

Sechelt's Seawatch subdivision evacuated

Sechelt, BC – The District of Sechelt has declared a Local State of Emergency and issued an Evacuation Order for the Seawatch subdivision at 1pm today. Access has been restricted with fencing and warning signs in place at the entry to the subdivision. These steps have been taken following receipt of a sealed engineering report from Thurber Engineering dated February 6th which stated that the subdivision was unsafe and that residents and members of the public were at risk if they remained in the area.

The February 6th Thurber report stated, “the sinkhole hazard is increasing with time and is not confined to locations where sinkholes have occurred previously. There is a very high probability of at least one sinkhole collapse each year based on the recent history of the site.” The report further states, “Future sinkholes or landslides could damage existing infrastructure such as underground utilities, roads or sidewalks, or private property including buildings and retaining walls. Injury or even death are possible consequences.”

The District of Sechelt has contacted residents and first responders will be on site to notify residents of the evacuation directly. Emergency Social Services is available to residents.

The neighbourhood has been on evacuation alert since February 7th. Residents requested time to evacuate and Council has gave them such on the understanding that they may have to leave very quickly if any signs of further deterioration are observed. Residents were informed of the risks and were asked to move children out of the area immediately.

Mayor Darnelda Siegers stated, “The evacuation order applies to all residents regardless of age. We hope residents put the lives of their families first and comply with the order as quickly as possible. We regret having to take this action but we did so to prevent serious injury or loss of life.”

The Seawatch subdivision has experienced sinkholes for several years. A new hole daylighted on December 25th on a parcel of land owned by the Seawatch developer Concordia, located adjacent to Seawatch Lane directly above the Seawatch subdivision. That hole was quickly filled by the owners, but was estimated to be 25 meters deep with a void of 400 cubic meters. The appearance of this new large void prompted a reevaluation of the risk to residents by Thurber Engineering and the resulting February 6th report.

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