



CITY OF RICHMOND

Richmond Film Office Year in Review 2022

COMMUNITY SERVICES DIVISION



Introduction

The City of Richmond has had a dedicated Film Office since 2007. 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. In 2018, Council adopted Policy 1000–Filming on Location in Richmond which formally acknowledges the economic and social benefits of filming.

The Richmond Film Office oversees the production of and facilitates filming activities in Richmond. The office processes filming applications, provides permits for filming activity on City-owned properties, and assists with location scouting within the City. Staff facilitate 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 motion picture 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. In recent years, the film office has also worked to help attract and facilitate the opening of film studio facilities in Richmond.



2022 Filming Activity

Despite an initial lull in Quarter 1 due to Covid-19, 2022 was an eventful year for filming activity in Richmond with an increase in film days and number of permits issued by the Film Office from previous years.

By spring 2022, filming activity in Richmond and the province was on par to previous years, with an increased number of higher value productions choosing British Columbia for filming. The end of 2022 brought a sense of familiarity, as productions resumed to operating as they did prior to the pandemic, while incorporating the positive learnings and processes acquired over the last two years. Motion picture stakeholders and groups also resumed industry initiatives and projects that were temporarily paused during the pandemic. The Provincial Film Commission attributes this success to British Columbia being one of the safest jurisdictions in which to film during the pandemic due to the professionalism and experience of local crews and industry stakeholders.

2022 Film Days

Table 1: Richmond Film Activity 2018-2022

Year	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
Shoot Days	211	238	128	140	196
Prep/Wrap/Hold Days	209	256	377	373	348
Total Days of Filming Activity	420	494	505	513	544

Within Richmond, there are many non-City owned locations used for filming, including Steveston Harbour Authority, Metro Vancouver, Vancouver International Airport, BCIT Aerospace Technology Campus, 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 2022, there were 428 days of filming activity managed by staff on City-owned property, 76 days of filming activity at Steveston Harbour Authority, 11 days of filming activity on Metro Vancouver property, 12 days of filming activity at Vancouver International Airport, eight days of filming activity at BCIT Aerospace Technology Campus, and nine days of filming activity at the Gulf of Georgia Cannery. The Film Office works with productions to spread out filming activity in order to limit location burnout and ensure the long term sustainability of filming in Richmond.

2022 Filming Revenue

The Richmond Film Office processed \$275,794 in service and location charges in 2022. The breakdown of revenue was as follows:

- \$46,684 in location rental fees;
- \$92,082 in street use and parking fees;
- \$62,898 in various cost recoveries (e.g., staff time cost recovery, fire hydrant permits, special effects permits);
- \$32,364 to the Richmond RCMP Detachment; and
- \$41,766 for administration fees.

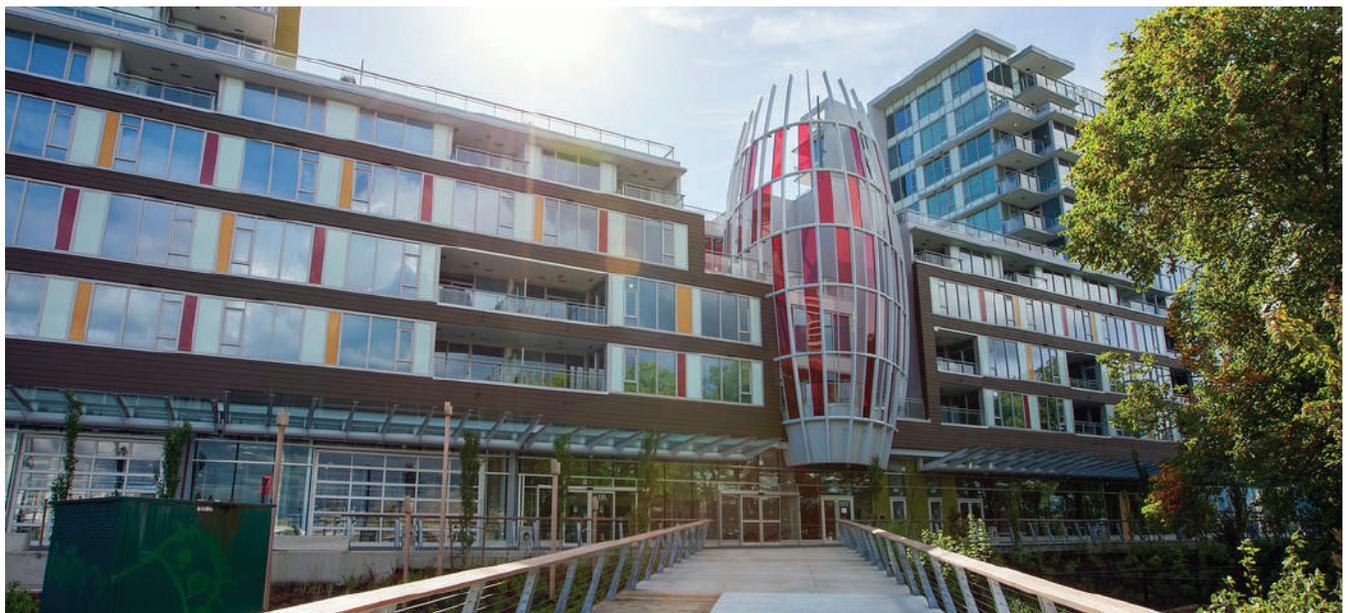
As per Provincial guidelines, the City charges on a cost recovery basis for the majority of services, however location rentals are billed at market rate.

