

Freeway transition roads covered by landslide expected to reopen next month

Daniel Tedford, Los Angeles Newspaper Group, 3-18-10

SAN DIMAS - Grading is complete on a collapsed hillside that closed two freeway interchanges, and crews are ahead of schedule, Caltrans officials said this week.

The transitions from the westbound 10 Freeway to the northbound 57 and from the northbound 71 Freeway to the northbound 57 have been closed since Feb. 18 when the hillside slid onto the roadway during the morning commute.

As long as weather doesn't slow workers down, the hope is the freeway transition roads will be reopened before late April, the original completion timeframe, said Caltrans spokeswoman Maria Raptis.

"We have had good weather ... we are ahead of schedule," said Raptis.

Grading was completed on the hillside, where you can see large benches of dirt where there was once grass.

Crews added drainage to prevent future issues with landslides, Raptis said.

"The hillside had drainage, but what they have done is they have added ditches to the existing drainage," Raptis said.

Crews have removed more than 100,000 cubic yards of dirt and rock from the site, Raptis said.

And now that drainage improvements and grading are done, crews will focus on general cleanup and freeway repairs before the roads are reopened, Raptis said.

Also, drain inlets will be cleaned and steps will be taken to prevent loose rock from falling onto the freeway, Raptis said.

About 27,500 cars use the west 10 Freeway connector to the north 57 Freeway daily, according to 2007 figures.

And 15,000 cars use the north 71 Freeway connector to the north 57 Freeway each day, according to 2008 figures.

"That area has moderate traffic at all times," said California Highway Patrol Sgt. Dean Trujillo.

For now, the alternative for drivers is to use the south 57 Freeway and exit Temple Avenue to enter on the north 57, or to use the east 10 Freeway to transition onto the 57 north, Trujillo said.