

Bike Friendly Kalamazoo
September 17, 2015 Meeting Minutes
KRESA Main Campus

Attendees

Megan Arndt, Associate Planner, Kalamazoo Area Transportation Study (KATS)
Jim Bodine, General Sales Manager, Midwest Communications
Deb Buckholtz, Commissioner, Road Commission of Kalamazoo County
Adam Dmoch, Crime Prevention Officer, City of Portage
Megan Hicks, District Director, State Senator Margaret O'Brien
Marc Irwin, Public Relations, Kalamazoo Bicycle Club (KBC)
Ashley Kletke, Senior Manager, Wellbeing, Stryker Instruments
Shawn Kloha, Senior Project Planner, Stryker Corp.
Luis Morales, Office for Sustainability, WMU
Renee Newman, VP of Marketing and Communications, Discover Kalamazoo
Derek Nofz, Associate VP of Public Policy, Southwest Michigan First
David Rachowicz, Director, Kalamazoo County Parks & Expo Center
Paul Selden, Director of Road Safety, KBC; Member, TriKats
Steve Stepek, Senior Transportation Planner, KATS

Session Goal

Assemble a toolbox for marketing our community as bicycle friendly.

Agenda

Welcome and Introductions

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

Idea Generation

Participants brainstormed ideas for marketing out greater community as bike friendly. Ideas are categorized in order of the following main topics beginning on the next page. Participants were encouraged to act on own initiative and network with each other to implement any of the ideas generated in this session. (Appendix B contains a blank set of instructions used to guide the session.)

1. Key Messages
2. Media Tie-Ins
3. Ideas for Naming Our Entire Bicycle Network
4. Tangible / Objective Goals
5. BFK Logo Markup

Sample logos were provided by Paul Guthrie, Laboratory Manager, Bronson Hospital and Ryan Johnson, Parks Manager, City of Kalamazoo (See attached files: many thanks to both!)

Discussion

General discussion followed about ideas participants felt might be most useful. Some of each author's own favorites are listed separately in Appendix A.

Next Steps

Anyone should act on the ideas in these minutes as they see best since there is no "BFK staff" to implement them. Eventually the BFK web site will post materials that can be used by the community to market itself as bicycle friendly. Paul Selden will follow up with anyone volunteering to help with the marketing ideas.

Important: Ideas recorded in these minutes are permitted for use by others in the public domain, under regulations pertaining to same (please respect to rules/regulations/laws concerning attribution / authorship, especially of graphic and photographic material).

Special thanks to KRESA for providing the meeting space!

Key Messages

Key elements (messages, phrases, paragraphs, unique selling propositions, etc.) that make our community bike friendly are listed below. *Example: "lots of paved roads and trails."*

4 seasons bicycling – snow, mountain, road, trail

Active bicycle groups

Active Complete Streets

Active cycling clubs

Ample signage

BFK [Bike Friendly Kalamazoo]

Bicycle days every month

Bicycle shops

Bicycle shows/bike nights

Bike and Transit Access

Bike clubs are a great way to become more familiar with proper rules of the road.

Bike clubs/tri/cyclocross/mountain

Bike friendly award winning

Bike lane and sharrows signs/markings

Bike lanes

Bike racks and businesses

Bike racks at many businesses

Bike racks on busses

Bike related events

Bikes and Street Cafe

Brewery by bike

Cabbage Bros mobile bike rentals and repairs

Combine with craft beer (tours, post ride)

Connection to South Haven (beaches)

Country Roads

Culture of wellness/wellbeing/activity/exercise

Dedicated bike lanes

Easy access to trails

Enjoy the environment

Events – BTR

Fall Colors, Spring Flowers

Farmers market and festival bike valets are growing in popularity

From your door to most anywhere

Fun family atmosphere (safe); lifelong activity

Fun rides

Great breweries

Great camping

Great Trail/bike route networks

Great visitor destinations. South Haven, breweries, parks, etc.

