

**Kalamazoo Region Bike Route Committee (KRBRC)  
July 16, 2024 Meeting Notes**

Participants: Jamie Harmon,  
Kathleen Hoyle, Jun Oh and Paul Selden (Chair)

These are abbreviated meeting notes, which should suffice until sufficient progress has been made so that updating the previously agreed-upon recommendations in our complete Implementation Plan is justified. In the meantime, the wayfinding principles and their local implications that are emerging from our quarterly meetings may prove helpful (see related section, below).

Goal/Agenda

The primary goal of the meeting was to continue previous discussion and brainstorming about destination place-names on the "D1-series" destination/direction/distance wayfinding signs\* on the Southwest Michigan Bikeway. The agenda focused on signage to the City of Portage coming from the City of Kalamazoo on Oakland Drive.

\*An example of the D1-series Destination-Direction-Distance guide sign (in Portage at the SE corner of Oakland Dr. at the intersection of Kilgore Rd) is below:



Next KRBRC Meeting

Next quarterly KRBRC Mtg

October 22; 11am-noon; location TBD – most likely rotating back to Oshtemo or Kalamazoo

Background

A community-wide bike route planning effort began in 2012 that culminated in transportation-oriented routes explicitly designed to connect the list of named municipalities and institutions of higher learning\* found in Appendix F in the 2045 KATS MTP (see p. 190). These bike route planning efforts to/from named destinations lead to adoption of the routes illustrated in the KATS 2045 Metropolitan Transportation Plan (illustrated in Map 7) and to adoption of the regional-oriented routes illustrated in Maps 13, 13a, 17 and 17a in the KATS 2050 Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP). Following their adoption in the 2045 KATS MTP, the routes in Map 7 were collaboratively named Southwest Michigan Bikeway. KATS refers to these routes as “Regional Routes” in its 2050 MTP. \*Destinations are sometimes referred to as “trip generators” in the literature.

Today’s Meeting

This was another KRBRC meeting to more closely examine aspects of routing and signage raised by the City of Portage since adoption of the 2050 KATS MTP. Portage poses one of the more complex destinations in the regional Southwest Michigan Bikeway, in large part due to its centrality in the County of Kalamazoo, its size, and the number of its to/from connections.

## Questions Raised / Answered / Tabled

At this meeting participants reviewed and discussed two key questions. What follows are the questions as they were raised, together with their disposition.

### *Question 1*

Given the principles\* emerging from our meetings below, which if any appear to resolve how the D1-series bike route wayfinding signs should be designed?

#### Principle: Using Established Destination Names

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. (See notes, April 18, 2023). *Comment: This principle is similar to how Interstate highways count down their mileage signs to a city's central business district.*

#### Principle: Using Jurisdictional Border Names

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
- the municipal "center" is not on a planned Southwest Michigan Bikeway route, then
- the D1-series signs can state the name of the municipality and the mileage element of the D1 legend can count down to the jurisdiction border. SWMB primary signage can then continue at that point, and additional D1-series signs can then provide direction within the municipality. *Comment: This principle is similar to how Interstate highways count down their mileage to state borders, then count down mileage from the state border to other named destinations within the state.*

\* Other principles may emerge over time. The titles on the principles are suggestive and for convenient reference during KRBRC meetings. The titles are not meant to be official in other senses of the word and may change, as well.

#### Disposition

The group (unofficially) confirmed that the second principle was most appropriate for the City of Portage. Signs TO Portage would contain the direction, the destination name "Portage," and mileage to the Portage's municipal border (to the nearest tenth of a mile). Portage will determine D1-series signage to various local nodes within its borders over time.

*Comment:* This preference allows other agencies to plan their own D1-series signs direction cyclists to the border of the City of Portage without waiting for the City of Portage to further determine its local signage within its municipal borders. This preference may reflect a consensus already reached by the City of Portage with other Act 51 agencies. KRBRC has not yet independently confirmed this consensus.

## Question 2

Given the ideas for sign names generated at the KRBRC meeting in the City of Portage on January 17, 2023 in light of the principle preferred above, what ideas for destination labels for the D1-series plaques within the City of Portage seem most preferred?

Disposition

The group offered the following:

“Most preferred”

- City Center
- Celery Flats

“Second tier”

- Portage School District Campuses (such as Central and Northern)  
Portage Parks (such as Ramona, Lakeview, Schrier, etc.)
- WMU

*Comments: The rationale for these preferences is related to simplicity, while preserving the option to sign many other local destinations from The Portage Bikeway. The Southwest Michigan Bikeway and its destinations are more regionally oriented in scope.*

### KRBRC and Local Destination Naming

KRBRC is currently taking the position that, as part of a destination’s larger place making and community development efforts, the named destinations are being encouraged to state their preference for legends appearing on the D1 signs leading to and within their borders. *Comment: An emerging consensus about the D1-series destination names, based on numerous public community surveys, has been reported on in previous KRBRC Meeting Notes.*

### References

As a public service, Bike Friendly Kalamazoo maintains resources concerning bike routing on various pages on its web site at <https://bikefriendlykalamazoo.org> and a web page dedicated to resources concerning the Southwest Michigan Bikeway at <https://bikefriendlykalamazoo.org/sw-mi-bikeway/>

*Thank you to our meeting host, Kathleen Hoyle. Please report corrections to Paul Selden.*