

Information that may be of interest...

February 24, 2020

This information is provided by The Murray Hill Neighborhood Association. We are sharing it as a service to our members. If this notice does not interest you, please disregard it.

You can also find these weekly newsletters online in PDF (printable) format at www.murrayhillnyc.org in the News section, look for Weekly Eblasts 2020.

Please share this email with a friend, neighbor or colleague. You can sign up for these emails at www.murrayhillnyc.org, scroll down the Also Happening column.

The MHNA Discount Program

Please be prepared to show proof of membership when you ask for a discount.

Full list of discounts offered to MHNA members:

[Restaurant and Food Discounts](#)

[General Discounts](#)

Important Transportation Updates

The Park Avenue Tunnel will be closed beginning **Friday, February 21** for inspection of ventilation and fire life safety systems. To accommodate equipment and personnel, the tunnel needs to be fully closed. The New York City Department of Transportation Division of Bridges will provide an update and a schedule for re-opening the tunnel upon completion of the inspection.

A new uptown bus stop has appeared on Third Avenue between 34th and 35th Street. Due to the street construction on that block, the bus stop that was between 34th and 33rd Street on 3rd Avenue had been temporarily eliminated. The nearest bus stops for those who wanted to embark or disembark at 34th Street were at 31st or 37th Street. This new stop is a welcome and needed replacement for the old 34th Street stop. We think this is a temporary replacement for the bus stop on 3rd Avenue that is normally at the south corner of 34th Street, and are awaiting confirmation. We have been told that not all buses are stopping there. Karen Flores, our Community Liaison for the infrastructure replacement project on 2nd and 3rd Avenue and surrounding areas, will be speaking with the MTA to ask them to tell bus drivers to stop at the new 34th Street stop.

Upcoming events

February 27 6:30pm

Public meeting: A New Vision for St. Vartan Park

FREE and open to the public. The Parks Department will gather community feedback for improvements to St. Vartan Park. In the coming years, the Parks Department will be making a series of improvements to St. Vartan Park in Murray Hill. These changes come from \$4.9 million allocated by Mayor de Blasio and \$1.3 million allocated by Council Member Keith Powers's office and the City Council to help redesign the park. This spring, the blacktop area will be converted to synthetic turf, which will provide a much-needed space for youth sports teams to play. With the turf conversion underway, the Parks Department is also beginning to explore ideas for additional improvements at St. Vartan Park. If you have further ideas for St. Vartan Park that you would like Council Member Powers to share with the Parks Department, please reach out to Sara Newman in his office at snewman@council.nyc.gov.
at the Yeshiva University Stern College for Women
245 Lexington Avenue (at 35th Street)

February 27 7:30pm

Doctors Orchestral Society of NY concert: Brahms, Beethoven, Tchaikovsky

FREE and open to the public (donations welcome). PROGRAM: Brahms, Academic Festival Overture Op. 80; Beethoven, Symphony No.1 in G major Op. 21; Tchaikovsky, Violin Concerto in D major Op. 35 with soloist Siwen Xu.
at Norman Thomas High School
111 East 33rd Street (Park Avenue)
2nd Floor Auditorium

February 29 2-5pm

Forum on the State Budget

The Budget Forum is an opportunity to join other community members, advocates, and other interested parties to make your voice heard, and to hear the concerns of your neighbors, regarding priorities for the 2020-21 New York State Budget. Sponsored by State Senator Liz Krueger and other NYC elected officials. Anyone can offer oral or written testimony. If you would like to speak, please indicate it when you RSVP. Each speaker will have up to two (2) minutes to speak. Time limits will be strictly enforced. In order to ensure diversity of issues and neighborhood representation, they may not be able to accommodate everyone who wishes to testify in person. Those who have been selected to testify will be notified in the week prior to the hearing. Whether or not you testify in person, written testimony can be submitted via email ahead of or after the event to ManhattanBudgetForum@gmail.com, with the subject line "Budget Forum Testimony." If you would like to attend the event and/or testify you can RSVP at <https://tinyurl.com/BudgetForum2020> or call 212-490-9535.
at the New York Academy of Medicine
1216 Fifth Avenue (entrance at 103rd Street)
2nd Floor, Room 20

March 10 6:30 - 8 PM

Panel discussion: Another Silicon Valley? New York's Astonishing Growth as a Tech City

FREE. Gotham has become a fast-growing rival to Silicon Valley, despite recent troubles with Amazon. This wide-ranging discussion will explore the recent history of New York City's rise as a tech mecca, and discuss what the future holds for venture capital, employment, diversity, and platform companies such as Uber and Airbnb. Panelists: Sharon Zukin, Graduate Center/Brooklyn College, CUNY sociologist; author, *The Innovation Complex: Cities, Tech, and the New Economy*, David Ehrenberg, CEO, Brooklyn Navy Yard, Ben Kallos, NYC Council, District 5, Judith Spitz, Founding Program Director, Women in Technology and Entrepreneurship in New York (WiTNY), Cornell Tech, John Frankel, Founding Partner, ff Venture Capital, Moderator: Greg David, Columnist, Crain's NY; Director of the Business & Economics Reporting Program at the Craig Newmark Graduate School of Journalism, CUNY. RSVP required: <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/another-silicon-valley-new-york-as-a-tech-city-tickets-91192748967>. at The CUNY Graduate Center, Elebash Recital Hall
365 Fifth Avenue (between 34th & 35th Street)

Murray Hill in the news

Straphanger Slashed In Park Avenue Subway, Officials Say

February 20, 2020, *patch.com*, by Kathleen Culliton

A subway brawl became bloody when one straphanger slashed another on a Park Avenue subway platform Thursday morning, officials said. Two men began to argue on the platform of the East 33rd Street 6 train station about 6:30 a.m., said police and the FDNY. One man whipped out a blade, slashed the other in the face then escaped on a northbound 6 train...Emergency responders rushed the second man, in stable condition, to Bellevue Hospital...The slasher has yet to be caught but the investigation continues.

