

Truck Route Network Modernization

The safe and efficient movements of goods and services are key to the economic vitality and growth of commerce in New York City, and the greater metropolitan region. Trucks move goods and freight to grocery stores, markets and restaurants, manufacturing facilities, office buildings, construction sites, and residences. Trucks come in many shapes and sizes. The nature of a community's local businesses and industries dictates the truck traffic which is what dictates if a truck route is needed to facilitate freight movement.

The truck route network is a key safety tool, and we must ensure trucks stay on route. With about 1,300 miles of designated roadway, New York City has one of the most complex truck route systems in the nation. The best way to ensure a safe and efficient truck route network is not to reduce the options for truck drivers to take but to provide them with the tools that they need, such as overnight truck parking, neighborhood loading zones, curbside access, well-maintained roads, and stronger signage in and around the 21 IBZs throughout the city.

The IBZs house large freight generators which create inbound and outbound truck trips. Understand that there is a great deal of diversity in the business activity that goes on in these zones as New York City hosts many suppliers, distributors, and service industries that generate freight activity by sending or receiving goods, equipment, supplies, etc. The shared infrastructure and workforce, the need to protect our industrial careers and grow our manufacturing capabilities is why the IBZs exist. Given New York City's unique population diversity, the rise in remote and hybrid work, and the prohibitive cost of four-year college degrees, it is more important than ever for our economy that we nurture and grow our manufacturing and industrial sector.

However, with the rise of e-commerce, we know that trucks now must meet a significant B2C demand. Prior to Covid-19, 60% of the deliveries in New York City were made to commercial customers, and 40% to residential customers. Post-Covid 80% of deliveries are going to residential customers and 45% of New Yorkers receive at least one delivery a week to their home. Therefore, the Local Truck Route plays a larger role in the movement of goods. A complicated matter is the fact that trucks here can go off a designated route to make a delivery. Since the safest option is for trucks to stay on their designated route, the Local Truck Route will likely need to be expanded, for the safe and efficient movement of freight. Though this may raise some concerns among residents, like neighborhood loading zones, it is a direct result of their consumer behavior.

Another complex issue here relates to bike lanes. Not all home deliveries are made via truck. App based e-bike deliveries have similarly exploded since Covid and we expect to see more logistics providers utilize cargo bikes to service last mile freight. Yet, it is also in the best interest of all New Yorkers that we keep the truck route network and bike lane network separate as much as possible. Too often we have seen bike lanes placed right in front of freight terminals, which creates the potential for unnecessary conflict. There is probably a pathway to have the Local Truck Route Network and the bike network coexist, especially with shared freight, but that is not the case for the Through Truck Route Network.

If, we use the redesigned Truck Route Network to both preserve and protect our industrial space, while incorporating smaller, electric powered vehicles into last mile delivery then we should open the Through Truck Network for oversized vehicles where it makes sense. We already have exceptions for 53-foot trailers as well as permitting oversized loads. We know that there are large

sections in the city that cannot accommodate larger vehicles. But there are plenty of places along the truck route network, particularly in the IBZs that can. Given that many of the vehicles that service the IBZs come from outside New York and 53-foot trailers are the industry standard. Initiatives such as daylighting can safely help larger vehicles maneuver city streets. This is a safe way to create a stronger culture of compliance throughout the network.

Lastly, to ensure that trucks do not needlessly drive through neighborhoods and local roads, we must maintain NYC's highway network. That does not mean that community-based improvements should not be part of the urban highway design, but it does mean that maintaining freight access is nonnegotiable.

By doing all this, we will create a living network to meet current demand while providing the flexibility to safely and efficiently absorb the projected 68% freight increase by 2045.

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