

Bike Friendly Kalamazoo
November 12, 2015 Meeting Minutes
KRESA Main Campus

Attendees

Megan Arndt, Associate Planner, Kalamazoo Area Transportation Study
Lee Adams, Director, Southcentral Michigan Planning Council
Chris Barnes, Director, Transportation & Utilities, City of Portage
Deb Buchholtz, Commissioner, Road Commission of Kalamazoo County
Chris Chadderdon, Bronson Hospital (ret.)
Dave Chadderdon, Resident, City of Portage
Adam Dmoch, Crime Prevention Officer, City of Portage
Karen High, Parks Director, Oshtemo Township
Kendall Klingelsmith, Director of Parks, Rec. & Sr Citizen Svcs, City of Portage
Shawn Kloha, Senior Project Planner, Stryker Corp.
Dan Lewis, P.E., Prein & Newhof; Member, KATS Technical Cmte, Village of Schoolcraft
Steven C. Leuty, Trustee, Kalamazoo Township
Richard Skalski, Senior Construction Engineer (former), City of Kalamazoo
Cara Smith, Vice President, TriKats
Jodi Stefforia, Planning and Zoning Administrator, Comstock Township
Suzanne Sippel, Gull Lake Area Trails
Paul Selden, Director of Road Safety, KBC; Member, TriKats
Pam Sotherland, Member, Kalamazoo Bicycle Club; Resident, Kalamazoo Township
Paul Sotherland, Member, Kalamazoo Bicycle Club; Resident, Kalamazoo Township
Meg Zapalowski, VP, Southwest Michigan Mountain Biking Association

Agenda

Paul Selden: Introduction

Stated purpose of the meeting: review perspectives and experience of speakers; facilitate informed review of the draft commuter bike routes presented in KATS' 2045 long term transportation plan.

Bike Friendly Kalamazoo: a communications network of volunteer participants/delegates from community stakeholders (for more information, see www.bikefriendlykalamazoo.org)

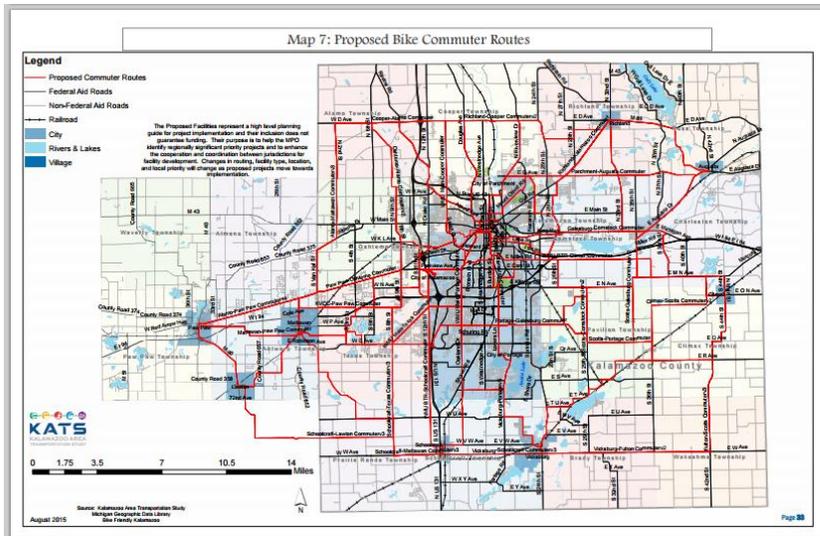
Reviewed benefits of bike routes as a component within a multi-modal transportation network: American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO)

- “It may be advantageous to sign some urban and rural roadways as bicycle routes.”
- “Many communities find that a wayfinding system for bicycles is a component of a bicycle network that enhances other encouragement efforts, because it provides a visible invitation to new bicyclists, while also encouraging current bicyclists to explore new destinations.”

Kalamazoo Area Transportation Study (KATS)

- “... proactively planning for a multimodal transportation system can promote integration with land use policies to encourage and better enable improved individual opportunity, sustainable community development and economic success.”

Displayed map of comprehensive proposed commuter bike within KATS metropolitan planning organization (MPO).



