

CITY OF RANCHO PALOS VERDES
FAQ 2023 LAND MOVEMENT
<https://www.rpvca.gov/Faq.aspx?TID=44>

1. What is happening and why?

Since Spring 2023, the City has seen a significant increase in land movement in the neighborhoods of Seaview, Portuguese Bend Beach Club and Portuguese Bend Community Association, which has resulted in the loss of utility service, roadway damage and the red- and yellow-tagging of some homes in the landslide area.

Recent land movement in these areas is due to their proximity to a complex of ancient landslides on the south side of the City. The acceleration in movement is believed to be primarily due to heavy winter rainfall resulting in surface water percolating into the ground and lubricating the bentonite soil condition. Recent test borehole drilling led to a discovery of movement on a deeper slide plane in the landslide complex than was previously known. The deeper slide plane is moving much faster than the shallower slide plane.

While the City continues to closely monitor the conditions and conduct inspections requested by property owners, no evacuation orders have been issued.

2. How much has the land movement accelerated?

The rate of land movement has increased significantly. The identified areas of landslide movement are now moving approximately 80 times faster than in October 2022. The entire active landslide complex has expanded from 380 acres to 700 acres. Read the most recent GPS monitoring data reports at <https://www.rpvca.gov/1426/Landslide-Surveys>

3. How can I get prepared?

In addition to keeping an emergency supply kit, evacuation packing list and having a plan for your family, make sure you are signed up for Alert SouthBay emergency alerts by texting “alertrpv” to 888-777 or registering at AlertSouthBay.com. Get familiar with the Peninsula cities’ new Know

Your Zone evacuation information platform. Go to PVPready.gov to find your zone number, then save it in your phone or write it down and keep it somewhere that’s easy to find in an emergency, such as on your refrigerator or near the front door. In an emergency, such as a landslide or wildfire, check the zone map at PVPready.gov to see if your zone is under an evacuation warning or order.

4. What should I do if I have concerns about my property?

Per Ready.Gov, if you are worried about land movement on your property, look for signs of potential land activity, such as cracks or bulges in the ground, street pavement, or sidewalks; soil moving away from foundations; tilting of patios or foundations; broken water lines; or leaning telephone poles, trees, walls, or fences. Watch for slow-moving landslides, or earthflows, that pose threats to property:

- Changes occur in your landscape such as patterns of storm-water drainage on slopes (especially the places where runoff water converges) land movement, small slides, flows, or progressively leaning trees.
- Doors or windows stick or jam for the first time.
- New cracks appear in plaster, tile, brick or foundations.
- Outside walls, walkways or stairs begin pulling away from the building.
- Slowly developing, widening cracks appear on the ground or on paved areas such as streets or driveways.
- Underground utility lines break.

- Bulging ground appears at the base of a slope.
- Water breaks through the ground surface in new locations.
- Fences, retaining walls, utility poles, or trees tilt or move.
- The ground slopes downward in one direction and may begin shifting in that direction under your feet.

For urgent matters or observation of any sudden shifts on your property, please call 9-1-1.

You may consider hiring a geologist to review the conditions of your property. Please note that the City's geologist does not conduct site visits of private property that is not part of a development permit application. While the City does not make referrals or recommendations, the Building and Safety Division maintains a list of geotechnical engineers who work in the area, which is available on request. The Building and Safety Division can be reached at 310-544-5280 or BuildingSafety@RPVca.gov.

5. Does homeowners insurance cover land movement?

News reports underscore that land movement-related damages are not usually covered by most homeowners insurance policies. Now may be a good time to re-read your policy. While understanding the nuances of your insurance coverage is essential, generally, homeowners insurance policies in California offer coverage for accidental physical loss to property, but with certain exclusions and limitations. Standard exclusions often include damages from floods, earth movements, earthquakes, landslides, mudflows, etc. You may have read that a specialized difference in conditions (DIC) policy can secure coverage against land movement.

However, it is City staff's understanding that these policies are nearly impossible to find, available only from large brokers who sell commercial insurance, extremely expensive, and/or may not be currently available in Southern California.

Please note that these DIC policies are different from DIC policies that are paired with FAIR Plan policies to fill gaps in coverage. Residents are encouraged to visit the California Department of Insurance's website at <https://www.insurance.ca.gov/> with any homeowners insurance questions or contact the agency at 1-800-927-4357.

