

Carolyn & David Rice

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November 6, 2023

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

Board of Directors, CV Regional District
770 Harmston Avenue, Courtenay V9N 2X6

Mayor & Members of Council
Town of Comox
1809 Beaufort Ave, Comox V9M 1R9

BC Ministry of Transportation & Infrastructure
550 Comox Avenue, Courtenay V9N 3P6

Dear Mayors, Members of Council, CVRD Directors & MoTI Representative:

Re: CVRD – Traffic Management Strategy

You will have received our letter dated October 18th outlining the current issues and unsafe conditions on Back Road. We have subsequently received a copy of the CVRD *Traffic Management Strategy* (TMS) for the *Sewer Conveyance Project*, adopted in August 2023. We are frankly appalled that that the *Traffic Management Strategy* for Back Road lacks any meaningful measures to protect our residential neighbourhood from the effects of a major traffic interruption during the Construction Project. The *Strategy* was written without consultation or input from the people who live on Back Road and in our opinion it is worthless.

It is not so much a *Strategy* for Back Road, but an unfocused discussion. The first suggestion [Section 5.4, p24] doesn't relate to the primary objective of (non-local traffic) deterrence and the second is absurd given the design and state of the roadway. In fact, the entire section dedicated to Back Road is presented in a manner that suggests the ideas will not be implemented at all.

Following the *Potential Calming Measures* [p24] it states; '*while these measures can help discourage use of this corridor as a detour route, these measures and speed humps in particular are often not universally supported by residents. Therefore, the benefits of traffic calming should be weighed against the impact on residents and an appropriate balance sought. Increased police enforcement will also support the use of appropriate speeds.*' Speed is not the purpose of the TMS, although it is one of our ongoing concerns. The

entire TMS seeks to manage the traffic flow with mitigation steps to ensure traffic is using the designated arterial detour routes. Therefore the singular purpose of the *Strategy* planned for Back Road should be to mitigate the damaging effect of potentially thousands more vehicles detouring into a residential neighbourhood and bypassing the designated arterial detour routes.

The ideas put forth are incongruent with the sheer scope of the traffic that will overwhelm our neighbourhood during the *Sewer Conveyance Project*. To suggest that we endure thousands more vehicles transiting Back Road is ludicrous and unacceptable. Even more ludicrous is the suggestion that Police speed enforcement will be important once all the cars detour onto Back Road. The police have already indicated to us that it is unsafe to operate effective speed enforcement on Back Road. If there is no effective deterrence, we believe that residents would choose a barricade at each access point to stop the non-local traffic, never mind speed humps.

The TMS estimates the daily number of vehicles on Back Road at 2000-2500 per day when the actual number is 5400 VPD according to the recent traffic study conducted by the City of Courtenay. Our neighbourhood is already overwhelmed by traffic volume, excessive speeds and reckless driving behaviour. There is also increasingly more commercial truck traffic transiting and also exceeding posted speeds.

We are regularly referred to the Police who have been unable to respond to our complaints. The Police are not about to step into the role of stopping or discouraging non-local traffic from using Back Road, so to imagine the Police are going to enforce speeds and/or stop non-local traffic is delusional thinking in our opinion.

The *Traffic Management Strategy* fails Back Road residents and raises many questions including:

- Why are there no specific measurable steps, actions and goals set out to deter or discourage traffic from rerouting onto Back Road?
- How does a speed board deter/discourage drivers from using Back Road when the neighbourhood is already overrun with non-local traffic using this Road as a *rat running route? **cut through driving; using residential side streets or any unintended shortcut instead of main road*
- How would the curb extensions be installed on a narrow road without curbs, shoulders or sidewalks?
- If local knowledge and information is not utilized for the purpose of developing an effective *Strategy*, what can we expect from an outside Project contractor who has no local authority or knowledge?
- What data or other information will the Contractor rely on to make decisions or to take steps once the traffic problems unfold?

- Why was the TMS approved, when the governing bodies are fully aware of the current problems that exist on Back Road?

Increasing traffic volumes combined with excessive speed have brought residents together to sound the alarm over issues of safety and livability on Back Road. We are acutely aware of the profound impact a Construction Project of this magnitude and duration will have on us. The problems that exist today have escalated quickly and will be compounded enormously by this project.

The greatest volume of traffic transiting Back Road today is entering from Ryan Road, Comox Avenue and Lerwick via MacDonald where drivers bypass the arterial routes and use this residential road as their personal arterial thoroughfare route. What do we predict will happen when there is just one lane westbound on Comox Avenue and all eastbound traffic is diverted to Ryan Road? We guarantee that Back Road will become a convenient right hand turn from all three arterials for thousands more vehicles and the greatest volume will be from the eastbound traffic on Ryan Road or from Lerwick via MacDonald.

The partners with jurisdictional responsibility for Back Road should install speed humps along the entire length of Back Road as the first and most effective measure to deter traffic volume and speeds. Our previous recommendation for a minimum of three 3-way stops located at MacDonald, Marsland and Valley View should be a priority before the Project starts. In our opinion, speed humps should also be placed around the playground on McDonald and perhaps even a 3 way stop at Lancaster to further deter the traffic that will rat run during the Project. As recent as last May, the speed board on MacDonald confirmed that the majority of drivers speed excessively through the playground zone.

Effective mitigation measures on McDonald and Back Road, combined with a 40 km/h speed limit on both, would severely reduce the desirability of using Back Road as a rat running route and keep traffic on the major arterial routes where it belongs.

A combination of speed humps, stop signs and a reduced speed limit (and if necessary, a barricade at Courtenay's southern boundary) are all critical to restoring neighbourhood safety and livability both during this two-year project and into the future.

In our previous letter, we stated that we have met with residents along the entire 3.3 km length of Back Road; however, the actual distance between Ryan Road and Comox Avenue is 4.6 km. Residents on Back Road and Glacier View Drive who live within the City of Courtenay, CVRD, First Nation or the Town of Comox, are involved in the *Make Back Road Safe* campaign.

The CVRD's *Traffic Management Strategy* planned for Back Road does not meet the standard of protecting or preserving the safety and livability of our residential

neighbourhood. We request that there is a consultation process with the *Make Back Road Safe* Steering Committee who have done their homework, have the local knowledge and can speak with confidence about the needs of our neighbourhood. Through this process we can develop effective solutions to keep our neighbourhood safe during this Project.

Yours truly,

Original signed

Carolyn & David Rice
On behalf of the Residents of Back Road

c: Back Road residents