Bike Routes aimed at commuters use destinations that are relatively permanent features of an area, such as governmental units, versus recreational and fitness oriented routes (which are subject to change more frequently, based on personal and riding club/group preferences). The proposed commuter bike routes in the KATS plan simultaneously s: a) connect major jurisdictions in the KATS MPO; b) provide to/from “trunk lines” centered on each major jurisdiction; and, c) have been developed over a three year period involving broad cooperative involvement by area engineers, officials, bicyclists, and the general public. The plan may represent another “first” for our MPO, to help promote the greater community.

Chris Barnes: City of Portage

Reviewed personal background: Engineer and Director of Transportation & Utilities for City of Portage.

Traced development of Portage Bikeway: collection of multi-use paths, sidewalks, bike lanes and on-road bicycling facilities/amenities.

Reviewed engineering and cost considerations (during Discussion/Q&A)

- Each installed sign and post costs \$150-200 depending on number of elements such as sign types used (e.g., main sign, arrows, destination, distance indicators)
- Consideration of many possible alternative routes to sign based on balance of many factors (engineering judgement) such as speed limits, traffic density, type of shoulder, lane width, sign clutter, etc.

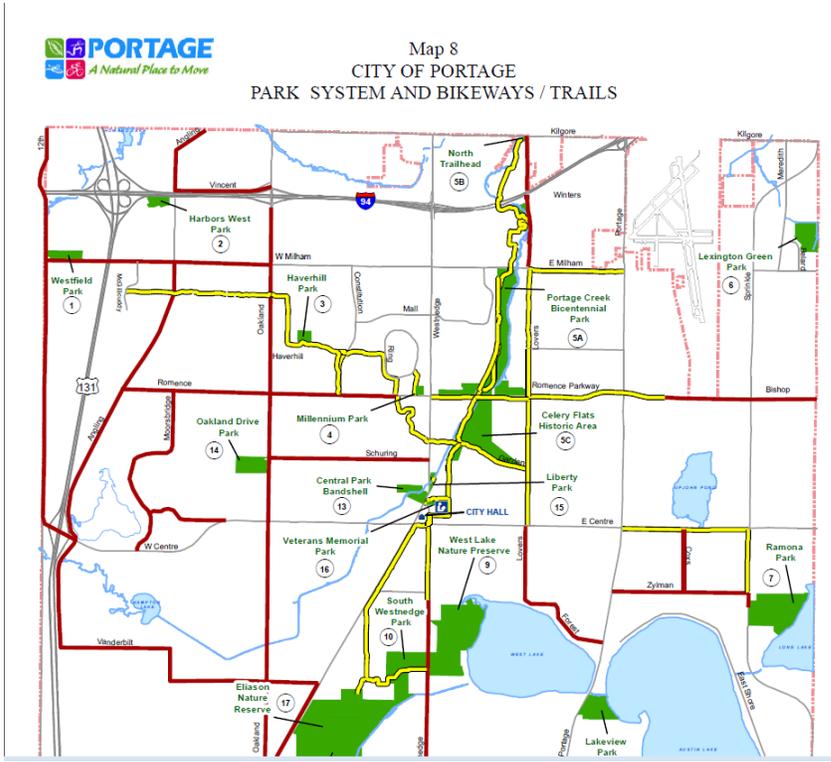
Reviewed Key AASHTO definitions from Section 9A.03 Definitions Relating to Bicycles:
Standard: The following terms shall be defined as follows when used in Part 9:

1. Bicycle Facilities—a general term denoting improvements and provisions that accommodate or encourage bicycling, including parking and storage facilities, and shared roadways not specifically defined for bicycle use.
2. Bicycle Lane—a portion of a roadway that has been designated by signs and pavement markings for preferential or exclusive use by bicyclists.
3. Bikeway—a generic term for any road, street, path, or way that in some manner is specifically designated for bicycle travel, regardless of whether such facilities are designated for the exclusive use of bicycles or are to be shared with other transportation modes.

4. Designated Bicycle Route—a system of bikeways designated by the jurisdiction having authority with appropriate directional and informational route signs, with or without specific bicycle route numbers. Bicycle routes, which might be a combination of various types of bikeways, should establish a continuous routing.

