



County of Los Angeles CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICE

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FESIA A. DAVENPORT
Acting Chief Executive Officer

Board of Supervisors
HILDA L. SOLIS
First District

HOLLY J. MITCHELL
Second District

SHEILA KUEHL
Third District

JANICE HAHN
Fourth District

KATHRYN BARGER
Fifth District

August 4, 2021

To: Supervisor Hilda L. Solis, Chair
Supervisor Holly J. Mitchell
Supervisor Sheila Kuehl
Supervisor Janice Hahn
Supervisor Kathryn Barger

From: Fesia A. Davenport
Chief Executive Officer

COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES FILM AND STILL PHOTOGRAPHY ANNUAL STATUS REPORT (ITEM NO. 16, AGENDA OF SEPTEMBER 9, 2014), AND REPORT BACK ON SUPPORTING THE COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES FILM AND DIGITAL MEDIA INDUSTRY (ITEM NO. 8, AGENDA OF FEBRUARY 4, 2020)

On September 9, 2014, the Board of Supervisors (Board) instructed the Chief Executive Officer to periodically report back on the actions taken to standardize the County of Los Angeles' (County) Film and Still Photography Permit Service Fees and attract more film production to the County. In the previous status report to the Board, dated August 6, 2020, the Chief Executive Office (CEO) stated that future report backs on the motion would be provided at the end of each fiscal year. Quarterly permit data continues to be sent to each Board office.

Furthermore, on February 4, 2020, the Board directed the CEO to implement the recommendations included in the CEO's report back dated October 20, 2018 "*Supporting the Growth of the County's Film and Digital Media Industry*" motion and to report back. The final update is included in a dedicated section of the attached Film and Photography Status Annual Report (Attachment).

This report provides updates on the following matters:

1. Fiscal Year (FY) 2020 - 21 Film and Photography permit and shoot day data;

2. Impacts to the County's Film Program and FilmLA due to the COVID-19 pandemic;
3. CEO and Department of Public Health partnership relative to COVID-19 Entertainment Industry safety protocols;
4. Report back on the LA2021: Future of Creative Talent Summit; and
5. Status of the County's Film Policy and Ordinance;

County Film Permit and Shoot Days Data - Fiscal Year 2020-21

Supervisory Districts	Number of Permits		Shoot Days	
	FY 2019-20	FY 2020-21	FY 2019-20	FY 2020-21
First	73	84	112	154
Second	112	162	222	484
Third	437	494	619	854
Fourth	106	77	135	126
Fifth	1,004	961	1,737	1,850
Total	1,732*	1,778	2,825	3,468

Note: The total number of County permits does not match the total per District as many permits cross District boundaries.

In comparing the data from the previous FY 2019-20, there was a small increase in permits along with a medium increase in shoot days. This indicates a slow recovery from the COVID-19 Pandemic impacts on the Film and Digital Media Industry. As seen in the chart, there was a less than three percent increase in permits, and almost a 23 percent increase in shoot days between FY 2019-20 and FY 2020-21. In FY 2018-19, the number of permits pulled were 2,310 and the number of shoot days were 4,285; therefore, the number of permits and shoot days for FY 2020-21 are 23 percent and 19 percent lower than FY 2018-19 respectively. The industry still has some gains to make before returning to pre-pandemic levels. The FilmLA Permit and Shoot Day infographics and LA-2021-Panel-Overview are provided as an Exhibits I and II to the report.

The CEO will continue to report back to the Board at the end of each fiscal year. As such, the next Film and Photography Status Report back will be due at the beginning of August 2022.

Each Supervisor
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Should you have any questions concerning this report, please contact me or Julia Orozco, Acting Senior Manager, at (213) 974-1151 or jorozco@ceo.lacounty.gov.

