

Signs Matter!

Mid-America Trails and Greenway Conference
October, 2009

Design and Application of New MUTCD Bike Route Signs



Mid-America Trails and Greenways Conference
Tuesday, October 27, 2009

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If It Involves Roads, It Is Regulated




- AASHTO – American Association of State Highway Transportation Officials
 - Publish "Guidelines"
- MUTCD – Manual of Uniform Control Devices
 - Set "Standards" for All Signs and Pavement Markings
 - Even An Off-Road Trail Should Conform to MUTCD Standards
 - Each State Adopts Its Own Version




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Two Types of Bike Route Signage in MUTCD

- Bike Route Guide Signs
 - Placed at Decision Points Along Designated Bike Routes
 - Identify Good Ways Between Key Destinations
- Bike Route Signs
 - Named/Numbered
 - Establish Unique Identity

State and Local Routes

Interstate Bike Routes

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Revising the MUTCD

- Painstaking Process To Get A New Sign In The National Version
- Many New Signs Are Proposed In The Next Version Due Which May Be Approved As Soon As Next Month
- States Still Need to Adopt the National Version Though
- Need Permission from the Federal Highway Administration to "Experiment" With Alternative Signs



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Pending Bike Route Guide Signs

- Condenses All Information Into A Single Sign About The Size of A Street Name Sign
- Adds Distance Info
- May Be Grouped At Decision Making Points







Current Bike Route Guide Signage

Pending Bike Route Guide Signage

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Pending National Bike Route Sign

- Pretty Much the Same
- Reversed the Bike Icon and Route Number
- Growing Interest In National Bike Route System

Current National Bike Route Sign

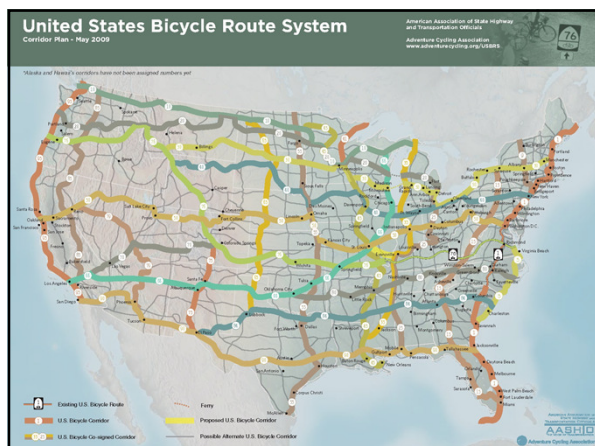
Pending National Bike Route Sign

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Pending State and Local Bike Route Sign

- Option to Place a Custom Logo at the Top of the Sign
- Branding Opportunity
- Been Employed In Many Communities Already



Current State or Local Bike Route Sign




Pending State or Local Bike Route Sign





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Bicycle Route Guide Sign Options

- Have The Ability to Incorporate Directional or Arrow Plaques Into Sign
- Does Not Specify That Only Numbers Be Used to Identify Routes








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New MUTCD Bike Route Signs Applications




- Guided Bike Route
- Named/Numbered Bike Routes
- Bike Boulevards
- Neighborhood Greenways
- Trails

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So What Should Be Signed?

- Bicyclists Can and Do Ride on Just About Every Road Except Freeways
- Bike Lanes Have Their Own Signs and Markings
- Does Not Make Sense to Sign Every Road



Signs Are Not Always A Good Solution, They Should Be Used With Some Restraint

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Disclaimer

- There Are Currently Many Different Valid (and Not So Valid) Approaches to Designating and Signing Bike Routes
- It is a Practice in Flux
- The Following Are Our Opinions







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Guided Bike Routes

- Use Bike Route Guide Signs To Identify Routes That Link Destinations Such as Schools, Parks and Commercial Areas Via Local Roads Suitable for Most Bicyclists
- Alternative To Bicycling on Primary Roads



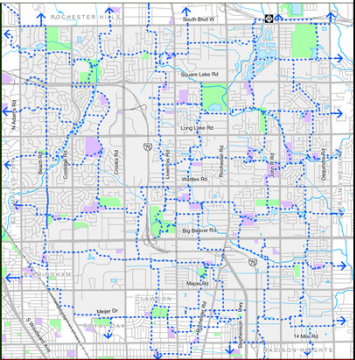

Target Audience: "Interested But Concerned" Bicyclists

Context: Generally Used on Local Residential Roads and Rural Routes with Moderate Speed and Traffic Volumes.