These NYC Hospitals Are Ranked Among America's Best In 2020

February 13, 2020, *patch.com*, by Adam Nichols

[Healthgrades ranks NYU Langone Health Tisch Hospital among the top 250.](#)

Business Owners In Grand Central Terminal Say Homeless People Taking Over

February 14, 2020, *patch.com*, by CBS New York City

From sleeping on the ground to stealing, some business owners in Grand Central Terminal say the homeless population is taking over and they simply can't take it anymore. Inside the world-class transit hub adorned with grand chandeliers, you'll find men and women sleeping at tables, hunched over on benches, using drinking fountains to bathe..."At 5:30 in the afternoon, it becomes a homeless shelter," business owner Joe Germanotta said..."People are scared to come and sit here and eat with their families"...Businesses that blame the problem for a loss in revenue say they've brought their complaints to the MTA multiple times but it's falling on deaf ears...Business owners want to see more police patrolling the terminal and more help offered to the homeless so they don't have to take up residence

there...the city Department of Homeless Services told CBS2 it is working to address getting New Yorkers off the streets and into housing.

Changes in the neighborhood

[Gene Kaufman's Pestana NY East Hotel Debuts At 23 East 39th Street In Midtown](#)

February 21, 2020, *newyorkyimby.com*, by Sebastian Morris

The Pestana NY East Hotel at 23 East 39th Street celebrated its grand opening earlier this week. Designed by Gene Kaufman Architect, the building stands 27 stories above Midtown, Manhattan. The 40,000 square foot structure contains 96 guest rooms, a fitness center, a bar, and an outdoor patio...Pestana Hotel Group, a global hotelier based in Lisbon, Portugal, purchased the vacant site in 2017 for \$16 million, and secured a 99-year ground lease.

[Permits Filed For 112 East 40th Street In Murray Hill, Manhattan](#)

February 8, 2020, *newyorkyimby.com*, by Vanessa Londono

Permits have been filed for a ten-story mixed-use building at 112 East 40th Street in Murray Hill, Manhattan. Located between Park Avenue and Lexington Avenue...Adam Gordon under the CMSJ Development LLC is listed as the owner behind the applications. The proposed 97-foot-tall development will yield 16,325 square feet, with 12,375 square feet designated for residential space and 1,975 square feet for commercial space. The building will have nine residences, most likely condos based on the average unit scope of 1,375 square feet. The concrete-based structure will also have retail on the ground floor. Dominick R. Pilla Associates is listed as the architect of record. Demolition permits were filed in June 2019. An estimated completion date has not been announced.



[Minrav Development To Launch Sales This Spring For 368 Third Avenue In Kips Bay](#)

February 16, 2020, *newyorkyimby.com*, by Sebastian Morris

Minrav Development has released the first renderings of the interiors of 368 Third Avenue [27th Street], which recently topped out in Kips Bay, Manhattan. Designed in partnership by Paris Forino and SLCE Architects, the 35-story condominium tower will debut as "VU" and will comprise 100 individual homes...To date, the developer has not confirmed a commercial tenant for the 3,000 square feet of retail area on the ground floor.

'Making Manhattan Mine' survey

Last fall, the Manhattan Borough President's Office launched “Making Manhattan Mine” an initiative to make the borough a better place to age. As part of that effort, they’ve partnered with The New York Academy of Medicine to construct a survey about the nature and quality of resources and amenities available to older people—things like transportation, technology, healthy living, advance-care planning, and the arts. They need your input on how to shape the initiative’s roadmap ahead. Please participate in the [short survey online here](#) or type bit.ly/AgeFriendlyMBPO into your browser (it’s case sensitive) or, to request a printed copy of the survey, send your address to Shula Warren at swarren@manhattanbp.nyc.gov or call (212)669-2392. The survey is available online and in print in English, Spanish and Chinese, and responses are anonymous and confidential.

Resiliency & sustainability

[Lower East Side flood protection plan threatened by lawsuit](#)

February 7, 2020, *ny.curbed.com*, by Caroline Spivack

A transformational plan to fill in and raise East River Park by eight feet is facing a legal battle that threatens to stall flood protections for Manhattan’s east side. A coalition of community groups have filed a lawsuit in Manhattan Supreme Court against the City of New York, arguing that officials must obtain the state legislature’s approval for the \$1.45 billion East Side Coastal Resiliency Project before the five-year plan can move forward. The suit calls on a judge to annul the City Council’s November approval of the plan, and require the state senate and assembly to sign-off on plans for East River Park before any work, which is scheduled to break ground in March, can get underway...The lawsuit charges that the city must seek “parkland alienation” from the state legislature in the form of a bill that would allow East River Park to temporarily become a construction zone...The lawmakers who represent the overall 2.4-mile project area—City Councilmembers Carlina Rivera, Keith Powers, and Margaret Chin—expressed reservations about the plan throughout the land use review process but ultimately negotiated changes and commitments from the city they believe meet the needs of the community.

Preservation & zoning

[Macy’s-Topping Skyscraper By FXCollaborative Revealed, In Midtown Manhattan](#)

February 7, 2020, *newyorkyimby.com*, by Vanessa Londono

Macy’s Inc. is pursuing plans to build an office tower over its block-long flagship store in Herald Square, Midtown...Company public filings show the retailer has been in discussions since last year with city and state officials to get the green light for the project.

