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JERSEY CITY - NORTH HUDSON

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*Bids more than 2X
higher than expected to
build 9/11 memorial
at Liberty State Park*

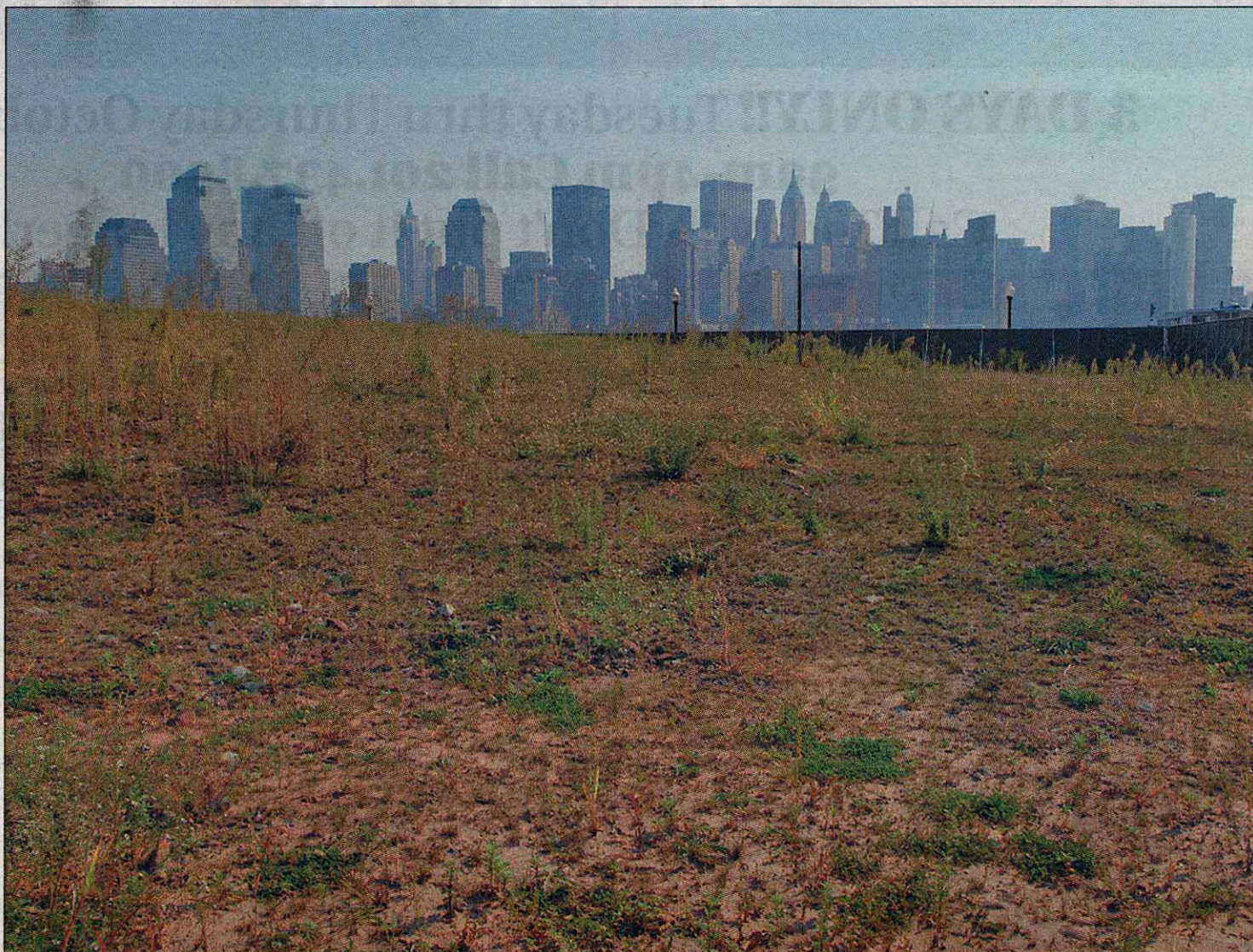
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THE FENCED-IN section at Jersey City's Liberty State Park where the 9/11 "Empty Sky" memorial is planned.

REENA ROSE SIBAYAN JOURNAL PHOTO

OVER BUDGET



REENA ROSE SIBAYAN JOURNAL PHOTO

THE "EMPTY SKY" 9/11 memorial is planned for this site at Liberty State Park in Jersey City.

9/11 memorial unexpectedly expensive

By **KEENAN STEINER**
JOURNAL STAFF WRITER

The state's 9/11 memorial at Liberty State Park turned out to be more costly than expected, halting construction while the memorial's designers look for ways to save money without altering the project.

Opponents of the memorial's location — who have tried to block its construction, saying it would obstruct views of the Manhattan skyline — now hope the growing cost of the project will help sway others to their argument.

But the state Department of the Treasury said the project will continue at the same location, albeit at a slower pace than anticipated, Treasury spokesman Tom Vincz said.

Phase 1 of the project — demolishing the plaza in front of the historic Central Railroad of New Jersey train terminal and preparing the ground for the steel structure — is done.

Construction was supposed to begin this fall and take 14 months, and a contractor was to be chosen this summer, but with bids coming in between \$22 million and \$25 million — more than double the state's \$9 million estimate — the Treasury has held off awarding the bid and has instead asked the memorial's architect to tweak the project to make it cheaper without changing the original concept, Vincz said. Five contractors will then be asked to submit new bids.

Vincz said \$13 million has already been committed for the project, with \$6 million from state coffers and \$7 million from Port Authority. But while the new bids are expected to be much lower, it remains to be seen if they will be anywhere near the state's \$9 million estimate.

"I don't think the people of this state will want to pay for a memorial that's going to cost this much," said Sam Pesin,

president of Friends of Liberty State Park, who has opposed the memorial's size and location.

Assemblyman Lou Manzo, D-Jersey City — who also was already against the design, called "Empty Sky" — says the state would have to dip into discretionary funds to pay more toward the project, and that money could be better used elsewhere, such as children's healthcare.

Vincz said the project's cost has gone up because it's a unique concept and the price of steel has been volatile recently.

Only a handful of companies can build the memorial as designed, which will have 30-foot-high and 200-foot-long concrete walls covered with stainless steel. The names of New Jersey residents killed in the attacks will be etched into the steel. An employee of one of the companies that sub-

mitted bids to work on the project said the design requires an unusually high level of accuracy.

Also contributing to the cost, the employee said, is the elaborate landscaping surrounding the site and the fact that the structure is to be aligned exactly with Ground Zero.

The Friends of LSP, with 900 members, says the monument was picked by a group of 9/11 victims' families without input from the public.

The organization's lawyer, Cynthia Hadjiyannis, said the state Department of Environmental Protection improperly granted approval for the project with a general permit, instead of a waterfront development permit, which would have required public notice and comment on the project. The Friends of LSP have filed an appeal with the state's Appellate Division against the DEP in an attempt to stop the project.