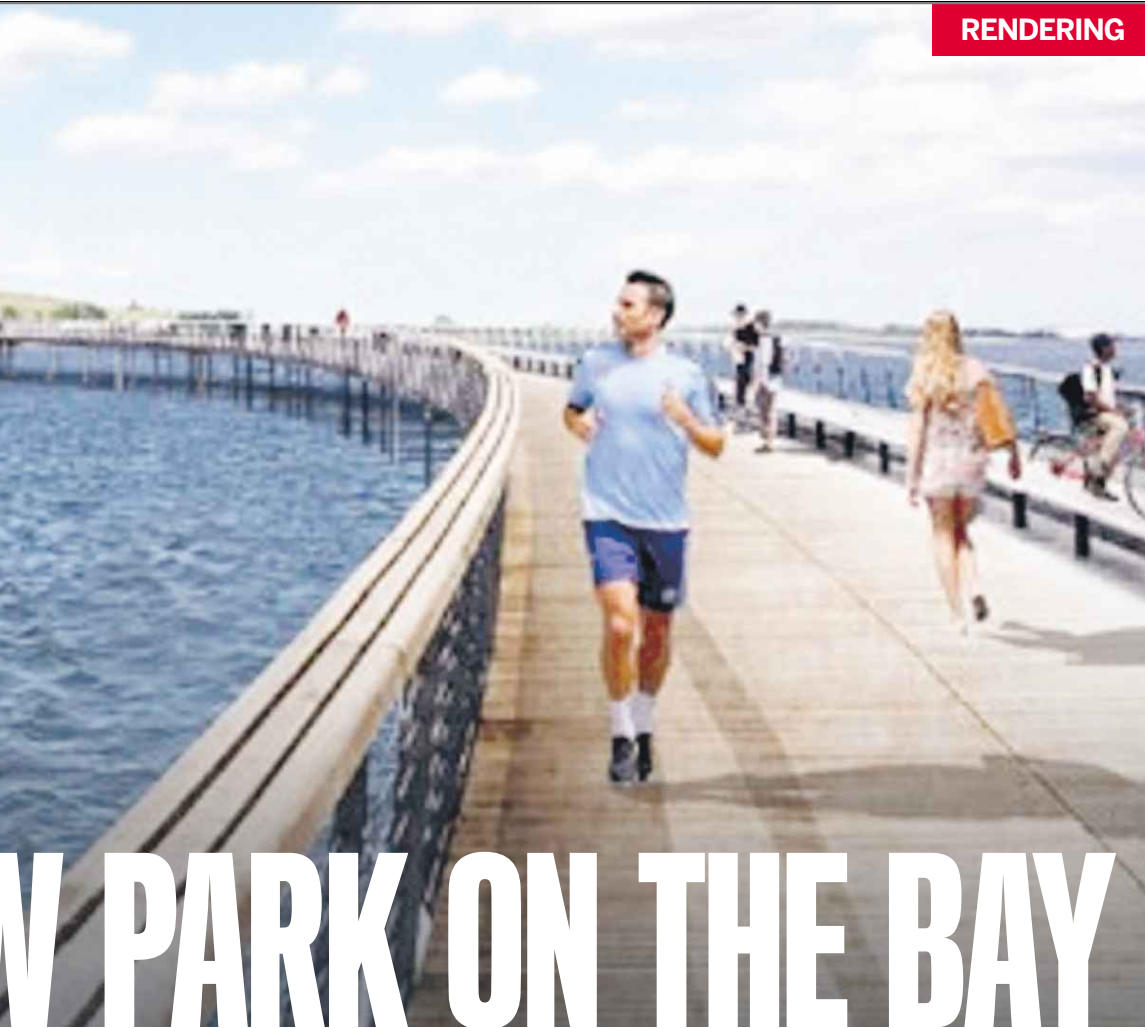


RENDERING



PARK ON THE BAY

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said: "This is the final Brooklyn frontier."

The park "turns a long forgotten and neglected piece of land into something people will enjoy," he said.

What will be the city's largest state park lies south of the Belt Parkway.

For two centuries after the Dutch claimed almost all of Jamaica Bay, fishing and oyster harvesting flourished, historians say. Even then, however, the city sent its trash to the bay, they say, and no one willingly stood downwind of the rubbish mounds.

"Of course the perception of the bay as a dump site conflicted with its view as a fishing ground and pleasure spot," noted a 1981 study done for the Department of the Interior.