[UWS Tower Ruling Puts 30 NYC Buildings In Limbo, Developers Say](#)

February 20, 2020, *patch.com*, by Anna Quinn

Developers who were ordered to chop floors off their already-built Upper West Side tower by a recent court decision contend that the ruling will create a logistical mess for at least 30 other buildings across New York City. Attorneys with SJP Properties, developers of the controversial 200 Amsterdam Ave. tower [the 52-story, 668' tall construction which is currently the tallest structure on the island of Manhattan north of 61st Street], have compiled a list of dozens of properties that they say are now in legal limbo because, like their building, they combined "partial tax lots" to create a larger zoning lot. A judge ruled last week to revoke 200 Amsterdam Ave.'s building permit, siding with community groups who said the development's "gerrymandered" zoning lot — which stretches far beyond the building site — violates the city's zoning codes. [Richard Emery, the lawyer who represented groups challenging 200 Amsterdam said] "The real message here is a message to developers to get the community on their side before they go ahead"... "Financial lenders will be scared now unless community approval is dealt with at the outset— which is obviously the only way to develop appropriately in New York."

Related document: Municipal Art Society joint statement

<https://www.mas.org/news/court-orders-200-amsterdam-tower-to-remove-floors/>

Traffic & transportation

Midtown Set For Multiple New Bike Lanes In 2020, City Says

February 19, 2020, *patch.com*, by Brendan Krisel

Plans are also in motion to fill the remaining gaps in Manhattan's Second Avenue protected bike lane between East 42nd and 34th streets after necessary water main work is completed in the area. Filling the gap will result in the completion of a continuous five-mile bike lane on the southbound avenue.

Are feds holding congestion pricing hostage?

February 21, 2020, *First Read Tech email*, cityandstateny.com, by Annie McDonough

Add one more item to the list of unanswered questions surrounding congestion pricing in New York City: Will it actually happen?... it was revealed that the federal officials who must approve congestion pricing in New York have not yet answered whether the state will have to conduct a full environmental review of the plan before implementing it...With both Cuomo and New York City Mayor Bill de Blasio casting doubts about congestion pricing's future – and the MTA still having yet to name the members of a board that will decide the price of tolls – the January 2021 start date of congestion pricing is looking increasingly uncertain.

New York Attorney General Accuses N.Y.C. of Fraud Over Taxi Crisis

February 20, 2020, *nytimes.com*, by Winnie Hu

The city marketed the medallions as a solid investment, even though it knew they were overpriced, the state says. New York State's attorney general on Thursday accused New York City of committing fraud by artificially inflating the value of yellow taxi medallions, and she demanded \$810 million from the city to compensate the thousands of cabdrivers who are now saddled with enormous debt...The attorney general, Letitia A. James, said the city must provide financial relief to the debt-ridden taxi medallion owners within 30 days or she would sue for fraud, unlawful profit and other violations of state

law...Bhairavi Desai, the executive director of the New York Taxi Workers Alliance, which represents cabdrivers, said she welcomed Ms. James's action and saw it as a validation of the city's culpability in the taxi crisis. "The devastation that has happened across the taxi industry has been a deep betrayal by the city," she said. "Not only did they close their eyes to predatory practices and directly engage in inflating the prices but they then allowed in Uber and Lyft completely unregulated."

Related article: [Cabbies worry as hedge fund snaps up taxi medallions](#)

February 20, 2020, *nypost.com*, by Thornton McEnery

New York taxi drivers and politicians are raising alarms after a secretive hedge fund this week quietly became the city's largest owner of taxi-medallion loans.

Affordability & homelessness

Report: NYC food pantries and soup kitchens see increasing demand

Source: NYN First Read email February 18, 2020, NYN Media, *cityandstateny.us*

About three-quarters of New York City food pantries and soup kitchens saw an increase in the number of visitors who rely on emergency food programs – particularly families, the elderly and immigrants – according to a new survey from the Food Bank For New York City. Increased visits from families with children was the most common trend seen across the food pantries and soup kitchens surveyed, according to the report, with many citing the rising cost of living and living on a single income as major reasons for their food insecurity. More than half of the organizations reported an increase in visits from immigrant families. The Hunger Cannot Afford To Be Hidden report: foodbanknyc.org/research-reports.

[NYC Tenants Need A Bill Of Rights, City Comptroller Says](#)

February 13, 2020, *patch.com*, by Kathleen Culliton

City Comptroller Scott Stringer wants landlords to give tenants a copy of their rights at every lease signing.

[Rental commissions are back — for now](#)

February 10, 2020, *therealdeal.com*, by E.B. Solomont

Rental commissions are back! A New York judge granted a temporary restraining order Monday afternoon, halting a Department of State guidance barring tenant-paid rental commissions from going into effect. The guidance, circulated Feb. 4, would have blocked tenants from paying rental commissions in cases where the landlord hired an agent to market the listing. But amid heavy backlash from rental brokers who said their livelihoods were at stake, the [Real Estate Board of New York] filed an Article 78 petition this morning in Albany.

Census

[Important 2020 Census Dates](#)

March 12-20: Initial invitations to respond online and by phone will be delivered by the U.S. Postal Service. Areas that are less likely to respond online will receive a paper questionnaire along with the invitation to respond online or over the phone.

March 16-24: Reminder letters will be delivered.

March 26-April 3: Reminder postcards will be delivered to households that have not responded.

April 1 is *Census Day*, a key reference date for the 2020 Census. When completing the census, you will include everyone living in your home on April 1, 2020. Census Day will be celebrated with events across the country.

April 8-16: Reminder letters and paper questionnaires will be delivered to remaining households that have not responded.

April 20-27: Final reminder postcards will be delivered to households that have not yet responded before census takers follow up in person.

May 13-July 31: If a household does not respond to any of the invitations, a census taker will follow up in person.

December 2020: The Census Bureau will deliver apportionment counts to the President and Congress as required by law.

by **March 2021:** The Census Bureau will send redistricting counts to states. This information is used to redraw legislative districts based on population changes.

There are 3 ways to respond to the Census: online, by phone, by mail. Census workers will visit homes that have not.

