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THIS WEEK IN NEW YORK

COVERING NEW YORK & CITY GOVERNMENT

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"No Man can be a good citizen unless he has a wage more than sufficient to cover the bare cost of living, and hour of labor short enough so that after his day's work is done he will have time and energy to bear his share in the management of the community, to help in carrying the general load" Governor Theodore Roosevelt.

In The News-New York State

Governor Hochul Signs Bills to Support NYPD Officers and Strengthen Pension Benefits

Governor Kathy Hochul signed two pieces of legislation this week to support members of the New York City Police Department (NYPD) by allowing experienced officers to serve longer and strengthening pension benefits for officers who have dedicated their careers to keeping New Yorkers safe.

"New York needs our police officers, and when experienced officers want to continue serving, we want them to stay on the job," Governor Hochul said**.** "I'm signing these bills to give our officers the opportunity to serve longer while ensuring their retirement benefits reflect their commitment to New York City. Their service is essential to the safety of our communities, and these bills recognize everything they do for New Yorkers."

Chapter 311, sponsored by Senator Jessica Scarcella Spanton/AM Charles Fall raises the mandatory retirement age from 63 to 65 for eligible Tier 2 and Tier 3 NYPD officers. The change allows experienced and highly trained officers who would otherwise be required to retire to continue serving.

Chapter 312, sponsored by Senator Scarcella Spanton and AM Stacy Pheffer Amato allows Tier 2 officers who began service on or after July 1, 2000, to base their pension on either their final 12 months of pay or the average of their three highest-earning years, whichever is higher. Previously, only Tier 2 officers who began service before July 1, 2000 were provided with that option.

Tier 2 pension reform has been a priority issue for the Detectives' Endowment Association (DEA) who fought to fix the inequity of the 2A pension tier.

"This reform gives our Detectives the ability to decide when the time is right for them to retire, instead of continuing to chase the carrot to secure the pension they've earned, DEA President Scott Munro explained. "That means more control over their future and more time with their families now. It will also help the NYPD retain experienced, highly skilled Detectives who are invaluable to keeping this city safe. We thank Governor Hochul and our partners in the Legislature for delivering for the men and women who have dedicated their careers to keeping New Yorkers safe."

NYPD Lieutenants Benevolent Association President Louis Turco thanked Governor Hochul for recognizing the value in retaining experienced police officers which will translate into keeping New Yorkers safe.

"To have a safe city, we must have the best and most experienced police officers who are committed to public service," NYPD Commissioner Jessica S. Tisch asserted. "When this department was facing a staffing shortage, we worked with our partners across government to open more pathways for talented people to join and stay on the job. This legislation will help improve retention and ensure our officers get what they deserve for their years of sacrifice and hard work."

NYPD Captains Endowment Association President Chris Monahan noted the equity importance of the measures, particularly in relation to membership retention. "… the tier 2A bill provides pension equality to members of the NYPD who do a brave and dangerous job. In addition both bills give us parity with the members of the FDNY and will add retention of our members," he explained.

Chapters of the Laws of 2026

Chapter 308, Sponsored by AM Steven Otis/Senator Liz Krueger: Establishes the electric landscaping equipment rebate program to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, improve air quality, and reduce noise pollution by promoting the adoption of quieter, zero-emission landscaping equipment; provides for rebates at the point of sale for applicants purchasing or leasing certain equipment.

Chapter 309, Sponsored by AM Charles Fall and Senator Andrew Gounardes: Authorizes the dormitory authority to provide financing to The New York Climate Exchange Inc. for the construction of facilities on Governor's Island.

Chapter 310, Sponsored by Senator Peter Harckum/AM Judy Griffin: Extends the time period from eighteen years to twenty-five years that a school shall be guaranteed recovery of energy performance contract costs from energy savings incurred by school districts over that time period.

