



# 6 crucial ways New York City's landscape will change in 2019

**What to expect from New York's transit, parks, megaprojects and more in the coming year**

January 2, 2019 | By ZOE ROSENBERG



2018 was one heck of a year for New York: The beloved Riegelmann Boardwalk at Coney Island became a landmark, a wave of progressive politicians refocused the conversation around issues like housing and inequality, 520 Park Avenue unseated its neighbor at No. 432 to claim the city's top residential sales, and—even though the news often felt crushing—good things did indeed happen in New York.

Now, with 2018 in our collective rear view, it's time look at what 2019 will bring. Rent stabilization will take center stage in June when the city's laws are up for renewal, megaprojects throughout the five boroughs will make giant strides, the city's new tallest residential tower will top out at 1,550 feet, and so much more.

# Megaprojects

The construction of Amazon's HQ2 in Long Island City will be a development a decade in the making. While local pols like the city comptroller and a handful of City Council members are still decrying the deal, it's too soon to tell what will physically happen at the site this year. (Reps for Amazon and the New York City Economic Development Corporation were none too quick to share specifics.)

Here's what we do know what the year ahead holds for the manmade inlet of Anable Basin that will hold HQ2: A 14-month planning process will kick off in January, with members of the 45-person Community Advisory Committee holding four meetings throughout the year. The CAC's Project Plan, Neighborhood Infrastructure, and Workforce Development sub-committees will meet monthly as they hash out community-driven recommendations for the development. (Council Member Jimmy Van Bramer of Long Island City and state Senator Michael Gianaris called the CAC, which they oppose, a "thinly veiled attempt to present the Amazon deal as a fait accompli.") The committee's recommendations will inform Amazon's master plan for the site, which should be revealed by early 2020.

The waterfront warehouse owned by Plaxall will most likely be razed to make way for Amazon's HQ2. Max Touhey

The tech giant has already committed to constructing between four and eight million square feet of office space and providing more than 500,000 square feet for public improvements including a school, light manufacturing space, a community facility workspace, an art and tech accelerator space, and public open space. The EDC and Empire State Development Corporation have expressed that construction could begin at the site as soon as 2020, with Amazon eyeing a 2022 move-in.

The much whispered about initiative to deck over 180 acres of rail yard bisecting parts of Long Island City and Sunnyside, creating Sunnyside Yards, was confirmed by the city in May when Amtrak and the MTA announced it tapped Vishaan Chakrabarti's Practice for Architecture and Urbanism to create a master plan for the massive site. (Yes, massive is an appropriate adjective—it's six and a half times the size of Hudson Yards.)

The plan to platform over 180 acres of Sunnyside Yard could see the creation of 24,000 new dwellings. Max Touhey

PAU is expected to wrap up its master planning process in late 2019, giving specific vision to the neighborhood that could see the creation of 24,000 dwellings, 19 schools, and 52 acres of public park.

Hudson Yards will be abuzz with activity again this year. In January office tenants will begin moving into the Kohn Pedersen Fox and Kevin Roche John Dinkeloo and Associates-designed tower at 55 Hudson Yards, and residential tenants will begin unpacking their bags in the pricey condos of 15 Hudson Yards, which came to market in October 2016.

## Hudson Yards in New York City

March 15 will be a big day at the 28-acre megaproject: The public square and gardens, including the beehive-esque sculpture that is Thomas Heatherwick's Vessel, will open to the public. So will the Shops and Restaurants at Hudson Yards, with new eateries helmed by celebrity chefs like David Chang and Thomas Keller, along with high-end retail storefronts for brands including Neiman Marcus, Coach, and Stuart Weitzman.

The 143 condos of the supertall mixed-use tower at 35 Hudson Yards will hit the market in 2019, and the building's Equinox Hotel will open, too. At 30 Hudson Yards, the western hemisphere's tallest observation deck will welcome visitors late in

the year. The Spiral, the office tower designed by Bjarke Ingels Group, will also start to go vertical in the second half of 2019. And another happening of unnameable significance: Work will begin on the platform over the west yard (from 30th to 33rd streets between 11th and 12th avenues) from which Hudson Yards' second half will grow.

