

DELEGATION REQUEST

Name of person speaking: Suzanne Sawyer, Kim Stubblefield, and Catherine Davidson

Organization you are representing: Macaulay Road and Area Neighbourhood Association

Primary purpose of the organization: Advocate for and support improvements to the Macaulay Road neighbourhood

Number of members: four

Contact name: Catherine Davidson, Treasurer

Subject matter:

Macaulay Road access - discussion of the emergency access routes available to residents and planning for workable solutions to road access problems

Specific request of the regional district:

We request that the Electoral Services Committee directs Comox Valley Regional District staff to undertake a feasibility study to identify several access routes for Macaulay Road and area residents. These access routes should enable a workable emergency evacuation of the area (1700 residents and livestock) and identify options for secondary permanent access roads to support the rural road networks and connectivity goals aligning with the CVRD's Rural OCP, Transportation Network and Active Transportation plan. We request that the emergency evacuation plan for Macaulay Road and area be made available and circulated to residents.

Requested meeting date: September 20, 2021



Macaulay Road Access Facts and Issues

- 1) **Emergency egress/access**
- 2) **Permanent road access – transportation network and connectivity**

- Macaulay Road is dead-ended, one way in, one way out, over 17 km long, servicing more than 5 populated rural residential subdivisions totaling over 28 km of roads feeding into it. These subdivisions were developed over the past 40 + years with long term residents commenting that the population growth and development has resulted in restricted access. Macaulay Road was a logging road track that circled the area, almost a complete circle and then dead ended. It is now paved, narrow, with no shoulders.
- Macaulay Road is situated in the northern area of the Comox Valley Regional District (Area C), with the northern boundary being the Oyster River. The Macaulay Road subdivisions and surrounding area is considered Rural Residential with ALR lands providing active farming (cattle, hay, trees), and businesses (trucking, excavation, a sawmill, and 2 equestrian training centers). R-U 8 zoning allows for two separate homes on these properties.
- Residents commuting to Courtenay and Campbell River, and local area business vehicles using this road include delivery vehicles, tractor trailers with large loads, fully loaded logging trucks, garbage trucks, etc. There have been 4 different large school buses each making 2 trips per day (they are not coordinated for the various schools in the area). This means that all these vehicles travel to their destination down the road and then must turn around and take the same route back.
- The population of this area continues to grow as more properties are developed. The CVRD proposed waste management services for Macaulay Road and its subdivisions as it was determined that the population density warranted these services (see population density map).
- The revitalization proposal of Saratoga Speedway suggests an RV campground with 168 sites, concert promotion, etc. and residents have expressed concerns regarding traffic mitigation, local wells and the aquifer, traffic noise, etc.
- Residents have asked over the years for better access. If trees or hydro wires come down blocking the road, residents cannot leave their homes or return home with their vehicles. A severe windstorm brought down hydro wires resulting in road closures for several days. (March 2012, other closures: January 2018, November 2019 and in December 2020)
- CVRD Emergency Planning Program has held community meetings (December 2012) where residents attended and commented that the planned evacuation routes (2) for this area were



...clearly inadequate for the population of the area..., and, ...where has the community planning been happening? The population has grown, and access is becoming more restricted (35-year resident). Other comments include:

To whomever it is that can help.

Please put Macaulay Road through. This is long overdue. My house is located at 4200 Macaulay road. This is quite far down. There is no way to get out of Macaulay road in an emergency if the road becomes blocked for any reason. We have already had this experience. A couple of years ago my elderly (70yrs) friend who was staying with me went into a coma. We could not revive him and called for an ambulance. The long trip around added a significant amount of time to get to the house. unfortunately, he passed away. I do not want anyone else to experience this. My taxes for last year were \$2483. we get very little service. no water no sewer, no garbage pickup, and no EMERGENCY ROAD EITHER.

