

Communication from Public

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Comments for Public Posting: Please see my letter attached below.

To: The Los Angeles City Council

I'm writing a letter in response to the recent City Council meeting notes pertaining to a motion introduced by Nazarian and Harris- Dawson (25-1509-S1) that was shared with me by our Union Representative, Chuck Trujillo. I am a full-time Park Service Attendant II. I am currently assigned to the Park Film Office and primarily oversee film requests and permit processing. My direct supervisor is Nicole Robottom. I am also in my second year of school at the University of Southern California, and am working towards an MS in Emergency Management.

I recognize the importance of filming in Los Angeles and see our office as a main artery of our local economy. I genuinely enjoy working with the film companies and count their approvals as office successes. However, some of the points listed in your motion raise concerns for our office. I will address them below:

1. "Require one working day response standards for all filming inquiries across departments".
 - Our office currently processes requests in three full business days. Bringing the processing time down would not allow enough time for all Supervisors to review the request, check for conflicts, and allow time for scouting and for our urban ecologists to conduct appropriate surveys so park wildlife is not impacted. This processing time would affect coordinators' ability to obtain authorization, as our process often requires revisions to work around scheduled programming and facility stipulations. We also frequently require companies to post a notice of planned filming at the location to mitigate park traffic that day. Reducing processing time would drastically increase the likelihood of unforeseen conflicts at the location when companies are present. This could potentially cost the company financially, as well as inconvenience patrons who use the parks regularly, who were not notified.
 - Concerns also center on potential liability for our department if adequate oversight wasn't provided for a filming request. Large equipment, large vehicles, and driving shots all need to be reviewed with the specific location in mind, as many parks and park roads could increase the risk of creating a hazardous incident in heavily patronized areas. Recreation and Parks can currently boast the third-lowest liability payouts among City Departments, and I attribute this to our culture of prioritizing public safety in our parks. This culture exists in our work at the Park Film Office.
2. "Remove detailed parking overhead map requirements from standard permit applications."
 - Overheads are critical to the approval process. They verify that the Location Manager is requesting the correct location, a lot, or facility under RAP jurisdiction and that it is available. For example, there have been many times when LM's have submitted an application that did not correspond to the plot plan, and therefore could have created

issues for them if they had shown up to try and land a basecamp without the correct approvals.

- We can permit public spaces because we never permit “exclusive use” unless it’s a “Special Facility”. Many Supervisors will only approve a request once plot plans have been corrected to reflect the appropriate area on the overhead, which will not impact programming or patron activity.
3. “Create a centralized, real-time calendar of upcoming city events, including their date, time, and location, for production companies to reference when scouting and selecting filming sites.”
 - I support the creation of such a calendar, but it should be accessible only to City Employees. Allowing companies access to activity violates patrons’ privacy and could create issues if Location Managers decide to approach permit holders directly, or, worse, if the calendar is accessed by a bad actor posing as a location manager.
 - This could also be a liability to the department. Much of the work in the parks is contracted and does not follow a schedule. For example, Brush clearance occurs every year, and the company hired must complete the work within a set window of time. They can show up at any time to complete this work, whether filming is occurring or not. Giving location managers the impression that they cleared the date by checking the master calendar would be misleading.
 4. “RAP shall publish a citywide Filming Conditions Matrix clarifying when park monitors are required,” and “RAP shall limit monitors to activities involving amplified sound, full closures, pyrotechnics, drones, or special effects.”
 - Monitors are scheduled based on the project's scope and scale. Their presence at the location ensures the permit is being followed, while also guaranteeing the company is co-existing with patrons and public safety is being prioritized. Few filming projects are ever the same; it would be misleading to post a matrix clarifying how many would be required.
 - Our office never wants to overburden a company with monitors. However, there are times when an extra monitor is required to post for gate access, or the topical geography isn’t visible from all areas of the park. In these scenarios, monitors are scheduled accordingly.
 - Monitors are essential for safely landing base camps in heavily patronized lots; they ensure that generators are landed at locations within LAFD standard guidelines and drastically reduce the number of scouts required. In effect, they reduce our department's liability during filming activity, and save companies time.

5. “RAP shall evaluate and return with recommendations to fully waive or reduce standard filming fees (e.g., to \$1) for productions that do not require exclusive park use or additional City staffing.”
 - The Park Film Office has not raised fees since 2007. While all other fees within RAP have been increased (except Travel Town), ours have not been raised.
 - Reducing or eliminating fees for the Park Film Office would significantly affect the office's ability to cover its operating costs independently. We are already operating on a limited budget, and quality work and customer service could be impacted.
 - Reducing/ eliminating fees would force the department or the City to fund or subsidize the work conducted by the Park Film Office. The funding would most likely come from Los Angeles' patrons and residents. The very people who are also struggling with the high cost of living, and who call our office and RAP facilities to complain about film activity occurring at the park. As of now, we are able to mitigate those concerns because the companies are shouldering the financial burden of our office. If patrons become aware that they contribute to funding the filming activity in our parks, it could increase complaints and additional public discontent.

Thank you for taking the time to read my concerns. While I see the need for change in the overall film permitting process in Los Angeles, and often find myself in agreement with the companies' grievances, I believe that not all considerations have been made for these points. I would openly encourage better collaboration among all City offices that permit filming and would like to see the overall film process in Los Angeles streamlined to preserve this vital industry. If you have further questions, I can be reached by email at maureen.wilde@lacity.org.

Best Regards,

Maureen Wilde