

# South Coast Slide Study

**Sounding Board/Phone Call/Email Interviews – September 16, 2022**

**Prepared by JLA Public Involvement**

Following phone outreach and an online open house in summer 2022, the project team sent out invitations to a sounding board meeting to be held on August 24, 2022. Anthony Pagano, associate planner for the City of Gold Beach attended the meeting and viewed a presentation prepared by the project team. Anthony also answered questions and shared his experiences with landslides on the Oregon coast. At the end of the meeting Anthony provided contacts that he thought would have additional valuable input for the project.

Of Anthony’s suggested contacts, Summer Matteson and Monica Ward were reached by phone/email. Additionally, Kathy Bernhardt, Curry County Public Transportation Service District, from the original stakeholder list was reached and provided brief answers to the project team’s questions.

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[Anthony Pagano, Associate Planner, City of Gold Beach,](#)

### **What could be improved in regard to how we deal with slides?**

There’s not really much more that ODOT can do. There’s no other way to bypass 101. Everything ODOT’s been doing is working, I don’t really know what else you could do.

### **How are you notified as a planner when there’s a closure?**

We learn about closures and events from our sheriff’s department. We don’t push it out, the sheriff’s office, state police, and ODOT push the info out.

### **How do you get the info as a regular citizen?**

I’ve got the text alerts from the county for emergencies.

### **Are there unique transportation needs in your community?**

There are unique transportation needs, freight and fuel is impacted big time during slides. I know the last slide they were using Carpenterville Highway, and even though they were using it we weren’t getting normal loads.

**What are some notable impacts to services?**

A lot of people here go into the valley or down south for medical reasons, most people have to travel for that, and when we get cut off we are cut off it is a big issue. It's definitely seasonal. Coy Creek Road is one of the routes people use, and it slides worse than 101 does.

**Are you aware of any knowledge issue with wayfinding on Carpenterville Highway?**

No, ODOT is really good about getting signs up and letting people know where to go.

People will understand the need to drive up and around during these events. People will understand you can't just put a bridge over every slide.

I've been here for so long that I know some alternate routes to get around, but they aren't safe for public travel.

**Anything else that people have to leave town for other than Gold Beach?**

There's not much here to do. Gold Beach is the county seat, but a lot of the people that work for the county are from Port Orford or Brookings, so it's impacted on either side.

**What did you do with the last slide did you just not come in?**

The only staff we have in Brookings are two police officers, and they knew about the slide, so they used Carpenterville Highway. The rest of us are local, so we could get to work. Our staff isn't generally affected.

[Monica Ward, County Emergency Manager, Curry County](#)

**What are some lessons learned from traffic control during past slide events?**

Communication is the biggest issue. When there's an event, people have to be able to get into reception to be able to call it in, which is difficult with slides blocking roadways. Also, the alternate routes are not always safe or possible for larger vehicles.

**What has worked well?**

Only been here for a year, and there's not a lot of great documentation from the past. Coordination between ODOT and our department has worked well. ODOT's signage has been great.

**What could be improved?**

Working on solidifying and reinforcing evacuation plans and alternate routes. The alternate routes are not safe for all types of vehicles and for those that are unfamiliar with them.

**How do you get roadway information?**

My department was not regularly notified in the past and have to find out through different channels.

### **Unique transportation needs?**

Recent slides have made it difficult for larger vehicles carrying necessary goods like food and fuel to get into the area. We need to come to agreements that allow use of smaller vehicles that can travel the alternate routes during these slide events.

Summer Matteson, Economic Development Director, Curry County

### **What are some lessons learned from traffic control during past slide events?**

Collaboration between agencies is thorough. Communicating with property owners surrounding alternate routes mediates negative feedback. Having an alternate route. Although the alternate may not be capable of handling the weight and frequency of traffic rerouted, it helps with essential workers travel and first responder calls.

Transportation is weak in resiliency in Curry County. If we experience a Cascadia event, causing landslides at the north and south end of the county, residents have no way out and supplies have no way in. Development of a road over Burnt Ridge is something to be reconsidered.

Locals have come to expect the unexpected, but communications with those that are newer here or are visitors/tourists, may not be familiar with routes and become confused.

### **What has worked well?**

Collaboration between jurisdictions in communications and providing a cohesive, simultaneous message. For instance, the new road info sign just south of Lone Ranch is a great addition.

ODOT is a great responder when it comes to addressing slides. Current conversations being had between agencies with regard to signage and wayfinding. Emphasis on internationally recognized icon/symbols so that despite language barriers in such a prominent tourism area, folks can identify.

