

An aerial photograph of New York City, showing the dense skyline of Manhattan and the surrounding water. A helicopter is visible in the lower right foreground, flying over the water. The image is overlaid with a blue tint.

HELIPORTS AND THEIR IMPORTANCE TO NEW YORK CITY

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Executive Summary

Helicopter service is a central element in the transportation infrastructure that links New York City to the surrounding region and the nation. The City's three public-use heliports, all of which are located in Manhattan — at West 30th Street, East 34th Street and Pier 6 on the East River in Lower Manhattan — together constitute an aviation system that supports the City's economy, emergency services and security network.

Businesses headquartered in New York City and others with major operations and personnel located in New York City are among the leading users of the three heliports. In 2010, corporate and charter helicopter services carried approximately 35,000 business passengers into and out of the City.

- In 2010, major business users of helicopter services employed approximately 133,000 people in New York City. These firms accounted for approximately 4.2 percent of private-sector payroll employment in New York City, and about 6.2 percent (about \$40 billion) of New York City's GDP. Heliports are a key link for these firms, connecting the island of Manhattan with other office centers in the region, airports, emergency support facilities and other destinations in the Northeast.
- Helicopters provide significant time savings relative to travel by automobile in the congestion-prone New York metropolitan region. We estimate that in the aggregate, business users of Manhattan's heliports saved a total of 23,300 hours in travel in 2010, resulting in higher productivity and greater value to the companies that employ them.
- In a survey of corporate helicopter users, 80 percent rated "helicopter access" as either "important" or "very important" and indicated that without it, their presence in New York City would be significantly reduced or activities dramatically curtailed. For those firms that rely on helicopter service, reduced access to helicopter transportation could diminish the total number of employees and events held in New York City. We estimate that a 1 percent reduction in New York City-based employment by firms that regularly use helicopter services would result in a loss of 1,300 jobs and a reduction in the City's overall economic output of approximately \$520 million.
- Manhattan's three heliports are a critical part of the City's emergency response capability. The New York City Police Department uses helicopters to respond to emergencies, monitor the City's airspace, and gather information. Helicopters are used to transport patients in emergencies and connect regional hospitals to New York City hospitals that can provide highly specialized acute care. These emergency uses do not generate a large number of flights — but in critical situations, helicopter service is virtually irreplaceable.

The Three-Heliport System

Helicopter services in New York City are provided at three heliports, located on the Hudson River at West 30th Street, on the East River at East 34th Street and on the East River near Wall Street. While their roles and the users they serve differ, all three are essential to the overall operations of the helicopter aviation system in New York City.

- West 30th Street is the City's oldest public-use heliport and is the only one that is available 24 hours a day, seven days a week for landing and refueling, a critical requirement for the local aviation industry. It primarily serves corporate users and charter operators, but accommodates a variety of uses, including medical, emergency management, law enforcement and government. The heliport's uncertain future places the three-heliport system in jeopardy.
- East 34th Street similarly serves corporate users, charter operators and other helicopter users. It is open between 8:00AM and 8:00PM on weekdays and is subject to a City-imposed operational cap on the total number of flights it can accommodate.
- The Downtown Manhattan Heliport is the only heliport that can accommodate the president of the United States and other dignitaries requiring special security measures. It is the only facility that is available for use by air tour operators, a key source of revenue to the City of New York. It also serves a broad range of helicopter traffic, including corporate users and government agencies. Should the West 30th Street Heliport be closed, the Downtown Manhattan Heliport is not capable of accommodating the displaced heliport traffic.
- Heliport leases provide valuable revenue to the City of New York and the Hudson River Park Trust. The West 30th Street Heliport paid \$797,000 to the Hudson River Park Trust in fiscal year 2011. The East 34th Street Heliport makes a payment of approximately \$675,000 as an annual lease payment to the New York City Economic Development Corporation, and the New York City Economic Development Corporation earns \$1.3 million in annual fees from the operation of the Downtown Manhattan Heliport.

Given the demand for helicopter service, the three heliports are essential to accommodate current and anticipated traffic volumes. Should there be a change in the status of the West 30th Street Heliport, the remaining two heliports will be unable to adequately serve the existing and projected helicopter activity. The consequences of a reduction in heliport infrastructure could potentially lead to increased numbers of helicopters in holding patterns, waiting to land above neighborhoods and sensitive sites in New York City.

Heliports and the Tourist Industry

Tourism has emerged as one of the critical sources of growth for New York City's economy. The air tour industry is especially attractive to international visitors, who spend four times more per- person, per-trip than domestic tourists when they are in New York City.

