

Audience
Research &
Analysis

Mayor's Office of Film, Theatre & Broadcasting

Neighborhood Reaction to Film Production



THE CITY OF NEW YORK
MAYOR'S OFFICE
OF FILM, THEATRE
AND BROADCASTING



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Introduction

Having completed a city-wide study of public awareness of the Mayor's Office of Film, Theatre & Broadcasting (MOFTB), Audience Research & Analysis (ARA) completed its research contract with MOFTB by assessing the reaction of residents to filming that had taken place in their neighborhood. At the suggestion of MOFTB, we focused on two different neighborhoods both with a significant history of film production on its streets: Greenpoint, Brooklyn and the West Village in Manhattan.

Research Objectives

- Incidence of seeing film production in the neighborhood
- Where saw production: in their building, on the block where they live, in their neighborhood
- Effectiveness of timing of notice of local filming
- Impact of issues relating to film production such as parking, noise and bright lights
- Awareness of neighborhood appreciate programs such as the Starbuck Van
- Value of MOFTB to New York City
- Respondent demographics
- Respondent's relationships to the Film or TV industry

Methodology

ARA used a combination of onsite interviews and a mail questionnaire¹ to capture the reaction of neighborhood residents. MOFTB provided ARA with a history of the dates and street locations where production had taken place in recent months. ARA visited those locations to identify specific street addresses where residents lived. Walking from building to building in the West Village, ARA assembled a list of 445 residential and business addresses on Bedford, Grove, Gansewoort, Gay and Barrow Streets. In July, ARA mailed a questionnaire to each of these addresses, receiving 76 completed questionnaires for a 17 percent response rate.

In Greenpoint, the local community board provided ARA with a reverse directory from which we identified 702 addresses on Franklin, Guernsey, Java, Lorimer, Nassau, North Henry, Oak and West Streets. We received 53 completed questionnaires for a response rate of eight percent.² To augment the mail sample, ARA traveled to two centers of neighborhood activity where filming had taken place: the Green Market in McCarren Park (Saturdays, July 28 and August 11) and Brooklyn Label restaurant on Franklin Street (Monday, August 13). We collected 87 completed questionnaires from local residents for a total Greenpoint sample of 140 residents and businesses. Across both neighborhoods, we collected 216 questionnaires.

¹ Response to the mail survey was incented with a drawing to win a \$100 VISA gift certificate.

² Printed directories are subject to aging resulting in many invalid addresses

Executive Summary

- One-quarter had seen film production take place within the past week. A total of one-half had witnessed filming in the past two weeks; three-quarters within the past month.
- Fifty-six percent experienced filming on their block including three percent in their home, building, business or workplace.
- Seventy-one percent said they were notified in advance of the filming of whom 93 percent saw signs posted and two percent received letters.
- Among production-related issues, parking was the greatest inconvenience.
 - Twenty-six percent said the *problem of finding parking* affected them “a great deal” (gave a rating of “5” on a five-point scale). Taken together, 31 percent rated problems with parking a “4” or “5”.
 - Many felt more parking spots were taken than actually needed.
- Forty percent of all respondents parked a car in their neighborhood which broke down as 48 percent in Greenpoint and 25 percent in the West Village.
 - Eighty-nine percent of those who parked cars had seen a “no parking” sign.
 - Among those who had seen the sign, 89 percent *said the notice was clear*, and 72 percent reported that it *allowed them enough time to move their vehicle*.
- Other salient issues included *bright lights, noise* and *access to home or business*.
 - Seven percent were affected a great deal by bright lights (gave a rating of “5”); in total, 15 percent rated bright lights either a “4” or “5”.
 - Six percent rated noise a “5”; 13 percent a “4” or “5”.
 - Five percent rated access a “5”; 15 percent a “4” or “5”.
- Overall, 25 percent of all respondents were “not at all” affected by any production-related issue.
- Eleven percent had made a complaint about film production.
 - Almost half complained to MOFTB.
 - Examples of complaints included *blocking access to entrance of a business* and *late notice of filming*.
 - One out of four said their complaints had been satisfactorily resolved.
- Two-thirds were aware of the MOFTB – 75 percent in the West Village and 62 percent in Greenpoint.
- Twelve percent had visited www.nyc.gov/film.