### **What could be improved in regard to how we deal with slides?**

Is there an app or notification option on TripCheck that could send a notice when someone enters the geofenced area?

Or maybe sign up for alerts similar to Everbridge?

Maybe a coordinated effort with that platform might work.

Integration with vehicle navigation systems.

Even maybe sharing lidar images as an overlay on GIS or giving emergency management insight as they prioritize focus of response.

### **How do you get roadway information?**

I work at the county, so I usually get information from Sheriff, Emergency Manager and Board of Commissioners office. I manage the county government social media and often serve in the PIO capacity to get road info out to the public.

### **Do you have or know of any unique transportation needs?**

That's like a loaded question. Transportation and infrastructure therein is a topic unique to the Southern Oregon Coast. We have Last Chance Grade to the south, Hooskenaden in Samuel Boardman, Hwy 101 North of Humbug Mountain. Curry County is a retirement destination. The old adage "Where people come to die" isn't really to our advantage when it comes to planning for evacuations during natural disasters like Chetco Bar Fire. State Reps Chief of Staff, Shelia Megson has, for years, pushed the idea of a rail type system to the valley from the Rogue (Jerry's Flat Road). Seemed a bit futuristic 8 years ago but these days, might be a worthy topic of discussion with emphasis on environmental sustainability and clean/renewable energy. There has been discussion in putting a bridge at Hooskenaden but the extensive work invested in addressing the most recent slide has really held up well. The 80 Acres slide seems to be showing itself a bit on the east side of the highway but the retention is holding up. The sinkhole at Ophir (Euchre Creek) is an example of routing traffic through a residential detour that really isn't equipped for that, but that was literally the only option. Curry Public Transit is the district that manages and executes public transportation. It would be cool to see ODOT support initiatives to funds programs in rural communities where folks are driving long distances to get to work, where a 14 passenger bus or carpooling initiative is encouraged. Incentives with employer discounted passes, etc. Sure would cut down on the wear on the roads and lighten the congestion we experience during the tourist season. We are going through the process of identifying details for a road diet in Gold Beach. We are hoping to maximize incentive for locals and touring cyclists with bike lanes. We also recognize the need to widen sidewalks to meet the requirements of ADA accessibility. Water is not our friend, when it comes to maintaining transportation infrastructure on the Southern Oregon Coast. Especially when the lack of forest fuels management gives way to fires and ultimately, eliminates groundcover that slows water flow and overwhelms/washes out culverts, road trenches, more significant water over roadways, negatively impacting salmon runs and pushing sediment into the Rogue River, calling for expensive dredging. With the loss of timber dollars that have historically economically sustained the local economy, tourism is what has, in part, replaced that. The economic recovery for small business and industry is greatly hindered when transportation is compromised outside of what it is already, with being such a rural and remote location to get goods and services to.

These questions are probably really good to ask of the Oregon Coastal Caucus, OCZMA, DOGAMI, etc.

[Kathy Bernhardt, Curry County Public Transportation Service District](#)

### **What are some lessons learned from traffic control during past slide events?**

Only way to get from Brookings to Gold Beach and beyond is Carpenterville Road, and it is too narrow and not maintained well enough to work well.

### **What has worked well? / What could be improved?**

Minimizing traffic works the best. If ODOT could let regular traffic know not to use Carpenterville Highway that would be the most helpful. We are happy to help and partner with these solutions.

There is just not way to expand Carpenterville Highway, so we have to mitigate the traffic on it.

Only real way to fix this would be to build an entirely different roadway, and people wouldn't use it, since they come to the coast for the views on the highway.

**Do you have or know of any unique transportation needs?**

Brookings has a large population that is over 60 years old, so there are a lot of people with disabilities. Those people tend to almost exclusively use buses, including the Coastal Express, which tourists also use. If ODOT could prioritize buses, that would be great, we are willing to work in partnership with ODOT on this. Lots of people only have bus transportation as an option, so when that isn't available, they are stuck.

**Do you have any ideas to improve travel on Carpenterville Highway?**

Make it a one-way during events. Send traffic one way on the hour and the other way on the half-hour.

Larger trucks and delivery vehicles should be routed through Medford, it's difficult to utilize the route when a logging truck is coming and it can't give way to other traffic.

Have flaggers at the bottom of the road using radios to direct traffic through.

We (Curry transit) could modify our routes to fit in with that as well.