Table 2: Richmond Film Office Total Service and Location Charges 2018-2022

Year	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
Total Service and Location Charges Processed	\$239,101	\$492,342	\$573,956	\$635,202	\$275,794

While the total number of filming days in the City have increased, film revenue collected in 2022 is lower than previous years for a variety of reasons:

- Productions have been able to work with smaller footprints and on tighter timelines as the Covid-19 guidelines lifted.
- Productions were filming more on private property in Richmond due to the nature of the location requirements of the scripts.
- This year there were no productions that used City owned lots for set builds. This accounted for over \$300,000 in revenue in 2021.



2022 Strategic Initiatives

In addition to commercial filming i.e. television shows, feature films, commercials, there are a number of productions that are filming Richmond as is, and showcasing the City as a tourism destination. In 2022 the Film Office worked with productions on a number of projects such as *Amazing Race Canada* Season 8, *Seeing Canada* Season 3, Travel Vlogs, and marketing campaigns for Parks Canada, Tourism Richmond, and Destination BC.

The City has also focused on strategic initiatives in 2022 which will benefit the community and support the motion picture industry in the future. These include:

- In an effort to support our joint goals of supporting local communities, industry stewardship, sustainability and creating opportunities for local talent/businesses, the Motion Picture Community Initiative (MPCI) partnered with Tourism Richmond and the City to support “Winter in the Village”. The MPCI contributed funding that went towards commissioning local Richmond artist Laura Kwok to create three stand alone photo murals. The murals are holiday and Steveston themed, and can be re-used in the future to enhance the village during the holiday period.
- Participating in Creative BC’s Municipal Film Advisory Committee, and working closely with industry stakeholders to develop plans, implement processes, and provide feedback on the motion picture industry’s Covid-19 return to work materials;
- Participating in the Provincial Film Commission’s Community Affairs Committee, a group of municipal, provincial, union and studio executives who meet regularly to address issues and best practices regarding the motion picture industry; and
- Participating in Reel Green stakeholder meetings and training sessions in order to advance Richmond’s climate leadership. The Reel Green initiative strives to “empower and inspire productions to innovate and implement sustainable practices and industry stakeholders to collectively support this effort”.



2022 Film Studio Facilities

Richmond is currently home to six film studio facilities. Demand for film studio facilities has been increasing for a number of years in the region. This demand has been further amplified with productions preferring to film at a studio facility when possible in order to ensure a safe and controlled work environment.

2022 Filming History

The productions that filmed in Richmond for 2022 included:

- **Motion Pictures:** *Balestra*, and *Joy Ride*;
- **Documentaries:** *Deux Filles en Camper*;
- **Short Films:** *How Tall is Jeffrey*;
- **Television Movies:** *Heart of the Matter*;
- **Television Series:** *Superman & Lois* Season 2 & 3, *Trade Winds* Season 1, *Charmed* Season 4, *The Night Agent* Season 1, *The Fall of the House of Usher* Season 1, *Blockbuster* Season 1, *Cruel Summer* Season 2, *Ultimate Ink Master* Season 1, *Amazing Race Canada* Season 8, *So Help Me Todd* Season 1, *Hourglass* Season 1, *The Power* Season 1, *Alaska Daily* Season 1, *Yellowjackets* Season 2, *Upload* Season 3, *Lucky Hank* Season 1, *The Flash* Season 9, *Dead Boy Detectives* Season 1, *Under the Bridge* Season 1, *Nancy Drew* Season 4, and *Career Opportunities in Murder and Mayhem* Season 1;
- **Commercials:** *Optimum*, and *Parks Canada*;
- **Marketing Campaigns & Commercial Photoshoots:** *Reigning Champ*, *Sport Chek Kids*, *Filson*, *Move to Cure ALS Public Service Announcement*, and *Tourism Richmond Winter in the Village*.

Economic Benefits of Filming

Each year the Motion Picture Association – Canada (MPA-Canada) releases economic impact studies for productions that have filmed in various regions in Canada. A report on the impact of Disney's *Peter Pan & Wendy*, which filmed in 2021 was recently released. The report highlights that the production spent more than \$170 million across the economies of British Columbia, Newfoundland and Labrador, and Quebec. In British Columbia, the production hired 1,200 local cast and crew, spending over \$112.3 million in the province, including more than \$71 million on local labour and more than \$41 million on local goods and services from over 780 businesses.

