

Study of Off-Off-Broadway Performance Venues



December 2008

Off-Off-Broadway Venues

HOW THIS DATA WAS COLLECTED

The data for this report regarding Off-Off-Broadway (OOB) venues was compiled by the New York Innovative Theatre Foundation from extrapolated information from online and press listings for OOB productions, as well as information submitted by producers registering their productions for the New York Innovative Theatre Awards from September 2004 through the present. The information was analyzed with the explicit intent of identifying theatres where OOB productions could be mounted and where productions were actually being performed.

While the number of companies producing OOB is in constant flux, our data as of October 1, 2008 indicates approximately 500 active OOB theatre companies in operation.

The approximate number of OOB productions per year was derived from the careful monitoring of OOB show listings on theatremania.com, offoffonline.com, nytheatre.com, unitedstages.com and nyitawards.com for the 2006-2007 season. We recorded approximately 1,700 unique Off-Off-Broadway listings for the year.

The neighborhoods were defined using the Manhattan Zip Code map prepared by the US Postal Service (see map 5 on page 13) as follows:

TABLE 1: New York City Zip Codes by Neighborhood

Neighborhood	Zip Codes
Upper West Side	10023, 10024, 10025
Upper East Side	10029, 10128, 10028, 10021
Midtown West Side	10019, 10036, 10018, 10001
Midtown East Side	10022, 10017, 10016
West Village	10011, 10012, 10014
East Village	10010, 10003, 10009
Financial District	10013, 10007, 10048, 10038, 10005, 10004
Lower East Side	10002
Queens	All zip codes in Queens
Brooklyn	All zip codes in Brooklyn
Other	Harlem, Washington Heights, Inwood, Bronx and Staten Island

Numbers were rounded off to the nearest percentage point.

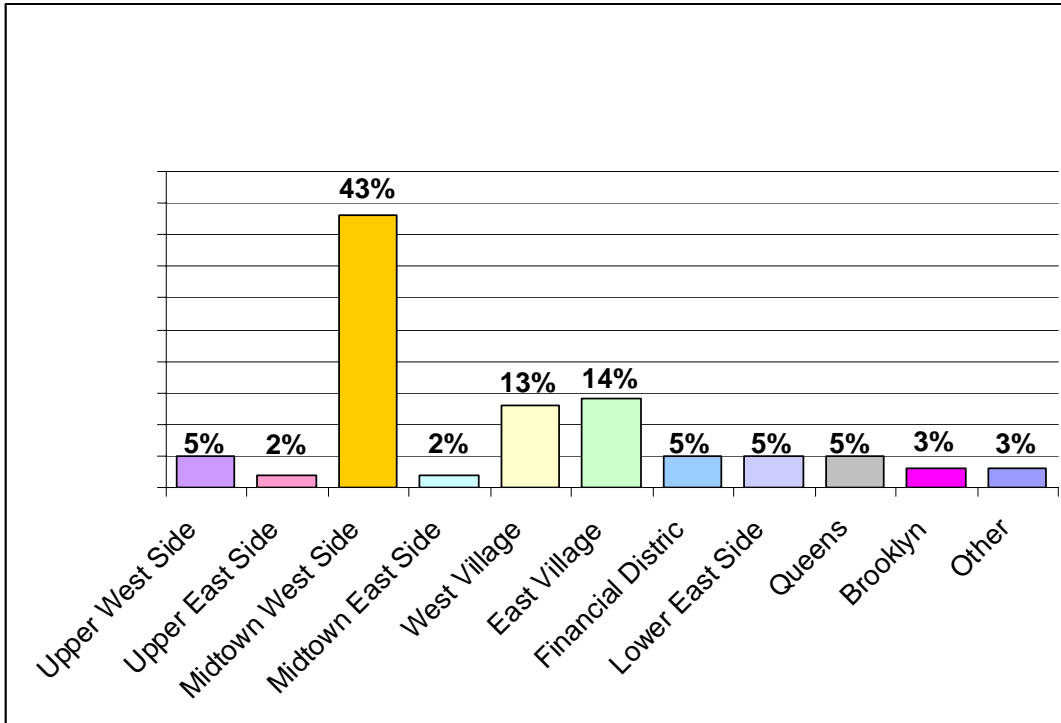
Maps were prepared by Jonathan Sury, Researcher, Columbia University; using 2007 TIGER/Line (R) Shapefiles Technical Documentation prepared by the U.S. Census Bureau, 2008 & The NYC Department of City Planning.

Thanks to Paul Adams, Ian Hill, Erez Ziv, David M. Pincus and Paul Bartlett for their contributions.

