Motu Road - closed until further notice

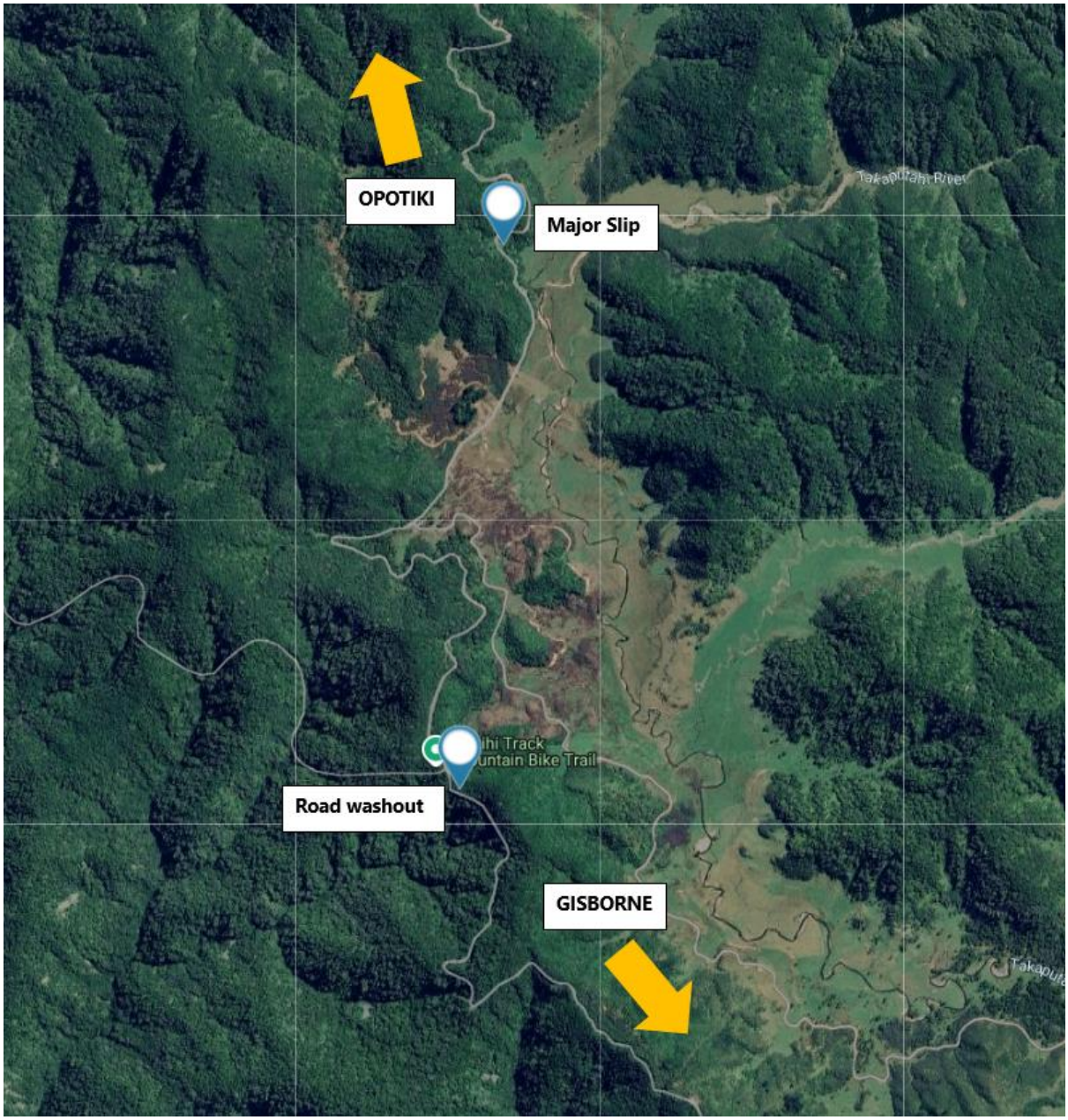
Date:

14 Nov 2025, 4:16 pm

Category:

Road Works and Closures

Motu Road remains closed until further notice following a large slip in late 2025. Geotechnical works and further investigation into the slip site and alternatives is ongoing.



