



Sterling Safety Corridor Improvements MP 82.5 to 94

Frequently Asked Questions

1. Why is this project being considered?
2. Is this the same project that was presented in 2009?
3. What is the current status of project development?
4. How would this project improve safety and reduce collisions?
5. How is the project funded? What will it cost?
6. What will happen to driveways, parking, or businesses that directly adjoin the highway in areas where the roadway is being widened?
7. How will this project impact moose?
8. How much right-of-way will be needed for the project? Will my property be affected?
9. Who can I contact to get more information?

1. Why is this project being considered?

The Sterling Highway is the main road connecting the communities of Sterling and Soldotna. The road has a high rate of fatal and major injury crashes, is over capacity, and does not function efficiently during commuter hours and summer peak traffic times. In 2009, the section from Milepost (MP) 83–93 was designated a Traffic Safety Corridor, which demonstrates the serious need for improvements.

2. Is this the same project that was presented in 2009?

This is essentially the same project, with different funding. The 2009 recommendation came out of a state-funded study of possible safety improvements to the MP 83–93 corridor. The study vetted a number of alternatives and culminated in the creation of a Preliminary Decision Document that recommended a four-lane highway with a depressed median. Due to the state's current economic climate, the Alaska Department of Transportation and Public Facilities (DOT&PF) is developing the project so that it will be eligible for federal funding. To receive federal funding, DOT&PF must complete the federally required environmental review process. Project funding is now anticipated to be primarily federal, with approximately 9 percent of the cost being contributed by the state.

3. What is the current status of project development?

The project is currently in the process of completing an Environmental Assessment (EA) under the

requirements of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). The EA is anticipated to be released for public comment in 2018.

4. How would this project improve safety and reduce collisions?

The proposed four-lane divided highway with depressed grass median will provide greater separation for opposing traffic, thereby reducing the risk of head-on collisions. The project will also include separated bike/pedestrian facilities, turn lanes, and intersection realignments. Dedicated turn lanes are proposed to remove turning vehicles from through lanes, lowering the risk of rear-end collisions. Separating bicycle and pedestrian facilities from roadway traffic helps to reduce potential injuries from collisions with vehicles. Realigning intersections improves drivers' ability to see upcoming signals and signage, which also helps reduce the potential for crashes.

5. How is the project funded? What will it cost?

The estimated cost for the design, right-of-way (ROW) acquisition, utility relocation, and construction of the proposed project is \$70 million. Cost estimates will be refined over time as the design progresses. Project funding is anticipated to be primarily federal, with approximately 9 percent of the cost being contributed by the state. While funding for final design is included in the Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) for 2016–2019, the funds required



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for right-of-way, utility relocation, and construction will need to be allocated in the future. The start of construction is dependent on many factors, but could begin as soon as 2022 if funding is made available.

6. What will happen to driveways, parking, or businesses that directly adjoin the highway in areas where the roadway is being widened?

All properties that presently adjoin the highway will retain access, although some access routes may not directly adjoin the highway after construction is complete. Some routes will be consolidated, which may redirect property owners to side streets or access roads instead of directly to the highway. It is too early in the project to know whether or not individual driveways will be impacted. In the event that driveways are impacted, DOT&PF will reconstruct existing permitted driveways and accesses to tie into the new roadway. DOT&PF will not be creating new driveways or approaches as a part of this project. If you would like to apply for a driveway/approach road permit, please consult the permit application website at <http://www.dot.state.ak.us/permits/index.shtml>.

7. How will this project impact moose?

Between 2000 and 2010, 28 percent of the crashes involved moose, and DOT&PF designers are anticipating that moose will cross the proposed, wider four-lane highway. Potential mitigation strategies under consideration include clearing vegetation and signage.

8. How much right-of-way will be needed for the project? Will my property be affected?

The majority of the project falls within existing DOT&PF right-of-way (ROW); it is possible that additional ROW will be required, but that has yet to be determined. Some ROW may be required to modify side streets and other improvements off the main alignment. The project is in the early design stage; as the design is refined, the ROW requirements will become more defined. If additional ROW is necessary, DOT&PF will proactively contact affected property owners and agencies during the ROW acquisition phase, prior to final design.

9. Who can I contact to get more information?

If you would like to request additional information or share your ideas, visit our website at www.sterlinghighway82to94.com. You can sign up for the project mailing list or leave a comment online. You may also contact the project manager or public involvement coordinator.

Alaska Department of Transportation and Public Facilities

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