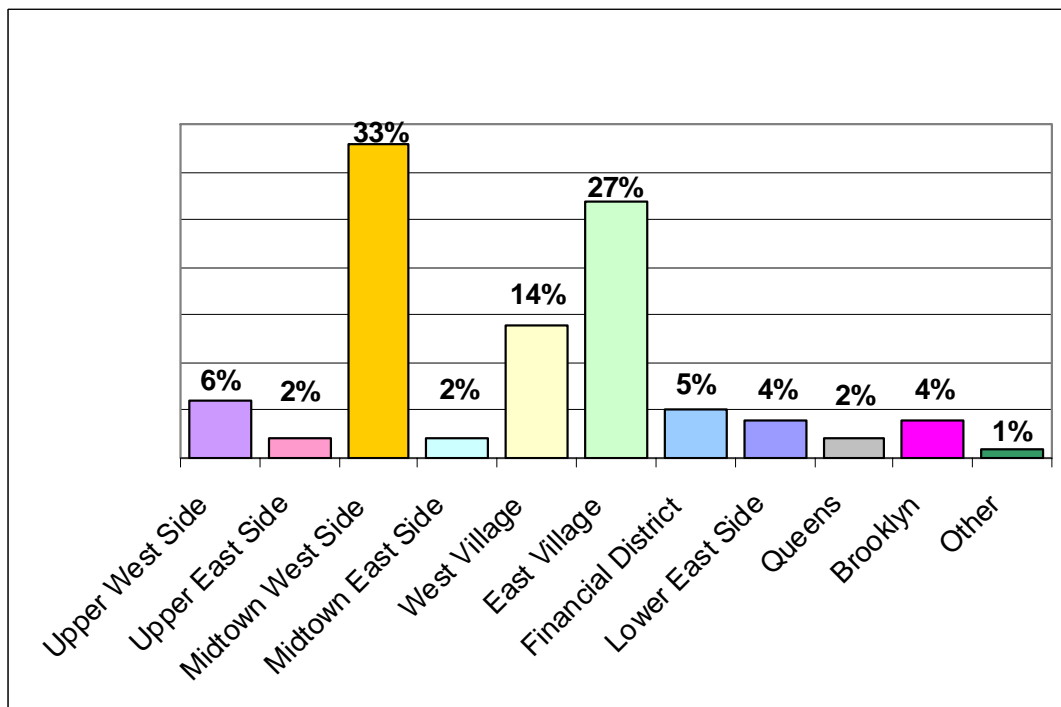
FINDINGS

The research indicates that there were approximately 200 Off-Off-Broadway venues that were active in the 5 year period from 2003 - 2008. Of those, approximately 175 venues were in continual or regular use.

GRAPH A: Location of OOB Venues by neighborhood



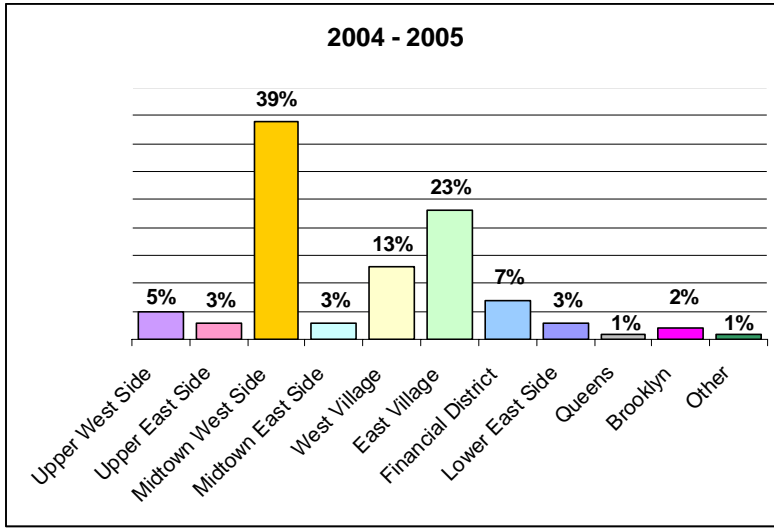
GRAPH B : Average Usage of OOB Venues over the last 5 years (2003 - 2008)



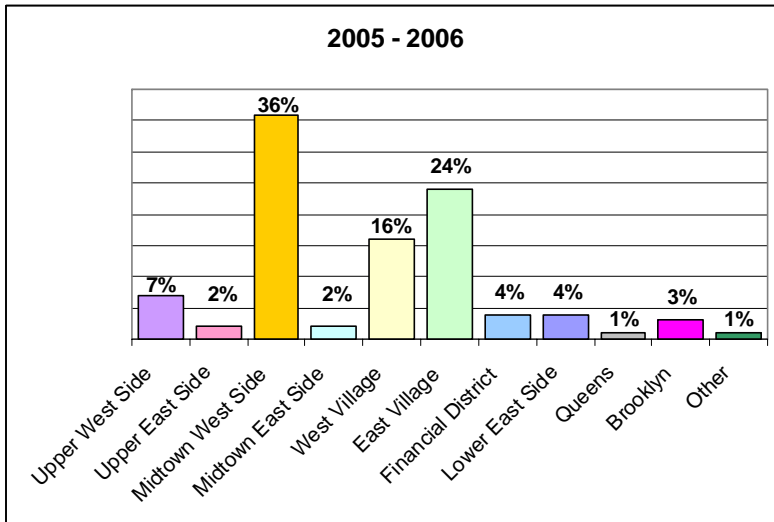
Midtown Area

While there are OOB venues in all 5 boroughs, there is a concentration of performance spaces in the West Side Midtown area of Manhattan. 78 performance spaces were identified that were in operation in the last 5 years in the Midtown area. These venues account for 43% of all spaces that are suitable for OOB productions. However, the data indicates that the actual OOB usage of these spaces only accounts for one-third (1/3) of the productions per year. In addition, the research demonstrates a slow and steady decline in productions performing in the Midtown area with an increase in the number of productions presented in the East Village and the outer boroughs.