- In 2010, air tour companies operating out of New York City's heliports conducted approximately 42,000 sightseeing flights, with a total of about 176,000 passengers. As of April 2010, the Downtown Manhattan Heliport is the only one of the three facilities where air tour operators are permitted to operate.
- In 2010, air tour operators directly and indirectly accounted for approximately 133 FTE jobs, \$11.3 million in earnings and \$33.2 million in output in New York City.
- Spending by incremental visitors (those for whom taking an air tour was a primary reason for coming to New York City) directly and indirectly generated about 150 additional jobs, \$6.6 million in earnings and \$16.9 million in output.
- The routes flown by air tour operators and their hours of operation are governed by the New York City Helicopter Sightseeing Plan. Promulgated by the City after extensive negotiations with the industry and community groups, the Plan is designed to limit any adverse impact of sightseeing flights on adjoining neighborhoods. The City's ability to regulate these flights is based on the fact that they take off from and land at a New York City heliport. If air tour operators were for any reason forced to instead use heliports outside the City (on the New Jersey waterfront, for example), New York City would no longer be able to limit their operations.



New York City's Heliport Network

Manhattan has three public-use heliports. As shown below (Figure 1), two of these facilities are located in Midtown, at West 30th Street and the Hudson River and at East 34th Street adjacent to the FDR Drive. The third heliport is located at Pier 6 on the East River in Lower Manhattan. Together these facilities account for most of New York City's helicopter movements.

The two midtown heliports serve a variety of uses, including corporate transportation, charter services, newsgathering flights, photography and videography, as well as various government, law enforcement and emergency medical purposes. The Downtown Manhattan Heliport serves all of these uses, as well as sightseeing and tourism flights.



Figure 1: Map of the heliports in Manhattan

West 30th Street Heliport

The West 30th Street Heliport opened in 1956; it was the City's first public-use heliport. It is located on a 1.6-acre State-owned site (including a 30,000-square-foot concrete wharf) situated between the Hudson River bulkhead and the western esplanade of Route 9A — within the boundaries of the Hudson River Park.

The heliport has parking for 11 helicopters (eight on the wharf and three on an adjacent barge). It includes aboveground refueling and two terminal trailers that are used for ticketing, passenger waiting and heliport administration and operation. The facility is managed by Air Pegasus Heliport Inc. through an operating permit with the Hudson River Park Trust. In 2010, the company paid the Trust \$797,000 for use of the site.

This heliport's primary operating hours are 7:00AM and 7:00PM on weekdays and from 11:00AM to 7:00PM on weekends, but when needed it is available 24 hours a day, seven days a week. It is Manhattan's only off-hours landing and fueling facility. In fact, it is the only heliport now operating within the tri-state area that is available and pumps fuel 24 hours a day, seven days a week, year round.

In 2010, West 30th Street handled 11,967 helicopter flights, carrying a total of 23,832 passengers. Corporate users accounted for 37 percent of all flights at West 30th Street, and private charters, for 58 percent of flights at that heliport. Most charter flights were also for business purposes. The heliport also served a diverse range of other uses, such as medical flights, law enforcement, newsgathering, and aerial photography.

Five percent of all operations at West 30th Street in 2010 were sightseeing flights. However, it is important to note that use of the heliport for tourism purposes ended on April 1, 2010.



Figure 2: Map of the West 30th Street Heliport and surrounding area

Supporting mixed-use development on the West Side

During the past decade, there has been a remarkable change on the west side of Manhattan, from Columbus Circle, where the old New York Coliseum has been replaced with the Time-Warner Center, to the Meatpacking District. The High Line, an elevated railroad line built to serve industrial buildings on the west side of Manhattan, has been transformed into one of the City's premier parks and tourist attractions. The Hudson River Park has emerged as a spectacular open space with greenways that draw cyclists, joggers and pedestrians. Most important, old industrial buildings have been converted into art galleries, residential structures and offices for high-tech firms. West Chelsea now features a burgeoning cluster of high-tech, media and creative companies such as Google, InterActiveCorp, Omnimedia and scores of smaller firms.

To the north, the extension of the #7 subway line, due to be completed in late 2013, is providing additional stimulus to investment in commercial and residential development on the West Side. The Related Companies' Hudson Yards development will include over 2 million square feet of Class-A office space. Slightly to the east, Vornado plans to develop 15 Penn Plaza — a two-million-square-foot office tower — and the renovation of Moynihan Station could provide significant opportunities for commercial development. As a result of these and other developments, Midtown West is one of Manhattan's fastest-growing mixed-use commercial districts.

