



The City of New York
Manhattan Community Board 1

Tammy Meltzer CHAIRPERSON | Zach Bommer DISTRICT MANAGER

COMMUNITY BOARD 1 – MANHATTAN
RESOLUTION

DATE: JANUARY 27, 2026

COMMITTEE OF ORIGIN: EXECUTIVE

COMMITTEE VOTE:	10 In Favor	0 Opposed	0 Abstained	0 Recused
PUBLIC VOTE:	0 In Favor	0 Opposed	0 Abstained	0 Recused
BOARD VOTE:	29 In Favor	3 Opposed	7 Abstained	0 Recused

RE: **EDC/Downtown Skyport Request for 2026 Expansion Pilot Program**

WHEREAS: CB1 has long standing complaints about helicopter noise and the pollution caused by helicopters in Lower Manhattan and has called for reductions in non-essential helicopter travel including sightseeing and tour flights from Pier 6^{1,2}; and

WHEREAS: CB1 is on the record with the passing of five resolutions: “Downtown Manhattan Heliport tour flights (July 2011), “Tourist Helicopter Flights from the Downtown Manhattan Heliport” (October 2009), “Downtown Manhattan Heliport at Pier 6 and elsewhere in CB1” (June 2015), support for New York City Council bills “Int. No. 858 & Int. No. 859” (November 2015), and “Helicopter tourism in Lower Manhattan” (February 2016) and has testified at multiple Council hearings and had numerous meetings with various agencies and elected officials over the years all in the effort to reduce the harms of helicopter noise and pollution on Lower Manhattan; and

WHEREAS: CB1 supported Skyport’s bid to operate Pier 6 helicopter operations because of their commitment to move to quieter and no-emission electric vertical take off and landing (EVTOL) mode of transport³; and

WHEREAS: In 2024, the NYCEDC implemented a stricter operating window for tourist flights at the Downtown Manhattan Heliport, reducing the daily curfew from 7:00 PM to 5:00 PM; and

¹ <https://www.nyc.gov/assets/manhattancb1/downloads/pdf/testimonies/11-12-2015.pdf>

² <https://www.nyc.gov/assets/manhattancb1/downloads/pdf/testimonies/07-11-2016.pdf>

³ <https://web.miniextensions.com/api/public-attachments/LU00d1BEC5zgaAqyneqF/recKQpbgulijScUpo>

- WHEREAS: At the January 2026 Executive Committee meeting representatives from Skyport and EDC stated that they believed that this reduction in operating hours had the unintended consequence of increasing noise complaints in CD1 because flights during that time flew out of New Jersey which has fewer regulations; and
- WHEREAS: Skyport, in partnership with EDC presented a proposal to conduct a pilot program extending air tour operating hours at the Downtown Manhattan Heliport, with the goal of shifting demand from unregulated New Jersey operators to the more regulated New York City facility; and
- WHEREAS: EDC and Skyport presented 311 Data and tracking reports for noise complaints which indicate there has been a significant increase (145%) in helicopter noise complaints since April 2024; which data analysis attributes primarily to air tours originating from New Jersey heliports that lack time and route restrictions; and
- WHEREAS: Downtown Skyport air tours are subject to strict over-water flight paths, time and day restrictions, and monthly caps, with robust enforcement and reporting mechanisms in place, while New Jersey operators are not subject to similar guardrails; and
- WHEREAS: The proposed pilot would extend air tour hours from the current 5:00 PM cutoff to 7:00 PM, during peak demand periods (April–December 2026), with the intention of reducing overall noise complaints by redistributing flights from New Jersey to New York City, without increasing the total number of flights; and
- WHEREAS: The pilot period is proposed to coincide with major events (e.g., FIFA, Olympics, Sail 250, Tall Ships) and peak tourism season, providing a "stress test" for capacity, noise mitigation efforts and data collection; and
- WHEREAS: Community Board 1 members expressed concerns about the impact of extended hours on residential neighborhoods, park users and the general public and requested the need for clear criteria/metrics for pilot success, and the importance of tracking noise complaints by location and time; and
- WHEREAS: Skyports and EDC committed to providing detailed data on current and projected flight volumes, noise complaint geotagging, and to return to the Board with findings and recommendations before any permanent changes are made; and
- WHEREAS: The Board recognizes the potential economic and employment benefits of supporting regulated air tour operations, but emphasizes that community impact and noise reduction must be the primary criteria for evaluating the pilot, MCB1 considers a metric and target for meaningful change to be a reduction of 10% in noise complaints; and
- WHEREAS: Members recommended that the pilot be time-limited (e.g., six to eight months), with a mid-point and final evaluation, and that no permanent changes be made without further Board review and public input; and

WHEREAS: MCB1's support for the proposed pilot program for a temporary expansion of the operating hours for helicopter air-tour hours should not be interpreted as support of the concept of helicopter air-tours, but simply as willingness to accord Downtown Skyport the opportunity to explore measures to reduce helicopter noise impacts in the context of its existing concession agreement for the operation of the Downtown Manhattan Heliport; now

THEREFORE

BE IT

RESOLVED

THAT: Manhattan Community Board 1 supports the concept of a time-limited pilot program to extend Downtown Skyport air tour hours from 5:00 PM to 7:00 PM, provided that:

- The pilot is clearly defined in terms of start/end dates, flight caps, and evaluation criteria;
- Detailed data on flight volumes, noise complaints (including geotagged locations), and community impacts are collected and shared with the Board;
- Skyports and EDC return to the Board at the midpoint and conclusion of the pilot with full information to present findings including and not limited to noise complaints, volumes, reported revenue changes and receive feedback;
- No permanent changes to operating hours or flight caps are made without further Board review and public input;
- The pilot is designed to prioritize noise reduction and community well-being over economic considerations, and