DATE: December 6, 2011

TO: Planning Commission

FROM: Eric Feldt, Planner
Community Development Department

FILE NO.: CSP2011-0008

PROPOSAL: A City project review for the reconstruction of Berners Avenue in the southern Mendenhall Valley area.

GENERAL INFORMATION

Applicant: John Nelson, CBJ Engineering Department

Property Owner: City and Borough of Juneau (CBJ)

Property Address: Berners Avenue

Legal Description: Right-of-Way

Parcel Code No.: 0 Parcel

Site Size: 0

Zoning: 0

Utilities: City Water & Sewer

Access: Glacier Highway, Muir Street, Ladd Street & Radcliffe Road

Existing Land Use: Public Street

Surrounding Land Use: North - D-5/ Light Commercial; Single Family/ Offices; Berners Ave.
South - D-15/ Industrial; Single- & Multi-family; Berners Ave.
East - Light Commercial; Frontier Suites/ Mica Rest.; Glacier Hwy
West - D-5; Single Family; Radcliffe Rd.
ATTACHMENTS

Attachment A  Project Letter
Attachment B  Project Drawings
Attachment C  Public Comment
Attachment D  1994 Juneau Wetland Management Plan map

BACKGROUND

Berners Avenue is located in the southern part of the Mendenhall Valley and connects to Glacier Highway and Radcliffe Road; See vicinity map. This road is approximately 1/3 mile in length. The reconstruction of Berners Avenue is listed in the 2010-2015 Capital Improvement Project (CIP), as described below:

**Berners Avenue Improvements** - This project involves reconstruction of the road base, asphalt pavement, storm drainage improvements, utility repairs and replacement, a new sidewalk with curb & gutter, and enhanced street lighting. The water system improvements include replacement of valve boxes and adjustment to final pavement grade. The sewer system improvements include replacement of failing manholes, sewer main, and service laterals. The existing roadway driving surface is in poor condition, utilities are old and in need of repairs and replacement, and increased pedestrian use of the roadway supports sidewalk and street light improvements. The project area extends along Berners Avenue from Radcliffe Road to Old Glacier Highway.

ANALYSIS

Berners Avenue is in a medium-density residential neighborhood consisting of single- and multi-family residences. This road provides a main connection to the CBJ Wastewater Treatment Plant and the popular Airport Dike Trail. A higher volume of traffic and speeds than a typical residential neighborhood has caused the road surface to wear. The road currently contains many potholes and extensive cracking. These can be seen in Figure 1.

This road provides two vehicle lanes (east/west bound) separated by a middle yellow striping. There are no sidewalks, curbs, or gutters. Surface drainage is channeled toward shallow ditches along the road. Road shoulders are small and not well defined. There are no defined pedestrian or bicyclist areas. Some of these features can be seen in Figures 1 & 2. Street lighting is provided at intersections.
Traffic speed has been a concern of the neighborhood for a long time. As indicated earlier, this street serves many users and acts more like a thoroughfare street than a typical residential street. Some property owners have posted signs informing drivers to “Slow Down”. Maximum speed limit signs are not well posted on this road. There are few traffic calming measures in place. The pot holes and uneven road surface slow traffic. With a new smooth road surface, traffic speeds are likely to increase. Staff received a letter from the public suggesting ways to slow traffic. Their concerns can
be read under attachment D. Traffic calming measures are warranted for this street.

Figure 2: Looking west along Berners Avenue toward Radcliffe Road, the road shoulder has been repaired and continues to erode. Property owners have installed personal speed limit signs to slow traffic. Picture taken by staff on 11-3-11.

Proposed Improvement
The following items are proposed for the reconstruction of Berners Avenue:

- Replacement of roadway embankment
- New 5-foot wide sidewalks with curb and gutters on both sides of street
- Improvements to existing water and sewer systems
- New underground storm drainage system
- New asphalt paving
- Upgrades to existing street lighting
- Additional road surface striping at intersections

The improvements will create new defined places for pedestrians while preserving vehicular traffic. The new sidewalks will make a continuous pathway as it connects to existing sidewalks along Glacier Highway and Radcliffe Road. Two, 12-foot wide travel lanes with 2-foot shoulders will be designed, as illustrated in Figure 3.

