

Kalamazoo Region Bike Route Committee (KRBRC)

July 21, 2026 Meeting Notes

Please report corrections to Paul Selden, Chair

Welcome and Roll Call: Participants & Affiliations

Bill Adams – Bike Friendly Kalamazoo
Mike Boersma – Kalamazoo Bicycle Club
Bill Greer – Calhoun Country Trailway Alliance
Terry Hutchins – Bike Friendly Kalamazoo
Dave Goldenberg – Bike Friendly Kalamazoo
Sharon Lowhim – Oshtemo Township
Mohith Reddy – City of Kalamazoo
Paul Selden – Kalamazoo Region Bike Route Cmte
Ali Townsend – Kalamazoo Area Transportation Study
Larry Wymer – City of Kalamazoo

The Chair welcomed and thanked everyone for their participation, and gave special thanks to Dave Goldenberg for taking the time to prepare a hypothetical example of how numbered guide signs could be applied to the Southwest Michigan Bikeway.

Next KRBRC Meeting: October 20, 2026; 11am-noon; location TBA; Agenda: Continued discussion of bike route guide sign alternatives allowed in the updated MMUTCD. Pros/cons discussion of non-numbered bike route signs, such as the D11-1c and others, as potential Southwest Michigan Bikeway route signs.

Meeting Goal

Surface pros/cons of numbered route signs in regional networks such as the Southwest Michigan Bikeway (SWMB).

Agenda

1. Review background: numbered guide signs; hypothetical numbering example for SWMB.

Meeting started with brief review of change in Michigan Manual for Uniform Traffic Control Devices limiting use of the M1-8 and M1-8a to numbered signs. The new Michigan Manual For Uniform Traffic Control Devices does not permit the use of words such as “Southwest Michigan Bikeway,” instead of numbers.

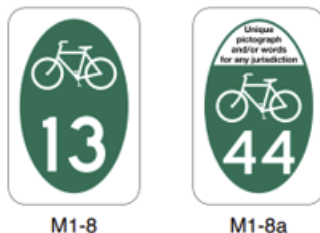


Figure 1. Illustration of M1-8 and M1-8a Guide Signs

[NOTE from April 21, 2026 meeting:

From: Section 2A.13 Standardization of Location

03 Standard: Signs requiring separate decisions by the road user shall be spaced sufficiently far apart for the appropriate decisions to be made.

13 Guidance: ... at a decision point, the guide sign should take precedence over other signs whose locations are not as critical to an immediate decision or action necessary by the road user.

From: Section 2A.20 Excessive Use of Signs

Route signs and directional guide signs for primary routes and destinations should be used frequently at strategic locations because their use promotes efficient operations by keeping road users informed of their location.

The hypothetical example of a numbering plan for how the Southwest Michigan Bikeway might be employed from last quarter's meeting was reviewed. Please see Figure 1, below and notes from April 21, 2026 meeting for details and illustration.

2. Brainstorming Thought Starters / General Considerations

Participants used the Chat function instead of sticky notes to generate general considerations that might spur listing of pros and cons in the final exercise. *To increase objectivity, participant names are not listed.*

Verbatim considerations pertaining to the use of numbered (vs. other types of signs) included:

