

67 Highland Avenue, Apartment 2  
Cambridge, Massachusetts 02139  
November 5, 1974

To the Cambridge City Council:

This refers to the application, presently on the table, for a permit to run buses from M.I.T. to Wellesley College on certain city streets including River Street and Western Avenue. I consider the application reasonable and would personally support it; however, contrary to Mr. Teso's letter of last week giving the route a clean bill of health, the council should be aware that traffic department actions into which I have looked as a member of the Cambridge Transportation Forum, confuse the status of buses on those streets.

Signs have been posted on River Street, Western Avenue and Prospect Street which read, in two halves: "COMMERCIAL VEHICLES OVER 2½ TONS EXCLUDED" and "7 P.M. TO 7 A.M. ALL DAY SAT. & SUN." These signs are, according to Mr. Preston, posted to implement the ban on trucks carrying non-dangerous cargoes during those hours, but the signs also prohibit dangerous cargoes and buses, both M.B.T.A. buses and buses such as those covered by this application, since, I understand, some will travel in the evening.

In our discussions on November 14 and 16 Mr. Preston informed me that the exception for dangerous cargoes need not be posted since the truckers all are aware of the exact nature of the restriction and do not need signs. The apparent restriction against M.B.T.A. buses would be overridden by the M.B.T.A.'s separate authorization to use the said streets. I do not remember exactly our discussion on this particular application, but it is my impression that Mr. Preston considers council authorization adequate to permit the M.I.T. buses regardless of the posting of the road.

My complaint is this. I drive extensively in the Boston area. Although I was born in Cambridge and raised in the Boston Area, I did live and work out of state for two years. The difference in driving conditions is that between sanity elsewhere and anarchy around Boston. Those massive insurance rates are not figments of insurance companies' imaginations; they are the monetary equivalent of massive amounts of blood, guts and dented fenders scattered over the local highways. Two governmental departments can readily be isolated as responsible: the police and traffic departments. One-third of our drivers, in my opinion, would not last a month on the road in a city with a police department which enforces moving traffic laws. To complement the non-feasance of local police departments, local traffic departments tend to post signs which are inadequate, confusing and dangerously wrong. The tradition is to post signs which are most useful for those who don't need them. The Cambridge Traffic Department is far better than those of Boston and of the M.D.C., but in these signs on Western Avenue and River Street, the department is following the well-established tradition: it is posting signs which are not and should not be obeyed or enforced.

What kind of impression is created in the mind of an average driver who sees unbeyable and unbeyed signs on the road? CONTEMPT FOR THESE LAWS AND A SERIOUS QUESTION WHETHER OTHER LAWS SHOULD BE OBEYED AS WELL!

With all due respect I suggest that the council, at the same time as it approves the bus route application, request the traffic department (1) to substitute for the signs which read "COMMERCIAL VEHICLES OVER 2½ TONS EXCLUDED", new signs reading "TRUCKS OVER 2½ TONS EXCLUDED", (2) continue the signs specifying the hours of restriction and (3) for the above reasons as well as to inform non-local truck drivers post below the others a third sign reading "EXCEPT DANGEROUS CARGOES".

Please do not condone the continuation of these apparent laws which are not worthy of being obeyed.

  
Robert J. La Tremouille

cc: Local newspapers

251 10  
Comm. from Robert LaTremouille relative to  
permits for bus routes to M.I.T. and  
Wellesley.

In City Council,

December 9, 1974

12/12/74

Placed on File-