

COMMENTS RECEIVED WITH THE OPSRRA TRIATHLON SURVEY SEPTEMBER 2012

1. Not appropriate to close the only road through the community. This is especially so because the road is closed before any cyclists are on the road and long after the majority are past the last 10 or so riders are holding up many more cars than riders.
Do not try and use this nebulous justification of improving tourism to justify this road closure.
 1. Already there are more cars using the road through Shirley than can be safely accommodated.
 2. Most local residents do not want increased tourism.
 3. There are alternatives to closing the road, let's evaluate them and choose one that does not inconvenience whole communities.
2. I could live with my inconvenience and am not in principle against an occasional few hours of public road closure for a public event. My concern relates to Emergency Service responses, especially in the event of fire. Fire risk was rated 'Extreme' this August 12th. Highway 14, especially beyond Otter Point Rd, is unsuitable for closure when it's the only road in and out and it's an inadequate road at that.
3. Closing our only road is not an option. A provincial highway should not be closed for any sporting event. This Triathlon should remain in Sooke.
I am opposed to this event coming through Shirley. No other Triathlon in Canada requires road closures. There was no input from the Shirley community. Our road is very dangerous and in very bad repair not suitable for regular daily traffic and certainly not for fast moving cyclists.
4. Very poor communication by organizers to residents as to the timing of road closures. Their written communication indicated eastbound would be open for local traffic at 10:30 but RCMP at side roads were told not until after noon. We had an issue trying to get to the airport on time..very frustrating for us as well as RCMP who very graciously gave a number of us an escort into town!
5. In Shirley the highway is the only through road and emergency access, from Muir Creek to Loss Creek, and accordingly the only way to guarantee emergency service response time is to relocate the race event to another location outside Shirley. The race sponsor admits the valid concerns created by the race in Shirley; but only offers non solutions or partial solutions that do not adequately address the health and safety risks created by the race. The only responsible solution for the protection of Shirley residents is the relocate the Shirley portion of the race to another location.
6. I am shocked and surprised that race organizers were not required to establish an emergency services agreement. Whoever negotiated this agreement with the race organizers did it with surprisingly little insight into the community it was impacting.
7. Strongly object to entire communities (no matter how small) being held under siege for any private event, particularly with no compensation made to taxpayers for the inconvenience - no economic benefit at all to the area. Highways are for everyone at all times. Since it is unlikely objections will cause the event to be held elsewhere, suggest organizers be required to make a substantial donation to the Shirley Fire Protection Society (note last year's incident involving a cyclist who was seriously injured) and the Shirley Community Association.
8. Some people have to go to work in the area. I used to be one of them. I know there are others also.

It made us VERY ANGRY!!!!!! I was a home support worker and I had clients in the area that needed help. Getting from one client to another was very difficult with the bikers. If I was late seniors became very worried.

I see no reason why, bikers from out of the area, have the right to close the only road. I bet if I was putting on a major horseback ride they would not close the road for me.

Thank you. This matter has been really bugging me for a long time!

9. It is entirely inappropriate to close a public highway for a private race.

In addition, there is no possible way to contact every person who lives or is staying on the route. The French Beach camping facility is full at this time, and there is no way to give adequate notice to short-term visitors, who may very well have plans for that day which are disrupted. They may even have plans to catch a plane or a ferry that morning, plans that require far-ahead reservations. In addition, there are numerous B&B and home rental properties in the area. It can hardly be a positive to need to inform any and all potential visitors that they may be imprisoned for a portion of their visit. This is not at all conducive to any rental or visit they may plan at other times during the year -- no way to know if some private company might manage to close a public highway.

It is also extremely unsafe to nationally advertise this stretch of highway as a bicycle venue -- it is too narrow and has no shoulders. It is not well kept up, and is full of potholes and patches. It is the only route for lumber trucks, gravel trucks and vacation vehicles. It is, of course, the only route for residents and emergency vehicles. It is an extremely unsafe road for bicyclists, particularly for recreational racing bicycle riders, who tend to ride in groups and in the center of the road -- a road with a 60 to 80 km speed limit (safe for normal vehicles.)