Maintaining a heliport on the west side of Manhattan will reinforce the enhanced attractiveness of Manhattan's Far West Side as an expansion of the Midtown Central Business District — and in particular, as a location for major corporate tenants.



East 34th Street Heliport

The East 34th Street Heliport, which opened in 1972, is a 40,400-square-foot facility located on a concrete wharf at East 34th Street and the FDR Drive. This facility technically has parking for five helicopters; however, due to space constraints, larger aircraft can reduce the capacity of the facility by taking up more than a single landing space. The East 34th Street facility has two terminal buildings and an underground fuel storage tank. The heliport is operated by Atlantic Aviation Metroport through a lease agreement with the New York City Economic Development Corporation. In 2010, Metroport made an estimated \$675,000 in lease payments.

The East 34th Street Heliport operates between 8:00AM and 8:00PM on weekdays and accommodates all helicopter users except air tours. Its principal uses include commercial, government and emergency medical flights. There is a limit on the total number of helicopter flights that can be accommodated at the East 34th Street Heliport that was imposed by the City of New York through its land use regulatory authority. The cap on the East 34th Street Heliport is 14,400 flights per year.

In 2010, East 34th Street handled 7,000 helicopter flights, carrying 14,485 passengers. About 60 percent of these flights were by corporate users, and 20 percent were by charter operators. The remaining 20 percent of flights were a mix of other uses, such as medical flights, law enforcement and aerial photography.

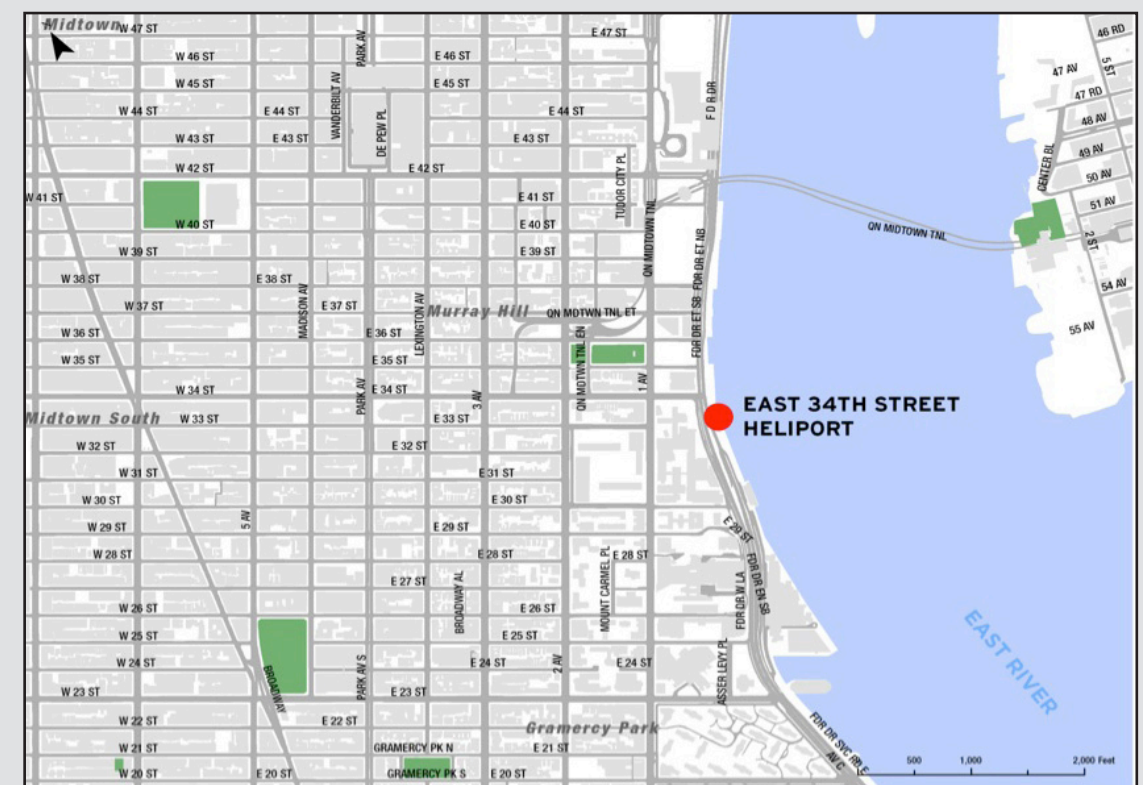


Figure 3: Map of the East 34th Street Heliport and surrounding area

Downtown Manhattan Heliport

The Downtown Manhattan Heliport (DMH) is located on a barge at Pier 6 on the East River at Coenties Slip. The New York City Department of Marine and Aviation established the heliport in 1960 and designated the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey as its operator. The Port Authority undertook a major rehabilitation in 1983 (with significant assistance from the Federal Aviation Administration). Today, the DMH is an 84,000-square-foot facility with parking for 14 helicopters. It also includes a year-round terminal facility with passenger and pilot lounges, administrative space and a gift shop.