Healthy, happy "culture"

High priority on bike safety/helmet safety

Hills and flats available

Historic homes

Increased installation of bike lanes

Invested citizens and community based groups [such as] > Kalamazoo Bicycle Club, Friends of KRVT, Open Roads, Parks Foundation, Safe Kids, SWMMBA [Southwest Michigan Mountain Biking Association]

Join the fun

Kalamazoo Bike Week and its growing popularity says a lot about Kalamazoo's bike community.

Kalamazoo public very supportive and aware of bicyclists

Kalamazoo/Portage has at least 5 quality locally owned bike shops who can help you select the correct bike for your goals and budget.

Kal-haven trail and Portage trail

Local and regional government support

Local bike shops

Many great groups for beginners too

Many options to bike in Kalamazoo and its surrounding communities.

Many organized rides

Metro transit racks on busses

Mountain bike trails

Natural resources

One of the best trail networks in the state.

Open Roads bike program

Opportunities for all levels of cyclists; solo or group riding

Organized rides

Paved multi-use paths

Portage "A natural place to move"

Portage Bikeway signs

Pretty lakes, rivers

Priorities for bikers on the road

Programs & activities in community support & encourage bicycle use.

Proliferation of bike lanes

Promotions/discounts for bikes in stores

Pros – Pedal, Kal. Area cyclists, Athletic Mentors

Protected and sheltered bike parking

Protected bike lanes

Ride to the lake

Rolling hills through wine country

Seeing people biking around the city (both roads and trails)

Sharrows

Significant connecting trailway system (safe, easily identifiable)

Speed limit for cars on a Complete Street

Support from Universities and Colleges. Support of vision new KVCC campus/WMU Office of Sustainability

Take the Amtrak and your bike to downtown, start your adventure there

The number of bicyclists I see on the streets is on the rise

Top colleges/universities

Trail connectivity

Trail maps

Trails that connect the entire region

Tri-Kats = friends and support

University

Very extensive

W/friends, camaraderie

Weather

“Wide shoulders”

Wide variety of / categories of nature seen while riding (e.g., Geography, Trees, Plants, Mammals, Reptiles, Birds, etc.), with examples of some of the more exotic / cute / interesting types (fox, deer, snapping turtles, wild turkeys). Key images to maps, such as a turkey graphic with an arrow pointing to Portage (where we see many)

Wineries

Work places bike friendly

Working to connect SW MI (Kal-Haven Trail, KRVT, Galesburg)

Possible photographs/images, etc. that would show what makes our community “bike friendly” are listed below. *Example: “photo of a line of happy bicyclists in on a scenic stretch of road.”*

Amtrak station – train with bikes and riders

Attractive men and women on bikes

Autumn on the bike trail

Bike camping

Bike crossings

Bike mechanic helping child

Bikes at Farmers Markets

Bikes on busses

Bikes on road with cars

Biking to sporting events, schools, etc.

Child with training wheels or “pusher” bike

Club ride

College campus cyclists

Commuting to work

Conservationstartshere.org has an awesome example downtown (of a billboard)

Cyclist riding through the grape vineyards.

Cyclists at marked and busy intersections

Cyclists outside of bike shops

Fall Color tours on KRVT

Fall colors, harvest, rolling country road with cyclist

Fall photos showing families on trails

Families biking together

Family ride

Group meeting at Pedal for Wed. ride

Happy families

IL license plates at 10th St parking lot [trailhead]

Kids at bicycle rodeo/safety and helmet photos

Loading bike on bus

Motivational words and phrases in the photo (e.g., do more cardio; use your legs, don’t leave it home, ride it!)

Mountain bike park “feature”

Mountain bikers – on trails at Fort Custer

Need wide range of rider types (diverse) from family (even grandparents) to serious riders

Parents pulling child in cart
Parked in front of Nikos Landing at bike rack along the trail / [also at] Bells [restaurant]
People riding to work with work bag and a line of bikes in a bike rack at business
People riding trails during fall
Photos of bicycles line up at bike shows / bike nights
Photos of full to capacity bike racks
Racing pics
Riders through wine country
Scenic overlooks, vistas
See above idea for ideas about nature photos
Smells of corn, flowers, grapes, hay
Students biking to class
There are several free “movement” groups throughout the area – esp. walk/jog/run, circuit training,create a list of group ride opportunities (maybe already exists?)
Trail bridges
Trails, lanes, sharrows
Urban bike lane rider, wayfinding signage with rider
Variety of athletic ability
Vineyards
Winter Pic showing bike lanes are properly plowed and usable
Work commuters

