



KETCHIKAN GATEWAY BOROUGH  
CITY OF KETCHIKAN



**Joint Media Release: Third Avenue Landslide Update 19**

Date: September 3, 2024, 6:00 p.m.  
Contact: Kacie Paxton, Public Information Officer, 907-228-2383

**For Immediate Release**

**Tourism Transit Planning Meeting and Transportation Update**

A Tourism Transit Planning meeting is planned for this evening at 5:00 pm at the Ted Ferry Civic Center. The meeting is hosted by the Planning Section of the Ketchikan EOC. All tour operators are expected to be in attendance. This is an effort to reduce congestion on Tongass Avenue during the school week.

Tour operators have made significant progress in reducing the impact of buses on Tongass Avenue:

- Many are ensuring their buses are at least 90% full before releasing them on the road.
- Ward Cove and others are already staggering their bus movements to ensure they are entering the roadways with spacing between bus departures.
- Many have adjusted schedules to avoid congestion.
- Many have made changes to operations to combine multiple vendor tours in order to make the transport vans more full.
- Some have canceled and culled some of their tours to alleviate congestion.

As of Tuesday September 3<sup>rd</sup>, tour vehicle traffic has been routed down the Front Street extension one-way to the Bawden/Mill intersection where AkDoT&PF is assisting with traffic control. Traffic control is also being provided at the intersection south of the tunnel.

**Rainbird Trail remains CLOSED.** Hikers are still accessing the Rainbird Trail. All sections of the trail have been closed since August 25, 2024. Entering the Rainbird Trail is prohibited. People's unauthorized presence on the trail or the ridge causes the shutdown of clean-up and stabilization efforts and diverts the efforts of the workers and emergency responders. Additional caution tape and signage was placed on the trail in the areas of the slide. Please respect this closure and do not attempt to access the trail.

**Recovery Work:** Considerable progress continued with debris and drainage. There were four excavators and twelve dump trucks working to remove debris from the site today. Danger trees that were marked yesterday by AkDoT&PF above the Third Ave Bypass were removed today, with one left to remove tomorrow. Demolition and article recovery of the three homes most severely damaged began today on the first home hit by the slide. Work will continue over the next few days.

The AkDoT&PF geologist team walked and reviewed the slide area with expert contractor Landslide Technology today, with the plan to review and take soil samples at the Copper Ridge area tomorrow.

Although the NOAA/NWS meteorologist team de-mobilized yesterday, citizens are reminded to check for daily weather updates at <https://www.weather.gov/ajk/> According to NOAA/NWS, dry weather is expected through Wednesday.

KPU Electric plans on replacing three of the damaged power poles on Second Ave North beginning at 7:00 p.m. this evening. If power hook up is possible to a residence, the crew will bring a drop to the service location tonight. If hook up is not possible due to damage, KPU Electric will provide power as soon as inspection is completed by the building inspector.

### **Upcoming Meetings & Events**

Wednesday, September 4, 2024: A National Crisis Response Canine team – Tia and Bear, and handlers Terry and Eleanor – will be available to provide comfort to community members affected by the landslide. Meetings have been scheduled, but there is a public drop-in planned Thursday, September 5<sup>th</sup> at the Landing Hotel, in the Board Room adjacent to the Lobby from 8:00 a.m. to 9:30 a.m. Call 907-228-2383 to request a visit with Tia and Bear.

### **Closures:**

- The City Library will be closed on Wednesday, September 4th.

**Evacuation Area:** The evacuation order remains in effect for homes on Second Avenue from 2122 Second Avenue to Whitecliff Avenue. Return to these areas will be authorized after slide debris is cleared and power poles are replaced.

### **Road Closures and Openings:**

- Whitecliff Ave has been opened from Tongass Ave to the first entrance of the White Cliff Building parking lot.
- First Ave is now fully open.

The following road closures are in effect:

- Second Ave from Austin St to Whitecliff Ave
- Third Ave from the Library to Washington Street. This area is expected to be closed for an extended period as debris is cleared and the area is assessed by engineers for structural integrity.

**Services for Evacuees and Displaced Families:** Services remain available and have moved to the National Guard Armory. Please call 907-228-2383 to request overnight assistance.

Anyone who had disaster-related expenses to their primary residence because of the event on August 25, 2024, is encouraged to complete the Individual Assistance application. The

application can be accessed via <https://ready.alaska.gov/Recovery/IA> or calls may be made to the IA hotline at 1-844-445-7131 Monday-Friday. The caseworker assigned can work to investigate other programs individuals may be eligible to use.

Red Cross representatives have been working with homeowners or renters who were directly affected by the landslide. Previous communications had stated only homeowners, but renters directly impacted are also eligible.

Salvation Army have also been able to provide assistance to individuals directly impacted by the slide.

Call 907-228-2383 for contact numbers for Salvation Army or Red Cross.

### **EOC Objectives**

The Ketchikan Emergency Operations Center Unified Command is operating under the following seven objectives:

1. Provide assistance to displaced residents.
2. Restore services on 2<sup>nd</sup> Avenue by September 10<sup>th</sup>.
3. Complete slope stabilization (up and down) along the slide area to facilitate the opening of 3<sup>rd</sup> Avenue by September 13<sup>th</sup>.
4. Complete demolition of condemned homes by September 5<sup>th</sup>.
5. Develop and implement transportation plan.
6. Ensure the financial stability of the City of Ketchikan while managing the costs associated with the landslide response and recovery (ongoing)
7. Develop demobilization plan by September 10<sup>th</sup>.

**Information and Disaster-Related Resources:** Additional information about the August 25, 2024, Third Avenue Landslide is available at <https://www.kgbak.us/1098/3rd-Avenue-Bypass-Landslide>

To sign up for Nixle emergency alerts text "99901" to 888777 for updates.

City of Ketchikan Public Works and DOT Geological Photos to follow.

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Four contractors and Public Works staff constructed a new access road to clear debris from the slide. Photo credit to City of Ketchikan. Photo credit to City of Ketchikan.



Four excavators and twelve dump trucks were on site to remove trees and debris from the Second Ave area. Photo courtesy of City of Ketchikan.



Tape and signs were placed near the slide zone to further discourage individuals from accessing the site.  
Photo courtesy of AkDoT&PF.