The New York City Economic Development Corporation (NYCEDC) took over management of the heliport from the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey in 2008. Since then, the terminal’s lounge areas have been renovated, and a refueling station has been added to the facility. Saker Aviation operates the Downtown Manhattan Heliport under a concession agreement with NYCEDC. Saker paid \$1.3 million in concession fees to NYCEDC in 2010.

In 2010, Downtown Manhattan handled 43,386 helicopter flights. The great majority of these — 41,540 — were air tours, reflecting the fact that DMH is the only heliport in New York City that permits tourism flights. Together, these flights carried more than 174,000 passengers.

Corporate users accounted for 1,800 flights into and out of DMH in 2010, carrying approximately 2,600 passengers.

DMH is the only heliport that meets the requirements for use by the President of the United States for travel to and from New York City, including advanced communications systems designed for emergency use by the president. The DMH is also used by other visiting dignitaries as well as by law enforcement, emergency management, newsgathering and aerial photography helicopters.

The facility is open between 7:00AM to 10:00PM on weekdays, from 9:00AM to 7:00PM on Saturdays and from 9:00AM to 5:00PM on Sundays. Air tours can only operate between 9:00AM and 7:00PM on weekdays.



Figure 4: Map of the Downtown Manhattan Heliport and surrounding area

	West 30th Street	East 34th Street	Downtown Manhattan
Square Footage	69,700 SF	40,400 SF	84,000 SF
Landing Spaces	11	7	14
Annual Flights	11,967	7,000	43,386
Annual Passengers	23,832	14,485	174,000
Operating Hours	24 Hours	8 a.m. to 8 p.m.	Weekdays: 7 a.m. to 10 p.m. Saturdays: 9 a.m. to 7 p.m. Sundays: 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.
Days of Operation	7	Weekdays Only	Limited Weekend Hours
Annual Lease Payments	\$797,000	\$675,000 (est.)	\$1,300,000

Table 1: Summary of the three Manhattan heliports

Together, the three locations provide users with a network that provides multiple access points to Manhattan, with specific market areas (East, West, and Lower Manhattan) as well as distinct facility offerings.

- There is specialization among the three heliports, with charter operators accounting for the largest share of flights into and out of West 30th Street, corporate users generating most traffic at East 34th Street and air tours accounting for most flights at the Downtown Manhattan Heliport.
- Flexibility among the three is nevertheless important. Leading corporate users, for example, do not typically use just one facility. Those with headquarters or other major operations in Midtown routinely use both West 30th Street and East 34th Street. Major charter operators also use all three facilities.
- The flexibility that comes with having facilities available at three different locations in Manhattan can be even more important for law enforcement and for emergency management.
- Despite the volume of traffic the three heliports handle (about 250 flights on a typical weekday) and the value of the services they provide, the surface area currently devoted to helicopter operations in Manhattan is less than 4.5 acres.
- Having New York City’s public-use heliports located at the water’s edge enhances the safety of helicopter operations. While accidents do occur (and always draw media attention), it is important to note that helicopter aviation is among the safer modes of travel in the United States. Based on U.S. Department of Transportation data on fatalities per 100 million vehicle-miles traveled, we estimate that in 2009 a passenger was about eight times more likely to be killed while traveling by automobile or light truck than while traveling by helicopter.¹ Moreover, according to the National Transportation Safety Board, accident rates for helicopters providing air taxi or sightseeing services were lower than the rates for fixed-wing aircraft providing the same services.²

¹ The nationwide fatality rate for automobiles and light trucks in 2009 was about 1.1 per 100 million vehicle-miles traveled; for helicopters, it was about 0.128 per 100 million of vehicle-miles traveled.
² National Transportation Safety Board, Review of U.S. Civil Aviation Accidents, 2007-2009, pp. 18, 29.

