



# Sterling Highway MP 45–60 Project Update



Photo of construction in Phase 4 and tree clearing within Phase 5.

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](http://www.sterlinghighway.net).



## Tasks Performed in March



**Public Involvement:** The project team coordinated and implemented outreach on completed and upcoming project activities. The team also prepared for the upcoming public meeting that was held on April 20, 2023.



**Phases 3-4:** Construction began the week of March 13, 2023 with the main earthwork focus on the west side (Phase 4). DNR issued the project the remaining Temporary Water use Permits required to construct Phase 3.



**Environmental:** Archaeologists continued to work on required post-field reporting and on planning for 2023. DOT&PF held the annual Programmatic Agreement (PA) signatory meeting on March 30, 2023. The first major amendment of the 2018 Programmatic Agreement was distributed to Signatories for final signatures.



**Phase 5:** The land exchange was completed. The project completed clearing within Phase 5 and mobilized for geotechnical investigations. The clearing work will help provide better access for archaeologists, hydrologists, engineers, drill rigs, and surveyors.



**Phase 6:** The project team continued coordination with the U.S. Forest Service (USFS) on the development of the Juneau Falls Trailhead and Juneau Falls Overlook. Design also progressed.



**Agencies:** Agency Coordination Meeting was held on April 11th where the project team provided a construction update for the 2023 season. Regular coordination with agencies was conducted.



**Phase 1B:** The Phase 1B team continued their coordination with utility owners to better assess and address potential utility impacts, constructability, and construction phasing challenges. This coordination will continue further into 2023.



**Phase 2:** The Juneau Creek Plate Girder Bridge design progressed to 85%.

## 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.



## Near-term Schedule Goals



**Agencies:** DOT&PF will work with Agencies to sign the PA amendment; a Memorandum of Understanding regarding Wildlife, Vegetation, and Maintenance; and a 404 Permit Modification request to USACE. Site visit coordination will focus on various project aspects.



**Phase 1A:** Phase 1A construction resumed in April 2023, and traffic updates will be available online at <https://511.alaska.gov> or by calling 511. Phase 1A is expected to be completed by August 2023.



**Phase 2:** The Juneau Creek Plate Girder Bridge will be at 95% design in May 2023. Negotiations with the CM/GC Contractor will continue with an anticipated award date of August of 2023.



**Phases 3-5:** The contractor will move over to Phase 3 and continue earthwork efforts for the Phase 3/4 grading and drainage construction. Field activities for geotechnical efforts will begin in May 2023 and all other field activities will start in early to mid-summer 2023. The design team will further the Phase 5 tight diamond interchange design after the geotechnical investigation results are available. The phase 5 design will be finalized in early 2024.



**Seward Highway MP 61.5 Culvert Improvement:** This culvert improvement replaces two culverts near MP 61.5 of the Seward Highway, while also upgrading these culverts to fish passage standards and fulfilling USACE mitigation for the Sterling Hwy MP 45-60 Project. Currently at 65% design with construction late Summer 2023.



**Phase 6:** The team will continue coordination and design efforts with USFS on the development of the Juneau Falls Trailhead and Juneau Falls Overlook. Design team site visits will take place during summer 2023.

## 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.

## Contact

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