The former SPURA site on the Lower East Side, now known as Essex Crossing, will have a momentous year, if all goes to plan. Businesses including the 14-screen Regal Essex Crossing, the new Essex Street Market, The Gutter bowling alley, phase one of the Market Line, and the new International Center of Photography Museum will all roll out the welcome mat.

The Lower East Side's former SPURA site will see a big year of openings.

The market-rate apartments of the Essex, at 125 Delancey Street, will begin leasing in January. And by the end of the year, the building at 140 Essex Street housing 92 affordable apartments for seniors will open. The rooftop farm at the Essex and the 15,000-square-foot public park surrounding the Rollins at 145 Clinton Street will also debut.

One of the last pieces of the World Trade Center campus—that is, barring the prolonged timeline at the St. Nicholas National Shrine owing to budget drama—is finally in the works. The World Trade Center Performing Arts Center, known officially as the Perelman Center, is undergoing below-grade construction by the Port Authority, who controls the site. The agency is poised to hand the project over to in the spring. In anticipation of the hand-off, construction materials that will help take the project above ground will start arriving on site in late January or early February, when the building's frame will start to rise.

The Perelman Center at the World Trade Center will start to go vertical in 2019.

The former site of Cobble Hill's Long Island College Hospital is in the midst of its billion dollar transformation into River Park, developed by Fortis Property Group. In early 2019, some of the project's first tenants will arrive at their new homes inside the hospital's historic Polhemus building. Meanwhile, 5 River Park, rising on Henry Street between Amity and Pacific streets, will top out at 15 floors in March. The second tower on the rise, the 475-foot 2 River Park, will continue its upward ascent into the year. It'll be joined by a construction kick-off at the 15-story condo coming to 1 River Park in the first quarter of the year. Both properties are expected to launch sales in the spring.

The 22-acre Pacific Park, Brooklyn's very own rail yard-topping megaproject, will soon see the rise of its tallest building, a 500-foot plus rental tower at 18 Sixth Avenue (or B4, for those who closely follow the project.) The tower, originally planned as an office building, was switched up for more residential space in early 2018. Developer Greenland Forest City Partners will continue working into 2019 on the platform that will allow Pacific Park's remaining development to move forward.

On Staten Island, Empire Outlets, the 100-store outlet mall near the Staten Island Ferry Terminal, will open to the public in the spring of 2019 with storefronts including Nordstrom Rack, Brooks Brothers, and Banana Republic. The nearby mixed-use project Lighthouse Point is wrapping up its first phase, with flexible co-working space company Regus and the Lighthouse Point Market eyeing a spring opening. A second phase, which will include a Westin hotel and the rehabilitation of four historic buildings on the site, will also make headway in 2019.

Bronx Point, the residential and retail project by L+M Development Partners and Type A Projects, will break ground in late 2019. The large affordable housing development along the Harlem River in the Lower Concourse will bring 1,045 new units of permanent affordable housing, a new waterfront esplanade and park connecting to Mill Pond Park, a public plaza, and a multiplex movie theater to the site. The project is being built out in two phases, the first of which is expected to be complete by 2022.

## Transit

At the turn of 2017 New Yorkers wondered if the situation with the subway could get any worse. The answer, we now know, was an unequivocal yes (though small improvements should be applauded)—and 2019 could be an even more challenging year.

Most notably, the dreaded L train shutdown will begin on April 27 and last for 15 months (though this is the MTA we're talking about, so it may take even longer.) Even before the official closure of the Canarsie Tunnel, which will mean no service between Brooklyn and Manhattan, service will be jacked: The L between Eighth Avenue and Broadway Junction will have overnight and weekend closures for every weekend in February, the first three weekends in March, and the weekend of April 27 and 28.