- [Side comment: Just to kick off discussion, do numbered signs (as opposed to other electronic methods such as Map my Ride or ARC GIS Field maps) add value to the public? The point of signs or electronic mapping is to allow the public to find a route to a destination. Electronic mapping is rapidly updatable as opposed to physical signage.]
- [Side comment: Bike Route Guide signs serve more functions than to let bicyclists know they are on a "preferred" route. They let the motoring public be more aware that bicyclists may be expected on that route. Bike route guide signs are present 24 hours/day, 365 days/year, so also serve to let casual observers, such as tourists and new area residents, become more aware that such routes exist as a feature or amenity in the area; in turn, this may also boost an area's reputation for being bicycle friendly. GPS reception is unreliable in many parts of southwest Michigan and even in Kalamazoo County, as drivers in newer motor vehicles discover. Only a small segment of bicyclists have GPS devices mounted to their bicycles, though many undoubtedly have cell phones stuffed in their pockets. In general, the use of signs of all sort is widely understood to be useful to the public; poor signage is often a source of public complaint; the lack of sufficient signage leads to confusion and results in inefficiency. It is widely understood that signage posted in the locations and of the sort specified by the MMUTCD improves safety and reduces confusion. From a bicyclist's perspective, if signs are good enough to be used by motor vehicle operators, shouldn't they should also be available for cyclists?]
- Should numbered routes extend beyond county lines?
- One numbered route parameter might be the amount of information that can be displayed
- Do "named routes", e.g. GLTL (Great Lake to Lake Trail) need a number?
- Numbered routing could be confusing to those who don't know which origin to origin route the number is associated with.
- How many numbers would be needed in any given region; statewide?
- [Side comment: Disappoint none road trails not included. Point of fact: Bikeways can consist of off the road multi-use paths, roads, signed bike lanes, etc. - any place bicycles are allowed.]
- Is there a statewide or any other convention that guides the use of numbered signs?
- At present, there are Bike Route signs around KALAMAZOO COUNTY. There are multiple maps covering county bike routes -- RCKC [Road Commission of Kalamazoo County] has a proprietary map covering RCKC jurisdiction. VBCRC does not have maps. Portage and the city of Kalamazoo. Bike trails -- Kalhven, KVRT, Portage-Vicksburg, etc are not included in the KATS map, etc. Which physical map to use and which routes to include/ exclude.
- May be necessary to include letters with the numbered routes - I am thinking of routes that don't connect to other routes
- Portage and City of Kalamazoo may/may not have maps...
- Is there a limit as to how many or the type of direction that numbered route signs should be applied? Eg - once a dog-leg occurs, should a new number be applied?
- Comment: US Bike Routes are all numbered (interstate)
- "Michigan is home to three designated U.S. bicycle routes: U.S. Bicycle Route 10, U.S. Bicycle Route 20 and U.S. Bicycle Route 35."
- What is to be done with routes that have already been signed with non-numbered versions of the M1-8a?

- Ease of planning routes
- Ease of implementation
- Likelihood of sign misplacement
- Discount on quantity orders
- Would numbers placed in one MPO be carried over to another?
- Just checked Adventure Cycling regarding US Bike Routes. All maps for US Bike Routes are now in electronic format.

3. Brainstorming Pros / Cons of Using Numbered vs. Non-Numbered Bike Route Signs

Participants used the Chat function to list pros and cons of using numbered vs. non-numbered bike route signs in the final exercise. They were also invited to email additional ideas to the Chair following the meeting. *To increase objectivity, participant names are not listed.* The list of pros/cons included:

Pros

- numbered routes allows for smaller signs
- numbers seem "orderly"
- Numbered bike routes are valuable to the public for planning and direction finding purposes.
- Once the routes are widely recognized and properly mapped, the numbering system could be beneficial. However, from an installation standpoint, using route numbers would make it easier to install and manage the signage.

Cons

- will still need another way to tell where that route goes, regardless of numbered or non-numbered systems.
- run out of numbers
- named routes - Paw Paw to Kzoo is more intuitive but needs a bigger sign
- numbering system is likely to not be uniform if agencies start putting them up in different areas
- Non numbered system would be easier to implement because:
 - Don't have to worry about where specific numbers go with non-numbered signs
 - Less chance for error when specifying sign locations for the sign vendors
 - Routes that overlap could be more easily posted wrong by suppliers
 - Quantity discounts may apply if more signs were all the same, say, with the name Southwest Michigan Bikeway on a D11-1c bike route sign
- A numbered system would need to consider possible future routes while implementing with the current and planned routes.
- If a network like the Southwest Michigan Bikeway was just a jumble of numbered routes, it would lose its coherence as a named network that could be marketed as such.
- I think if we use a numbering system for the bike routes, people may become confused between the street name and the route number, especially if the route numbers are not displayed in Google Maps or other navigation apps.
- Loss of marketing / placemaking appeal since assigning numbers vs names to almost anything is a well-known way to deprive identify.
- physical signage with either numbers or no numbers is expensive and more difficult to update (say if the ice cream shop closes).
- different signage policies across jurisdictions as to what signs to use, sign pollution, etc. Need to step back and consider the best, future resistant method to convey the information to the public.