I can think of no conceivable reason to allow the Sooke Triathlon to be run on West Coast Road at any point where an alternate route through Sooke and on into Victoria and beyond is unavailable. It is unsafe. It is clearly unfair to local residents. It is, quite simply, wrong.

10. The race organizers should not be allowed to close Hwy 14 in this area. Thank you

11. If the race requires the closure in HWY 14 in Shirley - then it should NOT BE ALLOWED TO HAPPEN HERE. If they can organize the race with the HWY open then no problem.

12. Closing the only road going in or out of a community(s) is ludicrous.

Anywhere else it would not have been considered. There is no piece of gold that could compensate, ie AED. Meeting with organizers, compensation, guaranteed response time?? Silly to think that it could even happen.

13. My weekend plans had to be changed because of this race. It was beyond inconvenient.

14. I find it hard to believe that you can close a public road to the people who live here. Is that even legal?

15. Please, just cancel this silly event.

16. I liked having the triathlon out here. It's a welcome change from motorcycles, trail bikes, RV's, and all the other fossil-fuel burners. It reminds me of the Swiftsure.

I don't see why the fire trucks couldn't get past the bikes if they had to answer a call.

17. Should the race organizers be required to meet with representatives from local fire, police and ambulance to agree on an emergency services plan for race day?

I cannot believe this wasn't done.

I don't see anything wrong with this race, it's only one day There must be better things to bitch about.

18. If we are going to hold a triathlon the road needs to be improved. The only reason that the road is closed to traffic is because it is too narrow and does not have adequate shoulders to allow bicycles and cars to safely share the road. If the road is improved, like the Sea to Sky highway (Hwy 99) has been recently, then the triathlon could be a draw for bicycle tourism to the region and a boost to our local economy. It would also allow us all to enjoy the possibility of safely riding our own bicycles on our local road.
19. There was a great deal of confusion between the race organizers, residents and RCMP re timing of when the road was to re-open. VERY poor communication on the part of race organizers which greatly inconvenienced a number of residents.
20. We were not adversely affected. It happens early enough on a Sunday morning that business should not be affected. The only concern is that emergency response must take precedent over the race.
I am quite happy to have the race come by. Last year we were course marshals and enjoyed ourselves. We could not volunteer this year due to prior commitments
21. Although I have no problem with this event and the organizers are trying very hard to accommodate residents, and include a nice donation to the local Fire Dept., I have a concern about the safety of the participants on a road that was never intended for bicycle racing!
If coverage of the event is shown on TSN as promised, will the bumpy cracked roadway be evident and will that attract or detract viewers...for that reason alone the organizers might want to find a more pleasing location for cyclists. On the other hand, I am not happy to have this place where I live crawling with tourists **when there aren't many facilities for them**, so if the bumpy road detracts, that's just as well.
I am interested to know what local businesses there are that might lose money due to lack of business of just one Sunday morning? Out here all I can think of is a B & B - maybe someone from the race event can book a stay, if that's what it will take.
Apart from seeing a few more cyclists on Westcoast Road than usual prior to and just after the event, the event itself takes place and clears away in an efficient manner. No complaints about the event.
22. Why can't just half the road be used .. and half used to keep traffic semi moving...This would work easily with some thought... but to cut us all off with functional businesses!! Allow one vein to remain moving.. no matter how slow...
The event is a great idea... and organized well...Just keep one side of our HIGHWAY open...This is EVERYONE's route... not just ones....
23. We are absolutely opposed to the triathlon on Hwy 14. It is the only road we can use and the road closure affects us personally and our guests (name of resort removed). We had a couple who had to catch a flight to Toronto and were forced to leave before the road closure. A second couple had to leave early to get a ferry to Washington State. Others had to change their plans for their day activities because they could not leave the property. We never saw any positive effect from the TSN coverage of this event.
24. I had 2 sick children that day (stomach flu) & was unable go into Sooke until the afternoon to get supplies to help them feel better. My husband also had to change plans to have a club meeting at our house because of the road closure.
The organizers try to "sell" the event to us as improving tourism in the area but that would only benefit a select few that run B & B's or the provincial camp sites & only later on. For that weekend we are not close enough to Sooke (25 min by car) for racers to stay & if I was taking a vacation & was told - by the way if you plan on leaving or going anywhere on Sun you need to leave before 7 AM or wait until 12 PM - I would not want to stay there & may never come back.