6. What do I need to bring with me if I voluntarily evacuate?

A list of recommended evacuation packing list items is available here:

<https://www.rpvca.gov/DocumentCenter/View/21214/Evacuation-Packing-List>

7. How can I install solar systems at my home or convert my home from natural gas to propane?

Since SoCalGas suspended gas service to the Portuguese Bend community, the City has heard from many residents who are interested in switching to alternatives for natural gas service. SCE's announcement of potential de-energization in the landslide area has also prompted many inquiries about solar power.

To help guide residents, the City has created informational handouts about the Community Development Department's expedited permitting programs for these projects:

Alternatives for Natural Gas Service: <https://www.rpvca.gov/DocumentCenter/View/22383/Alternatives-for-Natural-Gas-Service-PDF>

Residential Solar Energy Systems: <https://www.rpvca.gov/DocumentCenter/View/22382/Residential-Solar-Energy-Systems-PDF>

If you have questions, please contact the Building and Safety Division at 310-544-5280 or BuildingSafety@rpvca.gov.

8. Is individual financial assistance available to residents impacted by land movement?

VOLUNTARY PROPERTY BUYOUT PROGRAM

On October 28, 2024, the City of Rancho Palos Verdes, the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), and the California Governor's Office of Emergency Services (Cal OES) announced a \$42 million **voluntary** buyout program for property owners in the Greater Portuguese Bend landslide area whose homes have been damaged or threatened by land movement. Established with funding from FEMA's Hazard Mitigation Grant Program, the Voluntary Property Buyout Program is intended to help eligible homeowners relocate to safer areas by offering a fair market value for their properties based on pre-disaster appraisals. Properties acquired by the City through this program will be permanently converted to open space and deed-restricted, protecting the community from future redevelopment risks in these vulnerable areas. An overview of the program guidelines and application process are detailed below. A PDF version is also available here: <https://www.rpvca.gov/DocumentCenter/View/22752/Voluntary-Property-Buyout---Guidelines-and-Application>

The deadline for property owners interested in applying for the buyout program to request a voluntary property inspection from the City was 5:30 p.m. on Monday, November 4. **The application deadline closed at 4:30 p.m. on Friday, November 8, 2024.**

More information about this program is available on the Voluntary Property Buyout Program page at <https://www.rpvca.gov/1782/Voluntary-Property-Buyout-Program>

FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE GRANT PROGRAM

On October 1, 2024, the Rancho Palos Verdes City Council unanimously approved an emergency financial assistance program allocating \$2.8 million in landslide relief funding from the office of Los Angeles County Supervisor Janice Hahn to deliver immediate aid to City residents impacted by land movement and utility shutoffs. Through this program, the City could provide up to \$10,000 to each eligible affected property owner, with an estimated total of \$2.8 million allocated for up to 280 eligible homeowners, for critical expenses such as purchasing supplies, home repairs, temporary housing and other related costs due to land movement or utility interruptions. As of June 30, 2025, the City disbursed payments for 223 completed and verified applications, totaling \$2.2 million.

Another \$2.2 million from Supervisor Hahn's office was deployed to bolster the City's landslide response and stabilization efforts.

The deadline to apply for the Financial Assistance Grant Program was 5 p.m. on June 30, 2025. This grant program has officially ended, and no further applications will be accepted. Following direction from the City Council at the Annual Budget Workshop on April 17, 2025, the remaining grant funds will be transferred to the Capital Improvement Program (CIP) Fund to continue supporting landslide emergency response and mitigation efforts, in accordance with the grant requirements.

More information about this program is available on the Financial Assistance Grant Program page here: <https://www.rpvca.gov/1781/Financial-Assistance-Grant-Program>

SBA LOANS

Under a federal disaster declaration, low-interest disaster loans from the U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA) were made available to California businesses and residents affected by the severe winter storms, tornadoes, flooding, landslides and mudslides that occurred Jan. 31 – Feb. 9, 202. The deadline to apply for property damage was July 16, 2024. The deadline to apply for economic injury was Feb. 18, 2025. For more information, visit <https://www.sba.gov/funding-programs/disaster-assistance>

The federal disaster declaration also provides public assistance for local government agencies' emergency response and recovery costs.

The City will continue to monitor and communicate any other future opportunities for individual assistance. To reduce barriers and costs for Rancho Palos Verdes homeowners, the City has waived all permitting fees and is expediting projects to repair property damage from land movement.

9. Has the City's building inspectors examined properties in the landslide area?

On Thursday, August 1, 2024, the City began conducting windshield assessments of properties in the landslide areas of Seaview, Portuguese Bend Community, and Portuguese Bend Beach Club. These assessments are now complete. If a follow-up with a homeowner is needed due to signs of potential structural stress, City staff will reach out via a letter requesting a voluntary assessment be scheduled.