Douglas Johnston¹

- *Mike Fournier, then CVEP, responded that the emergency evacuation routes werethe best they could do with the present road access and topography of the area....putting a permanent road through would be up to the politicians....*
- *E-mails of support for a permanent road through were received from Bill Gibbings, S/SGT., RCMP²The RCMP would fully support an alternate access/egress to the Macaulay Road area as a public safety issue...., and from Chief Niels Holbek³....Oyster River Fire Rescue supports better alternate access and egress for Macaulay Road. We share your concern regarding the closures that occur on Macaulay Road (and others) from time to time and our consequential very limited ability to provide, rescue, fire or first responder service. Due to the nature of the recent event and an absence of emergency calls in that area we had time on our side in getting access through private property and connectivity to Hwy 19 through logging roads. A wildfire moving rapidly through the area would be far more challenging.*
- *Several residents provided a petition for better road access which was presented to Kal Kelly (previous CVRD representative). More recent petitions were developed (and were provided to the CVRD) that asked: "By signing below I agree that Macaulay Road needs to have another entrance/exit to ensure the safety of our residents."*

¹ February 23, 2013 e-mail from Douglas Johnson

² April 20, 2012 e-mail from S/SGT. Bill Gibbings, RCMP

³ April 1, 2012 e-mail from Niels Holbek, Fire Chief (retired), Oyster River Fire Rescue



- A meeting was held with then Minister Don McRae, Bob O'Brien (MoTI, retired), Edwin Grieve (CVRD Director), and several residents. Three possible routes were identified where road access could be built. Bob O'Brien agreed to "ballpark" costs for further discussion and provided the information to Minister McRae's office. It was suggested that the Macaulay Road alternate access road would need to be identified in the CVRD's Official Community Plan (OCP) or through other planning processes.
- The CVRD's OCP and Transportation plan of 2014 include references to alternate access for Macaulay Road residents and are yet to be implemented. Resident have been lobbying the CVRD for many years over the road conditions, safety issues (accidents and deaths), and lack of access in emergency situations.
- Individuals have met with CVRD Edwin Grieve and MLA Ronna- Rae Leonard regarding access issues. Minister Rob Fleming suggested MOTI, Emergency Planning BC, the CVRD and the Oyster River Volunteer Fire Department work closely together to ensure emergency services are informed about the road network in their areas. Residents do not have any common knowledge of an evacuation route for Macaulay Road should the singular access road be blocked or if there is a fire.
- Macaulay Road and Area Neighbourhood Association is planning a community meeting on September 28, 2021 to discuss emergency evacuation plans, FireSmart (provided by Oyster River Fire Rescue Volunteers) and identify additional areas of interest or concerns by area residents.

Macaulay Road residents are asking for leadership and support in securing alternate accesses for residents. This project requires concerted efforts and possibly provincial and federal infrastructure funding for the development of several permanent road accesses.

The 2014 OCP includes: Transportation – policies

23. (1) Review all new development proposals to assess the emergency access design. In general, new multi-lot residential and commercial development should have two separate and unobstructed accesses.
- (2) In partnership with MoTI, make efforts to provide secondary access to Macaulay Road through any new development or subdivision



The 2014 CVRD Transportation Road Network Plan – includes: Roads + Vehicles Existing and future traffic volumes do not necessitate new roads or intersection upgrades to accommodate vehicle traffic.

- Access will be improved by addressing network gaps and challenges, such as the Regent Road bridge (at Oyster River) and secondary access to Macaulay Road through development. Neighbourhood road layout guidelines are presented so that future developments include a connected street network, transit accommodation, and walking and cycling links.

The CVRD DRAFT Active Transportation Plan - Objective 4-C includes: Develop and maintain an interregional transportation system that efficiently and safely facilitates the movement of people and goods.

- The CVRD Regional Growth Strategy indicates the Macaulay Road area and its subdivisions as a Rural Settlement Area.
- Comments noted on the **Black Creek and Surrounding Area Facebook site** regarding a posting of the FireSmart Community designation of Martin Park Residents (the article with the photo was reposted (Nov. 9th) from the Comox Valley Record, November 7, 2020). Below are some of the 28 comments posted on the Black Creek site (edited - noted that not all have correct information):
 - "Yeah, we're so fire smart that, if there is a fire at the SE end of Macaulay, we're all trapped. Real smart."
 - "My point is that we have no evacuation plan. Ostensibly, saving lives is even more important than saving structures. It is one of the fire chief's responsibilities to implement one. When I moved here, we were told that the cranberry farm at the end of Macaulay was an escape route. We investigated and found that it was not. And, yes, an escape road is exactly what this community needs even if it is only ever used for emergencies."
 - "I moved here 42 years ago and there was a way out to Duncan Main before gates and private land closed roads."
 - "actually, it is the transportation department that is the contact for road issues. I have written them about many issues concerning Macaulay Road. There is nothing wrong with working and speaking for change."
 - "another option is to start a petition for your MP to extend the deal end of Macaulay through to Hamm Rd."
 - "We are still caught at the end of Doyle, James and Islak Not nice to think about."
- Approvals for these subdivisions were dealt with by the Comox Valley Regional District (CVRD) planning department, however, MoTI's *Provincial approving officer is the one responsible for*