2. Media Tie-Ins

Participants listed the types of media they may be able to use to convey the key messages/content above. (Example provided: *Illustrate existing bike trails, lanes or routes on a map of park locations.*)

Most of the participants were able to select one or more of the following media that they could personally influence/arrange, to carry the key messages:

Banners	Celebrity/Public Opinion Leaders
Direct Mail	Internet
Mobile Devices	Print Publications: (e.g., Bulletin Boards, Magazines, Maps, Newsletters, Newspapers, Place Mats, Posters)
Product Placement	Radio: Ads, Shows
Signage	Sponsorship Mentions/Listings
Television: Ads, Shows	Web Pages
Word of Mouth	Other Media Outlets / Channels

Many of the participants added specific ways that they could use the above media, including:

#bikefriendlykalamazoo
Email – weekly newsletter at Stryker Instruments
Encourage cycling activity on social media
Internet – encouraging cycling activity on social media
Newspapers-trail openings, maps
Other Media Outlets / Channels
Other Media Outlets / Channels – Facebook/Twitter
Portage maps
Product Placement

Public statement from Larry Bell about why he moved here: bike tourism (already on video somewhere)

Q: somehow develop local “map my ride” sort of online program following bike friendly routes – or just list by color w/ distances, levels.

Radio: Ads (Midwest Communications & maybe others) public service announcements Note: Jim Bodine invited others to contact him with ideas in this regard.

Radio: Ads, Shows – WMUK

Registering bikes

Signage – already have billboards and bus signage in Chicago

Signage – digital billboard

Slides at events depicting cyclists

Slides of cyclists on website

Testimonials on the radio – articulate positive experiences while cycling.

Web Pages – already have bicycle section on Discover Kalamazoo’s web site

Web Pages – bike shops promoting BFK/trails

Web Pages - KATS website

Web Pages – map of bike routes/trails posted on RCKC website is a potential

Web Pages – Parks/Police for safety

Web Pages – Wellbeing web page at Styrker Instruments

Web Pages -> Google maps walk/bike

Weekly or monthly cycling report.

Word of Mouth

Word of Mouth – KATS meetings

3. Name Ideas

A name is helpful to use for marketing (and many other) efforts. Kalamazoo County has its “Kalamazoo River Valley Trail and the greater community has many bike lanes, routes, etc. Participants were asked to jot ideas for a name for the entire network of bike lanes, routes, multi-use trails, etc., that span our entire metropolitan planning organization (which includes Kalamazoo County, portions of Van Buren County-- and may grow in the future). They were told that they could also limit name ideas to just Kalamazoo County alone, if that helped to get the ideas flowing.

**BIKE
SW
MI**

“KABS” – Kalamazoo Area Bike System or similar

Bike Friendly Greenway

Bike Friendly Kalamazoo

Bike Friendly Network

Bike Healthy Kalamazoo

Bike Kalamazoo

Bike Kalamazoo

Bike Southwest

Bike-friendly Kalamazoo

Can sign for network incorporate or weave in a few simple symbols of our region? Celery, cereal grains, barley, water, flowing rivers, trees, Native American heritage etc? Could add / vary element by township, jurisdiction paying for their bike route signs. SE could be Native

American, Kalamazoo could use celery, etc., Portage the canoe being portaged, Van Buren Co. and Texas townships the grapes, etc. Whatever speaks to their unique heritage.

