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**The City of New York  
Community Board 8 Manhattan  
Transportation Committee**

Wednesday, February 4, 2026 6:30 PM

*Conducted Remotely on Zoom*

*Please note: The resolutions contained in the committee minutes are recommendations submitted by the committee co-chairs to the Community Board. At the monthly full board meeting, the resolution is discussed and voted upon by all members of Community Board 8 Manhattan.*

**Resolutions to be voted on:**

**Item 1: MTA Open Stroller Program Expansion Request**

**Item 2: Ban on Non-Essential Helicopter Flights**

**Item 4: York Avenue Traffic Study (Unanimous)**

**Minutes:**

*Present:* Danielle Avissar, Gayle Baron, Michele Birnbaum, Lori Bores, DJ Falkson, Sebastian Hallum Clarke, Paul Krikler, Craig Lader, John McClement, John Phillips, Judy Schneider, and Charles Warren.

*Absent:* Valerie Mason

*Approximate Number of Public Attendees:* 30

The meeting was called to order at 6:33 PM.

**Item 1: NYCT/MTA Open Stroller Pilot Program - Request to Expand the Pilot on routes serving Community District 8**

Community Board 8 Members Danielle Avissar and Sebastian Hallum Clarke presented a request to expand the MTA's Open Stroller Pilot Program. Ms. Avissar worked with the MTA to spearhead this initiative to allow strollers to be brought onto buses and to remain open while on board. It was introduced in 2023 on various routes, including the M15, M101, M102, M103, and Q32, but is not available to passengers on a large portion of routes serving the Upper East Side, including the M1, M2, M3, M4, M31, M66, M72, M79, M86, M98, and Q102.

Ms. Avissar described how the Open Stroller Pilot Program is structured to provide one designated spot for a single stroller on each bus operating on the routes in which the program is in effect; this designated stroller area is separate from wheelchair accessibility areas. Only single strollers that fit in a designated confined space are permitted; double strollers cannot be accommodated. There aren't any strict brand/size regulations - users must exercise discretion similar to a parking spot. Older buses have a nook for strollers; newer buses have flip-up seats that can accommodate slightly larger strollers.

Buses display exterior signage with a stroller icon indicating participation in the program. Access is on a first-come, first-served basis for the designated spot, and passengers are expected to fold up their stroller or wait for the next bus if the spot is utilized and they wish to keep a stroller open. Bus drivers are not allowed to enforce capacity for safety reasons and to avoid potential disciplinary action. Similar to wheelchair access, there aren't any time-based restrictions for the length of use. Currently, there is no official guidance for situations when the bus is crowded, but it is expected to be developed when the program becomes permanent. Pamphlets describing the program are available at New York Public Library branches.

Ms. Avissar described how surveys showed over 90% satisfaction from bus riders, and that the MTA plans to make the program permanent, but the announcement of permanent status keeps getting delayed and currently remains as a pilot on specific designated routes; the cost to expand it is projected to be approximately \$1.4 Million.

Comments from public attendees and CB8 members were divided. Supporters emphasized that parents and children should have a fundamental right to use buses like any other transit mode, and highlighted accessibility concerns and parallels to wheelchairs and that traveling by subway is often not an option due to a lack of elevators. They spoke of the many instances in which a parent or caregiver is physically unable to remove a child from a stroller while in transit, or where it may not be safe for the child to be moved from their stroller. Proponents also noted that there is currently chaos with strollers, walkers, and wheelchairs on buses, and designated spaces would provide organization and get strollers out of gangways, benefiting everyone. Ms. Avissar also highlighted affordability concerns, as parents take their infants and toddlers to many medical appointments, and they can't necessarily afford regular taxi and for-hire vehicle costs to access doctors.

Opponents raised fears about safety hazards from strollers and mobility devices creating obstacle courses near the front of the bus, especially on crowded routes in the district, if it were to be expanded to crosstown buses. Concerns were also raised about the lack of an enforcement mechanism when bus drivers cannot regulate passenger compliance, and about stroller size variations (double-wide, extended-length baby carriages with storage versus compact foldable strollers). The impact on mobility-impaired passengers who cannot navigate through crowded bus fronts was emphasized. Umbrella strollers were suggested as an alternative solution, though it was noted that umbrella strollers are not safe for the youngest infants.