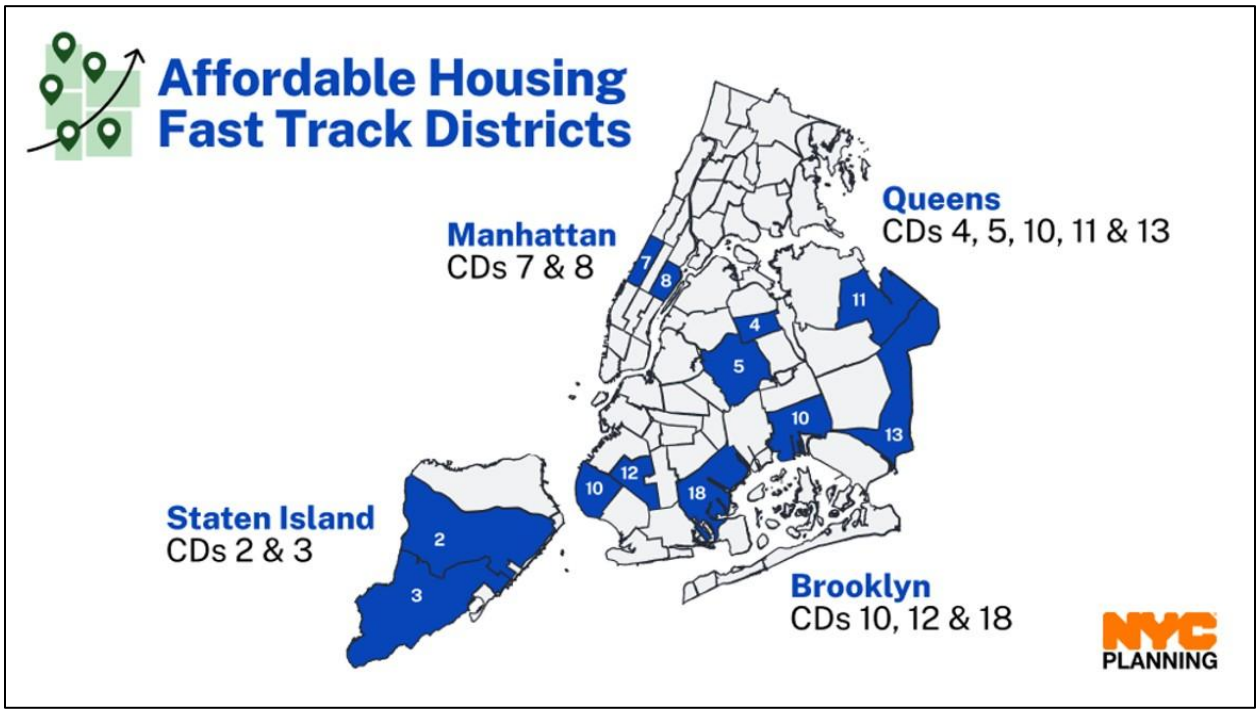
In The News-New York City

Mamdani Administration Puts 12 Neighborhoods on Fast Track for Affordable Housing

New York City Mayor Zohran Mamdani and Department of City Planning (DCP) Director Sideya Sherman announced the 12 community districts where the voter-approved **Affordable Housing Fast Track** will take effect in January 2027. According to the Mayor, the initiative brings the City one step closer to a housing system where every neighborhood does its part to meet the needs of New Yorkers.

The 12 Affordable Housing Fast Track districts with the lowest rate of affordable housing production are:

- Brooklyn CD 10: Bay Ridge, Dyker Heights
- Brooklyn CD 12: Borough Park, Kensington
- Brooklyn CD 18: Canarsie, Flatlands
- Manhattan CD 7: Upper West Side
- Manhattan CD 8: Upper East Side, Roosevelt Island
- Queens CD 4: Corona, Elmhurst
- Queens CD 5: Ridgewood, Maspeth, Middle Village
- Queens CD 10: South Ozone Park, Howard Beach
- Queens CD 11: Auburndale, Bayside, Douglaston
- Queens CD 13: Queens Village, Bellerose, Rosedale
- Staten Island CD 2: Mid-Island
- Staten Island CD 3: South Shore



"New York's housing crisis is not going to be solved by asking the same neighborhoods to do all the building," said Mayor Mamdani. "Every New Yorker deserves a home they can afford, and every neighborhood must be part of delivering it. The Affordable Housing Fast Track gives us a new tool to cut through red tape and make sure our housing growth is shared more fairly across all five boroughs. We are going to build – block by block, neighborhood by neighborhood — at the scale this crisis demands."

Beginning January 1, 2027, eligible rezoning proposals that create affordable housing in the 12 designated districts will use a streamlined 90-day public review process, cutting roughly four months from the traditional Uniform Land Use Review Procedure (ULURP). The Fast Track maintains Community Board and Borough President review and opportunities for public input. It does not change environmental review requirements or landmark protections.

Comptroller DiNapoli: Recovery for NYC Retail Remains Uneven as Sales Increase but Job Growth Stalls

Retail spending in New York City bounced back quickly after the pandemic, but it has slowed and remains uneven, according to a report by State Comptroller Thomas DiNapoli. Clothing and food retailers saw modest employment gains, but other industries, especially furniture, electronics and general merchandise continue to lose jobs.