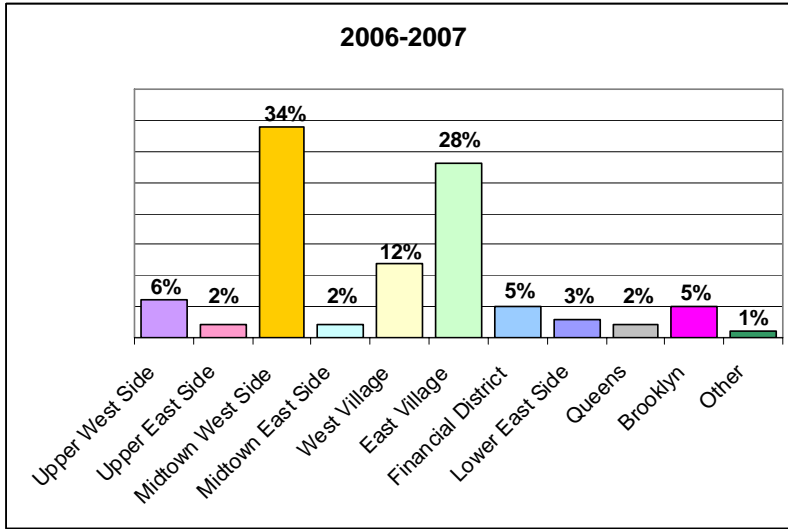
GRAPH C: Average Usage of OOB Venues 2004 - 2005



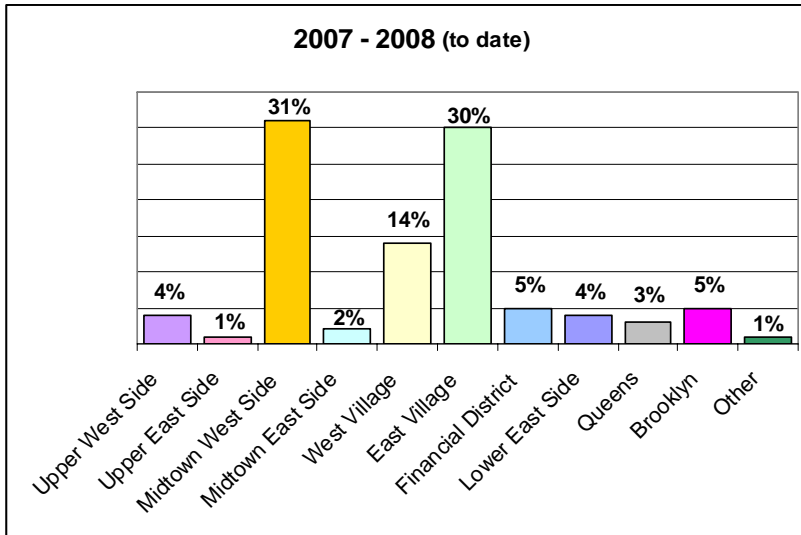
GRAPH D: Average Usage of OOB Venues 2005 - 2006



GRAPH E: Average Usage of OOB Venues 2006 - 2007



GRAPH F: Average Usage of OOB Venues 2007 - 2008



The decrease in OOB usage of Midtown theatres can be attributed to several factors. The most noteworthy are increasing rents and the loss of theatres in the Midtown area. The rising rents of venues in the audience-friendly Theatre District often price these spaces outside the budgets of OOB productions. Since 2003 the OOB community has lost a significant number of theatres in Manhattan to real estate development projects. Twenty (20) of these spaces were located in the Midtown area (see table 2 on page 6), which accounts for over 26% of the available theatres in that area (see maps 1 on page 8 and map 4 on page 11).

TABLE 2: Defunct OOB Spaces in the Midtown West Side area

Theatre Space	Zip Code
29th Street Theatre	10001
Creative Place Theatre	10036
Douglas Fairbanks Theatre	10036
Emerging Artists Theatre	10036
Hinton Battle Dance Laboratory	10036
Intar Theatre	10019
John Houseman - Theatre 1 - OB space	10036
John Houseman - Theatre 2	10036
John Houseman - Theatre 3	10036
Jose Quintero	10036
Michael Weller Theatre	10036
Nat Horne Theatre	10036
New Perspectives Theatre	10036
Oasis Theatre	10019
Pelican Theatre	10036
Show World Theatre	10036
The Tank	10036
Theatre 5	10036
Trilogy Theatre	10036
Vital Children's Theatre	10036
Where Eagles Dare	10018

West Village

The loss of OOB theatres is not isolated to the Midtown area. Within the last five years, of the 30 OOB spaces operating in the West Village area (accounting for 13% of suitable OOB spaces overall), 25% are now defunct and an additional three (3) theatres are currently in danger of eviction. If the three theatres in question are displaced, that will increase the number of lost spaces in the West Village to 40% (see map 2 on page 9 and table 3 on page 12).

East Village

While venues in the East Village only account for 14% of the overall available OOB performances spaces, the number of productions being presented in this area has sharply increased over the last 4 years from 23% in 2004 to 30% in 2008. Currently there are nearly as many OOB productions performing in the East Village as there are in the Midtown area (see graphs A & B on page 3).