analyzing road infrastructure requirements related to land development and subdivisions as well as requiring developers to provide road dedication and construction⁴.

“As you may be aware, local governments plan local road networks and development in their communities, and the ministry considers these plans when determining new access points and connections within the road network. In rural areas, new public roads are typically established through the subdivision process, in response to new developments that local governments have proposed.

...

If the ministry receives applications for new developments in the area from the CVRD, ministry staff will work with our engineers to assess the future road network requirements and study the feasibility of establishing new access points and connections that would contribute to a more connected road network.

...

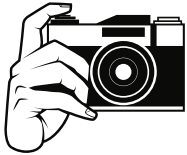
However, we will consider additional access for Macaulay Road during long-term transportation planning as the area develops and we look to support the CVRD’s development goals by expanding the road network accordingly.⁵”

August 2021

⁴ August 18, 2011 letter authored by Edwin Grieve, CVRD Chair

⁵ July 13, 2021 letter authored by Minister Rob Fleming, MOTI

Take a pic to remember!



Macaulay Road and Area Neighbourhood Association

→ **COMMUNITY MEETING** ←

Tuesday, Sept. 28, 2021

6:30 - 8:30 pm

Oyster River Firehall

2241 Catherwood Rd., Black Creek, BC

- ★ Come and meet your Macaulay Road and Area Neighbours
- ★ Learn about our not-for-profit *Macaulay Road and Area Neighbourhood Assoc.*
- ★ Fire Chief Bruce Green will provide a presentation on the *FireSmart Program*
- ★ Howie Siemens, *Comox Valley Emergency Program* will be in attendance
- ★ Join our Organization!

For more information:

