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To: ["Direct to Mayor and Council - DL"](#)
Date: 3/14/2023 4:47:12 PM
Subject: Film Commissioner Briefing
Attachments: 2023-03 Film Commissioner Backgrounder - For Mayor's LA Trip.pptx
CoV Film Industry Letter March 2023 (002).pdf

Dear Mayor and Council,

Please find attached a briefing document from the Vancouver Film Commissioner that summarizes the following:

- The City's Motion Picture Leadership Group
- The Film Services Alignment Project
- Film Commissioner functions
- Known challenges and requests from industry

Additionally, we attach here a letter from the Director's Guild of Canada and the Motion Picture Industry Association to Mayor and Council via the Vancouver Film Commissioner. This letter provides additional context to some of the more acute permitting process challenges and opportunities that the briefing document summarizes.

Thanks,

Karen

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The City of Vancouver acknowledges that it is situated on the unceded traditional territories of the xʷməθkʷəy̓əm/Musqueam, Sḵwə́wú7mesh/Squamish and səliwə́tə/Tsleil-Waututh nations

Vancouver Film Commissioner Briefing for Mayor and Council



- Motion Picture Leadership Group
- Film Services Alignment Project
- Film Commissioner Functions
- Known challenges & requests from industry



Vancouver's Motion Picture Leadership Group

A forum for City and industry representatives to collaborate, key objectives:

1. Maintain ongoing collaboration between the City and motion picture industry in order to support long-term industry sustainability
2. Engage motion picture industry to prioritize opportunities, develop action plans and advance initiatives
3. Provide Council with progress reports as needed

Industry Representatives	City Representatives
Motion Picture Industry Association BC	Film & Special Events Branch
Canadian Media Producers Association	Engineering
Motion Picture Association Canada (US Producers)	Park Board
Vancouver Film Studios	Planning
Directors Guild of Canada (labour org)	Real Estate and Facilities Management
IATSE 892 (labour org)	Development and Business Licensing
CreativeBC (Provincial Film Commission)	Vancouver Film Commissioner

Key priorities
1. Streamline permitting processes
2. Increase industry participation in City processes shaping land use & infrastructure
3. Improve access to City-owned facilities & parking
4. Support workforce development initiatives
5. Be the world leader in sustainable production

Film Services Alignment Project

A project that is responding to industry desire for greater alignment of policies and processes across all groups providing service to the industry.

- Identify mandates, structures, and services across multiple departments
- Make recommendations that will clarify mandates, improve internal alignment, and streamline permitting processes
- Set Vancouver up for continued success and growth as the third largest production centre in North America

Customer Empathy Mapping

What do they see/feel?

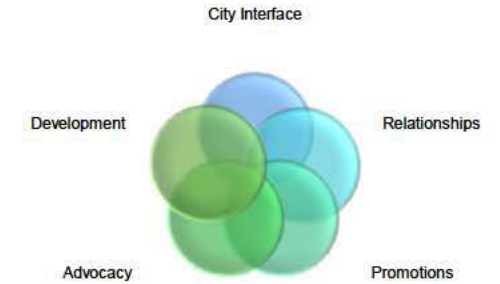


What do they want ?



