



# This Week in New York

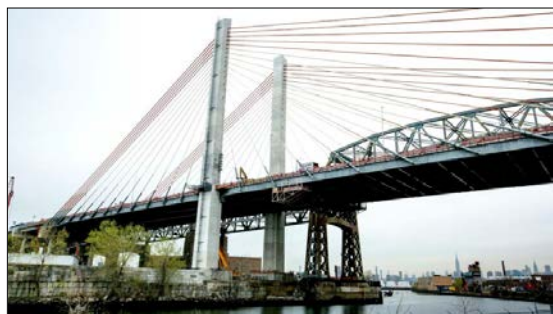
**Covering New York State and City Government**

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## *In the News – New York State*



### **New Kosciuszko Bridge Opens**

***First Major New Bridge Constructed in New York City in More Than Fifty Years***

Flanked by dignitaries and community members of Queens and Brooklyn, Governor Andrew Cuomo presided over the grand opening of the first span of the new Kosciuszko Bridge – the first new bridge constructed in New York City since the Verrazano Bridge in 1964.

The grand opening included a celebratory march across the brand new bridge, with delegations from both the Queens side and the Brooklyn side meeting in the middle to kick off the celebration. The Governor also drove across the bridge in a ceremonial first ride in President Franklin Delano Roosevelt's 1932 Packard. The new span opened to traffic in both directions at 11:30 p.m. on Thursday night.

The Kosciuszko Bridge project replaces the existing 78-year-old bridge with two new state-of-the-art cable-stayed bridges – one Queens-bound and one Brooklyn-bound. The original Kosciuszko Bridge first opened in 1939 under President Roosevelt's administration.

The \$555 million Phase I project is the largest single contract the New York State Department of Transportation has ever undertaken – resulting in the construction of the Queens-bound bridge, which includes three lanes of traffic in each direction until the completion of Phase II. The new bridge will benefit approximately 200,000 commuters each day and has a service life of 100 years.



"New York is making unprecedented investments to revitalize our transportation infrastructure, ensuring our roads and bridges are fully equipped to meet the needs of the 21st century traveler," Governor Cuomo said. "....



This new bridge will ease congestion and improve our region's transportation network while demonstrating that the Empire State continues to lead the nation in building state-of-the-art

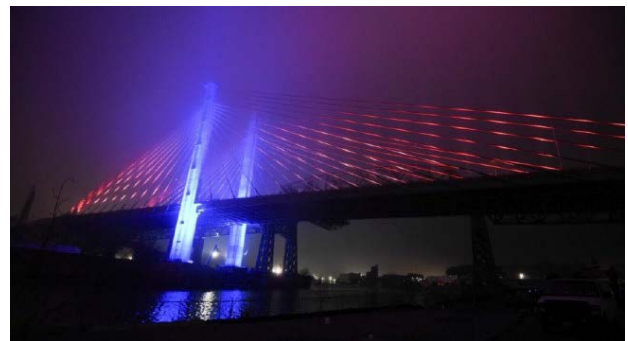
infrastructure projects that will serve New Yorkers for generations to come."

The FY 2018 Budget supports and expands upon New York State's historic \$100 billion infrastructure program – investing in the state's roads, bridges and other critical infrastructure components. This week's grand opening will soon be followed by the Tappan Zee Bridge, 2nd Avenue Subway, LaGuardia Airport, Moynihan Station projects.

Once the project is fully completed, the Queens-bound bridge will carry five lanes of traffic and the Brooklyn-bound bridge will carry four lanes, as well as a 20-foot-wide bikeway/walkway with spectacular views of Manhattan. Shoulders will be added to both bridges, where none currently exist. The new bridge will be lower than the original by 35 feet, decreasing the incline and allowing trucks and other large vehicles to maintain consistent speeds on the bridge, helping to ease congestion.

The new Kosciuszko Bridge is New York City's first cable-stayed bridge, featuring a total of 56 stay cables made up of approximately one million linear feet of steel strands. A cable-stayed bridge uses steel cables placed at an angle to connect the bridge deck to vertical towers that extend high above the roadway, with the pylon tower of the Kosciuszko Bridge measuring 287 feet high. Additionally, each of the 3,850 tons of structural steel used to construct the new bridge was manufactured in the United States. The bridge measures 1,001 feet in length and 99 feet in width.

The Governor marked the grand opening of the Kosciuszko Bridge with a spectacular light show synchronized to music. The light show is the first performance in "The New York Harbor of Lights" that will illuminate crossings with multi-color LED light shows that will be visible for miles. The premiere of "The New York Harbor of Lights" included coordination with the lights of the Empire State Building.