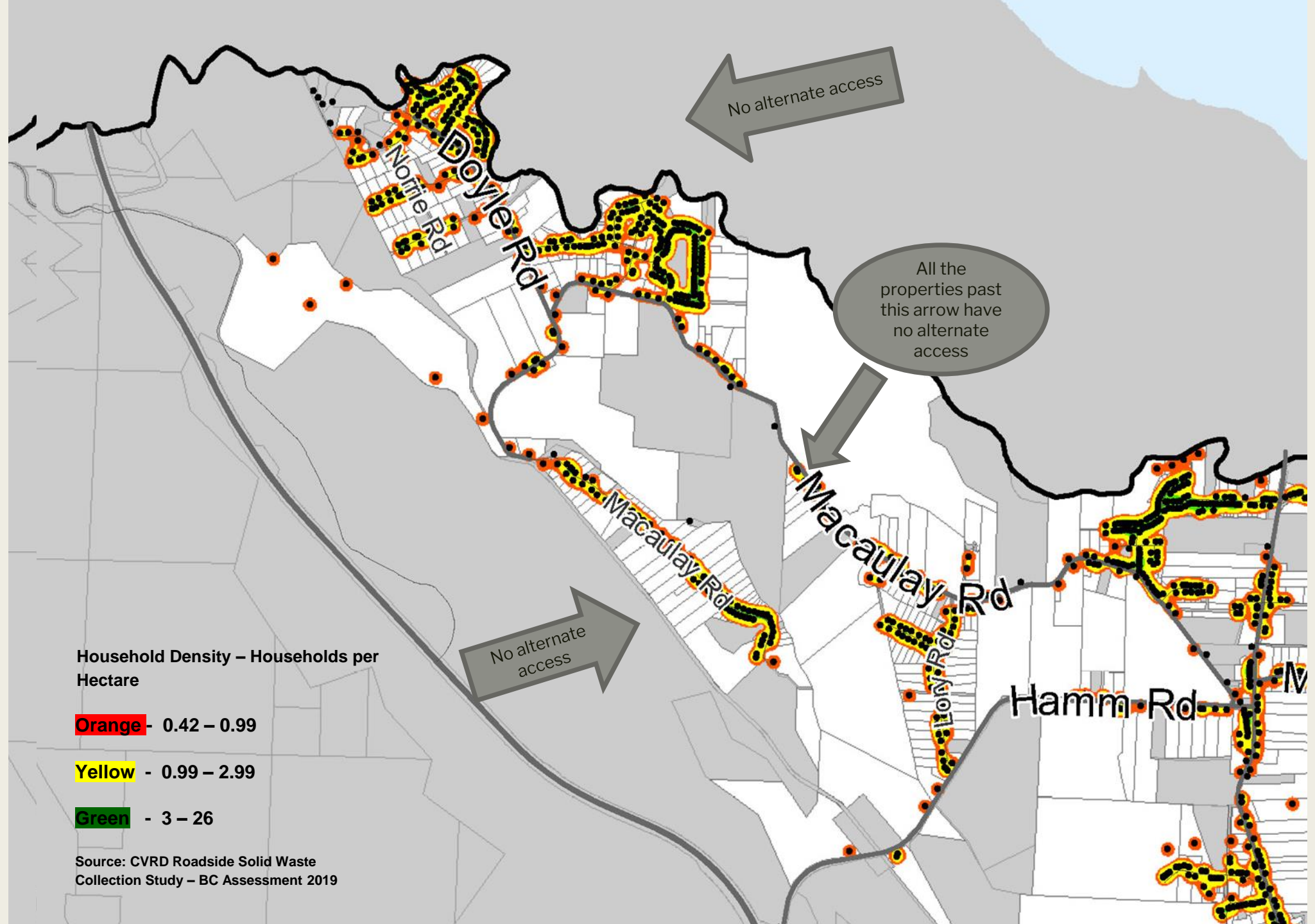
Call 250-337-5906 or Email: macaulayroadana@gmail.com

Please note: COVID precautions will be in place. Masks and social distancing required.



MACAULAY ROAD

1. Emergency egress/access
2. Permanent road access – transportation network & connectivity



No alternate access

All the properties past this arrow have no alternate access

No alternate access

Household Density – Households per Hectare

Orange - 0.42 – 0.99

Yellow - 0.99 – 2.99

Green - 3 – 26

Source: CVRD Roadside Solid Waste Collection Study – BC Assessment 2019

Problems with the Emergency process and protocols:

- If the road is blocked - we can't get in or out - how would emergency personnel get into the area?
- Wildfires coming through won't provide time for protocols and processes to be enacted - Lytton, BC had about 15 minutes to evacuate and is ¼ of the population of this area
- Protocols takes time – involvement of many different agencies, levels of government & responsibilities, & coordination of processes (*e.g.: allow for 1 hour & 20 minutes for paperwork*)
- With evacuation routes over private lands (fields) there could be weather issues? (*can't expect this population to walk out*)
- Population of this area is far too large to be directed through the two exits identified in the plan
- In 2013, Mike Fournier, CVEP responded: *“best they could do with the present road access and topography of the area...putting a permanent road through would be up to the politicians”*

Road closure due to a wind storm – no exit/entrance for several days



Residents trying to get home – 10 Km + walk



Present process:

- Subdivision application, CVRD support, approval from the ALC, support from MOTI (Provincial Approving Officer) - partnership
- 2014 farm land subdivision application received approval with an easement (referred to as an emergency access route) - what happened?