Outer Boroughs

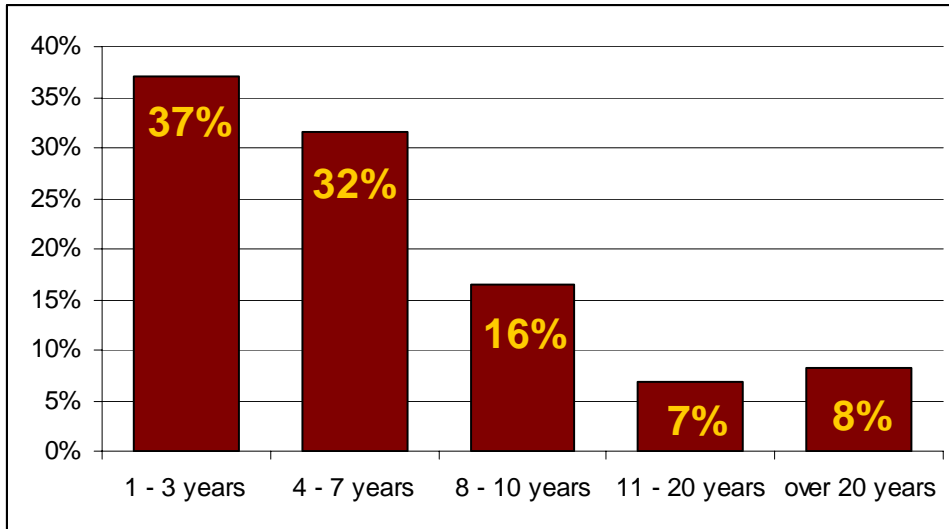
There has been a slow increase in the percentage of OOB productions being presented in the outer boroughs. Trends indicate that these percentages will continue to grow over the next few years.

Space Stability and Company Stability

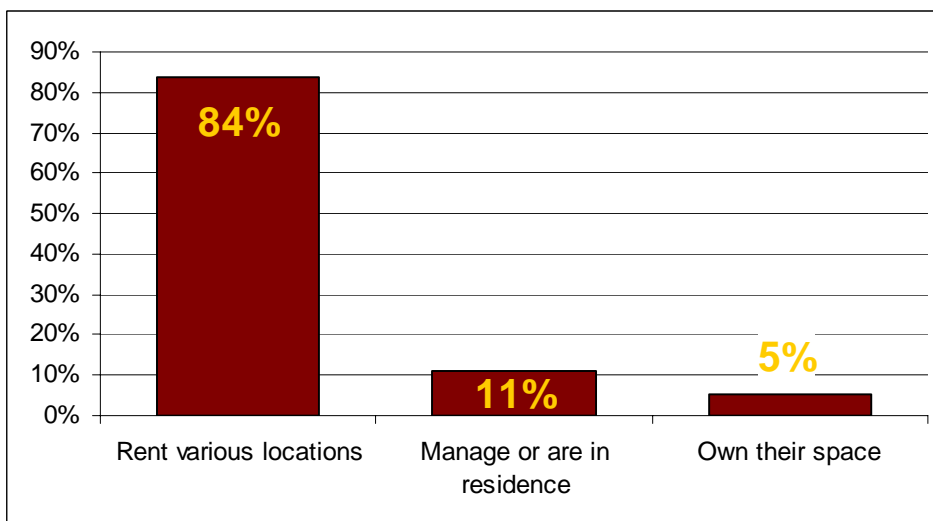
The study "Statistical Analysis of Off-Off-Broadway Budgets" conducted by the New York Innovative Theatre Foundation and released in April 2008, found that 15% of OOB companies have been producing theatre for more than 10 years (graph G below). Notably, 16% of OOB companies reported that they either owned or were in residence at a performance venue (graph H below).

The 8% of OOB companies from the study that have been producing for over 20 years represent a wide variety of company structures, genres and locations. However one common factor that all of these companies share is that they have been presenting work at the same location for at least 15 years.

