

Crystal Lake trucking company delays zoning request for proposed expansion



A "Stop Truck Terminal" sign seen in Crystal Lake. (Diana Wallace/Shaw Media)

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Residents railing against a Crystal Lake-based trucking company's expansion plans will have to wait until 2024 to voice their opposition to the local planning and zoning committee.

NVA Transportation, at 7013 Sands Road, first proposed a request to rezone the property in July to expand the business by more than 20 acres. The proposal includes parking spaces for more than 300 semi-trucks and a new 33,000-square-foot building, according to city documents.

This is the fourth delay requested by NVA Transportation since its first proposal in July. The company was set to appear on Wednesday before issuing a continuance last week.

"The continuance, and the short notice that we get on it, is frustrating as we try to mobilize all the concerned residents," Crystal Lake resident Kevin McVeary said. "But that's what we have to deal with."

The continuance was requested because lawyers representing "a handful of neighbors" asked for one, NVA Transportation attorney Mark Daniel said.

Nearby residents have continued to organize against the proposed expansion by creating the website [SaveSandsRoad.com](https://www.savesandsroad.com) and an online petition that has garnered more than 1,500 signatures. Yard signs reading "Stop truck terminal" can be found throughout Crystal Lake and along Route 14.

Major resident concerns include the impact on the environment and safety that increased truck traffic could bring. Since the delayed Nov. 15 meeting, an environmental and traffic study has been completed.

The traffic study, performed independently for the city by Civiltech Engineering, ultimately backed the proposal, with a recommendation to install a northbound left-turn lane on Sands Road.

The study estimates about five to 15 trucks per hour moving in and out of the facility during peak times, according to city documents.

"The traffic generated by the proposed NVA development will not substantially impact operations at this intersection," the report said.

The study also took in data from a 2020 traffic study done for the new Casey's General Store and Gas Station set to open sometime in 2024 on the northeast corner of Route 14 and Sands Road, Crystal Lake Community Development Director Kathryn Cowlin said.

An environmental impact plan conducted by Jacob & Hefner Associates reported the proposed site would comply with noise standards set by the city, county, state and federal governments. It also determined the facility would comply with air emission requirements.

More than 150 trees were removed to clear space for the proposed expansion last October, with no warning to neighbors, McVeary said.

"Any numbers they make at this point is not factual to what it was before they tore down that 50- to 100-foot-deep forest," he said.

Residents living along Sands Road discovered this isn't the first time the community has gathered to protest a zoning request on the same land. In 1985, hundreds of citizens were against the development of an industrial plot of land at the corner of Route 31 and Sands Road.

NVA Transportation and attorneys representing the company held a community meeting on Nov. 9 and about 30 residents attended. NVA made a "handful" of changes after meeting with neighbors, including adding a fence and gate around the property, Daniel said.

The continuance date has not yet been set, but NVA plans to present to the committee in January, Daniel said.

The next two scheduled Crystal Lake planning and zoning meetings are Jan. 3 and Jan. 17. NVA does not plan on having another community meeting ahead of the planning and zoning proposal, Daniel said.

"We've made ourselves available," he said. "They can always give a shout or request a Zoom call."