Film Commissioner Functions

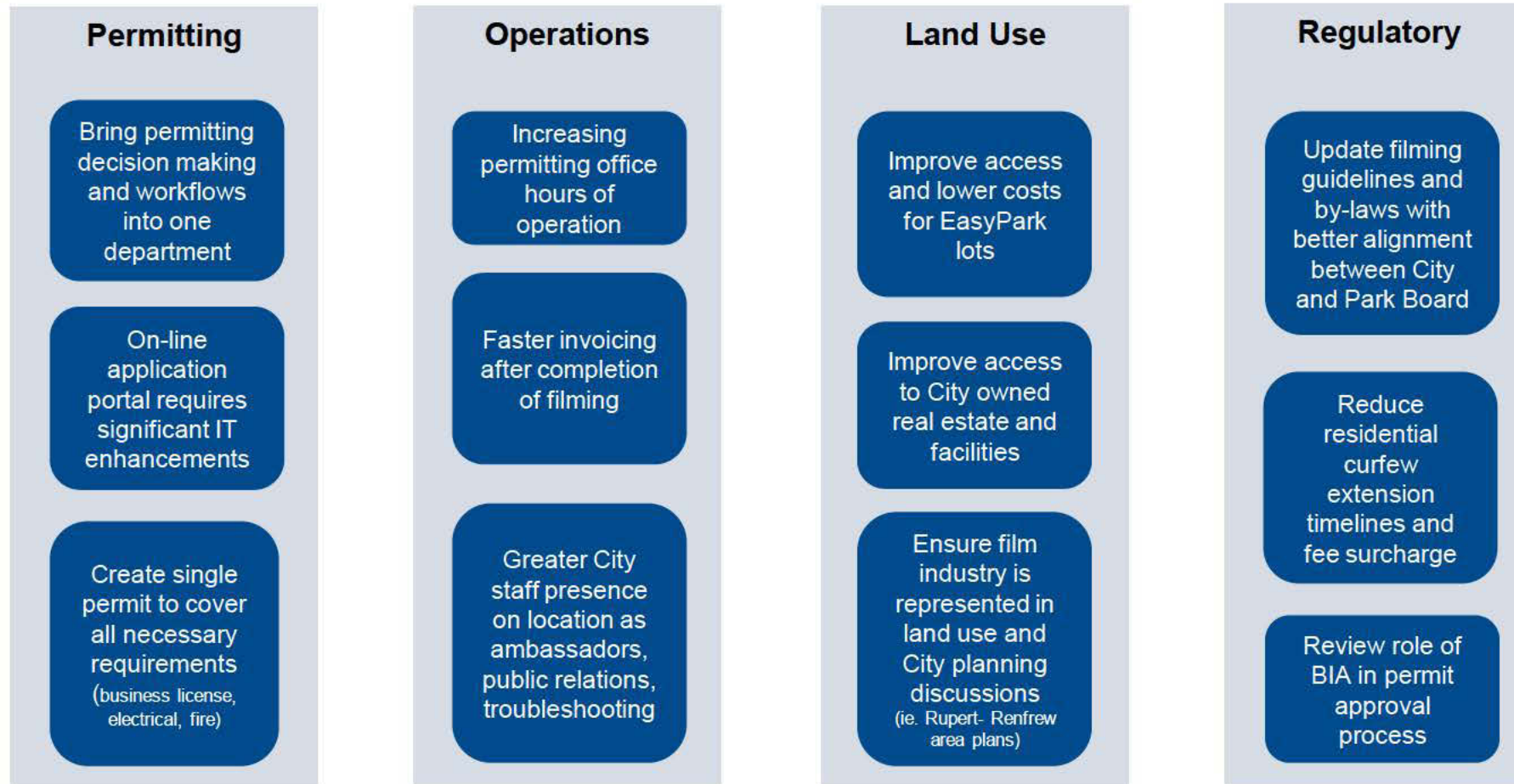
Five broad categories of Film Commissioner activities, supported by staff from Vancouver Economic Commission, Engineering, Vancouver Park Board, Finance, Legal, Sustainability, and Licensing



Optimizing City - Industry Interface	Relationship Management	Sector Development	Advocacy & Research	Promotions & Communication
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Driving internal process improvementOptimizing policy and regulatory frameworksIntegration into City planning and land use decisions	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Inquiry management and troubleshootingCollaboration with other jurisdictionsIndustry relations & engagement	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Competitive analysis and priority settingDirect investment facilitationCross sector collaboration (ie Tourism & Hospitality)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Political advocacy & government relationsProduction attraction & retentionResearch, analysis & reporting	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Public relations & eventsMedia relationsWebsite management
<p>See next page for drill down</p>				

Optimizing City-Industry Interface

Internal process improvement began pre-pandemic. However, more is required to respond to industry permitting, operational support, and land use needs. Below is a summary of the most common challenges and requests from industry



How can I help?



Geoff Teoli

Film Commissioner

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Working Together so the Film industry can continue to Grow

March 13, 2023

Dear Mayor and Council:

The City of Vancouver is the busiest filming area in British Columbia. It attracts large scale production for sites that are used frequently (The Art Gallery) and others that are used more intermittently. Some productions required a full shut down of major thoroughfares (ie. Deadpool) and others only need a street corner for a day.

The film industry is unlike many other industries. One of our superpowers is the ability to pivot and act quickly. The age-old theatre adage “the show must go on” is relevant for film production as well. For example, an actor may be ill and we have to change our shooting dates for a particular scene from “next week” to “the day after tomorrow” because those actors are available. The cost of a day’s production is immense. If you think of the \$4.8B dollars that was spent in BC last year and if you even break that down to a per day per production spend, you can anticipate that the costs are high and thus, the stakes are as well.

Things that we are good at in production:

- *Pivoting*. Our relatively quick return to production when Covid hit is the most extreme example of what we can do. We adapt very well.
- *Servicing the needs of the Creative Team*. We have so much to offer in terms of locations in BC and is one of the main reasons why our industry has grown so much in the last 20 years. We work together to make the creative vision possible.
- *Working with the community* to establish relationships. We talk to neighbours, businesses and others impacted by our presence. We also ensure that we leave a location the same or better than we found it.
- *Giving back*. We donate to community causes and support local charities.
- *Sustainability focussed*. We are seen as one of the most progressive sustainable production regions in the world and we continue to push for improvement with each production. Thank you to the City of Vancouver for the power kiosks!
- *Working with Government at every level in partnership to ensure that policy is not prohibitive*. For example, we have worked closely with the Ministry of Transport to establish programs to allow the new Hours of Service policies to work with how our industry does trucking.