## **A.G. Launches Crack Down On Heroin And Opioid Traffickers In Suburban And Upstate New York**

### ***New Report Shows Drug-Related Deaths Up By 84 Percent In 17 Upstate And Suburban Counties***

Responding to the heroin epidemic's rising death toll in New York's suburban and upstate communities, Attorney General Eric Schneiderman this week announced the launch of the Suburban and Upstate Response to the Growing Epidemic ("S.U.R.G.E.") Initiative, a new law enforcement effort spearheaded by the Attorney General's Organized Crime Task Force that aims to disrupt New York's widening heroin and opioid distribution networks.

The S.U.R.G.E Initiative will target gangs and individuals who deal heroin and opioids and commit acts of violence in suburban and upstate communities across New York State. The OAG's Organized Crime Task Force will work closely with federal, state, and local law enforcement to investigate, arrest, and prosecute those criminals who target suburban and upstate areas.

On Thursday, AG Schneiderman and Syracuse Police Chief Frank Fowler announced the first successful takedown under the SURGE Initiative, arresting and indicting 52 people in Operation Bricktown, a multipronged investigation that dealt a major blow to one of Syracuse's most violent drug dealing street gangs.

“By the Numbers: The Growing Drug Epidemic in New York,” an April 2017 report published by the Rockefeller Institute of Government, found that New York—like the majority of the country—is experiencing a rise in drug-related deaths. According to the report, 14,173 people died from drugs in New York State between 2010 and 2015. In contrast, 9,754 people suffered drug-related deaths in the preceding six years (2004-2009). In 2015 alone, 3,009 New Yorkers died from drug overdoses or from chronic drug abuse—a 71 percent increase from 2010.

**Table 3. Total Drug Deaths by County Have Increased in New York State\***

	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	% Increase 2010 to 2015
Albany	28	33	27	36	40	36	29%
Bronx	180	196	212	219	212	297	65%
Broome	19	28	22	34	42	40	111%
Chautauqua	13	15	13	15	18	26	100%
Dutchess	59	38	62	72	50	65	10%
Erie	82	115	95	140	153	292	256%
Kings	191	216	230	219	254	272	42%
Monroe	64	70	84	96	112	105	64%
Nassau County	115	155	165	171	178	209	82%
New York	141	171	207	211	197	215	52%
Niagara	32	25	35	41	38	53	66%
Oneida	19	17	20	29	44	41	116%
Onondaga	41	47	63	68	80	101	146%
Orange	64	57	57	65	72	75	17%
Oswego	12	17	17	21	18	24	100%
Queens	142	148	148	196	164	183	29%
Richmond	72	87	92	77	88	90	25%
Rockland	20	20	21	34	22	37	85%
Suffolk	204	285	291	282	273	294	44%
Ulster	15	26	23	26	22	35	133%
Westchester	51	95	95	109	97	117	129%

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Health Statistics, “Underlying Cause of Death 1999-2015,” on CDC WONDER Online Database, released December 2016. Data are from the Multiple Cause of Death Data File, 1999-2015, as compiled from data provided by the fifty-seven vital statistics jurisdictions through the Vital Statistics Cooperative Program, <http://wonder.cdc.gov/mcd-icd10.html>.

According to the Attorney General, while the steady increase of drug-related deaths has been felt across the state, suburban and upstate communities have been hit particularly hard. In New York City, drug-related deaths increased by 45 percent since 2010. Comparatively, drug-related deaths increased by 84 percent in 17 counties outside of New York City (for which there is complete federal data). For example, in Onondaga County, the drug-related death rate increased by 145 percent from 8.8 per 100,000 people in 2010 to 21.6 in 2015.

“The S.U.R.G.E Initiative will bring our state’s most effective law enforcement resources to bear in the fight against New York’s growing opioid and heroin epidemic,” said Attorney General Schneiderman. “... By directing resources to the communities that need our help the most, we can help curb some of the heroin epidemic’s most devastating consequences for New Yorkers. With overdose deaths on the rise and federal funding for drug prevention on the chopping block, the S.U.R.G.E Initiative will be an important part of my office’s multipronged approach to fighting the expansive and violent heroin and opioid distribution networks across New York State.”

# *In the News – New York City*



## **NYC Budget Released**

Mayor Bill de Blasio this week released the FY18 Executive Budget totaling \$84.86 billion. This budget

In releasing the budget, Mayor de Blasio projected that the City will see modest financial growth in FY18, as lower tax revenues will be offset by strong property tax receipts.