Sewage also fouled Jamaica Bay; in 1921, shellfishing was banned, the study said.

In the 1930s, Jewish and Italian mobsters, some of whom grew up together on the Lower East Side, joined the infamous "Murder, Inc." execution squad, mob historians say.

Led by Louis "Lepke" Buchalter, then Albert Anastasia, they buried countless victims, possi-



RENDERING

An area that's to be a grassy knoll next year after the renovation

Flickr / NEW YORK STATE PARKS

bly in the hundreds, in the Fountain Avenue landfill, the historians say.

From 1956 to 1983, the city turned the two landfills into 130-foot-high mounds of trash.

Protests by environmentalists and community members were answered in 1974 when the city gave the land to the adjoining Gateway National Recreation Area.

But that did not end the site's grim history. In 2006, the slain body of Imette St. Guillen, 24, a

criminal-justice graduate student, was discovered along Fountain Avenue.

It has taken years to finalize plans for the site. Starting in 2002, the city spent \$235 million capping and covering the landfills with 4 feet of earth, and planting more than 35,000 trees and shrubs, along with prairie grasses.

Kadinsky, the historian, is optimistic the scene there will no longer look like "a bald hill-top without any trees."

Gov adding fees to battle deficit

BY STEFANIE DAZIO
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CUOMO FEE HIKES

ALBANY — Gov. Andrew M. Cuomo has nearly \$1 billion in "revenue raisers" in his 2018-19 proposed budget, new and increased fees that some Republican legislators from Long Island said were akin to new taxes.

Cuomo proposed the fees and charges as part of a plan to close a budget deficit estimated at \$1.8 billion if the state stays within a self-imposed 2 percent spending-growth cap. The gap would be \$4.4 billion if the cap is breached; unlikely, Cuomo said.

The proposed new revenue include \$750 million from allowing nonprofit health insurers to become for-profit and an \$8 fee for a new online "pre-licensing" course for beginner drivers.

Others include a \$120 safety inspection fee for private for-profit car services and passenger carriers; a broader tax on e-cigarette and vaping products at the distributor level; a surcharge on opioid prescriptions; an incentive for vending machines to go cashless and an extension of sales tax collections on online sales.

"It's hitting people on all levels," Assemb. Dean Murray (R-East Patchogue) said. "There seems to be no end to their creativity in finding ways to hammer New Yorkers."

Murray and other lawmakers said Cuomo's budget should have cut more spending — but he conceded it's a reelection year for the governor.

"We have a spending problem," Assemb. David McDonough (R-Merrick) said. "We can't keep doing fees. Fees are another word for taxes."

Cuomo said the only alternatives to increased fees and surcharges are reductions in education and health care spending.

"It's just too big a deficit and the choice of cutting education or cutting health care, I don't think is a place anyone wants to go this year," Cuomo said in his budget address Tuesday. "So we have to raise revenue."

Some of Cuomo's proposals, including the opioid surcharge and vaping taxes, would apply to manufacturers or busi-

Gov. Andrew M. Cuomo's proposed 2018-19 budget contains nearly \$1 billion in new or increased fees, including:

- An excise tax of 10 cents per fluid milliliter on vapor and e-cigarette products at the distributor level.
- An \$8 fee for a five-hour online "pre-licensing" course for new drivers.
- A surcharge of 2 cents per milligram on prescription opioid drugs to go toward combating the state's opioid and heroin epidemic.
- An increase in the sales tax exemption for cashless vending machines to encourage the industry to use more of them. It's easier for the state to collect taxes on electronic transactions.
- A \$120 vehicle safety inspection fee for private for-profit car services and passenger carriers.
- A more precise definition of how the state tax rate on cigars is applied to make it harder for suppliers to skirt or shortchange the tax.

nesses. It's unclear how they might be passed on to consumers.

Assemb. Michaelle Solages (D-Elmont) said proceeds from the opioid surcharge, estimated to generate \$127 million in fiscal year 2019, would go toward fighting the state's heroin epidemic.

"Of course they're going to trickle down but at the end of the day some of that money is going to go to combat the opioid crisis," Solages said.

Sen. Todd Kaminsky (D-Long Beach) said the vaping and opioid surcharges are aimed at deterring use of the products.

"We have to make tough choices and that's going to require driving revenue, hopefully from sources that can help better our society," Kaminsky said.

With Yancey Roy