Budget & taxes

Property Tax Reform Commission Recommendations

Source: Council Member Keith Powers's email of February 13, 2020

In 2018, New York City created a commission to evaluate the property tax system and develop recommendations for reform. These recommendations aim to make the property tax system simpler, clearer, and fairer, while ensuring that there is no reduction in revenue used to fund essential City services. Following several public hearings, the Advisory Commission on Property Tax Reform released its initial report and recommendations. These recommendations are not binding, and most suggested changes would require the involvement of the State legislature in order to be implemented. In the coming months, the commission will be holding another series of public hearings to gather feedback from New Yorkers on their initial recommendations, after which they will release a final report. Dates and locations for the upcoming public hearings will be posted to <https://www1.nyc.gov/site/propertytaxreform/hearings-meetings/hearings-meetings.page> in the near future. Read the Preliminary Report: <https://www1.nyc.gov/site/propertytaxreform/report/preliminary-report.page>

You can submit testimony by email to proptaxinfo@propertytaxcommission.nyc.gov. Be sure to give your name and address, so that they know you are a constituent. Councilmembers Keith Powers and Carlina Rivera are welcoming feedback from constituents on how the proposed property tax changes might affect them.

Government, legislation, rules, policies (including pending)

Requiring Businesses to Accept Cash Payment

Source: Council Member Keith Powers's email of February 13, 2020

The NYC Council passed a bill in January to require businesses to accept cash. This is a consumer protection issue, but also fundamentally an equity issue. Recently, several businesses in New York City have transitioned their operations to become entirely cashless, accepting only debit or credit cards. This has placed a burden on individuals that are underbanked, unbanked, or do not have access to a credit card (e.g. individuals under the age of 18). Currently, more than 25 percent of New Yorkers are under- or unbanked. Council Member Keith Powers was a lead sponsor of this legislation that will make it easier for all New Yorkers to patronize businesses.

[New York City eliminates some first-time fines for small biz](#)

February 20, 2020, *nydailynews.com*, by Shant Shahrigian

The city is eliminating certain kinds of first-time fines for small businesses. The penalties include \$560 fines for noisy air compressors and \$100 levies for failure to keep the street clean...The NYC Hospitality Alliance, which advocates for thousands of restaurants and clubs, dismissed the fine relief as chump change...“By the city’s own estimate, the relief equates to around \$120 per year for each of the city’s 220,000 small businesses,” the Alliance’s President Andrew Rigie said in a statement. “This is not even close to offsetting the skyrocketing real estate taxes, labor costs and other government mandates in New York City, as well as the proposed paid vacation mandate, which would be a more than \$1.2 billion tax on small businesses.”

[Quality of life summonses in NYC dropped by half since 2017 reforms, report says](#)

February 18, 2020, *nypost.com*, by Craig McCarthy and Jorge Fitz-Gibbon

Summonses for quality of life infractions like public urinating, littering and open containers were cut nearly in half since they were decriminalized in 2017, a new report has found. The Big Apple has seen a 48-percent drop in such citations under the Criminal Reform Act, according to a John Jay College study funded by the Mayor’s Office on Criminal Justice. The law took five infractions — littering, drinking in public, urinating in public, unreasonable noise and parks department violations — and made them largely civil violations that are dealt with in an administrative hearing rather than a courtroom. That has led to cops writing fewer and fewer summonses.

[Cuomo once again presses for flavored vaping ban](#)

February 20, 2020, *wxxinews.org*, by Karen Dewitt

Cuomo and his health commissioner, Dr. Howard Zucker, tried to ban the products in New York last fall after a widespread illness associated with vaping killed 60 people, including four in New York. But the emergency order by a state panel was stopped in court after the vaping industry sued. Now, Cuomo has proposed a ban, along with comprehensive regulations, in his budget plan...Matthew Myers, president of the Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids, said after 30 years of measures to curb the use of combustible cigarettes, the state was finally on its way to have the first generation of nonsmokers. But he said the

growing use of tobacco-based vaping products have upended that goal...The vaping industry maintains that the products, including the flavored varieties, are designed for adults, many of whom are trying to quit smoking regular cigarettes. The sponsors of similar legislation in the Assembly and Senate to ban flavored e-cigarettes said they agree with the governor. Sen. Brad Hoylman and Assemblywoman Linda Rosenthal said they would like to see the bills passed even before the budget is done.

Cuomo, Democrats creating watershed session for gun control

February 17, 2020, *newsday.com*, by Michael Gormley

Gov. Andrew M. Cuomo is proposing six gun control bills in his budget and more than two dozen more are active in the legislature...This year, Cuomo proposes: Prohibiting “ghost guns,” which would bar individuals who can’t legally possess a firearm from buying separate parts, then assembling an untraceable gun or shotgun. Authorizing courts to seize guns from the scene of a domestic violence incident. Denying firearm permits and licenses to an applicant who committed certain misdemeanors deemed serious in another state. Current law already denies permits and licenses to New Yorkers if they commit serious misdemeanors within New York. Requiring all crime gun data including ballistic records to be kept in a centralized database for use by law enforcement. Sharing “flags” of mental health concerns about gun owners to officials in other states. Creating a “domestic violence misdemeanor” that could deny firearms from an abuser upon conviction.

Is Brad Hoylman declaring war on Jeff Bezos?

February 20, 2020, *cityandstateny.com*, by Annie McDonough

After Democrats gained control of both chambers of the Legislature last year, they started passing laws left and right – and nobody was more prolific than state Sen. Brad Hoylman...But while Senate Democrats haven’t been charging out of the gate with as much gusto as they did at the start of session last year, Hoylman still has a long list of bills he’s hoping to see through. City & State caught up with Hoylman during a session break to talk about his efforts to ban law enforcement’s use of facial recognition technology, crack down on ghost guns, pass a pied-a-terre tax and more.

