



CITY OF NEW YORK  
**MANHATTAN COMMUNITY BOARD FOUR**

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**JESSICA CHAIT**  
Chair

**JESSE R. BODINE**  
District Manager

May 15, 2025

Hon. Charles E. Schumer  
New York State Senator  
780 3<sup>rd</sup> Avenue, Suite 2301  
New York, NY 10017

Hon. Jerry Nadler  
U.S. Congressman  
201 Varick Street, Suite 669  
New York, NY 10014

Hon. Brad Hoylman-Sigal  
New York State Senator  
322 8<sup>th</sup> Avenue, Suite 1700  
New York, NY 10001

Hon. Kathy Hochul  
New York State Governor  
633 3<sup>rd</sup> Avenue, 38<sup>th</sup> Floor  
New York, NY 10017

Hon Tony Simone  
New York State Assembly Member  
214 W. 29<sup>th</sup> Street, Suite 1401  
New York, NY 10001

**Re: Helicopter Safety**

Dear All,

A vote of 35 in favor, 1 opposed, 1 abstaining, and 2 present but not eligible was taken by Manhattan Community Board 4 (MCB4) at the May 7<sup>th</sup> Full Board meeting in response to the recent tragedy in which a pilot and five family members perished in a helicopter crash in the Hudson River. Manhattan Community Board 4 is once again calling for a permanent ban on non-essential helicopter flights above New York City, and for the closure of the West 30th Street Heliport.

At least 38 people have died in Helicopter crashes in New York City since 1977<sup>1</sup> and there is a long and growing list of incidents that put operators, passengers and New Yorkers on the ground at risk <sup>2</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.wxii12.com/article/history-of-helicopter-accidents-new-york-city/64447985>

<sup>2</sup> (<https://www.nytimes.com/2009/08/09/continuous/09crash.html>).

MCB4 continues to call for the elimination of non-essential helicopter flights in the region. Tourist flights have been particularly dangerous and should be immediately grounded as would be possible under Congressman Nadler's bill 1071.<sup>3</sup> A significant number of street users may be impacted on the ground at the scene of a catastrophic incident involving helicopters flying over Manhattan. Furthermore, without Homeland Security screening, there is no guarantee that the passengers will act in a peaceful manner. With their doors wide open, helicopters would be the ideal vehicle for terrorist attacks. Lastly, our district's quality of life is greatly impacted by the constant hovering and noise. In contrast to the safer methods employed by light aircrafts, helicopter pilots navigate by sight, (visual separation) without the aid of radar or tower controllers, in a corridor that is congested. Visual separation can also create a deadly risk — one that aviation experts have warned about for years.<sup>4</sup>

Given that the majority of these planes originate in New Jersey, we believe that a flying ban over New York City ought to be implemented like the recent ban of most helicopter flights the F.A.A. recently ordered along a portion of the route in Washington D.C. following a deadly crash there.

The helicopter involved in April's fatal accident operated out of many of the region's heliports, including the one in District 4.<sup>5</sup> MCB4 has long opposed the West 30th Street Heliport, and has sought its closure.<sup>6</sup> The West 30th Street Heliport, located within Hudson River Park, is prohibited by a Court Settlement and the Hudson River Park Act from having tourist flights, and yet still has tens of thousands of non-essential commuter flights per year to nearby transit-accessible airports and vacation destinations like the Hamptons. These are not necessities. These flights disrupt life on the West Side and diminish the park experience.

A heliport that serves only essential services - police, fire, and medical flights - would see dramatically lower traffic, and result in an improved quality of life along much of Manhattan. Some recent legislative efforts would still allow commuter flights if they follow Federal Aviation Administration-defined routes, such as those along the Hudson or on approaches to airports, but that would still leave the West Side with the impacts of noise, pollution and traffic as helicopters land and take-off from our community's largest park<sup>7</sup>.

The West Side Heliport should be closed because it poses serious threats to the general public.

