

COMMUNITY BOARD #1 – MANHATTAN
RESOLUTION

DATE: OCTOBER 27, 2009

COMMITTEE OF ORIGIN: FINANCIAL DISTRICT

COMMITTEE VOTE:	11 In Favor	1 Opposed	0 Abstained	0 Recused
PUBLIC MEMBERS:	0 In Favor	1 Opposed	0 Abstained	0 Recused
BOARD VOTE:	42 In Favor	0 Opposed	0 Abstained	0 Recused

RE: Tourist Helicopter Flights from the Downtown Manhattan Heliport

WHEREAS: Community Board #1 (CB#1) is aware of the problems that several local neighborhoods, particularly on the West Side, have experienced in recent years as a result of the thousands of tourist sightseeing helicopter flights that take place annually over and in close proximity to these neighborhoods, including serious safety concerns and issues related to noise and air pollution from engine fumes, and

WHEREAS: A legal settlement (the Settlement) was reached in 2008 in a lawsuit filed by Friends of Hudson River Park and other local groups and individuals against the operator of the West 30th Street heliport and Liberty Helicopters, which runs sightseeing and commercial helicopter flights from that site, the terms of which Settlement (i) established restrictions on flight patterns that must be adhered to by sightseeing helicopters so as to have the least possible impact on nearby residential areas, including requiring such helicopters to fly parallel to the Manhattan shoreline only while the helicopters are over the middle of the Hudson River and requiring arrivals and departures to fly in a direct line between the heliport and the middle of the river unless safety considerations dictate otherwise, (ii) reduced the number of sightseeing flights from 25,000 between June 2008 and May 2009, then to 12,500 between June 2009 and March 2010, with all tourist helicopter flights operating from that heliport to end by April 1, 2010, and (iii) placed restrictions on the hours during which tourist flights could operate to between 9:00 a.m. and 6:30 p.m., and

WHEREAS: The proposed agreement between the City's Economic Development Corporation and a private company for the latter to manage the Downtown Manhattan heliport under an arrangement that will permit tourist sight-seeing helicopter flights to operate from that location could once again subject Lower Manhattan neighborhoods to thousands of additional tourist helicopter flights annually and the problems attendant to those flights, with such flights potentially not being subject to the kinds of mitigating constraints agreed to in the above-referenced Settlement unless enforceable arrangements are made ahead of time, now

THEREFORE
BE IT
RESOLVED
THAT:

CB#1 strongly urges the Economic Development Corporation to require that any contracts or other agreements that are entered into with operators of tourist excursion helicopters that will conduct flights in and out of the Downtown Manhattan heliport must include provisions that would impose substantial and enforceable penalties, financial and otherwise, for such flights that create excessive noise, pollution and or potential safety hazards for Lower Manhattan residential neighborhoods, and

BE IT
FURTHER
RESOLVED
THAT:

In exchange for the privilege of operating flights out of the Downtown Manhattan heliport, operators of tourist flights should be required to agree to limited times of operation, numerical limits on the number of flights, and flight path restrictions similar or identical to those that tourist sight-seeing helicopters currently operating out of the West 30th Street heliport are subject to under the terms of the Settlement in order to assure that these flights are kept well away from Lower Manhattan residential neighborhoods, and

BE IT
FURTHER
RESOLVED
THAT:

The Economic Development Corporation should require the company receiving the contract to manage the Downtown Manhattan heliport to be proactive in causing the companies that operate tourist flights out of that heliport to adhere to the restrictions described above and, if any regular user of that heliport repeatedly violates these provisions, it must immediately refuse that operator the right to use the heliport (to the extent it has the right to do so under relevant governmental regulations).