**WHEREAS**, the MTA's Open Stroller Program was introduced in 2023 and currently allows open strollers on certain bus routes in Community District 8 (M15, M101, 102, 103, and Q32) with designated stroller areas on buses; and

**WHEREAS**, each bus in the program has one designated spot for a single stroller, with clear exterior signage, separate from wheelchair accessibility areas; and

**WHEREAS**, the Open Stroller Pilot Program has shown over 90% satisfaction in surveys and the MTA plans to make it permanent; and

**WHEREAS**, many bus routes serving Community District 8 are not included in the program, including the M1, M2, M3, M4, M31, M66, M72, M79, M86, M98, and Q102, making it difficult for families with young children to access transportation, particularly on cross-town routes and avenues such as Fifth Avenue, Madison Avenue, and the far East Side; and

**WHEREAS**, families depend on public transportation for medical appointments, childcare, and daily activities, and cannot always afford car services or walk extreme distances; and

**WHEREAS**, many subway stations lack elevator access, making buses the primary transportation mode for families with strollers; and

**WHEREAS**, clear signage and program rules will help ensure proper use and awareness among all passengers;

**WHEREAS**, Open stroller policies on buses help promote affordability and mobility for Community District 8 families, and contribute to the District's desirability as a place for families to reside;

**THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED**, that Community Board 8 Manhattan calls on the MTA to expand the bus open stroller program to allow open strollers on all bus routes in Community District 8 and ensure there is clear signage about the rules of the program.

*Yes (10): Avissar, Bores, Falkson, Hallum Clarke, Krikler, Lader, McClement, Phillips, Schneider, Warren*

*No (1): Baron*

*Abstain (1): Birnbaum*

**Item 2: Discussion regarding helicopter noise and calls to ban non-essential helicopter flights**

Andrew Rosenthal, Chairman of the organization Stop the Chop, presented a request to support an initiative to ban non-essential helicopter flights over the New York City Metropolitan Area.

Mr. Rosenthal is pursuing this ban to address quality of life and safety concerns. The issue of helicopter noise has been a long-time complaint among some New York City residents, and there have been multiple fatal helicopter crashes in New York City in recent years that could have been much more dangerous if they occurred in crowded places.

Mr. Rosenthal described the first-ever helicopter regulation bill (Local Law 64/Intro 26) that passed through the City Council in early 2025 to ban "noisy" helicopters from city-owned heliports. He noted that the bill was watered down before passage, as it doesn't become effective until December 2029; the helicopter industry has already filed a lawsuit regarding the new law despite the 2029 implementation date.

Mr. Rosenthal is requesting a resolution in support of a total ban, which would include the closure of three publicly owned heliports - the Downtown Skyport (Pier 6, formerly Downtown Manhattan/Wall Street Heliport), which Mr. Rosenthal said is the world's busiest with about 35,000 operations per year, the East 34th Street Heliport, and the West 30th Street Heliport. He noted that Mayor Mamdani has previously stated his support for a ban on non-essential helicopters, and that the Mayor has the authority to close the Downtown Skyport and East 34th Street facilities. He is working with partners in New Jersey and noted that there is a Federal bill proposed that would ban non-essential helicopter flights within 20 miles of the Statue of Liberty. It was emphasized that this is not intended to restrict official helicopter use by media organizations, police, first responders, military, or government entities - only tourists and charter flights.

There was a mixed opinion among those who spoke on the topic. Among those who supported the proposal, they pointed to the quality-of-life impacts of helicopter noise impacting people in their homes, Central Park, and other public spaces across the city, such as Governor's Island, and the general risk that helicopters pose if they were to crash. Those who opposed believed helicopters were being used largely

for legitimate purposes and were concerned about the economic impacts to tourism and loss of revenue from heliports. There was also a concern that a single heliport remaining if the city were to close down others wouldn't be prudent.

**WHEREAS**, Stop the Chop is advocating for a ban on non-essential helicopter flights over New York City; and

**WHEREAS**, helicopter noise increasingly impacts residents across New York City, including Community District 8; and

**WHEREAS**, three heliports in Manhattan are owned by taxpayers and generate significant helicopter traffic, including the Downtown Skyport with approximately 35,000 operations per year; and

**WHEREAS**, New York City Local Law 64 was passed into law in 2025 to regulate noisy helicopters, but does not take effect until December 2029; and

**WHEREAS**, the Mayor has authority to close the two East River city-owned heliports, which would eliminate approximately half of metropolitan area helicopter flights; and

**WHEREAS**, Federal legislation has been introduced that would ban non-essential helicopter flights within 20 miles of the Statue of Liberty, with bipartisan support; and

**WHEREAS**, proposed bans would not affect news, police, medical, military, or government helicopters, only tourist and charter flights; and

**WHEREAS**, helicopter crashes pose safety risks to New York City residents;

**THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED**, that Community Board 8 Manhattan supports the recommendations of Stop the Chop and calls on the mayor to take actions within his authority regarding city-owned heliports to reduce non-essential helicopter use; and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that Community Board 8 Manhattan supports federal legislation to ban non-essential helicopter flights within 20 miles of the Statue of Liberty.

