

# **Mendenhall Loop Road Capacity Improvement Project**



## **Project Advisory Group & Public Meeting Comment Summary**

*Prepared for Alaska DOT&PF by Kittelson & Associates Inc. and  
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**December 9, 2013**

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## Meeting and Comment Summary

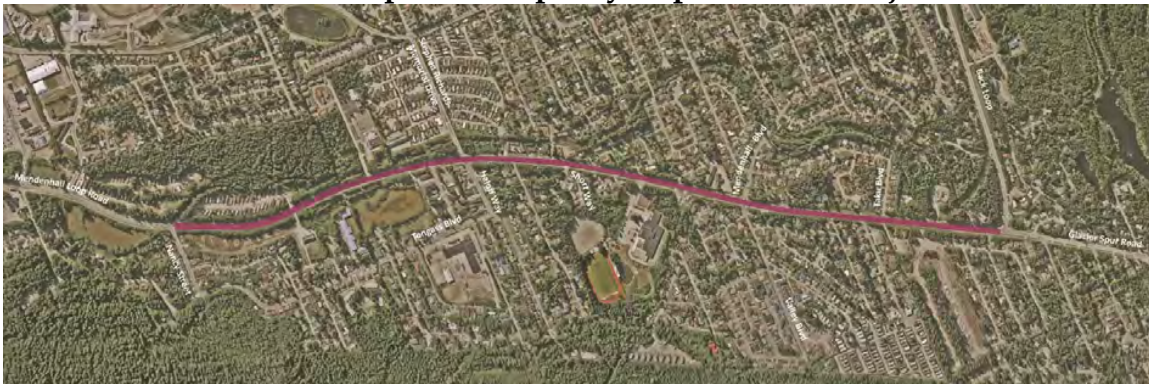
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## Executive Summary

The Alaska Department of Transportation and Public Facilities (DOT&PF) and its contractor, Kittelson & Associates, Inc. (KAI), are working to identify a preferred concept design to provide adequate vehicle capacity and improve bicycle and pedestrian facilities on Mendenhall Loop Road between Nancy Street and the intersection with Back Loop Road.

On November 6, 2013, DOT&PF and KAI hosted an advisory group meeting and a public meeting. Public comments were accepted through November 22, 2013. The goal of these efforts was to better understand the travel challenges and concerns from those that regularly drive, walk, or bike along this corridor.

### Mendenhall Loop Road Capacity Improvement Project Area



Just under 40 stakeholders or members of the public attended one or more of these meetings (Appendix 1) and 15 comments were received during the public comment period (Appendix 2). All attendees and commenters agreed: 1) with the project purpose and need; 2) that this road corridor is challenging for vehicles, pedestrians and bicyclists; and 3) that the project is of high importance.

The 10 most frequently mentioned and significant comments are:

1. STEPHEN RICHARDS/HALOFF INTERSECTION. There are several problems with this intersection including the traffic signal, the alignment of the intersection, and a lack of understanding the rules. The poor configuration of the intersection at Stephan Richards is the primary cause of backups during the evening rush hour. During morning rush hour particularly, trying to turn left from Haloff Way onto Mendenhall Loop Road is extremely difficult. Because it is a difficult intersection drivers do not always pay attention to whether someone is waiting to cross or not, making crossing here risky for pedestrians. A roundabout could solve many of the

problems with this intersection, and has support from many commenters. Several commenters noted that if the Stephan Richards intersection is fixed, most of the purpose and need of this project will have been addressed.

2. **AVOID CORRIDOR WIDENING.** Many commenters were opposed to increasing the corridor to include four to five lanes, except where critically required. Generally it was felt that adding lanes would have a negative impact on safety, which is important because this corridor feeds an area that is primarily residential and serves two schools. Some felt that if the throughput at the Stephan Richards intersection was increased, the need to have widening elsewhere along the corridor would be negated.
3. **SNOW REMOVAL CRITICAL.** Maintaining the ability to efficiently conduct snow removal is of vital importance and should not be compromised. The need for snow removal should be considered as project is designed and nothing should be done that would make snow removal more difficult. It is important that children can make it safely to school on snow days.
4. **NANCY STREET INTERSECTION.** The Nancy Street intersection the highest traffic levels in the corridor and needs to be improved. Drivers have to merge at this location, but they are confused and do it poorly. Cars can be focused on changing lanes, and do not pay attention to the cars that are turning. Traffic in the direction of the Nancy Street intersection is often backed up for several lights in the afternoon. Making a left off Nancy Street onto Mendenhall Loop Road can be challenging. However, there is not support for a roundabout at Nancy Street. The Glacier Valley Elementary school staff, site council, and parents group favor a new traffic light at this location, and are opposed to adding more lanes at this location.
5. **SAFE CROSSINGS FOR CHILDREN.** Crossing Mendenhall Loop Road at any point is very risky, especially for younger students in the dark, and enhancing safety should be of vital importance. Between 7:15 and 8:30 on school day mornings Mendenhall Loop Road is the mixing bowl for an extremely high risk recipe: the heaviest volume of traffic of the day, the largest concentration of elementary and middle school age children of the day crossing the road, and twilight or darkness much of the year. Safe passage for children crossing this street should have priority over traffic-related concerns in this corridor.

6. **BICYCLE LANES ON ROAD.** Bicycle lanes on the road are important for commuters. It is important to keep bike lanes as wide as possible while maintaining their integrity. There are not enough visible signs – whether painted on the pavement, or upright, indicating the bike lanes or promoting bike lanes. Consistent road marking/stripes and signage are needed to indicate the Bike Route for both drivers and cyclists.
7. **MENDENHALL/VALLEY BOULEVARD INTERSECTION.** The green light at this intersection is not long enough for the cross traffic because left-turning vehicles cut off the right-turning Mendenhall Blvd traffic. The lane for turning onto Mendenhall Blvd is not long enough. Yielding can also be confusing at this intersection. Intersection improvements at the Mendenhall Loop Road and Valley Blvd Intersection are needed.
8. **MULTIUSE PATHS.** Prioritize the multiuse paths in developing the corridor improvement plan. The Glacier Valley Site Council and school staff both commented that maintaining the multiuse paths is their highest priority. Reduction of driveways will reduce conflict points along the multiuse paths. Improve lighting along the multiuse paths, especially at intersections with roads and driveways where collisions are likely to occur.
9. **BUS STOPS.** Getting to and from the bus stops is difficult for pedestrians. Pedestrian crossings are needed in conjunction with transit stops. The bus stop across the street from Lakeside Condos generates numerous pedestrians who need to cross the street at this location, but there is no adjacent crossing. Transit pullouts and shelters are included in the Juneau Transportation Plan and should be considered. It is important that the project team coordinate with Capital Transit in the development of bus stops and crossings for bus stops.
10. **EXTENSION OF SHORT WAY TO TONGASS BOULEVARD AND HALOFF WAY.** Commenters generally spoke in favor of a new Short Way connection, but cautioned that this must be done in coordination with the CBJ, and should not create additional delays in reaching the main corridors.

## Comment Summary

This report summarizes all comments received, by topic.

### Location Specific Comments

#### **STEPHEN RICHARDS/HALOFF WAY & MENDENHALL LOOP ROAD INTERSECTION (11 COMMENTERS)**

The largest volume of comments related to the Stephen Richards-Haloff Way Intersection. Two individuals submitted lengthy written comments regarding this intersection. Much of the sentiment was this: Fix Stephan Richards and you will have addressed most of the purpose and need of this project.

##### **A. Intersection Problems (3 commenters)**

- There are several problems with this intersection including human error, lack of understanding the rules, the lights, and the alignment of the intersection.
- The poor configuration of the intersection at Stephan Richards is the primary cause of backups during the evening rush hour. The Stephan Richards intersection simply cannot process enough cars during peak traffic to keep up with the traffic feeding into it.
- There has been one death at that intersection. Commenters continue to witness close calls almost daily. "It's like playing Russian roulette every day going through that intersection."

##### **B. Stephan Richards Roundabout (6 commenters)**

A roundabout should be placed at this intersection.

- The project team should consider a roundabout at Stephan Richards to benefit the corridor as opposed to widening a portion or the full length of the corridor.
- A roundabout at Stephan Richards would provide improved safety and improved levels of service for vehicles.
- The primary benefit of a roundabout is that it reduces delay at the intersection, particularly when pedestrians are crossing Mendenhall Loop. (Currently the pedestrian signal for pedestrian crossing Loop is 20 seconds. A roundabout will allow potentially reduce that delay to 8 seconds.)
- A roundabout would allow the Stephan Richards intersection to process traffic more efficiently with less delay. Most of the delay on Mendenhall Loop is due to problems with the intersection not due to lack of lanes.



- Another advantage of a roundabout is that it improves the situation with the sidestreets, Haloff and Stephan Richards trying to turn left onto Mendenhall Loop.
- Concentrating limited funds on fixing the intersection at Stephan Richards may give us the most benefit perhaps avoiding the need to widen elsewhere on the corridor.
- **Two-Lane Roundabout Concept (one commenter):** Consider building a roundabout at Stephan Richards intersection with two lanes entering northbound, and a single lane entering on the three other legs. See suggested attached roundabout configuration drawings for the Stephan Richards intersection. **(Pages 44 to 47)**
  - **Two northbound lanes** are needed to keep up with traffic during the evening. Northbound Loop traffic peak hour evening traffic is 1098 vehicles arriving at Stephan Richards. They would enter the roundabout against 134 vehicles of circulating traffic. According to graphic 4-3 of the FHWA Informational Guide for Roundabout, this would bring the q/c ratio of the roundabout to 100% for the peak hours, which would indicate a poor level of service. Therefore two lanes would be needed northbound to have an adequate level of service.
  - **Only a single lane is needed southbound.** The morning peak traffic is not as acute as the evening peak. During the peak morning hour, there are 822 vehicles entering the Stephan Richards southbound conflicting with 184 vehicles of circulating traffic. One lane entering the roundabout southbound I believe would be adequate.
  - This **eastbound Stephan Richards traffic stream** during the morning peak is most likely to experience delay. They would enter the roundabout and conflict with 864 of circulating traffic. Therefore one of the following two elements also need to be included: 1) Install a metering light on Mendenhall Loop southbound to come on and stop the large stream of south bound traffic on Loop when the queue on Stephan Richards get too long; **or 2)** provide a free right turn to the east bound traffic on Stephan Richard, effectively beginning the 2<sup>nd</sup> south bound lane on Loop. (This would be more expensive because you would have to continue this second lane down to Nancy.)

- The **stop bars** should be placed right at the roundabout including on the exit. This means traffic would back up into the roundabout. It would be a considerable improvement over what we have now.

**Two Roundabout Concept (one commenter):** If two roundabouts were to be installed on the corridor: one at Stephan Richards and one at Mendenhall Boulevard, the added benefits would include the following:

- This would solve the problem of getting out of Floyd Dryden, a during heavy traffic, vehicles could turn right, make a U-turn at the Mendenhall Boulevard Roundabout and the go south.
- Building two roundabouts would likely cost less widening the corridor
- Less delay to vehicles due to better efficiency of the intersections
- Better accommodation of non-motorized users.

#### **C. Turning left from Haloff to Loop Road (4 commenters)**

- During morning rush hour particularly, trying to turn left from Haloff Way onto Mendenhall Loop Road is extremely difficult.
- As a driver turning left from Haloff Way to Mendenhall Loop Road, the alignment of the intersection impairs a driver's view of oncoming traffic. When several cars are on the opposite side in the left turn/straight away lane, it is difficult to see if there are cars approaching the intersection to turn right from the Duck Creek Market side to Mendenhall Loop Road south.
- When turning left, drivers turning right from the Duck Creek Market side either wait for drivers turning left (as often those turning left do not yield to oncoming traffic) and don't seem to understand that they have the right away over the cars turning left.
- Current through or left turn traffic from Stephen Richards causes delays because of uncertainty over Haloff Way traffic intentions.
- **Suggestions:**
  - Make the left turn/straight away lanes on Haloff Way & Stephen Richards be left turn only. Having a dedicated light for cars turning left from Haloff & Stephen Richards would eliminate the left turn yield on green, and increase pedestrian safety.
  - A roundabout would make that turning movement much easier.

#### **D. Pedestrians (2 commenters)**

- It is risky for pedestrians at this intersection, drivers don't always pay



- attention to whether someone is waiting to cross or not. Because it is a difficult intersection, drivers are instead focused on figuring out what other driver's intentions might be and getting across the intersection without running into a car, they sometimes don't pay attention to pedestrians.
- Despite looking for pedestrians, even I did not see one until I had already put on the gas to cross.
  - Parents are more likely to drop their kids off for school at Haloff Way than Nancy Street.
  - **Suggestion:** Change the intersection lights so that when pedestrians push the button to cross, **all cars stop**. No one driving when pedestrians are crossing.

**E. Driving straight from Haloff Way across Mendenhall Loop to Stephen Richards (1 commenter)**

- Vehicles going straight have close calls due to vehicles turning left not yielding. Some people don't use their turn signals, adding to the confusion.
- **Suggestion:** Join the straight away lane and right turn lane

**F. Turning left from Mendenhall Loop onto Stephen Richards (1 commenter)**

It can be difficult to turn left onto Stephen Richards. The turning lane is not long enough, and it can be difficult to safely see oncoming traffic.