- After reading a statement on the questionnaire about the NYC Police Department Movie/TV unit, 28 percent said they were aware of it. Among those familiar with the unit, 34 percent said they had had an interaction with a Movie/TV officer.
- After reading a description of the MOFTB, 18 percent said the work it performed was “extremely” valuable to the City while 42 percent found it “very” valuable. Another 27 percent said it was “somewhat” valuable. Only 13 percent felt it was “not very” or “not at all” valuable.
- Ten percent were aware of contributions or improvements made to their neighborhood by a film or TV production company.
- There was virtually no recall of a Starbucks resident appreciation van or a “Resident Thank You” ad in a local newspaper.
- Overall, 40 percent said that “they, a family member, or friend worked in the Film or TV industry.”
 - Relationship with the industry was higher in Greenpoint than in the West Village: 46 percent versus 30 percent.
 - These respondents were more likely to be aware of the MOFTB, but, in general, reacted to most production-related issues similarly.
- Ten of the respondents were business owners – four in the West Village and six in Greenpoint.
 - Problems finding parking remained the number one issue, but access to their business was a strong second.
 - Nine out of ten felt that the work MOFTB was at least “somewhat” valuable.
- Demographically, 56 percent were female and 71 percent were under 50 years of age.

FINDINGS

WHEN AND WHERE SAW FILMING

Overall, 97 percent of the respondents had seen filming take place in their neighborhood – 99 percent in the West Village and 96 percent in Greenpoint.

About one-quarter of the total sample had seen filming within the last week.

Last Time Saw Filming	Within Last Week	Two Weeks Ago	One Month Ago	More than One Month	Can't recall
Total	26.4	23.1	25.0	21.6	3.8
West Village	20.0	28.0	22.7	26.7	2.7
Greenpoint	30.1	20.3	26.3	18.8	4.5

Overall, about one-half had witnessed production on the block where they lived. In the West Village, the incidence of filming on respondents' own block was closer to two-thirds. In Greenpoint, where many of the interviews were conducted in McCarren Park or at the Brooklyn Lager restaurant (as opposed to respondents completing the mailed questionnaire), the incidence of seeing productions on their own block was a little lower.

Where Filming Took Place (Percent)	In building where live	In business or workplace	On block where live	Elsewhere in neighborhood
Total	1.4	1.4	53.1	44.0
West Village	2.7	0.0	↑62.7	34.7
Greenpoint	0.8	2.3	↓47.7	49.2

Across both neighborhoods, 71 percent were notified in advance of the filming (75 percent in the West Village and 69 percent in Greenpoint), 93 percent of whom saw signs posted in the neighborhood and two percent who received a letter.

PRODUCTION-RELATED ISSUES

Parking had the greatest affect on neighborhood residents with 26 percent saying it affected them “a great deal.” Seven percent were greatly affected by *bright lights*, six percent by *noise*, and five percent by lack of *access to their home or business*. On the other hand, between sixty and seventy out ten said they were “not at all” affected by each of the individual production-related issues. A net 25 percent answered “not at all” to all of the production-related issues.

How Production-Related Issues Affected You – TOTAL Percent	Rating					Mean
	Not at All 1	2	3	4	A Great Deal 5	
Problem finding parking	58.3	4.0	6.5	5.0	26.1	2.37
Bright lights	52.2	18.4	15.0	7.7	6.8	1.99
Noise	57.5	17.9	11.6	7.2	5.8	1.86
Access to my home or business	63.3	11.6	9.7	10.6	4.8	1.82
Interaction with production crew	65.0	12.8	11.3	6.9	3.9	1.72
Fumes	65.7	17.9	5.8	6.3	4.3	1.66
Garbage left afterward	72.7	8.3	9.8	5.4	3.9	1.62

Respondents who rated a production-related issue a “4” or “5” were asked to clarify. In Greenpoint, the most common complaint was that crews took more space than they seemed to need. Some verbatim comments are listed below:

Couldn't drive down my block or park on mine or surrounding blocks because crew took up all parking spaces

Film crews take much more than necessary, sometimes 6 blocks

Vehicles being towed at 1:00am in unacceptable, since I have to be at work at 7:30am. Noise & flashing lights in my windows was not appreciated. During day having to drive for 1.5 hrs to find parking is area is not funny

Their trucks arrived late at night, crew made noise, trucks idled

They take up 30-40 parking spots in a 4 block radius; it is difficult to park under normal conditions. Should suspend alternate side parking in affected area!