GRAPH G: Years producing OOB theatre

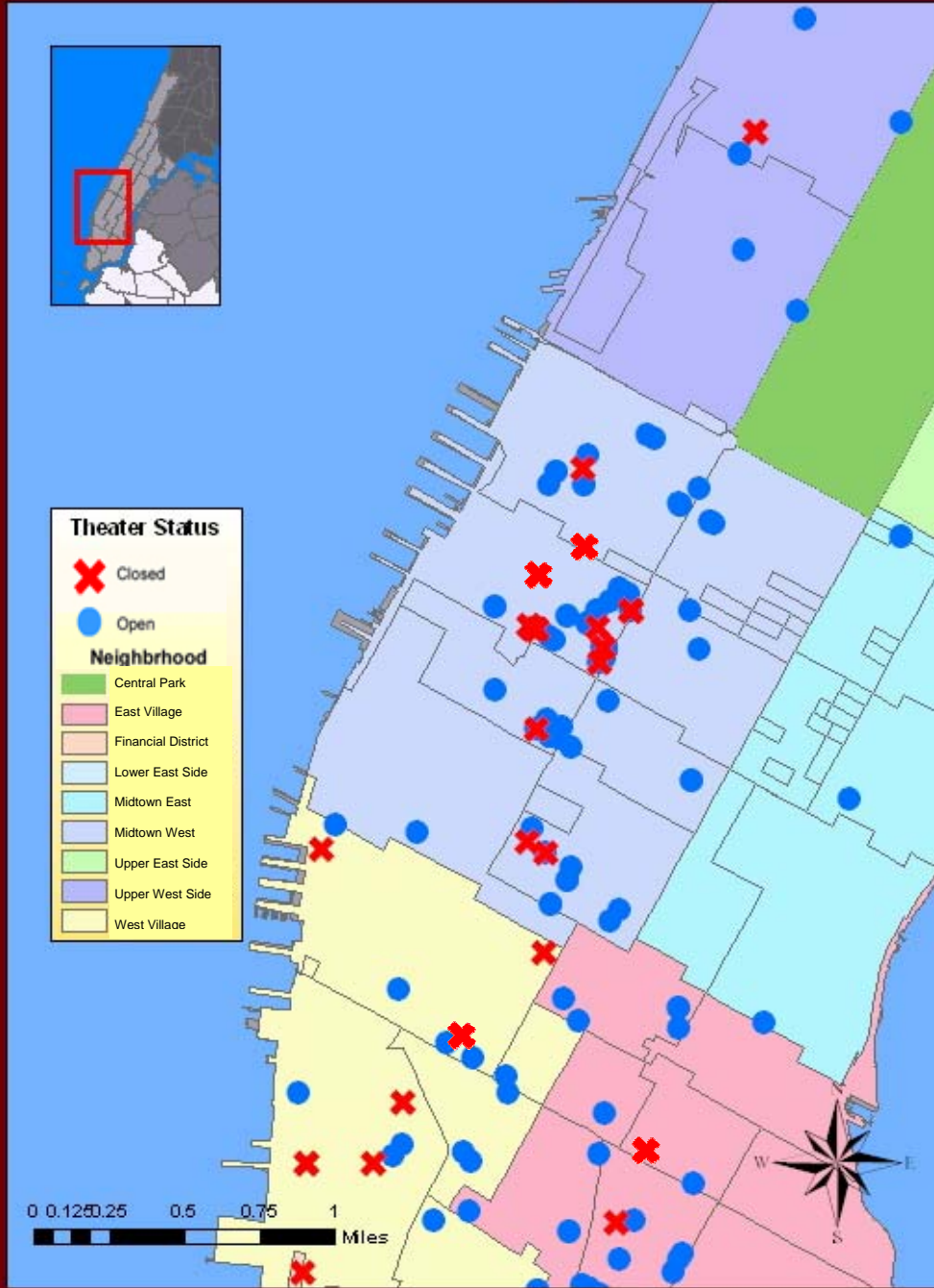


GRAPH H: Performance space usage



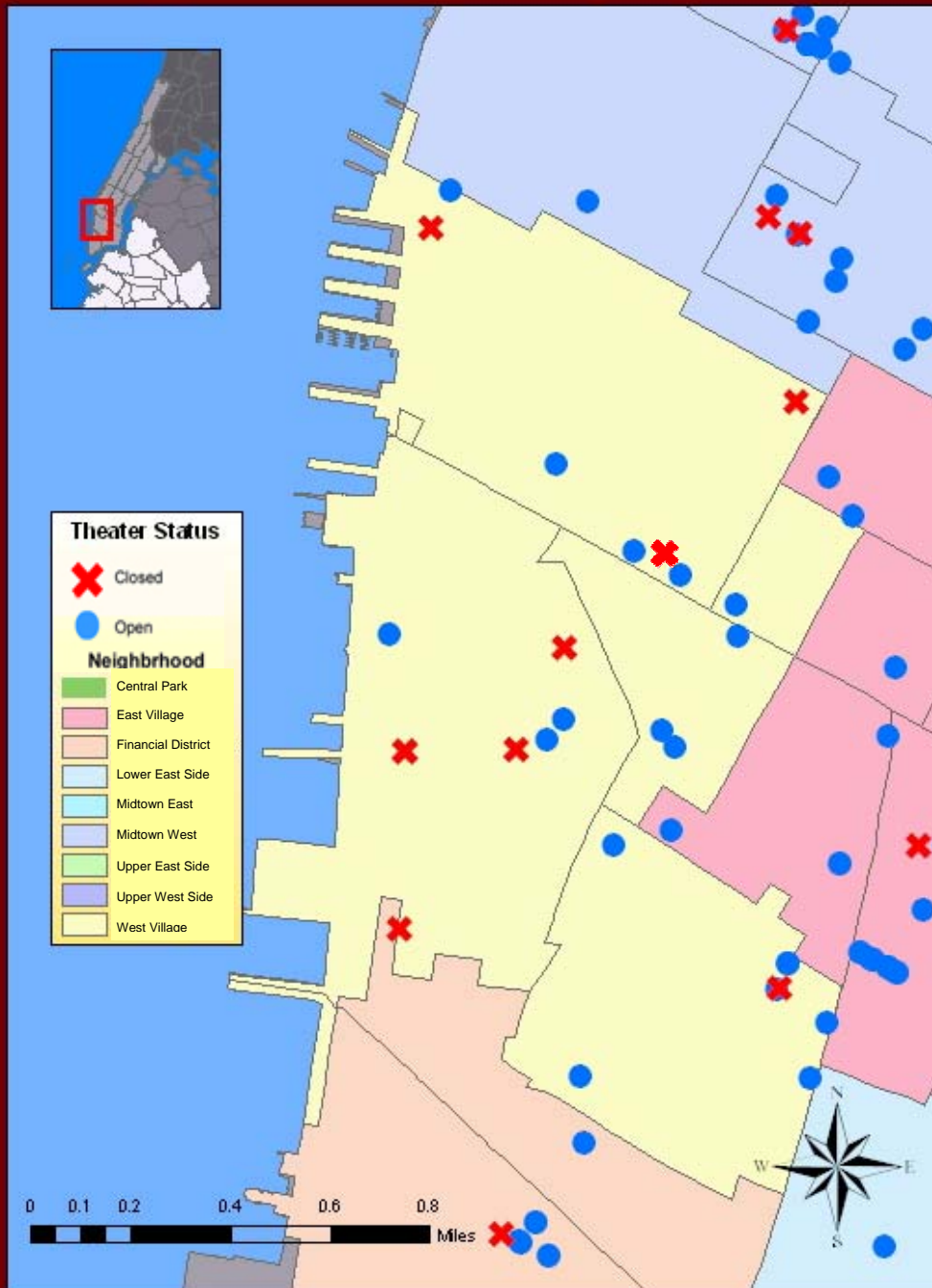
The recurring loss of performance space drives many companies and artists into a cycle of successive displacement, repeatedly searching for affordable rents and long term leases. The data indicates that the stability and longevity of a company is highly correlated with the stability of their performance space.

