



A PUBLICATION OF
PITTA BISHOP & DEL GIORNO LLC
Government Relations / Consulting

THIS WEEK IN NEW YORK

COVERING NEW YORK & CITY GOVERNMENT

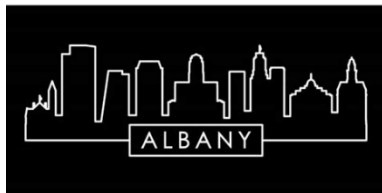
SEPTEMBER 4, 2026 EDITION



"No Man can be a good citizen unless he has a wage more than sufficient to cover the bare cost of living, and hour of labor short enough so that after his day's work is done he will have time and energy to bear his share in the management of the community, to help in carrying the general load" Governor Theodore Roosevelt.



In The News-New York State



Governor Touts New State Investment to Revitalize Downtown Albany

As with many downtown business districts across the country, Downtown Albany has struggled to regain its footing since the COVID-19 pandemic. The rise of remote and hybrid work dramatically reduced the daily population of state employees and other office workers who once sustained restaurants, shops and small businesses surrounding the Capitol and Empire State Plaza. Today, Downtown Albany is estimated to have only about 60 percent of its pre-pandemic workforce, and local business leaders say that since COVID, more downtown businesses have closed than opened.

Governor Kathy Hochul is betting that a historic infusion of state investment can help reverse that decline. This week, the Governor announced another major step in her \$400 million Championing Albany's Potential initiative, including more than \$18.6 million for ten projects expected to leverage nearly \$97.5 million in additional investment and create almost 300 new housing units.

The State is also committing up to \$20 million for streetscape and public-space improvements and \$1 million for a Small Business Development Fund to help businesses improve storefronts, build out retail space and purchase equipment.

The projects reflect an important shift in how policymakers are thinking about Downtown Albany. Rather than simply trying to recreate a business district dependent upon thousands of government employees arriving every morning and leaving every afternoon, the plan seeks to create a modern, genuine mixed-use neighborhood where more people live, shop, dine and spend time after normal business hours. Several largely vacant office and commercial properties will be converted into housing, including 43 apartments at 39 North Pearl Street, 120 apartments at 54 State Street and 50 workforce apartments at historic Union Station.

“One year ago, I called on Albany residents, businesses and community leaders to help shape a stronger future for Albany and today we are delivering the first major milestone on that shared vision,” Governor Hochul said. “Not only are we forging a monumental path forward for Liberty Park, but we are also awarding visionary projects, launching vital tools for downtown businesses and continuing to strengthen Empire State Plaza’s connection to Albany’s core for residents and visitors of our historic capital city.”

A key component to Downtown Albany’s long-term revival will be reconnecting the Empire State Plaza with the surrounding city. The sprawling 98-acre government complex has long functioned almost as a city within a city, and the decline in the number of workers regularly reporting to offices since the pandemic has contributed to reduced foot traffic and commercial activity. The Plaza itself has felt the effects, as businesses that once relied on a steady stream of state workers have struggled and storefronts and retail spaces have closed.

The state is investing \$25 million to establish the *Reconnect the Empire State Plaza* initiative which seeks to make the complex more accessible, inviting and connected to Downtown Albany. Plans include traffic-calming and green-space improvements along South Swan Street, better signage and navigation, an expanded visitor center and improved pathways between the Concourse and Plaza levels. The larger goal is to break down the physical and psychological barriers separating the government complex from surrounding neighborhoods and turn the Plaza into a destination for residents and visitors, not simply a place where state employees report for work.

These improvements could be particularly important during Albany's winter months, when cold temperatures, snow and ice can make walking outside between downtown destinations challenging. Better connections to the Plaza and its indoor Concourse could make it easier for residents, workers and visitors to move through the area and, hopefully, encourage more people to patronize Downtown Albany's restaurants, shops and attractions during a time of year when businesses need that foot traffic the most.

