

## Guidelines for filming in Business Improvement Areas

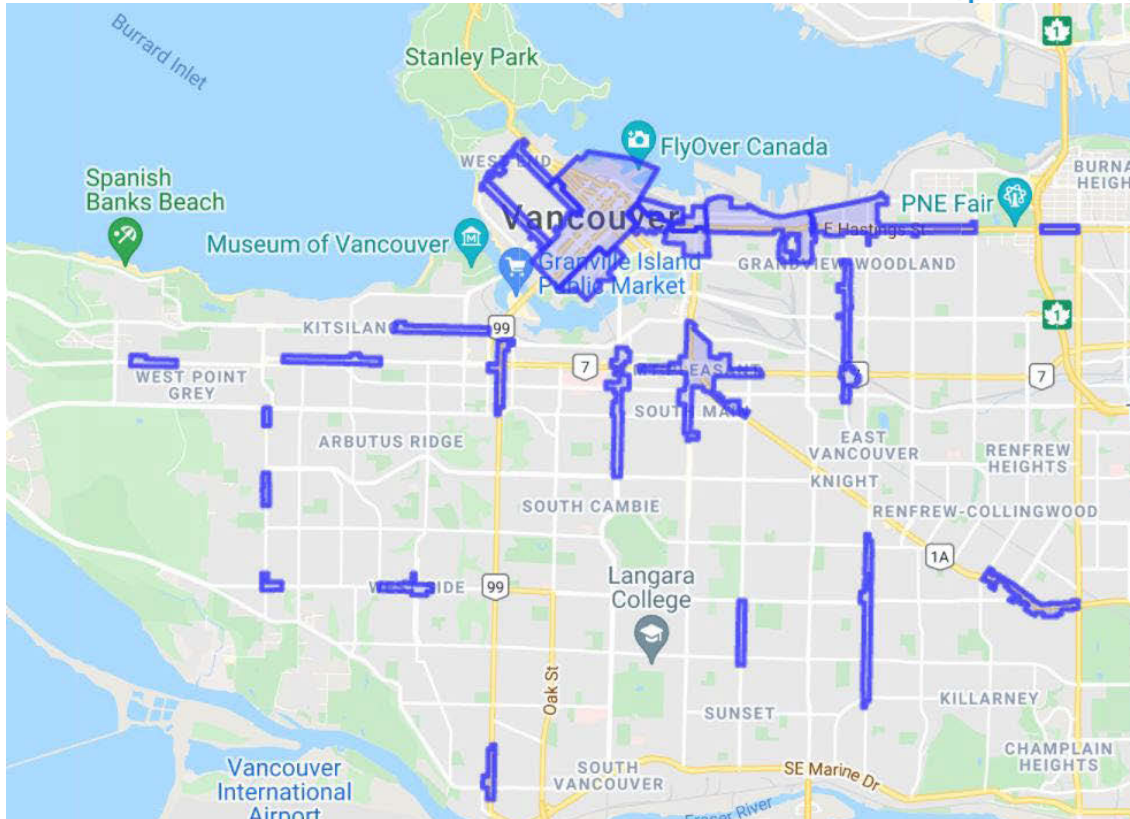
### Purpose

The City of Vancouver and the Vancouver Business Improvement Associations (BIA's) recognise that film production is an important economic sector injecting billions of dollars into the Provincial economy each [year](#). On average, the city of Vancouver permits about 2000 days of filming per year, a great deal of which takes place in our business districts.

City staff, BIA directors, Creative BC and Film industry representatives have developed the guidelines that follow with the intention of balancing the needs of the film industry with the needs of the merchants whose business areas you wish to film.

The purpose of these guidelines is to provide clarity on the approval process for the City of Vancouver to permit filming in Business Improvement Areas. These guidelines are applicable in all twenty-two BIA areas of the City. The most current list of all BIAs and a map of their location can be found [here](#). At the time of writing these guideline have been adopted by the following BIAs:

1. Cambie Village
2. Collingwood
3. Commercial Drive
4. Downtown Vancouver
5. Dunbar Village
6. Gastown
7. Hastings Crossing
8. Hastings North
9. Kerrisdale
10. Kitsilano 4th Avenue
11. Marpole
12. Mount Pleasant
13. Point Grey Village
14. Robson Street
15. South Granville
16. South Hill (Fraser Street)
17. Strathcona
18. Vancouver Chinatown
19. Victoria Drive
20. West Broadway
21. West End
22. Yaletown



## Permitting Responsibilities and Authority

### City Authority and Responsibilities

The City of Vancouver has the exclusive legal authority to permit the use of City property within a BIA; including streets, sidewalks, plazas and parks.