Midtown Off-Off-Broadway Theater Closures



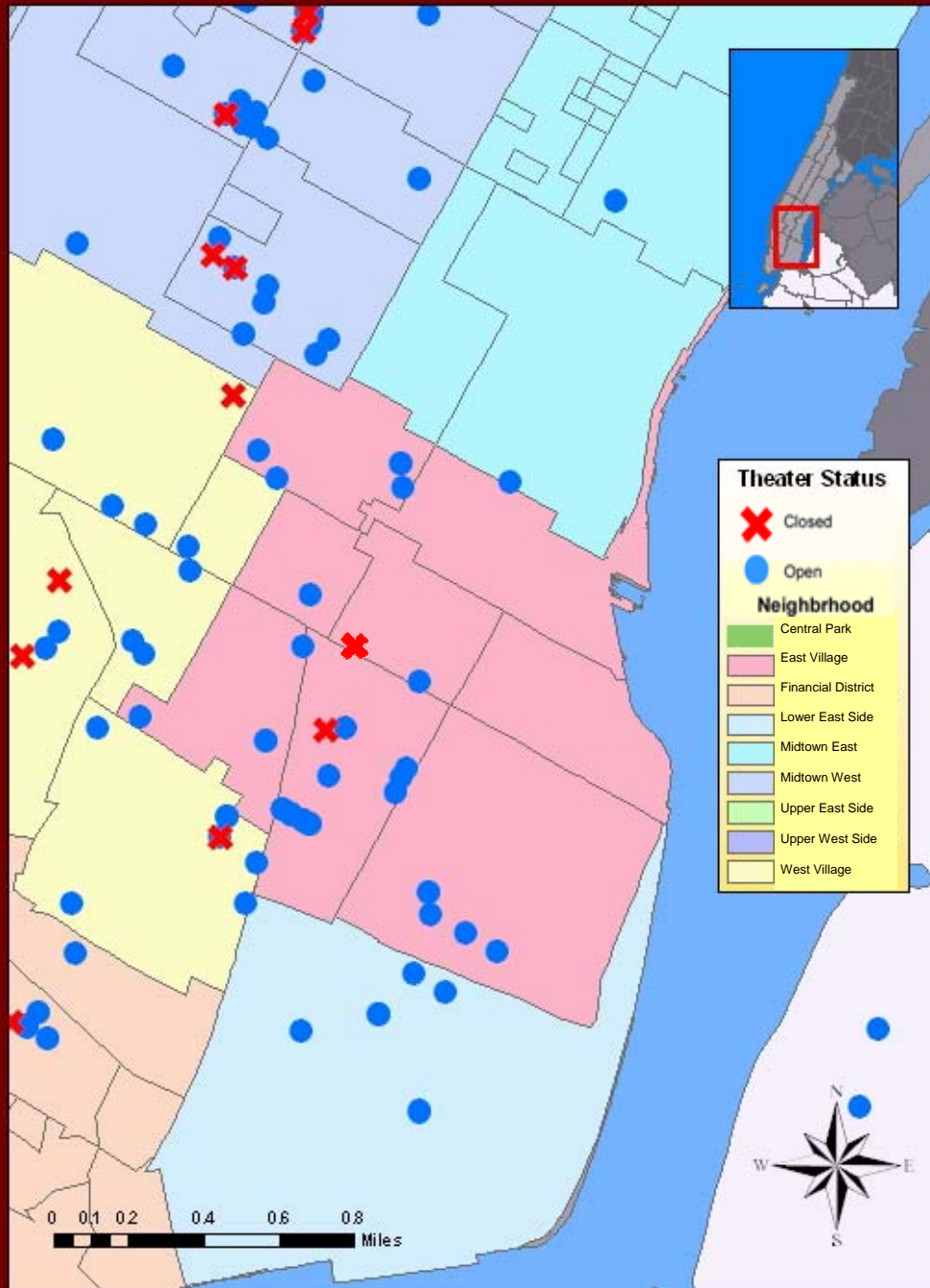
Data: 2007 TIGER/Line (R) Shapefiles Technical Documentation prepared by the U.S. Census Bureau, 2008 & The NYC Department of City Planning
Prepared by Jonathan Sury Date 10/27/08

