

January 21, 2019

Kalamazoo Region Bike Route Committee (KRBRC),

I am writing this letter on behalf of myself and The Chain Gang bicycle club in support of the Southwest Michigan Bikeway, and specifically in support of the usage of the M1-8a signage proposed by the KRBRC.

Kalamazoo is a very special community, unique and excellent in so many ways. From the Kalamazoo Promise to being one of Reader's Digest Nicest Places in America (November 2018, issue), our community is not just average. I believe the Southwest Michigan Bikeway can be another great example of our community being best in class. Roadways are continuously becoming more congested with traffic, and the trend in big cities across our country and around the world shows that bicycles are a great solution to congested roadways. John Burke, president of Trek Bicycle, has said "The bicycle is a simple solution to a complex problem", referring to the increasing problem of congested roadways. Bike routes like the Southwest Michigan Bikeway, the Kalamazoo River Valley Trail and the Kal-Haven Trail draw people to our community (both tourism and residents!), and as our community continues to grow these bicycle commuter routes will help to solve complex issues of commuter congestion. I am super appreciative of all the work that has gone into the Southwest Michigan Bikeway, and I believe this bikeway is part of what makes our community an example to our state and country.

I believe that the use of consistent, uniform roadway signage throughout the Southwest Michigan Bikeway is key to the use of the bikeway. I am very much in support of the M1-8a signage along the route including destination arrows and distances. The Southwest Michigan Bikeway is an asset to our community, but cannot be successful without proper signage.

Part of why Reader's Digest named Kalamazoo as one of The Nicest Places in America is because of how our community reacted to the bike tragedy that occurred in June of 2016 in which five cyclists were killed and four were severely injured. Since that tragedy, our community has been deliberate about making our roads safer to cyclists, and our country has noticed. This is worth repeating: Our community has been deliberate about making our roads safer to cyclists, and our country has noticed. Proper signage along the Southwest Michigan Bikeway would continue to promote safer roadways for cyclists.

KRBRC, thanks for what you guys are doing for our community!

Sincerely,

Steve Johnson
and
The Chain Gang bicycle club