

Agenda Report

TO: CITY COUNCIL

DATE: MAY 16, 2005

THROUGH: LEGISLATIVE POLICY COMMITTEE

FROM: CITY MANAGER

SUBJECT: ADOPTION OF A RESOLUTION IN SUPPORT OF EFFORTS TO MAINTAIN THE CURRENT LIMITS ON TRUCK SIZE AND WEIGHT AND OPPOSE LONGER COMBINATION VEHICLES

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that City Council adopt a resolution in support of efforts to maintain existing limits on truck size and weight and oppose Longer Combination Vehicles, including triple trailer trucks and long double trailer trucks on any highway or roadways including dedicated truck-only lanes.

TRANSPORTATION ADVISORY COMMISSION

The Transportation Advisory Commission (TAC) reviewed the proposed program at a special meeting on April 7, 2005 and unanimously supported staff's recommendation that the City Council adopt a proposed resolution supporting maintaining the current limit on truck size and weight.

BACKGROUND

Since the early 1990's, there have been several federal legislative efforts to improve highway safety on a national level by freezing existing truck size and weight limitations. Currently, states can set their own truck size and weight standards for non-federal highways. The Southern California Association of Governments (SCAG) and other groups are urging the Governor and the Legislature to support a proposal to build regional toll truckways carrying longer double and triple trailer trucks (Triples) from the Los Angeles/Long Beach Ports to Nevada and from the Oakland Ports to the Silicon Valley. Proponents of bigger and heavier trucks are proposing to build a network of truck-only toll lanes throughout Southern California and the Bay Area, which would allow longer combination vehicles (LCVs) and longer double trailer trucks (Doubles).

The proposed truck-only lanes in Southern California would run along I-710 and across either I-10, SR 60, or SR 91 and then connect with I-15 to Nevada.

Under the goods movement plan proposed by SCAG LCVs would operate in dedicated truck lanes. However, these vehicles could impact city streets as they serve local businesses to make deliveries or to access services such as fuel and food. An incident involving a LCV, even in dedicated truck lane, could impact the entire freeway due to the size of the vehicle or trucks being diverted in to the mixed flow lanes to bypass the incident.

A coalition of cities and the Californians for Safe Highways are supporting legislation that would expand existing federal oversight beyond the 44,000 mile Interstate Highway System and are seeking to reestablish federal regulation of truck size and weight to promote motorist safety. Currently, Triples are not allowed in California. The maximum truck lengths permitted in California are 65 feet for a single semi-trailer and 75 feet for a double semi-trailer. Triples average 115,000 to 135,000 pounds and extend for 100 feet (the equivalence of 12 cars).

The California Department of Transportation has tested and videotaped the performance of each LCV type on California highways along the same 1,200 mile route. The test also included freeway interchanges, open-road travel, urban traffic, narrow lanes, two-lane roads, rest areas, weigh scales, off-tracking, speed on grades, braking, acceleration, travel in rain and wind, noise generation, and fuel economy. Some of the problems encountered included (1) the whip and sway action of the Triples on the open road, (2) the off-tracking of the Doubles on curves, and (3) the difficulty parking in rest areas of all LCV types.

Heavier single trailer trucks are also more dangerous in that they are more likely to roll over, have braking and steering problems, require longer stopping distances and have a large crash footprint. Bigger trucks also translate into greater damage to bridges and roads. While LCVs are cheaper to operate, the weight of these trucks accelerates the need for bridge and road repairs, costing taxpayers more money.

The City has supported the extension of the Alameda Corridor East to improve the movement of regional goods and to address truck traffic on area highways. The completion of this project will ease congestion and increase rail freight capacity by moving goods more effectively and safely from the Ports of Long Beach and Los Angeles through the San Gabriel Valley. This solution to goods movement makes sense and should continue to move forward.

SUMMARY ADVANTAGES AND DISADVANTAGES OF LCVs

The **advantages** of LCVs may include:

- **Productivity:** Improve productivity due to an increase of cargo-carrying capacity per driver.

- **Cost:** Transport costs may be lower due to fewer drivers needed per cargo unit, and more efficient use of fuel. The cost savings may be passed on to the consumer.
- **Traffic:** Improved productivity may result in fewer trucks on the road.
- **Air Emissions:** May produce lower air emissions per unit of cargo transported.