- loss of discounts on quantity orders if different numbers are used to break up an otherwise uniform identify.
- would be hard to talk about an "Iron Belle Trail" if it was just a series of numbers.
- Non-numbered signs allowed in the MMUTCD could more easily allow for routes to extend across agencies without requiring as much coordination. Getting such agreement among agencies on the right numbers to use would be almost impossible.
- Numbers that replace named routes would kill the marketing appeal of existing and applied to named routes
- Developing guidelines for numbered sign systems would add to complexity'
- The Southwest Michigan Bikeway already has a name. Easier just to use a sign that is allowed in the MMUTCD than to go to the trouble of figuring out and getting agreement on a numbering scheme.
- Numbered bike routes seem to be a throwback to the era where interstate and state numbering systems were the model for developing bike routes. The country has gone way past that now, with named bike route and trail systems in Michigan.
- Numbered bike routes are not aligned with the West Michigan Trails non-profit to sign trails with names, including destination names.
- Numbered routes sound boring.
- Numbered routes may be okay for a country the size of the Netherlands whose land mass is only about one quarter of Michigan's.

Final Feedback

Participants were asked to note any final feedback about the meeting.

- I think that Chat is a good method to capture ideas.
- Thank you Paul!

Map 7: Proposed Bike Commuter Routes