Discover Bikeable Kalamazoo
Friendlier than ever
Gentle Rivers Bike Network
Gentle Rivers Greenway
Glacier Greenway
Great Southwest Bicycle Network
KABS – Kalamazoo Area Bike System
Kalamazoo
Kalamazoo Bikeway Network
Kalamazoo Bikeways
Kalamazoo future is here
Kalamazoo Greenway Network
Kalamazoo pedals everywhere
Kalamazoo River Bikeway
Kalamazoo River Greenway Bike Route
Kalamazoo River Valley Network
Kalamazoo River Valley Watershed
Kalamazoo Valley Bikeway
Kalamazoo Wheelway
Kalamazoo, greener than ever
KATS – Kalamazoo Area Trail System
Mighty Rivers Greenway
Mighty Rivers Network
Potawatami (something)
Ride the River
River Ride
River Valleys Greenway
Riverways Bike Route
Shore to Brew
Southwest MI bikeway
Southwest Michigan Greenway
Southwest Michigan Trail Network
Sparkling Waters Greenway
St. Joseph River Bikeway
SW MI bike network
SW MI Bike Network
SW MI bike-friendly network
SW Michigan Bike Network
SW Michigan Greenway
SW Michigan Trails
S-West Michigan Bike Friendly System
SWMI Greenway
Tri County Bikeway
Tri County Greenway
Waterways Bike Route
Winding Rivers Greenway

Winding Waters Greenway

Wine to Water Trail

XC Bikeway

XC Greenway

4. Tangible/Objective Goals

Instructions were to list some tangible bike friendly goals to shoot for, that your organization or the community might find inspirational (e.g., the "biggest," "best," "most," "longest," "greatest," specific awards, etc.).

Best bicycling signage in the state

Best network

Biggest network of bicyclists

Biggest network of trails

Bike Friendly City / Area / award

Bike Friendly Community Award (for our entire Metropolitan Planning Organization)

Healthiest people in the southwest region

Highest amount of students who prefer to bike rather than drive on a Sunday morning

Largest % of bike pathways and trails per road miles per population

Largest bicycle group in Michigan

Most BF awards for size of area

Most bike friendly community in Michigan

Most bike friendly region in the state

Most bikeable community

Most connected

Most connected urban network

Most craft breweries along bike routes

Most cyclists per capita

Most diverse landscape along trails

Most Extensive

Most miles in any Michigan City

Most miles of trail in the state (regionally)

Most miles of trails

Most paved roads per miles of road in _____ SW MI / region/state/Great Lakes/other?

Most Scenic

Road dieting and landscaping to improve the appearance of non-motorized infrastructure.

Safest

5. BFK Logo Idea Comments

BFK will be asking for logo ideas in the not too distant future. In the meantime, Paul Guthrie, Laboratory Manager, Bronson Hospital, and Ryan Johnson, Parks Manager, City of Kalamazoo kindly offered some potential images as thought-starters. The quality of the photographs used in these minutes does not do them justice.



Submitted by Paul Guthrie



Submitted by Ryan Johnson

Participants made the following comments about them:

BFK-for someone who doesn't know what BFK is, the initials [without the words Bike Friendly Kalamazoo] don't tell the story

I like the wheel with the sunburst and full words not initials.

Make bike wheel more stylized and bring sun inside wheel to save space.

Sun [with Bike Friendly Kalamazoo spelled out]

Triangle - eye-catching

Discussion

Many of the ideas above, were mentioned by participants when asked to share their “best” ideas. They were asked to write these “best” ideas on sticky notes, which are recorded in Appendix B.

Point was made that participants can think of ways to use the phrase bike-friendly whenever talking about the features they are already promoting, e.g., “we are bike-friendly,” or “our campgrounds are bike-friendly” or “our bike friendly campus,” or, “our business is bike-friendly.” The concept of “bike friendly” can do double-duty in promoting things that participants are already promoting.

The point was made that we all need to recognize that there are at least two or three types of riders: 1. Very serious, fast, competitive riders; 2. Families, recreational; and 3. maybe Commuters. Each has different needs and perspectives.

Participants discussed elements that make our area special/unique, that can’t be easily copied by other areas.

Photos of bicyclists can be woven into the idea of being able to bike between everything about our area that we want to promote anyway. Wherever we can, we can incorporate images of bicyclists within the photos of things that make us so unique / special.

Next Steps

Selden said that in addition to sending out minutes of this meeting, and putting the content on the BFK website, fairly soon, Bike Friendly Kalamazoo would be:

more broadly soliciting naming ideas for the concept of what to call our inter-connected network of trails, local bike lanes and bike routes, etc. so that the entire network could be named and promoted as a place-making tool for our greater community.

asking for ideas for a Bike Friendly Kalamazoo logo, for our own use.