FAD:JMN:JO
GS:yy

Attachment

c: Executive Office, Board of Supervisors
 County Counsel
 District Attorney
 Sheriff
 Animal Care and Control
 Arts and Culture
 Beaches and Harbors
 Consumer and Business Affairs
 Fire
 Health Services
 Internal Services
 LA County Library
 Medical Examiner-Coroner
 Military and Veterans Affairs
 Parks and Recreation
 Public Works
 Workforce Development, Aging and Community Services
 Women and Girls Initiative
 FilmLA

ATTACHMENT



Chief Executive Office

Economic Development and Affordable Housing Division

FILM AND PHOTOGRAPHY STATUS REPORT

July 1, 2020 to June 30, 2021

FILM AND PHOTOGRAPHY STATUS REPORT

BACKGROUND

On September 9, 2014, the Board of Supervisors (Board) instructed the Chief Executive Officer to periodically report back on the actions taken to standardize the County of Los Angeles' (County) Film and Still Photography Permit Service Fees and encourage more film production in the County. The last status report to the Board was dated August 6, 2020.

FILM, TELEVISION, AND PHOTOGRAPHY PERMIT MANAGEMENT

A. Comparison chart of County Film Permits with Previous Fiscal Year

Supervisory Districts	Number of Permits		Shoot Days	
	FY 2019 - 20	FY 2020 - 21	FY 2019 - 20	FY 2020 - 21
First	73	84	112	154
Second	112	162	222	484
Third	437	494	619	854
Fourth	106	77	135	126
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Total	1,732*	1,778	2,825	3,468

Note: Total number of County permits does not match the total per District as many permits cross District boundaries.

In comparing the data from the previous Fiscal Year (FY) 2019-20, there was a small increase in permits along with a medium increase in shoot days. Both fiscal years include periods where the stay at home orders were enacted and continue to show pandemic impacts on the film industry. The numbers are not back to FY 2018-19 and we will not see a steady increase until the pandemic is under control. These figures indicate a slow recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic impacts on the Film and Digital Media Industry. As seen in the chart, there was a three percent increase in permits, and a 23 percent increase in shoot days between FY 2019-20 and FY 2020-21. In FY 2018-19, the number of permits issued were 2,310 and the number of shoot days were 4,285; therefore, the number of permits and shoot days for FY 2020-21 are 23 percent and 19 percent lower than during FY 2018-19, respectively. The industry still has some gains to make before returning to pre-pandemic levels. The FilmLA Permit and Shoot Day infographics are provided in Exhibit I to this report.

FILM AND PHOTOGRAPHY STATUS REPORT

The COVID-19 pandemic had a tremendous impact on the Industry starting in March 2020 to present. Beacon Economics¹ estimated that 90,547 direct jobs in the Entertainment Industry were lost in Los Angeles County (County) during the height of the pandemic from February 2020 to December 2020. As infections from COVID-19 started to decrease in January 2021, production activity begun to increase slowly leading to more jobs being replaced. However, it is not expected that the Industry will return to its pre-pandemic levels until late 2021.

On June 15, 2021, the State of California lifted the statewide COVID-19 restrictions and tier system. As a result, the County released a revised Health Officer Order (HOO) on the same day which retired most of the HOO appendices as mandates and converted them into recommendations. This change includes Appendix J which governed the COVID-19 restrictions for the Industry. The following sections of this report provide updates on the film activities of the Chief Executive Office (CEO) and impacts to FilmLA.

B. Impact on FilmLA

On March 12, 2020, FilmLA shuttered its physical offices and conducted their work remotely. By April 1, 2020, 50 percent of its staff were furloughed while maintaining health insurance coverage for those employees. Remaining staff were reduced to 70 percent of normal hours and salary. These staff were dedicated full-time to an accelerated development schedule for new technology systems. On learning that the County was preparing to allow filming to resume, active staff were either returned to full-time status or moved to 75 percent of normal hours and salary. On June 1, 2020, three field service staff were brought back from furlough, as applications for filming resumed.

