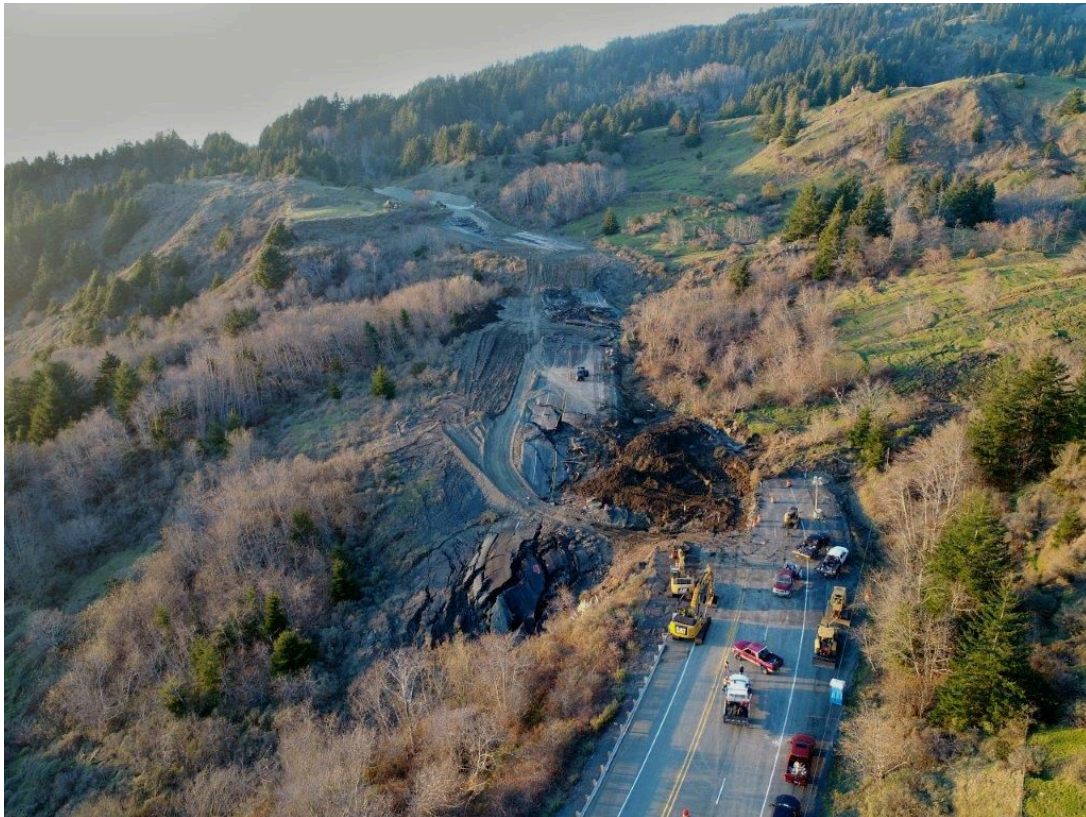


Highway slide area repair delayed

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The repair of the roadway at U.S. Highway 101's Hooskanaden slide, between Brookings and Gold Beach, will have to settle in for the long haul - literally.

The Oregon Department of Transportation (ODOT) has announced that the first construction bid for the project fell short.

"We've had an unsuccessful bid," said ODOT Public Information Officer Dan Latham said.

The bid was complicated, said Latham, because first, a contractor must find a location to dump the significant amount of material to be removed from the site. Second, there is a lack of trucks available to any construction company to move that material.

"We need to adjust the scope of the work," Latham said. "We will rework the contract for bidding over the winter, and schedule the (repair) work for the following spring and summer. That will give contractors the time they need to make arrangements for getting rid of the materials they remove."

The plan still is to restore the highway to three lanes, plus shoulders, as it was before the slide, he said.

“The area has experienced slides about every 15 years, with major slides occurring in 1977, 1995 and 2019,” Latham said. “We are hopeful that the soils will remain stable, as they have been historically after a major slide.”

ODOT had planned to the repair work begin late this summer. The failed bid sets that schedule back several months.

Latham said ODOT anticipates the final repair will cost \$3.5 million to \$4 million, with the money coming primarily from federal emergency relief funds.

Meanwhile, ODOT will continue to patch any minor slips and cracks that occur over the coming winter.

Latham said two crashes have occurred, at the south end of the project area, since the repaired route opened. ODOT plans to add chevron signs, used to give additional emphasis and guidance because of a change in the horizontal alignment of the roadway, specifically to warn drivers of sharp curves in the slide area.

The Hooskanaden area of U.S. Highway 101 began sliding the week of Feb. 25, closing both lanes of the highway and diverting traffic to Carpenterville Road — the only alternative. A single lane was built by Tidewater Construction in March and two lanes were opened in May, but they sit atop a temporary roadway.

ODOT spent about \$1 million for the temporary repair, which closely bypasses the original slide area.

The February slide caused a strain on emergency services and triggered a downward economic trickle effect in Brookings and Gold Beach, said local officials.

During a presentation for the Brookings City Council about the slide earlier this year, Brookings City Councilor Ron Heneskpog noted the land has been sliding at Hooskanaden for years.

He called the area a “land glacier” and said he was told nearly 200 feet of earth sits on top of bedrock there, “a phenomenal amount of dirt, a phenomenal problem.”