State Senator Patricia Fahy called the announcement “a historic day for Albany” and “a true turning point in the revitalization of the core of our Capital Region.” Fahy particularly highlighted the nearly 300 new housing units, Liberty Park redevelopment, return of Union Station to active use, assistance for existing small businesses and streetscape improvements intended to increase walkability, including around Empire State Plaza. “It’s another concrete sign that Albany’s day has come,” Senator Fahy said.

There may be no better symbol of Downtown Albany's struggles — and hopes for a comeback — than Jack's Oyster House on State Street. Founded by Jack Rosenstein in 1913, Jack's became one of Albany's great institutions, serving generations of governors, legislators, business leaders and families.

The restaurant moved to its longtime State Street home in 1937, and the block was ceremonially named “Jack’s Oyster House Way” during its centennial celebration in 2013. For generations, it was synonymous with Albany’s political and business culture — the kind of place where governors ate, deals were discussed, and families celebrated milestones. Jack’s was a destination for people outside of Albany.

But Jack’s also became a casualty of the difficult post-pandemic environment. It closed in August 2022, initially for renovations, and remained dark for more than three years. Its eventual sale and reopening in December 2025 under new ownership represented something larger than the return of a famous restaurant: it provided a tangible sign that investors were again willing to bet on Downtown Albany. The new owners have pursued additional restaurant and hospitality projects nearby, bringing new activity to a stretch of State Street in desperate need of it.

Albany’s recovery will not happen overnight. The combination of new housing, improved streets, small-business assistance, redevelopment of vacant properties and a more welcoming Empire State Plaza provides an opportunity to redefine Downtown Albany for the post-pandemic era.

In The News-New York City



NYC Office of the Mayor

Mayor Mamdani Announces New Measures to Strengthen NYC’s Response to Legionnaires’ Disease

Ahead of the City Council’s Oversight hearing on Legionnaires’ Disease, Cooling Tower Inspections, and Keeping New Yorkers Safe, Mayor Zohran Kwame Mamdani and the New York City Health Department announced a series of new measures on Tuesday to strengthen the City’s education, enforcement and response to *Legionella* bacteria in cooling towers following the Upper East Side community cluster earlier this summer.

The new measures include:

- ❖ Identifying potentially unregistered cooling towers by developing synergy between the Health Department and the Department of Buildings (DOB) in the City’s registration and tracking systems.
- ❖ Enhancing public visibility and transparency regarding cooling tower regulations by adding a mapping feature to the Health Department’s address-based cooling tower lookup tool.
- ❖ Exploring faster culture testing methods and novel testing approaches to decrease the amount of time it takes to test and confirm positive results.
- ❖ Accelerating enforcement of cooling tower violations by assigning the earliest Office of Administrative Trials and Hearings (OATH) date that rules permit.
- ❖ Convening a scientific advisory panel to evaluate emerging cooling tower technology and alternative cooling systems.

In addition, the Health Department will expand its existing [online, address-based cooling tower lookup tool](#) with a citywide mapping feature that will allow New Yorkers to see registered cooling towers across the five boroughs. As of late August, 81% of cooling towers citywide were in compliance with monthly requirements to sample and test.

“New York City responded to this summer’s cluster of Legionnaires’ disease with urgency and an unprecedented level of action. When New Yorkers’ health is at stake, government cannot wait for the crisis to pass before asking how it can do better. Our response to the Upper East Side cluster was fast and aggressive, and we are building on what we learned to make our systems stronger, enforcement faster and public health response more transparent,” said Mayor Mamdani. “New Yorkers deserve a government that moves with urgency to keep them safe.”

To date, there have been 94 cases of Legionnaires’ disease associated with the cluster in the Upper East Side. eleven people have died. According to published reports, when NYC Health Commissioner Alister Martin announced the two additional deaths on X, he indicated that "there is no evidence of ongoing transmission."

At Wednesday’s hearing, Council Speaker Julie Menin, questioned Commissioner Martin on whether the city did enough to inspect cooling towers and enforce new legislation that compels building owners to ramp up testing for legionella.

"What we’re trying to get to here is, why there wasn’t enforcement when we knew summer months were coming," Council Member Menin asked, according to published reports.