The Role of Heliports in the New York City Economy

THE ECONOMIC IMPACT OF HELIPORT OPERATIONS

Heliports and helicopter services in New York City provide a service whose value to the City's corporate and financial communities far exceeds the scale of their operations. Companies that use this service include at least 15 of Fortune 100 (the country's 100 largest corporations, as measured by total revenues in 2010). Together, we estimate that these firms employ about 133,000 people in New York City.³

The City's three public-use heliports handled a total of 14,610 corporate flights in 2010, with a total of 18,937 passengers. In addition to these direct corporate operations, we estimate that corporate customers accounted for about 85 percent of the 9,685 flights operated and 19,288 passengers carried by charter operators. We thus estimate that in 2010 corporate and charter operations together carried more than 35,000 passengers into and out of New York City.

In 2011, Appleseed conducted a survey of corporate users of New York City's three heliports. The survey highlighted diverse reasons for using helicopters:

- For companies that have major operations in New York City and elsewhere in the Northeast, helicopter service provides a quick, easy, flexible and reliable way for key personnel to travel between Manhattan and other office locations.
- Helicopters provide significant time savings relative to travel by automobile in the congestion-prone New York metropolitan region. Using a helicopter reduces the duration of the average trip by at least 40 minutes.
- We estimate that in the aggregate, business users of Manhattan's heliports saved a total of 23,300 hours in travel in 2010, resulting in higher productivity and greater value to the companies that employ them.
- Helicopters bring entrepreneurs into Manhattan for meetings and business activities.
- Companies use helicopters to transport personnel between their New York City offices and regional aviation hubs such as Newburgh, New York and Teterboro, New Jersey.
- Some companies use helicopters to bring customers or clients into the City or to take them to other sites around the region.

³ Because charter operators generally treat information about their business customers as being confidential, and some large corporations that operate their own services similarly choose to keep this information confidential, comprehensive data on corporations that regularly use helicopter services are not readily available. The estimates cited above may thus understate the number of New York companies that regularly use this service — and the number of people they employ in the City.

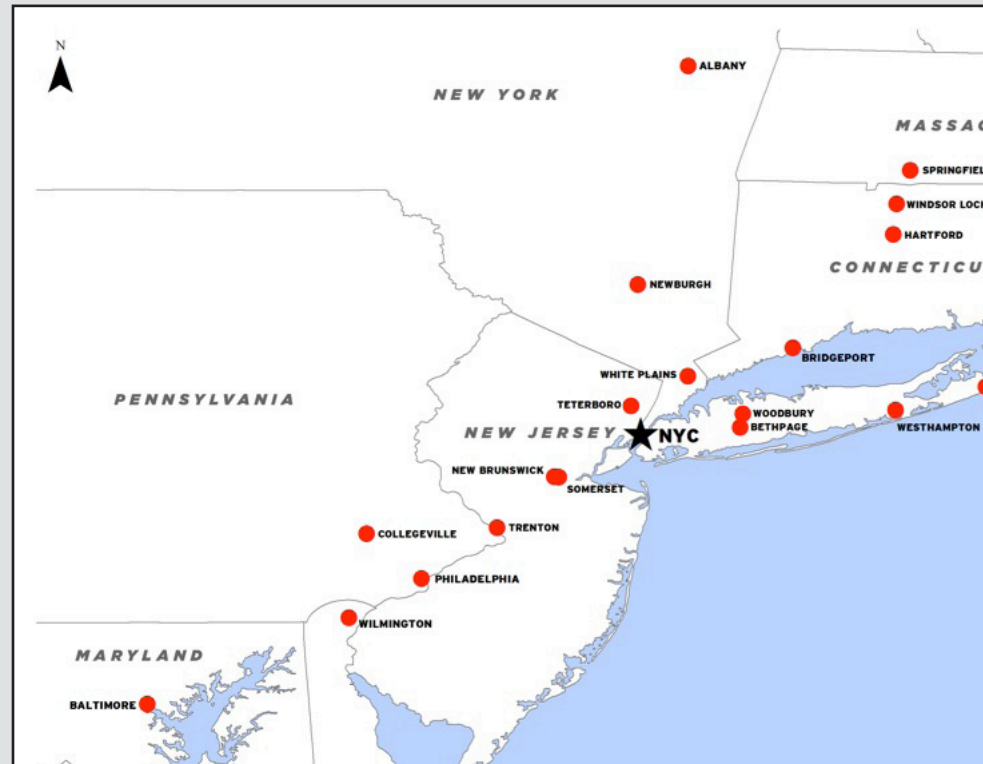


Figure 6: Map of the most common origin and destination points for corporate helicopter flights into and out of New York City.