**Figure 3: Proposed Road Profile**

**CONFORMITY WITH ADOPTED PLANS**

**2008 Comprehensive Plan**

The 2008 Comprehensive Plan states the following transportation policies that are germane to the project:

**POLICY 8.1 IT IS THE POLICY OF THE CBJ TO PROMOTE A BALANCED, WELL INTEGRATED LOCAL MULTI-MODAL SURFACE TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM THAT PROVIDES SAFE, CONVENIENT AND ENERGY-EFFICIENT ACCESS AND TRANSPORT FOR PEOPLE AND COMMODITIES.**

**8.1.SOP2** Maintain the CBJ overall and subarea transportation plans and ensure their consistency with other relevant CBJ Plans, including the Comprehensive Plan, the Parks and Recreation Comprehensive Plan and the Capital Improvement Plan and Program. (Emphasis added.)
POLICY 8.2 IT IS THE POLICY OF THE CBJ TO PROMOTE AND FACILITATE TRANSPORTATION ALTERNATIVES TO PRIVATE VEHICLES AS A MEANS OF REDUCING TRAFFIC CONGESTION, AIR POLLUTION AND THE CONSUMPTION OF FOSSIL FUELS, AND TO PROVIDE SAFE AND HEALTHY MEANS OF TRANSPORTATION TO ALL PEOPLE.

The following paragraph indicates the need for pedestrian facilities within and between neighborhoods.

“Improved pedestrian and bicycle movement within and between major shopping and employment centers, schools and other concentrations of population are needed. Pedestrian and bicycle facilities are needed to provide safer and more efficient movement within and between neighborhoods and major concentrations of population. These facilities are also important as an aspect of recreation.” (Emphasis added)

The Plan indicates several principles for creating livable mixed use communities. With residences along Berners Avenue living close to services along Glacier Highway, the policies below are germane to the proposal.

Design on a Human Scale

Compact, pedestrian-friendly communities allow residents, workers and visitors to walk to shops, services, cultural venues, and jobs, reduce traffic congestion and improve people’s health.

Provide Transportation Options

Design safe, well-lit and convenient all-weather pedestrian pathways, separated bicycle lanes, sheltered bus stops; give preferential parking to carpool vehicles and car-sharing vehicles and provide preferential and metered electric energy stations for electric vehicles.

2009 Non-Motorized Transportation Plan

The Non-Motorized Transportation Plan (NMTP) encourages streets to be designed for safe travel of all users such as pedestrians (young & old), bicyclists, automobiles, handicap, transit, etc.. Choosing appropriate types of infrastructure is based on several elements such as surrounding land uses and volume and speed of users.

The following policy supports and encourages active transportation and increases the safety and effectiveness of the existing non-motorized system:
POLICY 3 MUNICIPAL PROJECTS. Improve the process for Planning Commission review of CBJ projects to allow timely comment on non-motorized infrastructure and routes. Project managers will use a context sensitive approach in the design of City projects to achieve a Complete Streets network.

The goals of this policy are two-fold, to: A) Have Planning Commission review of CBJ projects (Whether the project is initiated by the Airport, Engineering, Harbors, Lands, Parks and Recreation or other department) occur earlier in the design process; and B) “Institutionalize” the context sensitive approach that many CBJ departments already take to motorized and non-motorized improvement planning and construction.

Improvements to Berners Avenue is not specifically identified in the plan, but are listed in the 2010-2015 CIP as needing improvements to utility lines and new sidewalks, curb and gutters. The following items are recommended by the NMTP to increase pedestrian safety:

- Having 5-foot minimum wide sidewalks along low speed/volume roads and accessible ramps at street crossings,
- Wide shoulder lanes for bike lanes,
- 11 foot travel lanes widths where speed limit is less than 45 mph
- Shorten crossing distances at intersections by tightening curb radii,
- Use continental or ladder design pedestrian striping at street intersections, and
- Install appropriate street lighting for pedestrians.

Many of these items are incorporated into the project. The applicant indicates that there is insufficient room for bicycle lanes with 2, 5-foot wide sidewalks. Bicyclists can safely share the road with automobiles by using the road shoulder or travel lane. The recommended lane width of 11 feet is 1 foot less than what it proposed. An 11-foot travel lane is stated in the Plan as a traffic calming element.

