

# Peoria revised ordinance keeps trucks on Beardsley

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Ventana Lakes property owners will see no relief from truck traffic in a revised ordinance passed this week by the Peoria City Council.

In the first changes in the truck traffic code in 16 years, the council altered and eliminated several truck routes. The vote came after a lengthy report to the council by City Attorney Steve Kemp and after this question from council member Vicki Hunt: "What about the people of Ventana Lakes?"

Hunt referred to a recent City Council meeting at which dozens of Ventana Lakes residents voiced concerns over trucks driving by their neighborhood. The community, located near Beardsley Road and 99th Avenue, sees more than 1,300 sand-and-gravel trucks drive on Beardsley daily.

"Unfortunately, this ordinance change will not have any impact on the situation at Ventana Lakes," Kemp said. "Beardsley Road is the only way for those trucks to get to the gravel operations, so to get them off Beardsley would require a new access road. This ordinance change does not address that."

What it does address is the city's previously loose definition of what constitutes a truck. Previously, semi-trucks and gravel haulers counted, while dump trucks and cement trucks did not.

"We had a problem with them using non-truck routes and creating a lot of the same problems that larger trucks create," Kemp said.

The new definition, however, covers more types of trucks, a change that council member Dave Pearson said is the most important of anything in the ordinance.

"I always used to joke, when is a truck not a truck? When it is in Peoria," Pearson said. "I believe that changing the definition of a truck in this city has been a long time coming, and I think it will help our community a great deal."

Kemp said the fines related to truck route violations will also be increased. Previously, the fines levied included with it the related surcharges. Kemp said fines like these typically have a 100 percent surcharge, and that if the surcharge is included in the fine it significantly lowers the penalty to the violator. The new ordinance removes the surcharge from the fine, meaning a \$350 fine will now cost \$700.

"We hope that this will act as a deterrent to the truck companies, especially the ones that have in the past been willing to absorb our fines in order to travel outside of the designated truck routes," Kemp said.

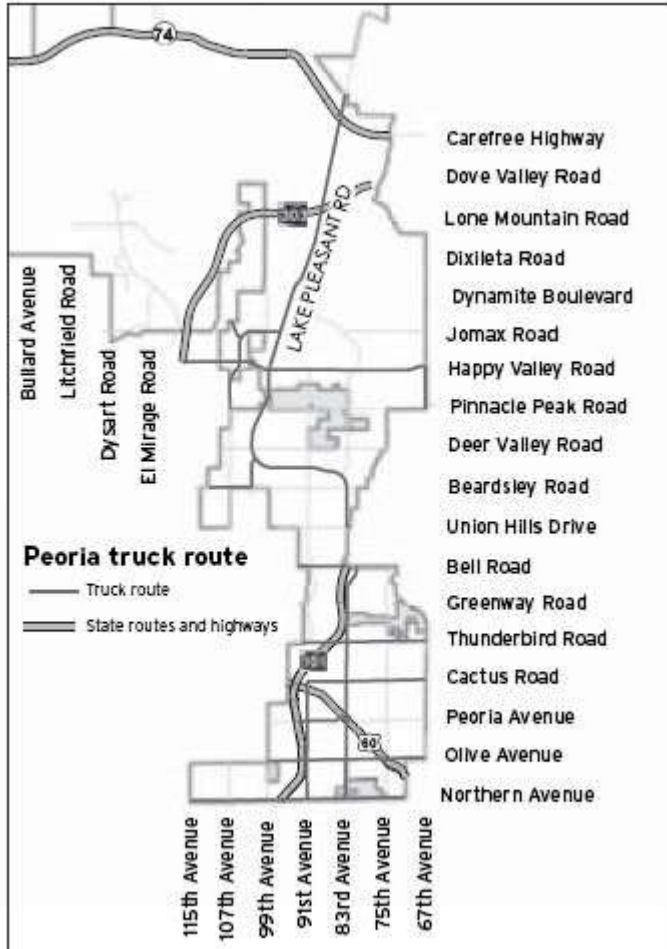
The new ordinance will also result in some adjustments to truck routes, including the de-classification of Peoria Avenue as a truck route east of Grand Avenue and the removal of Union Hills Drive as a truck route, as well. While most of the council members were pleased to see the changes being made, Pine District Councilor Carlo Leone voted against the ordinance change, citing fears that neighborhoods in his district in south Peoria will experience the same problems as Ventana Lakes in the north.

"My constituency is not happy about this, and I will be voting against it," Leone said.

Pearson reminded Leone the truck routes in the Pine District are not changing.

"I sympathize with Mr. Leone's concerns, and I think they are concerns that the whole city shares," Pearson said. "But the routes in the south are not changing, and there is no reason to believe the truck traffic will increase."

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