West Village Off-Off-Broadway Theater Closures



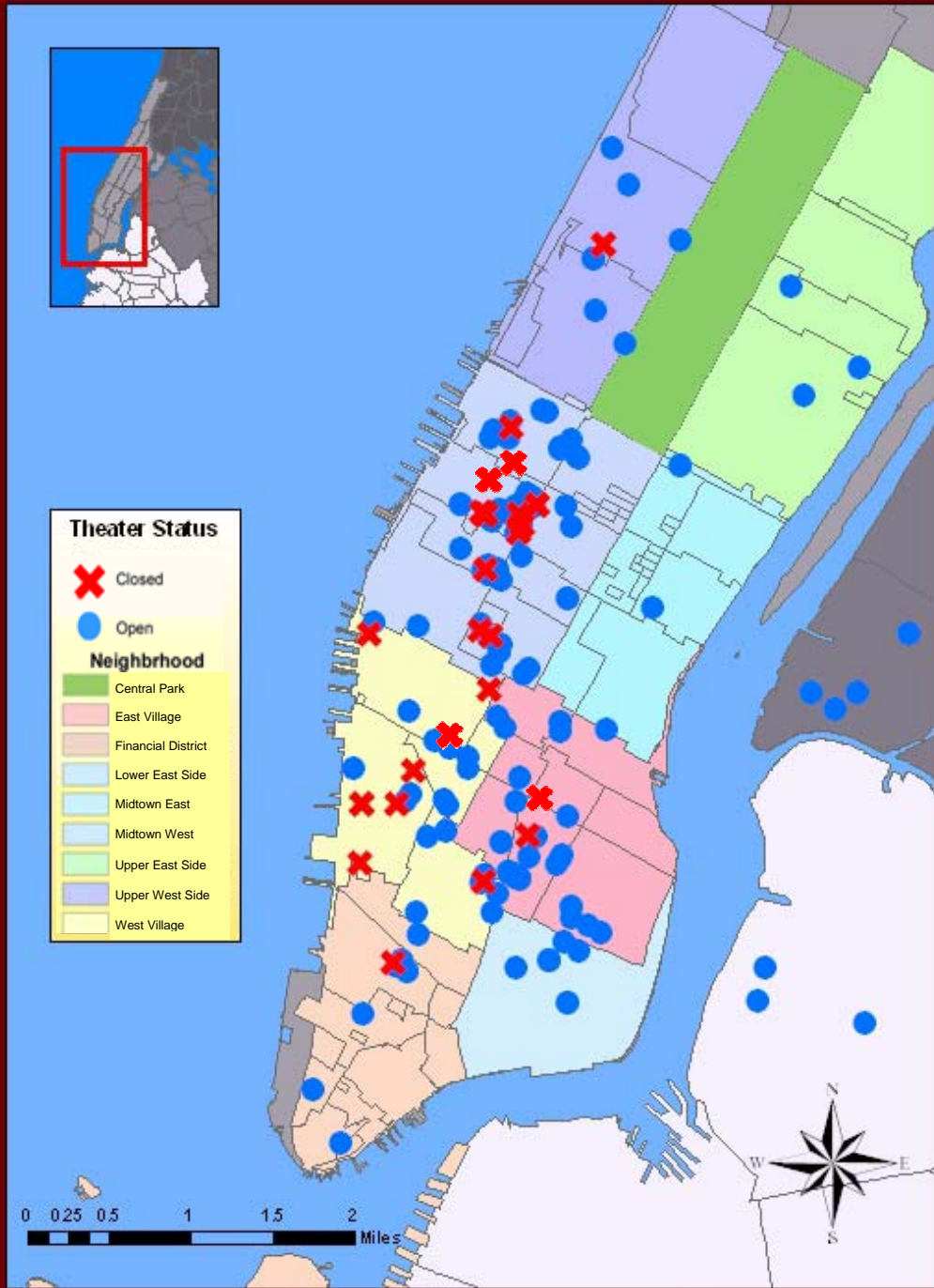
Data: 2007 TIGER/Line (R) Shapefiles Technical Documentation prepared by the U.S. Census Bureau, 2008 & The NYC Department of City Planning Prepared by Jonathan Sury Date 10/27/08

East Village Off-Off-Broadway Theater Closures



Data: 2007 TIGER/Line (R) Shapefiles Technical Documentation prepared by the U.S. Census Bureau, 2008 & The NYC Department of City Planning Prepared by Jonathan Sury Date 10/27/08

Manhattan Off-Off-Broadway Theater Closures



New York
Innovative Theatre
Foundation
Celebrating Off-Off-Broadway

Data: 2007 TIGER/Line (R) Shapefiles Technical Documentation prepared by the U.S. Census Bureau, 2008 & The NYC Department of City Planning
Prepared by Jonathan Sury Date 10/27/08