UPDATE 23 June 2026

Since our last update, Council staff and our geotechnical specialists have reviewed the results from drilling at the main slip site. Based on these findings, our maintenance contractor is working alongside the geotechnical team to finalise a safe methodology for removing the slip debris.

As previously updated, NZTA/Waka Kotahi funding has been confirmed, allowing us to progress this next stage of work. The methodology is expected to be finalised within the next week, with safety requirements being confirmed along with a suitable location for placement of the removed material.

Subject to weather, the aim is to have machines **on the ground by 20 July.** Once the methodology is confirmed, we will provide a further update and share details on the Council website—and will bring this forward if earlier access to the site becomes possible.

Once works begin, the site will be an active construction area and **fully closed to the public at all times**, including outside working hours. This is due to the safety risks associated with earthworks and ground stability.

Our message is to not enter the site under any circumstances during this time.

We recognise this route is a key lifeline connection to Gisborne and our remote rural communities, and we know how challenging this closure has been. We are working to progress the repairs as safely and quickly as possible and will continue to keep you updated via our website and other channels as works get underway.

UPDATE 13 May 2026

- We can confirm that funding support from NZTA has been secured to enable repair work to the major slip to progress.
- Geotechnical investigations, including recent drilling, are nearing completion. Early indications are positive and allow us to move forward into the next phase, which includes developing a detailed repair approach and confirming where excess material from the site can be safely placed.
- Once this method is confirmed, we will be in a better position to share clear timeframes, key milestones, and provide more regular updates.
- We also want to note that the recent April washout on the Gisborne side of the main slip has now been stabilised. The road is currently open from the Gisborne side through to Whitikau Road.
- As signage was repeatedly removed during the response period, more permanent signs have now been installed. It is hoped this will improve visibility of the current road status and help ensure road users are well informed.

UPDATE 4 May 2026

- Debris has been cleared and the washout section of Motu Road is OPEN and residents on Whitikau Road have restored vehicle access through the Gisborne district.
- The remaining section of Motu Road remains closed due to the larger slip from late 2025 at Papamoa Crossing and Whitikau Road.

UPDATE 30 April 2026

- The date to reopen the section of Motu Road where a washout occurred has been extended following a site inspection this morning.
- Debris has come down overnight from where the bank was cut to widen the road and the road remains closed.
- We expect it will take another two days to clear and will provide additional updates when we know more.

UPDATE 24 April 2026

Motu Road washout - new underslip has closed vehicle access to Gisborne district

Recent weather events have contributed to a newly formed underslip approximately 2km in front of the major Motu Road slip, heading towards the Gisborne boundary.

This means vehicle access to Gisborne is not possible by car or larger 4WD vehicles. The site is passable only by pedestrians, cyclists, and motorbikes (including larger four-wheel bikes).

Delta Contractors are scheduled to start work on the underslip on Tuesday 28 April to widen the carriageway. This section of road is expected to reopen to vehicles by Friday 1 May.

Council staff have contacted the affected residents to undertake a welfare check.

Please note that Motu Road is closed at the 37km mark.

Once the underslip is repaired Motu Road will remain closed due to the larger slip from late 2025 at Papamoa Crossing and Whitikau Road, and residents on Whitikau Road will have restored vehicle access through the Gisborne district.

Underslip April 2026

Original post:

Wednesday's wet 'n wild weather left a major slip on Motu Road and it will be closed over the weekend and possibly Monday as contractors work to clear it.

While contractors have been onsite, working since Thursday morning, additional slip material and trees came down overnight, making it a much bigger job.

The closure is between Papamoa Hill and Whitikau, approximately around the 35 km mark.

Ngā mihi kia koutou e ngākaunui mai | Thank you for your patience and understanding.

UPDATE 10 December

Initial reports confirm the severity of the slip. The area is still very unstable and further investigation work will be needed before any work can get underway.

Full media release

UPDATE 2: 21 Nov

Motu Road will remain closed until further notice, due to the large slip.

Delta Contracting Ltd have secured the slip site for safety and will continue to monitor it for movement.

This is a big job - due to the size, scale and risk. A Geotech specialist has been engaged, and investigations will be carried out. This will give Council a better understanding of cost and timeframes.