To be successful, we rely upon:

- The ability to work closely with people in the community, the municipalities and the provincial government to make the seemingly impossible possible.

What is guaranteed:

- We will constantly make changes to our plans.
- We will be respectful of the environment, location, and the people we are working with.
- We will endeavour to leave the filming location the same or better than when we arrived.

What makes it all worth it?

- The economic impact of production goes well beyond the direct spend.
- Tourism expands from having had production shoot here.
- Industry employs over 70,000 people directly and more through the vendors that we use
- We support local business.

Our relationship with the City of Vancouver has improved recently, but there is still more work to be done. Our location managers are constantly challenged and at a minimum, it creates chaos for production at a maximum, production avoids coming to town at all.

We need your help to ensure that we continue to be a premier choice for production.

Here is a list of ideas that we would like to present for your consideration/action. The examples I have presented are not simply one-time experiences. We welcome the opportunity to work with you to implement solutions and would appreciate a follow-up meeting with the teams involved where we can discuss these further.

- Start with a policy of “Yes”.
 - There are staff in the Film office that always do, but others who need to be convinced and only present the reasons for why they can’t accomplish the request.
- Be available:
 - The film industry is never going to be 9am to 5pm. The most successful municipal offices we work with provide us extended hours of service.
- Communicate and update the location manager:
 - Let us know where our request is at and what further information the City needs to lead to “yes”
- Change the permitting portal:
 - It is not user friendly and results in more work for production teams to manage. In fact, the locations department adds an extra administrator when they know they are working in the City for their film.
 - Last minute amendments, which happen often, are nearly impossible because the portal is inflexible, and results in delays.
- Invoice us in a reasonable timeline:
 - We often do not get our permit invoices for **months** after filming is complete, which creates challenges particularly when they come after production has wrapped. Staffing our accounting team beyond our end date simply to receive and process invoices from the city is costly. From what we understand, it is the finance department that takes this lengthy time that creates the issues.
- Update the Residential Curfew extension guideline:
 - There is a 14-day notification guideline which does not work for our industry. While staff has some discretion, it currently lacks transparency. Our turnarounds between scouting and shooting are often only a few days, which doesn’t correspond with the requirements that are currently in place.

A 7-day notification would be much more feasible and would be more consistent.

- BIA authorization
 - They currently can say No to filming even after we have received approval from all the businesses involved. Their 'no', although it is not supposed to be the final say, often influences the final decision of the film office. We are happy to engage and coordinate with the BIA's, but they should *not* be able to stop us from filming when the community has approved it. In particular, if the BIA is non-responsive to our emails, which often happens, that should not be assumed as a no, but rather we should consider that we as production have done our due diligence and the BIA as been informed and we get to move forward.
 - The BIA expect and collect a fee from every production that comes, even when they are not providing support to production or assisting us. This should not be the case. We already pay the businesses for any disruption, and we pay the city for access and permitting. The additional costs are getting prohibitive.
- Reconsider Permit Fees:
 - The doubling of nighttime permit fees in residential areas is a significant burden to production. Often, we can only gain full street control overnight and this then results in burdensome fees.
- Allow Property access:
 - Parking in the City for production has become increasingly difficult. We understand that our footprint is large and that the city is growing! Parking on Private properties is cost prohibitive. We would appreciate an opportunity at the Motion Picture Leadership Group table to discuss what City Owned properties could be make available regularly for film industry access as was done under the Viaduct.
 - Easy Park lots are City Owned, and it would be helpful to discuss how production can access these for crew parking when downtown.
- Bring the permitting decisions to one department internally:
 - Improve the process so there are not so many steps to get to "yes". Give more ability for the film office to coordinate quickly with other departments (including the parks office) to ensure that the application keeps moving quickly.
 - Create a workflow between the Film office and other departments that is streamlined and efficient so that the film clerk can coordinate more easily.

Here are other challenges that we have that we hope you can work with us on as well:

- Fire department Special Effects Permit:
 - We require a Pyrotechnic permit for our special effects from the fire department and we have challenges with getting a timely response. We propose that there is a more formal form/application which is followed by the required site/set visit within 48-72 hours of submission.

- Policing:
 - Determining policing requirements, attending to requests and supervising the work on the site are all inconsistent and generally unpredictable/hard to budget for. We propose a solution that is formulaic to remove guesswork. A couple of examples we could start with:
 - ITC – 4 corner intersection will require 4 VPD Members and 1 Sergeant.
 - Road closure stunt for every 4 officers 1 Sergeant needs to be present.
 - We understand that we would still have to go through a process, but having a basis of expectations will help for our budgeting. We would also like to discuss opportunities to use Traffic control in place of Police officers in situations where it makes sense (ie. To the extent that constructions sites use TC)

We welcome the opportunity to work together with you to discuss and resolve some or all these issues. We appreciate that it will take time to do so, but working as a team to make the seemingly impossible possible is what we do best!

You can reach us at the email addresses below.

With Appreciation,

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