The **disadvantages** to LCVs may include:

- **Safety:** The third trailer on a Triple tends to sway and can leave the lane it is traveling in. LCVs also require more passing length and have a history of being underpowered while climbing grades.
- **Pavement Damage:** Heavier trucks deteriorate the pavement structure at an accelerated rate.
- **Infrastructure Damage:** LCVs, especially Doubles, demonstrate wider off-tracking on curves than current legal tractor-trailer combinations. Off-tracking can damage shoulders, curbs and roadside signs along ramps and intersections.
- **Parking:** The parking spaces at State rest areas and truck stops are not designed for trucks longer than 80 feet.
- **Traffic:** In theory, LCVs could result in fewer trucks on the road; however, if rail cargo is diverted to trucks due to lower costs, then any traffic advantage would be negated, and traffic could even worsen.

FISCAL IMPACT

While specific fiscal impacts cannot be identified if LCVs were allowed to travel on City streets there could be significant degradation to pavement and bridge structure requiring accelerated maintenance, rehabilitation or replacement.

Respectfully submitted,


CYNTHIA J. KURTZ
City Manager

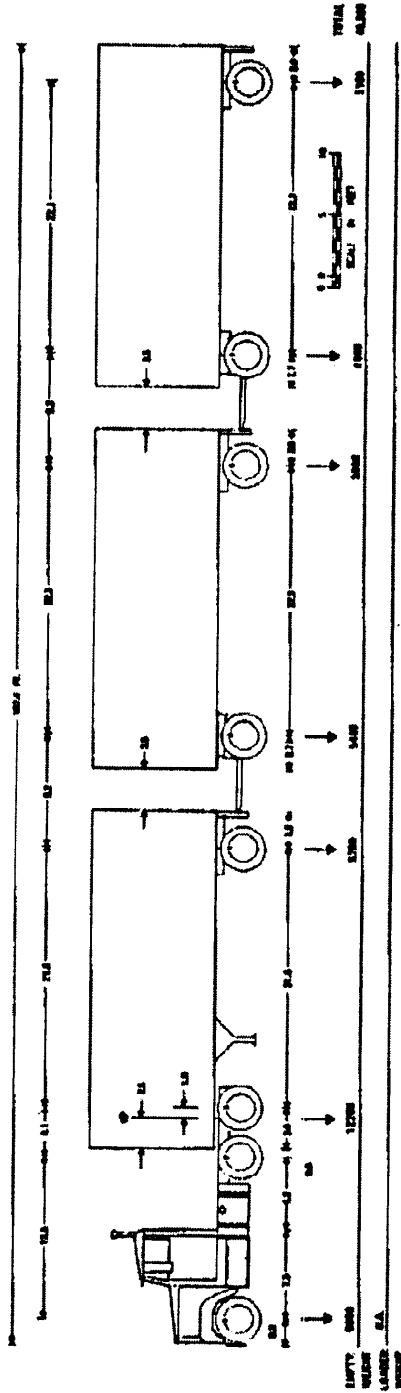
Prepared by:


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Principal Transportation Planner

Approved by:


JOYCE Y. AMERSON
Director of Transportation

LONGER COMBINATION VEHICLE DIMENSIONS TRIPLE TRAILERS (CONVENTIONAL)

