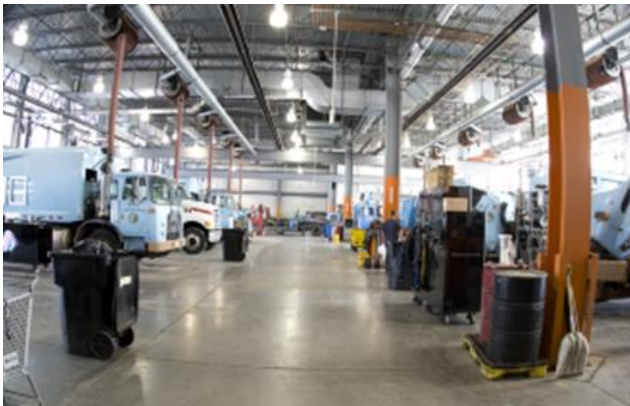


Fleets of the Future: Chicago Fleet

By: Keith T. Kerman and Henry Cornejo

NYC has ambitious sustainability and safety goals for its fleet. As large and critical a fleet as we operate, no single fleet can move the entire industry. It is essential that NYC partners with corporate, non-profit, and other public fleets to guide the industry to a more sustainable, safe, and efficient future. Through the Fleets of the Future initiative in [Mayoral Executive Order 53](#), DCAS has been charged with building these bridges.

Throughout the year, our newsletter will begin spotlighting partner governmental fleets that are working towards these common goals. We begin with the great city of Chicago. Chicago and New York have followed similar fleet improvement paths including consolidation, Vision Zero, new fleet management and tracking systems, fleet sharing, parts reorganization, and a commitment to sustainability.



Chicago's Bureau of Fleet Operations is overseen by Deputy Commissioner John "Doug" Wedel, and manages over 12,000 units including 3,200 police vehicles, 500 garbage trucks, 370 salt-spreader trucks, 125 street sweepers, and 110 ambulances. Central fleet management serves 23 internally funded *corporate* departments, three *enterprise* revenue-generating departments (Aviation, Water and Libraries), and six sister agencies which are separate

taxing bodies.

Twenty years ago, Chicago embarked on a consolidation effort, placing fleet services for separate services and departments under one umbrella. NYC, of course, launched a shared services and consolidation effort in 2011. The Chicago consolidation resulted both in a stand-alone agency and also combined two other citywide services, Facility Management and IT. Kevin Campbell is the manager of Fleet Services and Automotive Procurement for the City of Chicago Department of Assets, Information & Services (AIS), which serves the facility, fleet, and IT needs for all of Chicago's departments.

In Chicago, AIS handles the resource and technical needs for these three areas, enabling their client agencies to focus on their core missions and expertise, and ensuring a citywide approach to these three areas. Through AIS, Chicago works to ensure that resource areas such as fleet get a seat at the table in major policy decisions and investments.



As we know in fleet, our garage facilities can often be older repurposed facilities. AIS has prioritized a series of purpose-built garage facility investments to support their centralized approach. AIS was involved in the design, layout, and construction of their Western Boulevard Maintenance Facility, which opened in 2009. Kevin stated, "...we did this so that when we moved in, it was ready for us...it was made to meet our needs." This was the first purpose-built facility and became the model for their recent construction, the Englewood Facility, which opened in 2019. The Englewood Facility houses the administrative staff and has a large shop that can maintain a variety of vehicles from different departments. Kevin also states, "...we want this to be the new model so that we can continue building future maintenance facilities that meet our requirements instead of trying to get something that is already in existence to work for us."



This focus on maintaining their fleet at centralized locations continues with the near completion of their Refurbishment Center, which will overhaul aging trucks, thereby gaining additional years of service life. It will include mechanical and electrical repairs, along with sandblast and paint booths to address both structural and cosmetic issues.

Along with the investment in facilities, Chicago has invested in fleet management systems. As NYC

learned, an effective fleet system is required to enable shared servicing across departments. NYC and Chicago use the same fleet management provider. Chicago uses this same provider to manage their 12 in-house fueling systems, something NYPD has transitioned to as well for NYC. Chicago requires all fleet units to fuel at these locations, establishing a great deal of oversight control over fueling orders, monitoring of fueling exceptions, and tank management. Chicago is also working to enhance their internal fleet management system to enable better monitoring of contract repairs.

Chicago has also begun the implementation of fleet tracking for their entire fleet, similar to our Fleet Office of Real-time Tracking (FORT) initiative. Chicago will be using a similar provider as NYC, replacing older technology, and recognizes the potential this technology presents to improve efficiency, safety, and improve direct services.



