



CITY OF NEW YORK

**MANHATTAN COMMUNITY BOARD FOUR**

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**JEAN-DANIEL NOLAND**  
Chair

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District Manager

July 26, 2007

Mr. Charles E. Dorkey III – Chair  
Mr Daniel Doctoroff – Vice-chair  
Ms. Connie Fishman – President/CEO  
Hudson River Park Trust  
Pier 40 @ West Houston Street  
2nd floor  
New York, NY 10014

**Re: 30th Street Heliport**

Dear Mr. Dorkey, Mr. Doctoroff and Ms. Fishman:

This letter pertains to the heliport in Hudson River Park in the vicinity of West 30<sup>th</sup> Street. As you are aware, this heliport is operating illegally in that it includes an operation that provides helicopter tours for tourists, which is specifically prohibited by the Hudson River Park Act.

In addition, the location itself, for flights of any kind, is situated on land that is intended for park use by the Hudson River Park Act, and is directly adjacent to the bikeway and walkway in that area. This location is also illegal for the placement of an as-of-right heliport within Hudson River Park.

These situations have been the case since the Hudson River Park Act was passed in 1998 and the current lease for the heliport ended in 2001. However, due to the fact that park financing and construction was focused on other areas within the park, the community has been tolerant of the heliport in the belief that, when the time came, the future of this heliport would be addressed. Manhattan Community Board No 4 believes that time has now come.

With the opening of a new park pier at the end of West 26<sup>th</sup> Street (Pier 66) and the parkland now finished up to approximately West 28<sup>th</sup> Street, just adjacent to the southern end of the existing heliport, it is clear that, at a minimum, the tourists flights that operate from this heliport must now end immediately. In no way can it be argued that these illegal tourist flights are “grandfathered” in any way. The Hudson River Park Act is specific in saying that a permitted park/commercial use includes a non-tourism/non-recreation heliport for commercial and emergency transportation use (emphasis ours). There is no date specified for termination; the heliport’s current lease expired several years ago; and the fact that the community has refrained from objecting until this point does not make it legal.

Further, it only takes one walk or bike-ride along the now very popular bikeway/walkway that runs a scant few feet east of the current heliport while a helicopter is landing or taking off to understand how ill-suited this location is for such a use. The wind from the prop wash is enough to topple a bicyclist or baby carriage and the noise is excruciating and well beyond what would be permitted in any park in the city. And the recent crash of a helicopter in the adjacent river is a sharp reminder of the danger of locating a heliport so close to a heavily trafficked bikeway and walkway. In addition the current heliport is located in a zone that excludes park/commercial uses, and the Act specifically defines a permitted, non-tourist heliport as such.

Manhattan Community Board No 4 believes that no heliport is appropriate within any park, including Hudson River Park. However, we recognize that the city has long maintained that a business/emergency heliport was needed on the west side of Manhattan and that such a heliport is permitted by the Act. The board has considered several locations and come to the conclusion that Pier 72, currently a pile field, might be a suitable location as long as helicopter landing pads were located at the extreme western end of the pier; at least 200 feet west of the bikeway/walkway. Pier 76, which is mandated by the same Hudson River Park Act to be 50% parkland, is not a suitable location.

For the reasons cited above, Manhattan Community Board No 4 insists that the Hudson River Park Trust take steps to terminate tourist flights immediately at the existing heliport and serve notice to the current heliport tenants that the current location is illegal. Further, HRPT should aggressively look toward a permanent location for a permitted heliport so that the current one can be removed and park construction can proceed between 29<sup>th</sup> and 31<sup>st</sup> Streets.

Thank you for taking this matter seriously and we look forward to solution that is better, quieter, less windy and, above all, safer.

Sincerely,

*[signed 7/26/07]*  
Jean-Daniel Noland  
Chair  
Community Board 4



John Doswell  
Co-Chair  
Waterfronts and Parks

*[signed 7/26/07]*  
Kristin Dionne  
Co-Chair  
Waterfronts and Parks

Cc:  
Air Pegasus, Liberty Helicopter Tours, electeds, FoHRP