5. Shared-Use Path—a bikeway outside the traveled way and physically separated from motorized vehicular traffic by an open space or barrier and either within the highway right-of-way or within an independent alignment. Shared-use paths are also used by pedestrians (including skaters, users of manual and motorized wheelchairs, and joggers) and other authorized motorized and non-motorized users.

Presented map of Portage Bikeway.



Presented primary sign used in Portage.



Presented a variety of sign types used in Portage and Madison, WI.



Noted that there needs to be a balance between the number of signs and the possibility that too many can lead drivers to ignore some of their content. In his opinion, the following stretch might be considered to be “cluttered.”



Deb Buchholtz: Road Commission of Kalamazoo County (RCKC)

Reviewed personal background: newest RCKC road commissioner, appointed for six year term; former Kalamazoo County Commissioner.

Presented online links to RCKC policies and permits related to non-motorized elements:
<http://www.kalamazooountyroads.com/> (under “Engineering” and “Permits” tabs)

RCKC Non-motorized Facilities Policy reviews/covers:

- Importance of Early Planning
- Generally Responsibility of Local Unit of Government
 - Non-Motorized Paths (separated from roadway)
 - Paved Shoulders (along existing roads)
 - Signed Routes (on existing roads)
 - Sidewalks
- Every Project Unique

- Limited Resources
 - Construction & Maintenance

Signing & Marking Policy:

- “Adequate signing and marking is an important safety consideration. General guidance is provided in the Michigan Manual of Uniform Traffic Control Devices. Signing and marking requests must be in writing using the RCKC right-of-way application and shall be reviewed by the RCKC’s Engineering Department.
- All approved signage and marking related to installation and maintenance costs are the responsibility of the requesting party. Only signing necessary for safety should be erected so as not to create confusion or restrict vision.”

Signed Routes Policy:

- “There may be times when it would be desirable to sign an existing roadway (without paved shoulders or separated path) as a ‘Bike Route’. This may also be needed for the purpose of providing continuity of routes within the County or regionally.
- An agreement with the local unit of government shall be executed assigning certain responsibilities for signing, maintenance and liability of such routes.”

Karen High: Oshtemo Township

Reviewed personal background: Oshtemo Township Parks Director, Licensed Landscape Architect

Presented maps/overview of Oshtemo’s non-motorized plan, which is oriented around their “complete streets” perspective, namely, that streets are “for people, not just cars.”

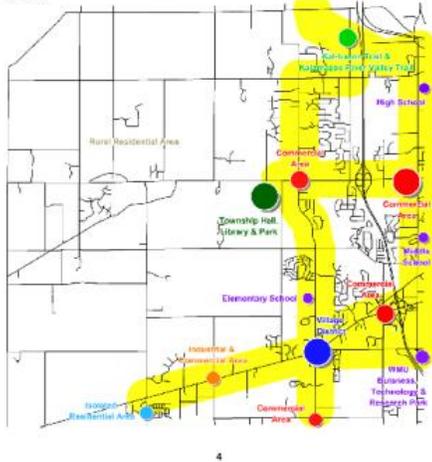


Maps illustrated Bike Lanes planned for many major roads, and Bike Routes connecting many neighborhoods.

2. NON-MOTORIZED FRAMEWORK

KEY CORRIDORS

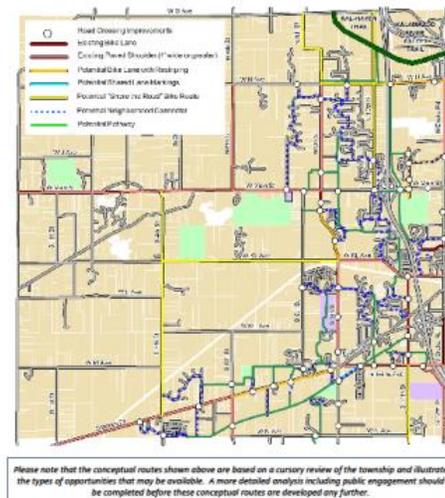
Highlighted below are key corridors in the township that provide connections between areas of higher population and major destinations. This plan focuses on providing non-motorized connections along and across these corridors and to the major destinations identified on the map below. The recommendations for these corridors may include improvements to the road right-of-way or alternative routes that access the corridor utilizing the local roads and off-road pathways.