**G. Traffic light at Stephen Richards/Haloff Way (2 commenters)**

- A traffic light at this location would be helpful.
- If a traffic signal is added to the intersection at Stephen Richards, increase the number of lanes entering the intersection to increase the intersection's ability to process traffic.

**NANCY STREET INTERSECTION (10 COMMENTERS)**

Another intersection that received a great deal of attention from commenters was the Nancy Street intersection

**A. Nancy Intersection Problems**

- The problems in this corridor are larger the closer you are to Nancy Street, because there is more traffic.
- Drivers have to merge at this location, but they are confused and do it poorly.

- Traffic in the direction of the Nancy Street intersection is often backed up for several lights in the afternoon.
- Making a left off of Nancy Street onto Mendenhall Loop Road can be challenging. Cars can be focused on changing lanes, and they don't see the cars that are turning.

## **B. Nancy Street Roundabout**

Most commenters had concerns about the placement of a roundabout at the Nancy intersection.

- A roundabout at Nancy Street would be a bottleneck, especially during morning commute because those turning left onto Nancy would have the right of way.
- If developed, it would be the only multi-lane roundabout in Juneau – so residents might not know how to use it properly.
- Is it far enough from the Mendenhall Mall Road to have a roundabout?
- Aside from morning rush hour traffic, a roundabout at Nancy Street could be an advantage when there is not full flow traffic, as generally vehicles wait longer for signal than they will for a roundabout.
- The roundabout may not solve the problems.
- Glacier Valley Elementary school staff, site council, and parents group are opposed to the two lane suggested for Nancy.

## **C. Nancy Street Signal**

- The Juneau Transportation Plan states that Nancy Street is potential a good site for a new traffic signal because it integrates access control with neighborhood and school district needs.
- The Glacier Valley Elementary school staff, site council, and parents group favor a new traffic light at this location.

## **D. Other Nancy Street Intersection Improvements**

CBJ staff pointed out that Juneau's *Non-Motorized Transportation Plan* includes specific recommendations for the Nancy Street intersection, including:

- The addition of "pork chops" and decreasing the turning radius to shorten crossing distance on Nancy Street; and
- Improvements such as continental crosswalk markings and pedestrian two stage crossings.

## **MENDENHALL LOOP ROAD AND VALLEY BLVD INTERSECTION (8 COMMENTERS)**

Several commenters agreed that intersection improvements at the Mendenhall Loop Road and Valley Blvd intersection are needed.

### **A. Turning at this Intersection**

- **Light too short.** The green light at this intersection is not long enough for the cross traffic because left-turning vehicles cut off the right-turning Mendenhall Blvd traffic.
- **Lane too short.** The lane for turning onto Mendenhall Blvd is not long enough. The barrier forces left turning traffic to stay in the main traffic lane until the light changes.
- **Yielding is confusing.** The Intersection of Mendenhall Valley Boulevard and Mendenhall Loop Road is an issue when you are turning left because there is no dedicated left hand turn. If you are turning left on green light, you are suppose to yield, but people do not always understand and feel they can turn on the green light without yielding.
- **Safety concerns.** There have been close calls at the intersection of Valley and Mendenhall Blvd.

**B. Site specific commentary: Valley Baptist Academy Concerns (Between Mendenhall Blvd and Spruce Lane).** I work at Valley Baptist Academy, and generally approach from the Back Loop. I am often stuck in traffic that backs up from Mendenhall Blvd, even as far back as Back Loop, but more often from Kimberly Street between 7:40 and 8 AM during the school year. Slow, backed up traffic becomes more noticeable and increasingly inconvenient as the days get shorter and darker. Adding a lane is unlikely to solve this problem.

## **LAKESIDE CONDO DRIVE (5 COMMENTS)**

### **A. Shared Turning Lane for Both Cinema Drive and Lakeside Condo Drive Problematic:**

Because the turning lane for Cinema Drive and Lakeside Condo Drive is shared, it can turn into a “game of chicken” in that center lane, and it is hard to know when to go. Moreover, since not everyone uses blinkers, it is not always clear what other vehicles are intending to do. It is especially confusing when cars come out of the Glacier Theaters area and turn onto Lakeside Condo Drive.

### **B. Exiting Lakeside Condo Drive:**

Turning left from Lakeside Condo Drive onto Mendenhall Loop Road is often difficult. Trying to turn into the left hand turn lane in the morning and evening is very difficult because it is against traffic.

**C. Entering Lakeside Condo Drive:**

When turning onto Lakeside Condo Drive there is a wide shoulder, but there is a huge pothole that must be avoided, making getting out of the road quickly more difficult.

**CINEMA DRIVE (2 ADDITIONAL COMMENTS TO COMMENTS ABOVE)**

**Exiting Cinema Drive:**

- Taking a left or right hand turn from Glacier Cinemas onto Mendenhall Loop Road can be difficult.
- When movies let out, cars tend to block the bike lanes while they are waiting to get onto Mendenhall Loop Road, which can be a problem.

**CHURCH OF THE NAZARENE DRIVEWAY (2 COMMENTS)**

**Exiting Church of the Nazarene Driveway:**

- It is hard to take a left onto Mendenhall Loop Road out of the Church of the Nazarene Driveway. People wait for a long time while trying to make that turn. This is a problem all of the time, not just Sundays. When taking turn to go North onto Mendenhall Loop Road it is especially difficult because cars are merging as well as coming onto Mendenhall Loop Road from across the road.

**EXTENSION OF SHORT WAY TO TONGASS BOULEVARD AND HALOFF WAY (6 COMMENTS)**

Commenters generally spoke in favor of a new Short Way connection, but cautioned that this must be done in coordination with the CBJ, and should not create additional delays in reaching the main corridors.

- Adding a Short Way street connection would be a great improvement.
- The extra connections and extra routes, especially in case of an emergency, would be beneficial.
- The best way to make this connection would be to make it connect all the way to Tongass Blvd, removing access to Mendenhall Loop near Short Way.
- Glacier Valley site council wants to make sure that if this connection is made, side access is managed to prevent backups and getting out of neighborhoods.

- This element of the project should be coordinated with CBJ's plans to reconstruct and move the ball fields at Floyd Dryden Middle School, which may impact the alignment of the new street connection.
- Please contact Skye Stekoll—project manager for the city's engineering department—at [skye\\_stekoll@ci.juneau.ak.us](mailto:skye_stekoll@ci.juneau.ak.us) to coordinate with the CBJ regarding this project.

### **FLOYD DRYDEN ACCESS ROAD (4 COMMENTS)**

**Exiting Floyd Dryden Access Road:** Leaving the school in the morning when parents are dropping off kids, or during sporting events is difficult, especially when turning left.

### **BACK LOOP ROUNDABOUT (3 COMMENTS)**

- At the intersection of Back Loop Road and Glacier Spur Road consider constructing a roundabout.
- For residents that live directly on Mendenhall Loop Road near this intersection, changes to the corridor may make it more difficult to directly turn into their properties, in which case a roundabout at Back Loop would make it easier for these residents to access their properties.

### **MCGINNIS DRIVE (1 COMMENT)**

The grade of McGinnis Drive is too steep when icy, and the slope should be reduced.

## **Key Corridor Considerations**

### **CONCEPT TO EXPAND TO FOUR OR FIVE LANES (14 COMMENTS)**

The corridor improvement concept that received the largest number of comments was the widening of the road to include more lanes. Most of the commenters were opposed to increasing the corridor to include four to five lanes (except where critically required).

#### **A. In Opposition to Adding Lanes (7 commenters):**

- Adding lanes should be done only as a last resort because adding lanes will result in less safety for all users. This corridor is an arterial that feeds an area that is primarily residential.
- The Glacier Valley parent group questioned the need for expansion of the route to five lanes and would prefer adding lights and realigning

intersections.

- I am not in favor of the 4-lane. I ride my bike to work all year round and the 4-lane will create problems.
- Kids already sometime walk on Loop Road on the way to school instead of the bike path because plowed snow can get pushed onto the multiuse path. With the widening to 4 lanes, there will be much more snow going onto the bike paths.
- Five lanes of traffic is a bad idea. Keep three lanes. Traffic levels do not warrant 5 lanes. Other capacity improvements not involving the 5-lane concept should be implemented.
- Three lanes of traffic are sufficient.
- Adding lanes will probably have a negative impact on safety. This is important because this corridor feeds an area that is primarily residential plus there are two schools adjacent to the corridor.
- Increase the throughput at Stephan Richards and you may not need to do widening elsewhere else on the corridor. Twice a day, Mendenhall Loop road become a parking lot for cars waiting to go through the Stephan Richards intersection. The lack of lanes on Loop road is not the problem, the poorly performing intersection at Loop is the problem.
- One way to obtain more right of way footage in the southern section is to borrow from the AEL&P Corridor. Could the separated path in the AEL&P corridor be placed beneath the power lines? A hard surface under AEL&P lines would be helpful to them, as it would make maintenance easier, as well as to keep vegetation away from the lines. This could provide an extra 10 feet of space to the corridor for elements such as more bike lane buffer.

**B. Average Daily Traffic (ADT) Counts do not Warrant Corridor Widening (CBJ Comment)**

- The recorded ADT along Mendenhall Loop Road is near the threshold where many cities consider implementing a road diet, converting roadways from four lanes to three (two travel lanes with a center turn lane). According to the AASHTO Guide for the Development of Bicycle Facilities, streets with 15,000 cars per day or less are ideal candidates for road diets, and many cities have successfully implemented 4 to 3 lane conversions on streets with up to 20,000 ADT.
- If the traffic volume along Mendenhall Loop Road continues to go down, providing more than three lanes would create excess capacity, while also introducing additional pedestrian crossing hazards. Given the impact to

pedestrian level of service of widening the road, we would encourage further analysis of traffic trends and projections. It could be that an increase from three lanes to five north of Nancy Street is not warranted at this time.

- Despite the fact that the Juneau Transportation Plan contains a recommendation to “Develop Mendenhall Loop Road as a four-lane boulevard with a median and/or turn pockets from Egan Drive through Glacier Spur Rd” the CBJ community development department feels that this was based on a model of traffic growth, and since the growth has not occurred, this recommendation is less relevant.

**C. Location Specific Widening:** Several other commenters suggested putting limits on the amount of widening that is proposed to take place:

- I support ending five lanes at Stephen Richards.
- Add an extra lane in the vicinity of Stephan Richards only for the purpose of processing vehicles more efficiently through the intersection. Do not carry those two lanes back down to Nancy.
- Extra lanes north of Nancy are not needed until you get closer to Stephan Richards.
- You do not need the extra lanes until you near Stephan Richards so that you can process more cars through the intersection. Once past the intersection, you can go back to one lane.
- Make 5 lanes to Valley Blvd without a transition zone. Have lanes end at the Mendenhall Blvd intersection, with a dedicated right turn northbound and a new lane southbound.
- Expand to five lanes at least past Floyd Dryden.

## **SNOW REMOVAL (11 COMMENTS)**

Despite the fact that all comment was taken prior to the first snowfall, concern about snow removal was clearly articulated during in corridor improvements feedback.

- Those commenting from the schools (site council, parent group, principals) especially stressed that maintaining the ability to efficiently conduct snow removal is of vital importance and should not be compromised. The need for snow removal should be considered as project is designed and nothing should be done that would make snow removal more difficult. It is important that kids can make it to school on snow days.



- Many commenters also remarked on the difficulty with snow removal from the multiuse pathways.
  - Snow removal - especially pathways and the proposed pedestrian refuges – is an important consideration
  - The State does a good job with snow removal, but private driveway snowplowing can make the multipurpose path unnavigable.
  - Between Back Loop and Nancy, DOT plows the snow onto the path making it impassible at times for bikes and pedestrians.
- Many were concerned that widening the road would increase snow removal problems.
  - Snow removal a concern, especially with smaller ditches.
  - With the widening to 4 lanes, there will be much more snow going onto the bike paths. Currently when corridors are 4 lanes wide it is a disaster as DOT plows the snow and mag chloride onto the bike path from the 4-lane making a slushy, slurry, mess.
- One suggestion was to elevate the separated pathways to road grade.
  - Raising the level of the separated pathway to at-road grade would reduce the snow buildup along the trail from snow plowing of the roadway while also increasing visibility at trail intersections. However, one resident noted that the elevated roadbed causes snowmelt to drain down their driveway, causing flooding.
- Finally, it was recommended that the road should be designed for snow plowing into the center of the road in areas where the center turn lane is not needed.

## **BIKE LANE ON ROAD (8 COMMENTS)**

### **A. Bike Lane Width**

- Because the cross section will be changing from having an 8-foot buffer to having a 6-foot bike lane, bikers will have less buffer between themselves and traffic. It is important to keep bike lanes as wide as possible while maintaining their integrity and width.
- It would be best to have a two-foot buffer for the cyclists.
- A bike lane on road is important for commuters. The multiuse path can be a dangerous place for high-speed bicyclists, as there are dogs, strollers, and cars heading out of driveways are not looking for high speed bikers. Leave the multiuse paths for kids, timid bikers, and walkers.

### **B. Bicycle Wayfinding**

- There are not enough visible signs – whether painted on the pavement, or upright, indicating the bike lanes or promoting bike lanes. Lack of signage

- has created hostility between driver and the cyclists who use the bike lanes. Better signage and promotion could create more respect.
- There is an opportunity to increase the integrity of bicycle wayfinding during this project by making wayfinding improvements intersections.
- The most important wayfinding locations in this area are south of Nancy Street (just out of project area) as there are some conflicts there.

