

After Nearly Two Years and 6,500 Signatures, Save Vancouver Streets Ends Legal Battle but Warns of Lasting Damage to Citizen Initiative Rights

A Message to Our Supporters and the Vancouver Community

After nearly two years of fighting to give Vancouver residents a voice in decisions affecting their neighborhood streets, Save Vancouver Streets has made the difficult decision not to pursue further legal action following a recent ruling by the Washington State Court of Appeals.

This is not the outcome we had hoped for, and we know it is disappointing to the thousands of Vancouver residents who stood alongside us.

Our effort began nearly two years ago when a small group of concerned neighbors learned of significant changes being planned for our local streets, often with little meaningful public involvement. As we reached out to city officials to express our concerns, ask questions, and seek greater transparency, we repeatedly encountered roadblocks, limited communication, and what felt like an unwillingness to genuinely listen to the people most directly affected.

Out of that frustration, Save Vancouver Streets was born.

We have always been a 100% grassroots organization, made up of ordinary residents who simply wanted a voice in the future of our community. We weren't looking for a fight with City Hall. We wanted a conversation, accountability, and an opportunity for the people of Vancouver to have a meaningful say in decisions that will affect their neighborhoods for decades to come.

When our efforts to engage with the city failed to produce meaningful dialogue, we turned to one of the most fundamental tools available to citizens: the initiative process.

Through the dedication of our volunteers and supporters, we collected more than 6,500 signatures from Vancouver residents — approximately 50% more than the number required to qualify our initiative for the ballot. We believed then, and continue to believe today, that we followed the requirements established in the Vancouver City Charter.

Despite this overwhelming show of community support, the Vancouver City Council chose not to advance our initiative to the ballot.

Left with no other meaningful option, we pursued legal action to protect what we believe is the right of Vancouver residents to use the initiative process. In June 2025, the Clark County Superior Court ruled against our effort to place the initiative on the ballot. With encouragement from many of our supporters, we appealed that decision to the Washington State Court of Appeals.

Last week, we learned that our appeal had been denied.

Our remaining legal option would be to seek review by the Washington State Supreme Court. After careful consideration, we do not believe that pursuing another round of litigation would be a responsible use of the time, energy, and financial resources so generously contributed by our supporters. As a result, we have made the difficult decision to end our legal challenge.

But while our legal effort is ending, our concerns about the actions of the City of Vancouver — and the future of the citizen initiative process — remain as strong as ever.

We are deeply troubled that more than 6,500 residents can follow the established initiative process, make their voices heard through their signatures, and still be denied the opportunity to bring their proposal before voters.

During oral arguments before the Court of Appeals, the City Attorney argued, in substance, that the City Council should have the discretion not to advance initiatives with which it disagrees. We fundamentally reject that philosophy.

The initiative process exists to give citizens a voice independent of their elected officials. It should not depend on whether those same elected officials agree with what the citizens are proposing.

We believe the city's actions, combined with the resulting court decisions, have significantly weakened the initiative process in Vancouver and diminished one of the most important tools residents have to hold their local government accountable.

This issue has always been about something bigger than bike lanes, traffic lanes, or any single street project. It is about transparency, public participation, and whether the people who live, work, and travel in our community have a meaningful voice in shaping its future.

And the underlying concerns that brought us together have not gone away.

Significant changes are still being planned for major Vancouver streets, including corridors such as Andresen Road, 164th Avenue, and Mill Plain Boulevard. We remain concerned that many residents will not fully understand the extent of these proposed changes, including the potential removal of existing vehicle travel lanes, until plans are well underway and opportunities for meaningful input have passed.

We strongly encourage every Vancouver resident to pay attention, ask questions, attend public meetings, contact their elected officials, and demand transparency before decisions are finalized.

Don't wait until the construction equipment arrives on your street to make your voice heard.

Although we are ending our legal challenge, Save Vancouver Streets will continue working to keep our supporters informed about proposed street changes and opportunities for public involvement. We hope the community engagement that began with this effort will continue to grow.

Finally, to the thousands of residents who signed our petitions, the volunteers who gave countless hours collecting signatures, and the supporters who contributed financially to our legal efforts: thank you.

You proved that Vancouver residents care deeply about their neighborhoods, their streets, and their right to participate in local government.

We may not have achieved the outcome we sought in court, but we believe the effort was worthwhile. More than 6,500 residents stood together and demanded to be heard. That is something to be proud of, and something our elected leaders should not forget.

Our legal fight may be over, but the need for greater transparency and public accountability at City Hall remains.

Please stay involved. Keep asking questions. Keep speaking up. Your voice matters.

With sincere appreciation,

Your Friends at Save Vancouver Streets