



Sterling Highway MP 45–60 Project Update



Construction taking place at project site.

The purpose of this monthly report is to provide a snapshot update of the project. For more detailed project information, please visit www.sterlinghighway.net.

Tasks Performed in July

Project Overview

The Sterling Highway Milepost (MP) 45 to 60 Project will reconstruct the east and west ends of the existing roadway from approximately MP 45 to 46.5 and MP 56 to 58.

This construction will widen shoulders, straighten the road, and add passing lanes. Between MP 46.5 and 55.5 (the off-alignment section), the project will construct 10 miles of new roadway north of Cooper Landing and the Kenai River, including a new bridge spanning Juneau Creek Canyon.

This project will bring the highway up to current standards by efficiently and safely serving through traffic, the local community, and traffic bound for recreation destinations both now and in the future. Construction began in 2021 and the goal is to open the new highway to traffic by the end of 2027.



Environmental: Archaeologists continued working at sites within the Sqilantnu Archaeological District. A mid-year Programmatic Agreement (PA) Signatory meeting was conducted on July 20. Final signatures on the revised PA have been received, and it is now executed.



1B

Phase 1B: The Phase 1B team continued their coordination with utility owners to optimize and finalize utility relocations and access along the south side of the new highway. This coordination will continue further into 2023 and will culminate in approved utility agreements. Additionally, the Phase 1B team is supporting the right-of-way acquisition team with updated identification of temporary easements and construction permit determinations, as well as on-site meetings with property owners regarding driveway and approach designs.



2

Phase 2: The Juneau Creek Plate Girder Bridge design progressed to 100%.



3-4

Phases 3-4: Construction continued.

The Contractor is installing permanent drainage culverts on the west side (Phase 4). Excavation and blasting are ongoing on the east side (Phase 3).

Resurrection Pass Trail remains open at all times. Slaughter Gulch Trail is open, but access via Langille Road has been permanently closed.



5

Phase 5: Phase 5 geotechnical drilling started and will continue throughout the summer.



6

Phase 6: The Phases 3–6 team is continuing the development of the Juneau Falls Trailhead and Juneau Falls Overlook concepts and plans. A field visit with the U.S. Forest Service (USFS) took place on June 9, 2023, and a conceptual design for the Overlook is underway.



Near-term Schedule Goals



Funding: Establish funding in the FY2024 budget to award the Juneau Creek Bridge and Phase 1B construction. Work has started on our 2023 Annual Financial Plan Update, which is due in September.



Agencies: DOT&PF will work with the Agencies to update permits with the finalization of the Amended PA and will finalize a Memorandum of Understanding regarding wildlife, vegetation, and maintenance. Regular Agency meetings will begin again in the fall.



1A Phase 1A: Phase 1A construction is complete.



2 Phase 2: The Juneau Creek Bridge is ready to be under contract this fall.



1B Phase 1B: Incorporate the final southside utility relocations and revised driveways into the final roadway design. Supporting tasks include preparing revised draft utility relocation agreements. Certify the Phase 1B plan set assembly by fall 2023.



3-5 Phases 3-5: The Contractor will continue Phase 3 earthwork efforts for the Phase 3/4 grading and drainage construction. Field activities for geotechnical efforts will continue through the summer. The design team will further the Phase 5 tight diamond interchange design after the geotechnical investigation results are available.



MP 61.5 Culvert Improvement: This improvement replaces two culverts near MP 61.5 of the Seward Highway while also upgrading these culverts to fish passage standards and fulfilling U.S. Army Corps of Engineers mitigation for the project. Final plans were submitted with construction planned for fall 2023.



6 Phase 6: The team will continue coordination and design efforts with USFS on the development of the Juneau Falls Trailhead and Juneau Falls Overlook. The conceptual designs will continue through this summer and fall.

Recent Tasks Completed



January 2023

Public Involvement: The project team attended and hosted a booth at the January 12, 2023, Anchorage Transportation Fair to share project information with meeting attendees.



February 2023

Agencies: A 6-month PA extension was granted on February 28, 2023.



March 2023

Phase 6: A review meeting was held for the Juneau Falls Trailhead and Overlook 30% design level.



March 2023

Phase 5: The land exchange between Cook Inlet Region, Inc., and the Kenai National Wildlife Refuge was completed.



April 2023

The 2023 Initial Financial Plan, under the reclassification as a FHWA Major Project, was accepted.



May 2023

90% Design completion on the Juneau Creek Bridge.



June 2023

95% design completion on the Juneau Creek Bridge.



July 2023

100% Design completion of the 61.5 Culvert Improvement.

Contact

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