

# **BEMIDJI CITY COUNCIL**

## **Work Session Agenda**

**Monday, February 26, 2018**

**City Hall  
Conference Room  
5:30 P.M.**



1. CALL TO ORDER / ROLL CALL
  
2. DISCUSSION – Commercial Vehicle Testing
  
3. ADJOURNMENT

**NOTE:** *All cellular devices are to be switched to a non-audible function during Council and Committee meetings.*



City Manager's Office

# MEMORANDUM

**TO:** City Council  
**FROM:** Nate Mathews, City Manager  
**DATE:** February 22, 2018  
**RE:** Commercial Vehicle Testing

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At our upcoming February 26 work session we will discuss the past and current use of City ROW for private commercial vehicle testing. The purpose of the work session is to 1) hold a general Council discussion about commercial vehicle testing that has and is occurring, 2) review our current Traffic and Vehicles code regarding truck traffic regulations; and 3) receive Council feedback/direction regarding any ordinances you may want to see developed that would potentially license/control/restrict commercial vehicle testing.

## 1. General Information

Bemidji has served as a test site for winter vehicle testing for decades. However, as the industry has grown, so have the vehicles, the number of testing routes, and calls of disquiet from residents. Each year during the winter the City receives numerous phone calls from residents in residential neighborhoods (primarily Nymore) concerned about the increased volume and types of cars and trucks being driven for commercial testing purposes in residential neighborhoods.

This week I met with representatives of the two area commercial testing companies, Roush, and MDE, to gain some deeper understanding of their operations. I have invited them to attend Monday's work session to discuss their operations with you.

### Roush

- Tests a mix of cars and trucks
- This year they are testing 60 vehicles in Bemidji and 10 in Hibbing
- Customers are the major car manufacturers such as Ford, GMC, Cummins, Dodge, Mercedes, Mitsubishi, Hyundai, etc.
- Over 20+ routes exist based upon the testing standards engineers at each car company seek.
- Turns, stops, speed, all are very prescriptive for each specific vehicle's test need.
- Routes are a mix of City, Rural, and Highway driving
- Employ 5-12 FT and also up to 220 drivers (during the winter months)
- Driving shifts are *day*: 5am-1:30 to 3:30pm; *night*: 4:30 pm – 1:30 to 3:30 am
- Test driving occurs 7 days a week
- Roush has been in Bemidji since 1999, located at the airport. Prior to this, Ford operated a cold weather test facility at the same location dating back to around the 1950/60s.

MDE

- Tests a mix of cars and trucks
- Amount of vehicles, what they test, and where they drive depends upon their contract
- This year they are testing 4 cars and 6 trucks
- Routes are a mix of City, Rural, and Highway driving
- Turns, stops, speed, all are very prescriptive for each specific vehicle's test need
- Of the trucks, 3 are semi trucks, 2 are box trucks, and 1 is a flatbed truck
- The 3 semi trucks operate on major collector roadways and the industrial park
- The 2 box trucks and flatbed trucks operate on major roadways and also on a city/residential route and are loaded with weight
- Driving shift routines are similar to Roush
- Employ up to 80 drivers in the winter
- MDE has been a Northern Township business for 9 years

**2. Traffic Code**

Attached is our traffic code regarding load limits and truck traffic. Our code is very similar to other City ordinances in that it addresses vehicle weight, which is important to pay attention to because of potential ROW damage. Our code like many others enables a City to designate/restrict travel by vehicles that exceed a certain weight. At this time, even though we have adopted this ordinance we do not have any designated truck route streets in Bemidji.

**3. Council Direction**

If the Council decides some form of restriction on commercial vehicle testing is in the public interest, some options for consideration may be to 1) implement truck routes; 2) impose a time limit for commercial vehicle testing echoing our code regarding noise pollution control, e.g. no driving of commercial testing vehicles between the hours of 10pm and 7am.; 3) a combination of the same.

Sec. 24-48. - Load limits.

The chief of police, upon the recommendation of the city engineer, may from time to time impose upon vehicular traffic on any part or all of the streets such load limits as may be necessary or desirable. Such limits, and the specific extent or weight to which loads are limited, shall be clearly and legibly signposted thereon. It is a misdemeanor for any person to operate a vehicle on any street in violation of the limitation so posted.

(Code 1986, § 7.09)

Sec. 24-51. - Regulation of truck traffic.

- (a) The city council, by resolution, may designate streets on which travel by vehicles in excess of 9,000 pounds gross weight is prohibited. The city manager shall erect appropriate signs on such streets. It shall be a misdemeanor for any person to operate a vehicle in violation of this section. Such restrictions shall be in addition to and not in lieu of those established by state statutes and the commissioner of transportation.
- (b) The following vehicles are exempt from subsection (a) of this section:
  - (1) Emergency vehicles.
  - (2) Trucks owned and operated by the city, public utilities, and any contractor or materialmen while engaged in the repair, maintenance, or construction of the streets, street improvements or street utilities.
  - (3) Refuse trucks.
  - (4) Licensed school buses.
  - (5) Delivery trucks while making a delivery to a residence located on a street affected by this section.
  - (6) Moving vans while engaged in moving household items from or to a residence located on the streets covered by this section.
  - (7) Recreational vehicles, licensed as such.
  - (8) When a police officer or other duly authorized law enforcement official in the performance of his duties directs or orders the vehicle to use the street covered by this section.

(Code 1986, § 7.14)