The Hudson River Park cannot accommodate the heliport. Why is Hudson River Park different from Central Park, or the High Line where no one would put up with a heliport in proximity? Since there are two other nearby heliports that are a mere three nautical miles away, or a five-

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<sup>3</sup> <https://www.congress.gov/bill/118th-congress/house-bill/1071>

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.nytimes.com/2025/04/27/business/dc-plane-crash-reagan-airport.html?smid=nytcore-ios-share&referringSource=articleShare>

<sup>5</sup> <https://nyc.streetsblog.org/2025/04/17/helicopter-deaths-fast-and-slow/>.

<sup>6</sup> <https://cbmanhattan.cityofnewyork.us/cb4/wp-content/uploads/sites/10/2021/08/35-WPE-Letter-to-Electeds-re-Legislation-for-Heliport-Closure.pdf>

<sup>7</sup> <https://www.nysenate.gov/legislation/bills/2021/S7493>

minute flight, this heliport is not essential as discussed as early as 2002 in an MCB4 letter opposing the heliport<sup>8</sup>.

The heliport is only a few feet away from a sizable crowd of park visitors. Its customers' SUVs frequently extend onto on the greenway, blocking bicycles and pedestrians and occasionally endangering them when they abruptly back up. There is rarely a flag person directing traffic. Adjacent to the bike lane are large fuel reservoirs that are not guarded against misuse. The nearby community, which is primarily residential, would suffer terrible effects in case of a crash. The impact on air quality are massive: for example, each Airbus AS350 helicopter produces 950 lbs. of carbon dioxide an hour, more than 42 times what a car produces. "For those living and working nearby, that's like 42 cars idling outside your window, when only one aircraft is on deck at the heliport." (Adrian Benepe). Additionally, the heliport is a major annoyance for thousands of people: the noise is so loud during the 78 arrivals and departures per day, that it is impossible to enjoy a walk or a dinner, and it lowers the value of the franchises that support the park. The noise is audible over a large portion of the park and above the restaurants on the piers where diners feel like they are in a scene of Apocalypse Now.

This is particularly frustrating because the Heliport is required by a 2007 court settlement to stop operating commercial flights by December 2012. Nothing prevents the Trust from closing the Heliport, which is leased on a month-to-month basis at the moment. Now that the Gateway project requires the heliport to close 50% of its foot print, it is time for the operator to find a new permanent location away from the park.

Sincerely,



Jessica Chait  
Chair  
Manhattan Community Board 4



Christine Berthet  
Co-Chair  
Transportation Planning Committee



Jesse Greenwald  
Co-Chair  
Transportation Planning Committee

Enclosure

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<sup>8</sup> [https://cbmanhattan.cityofnewyork.us/cb4/wp-content/uploads/sites/10/downloads/pdf/agendas/2002\\_07/27\\_water\\_heliport.pdf](https://cbmanhattan.cityofnewyork.us/cb4/wp-content/uploads/sites/10/downloads/pdf/agendas/2002_07/27_water_heliport.pdf)



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GALE A. BREWER  
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January 18, 2022

Hon. Kathy Hochul  
Governor, State of New York  
Capital  
Albany, NY 12242

Hon. Eric Adams  
Mayor, City of New York  
City Hall  
New York, NY 10007

Richard "Rick" Cotton  
Executive Director  
Port Authority of New York and New Jersey  
Four World Trade Center, 150 Greenwich Street  
New York, NY 10006

Dear Governor Hochul, Mayor Adams and Director Cotton:

I write to urge you to close the West 30<sup>th</sup> Street Heliport that is located in Hudson River Park.

I have spent almost 15 years as a Council Member and the Manhattan Borough President working to curtail the noise and health issues that helicopters bring to the residents of Manhattan. I chaired a Task Force on Helicopters as a Council Member and then one with New Jersey and Manhattan Elected Officials as the Borough President. We forced the industry and the Mayor to make some route changes but tourism and non-essential helicopters that originate in New Jersey continue to fly over Manhattan, and tourism helicopters fly out of the Downtown Heliport in Manhattan. We want all of this helicopter activity to stop.

I also urge the 3 entities I write to today to close the one heliport located in a park. Parks and helicopters are not meant for co-location. This heliport focuses on transportation for customers going to airports and out of town. I have been at events near the heliport and the noise is deafening and the health concerns from fuel are real. I know that Community Board 4 and local residents support closing this heliport.

I look forward to your response.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Gale A. Brewer".

Gale A. Brewer