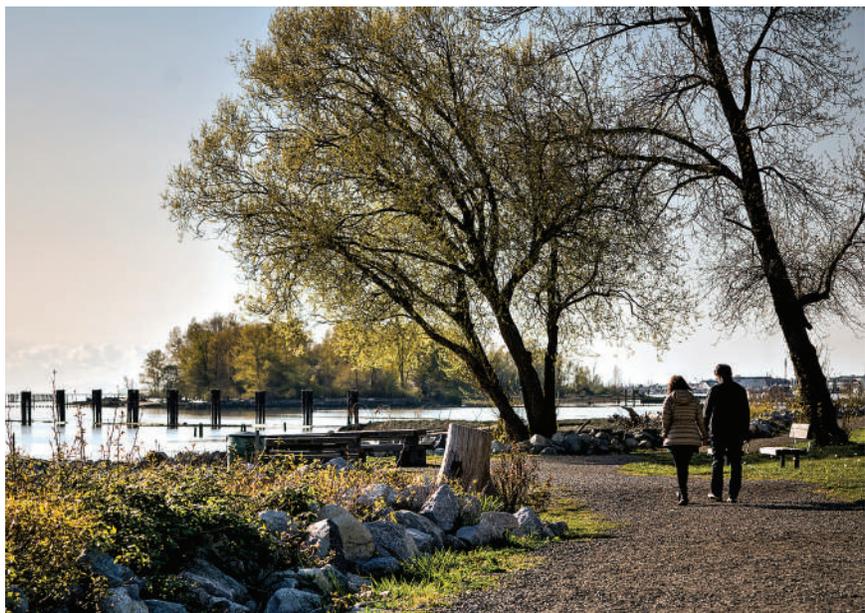
This report provides a good example of the impact one production can have on the local economy. This particular report is especially fitting, as *Peter Pan and Wendy*, filmed on location in Richmond, paying the City over \$300,000 for the use of a section of a large City owned lot for a period of six months.

MPA-Canada also collects local spending data from all of their global studio members, highlighting the impact of the motion picture industry on communities across Canada. In 2021, MPA Studios spent more than \$1.7 billion on goods and services, and supported 26,188 businesses in British Columbia.

In the Richmond community alone, MPA Studios supported more than 890 businesses with over \$28 million in spending on production-related goods and services (such as costumes, catering, automobile rentals and more). While MPA Studio data for 2022 has not yet been released, it is expected that the impacts the motion picture industry has on the local economy will continue to remain positive and strong. The MPA member studios include Disney, Warner Bros., Sony Pictures, Paramount, Netflix, and NBC Universal.

According to Creative BC, British Columbia is the second largest motion picture hub in Canada and fourth largest in North America, with over 300 productions in the region. Creative BC insights project that “2022 production spending by film and television projects in British Columbia will be over the estimated \$3.6 billion mark”. Furthermore, insights identify that there are over 85,000 British Columbian “workers” in the motion picture industry. As the industry is largely comprised of gig or freelance workers, this type of work remains difficult to measure however, Creative BC data indicates that this equates to 40,517 full –time equivalent jobs. The film sector continues to be a major employer in British Columbia and in Richmond. A media release published by the Vancouver Economic Commission reported that “physical production has invested \$23.1 billion into the provincial economy over the past decade, approximately half of which was paid directly to British Columbians as salaries and wages”. In Richmond, beyond the revenue generated by the City and public properties, filming continues to contribute significant direct and indirect revenue to local businesses, land owners, workers, and residents.

British Columbia has over 120 sound stages representing over 2.8 million square feet of purpose built stages and warehouse conversions. Productions are actively seeking warehouse spaces and converting them into film studio facilities. As of 2022, there are six film studio facilities in Richmond, four are operated by stage management companies and two are operated by studio production companies.





2023 Update

British Columbia and Richmond saw a steady increase in filming activity in Quarter 1. Despite projections for 2023 to be a record breaking year for filming activity in the region, the increase in activity was met with an unprecedented halt upon the announcements of strikes by two significant labour groups in the industry:

- The Writers Guild of America (WGA), who were on strike for 148 days between May 2, 2023 to September 27, 2023; and
- Screen Actors Guild – American Federation of Television and Radio Artists (SAG-AFTRA) who were on strike for 118 days between July 14, 2023 to November 9, 2023.

The two strikes caused an over six month pause in filming activity, which has affected many film industry workers around the world. Local industry unions and stakeholders have been primarily focused on the impacts of the strikes by providing support and resources to the many British Columbia residents out of work. Throughout the strikes, the Film Office continued to process film permits for commercials, local/indie productions, and student productions. As of October 2023, the Film Office has issued 38 film location agreements. It is projected that filming activity in British Columbia will ramp up to record breaking numbers in 2024. Staff continue to monitor the situation and liaise closely with the industry.

Conclusion

2022 was a record year for film activity in Richmond. This increase in filming activity can be attributed to multiple factors, including the establishment of additional film studio facilities in Richmond and a trend of higher value productions choosing Richmond for their filming. Staff will continue to work with stakeholders to establish and execute strategic initiatives and adjust existing services in order to enable the motion picture industry's growth as it moves beyond the outcomes of the strikes. The film sector continues to be an important economic industry in the City. The financial impact through employment and fees for locations is significant and beneficial to the City, local businesses and its residents.





City of Richmond

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