Commissioner Martin explained that the city Health Department issued more than 110 summonses to building owners in the outbreak zone. But the city admitted staffing was a problem earlier this year, needing to fill more than 20 vacant positions for water ecologists, who inspect cooling towers, according to News 4 New York.

"You are right. There are folks that we have not recruited. We have six open positions, and we are trying to make sure we got the right people," Dr. Martin said in the News 4 New York report.

Under the Mayor’s plan, going forward, the Health Department will work with the New York City Department of Buildings to strengthen connections between the Health Department’s Cooling Tower Registration Portal and DOB’s construction permitting system. By connecting the two systems, this will help “ensure more cooling towers are registered in the first place before they are ever turned on,” per the Mayor’s press release.

The new measures are expected to be implemented by the end of the year.

Briefs

Activist Gloria Steinem Dies at 92

Writer and magazine editor Gloria Steinem passed away this week. She was 92.

The Gloria Steinem Foundation said in a social media post Thursday that she "passed away peacefully at her home in New York City, surrounded by some of the many who loved her."

Steinem co-founded a number of initiatives, including the Women's Action Alliance, a feminist organization dedicated to fighting sexism; Ms. magazine, a publication focusing on women's issues; and the National Women's Political Caucus (NWPC), a multi-partisan grassroots organization aimed at increasing women's participation in the political process.

"I never wanted to be a politician or elected person myself, so I loved to work for other women who did—and hope that more girls will do that," Steinem said when founding the NWPC. "The problem is the feeling that we're divided from politics, that our vote doesn't count or what we do doesn't count. In fact, everything we do counts."

Steinem's advocacy centered on promoting equal rights and pay for women. In addition, she campaigned for women's reproductive rights and later supported the legalization of same-sex marriage.

"Feminism has never been about getting a job for one woman. It's about making life more fair for women everywhere. It's not about a piece of the existing pie; there are too many of us for that. It's about baking a new pie," she wrote in a 2008 op-ed for the *Los Angeles Times*.

In 2013, she was awarded the Presidential Medal of Freedom by President Barack Obama.

Federal Judge Strikes Down NY Law to Charge Fossil Fuel Companies for Climate Change

Chief U.S. District Judge Brenda Sannes this week struck down a New York state law to tax companies that contributed to greenhouse gas emissions to pay for infrastructure upgrades needed due to climate change, asserting that New York's Climate Change Superfund Act was pre-empted by the federal Clean Air Act.

"The court finds that the Climate Act is 'simply beyond the limits of state law,'" Judge Sannes wrote in a [63-page opinion](#). "It is precisely because the Climate Act operates within an area of law 'in which the federal interest is so dominant' that it cannot be enforced."

Governor Kathy Hochul signed New York's climate superfund program into law in December 2024. The law sought \$75 billion from companies that extracted or refined fossil fuels and contributed to more than 1 billion tons of greenhouse gas emissions from 2000-24. Local governments could then request money to pay for climate resiliency projects. The Department of Environmental Conservation was due to issue regulations by June 2027.

Business groups including the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, the Business Council of New York State and a coalition of Republican-led states brought a lawsuit against New York state in the U.S. District Court for the Northern District of New York.

"I think this was an attempt by the state, as they say, 'Have their cake and eat it too,' to impose these assessments and they thought, in a way, it would not impact consumers of fuels," said Ken Pokalsky, vice president of government affairs at The Business Council of New York State, said in published reports.

Governor Hochul said New York state is "looking" at its "options of appeal."

Comptroller DiNapoli: Millions in State Tax Checkoff Donations for Worthy Causes Remain Unused

Less Than Half of the Funds Reported Spending in SFY 2026

State taxpayers supported worthy causes with contributions to the state's personal income tax checkoff programs, but too much money is sitting idle instead of helping nonprofit organizations or research and other efforts, according to a new analysis from State Comptroller Thomas DiNapoli.

The report found that while some of New York's tax checkoff funds reported increased spending in State Fiscal Year 2026, over half had no spending at all, an ongoing issue that Comptroller DiNapoli has highlighted for more than a decade.