## **MULTIUSE PATHS (7 COMMENTS)**

Prioritize the multiuse paths in developing the corridor improvement plan.

- **Maintain multiuse paths.** The Glacier Valley Site Council and school staff both commented that maintaining the multiuse paths is their highest priority. The Juneau Transportation Plan includes a separated pathway for pedestrians and bicycles.
- **Improved lighting along the multiuse pathway.** The multiuse path is poorly lit, especially at intersections with roads and driveways where collisions are likely to occur. While lighting is consistently spaced along the corridor, the intervals do not always align with intersections, leading to dark and potentially dangerous conflict points, especially for separated path users.
- **Reduce driveway conflicts.** Reduction of driveways will reduce conflict points along the multiuse paths. Drivers do not always yield to bikes on multiuse path.

## **PRIVATE DRIVEWAYS (6 COMMENTS)**

- **Some driveways should be eliminated (3 comments).** Many kids commute to school on their bikes or by walking, and there are many driveways that cross the multiuse paths children use. These cars do not have other access points. Reduction of driveways will reduce conflict points along Mendenhall Loop road, improving safety for all modes. Elimination of driveways where reasonable alternative access is available would both facilitate safety and improve traffic flow.
- **Church of the Nazarene Driveway Church** Part of the access for our church needs to continue to be from main road because we are not a neighborhood church. We serve the entire community.
- **Residential Driveway before Nancy Street:** Our driveway is right before Nancy Street, which means we will be impacted by any change to the Nancy intersection.
- **Residential Driveway across from Kimberly Street:** We have two driveways with conflicts in the transition area for concept C. These two driveways serve three lots. Currently we wait in the northbound traffic

lane to make left turns into these driveways. Traffic either backs up or passes us on the shoulder – or both. Our access would be much safer with a middle turn lane to the Back Loop. We would prefer continuing to access our property in the northbound land.

### **LIGHTING (5 COMMENTS)**

Four of five commenters remarked that more lighting is needed between Nancy Street to Cinema Drive. One commenter felt that the corridor has sufficient lighting.

- Lighting is a problem in the corridor. It is hard to see when its dark and difficult to see where cars are supposed to merge at night.
- The Glacier Valley staff and Site Council urge the project team to improve the lighting throughout the corridor, especially from Nancy Street to Cinema Drive.
- From just north of Kodzoff Drive to just past Cinema Drive the driveways are just close enough in that area, and there is just enough space between lights that it is very dark.
- It is very dark and can be scary around the theater, and there are kids around there all of the time.
- The corridor does not need more lighting.

### **REDUCE SPEED LIMITS (4 COMMENTERS)**

#### **A. Reduce Corridor Speed to 35 MPH**

- The Juneau Transportation Plan calls for a speed of 35 miles per hour along Mendenhall Loop Road. The current speed limit in the project corridor is 40 miles per hour. Reducing the speed to 35 mph could increase traffic flow and improve safety.
- According to the 2000 FHWA Highway Capacity Manual, in some roadway designs 35 mph provides a peak traffic flow rate by allowing vehicles to travel more closely together.
- Lowering the speed from 40 to 35 mph enhances safety by improving drivers' reaction time, reducing the severity of vehicle crashes, and reducing the risk of fatality in collisions with pedestrians.
- It may be beneficial to model the capacity of the street with a 35 mph speed limit to gauge the potential impact to traffic flow.

#### **B. Corridor Design Promotes Speeding**

- Speeding in this corridor is always a problem, especially in the school zone areas. The main problem is perception because of the corridor design. The road is wide and pedestrians are so far from traffic. People

do not always realize how fast they are going. If the roadway is widened further, it might encourage people to go even faster. Visual cues do slow vehicles down. In areas where the center turn lane is not needed, there should be areas for snow and trees in order to make drivers behave more reasonably.

#### **DECREASE ELEMENTS THAT STOP OR SLOW TRAFFIC (4 COMMENTERS)**

- After hours flashing lights should be considered. Traffic lights are not needed prior to 5:30 AM when there are very few cars.
- Synchronize traffic lights all along the route to account for speed of travel.
- The two back-to-back school zones last nearly an hour in the morning, and greatly contribute to the morning backup.
- The City should consider redrawing the Glacier Valley Elementary boundaries to be entirely east of the Mendenhall Loop, thereby eliminating that school zone.

#### **BUFFER (4 COMMENTERS)**

The Juneau Transportation Plan calls for buffer strips along the corridor, and removal of the outer vegetative buffer will have negative impacts.

##### **Sound Buffer**

- Noise is important to consider in developing corridor improvement plans.
- The CBJ gets complaints about buses and other street noise.
- The visitor industry gets complaints from residents regarding the vehicle noise from their buses headed to the glacier.
- Houses should be buffered from the noise. More buffer between the road and the residences would decrease those complaints.
- Removal of vegetative buffers will increase noise for residents.

##### **Visual Buffer**

- This is the gateway to the Mendenhall Glacier, and this is not the most attractive corridor. Aesthetics for the hundreds of thousands of visitors who pass through this corridor each year to view the Mendenhall Glacier is important. The visitor industry would be affected by any buffer removal.
- Aesthetic consideration is also important to residential properties adjacent to the corridor.

##### **Sound/Sight Buffer:**

- In areas where the center turn lane is not needed, there should be areas for

trees in order to make drivers behave more reasonably.

#### **Watershed Buffer**

- A buffer to protect surface water quality should be maintained wherever possible.

#### **WATERSHED/WETLANDS (1 COMMENTER)**

The most important thing for this project is for the watershed integrity to be maintained.

- The 10-to-12-foot ditch should be maintained in a vegetated condition with proper drainage in the corridor. Fish passage constriction on Nancy Street is an ongoing concern, and upgrading this fish passage should be considered.
- Make sure that the integrity of habitat restoration will be maintained during any upgrades, especially in the following three areas: the Nancy Street wetlands, the Church of Nazarene wetlands, and the fish by the Lakeside Condos.

#### **ADT TRENDS ON THE CORRIDOR (1 COMMENTER)**

- It appears that data from DOT&PF demonstrates a downward trend in ADT along the corridor. According to the annual counts conducted by DOT&PF, the daily traffic along this corridor has experienced a downward trend for the last ten years, with the only period of growth from 2008 to 2010.
- This downward trend conflicts with traffic projections based on population growth.
- It appears that the population growth rate is decoupled from ADT in the project corridor. While population and development have continued to increase along Mendenhall Loop Road over the last ten years, traffic counts are going down.

## **Pedestrian Crossings**

#### **SAFE CROSSING FOR CHILDREN (9 COMMENTS)**

- The Glacier Valley Site Council believes that safe pedestrian crossings should have priority over traffic related concerns in this corridor.
- Crossing Mendenhall Loop Road at any point is very risky, especially for younger students in the dark, and enhancing safety should be of vital importance.

- Between 7:15 and 8:30 on school day mornings Mendenhall Loop Road is the mixing bowl for an extremely high risk recipe: the heaviest volume of traffic of the day, the largest concentration of elementary and middle school age children of the day crossing the road, and twilight or darkness.
- While the HAWK system enhances the safety of the Mendenhall Loop Road crosswalk, there is still significant risk due to some drivers ignoring the red lights. Most drivers are respectful – but some don't know when to start and when to stop. Driving through the red light is common.
- More outreach and education regarding what to do at the light could help.
- Floyd Dryden has only one bus, so kids often bike and walk.
- Children are walking to Glacier Valley Elementary School from the Duck Creek side of Stephen Richards. They need to be able to get safely across.
- Improve crosswalks visibility for cars.
- In developing improvement plans, remember that kids will take short cuts if they are easily available. Kids will dart across anywhere. Fences are helpful. Along the egress for Floyd Dryden nothing stops kids from darting across the Floyd Dryden Access Road.
- Work to keep the area safe for kids.

### **BUS STOPS AND PEDESTRIAN CROSSING (6 COMMENTS)**

Pedestrian crossings are needed in conjunction with transit stops. Getting to and from the bus stops are very difficult for pedestrians.

- Crosswalks are needed at Nancy and Cinema Drive.
- The bus stop across the street from Lakeside Condos generates numerous pedestrians who need to cross the street at this location, but there is no official pedestrian crossing.
- Transit pullouts and shelters are also needed (this need is included in the Juneau Transportation Plan).
- The Capital Transit plan is underway, and it is important that this project members coordinate with Capital Transit in the development of bus stops and crossings for bus stops.

### **OVERPASS/UNDERPASS (4 COMMENTS)**

Several commenters requested that an overpass or underpass be installed for crossing safety. It was noted that children will not always utilize raised crossings, and therefore an underground crossing should be considered for pedestrians and bicycles.

## **TWO STAGE PEDESTRIAN CROSSING/TRAFFIC ISLANDS (4 COMMENTS)**

Three of the four comments received were regarding safety concerns connected to traffic island **pedestrian refuges**.

- The Glacier Valley parent group has concerns that there will be cars passing kids on both sides of these islands. Kids will be getting splashed (and possibly hit) because they can't keep an eye on both sides of the road at once.
- Others also noted concerns regarding children near the movie theater at night. Do we want a group of kids out on an island on a busy street in the dark?
- Sometimes cars pay attention only to oncoming traffic, and not to pedestrian traffic island, in which case they might not see pedestrians.
- If cross section extends across a five-lane section of the road, there would need to be a crossing light with a countdown. That countdown should be slow enough so that a child or an elderly person would not have to run.

## **OTHER PEDESTRIAN CROSSING COMMENTS (4 COMMENTS)**

- Improvements such as continental crosswalk markings and pedestrian two stage crossings could be beneficial along the full length of the project, not only at the intersections of Nancy and Taku.
- This corridor is high volume traffic route, and attention must be paid to pedestrian crossings.
- Decrease amount of time pedestrians have to wait at lights.

## **Cross Agency/Plan Coordination**

### **CONSISTENCY WITH TRANSPORTATION PLANS (3 COMMENTS)**

**A. Consistency with the Area Wide Transportation Plan.** The transportation plans make specific recommendations for this project corridor.

- **Suggested Boulevard treatments.** Boulevard treatments include landscaped medians, bike lanes, buffer strips, bus pullout shelters and a separated pathway for pedestrians and bicycles.
- **Improvements in Grade.** At pathway intersections with streets, modify grading for a flatter pathway approach and integrate the pathway crossing at the intersection stop bar.
- Integrate traffic signal locations and access control with neighborhood and school district needs.



**B. Consistency with the Non-Motorized Transportation Plan.** The findings and suggestions of the Non Motorized Transportation Plan should be incorporated into the corridor improvements. Specific high priority recommendations from this plan include:

- Continental crosswalk markings and traffic calming along Mendenhall Loop Road to increase safety.
- Add pedestrian activated signal and continental style crosswalk at the Taku Boulevard Intersection.

**C. Consistency with the Juneau Safe Routes to School Plan**

Incorporated findings and suggestions of the Safe Routes to School plan in this corridor.

**COORDINATION WITH SCHOOL BUSES (2 COMMENTS)**

Talk to First Student about bus stops along the route. Improve the bridge and build a turnaround so that buses can pick up students at Coho - they have to walk way too far to get to the bus stop.

**COORDINATE CONSTRUCTION SCHEDULE (3 COMMENTS)**

- Develop a construction use plan that provides safe passage for bikes and pedestrians (especially on their way to school) during construction
- If the construction is going to take place during the school year, the schools will need to know well in advance so they can let parents and kids know how to get to school safely during the construction period.
- This level of coordination did not successfully take place in conjunction with the Auke Bay project, upsetting many.
- Avoid construction during the school year.

**CONSIDER POSSIBLE NEW DEVELOPMENTS (1 COMMENT)**

- There is a large piece of forested property that is being considered for development. This parcel could fit up to 200 dwellings under current zoning. The access to this area would be near Lakeside Condos, and could potentially directed onto Cinema Drive. If development of this property were to take place, it would increase traffic in that area, and this possibility should be considered as this project moves forward.

**AREAS OUTSIDE THE PROJECT AREA IMPACT TRAFFIC IN THE CORRIDOR (3 COMMENTS)**

**Riverside Drive**

- Some of the congestion along Mendenhall Loop Road might be generated by traffic controls on the adjacent corridor, Riverside Drive.
- In particular, we looked at a 4-way stop at Stephen Richards and Riverside Drive, to the west of the project area, which was installed in 2006 as part of a road reconstruction and intersection improvement project along Riverside Drive. The treatment was intended to allow traffic from Stephen Richards Memorial Drive to make left turns onto Riverside. However, the intersection turns into a bottleneck during peak periods. Northbound traffic especially takes a long time to clear the cue. Many now travel north along Mendenhall Loop Road from Egan to Stephen Richards, where they turn left at the traffic light to get back to Riverside Drive and avoid the long cue of cars northbound.

#### **Egan to Nancy Street**

- The section of Mendenhall Loop from Egan to Nancy also needs to be fixed in order to improve traffic flow in the study area.
- There have been close calls at the intersection of Mall Road.
- Making that crossing to the right of the Catholic Church can be difficult for bicycle commuters when commuting to work.