The FY 2018 Executive Budget is highlighted by a number of quality of life investments including:

- **3-K for All:** Instituting free, full-day, high-quality 3-K for All for every three-year-old in New York City through a \$36 million investment in FY18 and ramping up to \$177 million in FY21.
- **Air conditioning in Every Classroom:** Ensuring all students can learn in a safe and comfortable environment by installing air conditioning in every classroom at a cost of \$28.75 million over five years.
- **Anti-Eviction Legal Services:** Providing anti-eviction legal services to low-income families and legal advice to all NYC residents in housing court for \$93M annually at full implementation.
- **Opioid Overdose Prevention:** Contributing \$38 million in FY18 to invest in our effort to reduce opioid overdose deaths by 35% over the next five years.
- **E-Waste Curbside Collection Program:** Expanding the E-Waste Curbside Collection Program in Staten Island and northern Brooklyn for \$1.1 million in FY18, and increasing to more than \$4 million annually in FY20 and FY21.
- **St. George Ferry Terminal:** Bringing lower-level boarding to the St. George Ferry Terminal during the morning rush at a cost of \$775,000 in FY18, and more annually through the four year plan.
- **Private Schools' Security Costs:** Reimbursing private schools' security costs, totaling \$19.8 million in FY18.
- **Affordable Housing:** Making housing more affordable by investing \$1.9 billion to increase or preserve the number of affordable apartments by 10,000 for households earning up to \$40,000 annually, including 5,000 units for seniors and 500 for veterans.

- **Department of Veterans' Services:** Expanding services offered by the Department of Veterans' Services to better reach our veterans at an annual cost of \$859,000.
- **Homeless Shelters:** Renovating 30 existing homeless shelters with \$300 million in capital funding as part of the Mayor's commitment to address homelessness.
- **Sidewalk Cleaning Trucks:** Purchasing sidewalk cleaning trucks that can typically clean a heavily trafficked sidewalk area in a single pass for \$1.8 million in capital funds to further the Mayor's CleanNYC efforts.
- **Immigrant New Yorkers:** Including \$16.4 million in FY18 to fund legal representation for immigrant New Yorkers facing deportation and other immigration challenges.
- **32-mile Pedestrian Promenade and Bike Path:** Investing \$100 million towards completion of a contiguous 32-mile pedestrian promenade and bike path around the whole of Manhattan.



## PA James Calls for Independent Review, Reforms for Affordable Homeownership Program

Public Advocate Letitia James this week called for a thorough review of the City's Tenant Interim Lease Apartment Purchase Program (TIL). After hearing complaints from a number of constituents and holding a town hall meeting, Public Advocate James' office investigated the program and found that TIL is not fulfilling its purpose of providing New Yorkers with self-sufficient low-income cooperatives.

The TIL program was established to assist low-income New Yorkers in becoming homeowners of permanently affordable homes, yet poor management and alleged corruption have kept hundreds of units vacant for years, the Public Advocate asserted. The City's proposed solution to the TIL program -- the Affordable Neighborhood Cooperative Program (ANCP) -- is less affordable to New Yorkers, and allows the units to eventually become market rate. Public Advocate James called for ANCP to be postponed.

"As our City faces a crisis in affordable housing, it is shocking that a City-run program is allowing hundreds of affordable units to remain vacant," said Public Advocate James. "Worse yet, the solution proposed by the administration is ill-conceived and short-sighted. We must do better and fully commit to the goal of ensuring that every New Yorker has a safe and affordable home."

The TIL program was created in the late 1970s to assist tenant associations in converting their buildings into Housing Development Fund Corporation (HDFC) cooperatives. The building would enter into a temporary lease agreement with the City, undergo temporary rehabilitation, and then become an HDFC. Buildings have remained in TIL for an average of 13 years.

Currently, there are 145 TIL buildings with 2,322 units in New York City. Nearly 40 percent of the units (884 units) are vacant.

HPD has proposed a new program, the Affordable Neighborhood Cooperative Program (ANCP), to expedite the cooperative conversion process for TIL buildings. Public Advocate James does not believe that the program is sufficient to preserve affordability, and calls on the City to postpone it for independent review. The buy-in for tenants to participate in the program is ten times as expensive, and the buildings would face deregulation after thirty years.



## **NYC Releases New Resiliency Guidelines to Prepare Infrastructure & Buildings for Effects of Climate Change**

The de Blasio Administration today released a preliminary Climate Resiliency Design Guidelines which include projected impacts from climate change into the planning, engineering, construction, and renovation of City facilities.

According to Mayor Bill de Blasio, the Guidelines are a “critical step” towards integrating resiliency as a core principle in the design of City buildings and infrastructure. The guidelines provide a policy framework for incorporating forward-looking climate data into design.