City staff are responsible for considering the level of support of the BIA as part of their decision to permit filming. The City will always retain decision-making authority of public land and properties. In cases where a BIA is not supportive of a film application, City staff will evaluate all available factors including frequency of filming in an area and make a final decision that tries to balance the needs of all parties involved.

### Production Company Responsibilities to Engage BIA

During location scouting, the permit applicant is responsible for being aware of BIA zones in the City and to make contact with BIA staff as soon as a location in a BIA is being considered. For additional clarity, first contact should be made prior to submitting a permit application. This first contact should include high level information regarding dates, times, type of activity, and potential impacts to parking, traffic, pedestrians.

During the application process, the permit applicant is responsible for updating the BIA as details of the filming are firmed up. The BIA must be kept informed of any changes to information provided during initial contact. The applicant must ensure that what is discussed with the BIA is in alignment with what has been asked for in the permit application.

The applicant should document communications with the BIA and may be asked to provide written confirmation of BIA support more than once during the process if material changes are made to the parameters of the permit application.

Failure of the permit applicant to actively and accurately communicate with the BIA will be considered by City staff as rationale to reject or delay the issuance of a film permit.

### BIA Responsibilities

BIAs are responsible to work in good faith with film permit applicants and the City to facilitate film permit requests. They will not unreasonably withhold or delay support of a film permit application.

The level of support may take into account factors such as recent construction, events, and frequency of filming in the area. If a BIA is not supportive, it will provide written rationale of that decision to both the City and the applicant; and give fair opportunity to address the BIA's concerns. In the event that both parties are unable to resolve issues, the City maintains final decision-making authority.

If, in the opinion of the BIA, an area within their district has become sensitive to filming due to volume, the BIA may approach the City of Vancouver Film office to request a "cool down period". If a cool down period is enacted by the City, productions may be restricted until such time as the City, with input from the BIA deems appropriate.

### Production Company Responsibilities to Engage Independent Businesses

Engagement with the BIA is not a substitute for direct engagement with the independent businesses impacted by the proposed filming. Applicants are responsible for communications, contracts, compensation negotiations, and issue resolution with independent businesses. Applicants must make all reasonable efforts to engage directly with individual business owners or owner's agents regarding filming details. It is not adequate to only communicate with front line workers unless business owners have specifically delegated front line workers in that task. Furthermore, any financial compensation provided to a BIA is not a substitute for compensation of the individual businesses directly impacted by filming activity.

## Communications and Notification

### Confirmation of details with BIA

Following first engagement with the BIA when a location is initially scouted, the permit applicant should provide a summary of the proposed filming activity (focused on the dates and footprint of parking) to the local BIA at least ten calendar days prior to the start of filming activity. This summary should align with prior discussion with the BIA and the permit application submitted to the City. Discrepancies between what has been communicated to the BIA and the City may result in City staff delaying the issuance of a permit until those discrepancies are resolved.

For high impact and complex filming activity such as road closures, curfew extensions or extended duration of activity, the production should endeavor to give more than ten days notice if possible.

### Neighbourhood Notification Form

City-wide neighbourhood notification guidelines are applicable in BIA areas. This includes the requirement for written notification to affected merchants and residents a minimum of three days in advance of filming with more days in advance preferred. Productions must try to distribute notification directly to business owners/managers. If contact is not possible, production staff must specifically request that front line staff distribute the notification to their business owner/manager as soon as possible.

All correspondence by film crews should be done in the form of the template notification form provided by the City of Vancouver Film Office (see step 5 in [this link](#)).

Notification forms must be distributed to all merchants and residential properties within a radius approved by the City of Vancouver and the BIA. Consider that there are businesses above street level and ensure proper communication. Where the radius includes properties not accessible to the public, production may distribute a notification letter to a building manager. The BIA can be a great resource in assisting with finding appropriate contact information during the notification process. Productions are encouraged to supplement their distribution by inquiring with the BIA to determine if they have an email list that can be accessed, or if the BIA can send out on their behalf.

Should filming details significantly change (dates/hours/activity) after the initial notification is distributed, additional notifications will be required.

## **Working with Independent Businesses**

Support from a BIA is not a proxy for support from the independent businesses directly impacted from the filming activity. Productions must ensure they negotiate directly for use of private property, notify independent businesses, and resolve to the best of their abilities any issues that arise because of the filming.

### **Property Use Agreements with Independent Business**

Any private property use agreements and negotiations between a film production company and an independent business are considered third party agreements. Sometimes complex building owner and tenant relationships can be challenging to navigate; BIA's can assist with providing correct contact information of property owners.

### **Issues Resolution**

It is the responsibility of production to address concerns expressed by merchants or residents regarding proposed and active filming activity. All parties should work collaboratively to resolve issues, often through simple things like adjustments to planned activities and times or by arranging to purchase the goods and services provided by local businesses.