#### **COORDINATE WITH UTILITIES (2 COMMENTS)**

- **AEL&P Access** Our main concern is that we can access the pole and be out of traffic during maintenance operations. Buffer is important.
- Utilities should be placed underground in conjunction with the corridor improvement project.
- **Multiuse Path Access:** The transmission line that parallels roadway. AEL&P generally accesses and maintains the electrical line by driving onto the multiuse paths, and this practice will need to continue after the improvements are implemented. It would be disruptive for traffic if our trucks were forced into the road. Please be advised as to the size and weights of our trucks during the planning process.

#### **PUBLIC OUTREACH**

Include a public education and outreach process on the traffic revisions as they are implemented.

## APPENDIX 1 – ATTENDANCE LISTS

### November 6, 2013 Advisory Group Meeting

#### DOT&PF Team

1. Pat Carroll
2. Keith Karpstein
3. David Epstein
4. Marie Heidemann
5. Darryl Lester
- 6.

#### Kittelson/Sheinberg Team

1. Lee Rodegerdts
2. Andrew Ooms
3. Jenny Miner
4. Meilani Schijvens

#### Advisory Group

1. Ed Foster – CBJ Streets
2. Ben Lyman - CBJ - Community Development, Planner
3. Sarah Bronstein - CBJ - Community Development, Planner
4. Tom Milliron – Principal Floyd Dryden
5. Ted Wilson – Principal Glacier Valley Elementary School
6. David Means - Director of Administration Juneau School District
7. Bill Hagevig - Juneau Division Manager Holland America-Princess Alaska
8. Deb Senn - Vice President Lakeside Condo Association
9. Kenny Solomon - Director of Operations Glacier Cinemas
10. Samia Savell - Juneau Field Officer USDA-NRCS
11. Dan Wiese - Pastor Juneau Church of the Nazarene
12. John McConnochie – President Juneau Freewheelers
13. Dorain Gross – President Glacier Cinemas
14. Eric Eriksen - AEL&P
15. Lee Showers - Juneau Church of the Nazarene

### November 6, 2013 Public Meeting

#### DOT&PF Team

1. Pat Carroll
2. Keith Karpstein
3. David Epstein
4. Marie Heidemann
5. Darryl Lester

#### Kittelson/Sheinberg Team

1. Lee Rodegerdts
2. Andrew Ooms
3. Jenny Miner
4. Meilani Schijvens

Public Attendees

1. Kim Garnew
2. Jim Potdevin
3. Chuck Tripp
4. Pam Tripp
5. Kyle Cuzzort
6. Charles McCracken
7. David Howard
8. Alexis Howard
9. Ben Lyman
10. Steve Soenksen
11. Ed Foster
12. Steve Sorensen
13. Bob Laurie
14. Dan Roundsley
15. Julie Bednarski
16. Alan Aitken
17. Jonathan Weaver
18. David Epstein
19. Rebecca McCracken
20. Lisa Idell-Sassi
21. Nancy Eiler
22. John Eiler
23. Susan Kendig

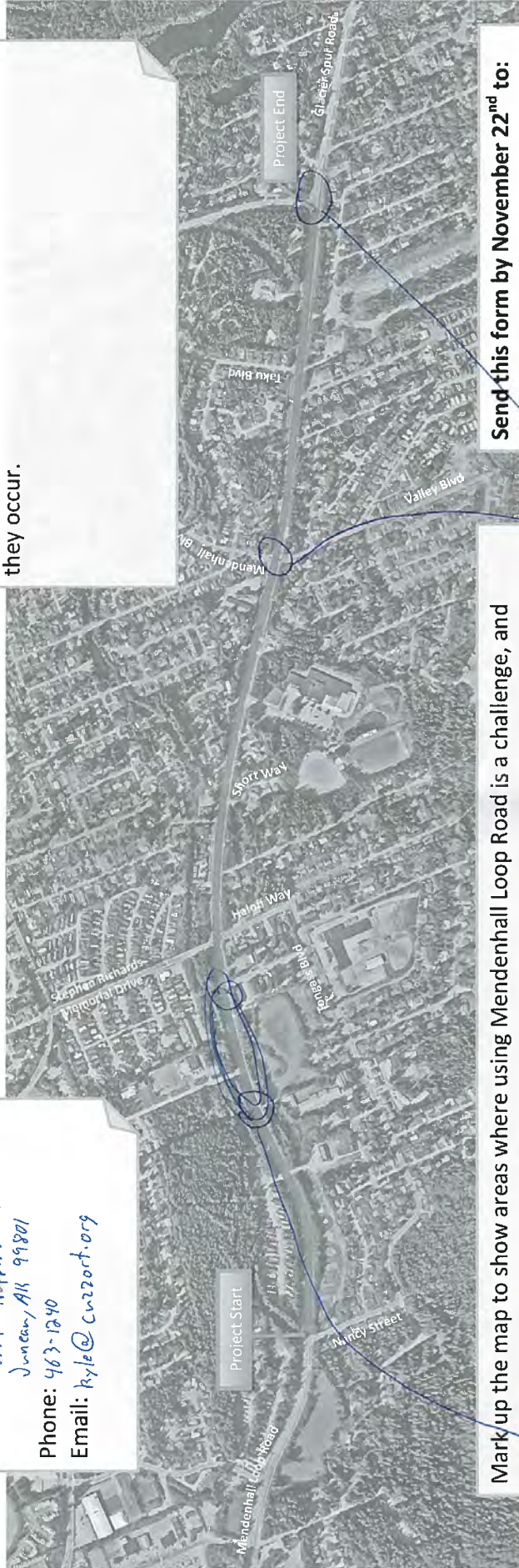
## **APPENDIX 2 - WRITTEN COMMENTS RECEIVED**

# Mendenhall Loop Road Capacity Improvement Project

## Comment Sheet

Name: Kyle Cuzzort  
Address 9719 Troopers Ln  
Juneau, AK 99801  
Phone: 463-1240  
Email: kyle@cuzzort.org

Are there recurring issues that you notice on the corridor? If so, describe the issue and mark where they occur.



Mark up the map to show areas where using Mendenhall Loop Road is a challenge, and explain why below:

Bus stop has lots of pedestrians crossing here. Needs pedestrian crossing

Make 5 lanes to Valley Blvd, no transition zone after here lanes end at intersection. Right turn northbound, new lane southbound. Dedicated

would LOVE a roundabout at Back Loop.

Send this form by November 22<sup>nd</sup> to:

Sheinberg Associates  
1107 W. 8<sup>th</sup> Street, Suite 4  
Juneau, Alaska 99801  
Or send by email to  
[mschijvens@SheinbergAssociates.com](mailto:mschijvens@SheinbergAssociates.com)

### PROJECT CONTACT

Project email: [M00prd@alaska.gov](mailto:M00prd@alaska.gov).  
Contact: Keith Karpstein 465-1796. Engineering Manager  
DOT&PF SE Region - Design

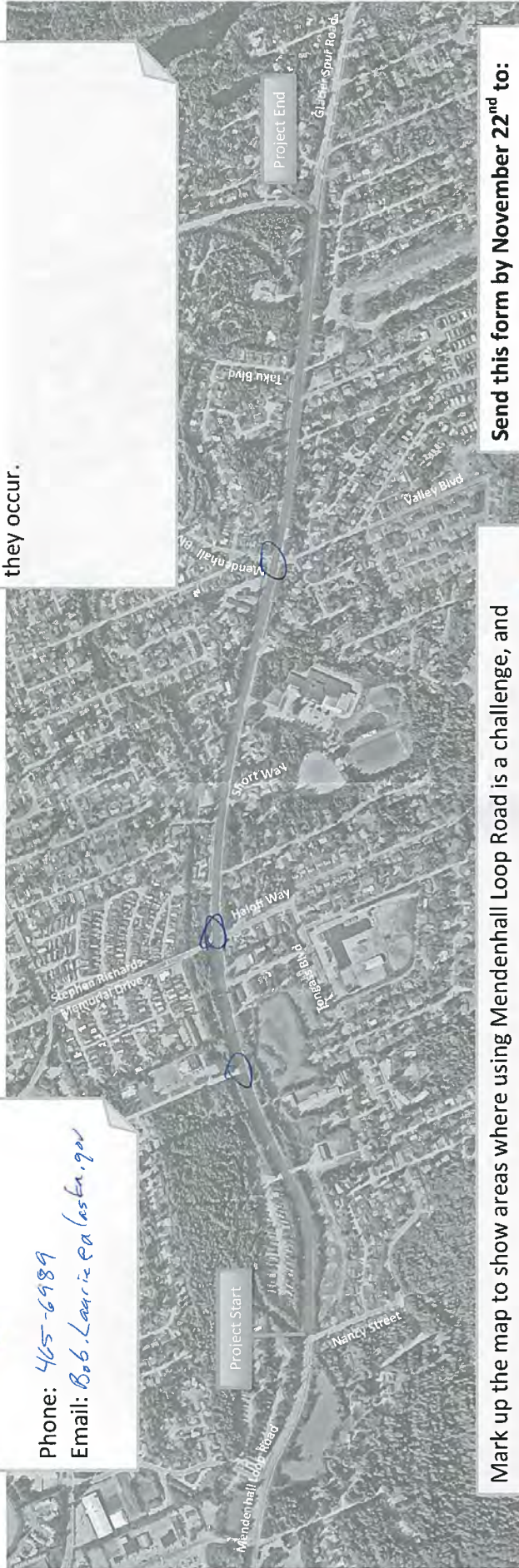


# Mendenhall Loop Road Capacity Improvement Project

## Comment Sheet

Name: *Bob Larrivee*  
 Address: *Rehta Drive*  
 Phone: *465-6989*  
 Email: *Bob.Larrivee@alaska.gov*

Are there recurring issues that you notice on the corridor? If so, describe the issue and mark where they occur.



Mark up the map to show areas where using Mendenhall Loop Road is a challenge, and explain why below:

*Halseth Way - Consider making left turn lane left turn only (new left turn straight thru). But there is a right lane (or add lane). Turned right from Stephen Richards delays because of uncertainty over the left turn lane or left turn traffic conditions.*  
*Mendenhall Blvd Valley Blvd - yielding confusion*  
*10. dealing to 5-lane not needed. 3-lane sufficient. But intersection improvements at*  
*1) Stephen Richards + 2) Mendenhall Blvd Valley*  
*Cine on Park - need pedestrian crossing for transit stops. Transit pullouts/shelters*

**Send this form by November 22<sup>nd</sup> to:**  
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 Juneau, Alaska 99801  
 Or send by email to  
[mschijvens@SheinbergAssociates.com](mailto:mschijvens@SheinbergAssociates.com)

**PROJECT CONTACT**  
 Project email: [Mlooprd@alaska.gov](mailto:Mlooprd@alaska.gov).  
 Contact: Keith Karpstein 465-1796. Engineering Manager  
 DOT&PF SE Region - Design



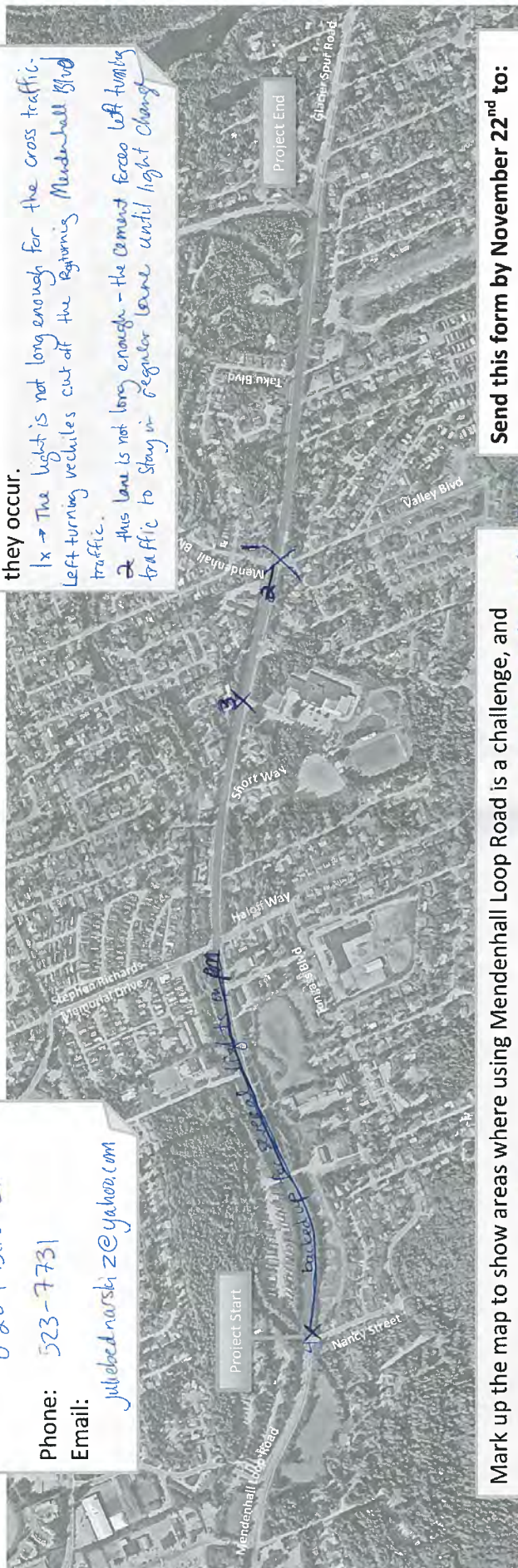
# Mendenhall Loop Road Capacity Improvement Project

## Comment Sheet

Name: Julie Bednarski  
Address: 8204 Birch Lane  
Phone: 523-7731  
Email: julebednarski2@yahoo.com

Are there recurring issues that you notice on the corridor? If so, describe the issue and mark where they occur.

