

Understanding Fuel Economy Standards, Local Law 38

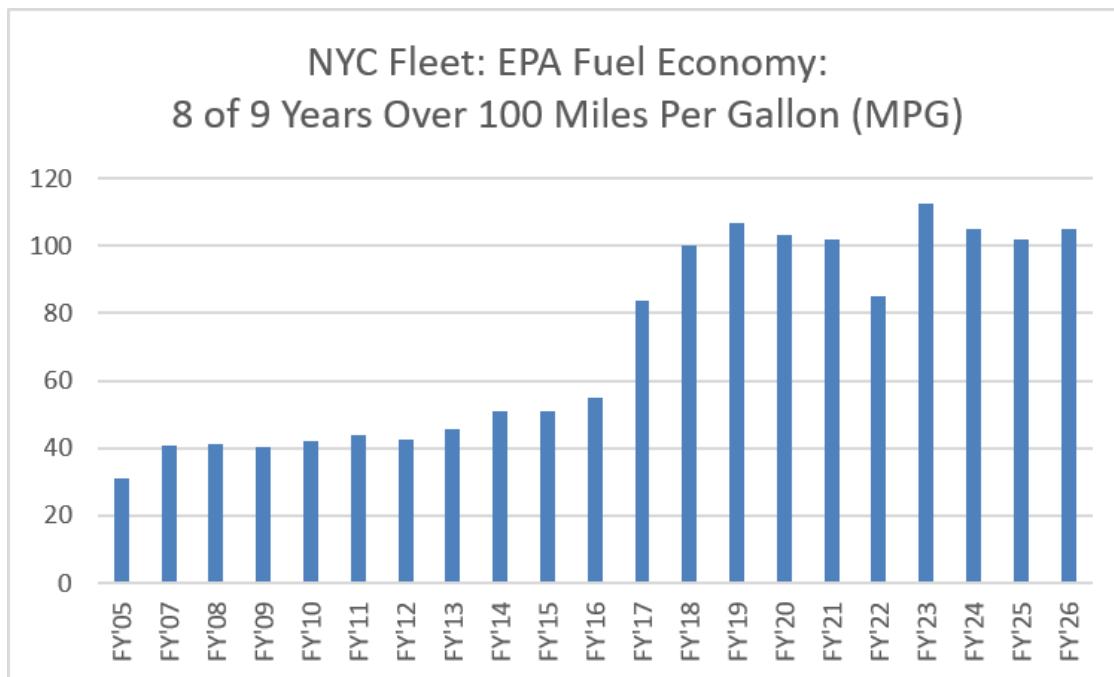
By Keith T. Kerman



Fuel economy standards were in the national news this week as the federal government made changes to the Corporate Fuel Economy Standards (CAFE) nationwide. CAFE standards are fuel efficiency targets set for all passenger vehicles and light duty trucks sold in the United States. The [revised](#) fuel economy goal for vehicles nationwide is 34.9 miles per gallon by 2031.

In 2005, New York City passed [Local Law 38](#) requiring the city fleet to publish its equivalent of these fuel economy standards for light duty non-emergency vehicles. In any given year, the number of vehicles purchased can vary, from a low of 65 in the year immediately after COVID to a high of 1,071 in Fiscal Year 2023.

The fuel economy trend has been unmistakable. Light duty city fleet vehicles have gotten dramatically more fuel efficient according to Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) fuel economy listings. This is EPA fuel economy listed on the “sticker” when buying a new car. In eight of the last nine years, the average fuel economy for new city vehicles was over 100 miles per gallon, nearly three times the new federal goal of 34.9 for 2031. In fact, city fleet vehicles have surpassed the revised standard since achieving 41 miles per gallon an average in FY07.



DCAS does not procure vehicles that are specific to government or fleet operations. DCAS procures vehicles from the general marketplace through competitive bids. In the now 21 years of this reporting, DCAS has procured vehicles of various models from Ford, Chevy, GMC, Dodge, Chrysler, Buick, Jeep, Toyota, Honda, Mitsubishi, Nissan, Kia, and Volkswagen. The latest of these is the fleet’s first all-electric minivan, pictured here.

Of the 10,954 vehicles captured in the city’s Local Law 38 fuel economy reporting, every single make and model is available to the general public. As we have discussed many times before, hybrid and electric vehicles often cost more up front to buy but achieve major savings in fuel, maintenance, and longevity once in operations.

New York City has shown clearly over two decades that major advances in EPA sticker fuel economy for light duty vehicles are achievable today. Through our Local Law 75 [reporting](#), DCAS has also shown that these units achieve the listed fuel efficiency benefits in actual operation.

In this period of incredibly high fuel pricing, reducing fuel use is as important as ever. What DCAS has achieved with improving fuel economy can be done by any fleet or individual today.

VISION ZERO **Building a Safer City**



Thursday, October 22nd, 2026
Queens Theatre, Flushing Meadows Corona Park

DCAS and Together for Safer Roads invite you to the 2026 Vision Zero Fleet Safety Forum!

The event will bring together leading stakeholders from public and private fleets, innovative safety technology companies, policy experts, and road safety advocates for an exciting day of speeches, panel discussions, and breakout sessions.

Join us as we discuss how to systematically build safety into our roads, vehicles, and fleet operations. The event is free and includes breakfast and a networking lunch. RSVPs are required.



Event Schedule:

Networking
breakfast begins:

7:30 a.m.

Program begins:

8:30 a.m.

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[NYC Fleet Newsletter 550, September 24, 2026](#): DCAS Opens Largest Public EV Charging Hub at Forest Park, Queens

[NYC Fleet Newsletter 549, September 22, 2026](#): DCAS Issues Clean Fleet Report Update; Reaches 6,000 EVs

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