



KETCHIKAN GATEWAY BOROUGH
CITY OF KETCHIKAN



Joint Media Release: Third Avenue Landslide Update 21

Date: September 5, 2024, 7:00 p.m.
Contact: Kacie Paxton, Public Information Officer, 907-228-2383

For Immediate Release

Plans to Complete Repairs to Third Avenue Bypass by September 30

After geologist assessment, the slope above and the slope below the Third Avenue Bypass has been determined to be stable. After removal of landslide debris, it was apparent that the road surface is in better condition than originally anticipated. There was no major impact to the primary electric sub-transmission, and it is fully functional. The next steps to repair the bypass include hydroseeding of the slope above and the slope below for additional stabilization, and installing fencing and guardrails along the road for safety. It is anticipated that the work will be completed in order for the road to be open by September 30, barring any unforeseen circumstances.

Tourism Transportation: Tour operators continue to make progress in reducing the impact of buses on Tongass Avenue. 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 Operators Asked to Avoid Fair Street (Base of Dump Hill) on Sept. 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, Sept. 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.

House Demolition: The house debris on the corner of Second and White Cliff Avenues was prepared for removal today. The first house to be removed was demolished by the landslide and was pushed into the upper lot of White Cliff Ave, ending up leaning on the adjacent property on Second Avenue. Work crews removed the house debris from that property and staged it for pickup and transport to the landfill. Removal will begin on Friday. 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.

Recovery Work: Considerable progress continued with debris removal today. Work crews removed over 100 loads of tree and landslide debris. All storm drains are operational with water flowing. Two sewer lines on Second Ave were dye-tested with good results. Further investigation into wastewater lines is ongoing. Hydroseeding has been planned for Friday to assist with slope stabilization above and below the Third Avenue Bypass.

The AkDoT&PF geologist team conducted an assessment of the Third Ave Bypass slope area, observed the ongoing operations, and hiked to the top of the Copper Ridge slide where soil samples were taken.

The Landslide Technologies team reviewed the retaining wall on Third Ave Bypass and found it satisfactory. They also began work to characterize the landslide. 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.

Closures/Opening: The City Library will be OPEN on Friday, September 6th.

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.

Evacuation Area: The evacuation order remains in effect for a handful of homes on Second Avenue that are awaiting final approval from the building inspector.

Road Closures:

- 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 as safety measures are put in place.

NOAA/NWS: Citizens are reminded to check for daily weather updates at <https://www.weather.gov/ajk/>

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. Ongoing.
2. Restore services on 2nd Avenue by 9/10/2024.
3. Complete slope stabilization (up and down) along the slide area by 9/13/2024.
4. Complete necessary repairs/updates to open to 3rd Avenue by 9/30/2024.
5. Complete demolition of condemned homes by 9/9/2024.
6. Develop and implement transportation plan by 9/1/2024. Completed and ongoing.
7. Ensure the financial stability of the City of Ketchikan while managing the costs associated with the landslide response and recovery. Ongoing.
8. Develop demobilization plan by 9/10/2024.
9. Conduct landslide awareness and public outreach. Date TBD.

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.

Photos to follow.

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Safety Officers observing operations on Second Avenue and White Cliff Avenue. Excavators removing house debris from the top of White Cliff and Second Avenues, and Fire Department crew removing household items from the second collapsed home.



AkDoT&PF Drone Pilot Andrew Dyke traversing the Copper Ridge Landslide area. Photo credit to AkDoT&PF.



AkDoT&PF Drone Pilot Andrew Dyke operating the drone control. Photo credit to AkDoT&PF.



A double rainbow over Tongass Narrows, taken during the geologist site assessment on the Third Avenue Bypass. Photo credit to AkDoT&PF.