25. I think it would be as shame to lose this kind of exposure on national television. In the years I have lived in Shirley I have experienced numerous road closure that have lasted longer than the triathlon due to misfortune or nature. The triathlon is well publicized and everyone is made aware of the closures. From my observations as a volunteer at this year's triathlon at the Shirley hall I noted that the road closure could be fine-tuned. If the location of the athlete's on the West Coast road was monitored more closely there were many opportunities to move traffic through the closed stretches using a lead vehicle to keep the speed down. Better communication and co-ordination could improve traffic movement and community support.
26. It was only by chance that I wasn't inconvenienced by the road closure. I need to be able to get out if I have an emergency. - WITHOUT EXTRA HASSLE! Please do NOT allow the triathlon to close the road between Shirley and Sooke.
27. Every year we try to plan a birthday party for our son (Aug 12th is his birthday) Saturday does not work for most families attending so Sunday is the day. Each and every year we cannot invite folks to our home due to the event. We end up going in to town very early to wait around until we can have our party. It does not make for a very fun time.
28. Having not known about the road closure caused a serious problem at our home in Shirley last August. A crane truck loaded with timber was scheduled to deliver and erect the frame for a building on our property. The truck had come from Port Alberni with the wood. It was my mistake for having booked it for that day I just had not realized the road would be closed.
29. I think it is just crap that people not from this community come here to run a sporting event and are able to tell people here that they are not allowed to use the only road that is available to them. not only does it make us prisoners in our homes because we are not allowed to use the road during that time, it also makes any emergency response time very much increased due to the people, cars, and bikes that are in the road during the race. it is my opinion that the race needs to be in a setting that is not going to make the residents trapped at home.
30. I think that small mindedness is at work to stop this race. Many of those living out here do so because any change is seen as a deep personal inconvenience or as a personal attack. It is difficult to adapt to. There is enough notice to work around, if there is the ability to plan ahead. Please find a way to stick to it and make it work. It is an enhancement to this community. What few local businesses are out here suffer daily as it is.
More things like this, especially if there was an established spectator's area could bring them some very good days. If they went to the crowd.
31. The worst part of this triathlon is the utter disdain with which local residents are treated. I felt like a third world squatter, not a law abiding, tax paying Canadian citizen.
32. They can expect an even more irate response next year- I plan on booking myself to several events on likely days, and will be leaving at a realistic for me departure time, driving at my speed...so they can !@#!@#!@ off with telling me to go faster. I will expect full and total compensation if I am inconvenienced. At full appropriate rates.
33. It is a great event and we can all sacrifice a little bit for a few short hours.
34. The only road in or out should not be closed for an event like this. It should only be closed in an emergency. This event should only be held where there is a secondary road to go around.
35. I feel like we are all very accustom, and at times inconvenienced in this area to road delays due to accidents, road repairs and storm debris. I support the benefits of the Triathlon as long as they provide a clearly communicated plan for the road closure times