Most of the reasons companies use helicopter transportation revolve around a single purpose — reducing the time that high-level executives and other key personnel spend traveling between New York City and other locations in the tri-state area and beyond. Appleaseed asked how companies value helicopter access as a factor in doing business in the City. Of those that responded, 80 percent rated helicopter access as either “very important” or “important” and indicated that without it their presence in New York City would be significantly reduced or even eliminated. Only 20 percent said that loss of helicopter access would not significantly affect their presence in the City.

The functions that these companies typically have located in Manhattan (headquarters, finance, legal, marketing) have a disproportionate impact on the City’s economy.

- According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, in 2010 the earnings of those employed in the “management of companies and enterprises” (NAICS code 5511) in Manhattan averaged approximately \$200,500.
- Using the IMPLAN⁴ input-output model, we further estimate that output per Manhattan employee in this sector averaged more than \$410,000 in 2010.
- Major corporate users of helicopter aviation account for about 4.2 percent of all private-sector payroll employment in New York City and about 6.2 percent of the City’s GDP.

⁴IMPLAN is an econometric modeling system that is widely used to estimate the impact of changes in income to, spending by or employment in a given industry within a given geographic area (for example, in this case, New York City). It is the most widely employed and accepted regional economic analysis software for predicting economic impacts. Federal, state and local government agencies, as well as academic institutions, nonprofits and private-sector firms use it to develop economic impact statements.

The Economic Impact of Helicopter Sightseeing

Based on data provided by one of the largest air tour operators, we estimate that the helicopter sightseeing industry directly employs approximately 70 people in New York City. Using the IMPLAN input-output model, we can translate this employment estimate into estimates of direct output and earnings. We estimate that in 2010, helicopter sightseeing operations directly generated \$21.1 million in economic output and employee compensation of \$6.7 million. Table 2 summarizes the direct, indirect/induced and total impacts of employment by the helicopter sightseeing industry in New York City.

Impact Type	Output (\$)	Employment (person-years)	Labor Income (\$)
Direct Effect	21,151,070.0	70.0	6,721,146.5
Indirect Effect	6,362,022.0	32.5	2,536,188.5
Induced Effect	5,718,019.5	30.8	2,043,469.3
Total Effect	\$33,231,112.0	133.2	\$11,300,804.0

Table 2: Impacts of employment by helicopter sightseeing industry

Taking into account both direct and indirect/induced effects, we estimate that the helicopter tourism industry generates:

- \$33.2 million in economic output in New York City;
- 133 full-time-equivalent jobs; and
- \$11.3 million in employee compensation.

Helicopter sightseeing tours are a significant attraction for out-of-town visitors. Assuming that approximately 5 percent (about 8,800) of all helicopter sightseeing passengers are incremental visitors (that is, visitors for whom a helicopter sightseeing trip was a primary purpose of their visit to New York City) and that 80 percent of these visitors are international visitors, we can estimate the economic impact of incremental visitor spending.

We estimate that annual incremental visitor spending directly generates \$9.8 million in output in New York City, 115 full-time-equivalent jobs and employee compensation totaling about \$3.9 million. Table 3 summarizes the direct, indirect/induced and total impacts of employment by the helicopter sightseeing industry in New York City.

Impact Type	Output (\$)	Employment (person-years)	Labor Income (\$)
Direct Effect	9,809,181.0	115.0	3,965,025.5
Indirect Effect	3,656,533.0	16.7	1,457,620.6
Induced Effect	3,410,092.3	18.4	1,218,435.9
Total Effect	\$16,875,806.0	150.1	\$6,641,082.0

Table 3: Impacts of spending by incremental visitors

Taking into account both direct and indirect/induced effects, we estimate that incremental visitor spending generates:

- \$16.9 million in economic output in New York City;
- 150 full-time-equivalent jobs; and
- \$6.6 million in employee compensation.

New York City Helicopter Sightseeing Plan

Heliport operations are a source of complaints from those who live nearby, especially about noise. Because the air tour business specializes in brief local trips that generate relatively large numbers of take-offs and landings, critics often focus particular attention on this segment of overall heliport traffic.

Helicopter movements below 1,300 feet are generally not afforded air traffic control services by the FAA. In response to community noise complaints, the New York City Economic Development Corporation in 2010 sought to use its ownership of the Downtown Manhattan Heliport — the only one of the three Manhattan heliports that can now be used for air tours — to de facto regulate several aspects of sightseeing operations.

