

TRAVEL AND HOSPITALITY

## Uber caters to affluent travelers with helicopter service

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Uber rolls out helicopter service. Image credit: Uber

By STAFF REPORTS

Ride-hailing service Uber is acting on its mission to expand to the skies with a helicopter service that will allow affluents to travel quickly in New York.

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Providing quick and elegant service between Lower Manhattan and John F. Kennedy airport in New York, Uber Copter is set to launch this month. While years ago, Uber announced the aerial division Uber Elevate to look into a greater strategy for the air, this will be the first service to actually launch.

### Riding the sky

Uber Elevate has been researching a wide-reaching plan to take Uber to the air, looking at concepts such as electric aircrafts similar to helicopters but which require no gas, skyport infrastructure and data-powered networks.

The group plans to launch testing as early as 2020 with a commercial launch in 2023.

However, in the meantime, the group is launching Uber Copter in the New York area, starting July 9.

Uber chose the route because of its frequency, as well as its cumbersome experience. The trip can take over an hour by ground transportation and even longer on public transit.

"This is a trip that so many travelers make a day, and we see an opportunity to save them a huge amount of time on it," said Eric Allison, the head of Uber Elevate, in a statement. "Our plan is to eventually roll out Uber Copter to more Uber customers and to other cities, but we want to do it right.

"The main goal of this initial venture is to understand the operations behind aerial vehicles," he said.



*Uber Elevates' concept for electric aircrafts. Image credit: Uber*

While Uber Copter will have a pricing formula similar to traditional Uber based on business, rides will likely cost between \$200 and \$225 a person. Helicopter charter service HeliFlite will operate the transportation.

Rides will begin nearby the Staten Island Ferry terminal and land at Terminal 8, and vice versa. In between the helicopter trip, guests will be transported to their locations via car.

Uber's new service competes with similar platform, Blade.

Crowdsourcing helicopter charter brand Blade also previously responded to consumer demand with a special service.

During both the morning and evening rush hours, consumers are able to book a helicopter between the west and east sides of Manhattan, circumventing anticipated traffic jams. This offers an opportunity for Blade to reach new consumers, as they turn to its air travel for the first time to navigate New York on a crowded day ([see story](#)).

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