

June 16, 2025

Letter mailed & emailed to:

Mayor & Members of Council  
City of Courtenay  
830 Cliffe Avenue  
Courtenay, BC V9N 2J7

Copy emailed to:

Inspector Scott Mercer  
Comox Valley Police Department  
via email: scott.mercer@rcmp-grc.gc.ca

**Dear Mayor & Members of Council,**

Back Road residents have had more than enough of this chaos - thousands more cars and a thousand times more noise that is caused by high volumes of traffic and excessive speeds. Not a single driver cares that this is NOT the *Detour Route* or that Back Road is for *Local Traffic Only*. The level of driver negligence while transiting through a residential street is quite stunning when it's witnessed up close on Back Road. And because of this, residents' are rightly concerned for their safety and making different choices about how they go about their day to day routines. So why do we need to live like this?

We know you're all busy people, so we will be as brief as possible while trying to convey residents' feelings of betrayal and outrage.

**After meeting with the CVRD Sewer Commission on June 10th, we are asking the City Council if it was aware that the CVRD would in effect do NOTHING to enforce the detour route or mitigate volume until there was 8,800 cars on Back Road?**

*If Council members read our October 2023 letter about speed, high risk driver behaviour, and rat running they would have, at a minimum, implemented speed mitigation measures over a year ago. Instead they hired a Consultant last Spring and 6 months later approved a Traffic Circle for Valley View Drive/Back Road to be built near the end of the Project, that will slow traffic at a single conflict point on 3.2 kms of road.*

*The option proposed by the CVRD last year was to install a barricade north of the hairpin but they conveniently neglected to mention that option wouldn't be considered until 8,800 vehicles, or the equivalent of 6000+ new vehicles, were choosing Back Road as their detour route. So enforcement was NEVER actually the Plan, it was just words meant to placate Back Road residents.*

***We are therefore calling on the City of Courtenay to install a barricade now, because we have zero speed enforcement, no detour enforcement and the speeds of those cutting through is absolutely out-of-control. Back Road literally feels like living on a freeway.***

## **Do the Police have the resources to keep residents safe?**

*When our Campaign started, every local leader knew Back Road's notorious reputation for street racing. What they didn't know is just how bad it was until the City collected the first Speed Board data - 110 km/h is not reserved for nighttime racing any longer but happens in the middle of the day and it gets worse year over year.*

*We stopped reporting speed, street racing, dangerous driver behaviour, close calls, or near death experiences to the Police more than a year ago. This is the only advice we have gotten at every turn and we initially followed that advice - in fact some of us had the Police on speed dial. However, it accomplished two things, 1) raised people's blood pressure, and 2) adds numbers to a statistical report.*

*The problem starts with an understaffed Police department and two traffic officers for the entire Comox Valley, one of which is part time. Then there's the reality, as described by the new Police Inspector, almost the same words as his predecessor two years ago: **"To operate speed enforcement on Back Road is dangerous for Officers and puts the public at risk."***

*With the greatest respect for our Local Police, calling to report an incident has resulted in a zero response rate and becomes a data point on a quarterly report. People feel hopeless in this circumstance and stop making those calls.*

*The problems have exploded since the Project started as thousands more drivers divert onto Back Road for the sole purpose of saving time. Drivers are not phased by the fact this is a residential neighbourhood and show no concern over the disruption or the danger this poses to us.*

*As long as this is tolerated by our local leaders, drivers will continue to speed through with impunity on Back Road. The sooner Council accepts that it is not possible for the Police to save our neighbourhood, the sooner they will accept that it is Council that is responsible for our safety and it is Council that needs to fix this problem. And any new speed mitigation measures need to protect all residents from Ryan Road to the City's southern boundary. It is NOT enough to build a single (\$300,000) speed hump at Valley View Drive.*

## **How is this impacting people's lives?**

*The night time speed noise wakes us up many times a night. Through our recent survey we learned that many households close their windows at night and use a fan to try to mask the noise. And it's not just vehicles and motorbikes, it's commercial trucks, hundreds of contractor vehicles, Comox Taxi, logging & dump trucks, semi's and long flat deck trucks that are flooding our neighbourhood. They SPEED and IT'S LOUD!*

*People feel at high risk entering or exiting their DRIVEWAYS, one family invested thousands to try to soundproof their bedroom, people's health & well being is compromised and their entire lives are upended. Families argue because of the stress and fear - one wants to stay hoping something will change and the other wants to sell and get the hell out of here. Not only because there's 3 - 4,000 more cars going past our doorsteps but because driver behaviour and speed is so out-of-control they no longer feel safe even on the sidewalk or crossing at a crosswalk.*

## Summary

We do not feel that Council has taken this situation serious enough.

The City of Courtenay placed residents' safety in the hands of the CVRD and at no time did they disclose to us that they could do nothing except count cars. The CVRD emphasized that whatever problems existed on Back Road before the Project IS NOT their responsibility. Although they promised us that 'if necessary' a barricade could be installed at Morrison, they conveniently neglected to tell us that 8,800 cars was the magic number before this option was considered. It appears that everyone knew, except us, and regrettably we placed our trust and hope that signage and enforcement would work. Their Plan failed spectacularly.

We don't accept moving residents through on a residential street between Comox and Courtenay when there are multiple Arterial roads designed for and designated as detour routes. Courtenay roads are the responsibility of Courtenay Council. We demand that you accept that responsibility and make changes to protect Back Road residents. The CVRD is focused on a number counting exercise and it is based on a severely inflated view of Back Road's safe carrying capacity. Back Road is being used as an Arterial route and it's completely unacceptable.

The CVRD's closures at Comox Avenue and last week at Strathcona & Corker will do nothing to change the traffic pattern on Courtenay's Back Road as vehicles continue to re-route from Ryan Road and up MacDonald for the duration of the project.

The profound impact on our lives is impossible to overstate. The City should choose a **barricade that divides the two communities at Courtenay's southern boundary** and could do so **immediately and inexpensively**.

This option will force drivers to stay on the appropriate Arterial roads and stop them from rat running through our residential neighbourhood. This will also serve to stop the ever increasing number of large commercial vehicles, and an ever increasing number of motorbikes and cars that street race day and night from Comox to Courtenay.

It is time for City Council to put Courtenay residents FIRST and take IMMEDIATE ACTION.

Regards,

*Carolyn Rice*

Carolyn Rice  
Campaign to Make Back Road Safe