The City's objective is to work with property owners to ensure their safety. If our inspectors see any concerning signs of damage or structural stress, they will work with homeowners to identify strategies to save structural integrity and prevent further damage, with the public's health and safety being paramount.

Generally, a building inspector determines whether a structure is safe to inhabit based on a combination of factors, such as structural stability and utility connection. Some examples of why a house would be red tagged include: foundation problems, inadequate egress, insufficient or blocked exits, severe structural damage, utility failures, fire damage, gas leaks, etc.

A home that is identified as being yellow-tagged displays signs of damage to a particular area of the home. This area of the property may be restricted from use, while other portions of the home remain accessible to a homeowner.

10. How can I have my property's value reviewed due to the land movement?

If you believe that your property value warrants review due to a decline in market value, you may file an application for Decline-in-Value Review by the Los Angeles County Assessor's Office.

The annual Decline-in-Value filing period is July 2 through November 30.

California's Proposition 13 established the base year value for property tax assessment. It also caps the growth of a property's assessed value at no more than 2% a year unless the market value of a property falls below the base year value.

In 1978, California voters passed Proposition 8, a constitutional amendment that allows a temporary reduction in assessed value when a property suffers a "Decline-in-Value." A Decline-in-Value occurs when the current market value of your property is less than the current assessed value as of January 1.

It is important to keep in mind that owners that experienced a reduction in property taxes in prior years, could see their property tax bill go up by more than 2% in markets where property values have increased. Property owners are encouraged to go to <https://assessor.lacounty.gov/tax-relief/decline-in-value> for more information about Decline-in-Value and how property value is assessed.

11. Is there risk of a sudden catastrophic landslide event?

Given the large size of the landslide complex and its long history of slow-moving behavior, there is not believed to be a risk of a sudden catastrophic landslide.

12. What is the City doing to respond in the short-term?

The City has taken a number of steps since Spring 2023 to immediately address the land movement, including but not limited to:

- Declared a state of local emergency in October 2023. This bolsters the City's ongoing response and allows staff to request state and federal assistance to address the landslide activity. The emergency declaration is active as of September 2024.

- Coordinated with public safety agencies, utilities, and community partners to monitor the activity and prepare for responses. The City requested that Cal Water deploy automatic pipeline leak detection technology at strategic locations to identify leaks immediately. Cal Water has also moved some water pipelines above ground in highly impacted neighborhoods. More info here: https://rpv.granicus.com/MetaViewer.php?view_id=5&clip_id=4406&meta_id=114299
- Temporarily closed approximately 8 miles of trails within the Portuguese Bend, Abalone Cove, Filiorum, and Forrestal Reserves. More info here: <https://www.rpvca.gov/1007/Trail-Conditions-Alerts>
- Formed a working group of stakeholders to address issues related to the land movement and keep channels of communication open. The Working Group meets virtually every Wednesday. Meeting information and notes are available on the RPV Landslide Complex Working Group page at: <https://rpvca.gov/1723/RPV-Landslide-Complex-Working-Group>
- Hired a geotechnical engineering firm to conduct additional field observations to survey the land movement, detect rates of movement and identify landslide boundaries. More info here: <https://www.rpvca.gov/1426/Landslide-Surveys>
- Directed the City's Building and Safety Division to conduct regular street-level visual checks in the impacted neighborhoods to monitor any new movement, as well as perform home inspections on request.
- Filled landslide fissures and repaired roadway damage as needed.
- Coordinated with the Abalone Cove Landslide Abatement District (ACLAD) and the Klondike Canyon Landslide Abatement District (KCLAD) to install seven new dewatering wells in the landslide complex area, including four funded by the City.
- Adopted an urgency ordinance to put a moratorium on new construction in the landslide complex that may contribute to the land movement. The City Council approved the moratorium on October 3, 2023 and on November 14, 2023, extended it through October 3, 2024. The California Department of Housing and Community Development approved the moratorium.
- Implemented water restrictions for all properties in the landslide complex

13. What is the City doing to slow the land movement long-term?

The City has prioritized and expedited the Portuguese Bend Landslide Remediation Project, a long-term effort to slow the Portuguese Bend Landslide by removing water trapped deep underground and preventing future rainwater percolation through surface drainage swales and fissure filling. In February 2024, the City Council authorized staff to expedite the project's Final Environmental Impact Report (EIR), which is expected to go before the Council this spring. More info here: <https://rpvca.gov/1031/Portuguese-Bend-Landslide>

14. How is the City addressing damage to Palos Verdes Drive South?

The City regularly inspects Palos Verdes Drive South (PVDS) for land movement damage and conducts repairs as needed to keep the road safe. With road conditions worsening recently due to land movement, particularly in the area known as the "ski jump" near Altamira Canyon, the City is developing plans to regrade portions of PVDS.