Participants were thanked for their ideas and comments.

The Kalamazoo Regional Educational Service Agency was thanked for providing the facilities.

Minutes: Prepared by Paul Selden. Please report any errors or omissions.

Appendix A

Authors' Own Favorite Ideas

Each participant was asked to list their own most favorite ideas, from among the ones they themselves wrote. Not everyone named their favorites. This was not a vote among all the participants as to which ideas the entire group most favored. Example: Joe Jones listed his own favorite idea, "image of XYX."

1. Key Messages

Discover Kalamazoo

Easy accessibility

Events specially for bikers

Invested citizens and community based groups.

People that live here make it happen.

Promotions/discounts for bikers in stores

Respectful car drivers to bikers

Working to connect SW MI (Kal-Haven, Galesburg, KRVT, Celery Flats)

List of photographs/images

Commuters in line

Full parking lot at Pedal for Wednesday night ride. Show the social aspect and wide variety of people who go.

Portage Logo contains bicycle

Signs on trail systems.

2. Media Tie-Ins

Digital Billboard

[Discover Kalamazoo is] already doing:

Online – paid and social

Billboards

Print publications

Web section

Busses in Chicago

Integration with Google Bike, Walk, Transit

Maps with all trails around Kalamazoo / Portage

Newspaper spots for bike events, trails

Signages around town

Twitter handle for BFK Anyone can post to it:

-upcoming events

-need for legislative involvement

3. Name Ideas (5 minutes)

Kalamazoo, Greener than ever

Southwest Michigan Bikeway network

4. Tangible/Objective Goals

Healthiest people on earth

Highest amount of students who prefer to bike

Promote BFK related events and messages on KATS Facebook and Twitter

Safest?

Tons of businesses with bike racks available;

5. BFK Logo Markup Sources: Ryan Johnson, Parks Manager, City of Kalamazoo; Paul Guthrie,

Laboratory Manager, Bronson Hospital

Sun looks attractive and simple

Triangles are eye-catching

Appendix B

Individual Idea Generation (35 min.; pause for a minute after ea. part to request one “great” example)

Instructions

Please print your name: _____

1. Key Messages (10 minutes)

Jot down key elements (messages, phrases, paragraphs, unique selling propositions, etc.) that make our community bike friendly. (Use back of page as needed.) *Example: “lots of paved roads and trails.”*

List possible photographs/images, etc. that would show what makes our community “bike friendly”.

Example: “photo of a line of happy bicyclists in on a scenic stretch of road”.

2. Media Tie-Ins (5 minutes)

Thinking about the media you control/influence, circle media you could realistically use to convey the key messages/content above. Content is often divided into “ad space” and “editorial.” (*Example: Illustrate existing bike trails, lanes or routes on a map of park locations.*)

Banners

Celebrity/Public Opinion Leaders

Direct Mail

Internet

Mobile Devices

Print Publications: (e.g., Bulletin Boards, Magazines, Maps, Newsletters, Newspapers, Place Mats, Posters)

Product Placement

Radio: Ads, Shows

Signage

Sponsorship Mentions/Listings

Television: Ads, Shows

Web Pages

Word of Mouth

Other Media Outlets / Channels

3. Name Ideas (5 minutes)

A name is helpful to use for marketing (and many other) efforts. Kalamazoo County has its “Kalamazoo River Valley Trail and the greater community has many bike lanes, routes, etc. Jot ideas for a name for the entire network of bike lanes, routes, multi-use trails, etc., that span our entire metropolitan planning organization (which includes Kalamazoo County, portions of Van Buren County--and may grow in the future). You can also limit your name ideas to just Kalamazoo County alone, if that helps.

4. Tangible/Objective Goals (5 minutes)

List some tangible bike friendly goals to shoot for, that your organization or the community might find inspirational (e.g., the “biggest,” “best,” “most,” “longest,” “greatest,” specific awards, etc.).

5. BFK Logo Markup (5 minutes)

Sources: Ryan Johnson, Parks Manager, City of Kalamazoo; Paul Guthrie, Laboratory Manager, Bronson Hospital