



Sterling Safety Corridor Improvements

Soldotna Wednesday Market

Soldotna Creek Park

- Wednesday, June 25, 2025
- Wednesday, July 2, 2025
- Wednesday, July 9, 2025
- Wednesday, July 16, 2025
- Wednesday, July 23, 2025
- Wednesday, July 30, 2025
- Wednesday, August 6, 2025

Project Team Staff

- Julia Hanson, DOT&PF Project Manager
- Steve Noble, DOWL Project Manager
- Erica Jensen, DOWL Assistant Project Manager
- Aaron Fletcher, DOWL Project Designer
- Stephanie Queen, Public Involvement Lead
- Morgan McCammon, DOWL Public Involvement Support
- Talli Vittetoe, DOWL Public Involvement Support

Summary:

The Alaska Department of Transportation and Public Facilities (DOT&PF) and QAP, with DOWL and Stephanie Queen Consulting, hosted a booth for the Sterling Safety Corridor Improvements Milepost (MP) 82.5 to 94 Progressive Design-Build project at the 2025 Wednesday Market in Soldotna for seven consecutive Wednesdays, from June 25 through August 6, 2025. The event was held at Soldotna Creek Park, strategically located in downtown Soldotna along the Sterling Highway and banks of the Kenai River.

Wednesdays in the Park was a large regional event, which drew a significant crowd of residents, as well as in-state and out-of-state visitors. The series averaged more than 1,000 attendees each Wednesday, with peak attendance exceeding 2,500 people on a given night. This year was a standout, with the Soldotna Chamber Director recently reporting that July set a new monthly record for attendees.

The project booth was staffed with two rotating team members each week, from 11:00 am to 4:00 pm. The team answered questions and shared informational materials, including a project fact sheet, frequently asked questions (FAQ) document, a Federal Highways Administration Safe Access brochure, and DOT&PF's Acquiring Real Property for Federal and Federal-Aid Programs and Projects brochure. The booth walls featured large-scale plots of the preferred design throughout the project corridor.



The location and format offered great exposure for the project, with many people casually browsing the information provided. The project team estimated upwards of 50 face-to-face engagements each week with community members who had specific questions or comments.

Question and Comments Summary:

Project team members received the following individual comments and questions.

Design

- Support for the preferred design and the improvements to safety in the corridor.
- Appreciation for thoughtful design decisions, which balance safety and property access.
- Suggestion to put a traffic signal at the Mackey Lake Road intersection and questions about what warrants traffic signals.
- Suggestions for driveway relocations.
- Suggestions for fish passage improvements for Soldotna Creek.
- Suggestion to install overhead lighting that directs downward to avoid light pollution and glare.
- Suggestion for acceleration lanes on the left and right sides of the highway.

Construction

- Suggestion to begin construction on the Soldotna side of the project area because of the high number and severity of crashes around the Mackey Lake Road area.
- Concerns with construction impacts to businesses and residents.
- Questions about the timing of construction and construction of frontage and backage connections.

Safety

- Concerns with the safety of U-turns and out-of-direction travel for roads accessing sections of the highway with a 4-lane configuration and a depressed median.

Other Feedback

- Many people commented on how much they appreciate our presence at the event and the team's outreach efforts to date.
- Concerns about winter maintenance of the preferred design.
- Requests to be added to the project email update list.

Public and Agency Notice:

Project e-newsletters in April, May, June, July, and August, and a postcard mailed in July notified the public of this opportunity. This marketing proved effective, as several people told us they came to the Wednesday Market specifically to find our booth and meet with the team.



Action Items and Next Steps:

- Distribute public comments to the project team and respond to concerns – Complete.
- Update FAQ Sheet based on comments and questions from the public.
- Post event summary to the project website.