

Haines Ground Failure Update

January 17, 2012

4:20 pm

Background/Overview:

This is a brief update on the ground failure situation in Haines. The Borough is taking measures to protect both life and property in the impacted area. Borough and ADOT&PF engineers are flying to Haines tomorrow (Wednesday, January 18) to assess the situation. AP&T is also closely monitoring their overhead transmission wires, and Haines Cable TV is removing their overhead cables from the utility poles in the affected area.

There are major ground cracks, including surface ruptures/tension cracks, lateral spreading, and differential settlement, over a large area. If viewed from above, the cracks would appear to be in the shape of a large horseshoe, with the apex parallel to and on both sides of Oceanview Road and the arms or tails crossing Lutak Road at approximate right angles.

Cracks and heaves in the asphalt pavement on Lutak Road were reported in the area over the weekend, but this is a common occurrence in that particular section of highway. In fact, the ADOT&PF recently performed major road repairs in the same section as one of the cracks. Significant ground failure along Oceanview and Lutak Road was reported this morning. The cracks are continuing to expand. Approximately 8 inches of lateral movement has been measured on Lutak Road since this morning.

Possible threats to life and property:

The greatest area of concern is for the safety of the residents in the immediate area. There is one house located on the water side of Lutak Road within the horseshoe crack zone. The Borough has been in contact with the owner who has made arrangements to stay elsewhere for at least tonight. There are four residential homes located on the uphill side of Oceanview, three of which are currently occupied. The occupants have been notified of the situation. It is not believed that these homes are in imminent danger, but we are monitoring the situation.

The secondary concern is for the physical infrastructure in the area. The greatest threats to public facilities are the Borough sewer and water utilities and roads. Oceanview is a Borough road and Lutak Road is a state road.

The sewer system serves approximately 100 residences in the Highland Estates / Skyline area. There is a single sewer main serving all of these residences that runs right through the impacted area. Public Utilities and Public Works crews are working on a plan to bypass the sewer main in that area by installing hose and a pump connected to manholes on either side of the impacted area. This will require crossing Lutak Road with the hose.

The water utility in the immediate area is also at risk. Oceanview Road residents have been advised to fill containers with potable water. The water pressure in the main was decreased to minimize flow in the event of a water line rupture.

Another concern is the affected roads. Oceanview has cracks on both the uphill and downhill (water) sides. The cracks on the water side are very large and have affected about one-third of the roadway width. The cracks on the uphill side are worrisome in that they indicate the extent of the ground failure zone in that area. The Borough has closed Oceanview to non-local resident traffic.

Lutak Road is a major primary road that connects the AMHS Ferry Terminal and the Lutak cargo dock with the downtown Haines area, as well as the Yukon and Interior Alaska. Both Delta Western and Lynden Transport operate at the Lutak Dock and depend on the Lutak Road for interstate and international commerce.

Next steps:

Both the Borough and ADOT&PF are investigating the situation. State and Borough engineers will be in Haines as soon as possible to further evaluate the conditions and make recommendations, including possible action. The Borough is actively monitoring the situation and is prepared to take additional measures as conditions warrant.

Ocean View / Lutak Road Slope Movement

Date: January 19, 2012

Daily Report Baseline –

State, Borough & Engineering officials have been monitoring & accessing the slope movement occurring in the Ocean View hillside and Lutak Road highway since it was brought to their attention Monday, January 16, 2012.

A geologist and engineers for the State of Alaska DOT arrived on Wednesday, January 18, 2012, to look at the area and gather field data of the impact to Lutak Road which is the State highway from town to the ferry terminal at 5 mile Lutak Road.

Borough officials have been onsite assessing the scope of the problem since it was brought to their attention Monday morning. The Borough brought in an engineer from Seattle from their contracted engineering firm PND to look at the area, and advise the Borough on proper monitoring and planning for the event the situation worsens.

A Command Center was set up in Brian Lemcke's office (Director of Public Works) office on Thursday afternoon, January 19, 2012 to monitor the event and plan for "Back-up" options if needed. Local disaster planner Roc Ahrens has been brought on board to monitor and record the event. A daily report will be recorded at the command center on the contact phone there, (766-2258), and will also be posted to the Borough's website under the link "OCEAN VIEW / LUTAK ROAD SLOPE MOVEMENT".

Daily monitoring is being recorded and State & Borough maintenance crews are planning repairs to the road damage on Lutak and Ocean View roads which they plan to begin tomorrow morning, Friday January 20, 2012.

Travelers through this area are advised to drive slowly due to the bumps the damage is causing.

Command Center Planner,

Roc Ahrens