



KETCHIKAN GATEWAY BOROUGH
CITY OF KETCHIKAN



Joint Media Release: Third Avenue Landslide Update 20

Date: September 4, 2024, 7:00 p.m.

Contact: Kacie Paxton, Public Information Officer, 907-228-2383

For Immediate Release

Operations to Be Monitored as Rain is Expected Thursday, September 5

According to NOAA/NWS data, Ketchikan is expected to receive approximately .5 inches of rain on Thursday. The debris removal operations will be suspended for a period of time to monitor the area with the heavier rainfall. Operations will resume after observation and assessment. Citizens are reminded to check for daily weather updates at <https://www.weather.gov/ajk/>

Tourism Transportation Update: Tour operators have made significant progress in reducing the impact of buses on Tongass Avenue. In addition, 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.

Tour Operator Permits to be Revoked for Unauthorized Access in Road Closure Areas

The City of Ketchikan has – and will continue to – revoke tour operator permits for unauthorized access in areas that have been closed. Taking tourists to the landslide area is unsafe for the tourists and poses a hazard to the contractors and utility operators working in the area. In addition, if tour vehicles access the Third Avenue Bypass, a \$1,000 fine will be imposed pursuant to KMC 5.40.085.8.

Plan for House Demolition: Once the debris removal is complete at Second Ave, demolition of the three houses that were completely destroyed in the landslide will ensue. The process will include removal of personal property from the homes as safety allows, to be followed by the house demolition. Dump trucks will be transporting the housing debris to the Ketchikan Landfill on September 6, 7, and 8. Traffic control will be provided at the intersections of Schoenbar Rd and Park Ave, as well as Fair St and Deermount.

Tour Operators Must Avoid Fair Street (Base of Dump Hill) on September 6, 7, 8

To allow for safe and efficient transport of the dump trucks carrying house debris, tour operators must avoid Fair Street on September 6, 7, and 8. Tour companies must use an alternate route on these dates.

Residents Requested to Avoid Ketchikan Landfill on Saturday, September 7th

Residents are also asked to avoid taking household refuse and materials to the landfill on Saturday to allow open access for the dump trucks carrying house debris from the landslide. We realize this is an inconvenience to our citizens, and we thank you in advance for your help with this process.

Rainbird Trail remains CLOSED. 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 removal today. Drainage will be monitored on Thursday with rain expected, and work will be stopped if necessary. KPU Electric completed installation of power poles on Second Avenue on September 3. KPU Telephone is working to string cable to Second Ave North. A dye test is scheduled for the sewer main on Second Ave. A plan is being developed for fencing and a footing design for Third Avenue Bypass, and it was identified that 23 panels of sidewalk need to be replaced.

Hydroseeding will be conducted on Friday or Saturday to assist with slope stabilization above and below the Third Avenue Bypass.

The AkDoT&PF geologist team completed their daily assessment of the Third Avenue slope area and hiked to the top of the Copper Ridge slide where soil samples were taken.

The Landslide Technologies team accompanied geologists to Copper Ridge and investigated the mechanisms for cause of the slide. They will continue to evaluate the data to interpret the source. A recommendation is expected to be provided to City Public Works by the end of September.

Upcoming Meetings & Events

Stop by and start your day with some unconditional love and affection on Thursday morning. A community drop-in visit has been scheduled with Tia and Bear from 8:00-9:30 a.m. on Thursday, September 5th in the boardroom at the Landing Hotel.

Tia & Bear, the National Crisis Response Canines, along with their handlers, Terry & Eleanor, are here to inspire resilience and recovery in Ketchikan.

To learn more about the National Crisis Response Canines visit their website at <https://crisisresponsecanines.org>

Closures: The City Library will be closed on Thursday, September 5th.

Evacuation Area: The evacuation order remains in effect for homes on Second Avenue from 2122 Second Avenue to Whitecliff Avenue. Return to these homes is being approved on an individual basis after power is restored and the building inspector has granted approval. Homeowners and renters can contact the EOC at 907-228-2383 with questions about access.

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
- A portion of Second Ave South as identified by closure signs
- 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.

The Salvation Army is 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 2nd Avenue by September 10th.
3. Complete slope stabilization (up and down) along the slide area to facilitate the opening of 3rd Avenue by September 13th.
4. Complete demolition of condemned homes by September 5th.
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 10th.

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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KPU Electric crew working to clear the damaged electric pole. Photo courtesy of KPU.



KPU Electric crew installing new electric pole. Photo courtesy of KPU.

G4 PTZ White Cliff Building



Contractors removing downed trees from the debris field on Second Avenue. Photo courtesy of City of Ketchikan.



Overview of Second Avenue with contractors clearing trees and debris. Photo courtesy of City of Ketchikan.