"New Yorkers have generously given their hard-earned dollars to income tax checkoffs," DiNapoli said. "It is unacceptable this money is unspent. The agencies responsible for managing these funds must ensure contributions are put to good use."

For tax year 2024, two new checkoffs were added, the Diabetes Research and Education Fund and the Cure Child Cancer and Research Fund, increasing the total number of Personal Income Tax (PIT) checkoffs to 36. Through SFY 2025, the most recent year for which checkoff contribution data is available, total annual contributions grew to \$3.8 million, up from \$2.6 million in SFY 2024.

Twenty-eight of the 36 funds rely primarily on taxpayer donations through the checkoffs, only 13 of the 28 eligible funds made any disbursements, the Comptroller found.

The Gift for Food Banks Fund and the Volunteer Firefighter Recruitment and Retention Fund were among those with the highest fund balances, at \$1.1 million and \$2.3 million, respectively. Neither fund had any disbursements since SFY 2024. In contrast, more than \$1.2 million was spent from the Homeless Veterans Assistance Fund in SFY 2026, reducing its balance by nearly 91% from the prior year, to \$130,641.

Comptroller DiNapoli urged state agencies to improve compliance with reporting requirements to provide greater clarity on why spending from the PIT checkoff funds may be delayed and to redouble their efforts to ensure funds are spent promptly.

Unplug and Play: \$75 Million Available Via *NY Bricks* for Municipal and Nonprofit Community Centers

The State Dormitory Authority has opened the application for the second round of the Building Recreational Infrastructure for Communities, Kids and Seniors (NY BRICKS) capital grant program, making \$75 million available to municipalities and nonprofit organizations to build, renovate and modernize community centers. The second round of NY BRICKS will provide grants ranging from \$250,000 to \$15 million, with priority given to projects in underserved communities.

The Request for Applications and supporting materials for the second round of NY BRICKS are available at [Dasny.org/bricks](https://dasny.org/bricks) and parks.ny.gov. The applicant question period is now open, and a webinar

for potential applicants will be posted by September 14th. Questions must be submitted by September 30th, with answers posted by October 26th.

Applications will be accepted through the DASNY Grants Application Portal beginning November 2nd and must be submitted by 3 p.m. December 7th. Awards are expected to be announced no earlier than February 26, 2027.

Applications will be evaluated based on project need, impact and viability. Nonprofit applicants must receive approved prequalification status in the Statewide Financial System before submitting an application and must remain prequalified through execution of the Grant Disbursement Agreement and payment of all requisitions.

POWER Energy Rebate Coming Your Way

The Protecting Our Wallets Energy Rebate (POWER) program, enacted as part of the FY2027 State budget, will begin to hit New Yorkers' mailboxes this month.

Full-time New York State resident who filed a timely New York State Resident income tax return for tax year 2024 are eligible. No forms are required.

Joint filers with incomes under \$150,000 will receive a \$200 check. Joint filers with incomes between \$150,000 and \$300,000 will receive a \$150 check. Single filers with incomes under \$150,000 will receive a \$100 check. According to Governor Kathy Hochul, all qualifying residents will receive a POWER payment by the end of the year.

Mayor Mamdani & Chancellor Samuels Call for AI Moratorium in NYC Schools

Mayor Zohran Kwame Mamdani and Schools Chancellor Kamar H. Samuels this week announced a moratorium on student-facing generative Artificial Intelligence (AI) use in schools, alongside a new screen time policy.

The policy establishes a one-year moratorium, effective in the 2026-2027 school year, on student-facing generative AI for children in 2-K through 8th grade. This includes all software that uses student-facing generative AI. Companion chatbots will be prohibited across all grades.

It also introduces twice-yearly AI critical thinking modules for high schoolers, limited AI pilots for a small number of high school classrooms and age-appropriate screen time restrictions. The decision that will impact nearly 600,000 public school students, or two-thirds of the system's total enrollment.

Teachers will continue to be permitted to use AI for instructional planning and operational tasks, provided all tools comply with NYCPS safety standards. Exceptions to the policy will be granted for assistive technology usage by students with disabilities, multilingual learners and students participating in career readiness programs, like computer science.