1x → The light is not long enough for the cross traffic. Left turning vehicles cut off the Righting Mendenhall Blvd traffic.  
2x this lane is not long enough - the cement fence left turning traffic to stay in regular lane until light change



Mark up the map to show areas where using Mendenhall Loop Road is a challenge, and explain why below:

3x → traffic dropping of kids use the Flashing red to turn out, and people stay stopped while light flashes  
4x → bad merging drivers

~~Also when there is an accident~~

there are few options to get through

Send this form by November 22<sup>nd</sup> to:

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1107 W. 8<sup>th</sup> Street, Suite 4  
Juneau, Alaska 99801  
Or send by email to  
mschijivens@SheinbergAssociates.com

### PROJECT CONTACT

Project email: Mlooprnd@alaska.gov.  
Contact: Keith Karpstein 465-1796. Engineering Manager  
DOT&PF SE Region - Design



# Mendenhall Loop Road Capacity Improvement Project

## Comment Sheet

Name: Alexis Howard  
Address 2880 Mendenhall Loop Rd.  
Phone: 919-961-9951  
Email: juneagymnastics@gmail.com

Are there recurring issues that you notice on the corridor? If so, describe the issue and mark where they occur.



Mark up the map to show areas where using Mendenhall Loop Road is a challenge, and explain why below:

This is our house and our driveway is right before Nancy St. We just want you to know that we will most likely be affected by the Light or round-a-bout being put in. Also the traffic for our business gymnastics academy will be affected by the Nancy St. construction.

Send this form by November 22<sup>nd</sup> to:

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Juneau, Alaska 99801  
Or send by email to  
[mschijvens@SheinbergAssociates.com](mailto:mschijvens@SheinbergAssociates.com)

### PROJECT CONTACT

Project email: [Mlooprdr@alaska.gov](mailto:Mlooprdr@alaska.gov)  
Contact: Keith Karpstein 465-1796, Engineering Manager  
DOT&PF SE Region - Design



# Mendenhall Loop Road Capacity Improvement Project

## Comment Sheet

Name: Jon WENNER  
Address:

Phone:  
Email:

Are there recurring issues that you notice on the corridor? If so, describe the issue and mark where they occur.



Mark up the map to show areas where using Mendenhall Loop Road is a challenge, and explain why below:

- ① I suggest ending 5 lanes at Stephen Richards
- ② Has the city considered repaving Glacier Valley Elementary's boundaries to be entirely east of loop & then eliminating that school zone? This would bring back to back zones last nearly an hour in the AM & greatly contribute to the morning backup

Send this form by November 22<sup>nd</sup> to:

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Juneau, Alaska 99801  
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[mschijivens@SheinbergAssociates.com](mailto:mschijivens@SheinbergAssociates.com)

### PROJECT CONTACT

Project email: [MIlooprd@alaska.gov](mailto:MIlooprd@alaska.gov).  
Contact: Keith Karpstein 465-1796. Engineering Manager  
DOT&PF SE Region - Design



# Mendenhall Loop Road Capacity Improvement Project

## Comment Sheet

Name: Steve Soenksen  
 Address 8991 Long Run Dr.  
Juneau AK 99801  
 Phone: 907-957-2550  
 Email: SSoenK@yahoo.com

Are there recurring issues that you notice on the corridor? If so, describe the issue and mark where they occur.

Keep Hawk Signal



Mark up the map to show areas where using Mendenhall Loop Road is a challenge, and explain why below:

- 5 lanes is a bad idea - Keep 3 lanes <sup>Bus stop and get</sup> <sup>improved</sup> <sup>3</sup> <sup>Signed for detour to</sup> <sup>to loop road's street</sup> <sup>when leg. Reduce</sup> <sup>off traffic</sup> <sup>Needs Drivable Daily</sup> <sup>Connection for Drop</sup>
- Lanes but 5 not needed by traffic numbers
- Speeds must be 35 mph or lower - due to high pedestrian traffic
- Make other capacity improvements but not 5 lanes.
- Do a public education and outreach process on traffic revisions as they are implemented.
- Incorporate Plan - Motorized Transportation Plan
- Incorporate SPTS Plan

Send this form by November 22<sup>nd</sup> to:

Sheinberg Associates  
 1107 W. 8<sup>th</sup> Street, Suite 4  
 Juneau, Alaska 99801  
 Or send by email to  
[mschijvens@SheinbergAssociates.com](mailto:mschijvens@SheinbergAssociates.com)

### PROJECT CONTACT

Project email: [Mlooprdr@alaska.gov](mailto:Mlooprdr@alaska.gov)  
 Contact: Keith Karpstein 465-1796, Engineering Manager  
 DOT&PF SE Region - Design



# Mendenhall Loop Road Capacity Improvement Project

## Comment Sheet

Name: Dan Rounsley + Kim Garnero  
Address: P.O. Box 33842  
Juneau, AK 99803  
4017 Mendenhall Loop  
Phone: 781-0247  
Email: danronsley@gei.net

Are there recurring issues that you notice on the corridor? If so, describe the issue and mark where they occur.



Mark up the map to show areas where using Mendenhall Loop Road is a challenge, and explain why below:

We have one of the driveway conflicts in the transition area for concept C. Our Mom also has one next door. As it is now (transition from 3 lanes to 2), we wait in the northbound traffic lane to make left turns into these driveways. Traffic either backs up or passes on the shoulder - or both. Our access would be much safer with a middle turn lane to the Back Loop. These two driveways service three lots.

Of course we would prefer continuing to access our property in the northbound lane. If it changes to "right turn only" access, a roundabout at the Back Loop would be essential for us to use the Loop Road for accessing our property.

One issue we have that this project may solve is the height of the roadbed. It has risen over the years and as a result, snowmelt pours down our driveways causing flooding in the winter.

*Recommend putting utilities underground as part of rebuild*

Send this form by November 22<sup>nd</sup> to:

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Juneau, Alaska 99801  
Or send by email to  
[mschijvens@SheinbergAssociates.com](mailto:mschijvens@SheinbergAssociates.com)

### PROJECT CONTACT

Project email: [Mloopprd@alaska.gov](mailto:Mloopprd@alaska.gov).  
Contact: Keith Karpstein 465-1796. Engineering Manager  
DOT&PF SE Region - Design

**Subject:** scan from xerox is GV Parent Group input

**Date:** Thursday, November 14, 2013 8:03:39 AM Alaska Standard Time

**From:** Wilson, Theodore

**To:** Meilani Schijvens

You received a scan from xerox this morning. It is the input from the Glacier Valley parent group regarding the proposed Mendenhall Loop Road Capacity Improvement Project.

Their points:

Someone should be talking to First Student about bus stops along the route.

Priority is for the multi-use paths

The group doesn't like the idea of a roundabout at Nancy Street - prefers a light.

Request for an overpass

Some concern about the pedestrian refuge - cars surrounding kids on both sides - getting splashed, possibly hit because they can't keep an eye on both sides at once.

There were several who questioned the need for expansion of the route to five lanes and would prefer adding lights and realigning intersections.

I meet with my site council tonight. Do you have the slide show up on your web site yet?

Thanks,

Ted

Ted Wilson, Principal  
Glacier Valley Elementary  
Juneau, Alaska

# Mendenhall Loop Road Capacity Improvement Project

## Comment Sheet

Name:  
Address

Phone:  
Email:

Are there recurring issues that you notice on the corridor? If so, describe the issue and mark where they occur.



Mark up the map to show areas where using Mendenhall Loop Road is a challenge, and explain why below:

present  
 group  
 going  
 when  
 road  
 plan  
 Talk to First Student about bus stops.  
 Priority - the paths:  
 Snow removal - driveways  
 Safety  
 & Crossing safety  
 some concern about the pedestrian refuge - so much traffic on both sides  
 overpass/underpass for pedestrians

**Send this form by November 22<sup>nd</sup> to:**  
 Sheinberg Associates  
 1107 W. 8<sup>th</sup> Street, Suite 4  
 Juneau, Alaska 99801  
 Or send by email to  
 mschijvens@SheinbergAssociates.com

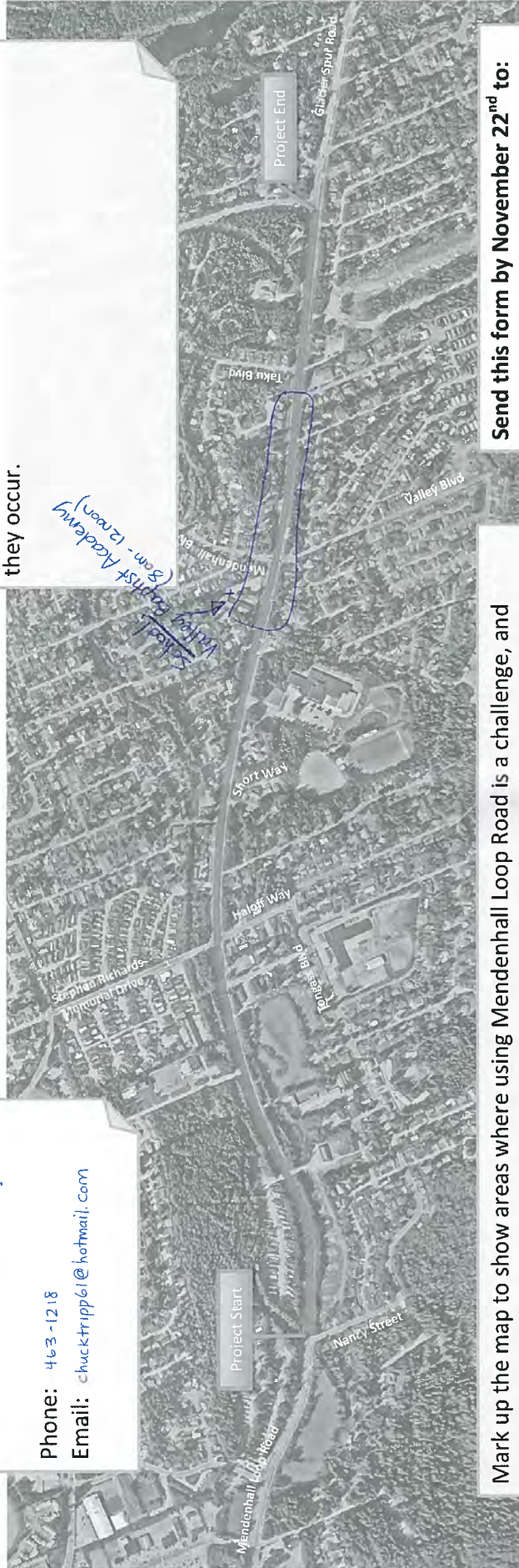


# Mendenhall Loop Road Capacity Improvement Project

## Comment Sheet

Name: Pam Tripp  
Address: 1137 slim Williams way  
Phone: 463-1218  
Email: chucktripp61@hotmail.com

Are there recurring issues that you notice on the corridor? If so, describe the issue and mark where they occur.



Mark up the map to show areas where using Mendenhall Loop Road is a challenge, and explain why below:

I work at Valley Baptist Academy. I drive there from the Back Loop. I am often stuck in traffic that backs up from Mendenhall Blvd ... even as far back as Back Loop, but more often from Kimberly St between 7:40 - 8 am. during the school year. Slow/backed up traffic becomes far more noticeable + increasingly inconvenient as the days get shorter/darker.

(I don't think adding a lane will ease the problem)

There is not enough visible signs - whether painted on the pavement or upright, indicating bike lanes - or promoting bike lanes. It's a problem on not only this road, but all over Juneau. Better signage + promotion could create more respect. Lack of signage has created hostility between drivers + the bicyclists who use the bike lanes.

Send this form by November 22<sup>nd</sup> to:

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Juneau, Alaska 99801  
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mschijvens@SheinbergAssociates.com

### PROJECT CONTACT

Project email: Mlooprdr@alaska.gov.  
Contact: Keith Karpstein 465-1796. Engineering Manager  
DOT&PF SE Region - Design

I ride my bike to work and have mentioned to ADOT&PF that I am NOT in favor of the 4-lane for several reasons. First, yes there are benefits. Second, since I ride my bike to work all year round and the 4-lane will create problems in the winter when the bike path is not plowed - I ride in the street and little footprints indicate that kids walk on Loop Road on the way to school instead of the bike path because it is covered in snow. I ride every day and see it. Often, when the State plows the bike path, CBJ comes along and does the side streets, but pushes snow on to the bike paths making them impassable with 12-18 inch frozen berms which can last for several days until they're cleared again. And kids walk in the streets again. With the widening to 4-lanes, there will be that much more snow going on to the bike paths. Currently, between Loop and Nancy (4 lanes wide) is a disaster as DOT plows the snow and mag chloride onto the bike path from the 4-lane making a slushy, slurry, mess. So I ride in the right lane. I was stopped by JPD while riding my bike on the road one morning (blue light and all) and the officer asked me why I was riding in the street. Several reasons I told him: better lighted than the bike path, usually clearer of snow than the bike path, and he added, "Yeah, they leave those berms at the cross streets."