- and can provide guaranteed emergency service escorts should they be required. I believe the Triathlon encourages health and wellness, showcases the beauty of the area for tourism benefits, and builds community pride and spirit.
36. It's one morning per year, not a big deal.
37. A dollar for dollar compensation for business may not be practical for the event to be successful. Consider instead an incentive- like including the business in the video presentations, TV ads, etc... perhaps impacted businesses could be considered in the same way as other "sponsors" and be included in the advertising and acknowledgements.
- Overall, I consider the triathlon a great way to feature our neck of the woods- let's take a POSITIVE, SOLUTION FOCUSED approach to any inconveniences.
38. It is inappropriate to close (for a private purpose) a public road for an extended period of time where that road is the only road providing access to an area. I believe that at least one lane of the road should always remain open and that two-way traffic be maintained most of the time. West Coast Road is the only access road to residents and businesses in this area, so should not be closed for a private event such as the triathlon.
39. I have watched races all over the world and there are always road closers. As long as emergency services are planned for I welcome the race.
40. I was astounded that a main road could be shut down for such a proportionately small interest group. What about tourists or campers heading out for beaches? Residents of Shirley? Jordan River? Port Renfrew - this is OUR road.
- This race belongs in a more urban area - where people have many alternate routes if need be. Think about the Sept 1st crash just past Gordon's Beach.....what if that had happened during this foreign conglomerate commercial race???
- Is it really worth the inconvenience and insult to the residents and taxpayers along this route to sponsor this small event?
41. It's Sooke's triathlon but Sooke isn't really inconvenienced by this event the people west of Sooke suffer - it's not just the day of the race it's also the days leading up to the race when participants come to do practice runs ... they ride 2 or 3 abroad along Otter Point Rd. I also found the low flying helicopter noise disturbing to myself and my pets. If Sooke wants to have a triathlon then they should figure out a way to keep the event in Sooke not have the majority of the event staged in outlying communities
42. 5 hours of inconvenience once a year is hardly justifies forfeiting the positive exposure to the area, which could increase tourism, property values. As long as any businesses impacted are compensated, and triathlon participants are well aware they use the road "at their own risk" with no guarantees to emergency services for themselves, and emergency services to the community will impact the event if necessary, I don't see any problem with this.
43. Thank you for doing this survey. The exuberance about the triathlon by some groups in the community (including the District of Sooke) causes an override of common sense.
44. This is a Sooke thing, so it should stay within the Sooke boundaries without inconvenience residents, including the residents of the communities beyond Sooke. The highway should be kept open at all times, it is the only way in or out for a lot of people. Furthermore, it is a commercial undertaking so if things stay the way they are, businesses should be fairly compensated.
45. Tri athletes bring business in, not lose business. Fire, police, and ambulance were part of the organizing committee.

46. The publicity generated from the triathlon highlights how unsafe the road actually is, national TV coverage may prompt senior governments to properly fund improvements. A planned closure on a Sunday morning is fine. Unsafe conditions lead to "UNPLANNED" closures which then inconvenience everyone for unknown periods of time.
47. Some of us do not have the luxury of having Sundays off. My boyfriend was an hour late for work. Also we have a handyman coming to our house by the Sooke Fire Hall from Point no Point and he was not able to come, the flag people on Westcoast Rd would not let him through. I love that there is an event like this, but if people need to go to work we need to be let through right away, not inconvenienced for hours. This either needs to be relocated or only one lane of Otter Point needs to be used and there can be flag people for single lane alternating traffic.
48. First of all, how can response times be guaranteed on any date. Things happen at the best of times, deer leaping in front of vehicles, landslides, trees falling, etc. The best approach, in our minds would be to have a plan of action for this event. Businesses have every opportunity to make this work for them, if they are even open on a Sunday morning! Even if they are not, they could work it to their benefit with a little planning. Once we get more of the community out as supporters and spectators there will be much less whining. I cycled part of the route, not as a participant, but as a spectator and supporter. This way I was still able to get around and not be in the way. I cycled on the 'wrong side of the road' in order to stay out of the way of the competitors. I cycled with caution in case I encountered any vehicles, which I did. I pulled over and stopped whenever this happened. I noted that the drivers were all also proceeding with caution. It wasn't a problem; it simply slowed a few people down for a short period of time. I find it hard to believe that anybody, including the race participants, objecting to true emergency response vehicles getting through. Has it happened yet? The Shirley Fire Dept. & Community Association could make it an event that morning (pancake breakfast?) and have most of their people already there, if they wanted to. Hand out flags that mount on the vehicle to any emergency personnel to be used in an emergency and identify them on the road. The other vehicles will have sirens and lights! We hope this is helpful feedback. Contrary to Mr. Hick's letter in last week's paper, there is support for the continuation of the race along this route. Sadly, we are late in reply to this survey and it seems to be another case of the silent majority. Keep up the good work.
49. Businesses should work with the race organizers. The Bed and Breakfast groups have already done this with a huge success. This is a big event for Sooke. I can't believe anyone would be against it. We should make every effort to encourage it.
50. The Triathlon is a wonderful event for Sooke, I really hope it can be continued I volunteered for the first time this year and LOVED it.....
51. Who needs this race--the business folks want people out to the races and have the gall to ask for compensation! I say get lost!!!
Let the do-gooders in the city (Vic.) host this nonsense.