Clearview AI lands in Big Tech’s crosshairs

Source: February 10, 2020 email First Read Tech, *cityandstateny.com*, by Annie McDonough

It’s not just lawmakers like state Sen. Brad Hoylman who are displeased with the work of the controversial facial recognition company Clearview AI. Now, even other tech companies – like Facebook and LinkedIn – are demanding that the New York-based startup stop scraping photos from their platforms to fuel the facial recognition database that law enforcement agencies across the country have been using to help solve cases...the app that founder Hoan Ton-That helped create has been used by more than 600 law enforcement agencies to match faces to public images it collects from the internet...While the images it scrapes are public, companies like Facebook have told Clearview AI that the practice violates their policies...Last month, Hoylman announced a bill that would prohibit law enforcement from using facial recognition and most other biometric surveillance technologies.

Real ID Deadline Looms: What You Need To Know In NYC

February 11, 2020, *patch.com*, by Adam Nichols

Starting in October 2020, U.S. citizens won't be able to take domestic flights without a REAL ID or a passport...The deadline was set by President Donald Trump's administration...[\[Department of Motor Vehicles's Document Guide\]](#)...The program is opposed by the ACLU, which says it is a thinly veiled attempt to create a national ID...REAL IDs don't look much different from a standard New York State driver's license, and the license itself doesn't have any new information. But in order to receive one, you have to go to the DMV and prove your identity, your New York residency, your lawful presence in the country and your Social Security status. Doing this gets you star icon on your license, which means it is REAL ID compliant...New York also now offers Enhanced IDs. These documents are REAL ID compliant and offer all the same benefits. You also can to use them as an ID to cross the border from Canada, Mexico and some Caribbean countries without needing a passport, but only by car. Enhanced IDs cost an additional \$30. [There have been reports that the lines are long with people applying for these cards at the midtown DMV.]

Cuomo Doubts Marijuana Can Be Legalized Outside Budget

Groups opposed to legalization mobilize, disagreements arise over revenue control
February 12, 2020, [ih.advfn.com](#), by Jimmy Vielkind

Whether New York will legalize recreational marijuana this year will come down to a handful of moderate lawmakers in the state Senate, Gov. Andrew Cuomo said this week. The Democratic governor included a framework for legalizing the drug in his \$178 billion budget proposal, some version of which must be adopted before the state's fiscal year ends on March 31...Lawmakers who support marijuana legalization...said the framework for regulation and taxation Mr. Cuomo put in his budget bills was closer to separate legislation that they sponsor. However, disagreements have arisen over whether legislators should have partial control of a new Office of Cannabis Management and about how tax revenue from legalizing marijuana will be spent...Groups opposed to marijuana legalization have begun to mobilize.

After Pressure Campaign From Law Enforcement, NY State Politicians Say They Will Change Bail Reforms

February 12, 2020, [gothamist.com](#), by Christopher Robbins

Currently, judges are prevented from setting bail on almost all misdemeanors and non-violent felonies, but violent crimes and some lower level charges that involve domestic violence are still bail eligible. Judges are required to only consider a defendant's risk of not returning to court, not their past criminal record...The proposed changes would erase cash bail from the system, but would instead allow judges to indefinitely jail suspects charged with felonies and some misdemeanors before trial based on their prior criminal records or their risk of not returning to court...[These] proposals also override the recommendations of the New York State Justice Task Force, a group of judges, district attorneys, and police commanders tapped to advise state lawmakers while they were crafting the reforms. The task force explicitly told lawmakers to leave the dangerousness standard out of the law that eventually passed. "The Task Force ultimately determined that although a court should not consider whether a defendant poses a threat to public safety, it should be allowed to consider whether a defendant currently poses a credible threat to the physical safety of an identifiable person or group of persons, such as in domestic violence cases," their report states.

Kirsten Gillibrand outlines new Data Protection Agency to take on Big Tech

February 13, 2020, *theverge.com*, by Makena Kelly

On Thursday, Sen. Kirsten Gillibrand (D-NY) released a proposal to overhaul the way the US government regulates privacy. Gillibrand's Data Protection Act would found a new independent agency called the Data Protection Agency (DPA), tasked with protecting consumer data at large.

Bill Offers \$400M for State, Local Government Cybersecurity

February 12, 2020, *govtech.com*, by Lucas Ropek,

The just-introduced bipartisan bill would send the money to state and local governments through the Department of Homeland Security, which would also create a new federal strategy for cybersecurity. With state and local governments beset by a precipitous rise in cyberattacks, new federal legislation might provide some necessary cover where needed. The State and Local Cybersecurity Improvement Act would create a grant program worth \$400 million to finance cybersecurity efforts in communities across the country, according to a release. Eligible communities would be able to apply for funds, provided through the Department of Homeland Security, which would be allocated to assist in areas like vulnerability scanning and testing, cyberworkforce development and intelligence sharing, according to the bill text. Text of the bill: <https://docs.house.gov/meetings/HM/HM00/20200212/110515/BILLS-116pih-TheStateandLocalCybersecurityImprovementAct.pdf>

With Vance under fire, DA candidate Quart proposes sex crimes overhaul

February 12, 2020, *politico.com*, by Erin Durkin

Assemblyman Dan Quart will release a plan to retool the unit that handles sexual assault prosecutions, calling for more transparency, the replacement of many staffers and reopening sex crimes cases Vance's office has declined to prosecute.

Should sex workers still end up in handcuffs?