Lighting truck parked in such a way that it damaged tree. Obnoxious self-important production assistant who demanded I walk on opposite sidewalk while filming wan not even taking place

In personal interviews with some of the respondents in McCarren Park, we heard stories that reflected indifference on the part of production crews. In one instance, a catering table was set-up in front of a wood cabinetry business blocking the entrance. The owner reported resistance when he asked to move the table to the side so customers could access his shop.

In the West Village, a higher proportion of the complaints had to do with access for residents and their guests, and the frequency of filming in that neighborhood.

All clients were very late for being blocked on streets or no parking

Filming in the neighborhood always disrupts the parking ecology. Give us vouchers for parking in garages.

I pay a lot of rent to live in a very quiet neighborhood which is overrun with production

Last year a film crew put RR tracks directly in front of my house on my sidewalk, blocking my stoop), putting me, my tenants and general public are risk. I was never notified, never given an insurance paper. I was told my sidewalk was not "mine"

Much too many permits are issued for Gay St & Greenwich Village. Production Co's arrogant & pushy

My car was towed, however, I found it easily and there was no problem

Production crew can be aggressive about not letting people pass

Washington Square during the Will Smith production incredibly insensitive

Overall, 11 percent had made a complaint in the past about film production in their neighborhood. MOFTB received almost half of those complaints.

To Whom Complaint was Made (Among Those Making a Complaint)	Percent
Mayor's Office of Film, Theatre and Broadcasting	45.5
311	36.4
Police precinct	27.3
Production company	27.3
Community Board	13.6
Council member	4.5
Other (e.g., crew members, block association)	22.7

In reviewing the nature of complaints made, caterers, noise and garbage were cited as often as parking. There were also instances of late or improper notice. And while some businesses benefit directly from filming³, others have access to their stores impeded. Examples of verbatim are shown below.

Blocking my restaurant without compensation

Garbage blocking sidewalk, cutting tree limbs, loud generator noise, no parking space. Tow truck with bright lights sitting in front of our house after 11pm.

Lack of notice and abuse of parking privileges

Production catering tables set up in bus stop

Putting up notification signs same day of filming

One out of four, or 26 percent, reported that their complaint had been resolved satisfactorily. Among those resolved were moving a truck parked for two hours in front of a house (by production company), a damaged tree (community board), and removal of garbage (MOFTB).

PARKING

³ Within our study area production took place at both Brooklyn Label and Dmitri's in Greenpoint and Moustache on Bedford Street in the West Village

Forty percent of all respondents parked a car in their neighborhood. The proportion in Greenpoint was nearly double that of the West Village: 48 percent versus 25 percent. In both Greenpoint and the West Village, 89 percent of those who parked a car saw a “no parking” sign posted in their neighborhood prior to filming. Among those seeing the sign, 89 percent reported that the notice was clear to them and 72 percent felt it allowed them enough time to move their vehicle. Twenty-three percent of car owners reported that their vehicle had been towed due to filming.

AWARENESS OF MOFTB AND OTHER SPECIAL SERVICES

Prior to seeing the questionnaire, two-thirds were aware of the MOFTB – more so in the West Village than Greenpoint. On the questionnaire, there was a statement about the history and function of the NYC Police Department Movie/TV unit. Approximately one-quarter claimed to be aware of the Movie/TV unit.

Last Time Saw Filming	Aware of MOFTB	Aware of Police Movie/TV Unit
Total	66.4	27.8
West Village	75.3	31.6
Greenpoint	61.6	25.7

Among those familiar with the unit, 34 percent said they had had an interaction with a Movie/TV officer, more so in Greenpoint than the West Village: 39 percent versus 26 percent.

Ten percent were aware of contributions or improvements made to their neighborhood by a film or TV production company. Virtually no one – 1.4 percent – had seen the Starbucks resident appreciation van in their neighborhood. Similarly, only two percent had seen the “Resident Thank You” ads in a local newspaper.

Overall, 12 percent had visited www.nyc.gov/film. The incidence of visiting the MOFTB website was higher in Greenpoint than the West Village: 17 percent versus three percent. Based on a small sample size⁴, we found that, overall, 24 percent were aware of the “Resident FAQs” on the website and 12 percent were aware of the “Make Your Home a Star” feature.

