

Kalamazoo Region Bike Route Committee (KRBRC)
October 22, 2024 Meeting Notes
Released October 29, 2024

Mike Chapman, Oshtemo Township; Ed Hellwege, Village of Paw Paw; Cheng Kidd Sun, Western Michigan University; Julie Rogers, MI House Representative; Ed Sackley, Gear Geezers; Paul Selden, Bike Friendly Kalamazoo

Next KRBRC Meeting: January 28, 2025; 11am-noon; location TBD – possibly rotating back to the City of Kalamazoo.

Agenda Addition: Legislative Update

MI House Representative (District 41) Julie Rogers presented a legislative update prior to the start of the regular quarterly KRBRC meeting. The update related to factors that could incent and increase use of bicycling facilities throughout Michigan.

Two bills which Rep. Rogers has been advancing in a bipartisan, bicameral fashion relate to:

- a) increasing protections for vulnerable roadway users (VRU) such as bicyclists; and,
- b) expanding access to electric bikes through financial incentives.

Both bills are currently in the process of House and Senate bills reconciling differences in their wording before moving ahead. With other matters also being considered by the legislature, it is difficult to predict whether the bills will be reconciled and approved into law this year. If they are not, they will need to be reintroduced in the coming year.

Discussion

As it is unfolding, the Southwest Michigan Bikeway and other non-motorized facilities are expected to improve connections and increase use of “active transportation” modes, whether by foot, bicycle or assistive devices. It has recently been reported that unit sales of electric bicycles <https://www.bicycling.com/news/a39838840/ebikes-are-outpacing-electric-car-sales-in-the-us/> surpassed the sales of electric cars. These factors and others bear on the development of non-motorized facilities such as the Southwest Michigan Bikeway.

Goal/Agenda

Oshtemo poses one of the more complex destinations in the regional Southwest Michigan Bikeway, in large part due to its multiple centers of commerce and government, and the number of its to/from connections.

The primary goal of this 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 related to Oshtemo Township. The “D1-series” signs would be mounted underneath the primary recommended SWMB signs (illustrated below, left) in order to provide “at a glance” guidance at route junctions, turns and for periodic confirmation.



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:



These illustrations are not to scale; the D1-series sign is the same width as the primary SWMB sign.

Discussion

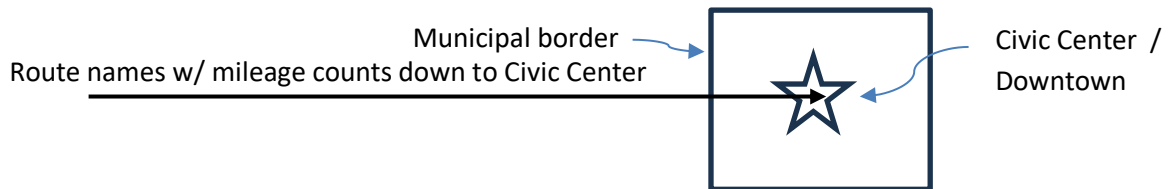
In previous meetings it has been helpful to frame discussion around key questions. These meeting notes briefly summarize the discussion.

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 for Oshtemo?

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, name the municipality and count down mileage to the civic center. If desired, the sign legend at the board can be changed 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 and Michigan state highways count down mileage signs to a city's central business district.*



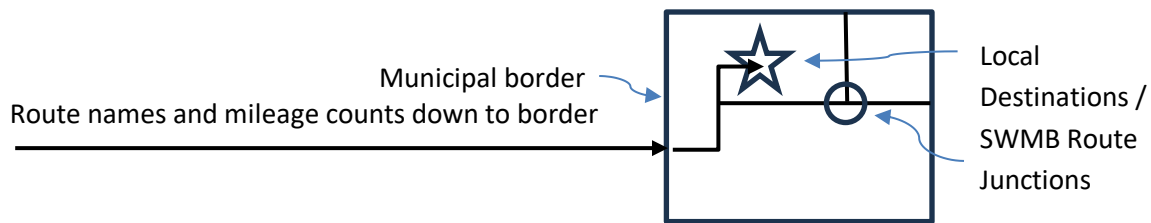
Principle: Using Municipal Border Names

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 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 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.

Discussion

At this point there was general consensus that second principle (above) appears to be most useful for resolving how the D1-series bike route wayfinding signs should be designed for Oshtemo.