To sustain core operations during the prolonged period of business interruption, FilmLA immediately implemented drastic cost cutting measures, including re-negotiation of fixed overhead costs and reduction of all variable expenses. FilmLA applied for the Paycheck Protection Program loan and various other Small Business Administration loans but were denied due to its 501(c)(4) status and/or due to the size of the organization. Fortunately, FilmLA was able to participate in the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act (CARES Act), Employee Retention Credit and Social Security Tax Deferral Programs.

¹ Otis Report on the Creative Economy, March 2021

FILM AND PHOTOGRAPHY STATUS REPORT

FilmLA's revenue was dramatically impacted by the pandemic as film permit fees are its only revenue source. The April 1, 2020 to June 30, 2020 quarter resulted in virtually no revenue to FilmLA. The remainder of the year also saw reduced film permit volume, reflecting ongoing film industry concern with local COVID-19 case, hospitalization, and fatality rates. With only the advertising sector in full swing by fall, permitted production remained at or below 60 percent of seasonal norms, until a voluntary production hiatus slowed the pace further from December of 2020 through February 2021. Production has increased considerably in the months leading up to present.

As for staff, FilmLA was able to return some furloughed staff to work based on business needs; however, in March 2021 Film LA made the difficult decision to pursue a reduction in workforce, which together with ordinary attrition, removed 15 percent of the organization's pre-pandemic workforce. The 17 positions eliminated were primarily aligned with non-core functions. Not long after, FilmLA shifted its focus from sustaining core operations to active pursuit of financial recovery, implementing a Board-approved fee increase in May 2021 along with a modest program budget for Fiscal Year (FY) 2021-22.

Fortunately, FilmLA began preparing for an event like the COVID-19 pandemic more than twelve years ago, building financial reserves for major technology improvements and to sustain the business during film industry activity downturns. They have a robust Business Continuity Plan (BCP) which covers scenarios from labor strikes, loss of the physical office, earthquakes, and pandemics. The BCP is reviewed annually by the FilmLA's Board of Director's Audit Committee and is updated regularly.

In addition to financial reserves, FilmLA projects that it will be able to restore its pre-pandemic operating reserves over an 8-year period. All current staff have returned to full-time status, and the organization is evolving its office space and personnel policies to support a fully hybrid home/office/field-based business model.

C. COVID-19 Pandemic Impact and Department of Public Health and CEO Partnership

Over the FY, the Department of Public Health (DPH) and the CEO continued to partner on providing guidance and assistance to the Industry as related to the County HOO (Appendix J). Individual meetings were also held with a variety of other Industry stakeholders as needed to assist with production planning and identification of best practices. In addition, the CEO and DPH established an on ongoing monthly meeting

FILM AND PHOTOGRAPHY STATUS REPORT

with 34 Industry stakeholders and each Board office to provide updated COVID-19 information, share best practices, track reopening progress, and respond to questions. These monthly meetings have created a much deeper working relationship between the County and the Industry and has provided the County with valuable insight into how this complex sector has successfully operated throughout the pandemic.

Film, TV, Music and Entertainment Workgroup Participants include:

Amazon	Netflix
Contract Services	Motion Picture Association
Director's Guild	Paramount/Viacom
Disney	SAG-AFTRA
FilmLA	Sony
Fox Corporation	Tastemade
IATSE	Teamsters Local 399
Local 724	Warner Brothers
NBC Universal	Recording Industry Association
Academy of Motion Pictures Arts & Sciences	Producer's Guild
Village Roadshow	Creative Artists Agency
AICP	City of LA
FilmLA	Silent House Pictures

Some examples of productions that the CEO worked with over the last fiscal year are:

- “Bosch” – Amazon – San Pedro Courthouse and Los Padrinos Juvenile Center;
- “Salt Snake” – Universal – Jordan Peele Feature - Agua Dulce;
- “For all Mankind” – Apple TV - Altadena
- “Masked Singer” – Fox Studios
- 93rd Academy Awards – Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences
- Emmy Awards – Television Academy
- Golden Globe Awards – Dick Clark Productions
- MTV Awards – ViacomCBS
- BET Awards – BET/Viacom CBS