CVRD is clearly responsible to initiate the planning process for these road accesses - align with goals & priorities:

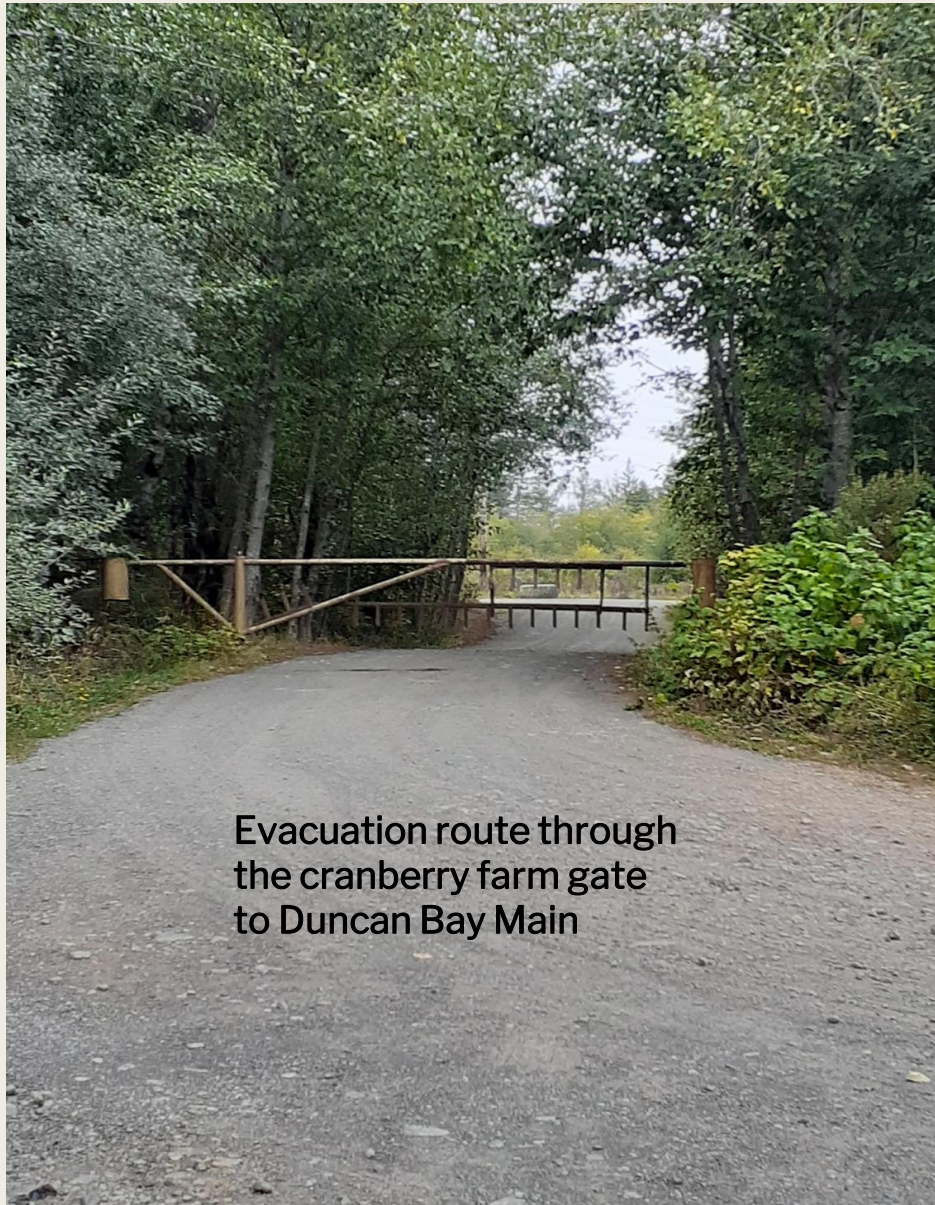
- OCP, Transportation Network Plan, Active Transportation Plan reference Macaulay Road access issues and future connectivity priorities - One Spot Trail to Hamm Road (Parks Strategic Plan)
- Support reduced vehicle emissions (all vehicles travelling in, must turn around and make the return trip out)
- Climate change planning - more severe storms, droughts, extreme temperatures & wildfires

What can be done?