New York City’s policy — the New York City Helicopter Sightseeing Plan — required significant changes of air tour operations. It eliminated very short tours (those lasting only a few minutes) and tours over Central Park, the Empire State Building and Brooklyn. It essentially limited tourist flights out of DMH to a route along the Hudson and Harlem Rivers and limited the hours of operation of tourist flights to 9:00AM to 7:00PM. The plan also improved complaint intake and response systems and established penalties for noncompliance — ultimately including the revocation of a tour company’s permit to operate from the Downtown Manhattan Heliport.

The New York City Helicopter Sightseeing Plan is a significant policy improvement. It shows that tour companies, heliport operators and the New York City Economic Development Corporation can and will respond to local community concerns. But perhaps even more important, it uses the City’s control of DMH as a basis for managing airspace, which is otherwise outside local jurisdiction.

Nevertheless, it is important to recognize that the City’s leverage in this area is limited. If the City should (as some anti-noise advocates have suggested) seek to impose further restrictions on sightseeing flights — or even ban them altogether — the result might simply be to induce tour operators to shift their operations to sites that are not controlled by the City. Tourist flights based in Jersey City or Hoboken, for example, could ignore the City’s policies about where tour operators should or should not fly.

The advantages of flying out of DMH are great enough to offset the restrictions imposed by the City. New York City cannot assume that this will always be the case — especially if the City seeks to impose any additional restrictions. And if air tour companies move to locations outside the City’s jurisdiction, the City may no longer be able to influence — let alone control — their operations.

The Heliports as Employers

As of the end of 2010, the three Manhattan heliports collectively employed 53 people directly, including 50 who worked full time and 3 part-time employees. More than three-fourths of the employees at the three heliports are racial and ethnic minorities. Together, the three operators paid a total of approximately \$2.475 million in salaries and wages in 2010 — an average of more than \$48,000 per full-time or full-time-equivalent job.

Of these 53 employees (as shown below in Figure 5), 31 full-time and 3 part-time employees were residents of New York City — 10 full-time workers lived elsewhere in New York State — and 9 lived outside New York State. More than half of the city’s heliport employees work at the Downtown Manhattan Heliport, where the operator provides all full-time employees with health care benefits and access to pension programs.

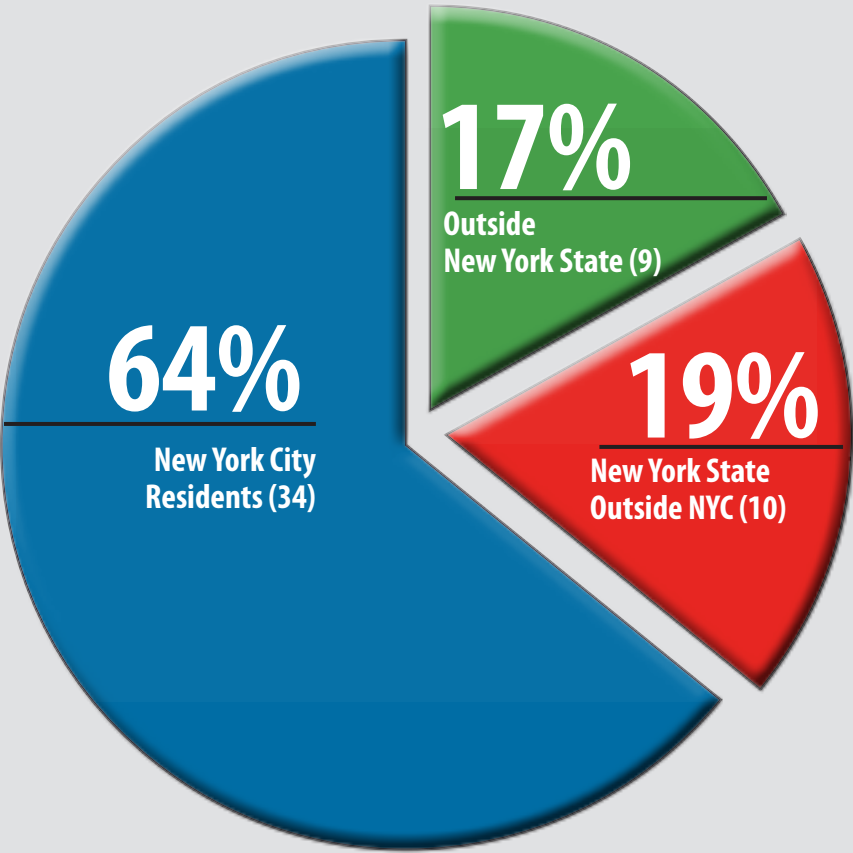


Figure 7: Geographic distribution of heliport employees

Indirect and Induced Effects

The impact of heliport operations is not limited to the number of people the operators employ directly or the number of people employed by their New York City-based suppliers. Heliport employees who live in the City use part of their take-home pay to buy a wide range of goods and services — housing, food, utilities, transportation, etc. — from local businesses. The heliports’ suppliers similarly spend part of the money the heliports pay them to buy goods and services from other local firms. These “indirect and induced” or “multiplier” effects add to the heliports’ impact on the City’s economy.