D. Film, TV and Digital Media Industry and Community Partnerships

Over the last fiscal year, the CEO has continued to deepen its professional relationships within the entertainment industry by not only guiding the development of and adherence

FILM AND PHOTOGRAPHY STATUS REPORT

to the County HOO Appendix J, but also working to increase utilization of County owned properties, reduce fees, solve production related issues, streamline approvals where appropriate, and craft transparent film policies and procedures. We have also continued to work with communities across the County to address their concerns about productions filming in their communities amidst the pandemic. The CEO has provided COVID related production information via FilmLA, and direct County correspondence.

The CEO has also developed stronger relationships with various Cities in the County around COVID-19 related production issues and information sharing. Specifically, we have advised the Cities of Los Angeles, West Hollywood, Santa Clarita, Glendale, and Malibu. The Cities of San Francisco and New York have also sought the County's guidance on COVID-19 related health orders and best practices.

SUPPORTING THE GROWTH OF THE COUNTY'S FILM & DIGITAL MEDIA MOTION UPDATE

On October 30, 2018, the Board passed a motion to support the growth of the County's Film & Digital Media (F&DMI) and directed the CEO to work with the Departments of Workforce Development, Aging and Community Services (WDACS), Consumer and Business Affairs (DCBA), and any other relevant County departments or partners, as well as with non-County entities, such as labor organizations and educational entities like the community college and school districts in the County to develop a County Plan based on key recommendations from the 2018 Beacon Economics report entitled "Film and Digital Media Industry: A County Perspective," and report back in 90 days on the development of a County plan.

The CEO submitted its first 90-day report to the Board on March 4, 2019, which detailed the framework of the County Plan. The final report on the County's five-point plan was submitted to the Board on September 13, 2019.

Subsequently, on February 4, 2020, the Board passed an additional motion that directed the CEO to work with WDACS, the Department of Arts and Culture, DCBA, the Los Angeles County Development Authority (LACDA) and any other relevant County departments or partners to implement the County Plan as put forth in the CEO's September 13, 2019 report (September Report) to the Board. The CEO provided its final report back on the progress of the February 4, 2020 motion in its August 4, 2020 as part

FILM AND PHOTOGRAPHY STATUS REPORT

of the Film Status Report. This report provides a final update on the LA2021 Film and Digital Media Summit as the event had not occurred at the time of the last report.

LA2021 FILM AND DIGITAL MEDIA SUMMIT

CEO organized the Forum on Film and Digital Media (Summit) in partnership with Beacon Economics, the Board, and its Industry partners. The event was scheduled to take place on September 16, 2020, at Paramount Studios. However, due to the pandemic and safety concerns for large gatherings, CEO and Beacon Economics explored virtual convenings to occur in 2021. On April 24, 2021, the CEO and Beacon Economics held the first of two LA2021: Future of Creative Talent convenings utilizing a virtual platform.

The Summit brought together all segments of the Los Angeles County Entertainment Industry along with high profile speakers to discuss the challenges the sector has faced due to the COVID-19 pandemic with a focus on workforce and economic impacts. The Summit also convened key Diversity and Inclusion leaders to facilitate policy conversations about how to create equitable and accessible career pathways into the Industry for traditionally underserved and underrepresented populations.

The overall response to the Summit was overwhelmingly positive and represented the first time that such a large cross section of the Industry was present in one setting to discuss policy and impacts. Summit videos can be viewed at: <https://beaconecon.com/la2021-future-of-creative-talent-summit-series/#eventmaterials>