"New York City's retailers took a big hit from lower foot traffic and online shopping during the pandemic," Comptroller DiNapoli said. "Local spending largely recovered, but its growth has lagged. Inflation, shifts in consumer behavior, and more people working from home are putting pressure on this important economic engine for the city. These trends could hurt young people and foreign-born New Yorkers who make up a large share of the city's retail workforce."

Comptroller DiNapoli's report analyzed the city's trends using taxable sales data which covers most goods and many services, including entertainment, restaurants and professional services. In state tax year 2025-26, which ended Feb. 28, 2026, retail accounted for 27.8% of the city's total taxable sales, the highest share among all major sectors, and was 23.3% higher than the pre-pandemic 2019-20 level. But that still trailed the overall growth in total taxable sales of 34.7%, which was driven by sales of services, such as restaurants and bars, maintenance and entertainment. When adjusted for inflation, retail sales were about 1% below pre-pandemic levels, while total taxable sales increased 8.3%.

In 2025, retail employment was 14.4% (49,588 jobs) below 2019 levels, even as total private sector employment grew by 4%. From 2022 to 2025, only two retail industries saw employment increase. Jobs at clothing, clothing accessories, shoe and jewelry retailers rose 6.8%, and those at food and beverage retailers increased 4.5%.

Other industries saw significant declines. Furniture, home furnishings, electronics and appliance retailers shed the most, losing 4,348 jobs (18%). General merchandise retailers lost 2,862 jobs, while health and personal care retailers were down 2,457 jobs.

Among the city's boroughs, Manhattan fared the worst, with retail employment 21.2% below its 2019 level. Brooklyn fared best but was still down 6.3% from 2019. Only six neighborhoods in the city exceeded their pre-pandemic retail employment levels, including four in Brooklyn (Bedford-Stuyvesant, Williamsburg/Greenpoint, Crown Heights North and Sunset Park/Windsor Terrace) and two in the Bronx (Riverdale/Kingsbridge/Marble Hill and Fordham/Bedford Park/Norwood).

In 2025, retail accounted for 7.2% of the city's total private sector jobs but only 3.3%, or $17.5 billion, of total wages. The average salary in the retail sector was $59,420, much lower than the $106,872 average pay in the private sector excluding the securities industry). Retail salaries remain low partly because 36% of retail workers work part-time.

Retail property values and rents are on par with pre-pandemic levels. The average price during the first quarter (Q1) of 2026 was $52.93 per square foot, just above the pre-pandemic level of $52.90 in Q1 of 2019. That number fell to $52.71 in Q2 of this year. However, of all retail space in the city, 6.3% was vacant in Q2 of 2026, higher than the 5.1% in the same quarter in 2019.

The number of visitors to the city also climbed, although it remains below pre-pandemic levels. According to the New York City Tourism + Conventions, the number of visitors increased every year since 2020 and reached 65 million last year, which is still 1.6 million below the record high in 2019. The Comptroller called the continued increase in tourism a "bright spot" that could drive higher retail spending.

NYC Office of the Mayor

Mayor Mamdani Unveils New York City's Strategy to Combat Antisemitism

Mayor Zohran Mamdani and the Mayor's Office to Combat Antisemitism released New York City's Strategy to Combat Antisemitism, a government plan to confront antisemitism, protect Jewish New Yorkers and strengthen Jewish institutions, traditions and communities across New York City.

The strategy is organized around seven strategic objectives that will guide the City's work to combat antisemitism:

- **Prevent hate violence**: Encourage and direct sustained investment in programs that prevent hate violence before it occurs.
- **Combat antisemitism in all its forms**: Address physical, verbal and digital antisemitism across New York City through coordinated initiatives led by MOCA and agency partners.
- **Educate New Yorkers**: Invest in education about Jewish New Yorkers' contributions to the city, the Holocaust, Jewish history and the lived experiences of Jewish New Yorkers.
- **Support survivors**: Ensure victims of antisemitic incidents and hate crimes can access resources, services and support.
- **Protect and celebrate Jewish life**: Preserve New York City as a special place to be Jewish, while working with community partners to strengthen and celebrate Jewish communities across the five boroughs.
- **Listen to Jewish New Yorkers**: Maintain regular, meaningful engagement with Jewish New Yorkers across the ideological spectrum so City government can better understand community needs and deliver services with dignity and respect.
- **Celebrate Jewish culture and tradition**: Use City policy, programming and public messaging to celebrate and cherish Jewish culture and traditions as an essential part of New York City's identity.