February 9, 2020, *cityandstateny.com*, by Lisa Peterson

The new coalition, Decrim NY, aims to “decriminalize, decarcerate and destigmatize the sex trade” – in other words, to repeal criminal laws regarding the purchase or sale of sexual services in the state...Throughout the 1990s, gentrification pushed urban streetwalkers away from busy areas, while the rise of internet access drew many of them indoors. The personals sections of message boards and online listing services became lively commerce hubs where sex workers advertised their services...A two-part piece of federal legislation, FOSTA (Allow States and Victims to Fight Online Sex Trafficking Act) and SESTA (Stop Enabling Sex Traffickers Act) aimed to thwart online sex trafficking, specifically through the blocking of adult online advertisements...Immediately after FOSTA-SESTA passed the U.S. Senate in March 2018, Rep. Carolyn Maloney, who co-sponsored the bill, sent out a celebratory tweet...For her part, Maloney now says she agrees that “equality, rights and protections” for those working consensually in the sex trade are “long overdue,” though her thoughts on decriminalization are less clear...Maloney's primary rival, Suraj Patel...denounced FOSTA-SESTA...[state Sen. Julia] Salazar...would be “introducing legislation to repeal the harmful ‘loitering for the purpose of prostitution’ statute.” Longtime advocates supported her interest in repealing the law, but pointed out that state Sen. Brad Hoylman had introduced such legislation in the previous session...transgender community members approached Assemblyman Richard Gottfried. The activists primed Gottfried on the next priority in their

agenda: the full decriminalization of sex work...Two of his colleagues in the Assembly, Dan Quart and Catalina Cruz, signed on as co-sponsors soon after...In early March 2019, protesters took over the steps of New York City Hall for an anti-decriminalization rally...Maloney spoke at the rally...the contentious feminist debate around sex work has reignited, this time causing flare-ups between proponents of decriminalization and supporters of the Nordic model, a policy that punishes patrons for purchasing sex, but not the people selling it...Sometimes referred to as the equality model...this approach has already been implemented in Canada, France and Sweden...In 2020, public discussion around the issue will be further complicated by state Sen. Liz Krueger's intention (along with Assemblywoman Tremaine Wright) to introduce Nordic model legislation this session.

Public service notices & scams

Coronavirus: Scammers follow the headlines

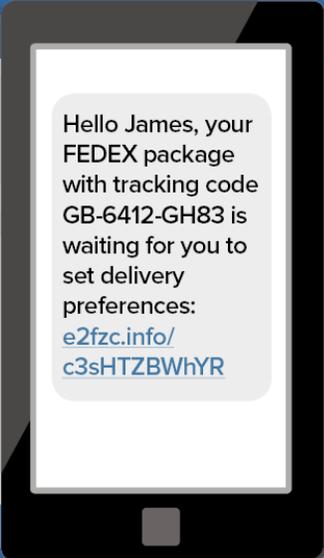
February 10, 2020, *consumer.ftc.gov*, by Colleen Tressler, Consumer Education Specialist, FTC
Scammers are taking advantage of fears surrounding the Coronavirus. They're setting up websites to sell bogus products, and using fake emails, texts, and social media posts as a ruse to take your money and get your personal information. If you would like more information on the latest scams, sign up for the Federal Trade Commission [consumer alerts](#). If you come across any suspicious claims, report them to the FTC at [ftc.gov/complaint](#).

Is that text message about your FedEx package really a scam?

February 20, 2020, *consumer.ftc.gov*, by Alvaro Puig, Consumer Education Specialist, FTC
[S]cammers come up with new stories all the time, like a package tracking scam we're hearing about. Here's how it works. Scammers send a text message with a fake shipment tracking code and a link to update your delivery preferences. In this case, the message says it's from FedEx. But they might use the name of another well-known shipping company, or the...U.S. Postal Service...In this version of the scam the link takes you to a fake Amazon website. There, you're invited to take a customer satisfaction survey. And you might just win a free prize. But to get it, you have to give them your credit card number to pay for shipping. **Tip:** If you get an unexpected text message, don't click on any links. If you think it could be legit, contact the company using a website or phone number you know is real. Don't use the information in the text message.

Is that text message about your FedEx package really a scam?

Source: Federal Trade Commission | FTC.gov



Hello James, your FEDEX package with tracking code GB-6412-GH83 is waiting for you to set delivery preferences: e2fzc.info/c3sHTZBWhYR

[Fraud alerts & credit freezes: What's the difference?](#)

February 13, 2020, *consumer.ftc.gov*, by Lisa Weintraub Schifferle, Attorney, FTC, Division of Consumer & Business Education

A fraud alert makes companies verify your identity before granting new credit in your name. Usually, that means calling you to check if you're really trying to open a new account. Placing a fraud alert is easy – you contact any one of the three nationwide credit reporting agencies (Equifax, Experian, TransUnion) and that one must notify the other two. A fraud alert is free and lasts one year.

A credit freeze limits access to your credit report so no one, including you, can open new accounts until the freeze is lifted. To be fully protected, you must place a freeze with each of the three credit reporting agencies. You'll usually get a PIN or password to use each time you place or lift the freeze. A credit freeze is free and lasts until you lift it.

There are three companies: Equifax, Experian and TransUnion. You can use one website to order your free annual credit report from three credit reporting agencies: [AnnualCreditReport.com](https://www.annualcreditreport.com). Starting in 2020, everyone in the U.S. can get six free credit reports a year through 2026 at the Equifax website or by calling 1-866-349-5191. The six credit reports are in addition to the one free Equifax report you can get at www.annualcreditreport.com.

Show Paper Recycling Some Love!

Source: New York State Department of Environmental Conservation email February 15, 2020

Let's recycle more paper in 2020 and make sure that the paper we're recycling is of high value, clean, dry, and free of food and other contamination.