Table 4 summarizes these indirect and induced impacts. We estimate that in 2010 the three heliports indirectly generated about 12 FTE jobs in businesses throughout New York City. Taking into account both direct and indirect/induced impacts, we estimate that heliport operations directly and indirectly accounted for approximately \$6.7 million in economic output and 70 full-time-equivalent jobs in New York City.

	Direct Spending		Indirect/Induced		Total
	Payroll	Purchasing	Employee Spending	Supplier Spending	
Output (in millions)	\$2.48	\$1.89	\$1.19	\$1.14	\$6.7
Employment (FTE)	51.5	7.1	6.5	5.1	70.2

Table 4: Direct, indirect and induced impact of heliport operators on New York City’s economy, 2010



Other Critical Uses of Helicopter Service

In addition to serving corporate users and tourists, the City's three heliports provide essential support for other uses of helicopter aviation. Taken together, medical, governmental, newsgathering and film/TV/photography accounted for a total of about 1,570 flights at the three heliports in 2010. These flights provide an important service for government, major medical institutions and leading New York City industries. While they account for a relatively small percentage of all flights at the three heliports, the immediacy that helicopter service offers to these users, especially in critical situations, is irreplaceable.

Helicopters are used to transport patients in emergencies, and to transport critically ill patients from community hospitals in outlying areas to New York City hospitals that can provide highly specialized services that may not be available at the local level. Use of helicopters for this purpose is generally restricted to patients whose condition makes it essential to minimize the time spent moving between hospitals. In addition to moving patients, helicopters are sometimes used to carry organs to or from New York City hospitals. In 2010 the three heliports were used for more than 360 medical flights.

The New York City Police Department uses helicopters to monitor the City's airspace, as well as other sites both on land and on the water — the harbor, the City's major stadiums, large public gatherings, etc. The NYPD and other agencies (including the Fire Department, the Office of Emergency Management and the U.S. Department of Homeland Security) use helicopters to monitor and manage all types of emergencies — suspected terrorist incidents, high-rise fires, major accidents, etc.

Helicopters are also used regularly to transport the president and other high-level officials into and out of the City. In 2010 there were more than 900 public sector flights, including law enforcement, emergency management and presidential visits to New York.

Conclusion: Heliports and the Future of New York City

New York City is increasingly linked to the global economy through the diverse character of its population, which is more than one-third foreign born, and through its concentration of global media enterprises, law firms, management consulting firms, advertising agencies that serve national and international clients and the nation's leading financial service firms. The three heliports of New York City are part of the vast, complex systems of transportation — roads, bridges, tunnels, subways and ferries — that connect New York City to the global economy.

It is important to recognize that the rapid and efficient flow of people in and out of New York City requires multiple modes and services that can meet the time requirements of different industries. Helicopters are essential for those time-sensitive industries and activities that place a premium on avoiding the uncertain patterns of congestion that characterize conventional surface modes of travel — and for the same reason, they are essential for certain types of emergency uses.

New York City has been a leader in regulating the helicopter industry through its control of heliports. The municipal government has effectively restricted the air routes for helicopters and the times when heliports are in operation. All New Yorkers benefit from the City's capacity to regulate helicopters and heliports, since the Federal Aviation Administration does not provide air traffic control services below 1,300 feet over the Hudson River nor below 110 feet over the East River.

Any change that reduces heliport capacity in New York City would not only risk adverse effects on the City's economy — it would also diminish the City government's influence in regulating helicopter activity. No New Yorker would benefit from having unregulated helicopter services provided by adjacent jurisdictions. For that reason alone, there is a compelling rationale for assuring that the three-heliport system continues to function in the City of New York.

New York is competing with jurisdictions around the world for continued prominence as a global center of finance and innovation. The City's diverse transportation assets make New York an attractive location for major corporations and high-level business transactions. Manhattan's heliports are a critical component of New York's transportation network and support the operation of New York City's businesses and the growth of the economy.