FDNY Report Detailing Long-Term Health Effects of 9/11 and the World Trade Center Rescue and Recovery Effort on FDNY Members

Fire Department of New York (FDNY) released a report this week detailing the latest findings on the long-term health effects of September 11, 2001, and the World Trade Center rescue and recovery effort on FDNY members.

Produced by the FDNY World Trade Center Health Program (WTCHP), the report draws on 25 years of medical monitoring, treatment and research involving firefighters, EMTs, paramedics, officers, civilians, retirees and other FDNY members who responded to the World Trade Center and participated in the rescue and recovery effort.

A summary of the report's findings includes:

- 86% of World Trade Center responders diagnosed with cancer are alive five years after diagnosis, compared with 63% of New York State residents who were not exposed to the World Trade Center and were diagnosed with the same cancers.
- More than 84% of enrolled responders are still participating in the FDNY WTCHP.
- 10,562 members are certified for at least one physical health condition, including lower respiratory disease, upper respiratory disease and gastroesophageal reflux disease (GERD).
- 4,496 members are certified for at least one mental health condition. The number of members reporting symptoms of PTSD and depression has decreased since the initial post-9/11 period.
- 4,257 members currently have cancer certification. The most common cancer among FDNY WTCHP members has been nonmelanoma skin cancer, followed by prostate cancer.

Mayor Mamdani Releases New York City's First Citywide Racial Equity Plan

Mayor Zohran Mamdani and the Mayor's Office of Equity and Racial Justice this week released the final [Citywide Racial Equity Plan \(REP\)](#), New York City's first government-wide framework for advancing racial equity.

The final plan follows a 30-day public comment period after the preliminary plan was released in April. During that period, the Mayor's Office of Equity and Racial Justice (MOERJ) worked with 45 City agencies to strengthen the plan's goals, strategies and indicators.

The plan sets eight citywide goals that New Yorkers can use to track the City's progress:

- **Housing:** By 2034, address racial disparities in rent burden and homelessness by dramatically increasing the production of affordable housing across New York City.
- **Early Childhood Education:** By 2034, reduce achievement gaps and racial disparities in literacy, numeracy and social-emotional development by expanding and improving early childhood education while advancing job quality for child care workers – the majority of whom are women of color.
- **K-12 Education:** By 2034, increase the number of integrated New York City public schools with stable enrollment, equitable access to academic programs and services, and culturally responsive leadership that improves belonging, engagement and academic outcomes for Black and Latino

students, multilingual learners, students with disabilities and other historically underserved communities.

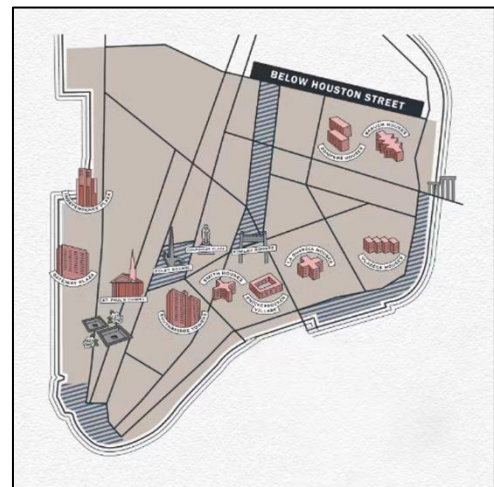
- **Unemployment:** By 2034, reduce unemployment rates among Black, Latino and Asian American New Yorkers relative to 2026 rates, including by improving workforce development outcomes.
- **Justice System:** By 2034, reduce the jail population, which is disproportionately made up of New Yorkers of color, while operationalizing smaller borough-based jail facilities.
- **Health:** By 2034, improve pregnancy-related health outcomes for Black New Yorkers, including by reducing Black maternal mortality, with progress tracked by race and ethnicity.
- **Transportation:** By 2034, reduce racial disparities in transportation access by prioritizing faster, more reliable and accessible bus service in Task Force on Racial Inclusion and Equity (TRIE) neighborhoods and communities experiencing the greatest transportation burdens.
- **Connectivity:** By 2034, increase home broadband adoption in the city's most under-connected neighborhoods, with data disaggregated by neighborhood.