List of Defunct Off-Off-Broadway Performance Spaces

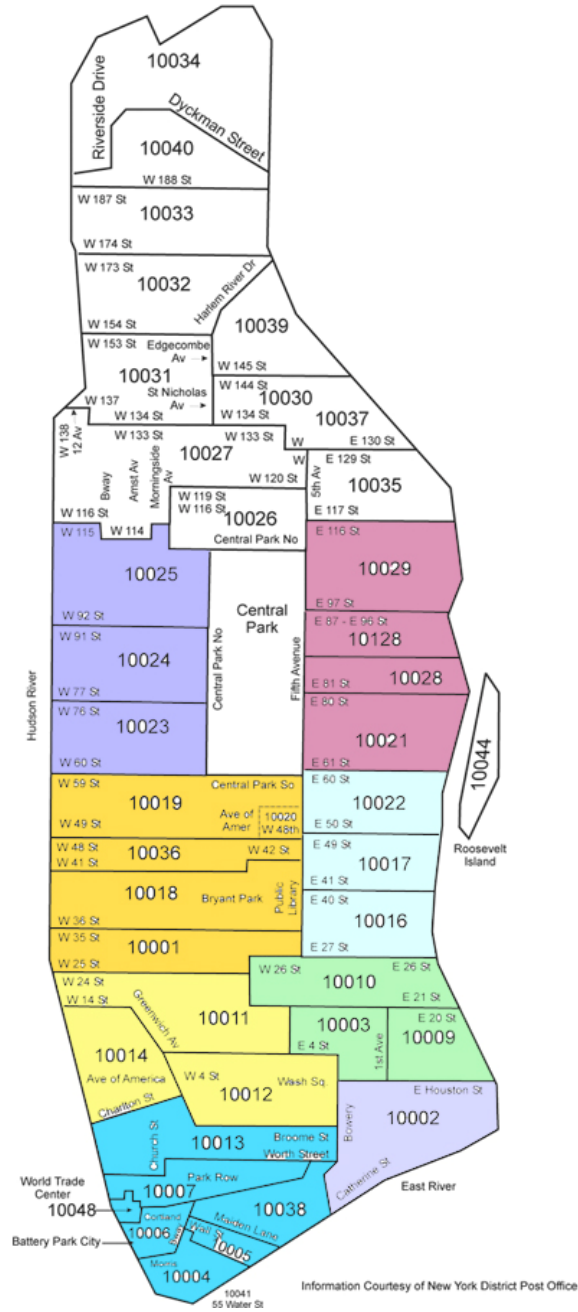
TABLE 3: Defunct Off-Off-Broadway Performance Spaces

Theatre Space	Zip Code
29th Street Theatre	10001
78th Street Theatre Lab, 2nd floor	10024
Actors Playhouse	10014
Bowery Lane Theatre	10002
Chelsea Repertory Company	10011
Collective Unconscious	10002
Creative Place Theatre	10036
Culture Project	10012
Douglas Fairbanks Theatre	10036
Emerging Artists Theatre	10036
Flatiron Theatre	10011
Greenwich Street Theatre	10014
Grove Street Playhouse	10014
Hinton Battle Dance Laboratory	10036
Intar Theatre	10019
John Houseman - Theatre 1 - OB space	10036
John Houseman - Theatre 2	10036
John Houseman - Theatre 3	10036
Jose Quintero	10036
Michael Weller Theatre	10036
Nat Horne Theatre	10036
New Perspectives Theatre	10036
Oasis Theatre	10019
Pelican Theatre	10036
Perry Street Theatre	10012
Provincetown Playhouse	10012
Sanford Meisner Theatre	10011
Show World Theatre	10036
Studio Dante	10001
The Tank on 42nd Street	10036
Theatre 5	10036
Trilogy Theatre	10036
Village Gate Theatre	10012
Vital Children's Theatre	10036
Where Eagles Dare	10018
Theatres currently in danger of eviction	
Epiphany Theatre	10014
Interborough Repertory Theater	10014
The Wings Theatre	10014
Theatre for a New Audience - OB space	10014
13th Street Repertory Theatre	10011

This list is regularly being updated as other venues that have been/are being demolished or redeveloped into non-performance spaces are identified. We encourage community members to inform us of other spaces that have been lost or new spaces that are being created by emailing info@nyitawards.com.

MAP 5: Manhattan Zip Code Map

ZIP Codes



ABOUT THE NEW YORK INNOVATIVE THEATRE FOUNDATION

The New York Innovative Theatre Foundation brings recognition to the great work being done in New York City's Off-Off-Broadway, honors its artistic heritage, and provides a meeting ground for this extensive and richly varied community. The organization advocates for Off-Off-Broadway and recognizes the unique and essential role it plays in contributing to American and global culture. We believe that publicly recognizing excellence in Off-Off-Broadway will expand audience awareness and foster greater appreciation of the full New York theatre experience.

The IT Awards is a not-for-profit arts organization supporting the Off-Off-Broadway community by:

- Celebrating and recognizing extraordinary Off-Off-Broadway Theatre
- Strengthening and nurturing the Off-Off-Broadway community
- Advocating for the Off-Off-Broadway community
- Honoring our artistic heritage
- Advancing public interest in and understanding of the theatrical arts



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Photos from the cover are from (L to R): Alter Ego Productions' production of *Cherry Docs* - photo by Caleb Levengood; Vampire Cowboys Theatre Company's production of *Fight Girl Battle World* - photo by Theresa Squire; Company SoGoNo's production of *Art of Memory* - photo by Ryan Jensen

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