Jim Potderrin  
8165 Thunde St

**Subject:** Two more groups provided Loop Road feedback from Glacier Valley

**Date:** Friday, November 15, 2013 10:43:40 AM Alaska Standard Time

**From:** Wilson, Theodore

**To:** Meilani Schijvens

Regarding the input from GV parent group that I provided yesterday - there were 9 parents representing that feedback.

I also presented and received feedback from my teaching staff (about 25 people) and from my site council (6 people, 2 of which were also at the parent group meeting).

From the staff:

Synchronize lights all along the route to account for speed of travel.

More frequent police monitoring of school intersections (there's a lot of running the reds).

Don't like roundabouts, especially the two lane suggested for Nancy. They want a light.

Extend the project all the way past Valley/Mend. Blvd.

Improve the lighting through the corridor.

Decrease amount of time pedestrians have to wait at lights.

Snow removal a concern, especially with smaller ditches.

Maintain the multi-use paths at all costs.

Develop a construction use plan that provides safe passage for bikes and peds (especially on their way to school) during construction (Auke Bay project seems to have been a disaster is perception of this group).

A note added by one staff member: please improve the bridge and build a turnaround so that busses can pick up students at Coho - they have to walk way to far to get to the bus stop.

From the site council:

Assure that there is really enough space for pedestrians

Pedestrian flow/safety is priority over traffic

Crosswalks needed at Nancy and Cinema Dr.

Increase lighting especially Nancy to Cinema

Maintain the multi-use paths - highest priority

Concern that they manage side access to prevent more backup, but not too restricted to get out of neighborhoods.

Expand to five lanes at least past Floyd Dryden, support full length past Valley

Snow removal - especially pathways and the proposed pedestrian refuges - important consideration

A note from the group is that the section from Egan to Nancy also needs to be fixed - especially the Superbear intersection - that would help flow as well.

Thanks,  
Ted

Ted Wilson, Principal  
Glacier Valley Elementary  
Juneau, Alaska



# Mendenhall Loop Road Capacity Improvement Project

## Comment Sheet

Name: Jim Potdevin  
Address 8165 Thunder St  
Phone: 465-8864  
Email: jim.potdevin@alaska.gov

Are there recurring issues that you notice on the corridor? If so, describe the issue and mark where they occur.

1 Traffic lights stopping all traffic at 0530 when there are only 2 cars. Don't need to stop the cars. Flashing lights after hours. Traffic lights not needed at 0530 or earlier



Mark up the map to show areas where using Mendenhall Loop Road is a challenge, and explain why below:

2 Clearing snow from bike path. With lanes, all that snow will cross the ditch and end up on the bike path. DOT plans the bike path. CBS plans the end of the bike path with their plans. Freetts in place. Need more input for keeping clear. Between Loop + Hajo, DOT plans all that snow/slurry onto the bike path making it impossible for bikes + Peds. I ride my bike in the right hand lane.

3 Do not add more lights

4 Have traffic signals flash after hours

Send this form by November 22<sup>nd</sup> to:

Sheinberg Associates  
1107 W. 8<sup>th</sup> Street, Suite 4  
Juneau, Alaska 99801  
Or send by email to  
mschijvens@SheinbergAssociates.com

### PROJECT CONTACT

Project email: Mlooprd@alaska.gov.  
Contact: Keith Karpstein 465-1796. Engineering Manager  
DOT&PF SE Region - Design

**Subject:** Mendenhall Loop Road - comments on project

**Date:** Friday, November 22, 2013 12:31:30 PM Alaska Standard Time

**From:** Chuck Tripp

**To:** mschijvens@SheinbergAssociates.com, Mlooprd@alaska.gov

Attached are my comments and analysis on the Mendenhall Loop Road widening project.

I commute this corridor everyday, primarily by bicycle. In the am, I don't usually experience the peak traffic flows in the morning because I come through a little before they hit, but I see them very much up close during the PM peak and I have had plenty of time to observe what doesn't work with this corridor which I talk about in my attached comments.

I took the liberty to taking traffic counts and looking at how the Stephan Richards intersection might function as a roundabout. I really think the department ought to consider how a roundabout at Stephan Richards might benefit the corridor as opposed to widening a portion or the full length of the corridor.

I am not sure that widening the corridor is necessary. I believe much that is wrong with the corridor can be fixed if we focus on fixing the intersection at Stephan Richards. I have to believe that fixing Stephan Richards, even if that fix were an expensive roundabout would be cheaper and more beneficial than a full on corridor widening project.

But beyond that, we need to remember this this arterial is an arterial that feeds an area that is primarily residential. Adding lanes should be done only as a last resort because all things being equal adding lanes will result in less safety not only for non-motorised users but for all users. On the other hand, a roundabout at Stephan Richards would not only give us improved safety but also improved levels of service for vehicles as well.

Thank you,

Charles Tripp  
907-723-4515



### Short Story:

Consider building a roundabout at Stephan Richards intersection. The roundabout would have 2 lanes entering northbound, and a single lane entering on the three other legs. A roundabout would be beneficial for the following reasons:

- Most of the delay on Mendenhall Loop is due to problems with the intersection not due to lack of lanes. Adding lanes does not address the problem => a waste of money
- A roundabout would allow the Stephan Richards intersection to process cars (all users in fact) more efficiently with less delay.
  - Currently the ped signal for peds crossing Loop is about 20 seconds. There are a lot of peds at peak hours. Adding 2 lanes would add at least 6 seconds to that delay, taking back some of the gains from adding the extra lanes.
  - A roundabout will allow peds to cross Mendenhall Loop while stopping only one direction of traffic at a time potentially reducing the delay to about 8 seconds.
- It's questionable whether we will ever get the funds to do a full widening which I understand may cost upwards of \$20 million.
- Concentrating limited funds on fixing the intersection at Stephan Richards may give us the most benefit perhaps avoiding the need to widen elsewhere on the corridor.
- Note: I propose two lanes on Mendenhall Loop entering northbound. I do NOT propose carrying those two lanes back down to Nancy. I would add the extra lane in the vicinity of Stephan Richards only for the purpose of process vehicles more efficiently through the intersection. Obviously you wouldn't build Mendenhall Loop like that if you were building it from scratch, but when funds are limited, there is no point in spending money on features that do not address the problem and in my view extra lanes north of Nancy aren't really needed until you get closer to Stephan Richards.
- Safety: roundabouts have an excellent safety record. Adding lanes will probably have a negative impact on safety. This is important because this corridor feeds an area that is primarily residential plus there are two schools adjacent to the corridor.

### Discussion

Think of Mendenhall Loop Road as a long parking lot because that is exactly what it is, twice a day at rush hour. Twice a day, Mendenhall Loop road become a parking lot for cars waiting to go through the Stephan Richards intersection. The lack of lanes on Loop road is not the problem, the poorly performing intersection at Loop is the problem. Fix Stephan Richards and you will have addressed most of the purpose and need of this project.

I mostly experience the backups on Loop road during the evening rush hour. I believe that the poor configuration of the intersection at Stephan Richards is the primary cause of backups during the evening rush hour. The Stephan Richards intersection simply cannot process enough cars during peak traffic to keep up with the traffic feeding into it. That's why I say think of Loop Road as a parking lot for Stephan



Richards road. Increase the through put at Stephan Richards and you may not need to do any widening elsewhere on the corridor.

Or to put it another way, if funds are limited (and I know they are), spend them on fixing the Stephan Richards intersection and you will go a long ways towards meeting the purpose and need of the project.

I have two suggestions for the intersection at Stephan Richards. One involves a roundabout, the other a traffic signal. In both cases I increase the number of lanes entering the intersection to increase the intersection's ability to process traffic. But I only increase the number of lanes in the vicinity of the intersection. I don't widen near Nancy. I wait until you get near Stephan Richards. You don't need the extra lanes until you near Stephan Richards so that you can process more cars through the intersection. Once past the intersection, you can go back to one lane.

### **Roundabout**

The primary benefit of a roundabout is that it reduces delay at the intersection, particularly when pedestrians are crossing Mendenhall Loop. Currently it is about 20 seconds to accommodate a pedestrian crossing Loop road given its width. If you add two 11 foot lanes, this would increase by at least 6 seconds (22 feet/3.5ft/sec). With a roundabout however, the delay to traffic due to pedestrians can be reduced to as little as 8 seconds!

Granted roundabouts are expensive but if you spend lavishly on the Stephan Richards intersection, you might not need to spend money elsewhere on the corridor and wind up saving money overall. You might avoid the expense of widening the full length of the corridor.

See attached suggested roundabout configuration for the Stephan Richards intersection. You would probably need two lanes north bound to be assured of being able to keep up with traffic during the PM. Northbound Loop traffic peak hour pm has 1098 vehicles arriving at Stephan Richards. They would be entering the roundabout against 134 vehicles of circulating traffic. According to graphic 4-3 of the FHWA Informational Guide for Roundabout, this would bring the q/c ratio of the roundabout to about 100% for the peak hours which would indicate a poor level of service.

Therefore Two lanes would be needed northbound to have an adequate level of service.

However, I don't believe two lanes would be needed southbound. The AM peak is not as acute as acute as the PM peak. During the peak am hour, we have 822 vehicles entering the Stephan Richards southbound conflicting with 184 vehicles of circulating traffic. One lane entering the roundabout southbound I believe would be adequate.

Another critical movement during the am peak is Eastbound Stephan Richards entering the roundabout and conflicting with 864 of circulating traffic. This stream I believe is the one mostly likely to experience delay during the am peak. I would deal with that in one of two ways:

1. Install a metering light on Mendenhall Loop southbound to come on and stop the large stream of south bound traffic on Loop when the queue on Stephan Richards get too long.



2. Give a free right turn to the east bound traffic on Stephan Richard, effectively beginning the 2<sup>nd</sup> south bound lane on Loop. This would be more expensive because you would have to continue this second lane down to Nancy.

It is also worth noting that one of the big reasons for the delay in the am is the school zone lights. The is the primary reason for the delay in the am in my opinion. The reason I say that is that traffic flow improves noticeably once you get through the school zone. So again, this is a situation where adding a lane doesn't really solve the problem. I think a roundabout at Stephan Richards would help in the am.

Another advantage of a roundabout is that it improves the situation with the sidestreets, Haloff and Stephan Richards trying to turn left onto Mendenhall Loop. During morning rush hour particularly, trying to turn left from Haloff onto Loop is extremely difficult. A roundabout would make that turning movement, all turning movements in fact much easier.

One other thing. I put the stop bars right at the roundabout including on the exit. This means traffic would back up into the roundabout. That would seem like a bad thing except for the fact that we are only talking about 8 seconds. I think it would be a considerable improvement over what we have now.

#### Traffic light

You could also put in a traffic light. With limited funding, I would not add lanes beginning at Nancy but would only add them in the vicinity of Stephan Richards for the purpose of increasing the through-put of that intersection.

Again: fix the intersection and you'll go a long way toward fl do not believe it is necessarily the lack of lanes that causes loop Road to back up.

#### Two Roundabouts

One could install two roundabouts on the corridor: one at Stephan Richards like we have discussed and a second one (probably a single lane) at Mendenhall Boulevard. Benefits:

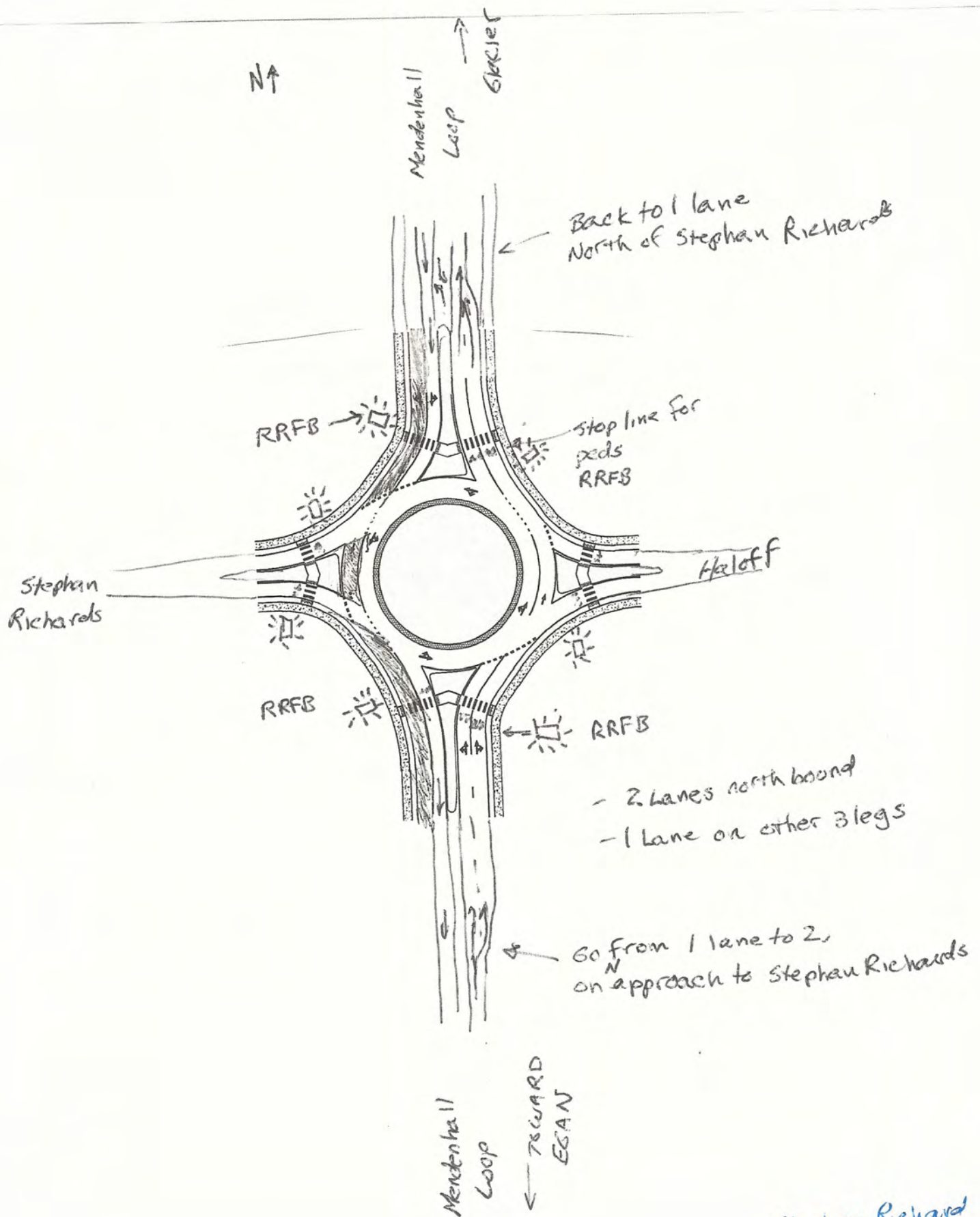
- This would very much solve the problem of getting out of Floyd Dryden. During heavy traffic, people could turn right, make a u-turn at the Roundabout at Mendenhall Boulevard and the go south.
- Cost: Building two roundabouts would probably cost less widening the corridor
- Less delay to vehicles due to better efficiency of the intersections
- Better accommodation of non-motorized users.
- Safety – roundabouts have a better safety record,