“New York is meeting the challenge of climate change head-on, and in the process we are building a better city,” said Mayor Bill de Blasio. “These guidelines are another national first, and will make the city’s buildings and infrastructure more resilient in the face of rising seas, extreme heat and storms. Our forward-looking approach will help us prepare for the effects of climate change, so the next generation can continue to call New York home.”

Developed under the direction of the Mayor’s Office of Recovery and Resiliency, the Guidelines provide architects, engineers, planners, and other professionals with step-by-step instructions on how to incorporate anticipated changes in temperature, precipitation, and sea levels into the design of City facilities, the Mayor explained. The Guidelines are to be used throughout the design process—from the conceptual phase to final design—for all new construction and substantial improvements of City buildings and infrastructure.

Current building codes and standards incorporate historic weather data. The codes do not account for changing climate conditions, such as the frequency of future floods, heat waves, and precipitation.

Highlights of the Guidelines include:

- Providing guidance to address major climate risks and planning for continued changes in climate across the entire useful life of facilities built today;
- Ensuring that both critical and non-critical city facilities are designed to be resilient;
- Ensuring cost-effective investments are made by evaluating the future climate projections against the service life of a planned new asset;
- Utilizing projected climate data at the local level;
- Providing guidance on how to limit the Urban Heat Island effect while also protecting facilities against extreme heat;
- Addressing urban flooding from extreme precipitation;
- Recommending the use of flexible adaptation pathways, a way of designing facilities with coastal storms protections that can be upgraded, as a way to manage uncertainty;
- Recommending that large-scale projects undertake a full climate risk assessment to develop a resilient design specific to the facility.

The Guidelines were developed based on the New York City Panel on Climate Change's (NPCC) regional climate projections that inform City resiliency policy. NPCC prepares projections for the City and metropolitan region which have shown that extreme weather will increase in frequency and severity, and that the climate will become more variable. Climate projections encompass a wide range of possible outcomes, for example:

- Mean annual temperature is projected to increase between 4.1 and 6.6°F by the 2050s and between 5.3 and 10.3°F by the 2080s.
- Frequency of heat waves is projected to triple by the 2050s to five to seven heat waves per year.
- Mean annual precipitation is projected to increase between 4 to 13 percent by the 2050s and between 5 to 19 percent by the 2080s.
- Sea level is expected to continue rising by 11 to 21 inches by the 2050s and by 18 to 39 inches by the 2080s, on top of the 1 foot of rise already measured since 1900.

## ***Briefs***

### **Bills Signed by the Mayor**

***Introduction 564-A, sponsored by Council Member James Vacca***, will review the feasibility of establishing online applications for all permits, licenses, and registrations issued by city agencies. It will also examine the feasibility and timeline for establishing a single web portal for these applications.

**Introduction 1112-A, sponsored by Council Member Steven Matteo,** will require the Parks Department to post information relating to the times, dates, locations and work statuses of various tree maintenance activities online.

**Introduction 1454, sponsored by Council Member Julissa Ferreras-Copeland,** establishes the New Dorp Business Improvement District (“BID”) in Staten Island.

**Introduction 886-A, sponsored by Council Member Inez Barron,** Sponsored by Councilmember Barron, sets up an Interagency Working Group to create a citywide Environmental Justice Plan that provides guidance on incorporating environmental justice concerns into City decision-making, identifies possible Citywide initiatives for promoting environmental justice and provides specific recommendations for City agencies to bring their operations, programs and projects in line with environmental justice concerns. The bill also establishes an Advisory Board consisting of residents and experts to assist the Working Group.

**Introduction 359-A, sponsored by Council Member Costa Constantinides,** requires the new Interagency Working Group to conduct a study to identify and address environmental justice concerns, and to make recommendations for measures to advance environmental justice goals. The environmental justice information will be made available to the public through a web portal that will provide easy access to relevant maps, data and Agency programs.

**Introduction 746-A, sponsored by Council Member Daniel Dromm,** will impose stricter guidelines for providers and further protect customers against immigration services fraud and unauthorized practice of law.

**Introduction 708-A, sponsored by Council Member Mathieu Eugene,** will establish a disconnected youth task force.

## **HPD Oversight Failures Lead to \$12 Million in Questionable Payments**

According to a new report from New York City Comptroller Scott M. Stringer, the New York City Department of Housing, Preservation, and Development (HPD) failed to properly review roughly \$12 million in payments. In violation of City spending rules, HPD cannot verify whether these millions of dollars of payments for demolition work were appropriate, and whether all work was actually completed as required.