The strategy includes $6.4 million in Partners Against the Hate (P.A.T.H.) grants that focus on hate crime prevention and survivor support. It also includes $1 million to strengthen the physical security of synagogues and other houses of worship.

The Mayor's Office to Combat Antisemitism will support implementation of Mayor Mamdani's $26 million investment in the Office for the Prevention of Hate Crimes. The Mamdani administration will also relaunch the Security Infrastructure Working Group, providing technical and strategic support to Jewish houses of worship and cultural institutions seeking to strengthen their security.

New York City Council Announces Anthropic, OpenAI, Google, and Meta to Publicly Testify Under Oath

New York City Council Speaker Julie Menin this week announced that the Council has secured the first public testimony under oath from major AI firms — including Anthropic, OpenAI, Google, and Meta — regarding the potential dangers of AI technology and to seek their input on potential legislative solutions.

Elon Musk's SpaceXAI has not responded to the Council's inquiry. Speaker Menin issued a subpoena this week compelling the company to appear at the hearing.

The testimony will occur at a rare Council Committee of the Whole hearing 0n Monday, October 5, which will convene all 51 members of the City Council to examine potential risks posed by rapidly developing artificial intelligence technologies.

"Leading experts and AI executives themselves are warning about the potentially grave risks of rapidly advancing AI, and governments have a responsibility to act," said Speaker Julie Menin**.** "That is exactly what the New York City Council is doing. Given the high stakes, these firms owe it to the public to come before the Council, answer our questions, and provide input on our proposed legislation under oath."

If SpaceXAI fails to comply with the subpoena, the Council may seek judicial enforcement in New York State Supreme Court.

Briefs

NYSIF Collaborates with Cities for Financial Empowerment Fund to Expand Safe Banking Access for Injured Workers

The New York State Insurance Fund (NYSIF), the state's largest workers' compensation insurance provider, announced a Request for Information for financial institutions to provide information on potential resources to connect injured workers to low-cost bank and credit union accounts.

The Cities for Financial Empowerment Fund (CFE Fund) is collaborating with NYSIF to identify and reduce barriers NYSIF's unbanked injured workers face in obtaining safe, affordable bank and credit union accounts.

Unbanked injured workers cannot receive direct deposit and therefore can only receive their workers' compensation benefits through paper checks leaving them to face additional unnecessary costs, such as fees at check cashers, and reducing the value of the benefits intended to support them during recovery.

Launched at the New York Stock Exchange in April, 2012, the CFE Fund provides funding and technical assistance to mayors and their teams to develop, launch, replicate and test financial empowerment strategies.

NYS Department of Labor Announces Unemployment Insurance System Upgrade

The New York State Department of Labor (NYSDOL) this week announced that on Monday, November 2**,** at 5 p.m. the Department will begin the upgrade of its system for processing unemployment insurance claims.

According to Commissioner Roberta Reardon, the upgraded system will replace the 50-year-old system to make it easier for customers to access the support. Additionally, the upgraded system will streamline requirements for businesses while maintaining strong Al information protection and fraud prevention for all customers. The process to bring the upgraded Unemployment Services system fully online is expected to take 9 to 12 days.

To support a secure transition from the current system to the upgraded platform during the upgrade period, all online and phone-based unemployment insurance services will be temporarily unavailable**.**

Per NYSDOL, individuals and businesses should be aware of the following:

- Customers will not be able to file new unemployment insurance claims, certify for weekly benefits, or access or update account information. The deadline to file a claim or certify is 5 p.m. on Monday, November 2, 2026**.**
- Individuals will experience delays in payments; however, customers will receive all benefit payments to which they are entitled once the upgrade is complete and they file or certify for benefits in the upgraded system.
- Customers should continue to complete and record work search activities during the upgrade period. To stay eligible for unemployment insurance benefits, individuals must complete and record at least three work search activities each week. During the upgrade period, Career Centers will be available virtually by appointment for job search assistance.
- NYSDOL will notify all customers when the upgraded system is available.
- The Unemployment Services upgrade will not affect electronic filing for NYS-1 and NYS-45 through the NYS Department of Taxation and Finance (TAX). Businesses will continue to file NYS-1 and NYS-45 through TAX once Unemployment Services is available.