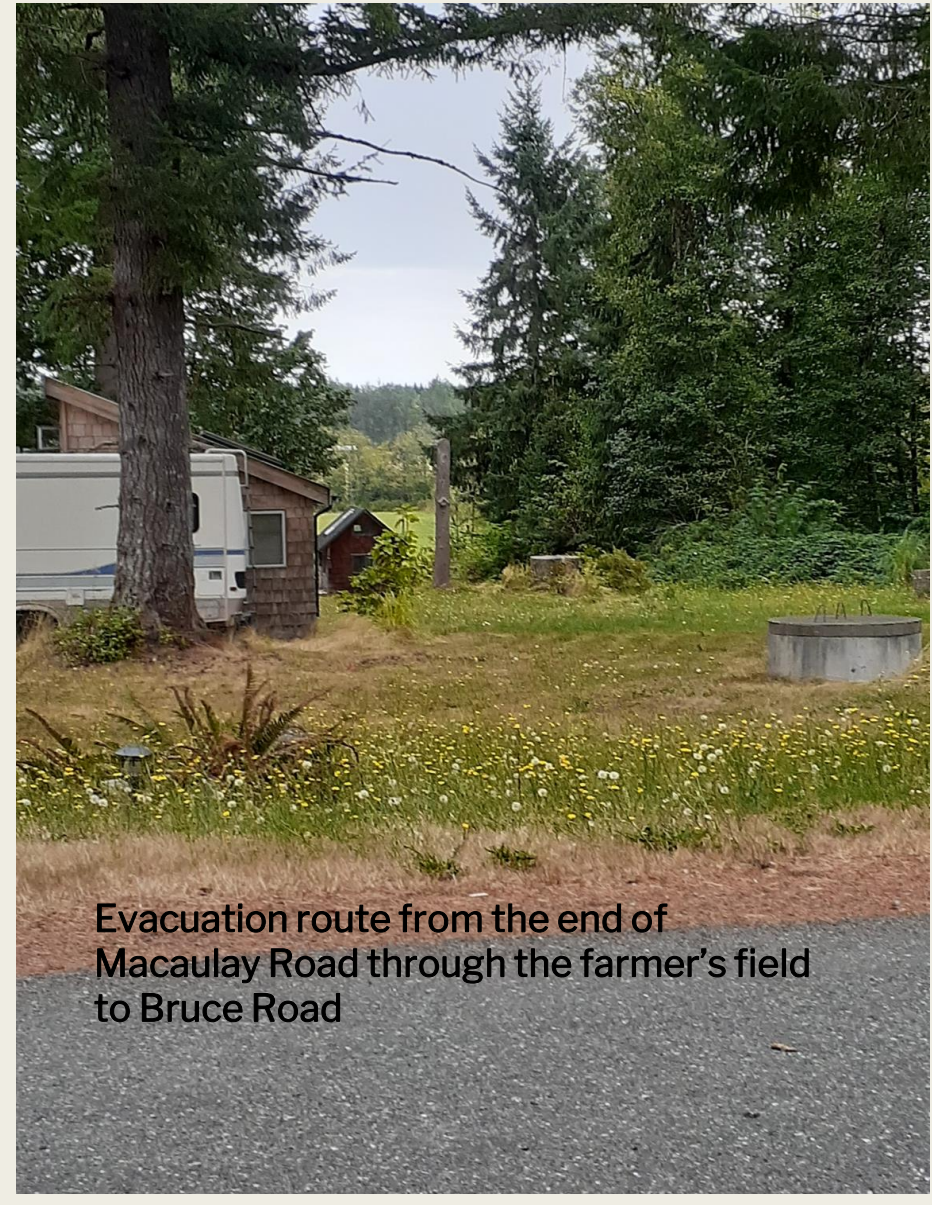
- Identify **workable** emergency access routes and educate residents of these routes.
- Plan for future road access development by instigating a feasibility study, taking into consideration easements, right of ways, zoning, and other lands available to support several road accesses.
- Commitment to monitoring property sales for availability and suitability for building access roads.
- Explore land swaps or exchanges for possibilities of access options.
- Develop partnerships with other levels of government to support the planning and implementation of future road accesses.

We need our elected officials to prioritize and action these very much needed road accesses in the Macaulay Road area.





Evacuation route through
the cranberry farm gate
to Duncan Bay Main



Evacuation route from the end of
Macaulay Road through the farmer's field
to Bruce Road



Lory Road Emergency Exit



CVRD Sturgess Road signage

MRANA at the Black Creek Fair