Rationale: Oshtemo has more than one “municipal center.” In this scenario, the D1-series signs can count down and provide direction to the Oshtemo township border; additional There is currently discussion within the township about developing agreed-upon place-names for key locations that can be used for many purposes, including establishing and building awareness/marketing identities for those locations. Such locations include:

- Oshtemo park/library/governmental complex on West Main. It was noted that non-motorized facilities do not connect to this location.
- businesses in the area of the intersection of S. 9th Street / West Main
- businesses/Oshtemo Community Center in the area of the intersections of Stadium Drive / Parkview / 9th Street.

Ideally, input from residents, leadership and visitors would help define the destination names.

It was noted that plans for increased housing along S. 9th Street might impinge on the usefulness of the wide shoulders to non-motorized users between West Main and West KL Avenue unless this space is preserved or enhanced to better accommodate non-motorized users.

Question 2

Given the ideas below for destination names generated at the KRBRC meeting in Oshtemo Township on July 24, 2023, in light of the principles preferred above, what ideas for destination labels for the D1-series plaques now seem most preferred?

- | | |
|--------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| 9th St/Stadium | Oshtemo Park |
| KVCC - 9th/O Av | Oshtemo Town Hall/Park |
| Mattawan/Paw Paw | Oshtemo Township Services |
| Oshtemo | Oshtemo Twp |
| Oshtemo Center | Oshtemo Twp Hall |
| Oshtemo Ctr | Oshtemo Twp Offices/Library |
| Oshtemo DDA/Flesher Field Park | Oshtemo Village |

Comment: The Southwest Michigan Bikeway and its destinations are more regionally oriented in scope.

Discussion

These names (and undoubtedly others) will be considered.

Question 3

The Kalamazoo Area Transportation Study hosts a Non-Motorized Subcommittee which discusses considerations aimed at facilitating updates to its next Metropolitan Transportation Plan. Previous meetings of the KRBRC raised the question of updating routes in the Southwest Michigan Bikeway to connect:

- a) the intersection of S. 11th Street/Parkview Avenue to the junction of S. 9th Street/Stadium Drive
- b) the intersection of S. 11th Street/W. Michigan Avenue to the junction of S. 9th Street/Stadium Drive.

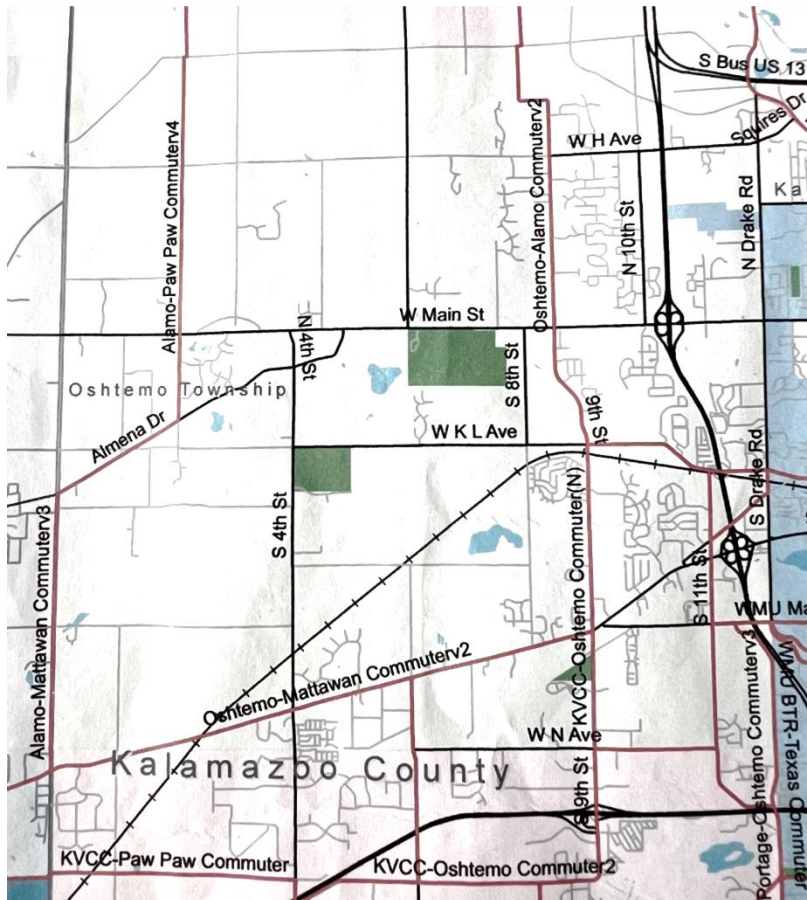
To what extent should these connections be offered to KATS and incorporated within Oshtemo’s own plans?

Discussion

Oshtemo Trustee Mike Chapman will further investigate the extent these connections are offered to KATS and incorporated within Oshtemo’s own plans.