The Canarsie Tunnel shutdown will bring about five new bus routes, a new Select Bus Service route on 14th Street, and ferry service between Williamsburg and East 20th Street that will begin on April 21. On April 28, routes surrounding the L like the M, G, and 7 will begin to amp up their service to quell demand.

Citi Bike will expand its service in some of the areas most likely to be affected by the lack of L service—namely Manhattan between Canal and 59th streets, and Williamsburg. An additional 1,250 bikes and 2,500 docks will be installed in those areas, and Citi Bike “valets”—who ferry bikes between empty stations—will increase. The company will also roll out pedal-assist e-bikes in certain areas, such as near the Williamsburg Bridge, where riders might want a two-wheeler with a bit more oomph. The city unveiled the first 200 of the pedal-assist bikes in August, with plans to plant 800 more on the streets closer to April 27.

And speaking of Citi Bike, the bike-share service will benefit from a \$100 million investment from its parent company, Lyft, which promises to increase the number of bikes on streets and the geographic areas it covers. Other long-gestating transportation initiatives—including congestion pricing and the legalization of e-scooters—will also be hotly debated throughout the year.

Though not poised to begin until 2020 at earliest, the city's much-derided plan to repair a 1.5-mile stretch of the Brooklyn-Queens Expressway will be debated into the new year. In late September the DOT unveiled two proposals to fix the ailing roadway, both of which proved unpopular; local officials and neighborhood residents have pushed the agency to find alternatives to the most extreme measure, which would stick a temporary roadway where the Brooklyn Heights Promenade now sits. It seems likely that the DOT will create a plan of action for the repair in 2019.

## Preservation

A plan to demolish the Union Carbide Building has incited fierce debate.

Two beloved New York buildings are staring down renovations this year. The city announced in February that it had reached an agreement with JPMorgan Chase to raze the Union Carbide Building at 270 Park Avenue and replace it with a new 2.5 million-square-foot headquarters for Chase. The Skidmore, Owings and Merrill-designed building is considered a companion to the Seagram Building, uptown's paragon of International Style architecture.

In a first step, the new building team appeared in front of Midtown East's community board in December to present a plan to scale back the building's public plaza. That proposal was voted down by the subcommittee. Neither Foster + Partners,

who's designing the Union Carbide Building's replacement, nor JPMorgan Chase would comment for this piece, but the next step in the process of replacing 270 Park Avenue is a meeting before the City Planning Commission that has yet to be scheduled but will happen in 2019.

The renovation of the former Sony Building at 550 Madison Avenue will also move forward into the new year following a more preservation-minded design that architecture firm Snøhetta unveiled in early December. The new design retreats from the firm's plan to replace a sizeable portion of the street-level facade with undulating glass curtain wall, but it re-imagines the building's privately-owned public space—or POPS—which will, in addition to changes of the new landmark's facade, also require approval from the city.

The proposed changes to 550 Madison Avenue's POPS will go in front of the City Planning Commission this year. Snøhetta Ultimately, whether or not this design will move forward rests on obtaining approval from the LPC and the City Planning Commission: The former will review the design in January, and assuming it receives approval, the latter will spend time going over the new POPS design.

## Housing

New York's rent stabilization laws are up for renewal in June, and may see some big changes owing to the Democrats' control of the state senate for the first time in a decade. Tenant advocates including the newly elected state senators Alessandra Biaggi of the Bronx, Zellnor Myrie of Brooklyn, and Jessica Ramos of Queens will push to end or amend loopholes including vacancy decontrol, preferential rent, and major capital improvements, all of which assist in the loss of rent stabilized apartments in New York. (Find a full explainer on the nuances of these loopholes [here](#).)

Those three newly elected state senators have also publicly supported repealing the Urstadt Law, a 40-year old piece of legislation that prohibits the City Council from meaningfully regulating rent laws in NYC, shifting power to the state. The law prohibits cities with a population over 1 million in New York state (of which there is only one, ahem) from enacting rent and eviction laws more stringent than those passed by the state. There is legislation to repeal the law, introduced by Senator Liz Krueger in 2017. Repealing it, however, hasn't unanimously taken top priority.