Charles Tripp

[chucktripp61@hotmail.com](mailto:chucktripp61@hotmail.com)

phone: 907-723-4515





Stephan Richards  
Roundabout  
overview

North

Mendenhall Lp

2 lanes exiting toward North

See note A below

Stop bar for crosswalk

East

West

Stephan Richards

Haloff

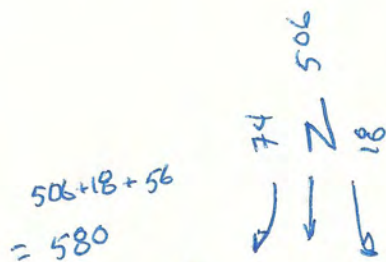
2 lanes enter from South

Note A: This is the important single feature of a roundabout over a traffic signal: people can cross in 2 stages with less delay to the vehicles. People cross one stream of traffic at a time, stopping traffic one direction at a time instead of the whole width of the street.

Stephan Richards Roundabout more details

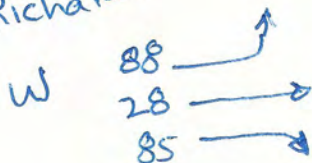
Peak  
PM

Mendenhall Loop

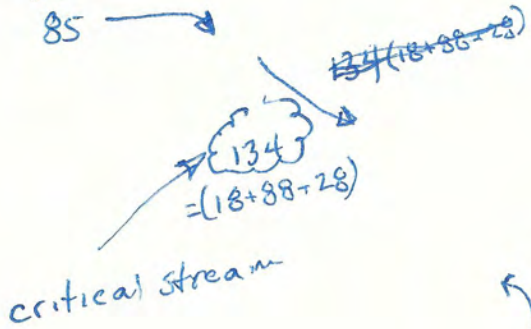
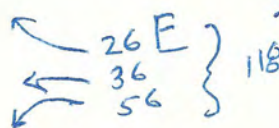


$$249 = 157 + 36 + 56$$

S. Richards

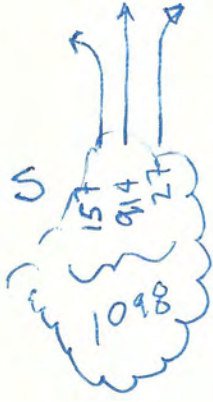


Haloff



$$1159 = (88 + 157 + 914)$$

$$1159 = (88 + 157 + 914 + 18)$$



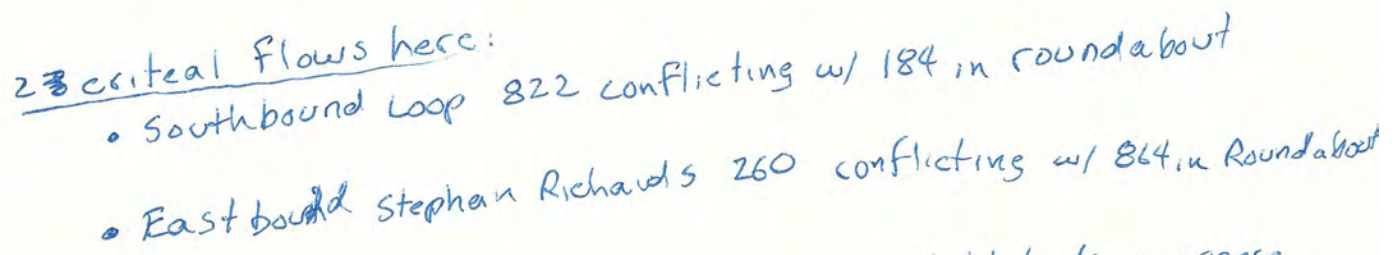
Mendenhall Loop

Critical streams of traffic  
Highest stream entering round about and the conflicting circulating flow in round about

Stephen Richards Roundabout  
Traffic flows PM Peak



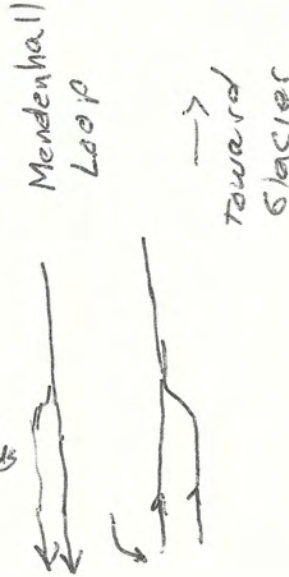
Stephan Richards  
Roundabout Flowers  
And pearls



→ Free right turn  $\Rightarrow$  2<sup>nd</sup> Lane from Stephen Richards

# N9 Traffic Light Alternative at Stephan Richards

Widen from 1 lane  
to 2 south bound  
to increase through-  
put at Stephan Richards

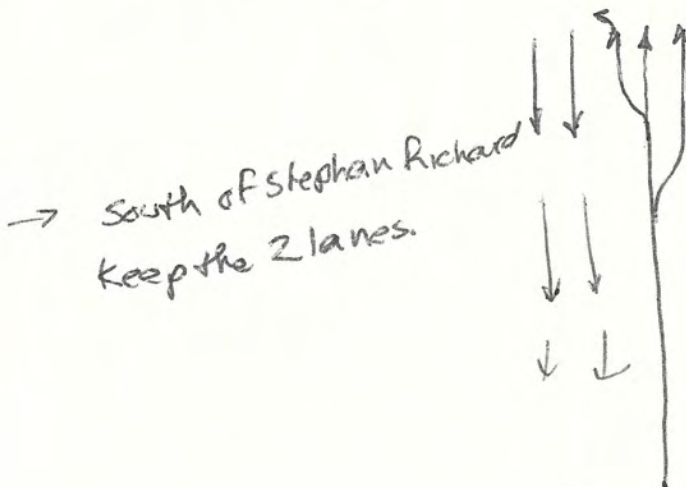


Narrow back to  
1 lane N of  
Stephan Richard

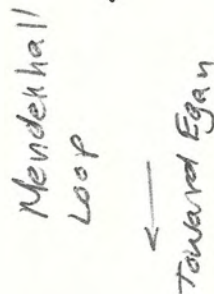
Stephan  
Richards



Haloff



Widen from 1 lane  
to 2 on approach to Stephan  
Richard to increase  
through-put at intersection



Don't widen at  
Nancy, it is not needed.  
Wait till closer to S. Richards

**Subject:** RE: Wednesday, November 6th meeting - please RSVP

**Date:** Monday, October 28, 2013 7:54:30 AM Alaska Daylight Time

**From:** Neary, John -FS

**To:** Meilani Schijvens

**CC:** Marshall, Marti -FS, Craig, Laurie F -FS, Hinds, Nicole A -FS, Lamm, Laurie A -FS, Dee, Arthur L -FS

Meilani,

Thank you for the notice. I will be travelling next week and won't be able to attend the meeting.

This project will affect transit to the Mendenhall Glacier Visitor Center as you know. Not only the traffic on the loop road but also the riders on Capital Transit who exit the bus and must cross the loop road to walk to the glacier visitor center. Perhaps a cross-walk is in the plans for them and for bike riders coming off the back loop?

cheers

*John Neary*

Director, Mendenhall Glacier Visitor Center

Juneau Ranger District

8510 Mendenhall Loop Road, Juneau, AK 99801

+1 (907) 789-6637

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From: Meilani Schijvens [mailto:mschijvens@sheinbergassociates.com]

Sent: Monday, October 21, 2013 1:26 PM

To: Neary, John -FS

Subject: Wednesday, November 6th meeting - please RSVP

Greetings John,

You may know that the Alaska Department of Transportation and Public Facilities (DOT) is starting work on improvements for the Mendenhall Loop Road between Nancy Street and the intersection with Back Loop Road. The goals of this project are to provide adequate vehicle capacity and improve bicycle and pedestrian facilities in the study area.

The USDA Forest Service's Mendenhall Glacier Visitor Center been identified as a key stakeholder for this project, and you are invited to attend the Stakeholder Meeting for this project on **Wednesday, November 6<sup>th</sup> from 10 to 11:30 AM** at the at the DOT Juneau 7 Mile First Floor Conference Room 6860 Glacier Highway. Please RSVP. If you can not attend, please let us know the contact information for someone you would like to designate to take your place.

DOT and the contractor (Kittelson & Associates, Inc.) hopes you can attend this kick off meeting. As an active user of this corridor, it is important for the project team to hear about your concerns and input as they move forward to develop recommendations to improve driving (including turning), biking, and walking in the Mendenhall Loop area.

In addition to the stakeholder meeting, we will be hosting a public meeting on **Wednesday, November 6<sup>th</sup> from 6 to 8 PM at the Floyd Dryden Middle School Library**. If you know anyone else who would have an interest in this project, please urge them to attend this meeting.

Best regards,

Mendenhall Loop Road  
Capacity Improvement  
Project Page 48

**Subject:** Re: Mendenhall Loop Corridor public meeting on Wednesday, November 6th

**Date:** Monday, November 11, 2013 9:37:58 PM Alaska Standard Time

**From:** Ann Ferlauto

**To:** Meilani Schijvens

Hi Meilani,

Thank you for the opportunity to send my input via email.

I pass through the intersection of Stephen Richards/Haloff & Mendenhall Loop Rd. many times a day, during rush hour and the off times. There are several problems with this intersection; some human error, lack of understanding the rules of the road, and some due to the lights and alignment of the intersection.

As a driver turning left from Haloff to Loop Rd., the alignment of the intersection impairs a driver's view of oncoming traffic--when several cars are on the opposite side in the left turn/straight away lane, it is difficult to see if there are cars approaching the intersection to turn right from the Duck Creek Market side to Loop Rd. south--you have to creep out, creep out, then gun it to make the turn before a car comes.

Also when turning left, drivers turning right from the Duck Creek Market side either wait for drivers turning left (as often those turning left do NOT yield to oncoming traffic--not sure if people understand what that sign up there means!), as if they don't understand that they have the right away over the cars turning left.

I often have to wave drivers on who are in the right lane waiting for me to turn left! Then there are people who are trying to go straight, but have had close calls from people turning left not yielding, so they just let them go first and avoid the possibility of a crash. Then there are people who don't use their turn signals, adding further to the confusion...the list goes on.

It is very confusing because many drivers do not know the rules of the road; add to that those who *do* know the rules of the road yet have had so many close calls that they don't want to take the risk. The end result is more and more people aren't following the rules of the road, making it even more treacherous. It's like playing Russian roulette every day going through that intersection.

This is not to mention the pedestrians. We already know there has been one death at that intersection (Skylar Kim)--I don't know what improvements were made to the lighting and alignment following that tragedy, but I witness close calls almost daily, and I know from shattered glass on the road at times that there have been many accidents. I am ultra careful at this intersection, but several mornings ago, before daylight savings time ended, it was dark and raining at 7:45am. Despite looking for pedestrians, I did not see one until I had already put on the gas to cross--luckily I was creeping along, straining to look, and saw the darkly dressed person in time to stop--still, it gave me quite a start that here I was actually LOOKING and didn't see the person crossing.

Since realigning the intersection through construction is probably not an option, the following is the only solution I can see to this dangerous intersection:

- 1) Make the left turn/straight away lanes on Haloff & Stephen Richards be LEFT TURN ONLY (as should be the norm--I have no idea why there are intersections in this town with the left lane and straight lane sharing--this seems idiotic--unless they have a dedicated light., i.e. Loop Rd onto Egan southbound).
- 2) Have a dedicated light for cars turning left from Haloff & Stephen Richards--eliminate the LEFT TURN YIELD on green; they get their own green to turn, then it's red.
- 3) Join the straight away lane and right turn lane--this will be a bit awkward with the current lane lines and intersection alignment, but can be fixed over time--I have actually driven from the right turn lane on Haloff

(straddling the painted line a bit) across to Stephen Richard to see how it would be and it worked fine.