Question 4

To what extent have routes in the Southwest Michigan Bikeway been integrated into Oshtemo’s plans?

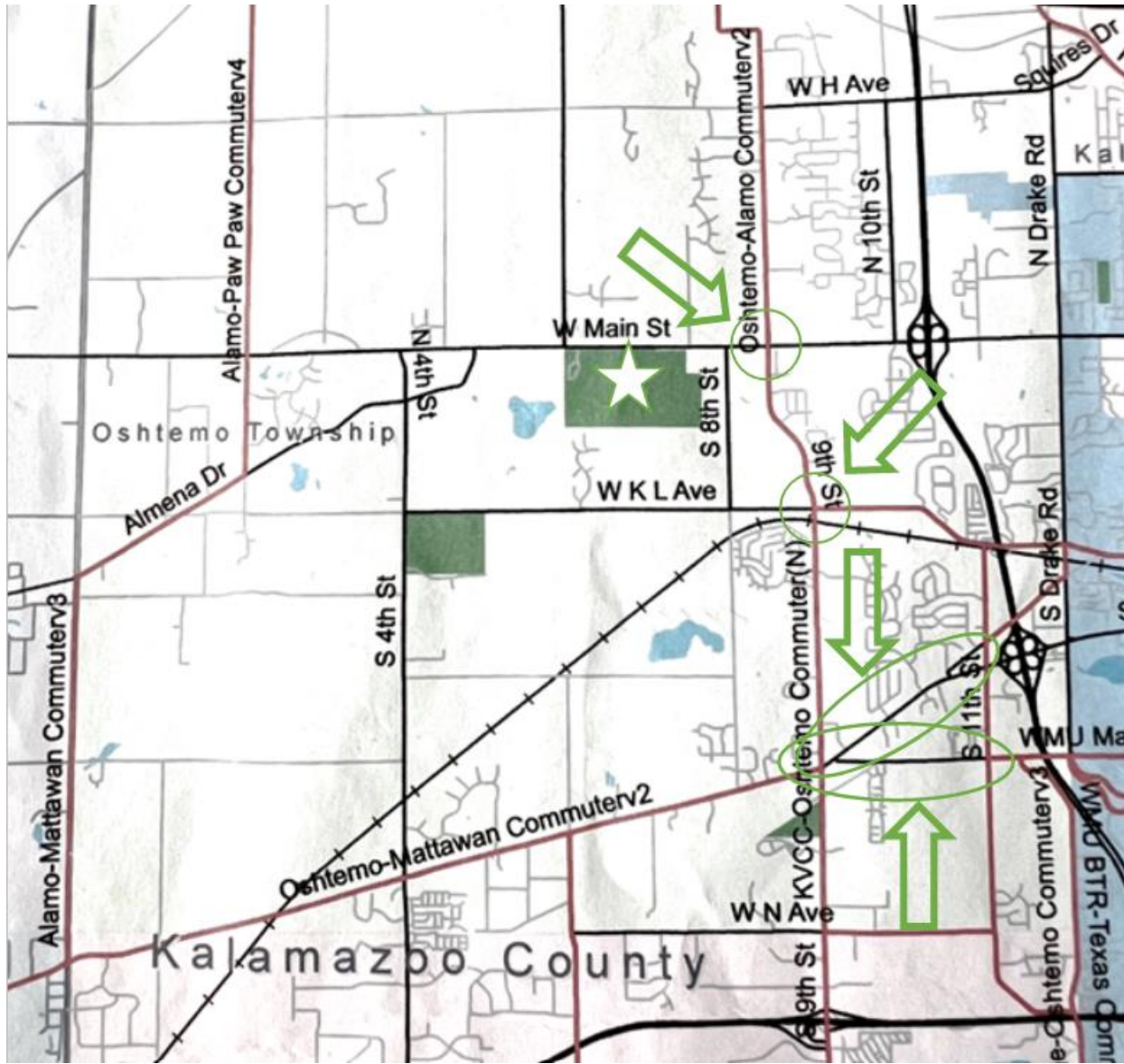


Discussion

Oshtemo Trustee Mike Chapman will further investigate the extent routes in the Southwest Michigan Bikeway been integrated into Oshtemo's plans.

Enhanced Map

The figure below highlights (see green arrows, circles and ovals) some of the SWMB routes (in red) and junctions discussed.



Background: 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 municipalities and institutions of higher learning 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.*

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.

References

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/> as a public service.

We appreciate Rep. Rogers offering to provide the legislative updates.

Thank you to today's meeting host, Oshtemo Township.

Please report corrections to Paul Selden, KRBRC Chair.