9/11 Solidarity Network Helps Claimants Obtain Vital Documentation for 9/11 Compensation Fund Claims

It is becoming increasingly difficult for some claimants to find documents to prove their presence at an eligible location so many years after the attacks. The 9/11 Victim Compensation Fund (VCF) understands this challenge and encourages individuals who were present in the exposure zone to gather and save their proof of presence documents now, even if they aren't currently ill or planning to file a claim.

The 9/11 Solidarity Network, developed by [Pitta & Baione LLP](#), directly addresses this challenge by creating a system where members can act as witnesses for one another. This network is especially vital because sworn Witness Presence Statements from people who can attest to a claimant's presence are accepted as secondary evidence by the VCF when primary documentation is unavailable. By participating, you can provide the crucial testimony a fellow member might need while also securing potential support for your own future claim. This initiative formalizes the collective memory of our members to ensure no one is left to prove their presence alone.

For more information regarding the 9/11 Solidarity Network, please contact Pitta & Baione at 844-901-1262.



9/11 Exposure Zone

Coming Up

New York State

*There are currently no Scheduled meetings at the time of this Publication**

New York City

Tuesday, September 8th

Subcommittee on Landmarks, Public Sitings, Resiliency and Dispositions, 250 Broadway – 8th Floor – Hearing Room 3, 11 a.m.

Wednesday, September 9th

Committee on Governmental Operations, State & Federal Legislation, Council Chambers – City Hall, 10 a.m.

Committee on Public Safety, Council Chamber – City Hall, 10 a.m.

Committee on Technology, Council Chambers – City Hall, 10 a.m.

Committee on Fire and Emergency Management, Council Chambers – City Hall, 10 a.m.

Committee on Housing and Buildings, 250 Broadway – 8th Floor – Hearing Room 1, 10 a.m.

Thursday, September 10th

Committee on Parks and Recreation, 250 Broadway – 8th Floor – Hearing Room 1, 10:30 a.m.

City Council Stated Meeting, Council Chambers – City Hall, 1:30 p.m.

Disclaimer: The materials in this ***This Week in New York*** report are provided for informational purposes only and are not intended to be a comprehensive review of legislative or governmental or political developments, to create a client-consultant/lobbyist relationship, or to provide consulting, lobbying or political advice. Readers are cautioned not to attempt to solve specific problems on the basis of information contained in this ***This Week in New York***. If consulting, lobbying or government relations advice is required, please consult a professional expert in such matters.

The information contained herein, does not necessarily reflect the opinions of Pitta Bishop & Del Giorno LLC, or any of its members or employees or its clients. Neither Pitta Bishop & Del Giorno LLC, nor its members or employees make any warranty, expressed or implied, and assume no legal liability with respect to the information in this report, and do not guarantee that the information is accurate, complete, useful or current. Accordingly, Pitta Bishop & Del Giorno LLC is not responsible for any claimed damages resulting from any alleged error, inaccuracy, or omission. This communication may be considered an advertisement or solicitation. To request that copies of this publication be sent to a new address or fax number, to unsubscribe, or to comment on its contents, please contact Theresa Cosgrove at tcosgrove@pittabishop.com or at (518) 449-3320.

To Our Clients: If you have any questions regarding any of the matters addressed in this newsletter, or regarding any legislative, government relations or political or consulting or related issues in general, please contact the Pitta Bishop & Del Giorno LLC professional with whom you usually work. ***This Week in New York*** is a publication of Pitta Bishop & Del Giorno LLC.

40 Wall Street, 24th Floor
New York, New York 10005
Telephone (212) 652-3890

111 Washington Avenue, St. 401
Albany, New York 12210
Telephone (518) 449-3320

1220 19th Street NW, St. 600
Washington, D.C. 20036
Telephone (202) 964-4753