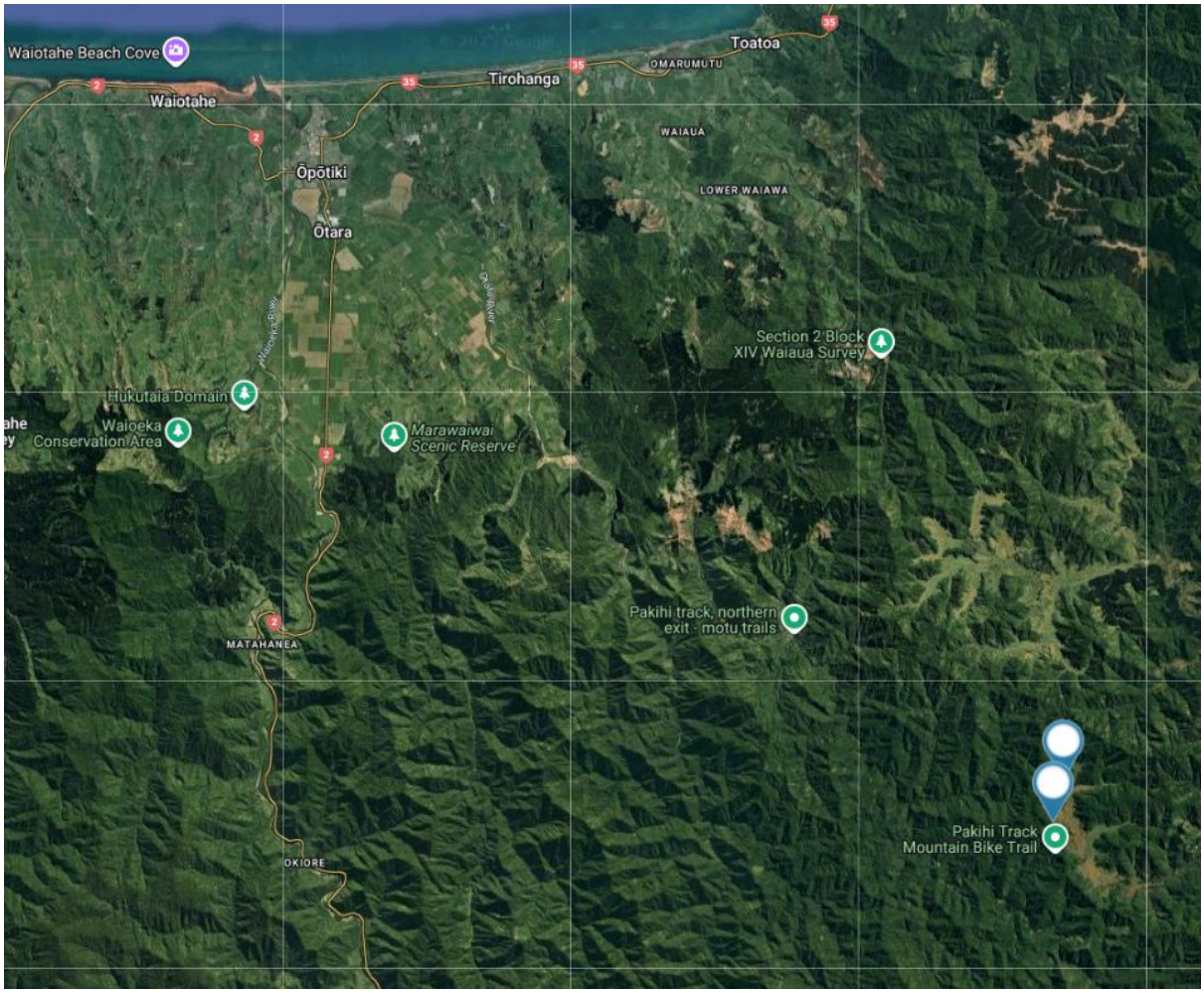
Once we have a plan in place we will share it with our hapori | community.

UPDATE 1: 18 Nov

Over the weekend more slip debris came down creating a much larger slip face (approximately 200m long by 20m high).

With heavy rainfall and bad weather forecast this week, contractors have paused work on clearing the slip and at this stage, the road will remain closed for the next few weeks.

We will continue to monitor the slip and reassess towards the end of the week.

Residents on Whitikau Road will have access through the Gisborne district.

The slip is towards the end of our district boundary between Papamoa Hill and Whitikau Rd, approximately around the 35 km mark.