

Kalamazoo Region Bike Route Committee Meeting NOTES

D1-Series Wayfinding Sign Agenda & Comments

Meeting held on April 18; 11-noon; City of Kalamazoo Water Treatment Plant

Participants: Paul Selden (Chair), Richard Skalski

Meeting Goal

The primary goal of this meeting is to brainstorm destination names for direction/destination/distance ("D-1 series") wayfinding signs on the Southwest Michigan Bikeway ("SWMB"). The SWMB Oakland Drive bike route between Kalamazoo and Portage will be used as a backdrop for brainstorming. Today's focus: Destination Name Sign Legends Heading TO Kalamazoo

Example of this type of guide sign (in Portage at SE corner of Oakland Dr. at Romence Rd):



Notes

The small size and informality of this meeting only a brief recap of the main principle arrived at is presented, below. Please offer comments to help us refine it, to Paul Selden.

Wayfinding Survey Input Received To Date (please request a survey if you would like one)

From previous surveys, we have learned that the destination names suggested for the municipalities in the regional SWMB bike network match those offered on the previously attached survey Item 1.

In Item 2, we've received input that adds the word "Center" to the Townships of Alamo, Comstock and Cooper.

Now we are working on the more challenging destinations of Kalamazoo, Portage, WMU and Oshtemo.

Tentative Principle

A tentative guideline we came up with that may work for the city of Kalamazoo, reads:

In cases where the municipal destination name is synonymous with a central business district or seat of government, from destinations outside that municipality, change the legend sign at the municipal border to "Downtown" or to the name of its civic center if that name is established.

Comments

This tentative principle works for the municipalities like Kalamazoo, where the mileage from another municipality can be listed to the closest inter-municipal node, regardless of whether the sign starts out from a distance with the legend "Kalamazoo," then switches to "Downtown" at the border.

Slightly modified, the guideline may also work for municipalities like the townships of Alamo, Comstock and Cooper, where the legends could start from a outside the township with the legends, "Alamo Center," and continue with the same legend and mileage countdown at the border.

A similar modification might also work for the other municipalities listed on the survey in Item 1.

D1 signs leading TO Kalamazoo FROM Portage on Oakland Dr. currently count down into the near-center of Kalamazoo's metropolitan area, starting in Portage at Romence Rd. This naming/mileage countdown is consistent with one of the approaches outlined in the Michigan

1 *Thanks for your participation; thanks to MDOT for providing its meeting facilities.*

Manual For Uniform Traffic Control Devices. The public generally identifies the destination “Kalamazoo” as Kalamazoo’s downtown. Further, Kalamazoo’s routes to and from other Southwest Michigan Bikeway named destinations generally connect to its downtown area. Space for legends on the D1 series signs is limited, so the names used should be fairly short yet meaningful.

Countdowns in mileage may not be needed for distances of less than a mile. We have not yet discussed whether the Destination names should be continued at turns, where a directional arrow would be helpful, at the very least.

Background

The Southwest Michigan Bikeway (SWMB) is a destination-oriented regional bikeway recognized by the Kalamazoo Area Transportation Study in its 2045 and 2050 Metropolitan Transportation Plans and by the Michigan Department of Transportation in its 2020 Southwest Michigan Region Nonmotorized Transportation Plan. A bikeway may be composed of bike routes, bike lanes and multi-use paths. Operationally defined, the Southwest Michigan Bikeway is composed of bike routes that connect the municipalities and institutions of higher learning in a hub and spoke routing between adjacent destinations. The SWMB is precedent-setting in its size of some 380 centerline miles, the number of municipalities it connects and in its ability to demonstrate principles of cross jurisdictional community development that can serve as a model for the rest of the region and beyond.

These routes were first explicitly named and proposed in the KATS 2045 Metropolitan Transportation Plan's "Map 7." SWMB's public planning process and the criteria for route selection were documented in KATS 2045 Metropolitan Transportation Plan, prioritizing transportation between permanent destinations. This emphasis is contrasted with routes for recreational, shopping and fitness purposes that are more subject to change and/or filled with an almost infinite number of to-from permutations. Routes in the Southwest Michigan Bikeway create trunk lines from which more local routing may be signed, and which trunk lines may be improved over time to benefit motorists and non-motorists alike: as the saying goes, "Better shoulders make better roads."

Formed shortly after Map 7 was adopted, Kalamazoo Region Bike Route Committee was formed to help play a low-cost role in working out signing priorities, benefits, principles, costs and sources of potential funding for regional bike route wayfinding between the named to/from destinations. The effort has obvious literal implications for place-making and strengthening a sense of community identity.

Routes in that original Map 7 are currently being planned and signed as the "Southwest Michigan Bikeway," as illustrated in the more recently updated KATS 2050 Metropolitan Transportation Plan's regional route maps (see Maps 13 and 17).

The degree to which our region is able to realize the benefits will be a testimony to the many talented individuals in our community who are coming together in a cooperative spirit in the highest traditions of collegial, civic participation.