City agencies are required to follow Comptroller’s Directive #7, which instructs them to establish “Engineering Audit Offices,” independent of agencies’ construction operations, to review and approve payments to contractors. These offices are responsible for conducting field inspections, verifying paperwork, and reviewing payroll data to ensure contractors have paid their employees prevailing wages. During Fiscal Years 2014 and 2015, HPD’s Engineering Audit Office reviewed contractors’ payment requests totaling \$56.1 million.

However, Comptroller Stringer’s audit shows that HPD was unable to prove its Engineering Audit Office appropriately reviewed payments made by HPD totaling roughly \$12 million.



## **R.I.P. FDNY Firefighter William Tolley**

Thousands, including Mayor Bill de Blasio and Fire Commissioner Daniel Nigro, attended the funeral of Firefighter William Tolley this week at St. Martin of Tours Church in Bethpage. He died in the line of duty earlier this week responding to a fire in Queens.

Firefighter Tolley was appointed a firefighter in 2003 and served out of Ladder Company 135. He is survived by his wife, Marie, and their daughter Isabella. Firefighter Tolley is also survived by his brother, FDNY member Bobby Tolley.

All of those at Pitta Bishop & Del Giorno LLC honor Firefighter Tolley and offer our sincere condolences to his family.

## **Coming Up**

### ***New York State***

***State Legislature is in session Monday, May 1<sup>st</sup> through Wednesday, May 3<sup>rd</sup>.***

### ***New York City***

***Tuesday May 2<sup>nd</sup>***

***Subcommittee on Zoning & Franchises, Committee Room – 250 Broadway 16<sup>th</sup> Floor, 9:30 a.m.***

***Committees on Public Housing and Oversight & Environmental Protection, Miccio Community Center 110 W. 9<sup>th</sup> Street, Brooklyn, 10 a.m.***

***T2017-5858 Oversight-NYCHA's Record in Removing Mold From Public Housing.***

***Int 0978-2015*** in relation to requiring licensure for mold abatement work.

***Committee on Housing and Buildings, Council Chambers – City Hall, 10 a.m.***

***T2017-5942*** in relation to amending Local Law 50.

***Int 1369-2016*** in relation to reporting on bedbug violations.

***Int 1407-2016*** in relation to requiring hotels to periodically inspect for bedbugs.

***Subcommittee on Landmarks, Committee Room – 250 Broadway 16<sup>th</sup> Floor, 11 a.m.***

***Subcommittee on Planning, Dispositions and Concessions, Committee Room – 250 Broadway, 1 p.m.***

**Committees on Transportation and Public Safety**, Committee Room – City Hall, 1p.m.  
**T2017-5926** Oversight-Holding hit and run perpetrators accountable.

**Int 1418-2017** in relation to establishing a reward for information leading to apprehension of hit and run perpetrators.

**Int 1463-2017** in relation to public notification of hit and run incidents.

**Subcommittee on Mental Health**, Council Chambers – City Hall, 1 p.m.  
**T2017-5925** Oversight-ThriveNYC Update.

**Committee on Fire and Criminal Justice**, Committee Room – 250 Broadway 14<sup>th</sup> Floor, 2 p.m.  
**Int 1531-2017** in relation to requiring DOC to facilitate processing of bail payments.

**Int 1541-2017** in relation to delaying formal admission of inmates.  
**T2017-5877** in relation to requiring DOC to facilitate the posting of bail or bond.

**T2017-5876** in relation to requiring NYPD to permit arrestees access to contact information.

**T2017-5878** in relation to posting of bail in courtrooms.

### **Wednesday May 3<sup>rd</sup>**

**Committee on Health**, Council Chambers – City Hall, 10 a.m.  
**Int 1103-2016** in relation to requiring signage about the risks of sugar.

**Int 1263-2016** in relation to reporting on inspections of food service establishments.

**Int 1456-2017** in relation to posting of letter grades received for sanitary inspections.

**T2017-5967** in relation to reforming the city's restaurant inspection program.

**Committee on Sanitation and Solid Waste Management**, Committee Room – City Hall, 1p.m.  
**Int 1480-2017** in relation to designating expanded polystyrene as recyclable.

### **Thursday May 4<sup>th</sup>**

**Committee on Finance**, Council Chambers – City Hall, 10 a.m.  
Executive Budget Hearings-Finance.

**Committee on land Use**, Committee Room – City Hall, 11 a.m.

### **Friday May 5<sup>th</sup>**

**Committees on Finance, Higher Education, Youth Services**, Council Chambers – City Hall, 10 a.m.  
**T2017-5917** in relation to Executive Budget Hearings-Higher Education.

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