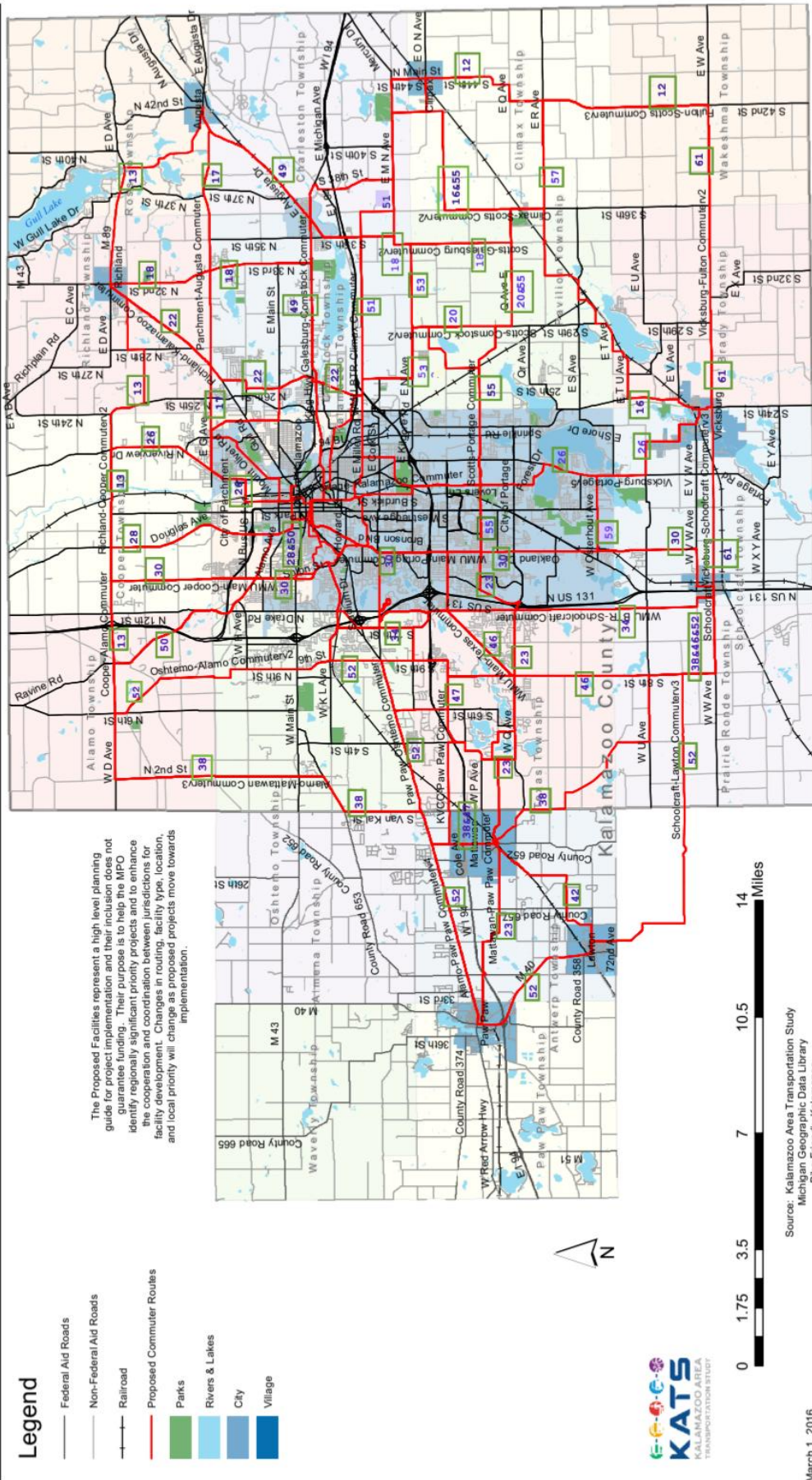


Figure 1. Hypothetical Numbered Routes; Southwest Michigan Bikeway
Submitted by Dave Goldenberg
Red: Routes Connecting Municipalities and Institutions of Higher Learning
Green Squares/Rectangle: Hypothetical Route Numbers as of April 20, 2026

Table 1: Hypothetical Routes, Mileages and Route Numbers

The following information related to route names, mileages and possible route numbers was submitted by Dave Goldenberg, for additional reference.

<u>Route</u>	<u>Mileage</u>	<u>Possible Route Number</u>
Climax-Fulton	9	12
Augusta-Richland-Cooper-Alamo	24	13
Climax-Scotts-Vicksburg	17	16
Augusta-Parchment	12	17
Richland-Galesburg-Scotts	15	18
Comstock-Scotts	7	20
Richland-Galesburg-E ML Ave.	9	22
Portage (Oakland Dr)-Texas Corners-Mattawan-Paw Paw	17	23
Cooper Cemetery-Parchment-Kalamazoo (via N Riverview)	7	26
Cooper-Kalamazoo (via Douglas)	6	28
Cooper-WMU (via 14th St/Nichols)-Schoolcraft (via. Oakland)	20	30
KL Ave-12 th St-Schoolcraft	12	34
Alamo-Mattawan-Schoolcraft	28	38
Portage-Texas Corners-Schoolcraft	13	46
KVCC-Mattawan	7	47
Augusta-Galesburg-Kalamazoo	13	49
Alamo-Kalamazoo	8	50
Climax-Burdick St.	15	51
Alamo-Oshtemo-Paw Paw	20	52
34th St.-Miller Rd. (via E N Av)	6	53
Climax-Q Av E-P Ave. E-Oakland	18	55
S 4th St-S 36th St (via E R Av)	3	57
Portage Rd.-Oakland Dr. (via Osterhout)	2	59
Fulton-Vicksburg-Schoolcraft	16	61
Total Mileage of Numbered Routes	296	

Notes:

- 1) Individual route mileage is approximate.
- 2) Some routes overlap. Total mileage includes duplicate miles due to overlapping routes.