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CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

The following is a conceptual framework for the non-motorized system that includes off-road trails and neighborhood connector routes. The following pages describe the elements of a non-motorized system and how they work together to provide a network that supports a spectrum of non-motorized users.



Please note that the conceptual routes shown above are based on a cursory review of the township and illustrate the types of opportunities that may be available. A more detailed analysis including public engagement should be completed before these conceptual routes are developed any further.

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Presented process for developing bike amenities/facilities, design through implementation:

- Our focus is on non-motorized improvements associated with a road or sewer project.
 - Drake Road improvements
 - Kl Avenue road improvements
 - 10th Street sewer project
- Conceptual design: facility type, location, costs
- Request funding through Transportation Alternatives Program, general fund, assessment district
- Final design in conjunction with roadway design.
- Construction occurs with roadway improvements.

Discussion, Q&A [With Editorial Notes]

KATS is soliciting public comments on the draft non-motorized component of its 2045 Metropolitan Transportation Plan until December 1, 2015. [See <https://katsmpo.files.wordpress.com/2015/02/2045-mtp-non-motorized-element-10-29-2015.pdf> for the non-motorized plan; submit comments to info@KATSMPO.org or sstepek@KATSMpo.org or in writing to 5220 Lovers Lane, Suite 110, Portage, MI 49002.]

Carl Newton inquired about designing for Bike Lanes that incorporate on-street vehicle parking plus regular traffic flow. Richard Skalski said there are such designs, also suggested Share the Road signs in such stretches. Chris Barnes said such designs exist if there is enough room. Meg Zapalowski said she has seen such designs. [Search for images online using the search term “buffered bike lane” for many examples; see page 43 of MDOT’s guide at http://mdotcf.state.mi.us/public/tands/Details_Web/mdot_research_report.pdf .]

Steve Leuty said that Kalamazoo Township and the City of Kalamazoo will be designing “bike boulevards” as part of their non-motorized plans. [From National Association of City Transportation Officials: “Bicycle boulevards are streets with low motorized traffic volumes and speeds, designated and designed to give bicycle travel priority.” See <http://nacto.org/publication/urban-bikeway-design-guide/bicycle-boulevards/>]

Richard Skalski stated that it would be nice to use common signs/conventions throughout the MPO's bike network. Selden replied that BFK's recently held marketing meeting explored the use of a consistent naming convention, and will soon be conducting a broader survey aimed at surfacing further ideas. [A BFK ad hoc route naming committee is currently winnowing down a list consisting of approximately 100 possible names to a more manageable list, prior to presentation in such a survey.] Chris Barnes mentioned that Dane County, WI (in which the City of Madison is located) uses a guide that integrates a consistent approach to signage for bike routes. [Paul Selden is currently compiling such a primer/guide for use in the KATS MPO, with appropriate references to the Michigan Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices, etc.]

Chris Barnes elaborated on engineering and cost considerations for signing Bike Routes.

Paul Selden observed that the basic information about Bike Routes and their development would need to be repeated many times for various audiences over the coming years.

[From MDOT sources, one of the main considerations governing the placement of Bike Route signs is that a Bike Route sign be placed in the direction of travel, just after each intersection. This is to inform users that the stretch of road they have just entered is a Bike Route and to be appropriately alert for the presence of bicyclists.

In many of our local rural stretches, the requirement for Bike Route sign placement implies that there would be at least one sign on each side of the road, approximately every half mile. More would be in order, in stretches where there were more than one intersection per half mile.

Given that an acceptable balance of many other appropriate standards and considerations are met, Bike Routes may be designated on roads with speed limits as high as 55mph, with or without four foot shoulders. Bike route signs do not prohibit parking.

All these factors make Bike Routes a comparatively inexpensive way to make our greater community even more bicycle friendly, in conjunction with the many other efforts underway to improve bicycling infrastructure, education and awareness building.]

Paul Selden facilitated the meeting and prepared these minutes.

Special thanks to KRESA for providing the meeting space!