This regrading project may require a temporary closure of PVDS. In the event of a temporary closure, staff is exploring ways to minimize the disruption to traffic through the potential use of off-peak construction hours and detours. PVDS typically accommodates approximately 16,000 daily trips.

A construction plan is being developed and will be presented to the City Council at a future date.

15. What is the Portuguese Bend Landslide Remediation Project?

The Portuguese Bend Landslide Remediation Project is a long-term effort to slow the Portuguese Bend Landslide. Planned since 2017, the project would remove water trapped deep underground and prevent rainwater from entering the ground in the future. This would be achieved through a combination of the following project components:

- Infilling fissures in the earth to prevent rainwater from entering the ground and contributing to movement
- Creating a surface drainage system using materials reflective of the surrounding environment and planted with native vegetation to convey rainwater to the ocean and prevent it from percolating underground
- Installing hydraugers (horizontal dewatering wells) to extract water trapped deep underground

The project has been modeled to reduce land movement to 1-2 inches per year and drastically reduce the threat of sudden movement that could result in the failure of Palos Verdes Drive South, a major road connecting the Peninsula and the City of Los Angeles.

City staff continues to work toward completion of the Portuguese Bend Landslide Remediation Project's Final Environmental Impact Report (EIR), which is expected to go before the City Council this Spring. A Draft Environmental Impact Report (EIR) for the project was released in February 2023 and can be read here:

https://rpv.granicus.com/MetaViewer.php?view_id=5&clip_id=4321&meta_id=110927

The estimated cost of the project is \$33 million. In 2023, the City was selected as a candidate for a \$23.3 million grant from the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) to help fund the project. The City is working to identify funding opportunities for roughly \$10 million needed in non-federal matching funds from state and local representatives and agencies.

Read more about the Portuguese Bend Landslide Remediation Project here:

<https://www.rpvca.gov/1031/Portuguese-Bend-Landslide>

16. What is the history of land movement on the Palos Verdes Peninsula?

The Portuguese Bend Landslide is part of a larger complex of ancient landslides on the south side of the Palos Verdes Peninsula. It was reactivated in 1956 by Los Angeles County's planned extension of Crenshaw Boulevard and has been moving ever since, becoming one of the largest continuously active landslides in the U.S. and moving homes by hundreds of feet over the years.

The land moves because of the dynamics of surface water percolating into the ground and water trapped deep underground, sliding as much as 8.5 feet per year. The City spends approximately \$1 million annually resurfacing a portion of Palos Verdes Drive South that is continuously shifting and cracking due to the landslide. The Abalone Cove Landslide Abatement District's operation of dewatering wells in the Portuguese Bend Community Association over the past two decades has essentially managed land movement in this neighborhood until recently.

In 2017, the City restarted efforts to explore options for long-term stabilization, forming a City Council Subcommittee to begin a collaborative effort with the community, holding public workshops and hiring a consultant to conduct a feasibility study. The City Council approved a concept for the Portuguese Bend Landslide Remediation Project based on the feasibility study in 2019.

17. Why did the City close some trails in the Portuguese Bend, Abalone Cove, Filiorum, and Forrestal Reserves?

Out of an abundance of caution, the City of Rancho Palos Verdes has temporarily closed about 13.5 miles of trails in the Portuguese Bend, Abalone Cove, Filiorum, and Forrestal Reserves due to the potential for hazardous natural conditions associated with increased land movement. Conditions associated with the land movement include sinkholes, unstable trails and surfaces, erosion, steep cliffs, and falling rocks.

The trail closures follow the recommendations of the City's geologist, who evaluated the area due to an increase in fissures and signs of land movement observed since late spring and early summer 2023.

18. Which trails are currently closed?

Maps showing the trail closures are available on the City's website here: <https://ca-ranchopalosverdes2.civicplus.com/1007/Trail-Conditions-Alerts>

The City is working with geologists and its land co-managers, including the Palos Verdes Peninsula Land Conservancy, and state and federal wildlife agencies, on solutions to restore public access, ensure public safety, and protect natural resources.