As indicated earlier, the neighborhood is deeply concerned about traffic speeds and implementing traffic calming methods is warranted. Reviewing the recommended methods in the NMTP on pages 25 & 26 such as speed bumps, road diets, landscaping, etc. staff finds that narrowing the travel lanes is most effective given the nature of the street and the users. Narrowing travel lanes from the standard 12 feet down to 11 or 10 feet has been used during past road reconstruction projects in town as an effective traffic calming tool. Further, by retaining the same roadway width but reducing the travel lane to 11 feet, additional shoulder room for bicyclists would be created. The applicant states that the proposed sidewalks and curb/gutters will create a new narrowing effect and will slow traffic. Further, since part of this road is used by large trucks of the Waste Water Treatment Plant, a wider travel lane will be more accommodating. Also, the 12-foot lane widths will match those on the recently rebuilt Radcliffe Road. Bicycle lanes are not provided along Radcliffe Road. It is important to note that the Non-Motorized Transportation Plan is only a guideline, not a regulation. Overall,
staff finds that an 11-foot travel lane would make the project more consistent with the NMTP.

2001 Area-Wide Transportation Plan

The AWTP defines the framework for transportation projects for the next 20 years (2021) and sets six top priorities, three of the following are germane to the project:

- Establish and implement Transportation Demand Management Policies throughout the CBJ focusing on reducing single-occupant-vehicle trips and promoting alternative modes of travel.

- Focus on local street connections between subdivisions to maximize connectivity for pedestrian, bicycle and vehicle use and improve connections from neighborhoods to a regional, interconnected and area-wide non-motorized trail system.

- Establish and maintain bicycle lanes, pathways, sidewalks and bus stops where they are needed. Maintain bicycle lanes, pathways, sidewalks and bus stops with regular restriping, re-surfacing, street sweeping and snow removal.

The following guiding principles of the AWTP relate to the project:

- **Public safety is of paramount concern.**
  Measures that enhance safety for users of the transportation system will be carefully reviewed, evaluated, selected, and recommended.

- **Bicycles provide a low-cost alternative to automobiles**
  Surface transportation needs to be improved so that it works as well for bicyclists as it does for other vehicle operators.

- **Travel by foot needs to be safe and convenient.**
  The addition of pedestrian facilities at many locations is needed to provide for all travelers, including children, the elderly and the disabled.

With the proposed improvements of a new road surface with sidewalks and curbs, pedestrian safety will increase and an overall neighborhood pedestrian connection can be created. As stated earlier, with the narrow roadway, bicycles lanes will not be proposed with this project but bicyclists will be able to safely share the road with automobiles. Wide shoulders for increased bicyclist comfort may be created if the roadway width was retained as proposed and the travel lanes were 11 feet.

Though the AWTP does not specifically identify Berners Avenue, the following recommended area-wide transportation improvement relate to the project:
Planning Commission
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- With new construction and reconstruction, evaluate pedestrian and bicycle needs and recommend sidewalks on one or both sides of a street, as appropriate, in all commercial or residential subdivisions.

The proposed improvements are consistent with the 2001 Area Wide Transportation Plan.

HABITAT

The only mapped habitat regulated by the Land Use Code and affected by the project are mapped wetlands and Duck Creek, which is an Anadromous fish stream (Fish-spawning), at the intersection of Berners Avenue and Glacier Highway. (See Attachment C.) Duck Creek is channeled within a culvert at the crossing of Berners Avenue. The culvert, which is shown on sheet 6 of the submitted plans, will remain in place. There will not be any construction in or within the banks of Duck Creek. According to the Land Use Code, roads, culverts, bridges, and other public structures with the purpose to provide access across the creek are not subject to the no development 50-foot setback from the creek. Proposed construction limits will be largely within and very close to the existing shoulder of the road and will avoid Duck Creek and most of the wetlands.

If any wetlands are affected, the applicant will be responsible for obtaining an approved wetland fill permit from the US Army Corps of Engineering (COE) prior to filling of any wetlands.

The applicant indicates that a Storm Water Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP) will be required for this project. Though not required by the Land Use Code, this plan will encourage avoiding sensitive habitat.

As proposed, the project is consistent with the Land Use Code.