### **Loss of Business Compensation**

The City recognizes that loss of business compensation agreements are common between film companies and businesses. In almost all cases, these arrangements are made in successful direct negotiations between the parties involved.

However, if a negotiated agreement cannot be reached, the City will not provide an opinion or arbitrate regarding what is fair compensation. Furthermore, it cannot consider a failed negotiation in its decision to issue a permit.

### **Donation to BIA**

BIAs are not-for-profit associations, run by volunteer boards and minimal staff. For as long as filming has taken place in the City, production companies as good steward in the community have donated to the BIAs in recognition of the work they do to support filming. Any donation amount received by a BIA is to be used at their discretion within the Business Improvement Area.

The City is not directly involved with the donation process but we encourage BIA's and productions to consider a variety of factors when coming to an agreement on donation amounts. Some examples for consideration:

- Road/sidewalk closures.

- Intermittent Traffic/Pedestrian Control.
- Frequency in the area and frequency of the production.
- Recurring locations.
- Amount of on street parking requested.
- Day of the week, timing of the day.
- Overall Size or scope of activity.
- Goodwill and past history.
- Level of support from the area businesses.

## **General Guidelines and Best Practices**

### Weekends and Holidays

Filming in some business districts during business hours is strongly discouraged on weekends and holidays. We ask that all productions consider a weekday date where possible as this lessens the impacts on businesses. Often many of the BIAs concerns about the impact of filming can be addressed by moving the date earlier in the week or adjusting the filming hours.

The City will consider issuing permits on weekends and holidays if the timing, footprint and overall impact to businesses is minimal, or where the production can demonstrate that the businesses in the area are generally supportive of the filming.

### December Moratorium

Film permits will not be issued for locations within a BIA during the December holiday season. Each year the City Engineer will determine the exact dates for the moratorium that generally begins in the first week of December and ends the first week of January.

Exceptions to this moratorium will only be made if the BIA is supportive of the request.

## **Parking & Street Use**

Film production parking in business areas can be impactful to merchants; productions must ensure they are requesting the smallest amount of parking that is necessary for their filming event. Specifically:

- Street parking should be limited to core essential vehicles only.
- Any requested parking that is not being utilized by production is to be given back to the neighbourhood as soon as possible.
- Vehicles parked on the street should not block driveways or loading docks without permission from the owner.

- No craft service trucks/tents/etc. in front of open restaurants without consent of the restaurant.
- Consider placement of portable toilets in business areas; keep away from food service businesses and building entrances.
- Productions should book as much off street parking as possible.
- Crew parking should be in designated areas only, there will be zero tolerance for crew vehicles in production booked parking. Crew should not, under any circumstances utilise any street parking in the neighborhood, it is imperative that as many public street parking spaces as possible be available.
- Unless specific arrangements are made, access for service vehicles, delivery vehicles and resident entrances must be accommodated.
- Work trucks can not be left in the area on non film days such as statutory holidays or weekends.
- Work trucks should be parked in a way that minimises hiding or covering business signage.
- Productions should consider renting a portion of the parking lot as a good will gesture for customers not able to access street parking.
- Productions are encouraged to use clean energy sources where possible.
- Generators should be placed in a way that minimises impact of noise and exhaust to buildings.

## **Code of Conduct**

When filming anywhere in the City of Vancouver, production should adhere to these general best practices and the Creative BC Code of Conduct to help keep Vancouver film friendly.

## **Production Assistants**

Production assistants (PA's) are often the first point of contact and ambassadors for the industry. PA's must be welcoming to members of the public and reiterate their welcome to the neighborhood. Proper communication about issues such as intermittent pedestrian control vs a closure, length of expected wait, and offers of assistance to access businesses should be communicated whenever necessary.

PA's are also critical to public safety from escorting public through a film location to "locking up" pedestrians during driving scenes and stunts.

The capacity for a production to provide a sufficient number of qualified PA's to support ambassadorship and public safety will be considered by City staff when considering a permit application.

## **Open for Business Signs**

Production should place signage at all entrance points to the filming area which include wording such as “All businesses open during filming” or “Open for Business during filming” to help foster merchant activity. In addition, production should consider customisable signage for shops that are particularly obstructed by film activity.

## **Report Damage**

Production must report damage to public property to the City and private property to the BIA immediately. If there is significant damage to private property the production must inform both the BIA and City of the damage. Production is responsible for repairing any damaged property, and ensuring there are no safety concerns while repairs are arranged.

## **Other Filming Guidelines and Resources**

The City of Vancouver has issued general guidelines for filming that all productions agree to follow. These guidelines, as well as the process for obtaining a permit can be viewed [here](#).

Creative BC has created a filming at business locations toolkit resource that can be accessed [here](#).