## Skyline

New York will have a new tallest residential building come 2019, when the 1,550-foot Central Park Tower tops out in the first quarter of the year. Closings in Extell's 179-condo building are slated for late 2019—the apartments hit the market officially in October—as is the opening of the building's 320,000-square-foot, seven-story Nordstrom NYC Flagship store.

The city's skinniest supertall tower at 111 West 57th Street will top out in January at 1,428 feet. The building designed by SHoP Architects and developed by JDS Development Group with Property Markets Group and Spruce Capital Partners officially launched sales in September. The condos in the landmarked Steinway Hall that's been incorporated into the building's base will begin closings in 2019, with closings for condos in the new tower following in 2020.

The folks at Vornado Realty Trust, which is developing Robert A.M. Stern Architects' 220 Central Park South, remain tight-lipped about what awaits the building in 2019, but here's what we know: Closings at the nearly 1,000-foot tower began in October, and there's a chance that two of its multi-million dollar apartments will break the record in 2019 for NYC's priciest

sold property, currently held by a \$100.5 million condo at One57. The building is reportedly home to a \$250 million triplex, along with an 11,000-square-foot quadplex asking above \$100 million.

Kohn Pedersen Fox's One Vanderbilt will top out at 1,401 feet in December 2019, ending two years of creep on the New York skyline. Construction is ahead of schedule and—gasp—under budget at the Midtown East office tower, meaning the building's opening has been pushed forward to early August 2020. Expect to see the building's terra cotta curtain wall, paying homage to the materials used in the neighboring Grand Central Terminal, wrap around the building's office floors by year's end.

The terracotta facade of One Vanderbilt pays homage to neighboring Grand Central Terminal.

One of Brooklyn's tallest towers-to-be, 11 Hoyt, is quickly on the rise after its April reveal. The 660-foot residential tower designed by Studio Gang and adjacent to Macy's Downtown Brooklyn will top out in the spring, with work on the cast concrete facade wrapping up before the end of the year. Occupancy in the 481 studio- to four-bedroom condos is expected to begin in 2020.

## Natural landscapes

Hudson River Park's Pier 55, designed by Thomas Heatherwick and financed by billionaire mogul Barry Diller, finally began taking shape in the Hudson River in a real way in 2018. Late in the year, the installation of the park's 132 undulating concrete pots got underway. That installation will continue through 2019, and wrap up in March 2020 with city officials eyeing a spring 2021 opening date.

No new piers or parkland will be unveiled at the yet-evolving Brooklyn Bridge Park in 2019, but 2020 will bring the debut of Pier 2 uplands. The 3.4-acre lawn and children's water garden is one of the last pieces of the BBP jigsaw. The uplands will be in construction throughout this year. This year will also bring the removal of the problem-plagued Squibb Bridge, with plans for a new span connecting Brooklyn Heights to the park to be announced sometime in the next 12 months.

Brooklyn Bridge Park's Pier 2 Uplands will open next year.

This year will also bring a new Ample Hills outpost to Fulton Ferry Landing at Brooklyn Bridge Park, as well as a new outdoor cafe. And of course expect some new stellar art in the park: Siah Armajani's Bridge Over Tree will debut in February in time with artist's first US retrospective at the Met Brierley. The installation consists of a 26-metre-long covered walkway built over a small tree, and will be in place through June.

New York's new, largest state park is expected to welcome visitors come the summer. Phase one of Shirley Chisholm Park will offer up 10 miles of trails that can be used for hiking and biking, waterfront access for kayaking, and pop-up educational space. The park will also offer a pier that includes picnic areas, concession stands, restrooms, and a park office.

Public meetings for the design of phase two will begin in the fall of 2019 and according to community input received thus far, could include an amphitheater, an environmental education center, and a cable ferry.