4) Change the intersection lights so that when pedestrians push the button to cross, **ALL CARS STOP**--no one driving when pedestrians are crossing--that's the way they do it in Great Britain--pedestrians actually DO have the right of way there (not here--in talk they do, but not in deed).

Right now it is terribly risky for pedestrians--you never know if drivers are going to pay attention to whether someone is waiting to cross or not--drivers are so focused on figuring out what other driver's intentions might be and getting across the intersection without running into a car, they sometimes don't pay attention to pedestrians--sad. I have seen many close calls at the intersection of Mall Road too--I imagine the intersection of Valley/Mendenhall Blvd has similar issues.

Again, thanks for the opportunity to explain my concerns. I hope this is helpful and that solutions are found to improve safety in sections of this corridor.

Ann

On Nov 9, 2013, at 2:15 PM, Meilani Schijvens <[mschijvens@sheinbergassociates.com](mailto:mschijvens@sheinbergassociates.com)> wrote:

Email is perfect! Thanks.

Sent from my iPhone

On Nov 9, 2013, at 12:09 PM, Ann Ferlauto <[aferlauto@alaska.com](mailto:aferlauto@alaska.com)> wrote:

Hi Meilani,

I had intended to go to this meeting but ended up working late. I have some concerns about this corridor, especially the intersection of Stephen Richards/Haloff Way and Mendenhall Loop Rd. Will there be another public forum or can I email my concerns, observations and suggestions directly to you?

Thanks,

Ann

On Nov 1, 2013, at 1:33 PM, Meilani Schijvens <[mschijvens@sheinbergassociates.com](mailto:mschijvens@sheinbergassociates.com)> wrote:

Greetings,

This is a note to remind you of the public meeting for **Wednesday, November 6<sup>th</sup> from 5:30 to 7:30 PM at the Floyd Dryden Middle School Library.**

The Alaska Department of Transportation and Public Facilities (DOT) is starting work on improvements for the Mendenhall Loop Road between Nancy Street and the intersection with Back Loop Road. The goals of this project are to provide adequate vehicle capacity and improve bicycle and pedestrian facilities in the study area. DOT and the contractor (Kittelson & Associates, Inc.) hope you can attend this kick off meeting. As an active user of this corridor, it is important for the project team to hear about



**TO:** Keith Karpstein, Alaska DOT&PF  
Lee Rodegerdts, Kittelson and Associates, Inc.  
Meilani Schijvens, Sheinberg Associates

**FROM:** Ben Lyman, Senior Planner  
ben\_lyman@ci.juneau.ak.us  
Sarah Bronstein, Planner  
sarah\_bronstein@ci.juneau.ak.us  
Community Development Department

**SUBJECT:** Mendenhall Loop Road Project

**DATE:** November 22, 2013

On November 6<sup>th</sup>, CBJ Community Development Department (CDD) staff attended a stakeholder meeting to discuss important issues related to the DOT&PF Capacity Improvement project on Mendenhall Loop Road. We have compiled this memo in response to the information and designs discussed at that meeting. Thank you for providing us the opportunity to comment on this important transportation project.

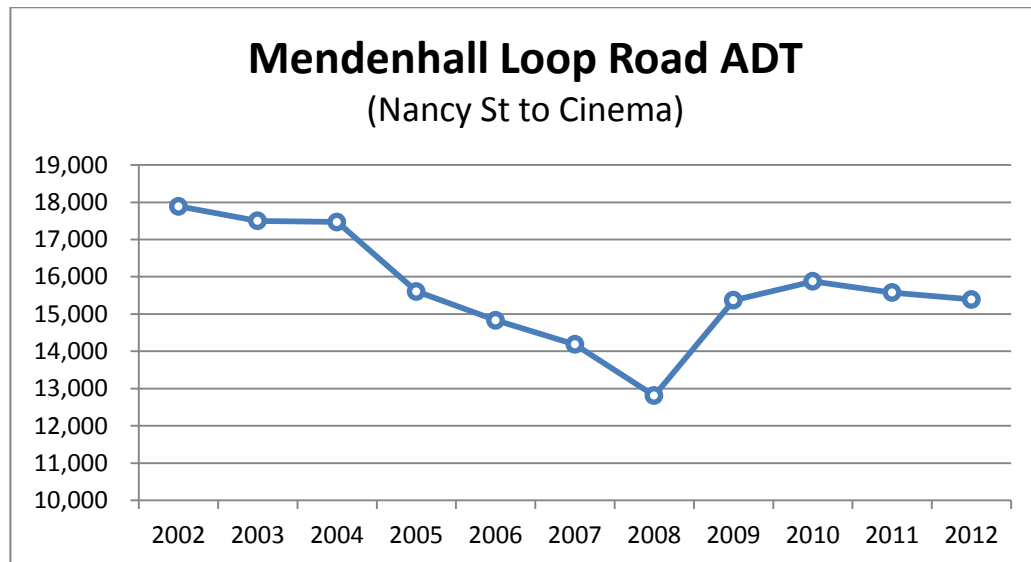
A) Potential influences outside the project area

CDD staff had concerns that some of the congestion along Mendenhall Loop Road might be generated by traffic controls on the adjacent corridor, Riverside Drive. In particular, we looked at a 4-way stop at Stephen Richards and Riverside Drive, to the west of the project area, which was installed in 2006 as part of a road reconstruction and intersection improvement project along Riverside Drive. The treatment was intended to allow traffic from Stephen Richards Memorial Drive to make left turns onto Riverside. However, the intersection turns into a bottle neck during peak periods. Northbound traffic especially takes a long time to clear the cue. Many now travel north along Mendenhall Loop Road from Egan to Stephen Richards, where they turn left at the traffic light to get back to Riverside Drive and avoid the long cue of cars northbound. Community Development staff wondered if the intersection treatment at Stephen Richards Drive and Riverside Drive may actually be causing artificial congestion along Mendenhall Loop Road, and if treatment of this problem at the source might relieve some traffic congestion along Mendenhall Loop. However, traffic studies have found that the current configuration at Stephen Richards and Riverside is functioning at an acceptable level of service. Additionally, as ADT on Riverside is dropping, the city has no plans to upgrade to a traffic control signal at this location.

B) ADT Trends on the corridor

It is our understanding that the primary intent of the project is to increase capacity for vehicles along the project corridor. We acknowledge that the corridor experiences congestion and could

benefit from safety and intersection improvements. However, it appears that data from DOT&PF demonstrates a downward trend in ADT along the corridor. According to the annual counts conducted by DOT&PF, the daily traffic along this corridor has experienced a downward trend for the last ten years, with the only period of growth from 2008 to 2010.



Source: DOT&PF Southeast Region Traffic Maps,  
<http://www.dot.state.ak.us/stwdplng/mapping/trafficmaps/adtarchives.shtml>

This downward trend conflicts with traffic projections based on population growth. The Mendenhall Loop Road Traffic Study states that DOT&PF assumes a traffic growth rate of 1.5 x the population growth rate. The study goes on to state that “Traffic growth rates can be caused by other factors besides a community’s population growth rate. These factors ... can result in traffic growth rates on a particular road varying widely in relation to population growth rate.” According to the Juneau and Southeast Alaska Economic Indicators 2013 report, the city population has been growing by 1-3,000 residents per year, slightly less than 1%.<sup>1</sup> Between 2003 and 2012, the city’s compound annual growth was 0.5%. If DOT&PF projections are correct, traffic counts should have seen increases at 1.5 times the population growth rate, or 0.75% ADT growth since 2003. It appears, however, that the population growth rate is decoupled from ADT in the project corridor. While population and development have continued to increase along Mendenhall Loop Road over the last ten years, traffic counts are going down.

If the traffic volume along Mendenhall Loop Road continues to go down, providing more than three lanes would create excess capacity, while also introducing additional pedestrian crossing hazards. Given the impact to pedestrian level of service of widening the road, we would encourage further analysis of traffic trends and projections. It could be that an increase from three lanes to five north of Nancy Street is not warranted at this time.

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<sup>1</sup> JEDC. Juneau Southeast Alaska Economic Indicators 2013. 2013. Juneau, AK: Juneau Economic Development Council.

Staff also noted that the recorded ADT along Mendenhall Loop Road is near the threshold where many cities consider implementing a road diet, converting roadways from four lanes to three (two travel lanes with a center turn lane). According to the AASHTO Guide for the Development of Bicycle Facilities, streets with 15,000 cars per day or less are ideal candidates for road diets, and many cities have successfully implemented 4 to 3 lane conversions on streets with up to 20,000 ADT (4-32, 4<sup>th</sup> ed.).

### C) Consistency with the *Area Wide Transportation Plan*

The City and Borough of Juneau has adopted transportation plans that make specific recommendations for this project corridor. Improvements to Mendenhall Loop Road are listed in the *City and Borough of Juneau Area Wide Transportation Plan* (AWTP) as a medium term priority. The plan makes the recommendation to:

“Develop Mendenhall Loop Road as a four lane boulevard with a median and/or turn pockets from Egan Drive through Glacier Spur Rd. Integrate traffic signal locations and access control with neighborhood and school district needs. Possible locations for new signals are Taku Blvd., Mendenhall Blvd., and Nancy Street. *Design the roadway for 30 to 35 mile per hour travel speeds* (emphasis added). Boulevard treatments include landscaped medians, bike lanes, buffer strips, bus pullout shelters and a separated pathway for pedestrians and bicycles ... At pathway intersections with streets, modify grading for a flatter pathway approach and integrate the pathway crossing at the intersection stop bar. At the intersection of Back Loop Road and Glacier Spur Road consider constructing a roundabout.”<sup>2</sup>

CDD recognizes that the recommendation in this document for a four-lane boulevard was predicated on a model of traffic growth. As mentioned above, this assumption has not proved to be accurate along this corridor. The Mendenhall Loop Road Traffic Study determined in 2006 that a boulevard treatment along this corridor was not feasible. However, other elements of this recommendation are still worthy of consideration.

The AWTP calls for a speed of 35 miles per hour along Mendenhall Loop Road. The current speed limit in the project corridor is 40 miles per hour. Reducing the speed to 35 mph could be a win-win tool for increasing traffic flow while also improving safety. According to the 2000 FHWA Highway Capacity Manual, in some roadway designs 35 mph provides a peak traffic flow rate by allowing vehicles to travel more closely together.<sup>3</sup> At the same time, lowering the speed from 40 to 35 mph enhances safety in the corridor by improving drivers’ reaction time,

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<sup>2</sup> CBJ Community Development Department. 2001. *City and Borough of Juneau Area Wide Transportation Plan*. Juneau, AK: City and Borough of Juneau, p. 18.

<sup>3</sup>Moore, T. et. al. 2007. *The Transportation Land Use Connection*. Chicago, IL: American Planning Association, p. 289.

reducing the severity of vehicle crashes, and reducing the risk of fatality in collisions with pedestrians. It may be beneficial to model the capacity of the street with a 35 mph speed limit to gauge the potential impact to traffic flow.

#### D) Consistency with the *Non-Motorized Transportation Plan*

Juneau's *Non-Motorized Transportation Plan* also includes specific high priority recommendations for this project corridor:

Nancy Street Intersection: Addition of "pork chops" and decreasing the turning radius to shorten crossing distance on Nancy Street; Continental crosswalk markings and traffic calming along Mendenhall Loop Road will increase safety.

Taku Boulevard Intersection: Add pedestrian activated signal and continental style crosswalk; Traffic calming along Mendenhall Loop Road

Improvements such as continental crosswalk markings and pedestrian two stage crossings could be beneficial along the full length of the project, not only at the intersections of Nancy and Taku.

#### E) Other corridor improvements

There were several improvements discussed at the stakeholder meeting which bear further discussion and inter-agency coordination.

*-Extension of Short Way to Tongass Boulevard and Haloff Way* – This element of the project should be coordinated with CBJ's plans to reconstruct and move the ball fields at Floyd Dryden Middle School, which may impact the alignment of the new street connection. Please contact Skye Stekoll at [skye\\_stekoll@ci.juneau.ak.us](mailto:skye_stekoll@ci.juneau.ak.us) regarding this project.

*-Improved lighting along the multiuse pathway* – CDD staff concurs with comments that the multiuse path is poorly lit, especially at intersections with roads and driveways where collisions are likely to occur. While lighting is consistently spaced along the corridor, the intervals do not always align with intersections, leading to dark and potentially dangerous conflict points, especially for separated path users.

*-Vegetative buffer removal* – Removal of the outer vegetative buffer in the 5 lane cross section will impact adjacent neighbors and may warrant further targeted community outreach. Noise and aesthetic impacts to adjacent properties, and the aesthetics of the journey to the Mendenhall Glacier for the hundreds of thousands of visitors who pass through this corridor each year will all be affected by the removal of this buffer.

*-Elevating separated pathway to road grade* – Raising the level of the separated pathway to at-road grade would reduce the snow buildup along the trail from snow plowing of the roadway while also increasing visibility at trail intersections.

*-Access management* – Reduction of driveways will reduce conflict points along Mendenhall Loop road, improving safety for all modes. Elimination of driveways where reasonable alternative access is available would both facilitate safety and improve traffic flow.