SPONSORS



FILM AND PHOTOGRAPHY STATUS REPORT

SPEAKERS

Remarks	Panelists
Supervisor Sheila Kuehl	Adam J. Fowler, Beacon Economics
Supervisor Hilda Solis	CA Senator Ben Allen
Supervisor Holly Mitchell	Duncan Crabtree-Ireland, SAG-AFTRA
Supervisor Janice Hahn	Montea Robinson, Ghetto Film School
Supervisor Kathryn Barger	Mike Miller, IATSE
Chief Executive Officer Fesia A. Davenport	Bryn Sandberg, Hollywood Reporter
Dept of Public Health Director, Barbara Ferrer	Louis Santor, Village Roadshow
LA City Mayor Eric Garcetti	Kerri Wood Einertson, SAG-AFTRA
Gabrielle Carteris, President SAG-AFTRA	Melissa Patack, MPA
Francis Fisher, Actress	Derek Huoth, Tastemade
Jodi Long, Actress	Latasha Gillespie, Amazon
Latasha Gillespie, Amazon Studios	Christine Simmons, AMPAS
Parvesh Cheena, Host	Gloria Calderón Kellet, Showrunner
	Natalia Williams, M88 Agency

ATTENDEES AND COST

309 total Attendees at \$20 per ticket. 100 complementary tickets were set aside for youth and 94 for County employees at no charge.

PANEL DESCRIPTION

Three key panels were held focused on the impacts that the COVID-19 pandemic had on the Industry, where the Industry is headed, and Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion in the context of rebuilding career pathways for underserved people. Full Beacon Report (Exhibit II)

Panel: “The Impact of COVID-19 on Los Angeles’ Entertainment Industry”

Moderator: Adam J. Fowler, Director of Research, Beacon Economics, LLC

Panel: Senator Ben Allen, Chair, Senate Joint Committee on the Arts
 Duncan Crabtree-Ireland, COO and General Counsel, SAG-AFTRA
 Montea Robinson, Executive Director (LA), Ghetto Film School
 Mike Miller, Dept. Director, Motion Picture & TV Production, IATSE

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Panel: “The Future of Screen Industries in Los Angeles”

Moderator: Bryn Sandberg, Hollywood Reporter

Panel: Louis Santor, Chief Operating Officer, Village Roadshow
Kerri Wood Einertson, Senior Director of Public Policy & Government Affairs, SAG-AFTRA
Melissa Patack, Vice President of State Government Affairs, Motion Picture Association of America
Derek Huoth, General Counsel, Tastemade

Panel: “Diversifying in Disruption”

Moderator: Latasha Gillespie, Executive Head of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion, Amazon Studios

Panel: Christine Simmons, Chief Operating Officer, Academy of Motion Pictures and Sciences
Gloria Calderón Kellet, Showrunner, Executive Producer, Director
Natalia Williams, Partner, M88

NEXT STEPS FOR OCTOBER SUMMIT

Planning for the October LA2021 Summit has begun with a focus on career pathways development in addition to further discussions about Industry recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic. Outreach has begun to community colleges, non-profit creative career pathway organizations, and other individuals working on the development of apprenticeship programs within the entertainment industry.

COUNTY FILM ORDINANCE UPDATE

As directed by the Board on May 2, 2017, County Counsel was charged with revising the County’s Film Ordinance and clarify language as it relates to enforcement of permit conditions, criteria used to approve permits, and other areas of the County Code that will strengthen the County’s role in facilitating responsible filming. In partnership with County Counsel, the CEO created an internal workgroup comprised of staff from the Department of Regional Planning to revise the County’s Film Ordinance. However, due to COVID-19 pandemic, the workgroup meetings were put on hold during 2020 and have resumed on a monthly basis. The primary area focus of the workgroup is on the alignment of the Significant Ecological Area Ordinance requirements with the needs of production.

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Other areas that are being analyzed relate to procedural permitting regulations. The expected timeline for a draft of the Ordinance is early October.

CONCLUSION

The CEO will continue to monitor all impacts to the entertainment industry related to the COVID-19 pandemic and encourage continued streamlined use of County assets for temporary film use. Additionally, the CEO remains committed to developing equitable career pathway programs into the Industry, simplifying permitting processes across the County departments, reduce fees where possible, and work with various communities within the unincorporated areas to reduce filming impacts and improve the transparency and efficiency of all film procedures and policies.