



FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (FAQs)

HSIP: STERLING HIGHWAY SHOULDER WIDENING

Mile Post 97 (Soldotna) to Mile Post 118 (Clam Gulch)

Project No. Z589800000/0211065

1. Why is this project a priority?

Widening shoulders will increase safety and reduce the number and severity of crashes, priorities of the Alaska Department of Transportation and Public Facilities (DOT&PF) and the Highway Safety Improvement Program (HSIP). Fatal and major injury crash mapping showed that 266 collisions occurred within the Highway mile post (MP) 97 to MP 118 corridor between 2006 and 2010. Of these, about 35% (approximately 93 crashes) could have been prevented or made less severe by wider shoulders, edge rumble strips, or a pavement safety edge.

2. What is the cost of and funding source for this project?

As an HSIP project, all costs except for the fish passage improvements at Crooked Creek are 100% federally funded. The Exxon Valdez Oil Spill Trustee Council (EVOSTC) has provided funding to the Alaska Department of Fish and Game (ADF&G) to provide the fish passage improvements at Crooked Creek. The project is estimated to cost between \$30M and \$40M.

3. When will the project be constructed?

Project construction is anticipated to occur between May 2018 and October 2019.

4. What type of construction traffic impacts would occur?

Road users may experience delays due to lane closures and a temporary detour at the Crooked Creek culvert area during construction. Advance notice regarding traffic delays will be provided to the public. There will be no complete or permanent blocking to property access along the corridor and no complete closure of the Highway.

5. Will vegetation removal/tree clearing occur for this project?

Select clearing will occur for shoulder embankments, utility work, and sight distance at driveways and approaches. A "clear zone" free of trees, brush, and obstacles that may be hazardous to a vehicle that leaves the road will be cleared. The DOT&PF does not anticipate clearing activities to go beyond what is necessary to construct the project.

6. Why can't a bicycle lane (for bikes, ATVs, pedestrians, etc.) be constructed for this project?

The scope is limited to improvements that meet the HSIP project purpose to reduce the number and severity of single-vehicle-run-off-road, sideswipe, and head-on type crashes. The addition of a separated bike path does not meet that purpose. (See HSIP details at <http://safety.fhwa.dot.gov/hsip>.) The 8-foot (ft.) wider shoulders will, however, help accommodate shared road use, except at the Kasilof River bridge, which is cost-prohibitive.

7. Why doesn't this project develop wildlife corridors to decrease moose-vehicle collisions?

The DOT&PF ranks moose-vehicle collisions throughout Alaska to identify areas of concern, and the Highway, MP 97 to MP 118, is not a top-ranked collision corridor. Corridors with a higher moose-vehicle collision rate receive priority. As part of another HSIP project, DOT&PF will install moose warning signs along the Highway.

8. Will lighting be constructed for this project?

Existing street lighting within the project limits may be improved, and lighting may be added at select locations where it benefits safety. Highway lighting will not be constructed along the entire corridor.

9. Why are Crooked Creek culvert improvements necessary?

Culverts will be replaced at Crooked Creek, Slikok Creek Tributary, Coal Creek, and an unnamed creek near Clam Gulch. Replacing culverts will improve fish passage and public safety. The Crooked Creek crossing currently consists of two undersized 8-ft. culverts. This has resulted in forming a downstream scour pool, and culverts progressively "perch" above the water, posing a challenge to upstream migrating fish. ADF&G targeted Crooked Creek after receiving EVOSTC funding to restore the Kenai Peninsula aquatic ecosystem.

10. How will this project improve and impact mail boxes located adjacent to the highway?

The mailboxes will typically be relocated off the highway on adjacent streets, but there are a few locations where boxes will remain on the shoulder. Pullouts are not within the HSIP project scope.

11. How will poor lines of sight at intersections and at Tustumena Elementary be improved?

Driveways and approaches will be modified to accommodate the shoulder widening and drainage improvements, including select clearing. Drivers may see longer lines of sight as a result of the improvements.