*Yes (6): Bores, Hallum Clarke, Krikler, McClement, Schneider, Warren*

*No (4): Birnbaum, Falkson, Lader, Phillips*

*Abstain (0): None*

### **Item 3: NYCDOT Updates**

Rafael Escano, NYCDOT liaison to CB8M, provided the following updates:

- NYCDOT is working on the planning of concrete pedestrian islands on 3rd Avenue, as was requested by CB8M; they are also looking at adding a pedestrian island in the 80s on 2nd Avenue.
- NYCDOT is considering options regarding the congestion and safety issue presented in December 2025 along 62nd Street between the Queensboro Bridge exit and 1st Avenue, including changing the parking regulation on the south side. One member reminded Mr. Escano

that CB8M didn't ultimately pass a resolution and that some members viewed the bike lane as the issue; a co-chair indicated that a request has been made to NYCDOT to have their bike planning staff discuss the broader bike network in the Lower East 60s Street and why a bike lane was placed on East 62nd Street.

#### **Item 4: Old Business**

##### **A. York Avenue Traffic Study**

Mr. Escano indicated that NYCDOT was requesting a resolution to move forward with data collection for the York Avenue Traffic Study, which was delayed at the request of CB8M due to the delayed completion of the DDC's Reconstruction of the York Avenue Combined Sewer and Water Main Replacement project. Following a project kick-off and an initial walk-through of the corridor, CB8M passed a resolution in April 2025 calling for the data collection to only be conducted after the lanes were restored, as the Board felt that the ongoing disruption caused by lane closures/blockages could impact the integrity of any data to be collected. Further delays could threaten the Study from being able to be performed, and the DDC project is now expected to continue longer than expected into potentially mid-2026.

**WHEREAS**, in 2020, CB8M requested NYCDOT conduct a comprehensive study of York Avenue traffic operations, initially focused on the segment between 59th and 79th Streets, which was later expanded to cover the entire corridor from 59th to 96th Streets; and

**WHEREAS**, NYCDOT secured funding and initiated the project in early 2025; and

**WHEREAS**, in April 2025, CB8M requested postponement of data collection due to ongoing DDC water/sewer construction work in the lower 60s and concerns about inaccurate data resulting from changed travel behaviors; and

**WHEREAS**, NYCDOT accommodated the CB8M request to delay traffic data collection; and

**WHEREAS**, the DDC water/sewer project work remains incomplete but is expected to be completed by June 2026; and

**WHEREAS**, Memorial Sloan Kettering construction affects one block of York Avenue between 66th and 67th Streets; and

**WHEREAS**, NYC DOT has advised that time is of the essence due to budget constraints and the risk that funding may need to be reallocated if the study is further delayed; and

**WHEREAS**, DOT has confirmed the study must be conducted across the entire corridor simultaneously to ensure accurate data collection, as traffic patterns vary daily and segmented data collection would not provide reliable results;

**THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED**, that Community Board 8 Manhattan requests that NYCDOT resume the York Avenue Traffic Study and related data collection from 59th Street to 96th Street as soon as feasible, weather permitting.

*Yes (9): Bores, Falkson, Hallum Clarke, Krikler, Lader, McClement, Phillips, Schneider, Warren*

*No (0): None*

*Abstain (0): None*

**B. Other**

- A public attendee reiterated prior requests to reinstall street cleaning regulations on the east side of Lexington Ave.
- A public attendee commented that they are witnessing increased congestion on 3rd Avenue following the implementation of the “green wave”.
- A public attendee asked NYCDOT to revisit the signal timing adjustments recently made at 3<sup>rd</sup> Avenue and East 63rd Street and reported that congestion has increased as a result of the changes due to vehicles frequently stopping in the right-hand lane and preventing the straight-only lane from functioning as intended. A member noted that a school is going to be opening along this block, which may exacerbate the issue. Mr. Escano said he would bring this issue up internally for further discussion.
- A co-chair noted that the traffic signal at the northwest corner of Lexington Avenue at East 86th Street was facing in the wrong direction, causing confusion and danger for pedestrians. Mr. Escano said that he would have a team sent out within a day to reposition the signal.

**Item 5: New Business**

- A member of the public asked about snow plowing on Park Avenue and suggested that it be directed towards the median.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 9:00 PM.

**Respectfully submitted, Charles Warren & Craig Lader, Co-Chairs**