Heating Oil Prices in New York State Increase Nearly 65% Since Fall 2025

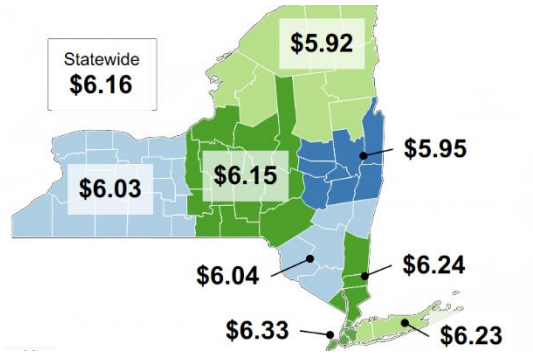
The price New Yorkers pay for heat has risen dramatically, climbing from $3.73 per gallon for heating oil in 2025 to $6.16 per gallon this week, according to the New York State Energy Research and Development Authority Heating Fuel Prices Dashboard.

Weekly Retail Price Snapshot for New York State

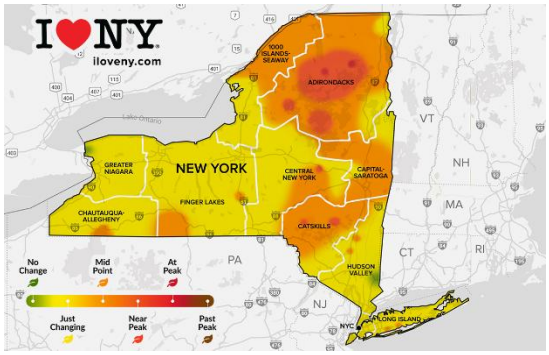
Updated 9/28/2026

	Current Week Prices	Prior Week Prices	Weekly Price Difference	Prior Year Prices	Yearly Price Difference
Heating Oil	**$6.16**	**$6.27**	**-1.7%**	**$3.73**	**65.3%**
Kerosene	**$6.77**	**$6.90**	**-1.9%**	**$4.56**	**48.4%**
Propane	**$3.19**	**$3.12**	**2.2%**	**$2.93**	**9.0%**

The Heating Fuel Prices Dashboard provides New York residents and businesses with objective information on residential retail heating fuel pricing in New York State and by region. The Dashboard includes current and historical residential retail price data, regional comparison, and fuel type comparisons for heating oil, kerosene, and propane. This dashboard helps keep consumers informed of residential retail heating fuel price trends in their area throughout the year including during critical winter months. The current statewide prices range from $5.95 to $6.33 across the State. Dealers are surveyed weekly from September through March.



NYS Foliage Report: Fall Colors Progress Across the State



The progression of gorgeous fall colors continues across New York State, with near-peak and some peak foliage expected in parts of the Adirondacks this weekend, along with leaves at midpoint of change throughout much of the mid and upper Catskills, and many Capital-Saratoga region locations. This is according to the field reports from volunteer observers for the Empire State Development Division of Tourism's I LOVE NY program.

Locations with the most significant foliage changes will include Lake Placid, Tupper Lake, Wilmington, Newcomb, Saranac Lake, Old Forge, Lake Pleasant, Long Lake and Benson (Adirondacks); Windham, Highmount, Delhi and Tannersville (Catskills); Stratford, Brunswick and East Nassau (Capital-Saratoga); Salamanca (Chautauqua-Allegheny); Corning and Cortland (Finger Lakes); and Kingston and New Paltz (Hudson Valley).

Coming Up

New York State

Monday, October 5th

Board of Regents Meeting, iPark 87 BOCES – Phoenix Room – Kingston, 9:30 a.m.

New York City

Monday, October 5th

Committee of the Whole, Council Chambers – City Hall, 11 a.m.

Tuesday, October 6th

Subcommittee on Zoning and Franchises, 250 Broadway – 8th Floor – Hearing Room 3, 11 a.m.

Committee on Land Use, 250 Broadway – 8th Floor – Hearing Room 3, 1 p.m.

Wednesday, October 7th

Committee on Rules, Privileges, Elections, Standards and Ethics, 250 Broadway – 8th Floor – Hearing Room 2, 10 a.m.

Committee on Consumer and Worker Protection, 250 Broadway – 8th Floor – Hearing Room 2, 10 a.m.

Subcommittee of Early Childhood Education, 250 Broadway – 8th Floor – Hearing Room 1, 1 p.m.

Thursday, October 8th

Committee on Finance, 250 Broadway – 8th Floor – Hearing Room 1, 11 a.m.

City Council Stated Meeting, Council Chambers – City Hall, 1:30 p.m.

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