PUBLIC COMMENT

A letter from the public (Attachment C) stated that a new driveway would be created for the Professional Office Plaza along Berners Avenue, and that this access was specifically prohibited during the permitting of the development (Condition Use Permit # CU-4-79). This office plaza is located at the corner of Berners Avenue and Glacier Highway. Currently, access to this plaza is only along Glacier Highway. This restriction was a condition of the permit and access is limited to Glacier Highway. Therefore, a new driveway off of Berners Avenue cannot be created if approved by the Planning Commission through a separate Conditional Use permit. The submitted plans do not show an access to the office plaza from Berners Avenue.
FINDINGS

With the proposed improvements the project will be consistent with the 2008 Comprehensive Plan and 2001 Area-Wide Transportation Plan. Though the overall intent of the 2009 Non-Motorized Transportation Plan is met, having 11-foot travel lanes instead of 12-foot will make it more consistent. As stated earlier, this is not a requirement, only a suggested improvement for traffic calming. The project will be compliant with the Land Use Code.

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended the Planning Commission adopt the Director’s analysis and findings and recommend the approval of this City consistency review permit to the Assembly.
CITY/STATE PROJECT AND LAND ACTION REVIEW APPLICATION

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**TYPE OF PROJECT REVIEW:**

- [x] City Project Review
- [ ] City Land Acquisition /Disposal
- [ ] State Project Review

**DESCRIPTION OF PROJECT**

See attached Scope

**CURRENT USE OF LAND OR BUILDING(S):**

Existing paved street approximately 24' in width

**PROPOSED USE OF LAND OR BUILDING(S):**

New 24' wide paved street with curb and gutter and 5' sidewalks on both sides.

**PROJECT NUMBERS ASSOCIATED WITH PROPOSAL:**

Is this project associated with any other Land Use Permits?  [x] No   [ ] Yes  Case No.: ________________

Capital Improvement Program # (CIP)  R72-051

Local improvement District # (LID)  ________________

State Project #  ________________

**ESTIMATED PROJECT COST:**  $1.1 million

For more information regarding the permitting process and the submittals required for a complete application, please see the reverse side.

If you need any assistance filling out this form, please contact the Permit Center at 586-0770.

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**NOTE:** MUST BE ACCOMPANIED BY DEVELOPMENT PERMIT APPLICATION FORM & EVEN IF THE PROPOSED PROJECT IS ASSOCIATE WITH OTHER LAND USE PERMITS, THIS APPLICATION MUST BE FILLED OUT
DEVELOPMENT PERMIT APPLICATION

CITY and BOROUGH of JUNEAU

Date Received: 10/25/11

INFORMATION

PROPERTY LOCATION

Street Address: Sabin Avenue between Rossetti Road and Glacier Highway
City/Zip: JUNEAU
Legal Description(s) of Parcel(s): [Subdivision, Survey, Block, Tract, etc.]
Assessor’s Parcel Numbers:

OWNERSHIP/LESEEE

Property Owner’s Name: John Nelson
Legal Name: Sabin Avenue between Rossetti Road and Glacier Highway
Location Address: 153 South Spruce Street, Juneau, AK 99801
Home Address: 1420 Spruce Street, Juneau, AK 99801
Email Address:

DATE OF APPLICATION

Date: 10/25/11

STAFF APPROVALS

Permit Type: Building/Plumbing/Floor

Date Received: 10/25/11
Application Number: SP20110008

OFFICE USE ONLY BELOW THIS LINE

Permit Intake Initials: NEJ

NOTE: DEVELOPMENT PERMIT APPLICATION FORMS MUST ACCOMPANY ALL OTHER COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT APPLICATIONS

Revised November 2006

FORM: SC 44-001 (Rev. 5-2009)
NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING

PROPOSAL: A City Consistency Review of the reconstruction of Berners Avenue.

FILE NO.: CSP2011-0008
APPLICANT: CBJ Engineering

TO: All Adjacent Property Owners
PROPERTY OWNERS: City & Borough of Juneau

HEARING DATE: December 20, 2011
PROPERTY ADDRESS: Berners Avenue

HEARING TIME: 7:00 PM
SITE SIZE: 1/3 mile

PLACE: ASSEMBLY CHAMBERS
Municipal Building
155 South Seward Street
Juneau, Alaska  99801

PROPERTY OWNERS PLEASE NOTE:
You are invited to attend this Public Hearing and present oral testimony. The Planning Commission will also consider written testimony. You are encouraged to submit written material to the Community Development Department no later than 8:30 A.M. on the Wednesday preceding the Public Hearing. Materials received by this deadline are included in the information packet given to the Planning Commission a few days before the Public Hearing. Written material received after the deadline will be provided to the Planning Commission at the Public Hearing.

