

Good afternoon Mayor Wells & members of Council, my name is Carolyn Rice and I am a resident of Courtenay living on Back Road. I have lived in the Valley View area for 20 years.

Our Campaign to *Make Back Road Safe* started 9 months ago. From the first families we met to the last, the #1 issue is SPEED. Excessive speeds, high level noise from speed and street racing. It wasn't only a problem for those of us living along the longest straight stretch of road, it was from one end to the other including roads that connect to Back Road.

We have researched and spent hours monitoring speeds and observing traffic patterns and together with our shared stories we learned this is a much more serious problem.

The Petitioning was the most insightful and critical phase of our campaign - people were exceedingly grateful to see us and to share their stories. All but one person over 4.6 km signed our petition and we reached 80% of the households.

We feel imprisoned in our homes while our street has been hijacked by street racers and people racing through as their preferred shortcut route - it has robbed us of our right to enjoy our property and to feel safe - and its no longer just cars and trucks, there is all manner of Commercial vehicles, taxis, trucks with horse trailers, construction vehicles with long flat deck trailers and they **ALL SPEED**. Drivers who use Back Road seem wired for speed - there are no traffic lights, potential congestion and they are oblivious to how their driving behaviour impacts our lives.

Why is this OK?

People are afraid to walk or cycle, some are afraid to drive on Back Road - people can't sleep and close their windows day and night even when it's 35 degrees to shut out the street racers & high speed traffic noise. They've stopped walking and cycling because they are seriously afraid of being killed even where there is a sidewalk & a crosswalk.

I no longer walk anywhere on Back Road so canvassing opened my eyes to just how risky it is to be anywhere near the road - drivers consider pedestrians and cyclists an inconvenience.

Visit Back Road for just 15 minutes, park near Tunner facing Ryan Road and observe the chaos, then tell us you are not shocked by this.

Traffic pours off of Ryan Road at 50 km/h, while a high number of vehicles are entering & exiting Tunner Drive, and vehicles are transiting at 60 km/h from 10th to Ryan - it's like there's a race to be won and it is truly the most chaotic scene. People can't even get in or out of their driveways at times and when they do, they need a careful plan to do so - but drivers could care less, once they can get around you, they hit the gas, clearly irritated that someone slowed them down. Unfortunately it seems this has all become normalized.

Three people told me they were almost **killed in the 10th Street crosswalk and** people's **properties are regularly damaged all** because of speed and drivers who are out-of-control.

These stories are told on every doorstep and people are genuinely traumatized by these events.

Getting SOMEWHERE FAST IS the sole reason traffic volume and speed has exploded on Back Road - it can't possibly come as a surprise to anyone since Ryan Road was near capacity 20 years ago as noted in a 2005 Courtenay Traffic Study - the traffic congestion on the only two East/West Arterials has long ago exceeded capacity but we keep building hundreds of new housing units without any new highway infrastructure and there are no future plans - residential areas like Back Road are the casualty for this infrastructure failure.

The majority of traffic on Back Rd exits/enters from Ryan Road, Comox Ave, MacDonald and 10th Street, and most are rat running to Comox or Courtenay and disrupting and endangering many neighbourhoods.

When we signal for drivers to slow down, stop or slow to make a turn into our driveways or drive at the posted speed they flip us the middle finger, scowl, lay on the horn, bumper ride, pass us with no concern for safety, or try to peel around us and then stomp on the gas.

ROAD DESIGN / FUNCTION

Back Road is mostly unchanged over six decades and has seen little to NO improvement since East Courtenay was built over 30 years ago. We are a Collector road to move traffic from those local roads adjacent to Back Road NOT an Arterial route that is designed and built to carry the overflow from the Arterials. Over the past 2 years we have become an **Arterial Route** and it's destroying our neighbourhood.

A Collector Road is expected to carry higher volumes of traffic by design but when you build it as a residential road and then turn it into a highway there's a very high risk of people being killed. Its the equivalent of building houses along Ryan Road and later building driveways with direct access.

A Collector road should serve multiple uses such as cycling, pedestrian sidewalks and parking and we HAVE NONE OF THIS except for a sidewalk along one short stretch of road. So no one cycles or walks anymore who know the risk - and the sole purpose of Back Road NOW is for cars, fast cars, crotch rockets, motorbikes, commercial trucks, taxis, and all others - it is chaotic and dangerous on a massive scale!

Cars pass us when we're done the speed limit and crawl up our bumpers to get out of their way - I recently **filmed 3 cars speeding bumper to bumper** heading toward a blind corner with two cyclists ahead of them and move into the oncoming lane when they had no idea what was around the corner. A lot of people could have died but for 5 seconds of grace.

Our video and many others have been provided to the City.

Near head on collisions in the hairpin are so common, we heard it over and over again - I personally had it happen twice in one month. A long time resident regularly pulls or assists people who have landed in the ditch due to speed and overestimating their driving skills.

19 out of 20 vehicles do little more than fake a stop at the 10th Street intersection. It's entertainment for local residents who can see over the intersection and they describe it like watching a movie with plenty of fender benders and minor smash ups to provide drama and suspense.

The **concrete barriers** on one corner property at the 4 way helps protect a home and property from out of control drivers. Further down at Tunner the same thing - concrete barriers - look for them they're slightly askew from being hit so many times.

Further south our properties are protected only because they sit uphill but the downhill properties at **Farquharson and near the hairpin are at high risk** of a driver careening out of control. A single home on Farquharson below Back Road had not one but two cars land in their backyard and another resident just last month had a car careen down the bank stopping just shy of plowing into his house. There is nothing there to protect them residents or their homes. An Audi, I estimated was doing 100 km/h, when he rocketed out of the intersection & along that section of road on a Saturday afternoon - and **he had just left the starting line.**

BACK ROAD IS so bad that every day we are reminded why we started this campaign

We are calling for:

Speed humps

100% of residents who signed our petition support this measure because it is the only way there will be 24/7 speed enforcement and based on our research, they are the **most efficient and cost effective option** available. And there are many models to choose from.

3 Way Stops

We have called for two 3 way **stop signs at Valley View and at Marsland** - both to slow down the speed track and to make entering and exiting from Back Road safer - two near fatal accidents at Valley View last year 8 months apart, the intersection is low enough there is a sightline issue for northbound vehicles - Marsland Drive sits between two blind corners before the hairpin and it is so dangerous no one feels safe to make a left turn.

Our petition reflects the City's decision to lower local speeds to **40 km/h speed** as the new standard speed on all local & collector roads. We are asking however that Back Road be prioritized in the first phase of implementation.

We know that signs alone will not begin to address the serious issues that we face, however we applaud the City for taking this important step and sending the right message.

Closing

The **Sewer Project** has the potential to make our lives much much worse and you will have read our letter addressed to all governing parties over the approach to managing the traffic.

We are in discussions with the appropriate parties and understand their limited role because this is not actually a CVRD Sewer Commission problem - yes they will be responsible for detour signs and quote *discouraging* Back Road as an alternate route - however the problem is right now and in the future and belongs to the City of Courtenay, Town of Comox and MoTI, not the CVRD.

To close we want to express our appreciation to the City's Public Works and Engineering Directors for meeting with us and fielding our many calls and requests.

The situation here is serious and we believe that Council needs to act with urgency.