Do Recycle

- Newspapers, magazines and junk mail (envelopes with plastic address windows are okay)
- White and colored office paper, and stationery

- Paper bags, packaging boxes, paperboard containers and cardboard tubes (non-paper inserts removed)
- Soft cover books

Bonus: Have a bigger impact by opting out of junk mail by registering on the National Do Not Mail List: <https://www.usa.gov/telemarketing#item-35222>

Maybe Recycle (Check with your local recycling program guidelines)

- Wrapping Paper
- Pizza Boxes (not if they are soiled or have plastic coating inside)
- Paper cups

Don't Recycle

- Paper products with metal, foil, glittery or large plastic components
- Paper mailers and envelopes padded with bubble wrap and Tyvek® envelopes
- Plastic inserts, fake credit cards, and other hard plastic cards
- Receipts
- Paper towels and tissues (consider composting instead if chemical cleaners are not used)
- Soiled paper plates, bowls, takeout boxes, etc.
- Share the love with an environmentally friendly greeting card, avoid purchasing cards with shiny elements – bonus points for choosing cards with as much recycled content as possible or using upcycled materials to DIY! #RecycleRightNY

Stories we are following

[A Rape Suspect Was Released. 3 More Women Were Attacked](#)

February 17, 2020, *nytimes.com*, by Ashley Southall

A series of mistakes underscored a longstanding problem in the N.Y.P.D.'s Special Victims division...Some of the division's detectives, facing heavy caseloads and a lack of resources, discourage rape victims from cooperating and push to close cases without a full investigation. Victims of sexual violence can visit a [designated hospital](#) or contact the New York City Alliance Against Sexual Assault for confidential assistance by phone at 212-514-7233 or online at svfreenyc.org.

[Report Shows Poverty in New York Far Worse Than Official Measures Say](#)

February 14, 2020, *gothamgazette.com*, by Samar Khurshid

While official city and federal measures show that employment is high and the poverty rate has continued to decline over the years, a new report from the Robin Hood Foundation and its partners shows that the reality is far more insidious than other numbers may indicate. According to the report, half of city residents observed during a years-long study had lived below the poverty line in at least one of the last four years, and black and Hispanic New Yorkers were more likely to have experienced poverty....Individuals were driven into poverty by common, life-changing events...losing a job, having a child, ending a relationship..." said Jason Cone, chief public policy officer at Robin Hood..."This Poverty Tracker underscores the urgent need for meaningful and sustainable economic mobility," said Wes Moore, CEO of Robin Hood.

[Defaults Are Rising in Sluggish New York City Hotel Market](#) (paywall)

February 18, 2020, *wsj.com*, by Konrad Putzier

Construction boom expands supply, knocking room rates down to their lowest point since 2013. More New York City hotel owners are defaulting on their mortgages, succumbing to a crush of new supply and rising expenses.

[Airbnb Is in Settlement Talks With New York Over Data Law](#)

February 14, 2020, *bloomberg.com*, by Olivia Carville and Erik Larson

A successful agreement will smooth road to stock listing. Airbnb Inc. is in talks with New York City to resolve a lawsuit over an ordinance that would require the home-sharing company to turn over data on hosts, jeopardizing thousands of listings in one of its biggest domestic markets...The San Francisco-based startup filed the suit in 2018, along with Expedia Group Inc.'s HomeAway, claiming the legislation would violate privacy laws. It would also allow the city to figure out which listings violate New York's regulations that ban entire apartments from being rented for fewer than 30 days without a tenant present. That limits legal short-term rentals to one- and two-family homes or spare bedrooms.

[States, cities rethink tax incentives after Amazon HQ2 backlash](#)

February 17, 2020, *thehill.com*, by Reid Wilson

State and local governments are reconsidering their efforts to use tax incentives to attract major corporations after a decade of mega-deals handed billions of dollars to some of the wealthiest companies in America...studies in retrospect show many of those deals rarely work out, either because the company does not deliver the promised jobs or because the promised residual economic growth never materializes. A recent study by Columbia Business School business professor Cailin Slattery and Princeton economist Owen Zidar found that state and local governments pay out an average of \$119,000 in tax incentives for every job created. Now, state and local governments are pumping the brakes on big new tax incentive packages, and moving to shine a more transparent light on those that are approved.

[Report: Plugging In: Building NYC's Tech Education & Training Ecosystem](#)

Issued by the *Center for an Urban Future*, February 2020

Over the past decade, jobs in technology have been among the fastest-growing occupations in New York, and the tech sector has become the city's most reliable source of new well-paying jobs. But even as demand for tech talent grows, too few of those good jobs are going to New Yorkers from low-income communities...It also threatens the economic competitiveness of the city's tech sector, which is already experiencing a talent shortage and will need to tap more of the local workforce to sustain its growth. Tackling this will require change on multiple fronts: wholesale improvements in the city's education and workforce training systems; stronger commitments from employers to hire, train, and retain diverse local talent; and major new investments that expose New Yorkers to these careers, introduce them to foundational skills, and help them develop the specific competencies and hands-on experience that are in demand at tech companies today. HTML version of the report: nycfuture.org/research/plugging-in.

[NYCHA's Path to Privatization](#)

February 17, 2020, *gothamgazette.com*, by Robert J. Rodriguez, State Assembly Member and Chair of State's Mitchell Lama Subcommittee and a Member of the Housing Committee.

The plan recently introduced by NYCHA to sell a 50% stake in six developments in exchange for an immediate cash infusion...requires closer scrutiny. Furthermore, it raises significant questions about the federal government's future role in providing housing subsidies...The biggest red flag in this deal are the details, or lack thereof, surrounding the developers' ability to take the units to market after 30 years. As we've seen with the Mitchell-Lama program across the state, a failure to ensure permanent affordability upfront has led to thousands of affordable units vanishing...Another concerning aspect of this deal is the property management contract, which has been awarded to an affiliate of the developer as a bundled service...I ask that Mayor de Blasio allow closer scrutiny of this deal and add additional checks and balances to ensure we are meeting our responsibility to provide high quality public housing.

