

Forest Home Overweight Truck and Bus Count

Pleasant Grove Road / Forest Home Drive Intersection

7:00 am - 6:00 pm Thursday, November 10, 2005

Town Legislation

Briefly stated, Town of Ithaca Code (Chapter 250: Vehicles And Traffic, Article II: Vehicle Weight Limits, Sections 250-6 through 250-12) restricts through-truck traffic to five tons registered weight on: McIntyre Place; Judd Falls Road from the Jug Handle down to the intersection with Forest Home Drive; and Forest Home Drive from the intersection with Plantations Road near Beebe Lake, through much of Forest Home, to the intersection with Caldwell Road. Trucks making local deliveries are exempt from this restriction. For purposes of this study, we recorded all vehicles with six or more tires, since vehicles with a GVWR of 5 tons or more generally have at least six tires.

Data Collection

Trucks were recorded traveling through the Pleasant Grove Road / Forest Home Drive intersection from 7 am to 6 pm on Thursday, November 10, 2005. All local schools were in session, all area bridges were open, and roads were clear and mostly dry. Weather was cold and cloudy, with occasional rain and snow showers. By recording truck movement through this intersection, we were able to monitor much, but not all, of the truck traffic through the restricted weight limit zone. This location allowed us to observe the major east-west traffic flow, as well as three of the four main north-south traffic flows through the community. However, this count did not record those trucks that traveled on McIntyre Place, those that made the turn from Judd Falls Road onto Forest Home Drive along Beebe Lake, or those that traveled on the Warren Road / Upstream Bridge / Caldwell Road corridor.

Overweight Trucks

A total of 97 overweight trucks were recorded traveling through the Pleasant Grove Road / Forest Home Drive intersection during the eleven hours from 7 am to 6 pm. Of these, the single largest category consisted of trucks owned and operated by Cornell University (28 trucks, 29%). The second largest category was unmarked trucks (24 trucks, 25%). The rest (45 trucks, 46%) were marked as belonging to a variety of companies. It should be pointed out that some of these trucks were making local deliveries. For example, the Town of Ithaca trucks were part of the Town's fall leaf pickup, the UPS truck was seen making deliveries on Forest Home Drive and the Byway, and Wharton Masonry was doing work on 123 Judd Falls Road, within the restricted weight limit area. However, the great majority of overweight trucks were apparently not making local deliveries.

Buses

A total of 102 buses were recorded passing through the Pleasant Grove Road / Forest Home Drive intersection during the eleven hours from 7 am to 6 pm. Of these, the majority were TCAT buses (55 buses, 54%). Most of the rest were school buses (42 buses, 41%), with a smattering of others (5 buses, 5%). According to TCAT's current on-line bus schedule (TCATbus.com), Routes 80 and 81 are not supposed to travel through the Pleasant Grove Road / Forest Home Drive intersection. The same can probably be said for the TCAT buses displaying the "Not in Service" signage. This represents 15 buses or 27% of TCAT bus traffic recorded. The other 73% of TCAT buses (Routes 31, 40 and 41) were apparently traveling on scheduled routes that take them through Forest Home. However, it is possible that some of these buses could be rerouted; perhaps traveling through North Campus on Cradit Farm Drive would serve more ridership than coming through Forest Home. As far as school buses are concerned, only a few can be considered to be "local delivery," picking up or dropping off Forest Home children. The vast majority are through-traffic, with no particular need to travel through the restricted weight limit zone.

Conclusion

There is far too much overweight truck traffic in Forest Home. While some of these trucks are making local deliveries, the vast majority represent unnecessary through traffic. However, it should be possible to significantly reduce much of this traffic. To begin with, Cornell University could be asked to reroute its truck traffic. In addition, there is the possibility of working with TCAT and the Ithaca City School District to see which of their buses could be rerouted around Forest Home. These measures, coupled with increased enforcement by the County Sheriff and Cornell Police, could make a significant difference in the number of overweight trucks that travel through this area.

Data

All local schools in session. Roads clear and mostly dry. All area bridges open. Weather cold and cloudy, with occasional rain and snow showers.

97 Overweight Trucks

73 Marked Trucks

28 Cornell University

13 Grounds

4 Planning, Design and Construction

3 Transportation Services

2 Dairy

2 Plantations

1 Catering

1 Dining

1 Mason

1 Orchards

7 Town of Ithaca (leaf pickup)

4 Conner Fence

3 FedEx

3 Ithaca Bakery

2 Freihoffer's Bakery

2 Mac Tools

2 NYSEG

2 Stroehmann (including 1 semi)

2 UPS

2 US Mail

2 Wharton Masonry

1 Each: Advanced Towing, Ag-Trac, Bill Brothers, Cayuga Signs, Cousin's Sea Food, Frito-Lay, Griffin (semi), Hope's Way, Jenson Overhead Door, Loomis-Fargo, Martin's Bakery, Portable John Rental, Superior Disposal, Thomas English Muffins

24 Unmarked Trucks

102 Buses

55 TCAT

26 Route 31

7 Route 40

7 Route 41

6 "Not In Service"

5 Route 81

4 Route 80

42 School Buses

33 Ithaca City School District

5 Candor

3 TST Boces

1 Lansing

2 Unlabeled Buses

1 Bernie Bus Service

1 Gadabout

1 Tioga Transport

199 Total Vehicles Recorded

* For purposes of this survey, "overweight" was defined as any truck with six or more tires. Legally, any truck in excess of five tons registered weight is considered to be overweight.

TOWN OF ITHACA CODE

Chapter 250: VEHICLES AND TRAFFIC

Article II: Vehicle Weight Limits

§ 250-8. Restricted locations.

No through traffic of trucks, commercial vehicles, truck tractors, or tractor-trailer combinations, with a maximum registered gross vehicle weight in excess of five tons shall be permitted on:

- A. McIntyre Place.
- B. Forest Home Drive, between the western terminus of Plantation Road (also known as Arboretum Road) and Caldwell Road.
- C. Judd Falls Road, between Forest Home Drive and the intersection with Plantation Road (also known as Arboretum Road).
- D. Honness Lane.

§ 250-9. Definitions.

For purposes of this article:

MAXIMUM REGISTERED GROSS VEHICLE WEIGHT — Shall mean the maximum gross vehicle weight for which the vehicle is registered with the New York State Department of Motor Vehicles. If the vehicle is registered in a jurisdiction other than the State of New York, the term shall mean the maximum gross vehicle weight for which the vehicle is registered with the applicable motor vehicle department or similar agency in the jurisdiction in which the vehicle is registered and which weight is shown on the registration for such vehicle. If the vehicle is registered in a governmental jurisdiction that does not indicate a maximum gross vehicle weight on registrations, the term shall mean the manufacturer's gross vehicle weight rating (GVWR) as indicated on the vehicle safety certification label.

§ 250-11. Exclusions.

Local deliveries and pickups to and from properties located on the aforementioned Town highways, by vehicles otherwise prohibited from using said highways by the provisions of this article shall not be prohibited hereby. Further, fire-fighting equipment and vehicles, and emergency medical service vehicles, otherwise prohibited from using such highways by the provisions of this article shall not be prohibited hereby.