Like NYC, Chicago was also an early adopter of fleet-sharing technology. Chicago has reduced their light-duty fleet through the use of both private car share vehicles and also through sharing City-owned fleet units using sharing technology. Chicago implemented this initiative in 2011, and was a key partner for NYC in its efforts the following year. DCAS used the Chicago contract as the basis of our original car and fleet share initiative. We have since moved on to a DCAS specific contract, but not without taking inspiration from Chicago. Efficiencies through fleet sharing played a beneficial role recently during the COVID-19 response, allowing the Chicago Fleet to redeploy 25 Flex Fleet vehicles for use by Chicago Fire Department paramedics to administer in-home COVID-19 vaccinations.



Chicago fleet services is also tackling the problem of parts distribution and inventory. AIS partnered with a single-source parts provider over 20 years ago and the arrangement has been extremely beneficial, both from a parts availability and pricing standpoint. In addition, it has allowed AIS to have complete control over the parts procurement and distribution process. As stated by Kevin, "...in the past we couldn't buy

parts if we didn't have a contract...everything was manufacturer-specific...now this has become a business model that we are trying to add to other parts of our operation."

Of course, at the heart of NYC Executive Order 53 is our Green Fleet and Vision Zero Plans. Chicago is equally focused on sustainability and safety.

In 2014, Chicago was the first city in North America to deploy an all-electric refuse truck. This original model had limitations. NYC is now embarking on a similar road by trying out all-electric garbage trucks at DSNY and Parks. Today, Chicago has over 2,800 alternative fuel vehicles and is taking early steps in the electrification of light and medium-duty. As with many fleets, Chicago is working through issues of range, charging, and emergency operations as it plots a plug-in future.



Within their fueling department, AIS has been active in using alternative fuels for their heavy-duty fleet. AIS dispenses biodiesel blends from 2% to 20%, depending on the season, Ethanol (E-85) and Compressed Natural Gas (CNG) at their fuel sites. In addition, they have partnered with a local construction company to share their Renewable Natural Gas (RNG) fueling infrastructure. All told, AIS uses over 1.2 million gallons of alternative fuel annually!



On safety, AIS directly modeled their Vision Zero program on NYC's efforts, much as we did with their fleet sharing initiative. AIS is implementing a version of our Safe Fleet Transition Plan with all new vehicle builds coming complete with safety-enhancing equipment. AIS has allocated funds to retrofit hundreds of units annually including a truck side-guard program. Chicago also partners with US DOT Volpe on some of these efforts.

As with all fleet operations, AIS is challenged by budget and staffing pressures and the need to keep up with increasing service demands and new technologies. AIS has used targeted contracting to enhance its servicing capacities at the same time as investing in new in-house facilities and staff. COVID-19 was also a major challenge for fleet services and all their clients.

While we don't approve of the sports logos they have painted on some of the fleet vehicles, we want to thank Kevin Campbell and their team for their partnership in many areas, especially fleet share and Vision Zero, and for joining us on a number of fleet panels and programs. We look forward to advancing in partnership with them our common sustainable, safety, and fleet management goals.



Thanks to Henry Cornejo for developing this first Fleets of the Future newsletter.



DCAS's Inside Citywide Podcast

DCAS's new [Inside Citywide podcast](#) provides a behind-the-scenes look at New York City government. Episode 2 is out now and takes a look at the future of the City of New York's vehicle fleet as it transitions to all-electric by 2040.

COVID-19 Safety Reminder

For all fleet drivers, please be reminded to wear a mask when operating a fleet vehicle with others in the vehicle. Attached again are the [Department of Health's COVID-19 Safety Guidelines relating to vehicle operation](#).

Check out past editions of the Fleet Newsletter

[NYC Fleet Newsletter 346, May 28, 2021](#): NYC Fleet Newsletter 346: US DOT and NYC Connected Vehicle Pilot Goes Live

[NYC Fleet Newsletter 345, May 21, 2021](#): TSR and DCAS Host Global Vision Zero Conference: Announce New Safety Award and Surround Camera Initiative for City Fleet Trucks

[NYC Fleet Newsletter 344, May 10, 2021](#): DSNY Introduces All-Electric Sweeper

[NYC Fleet Newsletter 343, April 30, 2021](#): Over 5,000 Drivers Complete Online Vision Zero Safety Training

[NYC Fleet Newsletter 342, April 22, 2021](#): Mayor Announces School Busses Going Electric
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