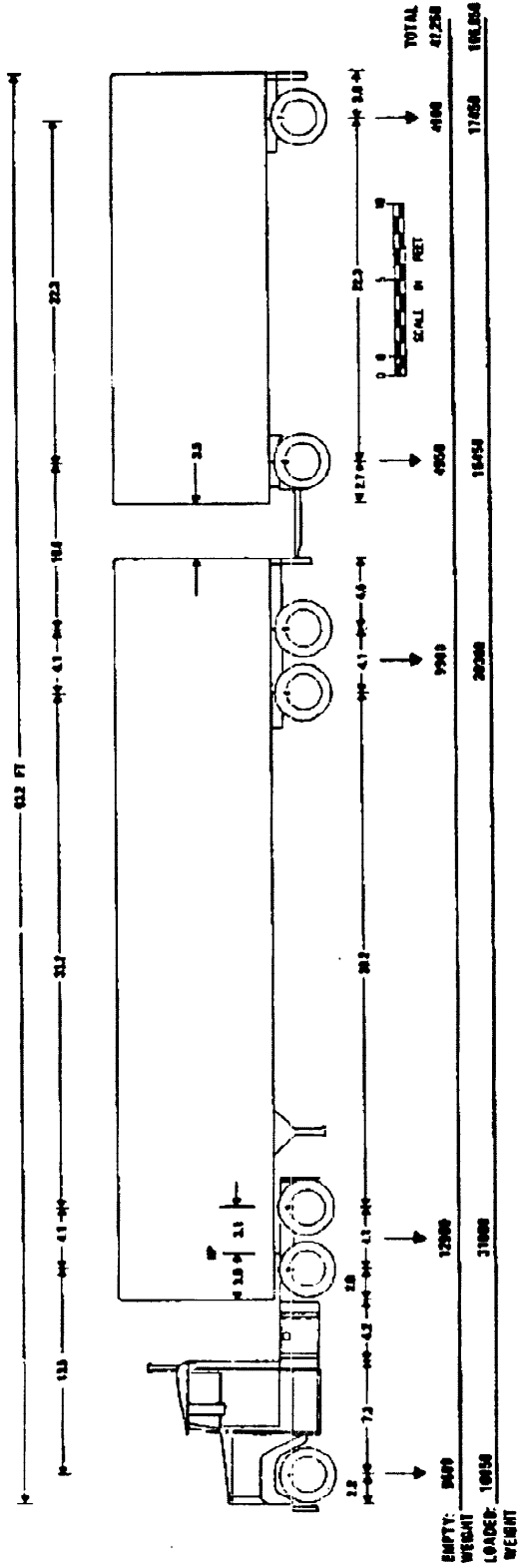


TRAILER COMBINATION : VT 1595,1554,1561

TRUCK : HX 4272
FORD LTL 6x4 CONVENTIONAL

NOTES : 28'x102" GREAT DANE VANS,96" DOLLYS

LONGER COMBINATION VEHICLE DIMENSIONS ROCKY MOUNTAIN DOUBLES



TRUCK : HX 4272
 TRAILER COMBINATION : 4818,VT 1581 (EMPTY)
4818,VT 1540 (LOADED)
 FORD LTL 6x4 CONVENTIONAL

NOTES : 48'x102" & 28'x102" GREAT DANE VANS,96" DOLLY

RESOLUTION NO. ____

A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF PASADENA, CALIFORNIA
SUPPORTING EFFORTS TO MAINTAIN THE CURRENT LIMITS ON TRUCK SIZE AND
WEIGHT AND TO OPPOSE LONGER COMBINATION VEHICLES

WHEREAS, the City Council, acting on behalf of the health and welfare of Pasadena citizens is committed to protecting the safety of motorists and to protecting the taxpayer's investment in our infrastructure; and

WHEREAS, Pasadena contains important transportation highways which connect the ports to the rest of the nation; and

WHEREAS, the California Legislature and the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors passed resolutions supporting the status quo on truck size and weight; and

WHEREAS, nearly 5,000 deaths and 100,000 injuries occurred as a result of large truck crashes in the year 2000; and

WHEREAS, according to the US DOT, National Bridge Inventory, 2000 data indicates that 28% of California's bridges are considered to be "structurally deficient" or "functionally obsolete;" and

WHEREAS, the August 2000 U.S. Department of Transportation Comprehensive Size and Weight Study found that: 1) Longer Combination Vehicles (LCVs)-long double and triple trailer trucks are at least 11% more likely to be involved in a fatal accident; 2) heavier single trailer trucks are more likely to experience dangerous rollover and braking problems, and ;3) longer and heavier trucks would mean \$319 billion in national budget costs, and

WHEREAS, the Southern California Association of Governments supports a system of dedicated truck toll lanes which will allow longer combination vehicles such as triple trailer trucks;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Pasadena City Council supports maintaining the current limits on truck size and weight and opposes LCVs-including triple trailer trucks and long double trailer trucks on any highways or roadways, including dedicated truck toll lanes.

Adopted at the regular meeting of the City Council on the _____ day of _____, 2005 by the following votes:

AYES:


NOES:

ABSENT:

ABSTAIN:

JANE L. RODRIGUEZ
City Clerk

APPROVED AS TO FORM:


NICHOLAS G RODRIGUEZ
Assistant City Attorney