productions filmed in Vancouver in 2015.

	2013*	2014	2015	Notes
Films	28	36	78	Includes feature films and made-for-TV films (26 features filmed in 2015 over 16 in 2014)
TV Series	27	34	45	
Pilots	13	10	16	The first episode(s) of proposed series. Often higher-budget than regular series and can feature high-profile directors and/or producers.
Commercials	116	105	158	
Other	65	50	56	Includes short films, music videos, documentaries, student films, photo shoots, etc.

### Employment Data

The film and television industry continues to be a significant employer and contributor to the City's economy. Payroll data based on city postal codes show that over \$143,000,000 was paid in wages to Vancouver residents in 2015.

### 2015 Initiatives and Milestones

In late 2014 it became evident that TV and film production in Vancouver was reaching unprecedented levels. In response, the film branch and the industry initiated a series of actions aimed at ensuring a viable and sustainable film production industry.

### Improved City-to-Industry Communication

Film branch management provides in-person monthly reports to the Motion Picture Production Industry Association. This was key to the production industry's recognition that location sustainability needed to be a primary area of focus. The Motion Picture Production Industry Association, the Director's Guild of Canada Location Caucus, and Creative BC (which houses the BC Film Commission) began and continue to work closely with the City's film branch to proactively encourage filming practices that are considerate of neighbourhoods, particularly those most heavily-filmed.

In partnership with the City, the film industry is currently working with the BIA Task Force on Film and Special Events as well as other with community groups regarding frequency management, crew conduct on location, and film tourism.

### A Regional Approach to Issues

Vancouver's film branch management has been a leader in establishing a more "regional" approach to production permitting, issue identification and resolution, procedure alignment and best practices sharing. Regular meetings with other municipal film offices have allowed for a unified voice at the industry table. This informal group has been able to help the film industry prioritize action. The City's film branch is leading the initiative to formalize the municipal film office working group.

### Vancouver - a "Film City".

A critical part of sustaining Vancouver's future as a production destination is to create a better public understanding of the film industry and the role it plays in the local economy and as a corporate citizen. Vancouver is the third largest production centre in North America and is one of the largest digital entertainment centres in the world. This is a story worth telling. The industry and the City's film branch are working on strategies on how to best share information such as that below:

- Location filming is an increasingly green industry and continues to develop its "Reel Green" program. Warner Bros. have a rigorous organics and recycling program in place - one started many years ago. The following link reveals how the practices of the City's largest TV client align with the our Green City Strategy. (<http://www.greensparkgroup.com/news/2015/4/22/warner-bros-is-watching-its-waste-showing-leadership-with-the-2015-vancouver-organics-ban> )
- Film productions give back to the communities they film in. Contributions include:
  - Over \$100,000 in new furniture by Great Pacific Media to various lower mainland charities, shelters and aboriginal societies.
  - \$87,000 contributed in 2015 to the Vancouver Food Bank via the industry's annual "Reel Thanksgiving Challenge" with 36 participating productions;
  - 3 decades providing nearly 80,000 meals at the annual Oppenheimer Park Dinner;
  - Multiple grassroots legacy contributions to BC communities including library, Boys and Girls Clubs and community Sport support;
  - Annual support for local charitable organizations via the Stephen J. Cannell fundraiser – past recipients include A Loving Spoonful, Habitat for Humanity, and the Paralympic Foundation; and

- Nearly \$1 million over 10 years in combined cash and resources supporting emerging generations of talent via the MPPIA Short Film Award.

#### Recognition and Appreciation

Key to location sustainability is the creation of mechanisms by which productions can formally acknowledge impacted residents and businesses. The film industry also remains committed to raising the City's profile through publicity. The film branch is currently revising film application forms to include economic impact and charitable outreach data with the goal of better tracking and reporting out on the film industry's social and financial contributions to the City.

The CBC production "Romeo Section" provides an example of the types of actions productions can do to promote and thank the city and its residents.

"Romeo Section" producers:

- Gave thanks to the City of Vancouver in its on-screen credits;
- Mentioned via Twitter that the show was set in Vancouver;
- Had cast and crew tweet positive messages about the neighbourhoods they were filming in such as Hastings Sunrise, Chinatown and Gastown; and
- Donated approximately \$10,000 to charities, schools, senior centres and mental health resource centres located in the specific areas where their filming was taking place.

#### **2016 Outlook**

A continued low Canadian dollar boosted January's 2016 figures to a 30% increase in film permits over 2015. Sound stage (studio) availability is low, however, and it will be interesting to observe whether lack of studio space diminishes the demand for physical location filming. Unless there is a significant increase in the Canadian dollar's value or a policy change at the provincial government level, it is very probable that filming in 2016 will match that of 2015.

Please contact Sandi Swanigan, Senior Manager, Film and Special Events at 604-257-8841 or [sandi.swanigan@vancouver.ca](mailto:sandi.swanigan@vancouver.ca) if you have any questions or require more information.



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