

4) Trucks hauling hazardous cargo (such as gasoline tankers) are exempt from city or town truck bans. Such trucks must leave the Mass Pike at Exit 18 (if not sooner) because they can't travel via the Prudential tunnel. Those taking Exit 18 travel up River Street or other Cambridgeport streets to cut through the city.

The council must look at the "big picture" to solve Cambridge's truck problems. Enacting a citywide nighttime and weekend truck ban is the only way to deal with the crux of the issue--i.e., most trucks travelling during the bans are taking shortcuts between major highways, not making local deliveries at 3 a.m. or on Sunday afternoon. Cambridge needs to send the message that its streets are not the connecting loop between Route 128 and the Mass Pike to the south and Routes 93 and 95 to the north.

If you doubt what I say, take a ride south on Routes 128, 95 or 1 (as I often do for my work) and notice all the orange signs posting the "alternate truck route" via Route 16 (Revere Beach Parkway) to reach Route 93. Any trucker looking at a map will realize that he can also take this route and jag through Cambridge to reach the Mass Pike. Other prominently placed orange signs warn that large trucks can't travel on the Tobin Bridge and thus must also take the alternate route. As the Central Artery Project construction accelerates, this detour and the previously-mentioned hazardous cargo restriction that forces trucks to exit the Mass Pike will put even more trucks on city streets.

At the various truck traffic meetings I attended with city officials, I heard about proposed five-year, state-funded studies to determine the destinations of trucks travelling north on Route 128. While long-range efforts to keep truck traffic heading north on the outer loop highways rather than letting it shortcut through Cambridge and its neighboring towns and cities are fine, they are no substitute for immediate local action. Those of us who live on or near truck traffic streets put up with truck problems all day; we deserve a little peace and quiet at night and on weekends.

In short, Cambridge needs:

- 1) a well-publicized, citywide nighttime and weekend truck ban,
- 2) a coordinated truck ban enforcement effort that also addresses concurrent problems such as trucks speeding and violating weight restrictions,
- 3) signs on the Mass Pike and routes to the north telling of Cambridge's ban,
- 4) new city signs with the universal symbol of a circle with a slash through the image of a truck--with restricted hours listed below. Presently most city truck ban signs read, "COMMERCIAL VEHICLES OVER 2½ TONS EXCLUDED." How many truckers absorb that mouthful as they speed down Cambridge streets in the middle of the night?

Respectfully submitted,



Vici Casana,
Chair

Traffic and Parking Subcommittee

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CENTRAL SQUARE NEIGHBORHOOD COALITION

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TO THE HONORABLE CITY COUNCIL:

Over 18 months ago (March 1994) I informed you of the results of the CSNC's traffic and parking survey in which 175 residents voiced concern about truck traffic problems and asked the City to alleviate them. Complaints from Central Square area residents included trucks over 2.5 tons travelling on restricted streets during posted 24-hour or 7 p.m.- 7 a.m. weeknight and all-day weekend truck bans, truck noise (rumbling, screeching brakes), truck vibrations that shake buildings and crack walls and ceilings, air pollution from truck exhaust, speeding trucks and truck moving violations. These problems are amplified in the summer when windows are open.

Councillor Duehay, chair of your environmental subcommittee, arranged a meeting of the CSNC traffic and parking subcommittee and city officials to address these complaints. This group met five times last year and achieved a small measure of success, but most truck problems still remain because they can only be solved with citywide solutions and tougher law enforcement efforts.

Lately residents of streets in other parts of the city have been requesting 24-hour or nighttime and weekend truck bans on their streets. Adding another street to the restricted truck travel list is only a band-aid because, as city officials will explain to you in great detail:

- 1) You cannot completely restrict truck traffic on a street (24-hour ban) unless you provide an alternate route that is approved by state authorities.
- 2) There are not enough police currently available to patrol existing restricted streets during truck ban hours. Also, some police balk at the idea of ticketing truckers "only trying to make a living." What's the point of posting more signs and restricting truck travel on more streets if the existing bans aren't enforced now?
- 3) Truckers--or their companies--only receive a \$25 fine for violating the truck travel ban. Some truckers might view the fine as a minor inconvenience, a small price to pay for saving overall travel time. Besides, how often are these fines paid? What happens to truckers who don't pay them? Acting on a CSNC traffic and parking subcommittee suggestion, city officials directed Representative Toomey to propose state legislation to raise the fine. Part of the problem is the powerful truckers' lobby that stymies efforts for state-generated solutions.

(continued)

Consent Communication #16 S-333

Communication was received from
Vici Casara, Chair, Traffic and
Parking Subcommittee of the Central
Square Neighborhood Coalition
regarding truck traffic problems
in Central Square area.

In City Council October 16, 1995

*Referred to Planning
Scheduled for
October 23, 1995*