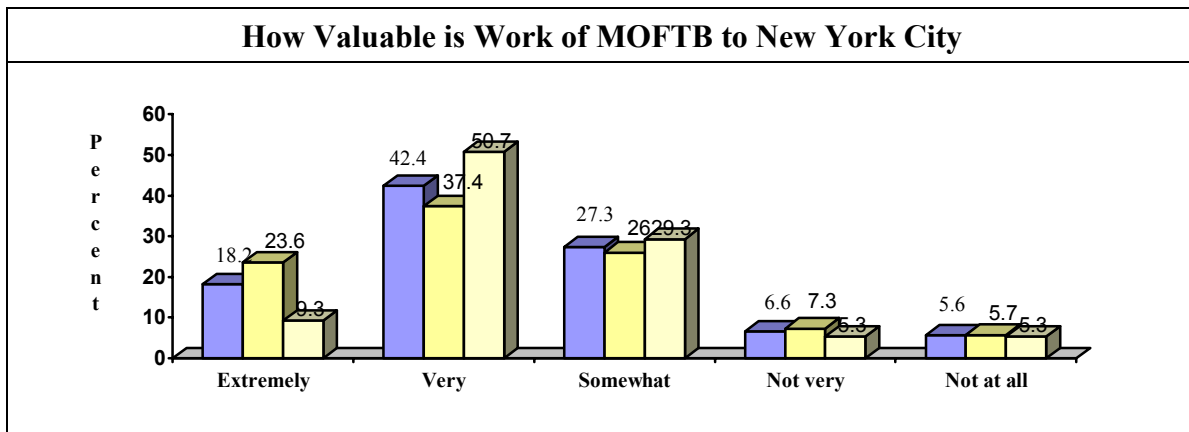
⁴ A sample size of 25 is not statistically significant. At best, these results are directional.

Value of the Work MOFTB Does for New York City

The following description about MOFTB appeared on the questionnaire⁵:

The Mayor’s Office of Film, Theatre and Broadcasting (MOFTB) markets and facilitates the production of films, television shows, commercials, music videos and still photography in New York City, which employs over 100,000 New Yorkers.

Overall, almost one out of five believed that the work MOFTB performed for New York City was *extremely* valuable and, overall, 61 percent thought it was *extremely* or *very* valuable. This was somewhat lower than the 82 percent reported in the city-wide survey which asked the same question.



RELATIONSHIP TO FILM OR TV INDUSTRY

Overall, 40 percent of the respondents said that “they, a family member, or friend worked in the Film or TV industry.” Interestingly, the incidence of having a relationship with the industry was higher in Greenpoint than the West Village: 46 percent versus 30 percent.

Their awareness of the MOFTB was naturally higher than those not associated with the industry: 83 percent versus 56 percent. But in response to most of the other questions, such as *parking a car regularly on the streets, or filing a complaint about production-related issues*, there were few significant differences between these two subsets of respondents.

⁵ While the question about the value of MOFTB was asked on the mail and intercept questionnaires, only the mail version had the description for the respondent to read prior to offering their evaluation. Comparing the results between the mail and intercept phases of the survey, we see that, overall, about six out of ten thought the work of the MOFTB was *extremely* or *very* valuable.

BUSINESS OWNERSHIP

Ten of the respondents were business owners – four in the West Village, six in Greenpoint. The businesses included a café, restaurant, hair salon, personnel agency, designer/builder, insurance agency, manufacturer, real estate and a recording studio. Although this is a small sample to analyze, we can say directionally that their awareness of MOFTB was consistent with the overall results (70 percent). And while only one business respondent had ever visited www.nyc.gov/film. All ten found the work of MOFTB at least “somewhat” valuable.

Parking was still the predominant issue (90 percent parked on the street), but access to their business also figured strongly with five out of ten rating the access a “4” or “5” on the five-point scale. Four out of ten had made a complaint about production in the neighborhood.

DEMOGRAPHICS

More than one-half of the respondents were female. Those associated with the film or TV industry were more evenly distributed with 50 percent of each gender. Among those not associated with the industry, 61 percent were female.

Gender	Percent	Total
Male		43.7
Female		56.3

With an overall mean age of 42 years, 71 percent were under 50 years of age. Among those related to the film or TV industry, 80 percent were under 50 years.

Age	Percent	Total
Under 25 years		1.9
25 to 34		30.7
35 to 49		39.5
50 to 64		18.6
65 to 74		6.0
75 and over		3.3
<i>Mean age (years)</i>		<i>41.8</i>