If you have questions, please contact Eric Feldt at 586-0764, or e-mail: eric_feldt@ci.juneau.ak.us

Date printed: December 7, 2011
NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING

CSP2011-0008 has been pulled from the Tuesday, November 22 Planning Commission meeting for further review. Notice will be provided when this case is scheduled to go before the Planning Commission.

PROPOSAL: A City Project for the reconstruction of Berners Avenue.

FILE NO.: CSP2011-0008
APPLICANT: CBJ Engineering

TO: All Adjacent Property Owners
PROPERTY OWNERS: City & Borough of Juneau

HEARING DATE: November 22, 2011
PROPERTY ADDRESS: Berners Avenue

HEARING TIME: 7:00 PM
SITE SIZE: 1/3 mile

PLACE: ASSEMBLY CHAMBERS
Municipal Building
155 South Seward Street
Juneau, Alaska 99801

PROPERTY OWNERS PLEASE NOTE:
You are invited to attend this Public Hearing and present oral testimony. The Planning Commission will also consider written testimony. You are encouraged to submit written material to the Community Development Department no later than 8:30 A.M. on the Wednesday preceding the Public Hearing. Materials received by this deadline are included in the information packet given to the Planning Commission a few days before the Public Hearing. Written material received after the deadline will be provided to the Planning Commission at the Public Hearing.

If you have questions, please contact Eric Feldt at 586-0764, or e-mail: eric_feldt@ci.juneau.ak.us

Date printed: November 16, 2011
Berners Avenue Reconstruction

SCOPE:

This project will begin at the intersection with Radcliffe Road and end at Glacier Highway. The reconstruction work will include replacement of the roadway embankment, addition of sidewalks and curb and gutter on both sides of the street, minor improvements to the water and sanitary sewer system, installation of a new underground storm drainage system, new asphalt paving and possible upgrades to existing street lighting.
Janet Thrower  
9416 Berners Ave.  
Juneau, AK 99801  
October 14, 2011

Naomi Hobbs, P.E.  
Engineering Manager, DOWL HKM  
5368 Commercial Blvd.  
Juneau, AK 99801

Dear Ms. Hobbs,

I have been mulling over the Berners Avenue reconstruction project since last week's meeting at TMHS. Thank you for the presentation. The project will be beautiful, and it sounds as though it will help with several drainage problems. On the other hand, the road will appear much wider, resulting in more speeding cars as has happened on Radcliffe Road.

The item of greatest concern in your presentation is the driveway opening at Professional Plaza. No matter what the justification, a driveway from Professional Plaza onto Berners Avenue has the effect of routing commercial traffic through a residential neighborhood. The Planning Commission did not allow this when the development went in, and upheld the decision again a few years ago. It is very disturbing that this would be slipped into the plans, no matter WHO requested it. “It’s easier to seek forgiveness than to get permission in the first place” seems to apply here. A DRIVEWAY FROM PROFESSIONAL PLAZA TO BERNERS AVE. SHOULD NOT BE INCLUDED IN THE PLANS FOR THIS PROJECT.

There needs to be a 3-way stop at Berners Avenue and Muir Street FOR THE PURPOSE OF PROVIDING A SAFE PLACE FOR CHILDREN/PEDESTRIANS TO CROSS THE STREET. It makes perfect sense to residents of this neighborhood. No one from the City has explained their lack of support, or the sideways glances between CBJ personnel when this has been brought up. What is the secret? Why the lack of response? This neighborhood should not be added to the growing list of locations that have safety measures installed AFTER an injury or fatality.

There has been much conversation about speed bumps in this neighborhood. I am requesting that one be placed on Berners Avenue between Ladd Street and Muir Street, and another between Muir Street and Radcliffe Road. I have been told of a type of speed bump that snowplows in Anchorage move right over in the winter. That has been mentioned as the problem with placing them. If there are speed bumps that the snowplows can maneuver over easily, the objection should end.

The above measures would enhance the safety of this project and this neighborhood.

Sincerely,

Janet Thrower

cc: John Nelson, Project Manager, CBJ Engineering Department  
Planning Commission members
ATTACHMENT D