

Kalamazoo Region Bike Route Committee Meeting NOTES

D1-Series Wayfinding Sign Agenda & Comments

Meeting held on October 24, 2023; 11-noon; MDOT Regional Office (Kilgore Rd)
Participants: Josh Grab, Tom Hohm, Jun Oh, Paul Selden (Chair), Richard Skalski, Madee
Thorburn

Meeting Goal

Continue to facilitate discussion/brainstorming about destination place-names on the "D-1 Series" destination-direction-distance wayfinding signs on the Southwest Michigan Bikeway and their role in community-wide place-making. These destination-oriented signs are posted underneath the primary signs on the same post.

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



Agenda

Welcome

Introductions

Review of Southwest Michigan Bikeway and Sign Discussions to date

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

Straightforward place-name legends all informally confirmed (e.g., “Galesburg,”
“Vicksburg”)
“Alamo Center” recently added to “Comstock Center” and “Cooper Center”

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 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. SWMB routes TO Portage connect to a somewhat rectangular SWMB ring route to nodes at the intersections of:

Oakland Drive & Romence Rd
Oakland Drive & Osterhout Rd
Portage Road & Osterhout Rd
Romence Rd & Lovers Lane

Today’s focus: Destination Name Sign Legends Heading TO Destinations With Diffuse
“Centers” (see input received below)

Election of Chair - Paul Selden reelected to Chair KRBRC in 2024

Next Scheduled Meeting: January 16, 2023; 11-noon; venue TBD

Agenda: continue to brainstorm and discuss emerging local sign legends and principles

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

Wayfinding Input Received October 24, 2023

Introduction

In a brainstorming meeting held on January 17, 2023 many locations within the City of Portage were identified as possible destinations that could work for D1-series destination-direction-distance plaques. The D1-series signs to be mounted underneath the primary recommended SWMB M1-8a guide signs.

Instructions Presented

In this meeting participants were asked to brainstorm signing principles that might be useful in “extreme” cases where:

- no (municipal) destination “center” was commonly associated with the municipality as a whole
- a single municipal center was not a safe destination to direct cyclists to
- the municipal “center” was not on a planned Southwest Michigan Bikeway route.

Summary

After considerable discussion participants concurred that the following guideline could be further considered in such cases. It is offered here for further refinement and input. KRBRC is taking the position that, as part of a destination’s place making and community development effort, it is up to the named destinations to state their preference for the legend appearing on the D1 signs leading to and within their borders.

Possible Guideline

In cases where:

- no simple name for a (municipal) destination “center” is commonly associated with the municipality as a whole
- a single municipal center is not a safe destination to direct cyclists to
- the municipal “center” is not on a planned Southwest Michigan Bikeway route,

the D1-series signs can state the name of the municipality and the mileage element of the D1 legend can countdown to the municipal border. SWMB primary signage can then continue at that point, and additional D1-series signs can then provide direction within the municipality.

As an example, if this guideline were applied on the SWMB route that is currently signed from Kalamazoo to Portage on Oakland Drive, the D1-series sign at Howard St. and Oakland Drive leading to the municipal City of Portage would look like the figure below. The mileage counts down to the border at Kilgore Rd.



Pros and Cons

Pro

The above tentative guideline is consistent with signing principles on roads such as interstate highways that count down mileage to a state line. States are similar to diffuse municipalities in that both states and such municipalities have many potential destinations within their borders.

Pro

The hypothetical sign that result from using this principle is consistent with many of the previously brainstormed options in the Portage-centered meeting on January 17, 2023.

Pro

If adopted by the City of Portage, it would allow the City of Kalamazoo to complete signing its portion of the Oakland Drive SWMB route, and allow the City of Portage to determine and post the SWMB D1-series destination-distance-directional signs within its border at a later date.

Pro

The above tentative guideline may also prove useful in Oshtemo Township.

Pro

Signs such as these would be helpful to motorists, too.

Con

?

Notes Collected From Participants

The following points were written on sticky notes collected from participants at the end of the session. They have been edited only for spelling and punctuation to fit this format.

Staggered approach to labeling distances.

Signs in relevant areas where bikers are trafficking the most ... like Oakland.

Twps: use core (center) as destination.

Bike routes with directional signs i.e., Portage City and Oakland Dr. route with directional signs to unique destinations: Portage Central, Portage Northern, Celery Flats

1. Question: how much detail we would like to provide? Depends on the # of signs.
2. First level should be city/township names.
3. Next level should be by landmark. We need to choose these landmarks.

Chose popular bicycling destinations for signage mile distance numbers.

How many signs?

- every ___ miles or where needed
- every popular location

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

Keep same format.

Are the signs layered? “SW MI Bikeway” over D1 signs.

Choose locations that are on the Bikeway map/system

Permits will be required

- the permit grantee may want input as to sign location.

Oshtemo Twp knows that they have joint “police power” over right of way. They will want to determine signing and locations.

Mileage to geographic middle.

Strive for system-wide consistency - have municipalities follow guideline

Sign every three miles.

Signing in municipal area.

MDOT wayfinding is similar (economic development)

Seek direction from municipality. They will assure local input.

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. 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.