

CITY OF LOS ANGELES
INTER-DEPARTMENTAL CORRESPONDENCE

DATE: August 6, 2026

TO: The Honorable City Council

FROM: Steve Kang 
President, Board of Public Works
Chief Film Liaison

SUBJECT: CF 25-1498: KEEP HOLLYWOOD HOME – FREE MICRO-SHOOT FILMING PERMITS

RECOMMENDATION

That the City Council receive and file this report, as it is provided for informational purposes only.

DISCUSSION

It is suggested that the recently established (as of April 2026) FilmLA Low Impact Permit Pilot Program be used as the primary framework for evaluating new permit categories before implementing any additional tiers such as the micro-shoot program envisioned in this Motion. The Low Impact Permit Pilot will run for six months, with a three-month evaluation to assess usage, impacts, and lessons learned before broader recommendations are made on other permit tiers.

CF 25-1498 directed respective departments to prepare and present an ordinance establishing a free Micro-Shoot Permit, required for any public-space filming activity meeting all of the following criteria:

- involves no more than 10 people on site;
- uses only handheld cameras, smartphones, small tripods, or similar lightweight equipment;
- does not block more than half of any sidewalk, maintains ADA access, and does not restrict public use;
- uses no generators, lighting units over 25 pounds, C-stands, dollies, or amplified sound;
- does not require parking removal, traffic control, or exclusive use of the public right-of-way; and
- does not involve drones, pyrotechnics, simulated weapons, hazardous activities, or special effects.

Responses from various partner agencies are listed below and can be used as feedback for the ultimate establishment of a Free Micro-Shoot Filming Permit.

Los Angeles Police Department (LAPD):

The Los Angeles Police Department (LAPD) finds the proposal feasible from both a community impact and public safety standpoint; however, more clearly defined constraints are necessary to ensure effective implementation.

As referenced in the Motion, the New York City model provides a useful framework. Their system includes a streamlined “Letter in Lieu of Permit,” accessible via a dropdown menu, which outlines specific conditions for filming on public property. While the Motion appropriately avoids overloading the initial proposal with detailed regulations, several key public safety and community impact considerations remain unaddressed. These include, for example, restrictions on the use of police uniforms by talent and the depiction of simulated criminal activity, both of which can generate public concern and unnecessary law enforcement response.

Adapting the language and structure of New York City’s “Letter in Lieu of Permit” to align with Los Angeles’ infrastructure and operational needs would provide a strong foundation. This approach would help ensure public safety and minimize community disruption while still advancing the goal of maintaining Los Angeles as a film-friendly city.

Los Angeles Fire Department (LAFD):

The Los Angeles Fire Department (LAFD) has been working on permitting language. Safety is not expected to be a factor when FilmLA does its initial screening, and finds that safety could be jeopardized as outlined in the parameters of the permit. Should this occur, it would disqualify the production from the low impact permit.

FilmLA:

FilmLA agrees with LAPD’s response overall. A “free micro-shoot filming permit” will require some level of coordination to ensure compliance and manage public reaction if productions are allowed to operate under more permissive rules without clear safeguards.

Any free-permit or minimal-requirement structure raises questions about City liability, insurance requirements, administrative oversight and coordination. The “Letter in Lieu of Permit” approach may help avoid some of these issues. If productions can apply for City permission to film and be subject to few or no approvals, the City still bears risk, and these issues are not adequately addressed in the motion language. The ordinance to be drafted by the City Attorney should reflect not only a desire to support filming, but also the need to maintain balance, transparency, and realistic operational guardrails.

Any new program must consider what happens when productions misrepresent their activities

and whether there should be consequences or other mechanisms to encourage compliance.

Neighborhoods already question the level of access productions receive. Eliminating permit costs for productions with visible neighborhood impact could intensify complaints. From a community perspective, even productions with relatively small footprints can still create significant disruption. Responding to community filming complaints requires ongoing investment of time by City and FilmLA staff. Accordingly, cost recovery should remain a consideration.

Los Angeles Department of Transportation (LADOT):

The Department of Transportation (LADOT) does not have concerns with the intent of this motion.