[Global Entry Ban: Cuomo Offers Compromise to Trump on N.Y. Applicants](#)

February 12, 2020, *nytimes.com*, by Jesse McKinley and Azi Paybarah

ALBANY, N.Y. — Gov. Andrew M. Cuomo said on Wednesday that he would seek to give federal officials access to state driving records for applicants to Global Entry and other federal programs that allow travelers to quickly pass through airports and borders...The announcement by Mr. Cuomo comes days after federal officials banned New York residents from applying to — and re-enrolling in — the programs, known as the Trusted Traveler Program...Last week, the Department of Homeland Security announced the ban, citing its inability to access D.M.V. records as the reason.

[Related article: No Res-o-lution After Cuomo and Trump Meet](#)

February 13, 2020, *spectrumlocalnews.com*, by Nick Reisman

Gov. Andrew Cuomo and President Donald Trump met for an hour at the White House on Thursday to discuss the federal government freezing New York's residents out of registering for trusted traveler programs. It was preceded by bellicose language and accusations from Cuomo...and a presidential tweet mocking the governor's brother as "Fredo." It ended with vows to continue talking.

[City Hall Makes \\$147.5 Million Call on Overhauling 911](#)

February 13, 2020, *thecity.nyc*, by Reuven Blau

The de Blasio administration has tapped a digital firm to revamp the city's 911 system — the same company that's already behind and over budget on creating a temporary text option for emergency callers. VESTA Solutions, part of Motorola, will be paid up to \$147.5 million over nine years to spearhead the broader NextGeneration (NG911) project, according to a Feb. 4 posting in the City Record.

Business news & resources

[Recorded webinar: Trademarks & Copyrights - Is Your Brand Protected?](#)

Source: SCORE, duration 1 hour. Your brand is your reputation, your promise to your customers, your values and how you live those values every day. You'll learn: Why you need trademarks and copyrights. The process for obtaining them. What type of content can be protected and more. How to protect your brand from imitators and competitors. Viewing this webinar requires you to provide some basic

information. This data is only used within SCORE and will not be distributed to any third parties.
Presenter: Deborah Sweeney, a former corporate and intellectual property attorney turned entrepreneur. Download the webinar transcript <https://s3.amazonaws.com/mentoring.redesign/s3fs-public/Trademark%20%26%20Copyright.docx>.

U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA) Learning Center
FREE online workshops
sba.gov/learning-center

New York State Small Business Development Center
Baruch College, Field Center
55 Lexington Avenue, Room 2-140
blogs.baruch.cuny.edu/fieldcenter
Check their online calendar. Many events are free and open to the public.

Our government representatives

When contacting your representative, be sure to state your address so that they know that you are a constituent. You can see the District maps and sign up for their emails on their websites.

Manhattan Community Board 5: www.cb5.org, 212-465-0907, office@cb5.org

Manhattan Community Board 6: cbsix.org, 212-319-3750, office@cbsix.org

NYC Councilwoman Carlina Rivera, Council District 2: council.nyc.gov/carlina-rivera, 212-677-1077,
District2@council.nyc.gov

NYC Council Speaker, Corey Johnson, Council District 3: council.nyc.gov/district-3, 212-564-7757,
SpeakerJohnson@council.nyc.gov

NYC Council Member Keith Powers, Council District 4: council.nyc.gov/keith-powers, 212-818-0580,
KPowers@council.nyc.gov

Manhattan Borough President Gale Brewer: manhattanbp.nyc.gov, 212-669-8300,
info@manhattanbp.nyc.gov

Public Advocate Jumaane Williams, #GetHelp, The Office of the Public Advocate assists with complaints and inquiries involving government-related services and regulations. Telephone Hotline: 212-669-7250, email: GetHelp@advocate.nyc.gov

Mayor Bill de Blasio: www1.nyc.gov/office-of-the-mayor, 311, online message:
<https://www1.nyc.gov/office-of-the-mayor/mayor-contact.page>

Landmarks Preservation Commission: <https://www1.nyc.gov/site/lpc/about/contact-us.page>

NY State Senator Liz Krueger, 28th Senate District: www.nysenate.gov/senators/liz-krueger, 212-490-9535, lkruieger@nysenate.gov

NY State Senator Brad Hoylman, 27th Senate District: <https://www.nysenate.gov/senators/brad-hoylman>, 212-633-8052, hoylman@nysenate.gov

NY State Assembly Member Dan Quart, Assembly District 73, www.nyassembly.gov/mem/Dan-Quart, 212-605-0937, quartd@nyassembly.gov

NY State Assembly Member Harvey Epstein, Assembly District 74, www.nyassembly.gov/mem/Harvey-Epstein, 212-979-9696, epsteinh@nyassembly.gov

NY Assembly Member Richard N. Gottfried, Assembly District 75, www.nyassembly.gov/mem/Richard-N-Gottfried, 212-807-7900, GottfriedR@nyassembly.gov

U.S. Representative Carolyn Maloney, New York's 12th Congressional District:
<https://maloney.house.gov>, 212-860-0606, website contact form:
<https://maloney.house.gov/contact-carolyn/email-me>

U.S. Senator Chuck Schumer: www.schumer.senate.gov, 212-486-4430, website contact form:
<https://www.schumer.senate.gov/contact/email-chuck>

U.S. Senator Kirsten Gillibrand: www.gillibrand.senate.gov, 212-688-6262, website contact form:
www.gillibrand.senate.gov/contact/email-me

U.S. President Donald Trump: <https://www.whitehouse.gov/people/donald-j-trump> website contact form:
<https://www.whitehouse.gov/contact>

[Shop amazon.com via this link](#), and support The Murray Hill Neighborhood Association!

[Read our Privacy Statement](#)

**The MHNA
Better Together!**

If you are not a member
or your membership has lapsed

please [join/renew](#) now

Connect with The Murray Hill Neighborhood Association



And, don't forget to tag **@murrayhillnyc**
in your Murray Hill-inspired Instagram photos!

Visit the MHNA website murrayhillnyc.org
Contact the MHNA by email at info@murrayhillnyc.org