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Guided Bike Route System Example

- "Shadow" System That Uses Local Roads and Short Trails
- Links Parks, Schools, Natural Features and Major Destinations
- Not As Direct, But Much Less Traffic Than Primary Roads

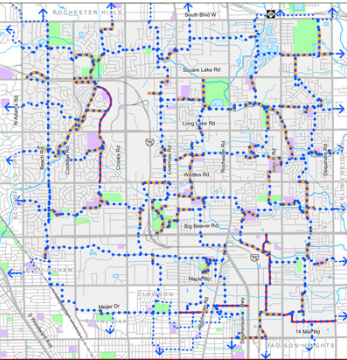


• • • Bike Route

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Guided Bike Route System Example

- By Linking Local Roads With Short Connector Trails Through Parks and Schools, Can Define Routes That Can Only Be Biked or Walked, Not Driven



• • • Bike Route
— Shared-use Path
— Bike Lanes

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Coordinate Crossing Improvements With Bike Routes

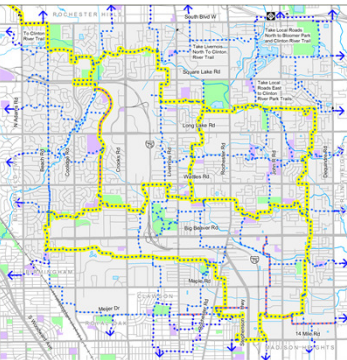
- Provide Ability to Cross Major Roads Comfortably and Safely Mid-block By Adding Facilities Such As Crossing Islands




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Certain Guided Bike Routes May Standout

- Link Up to Major Trails
- Connect Major Parks and Destinations
- These May Be Candidates For Named Bike Routes




• • • Bike Route
— Priority Bike Route
— Bike Lanes

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Named Bike Routes

- For "Special" Bike Routes
- Something Worthy of a Name or Number
- Importance May Come From Some Facility Enhancement:
 - Bicycle Boulevard
 - Neighborhood Greenway
- Importance May Come From Key Linkage Between Trails
- May Be Used to Identify Not So Obvious Trail





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Named Bike Routes – Bicycle Boulevards

- Can Take Many Forms
- Discourage Through Motor Vehicle Traffic Through Diverter Islands
- Reduce Speed Through Traffic Calming Measures
- Provide for Through Bicycle Traffic Via Median Openings and Exceptions To One-Way Travel
- Residents Benefit from Reduced and Slowed Traffic



The diagram shows a street layout with a median opening allowing bicycles to travel through. Labels indicate: 'Reduced median opening restricts motor vehicle traffic from cutting through', 'Median opening allows bicycles to travel through', 'Traffic circle acts as a traffic calming device', 'Turning right signs to favor through movement on bike boulevard', 'Cyclist entrances signal by prohibition', 'One-way street prohibits motor vehicles from entering bike boulevard', and 'Traffic signal allows bikes to cross arterial'.

Three photographs show different implementations: a street with a median opening, a street with a traffic circle, and a street with a dedicated bike lane.

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Named Bike Routes – Neighborhood Greenways

- Bicycle Boulevard +
 - Rain Gardens
 - Permeable Pavements
 - Native Plantings
- Can Be Avant-garde or Traditional in Appearance



Two photographs show neighborhood greenways: one with a wide, paved path and trees, and another with a more traditional street appearance featuring rain gardens and permeable pavement.

Many Design Elements Serve Multiple Functions; Making the Street More Pedestrian and/or Bicycle Friendly While Introducing Sustainable Elements.

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Named Bike Routes – Multi-faceted Trails

- Some Trail Takes Many Forms
- May be Hard To Know If You Are On The Trail or Not In Places
- There May Be Alternative Routes To Choose From
- Changes in Direction Are Not Always Clear
- Need for Route Identification
- Need to Elevate Visibility of Resource




Four photographs show different types of multi-faceted trails: a paved path, a dirt path, a path with a bridge, and a path with a sign.

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Named Bike Route Signage

- Placement Along Roadway Bike Route




Two photographs show bike route signage: one showing a sign on a pole next to a road, and another showing a sign on a pole next to a road with a cyclist.

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Named Bike Route Signage

- Placement Along Pathway




A photograph showing a cyclist on a path with a signpost indicating the route.

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Coordination of Named Bike Routes and Guide Signs

- Directional Sign Would be Placed in Advance of Intersections where Alternative Bike Paths are Available for the Same Route
- In Some Cases May Want to Provide Additional Information Via Maps



A photograph showing a cyclist on a path with a signpost indicating the route and a map.

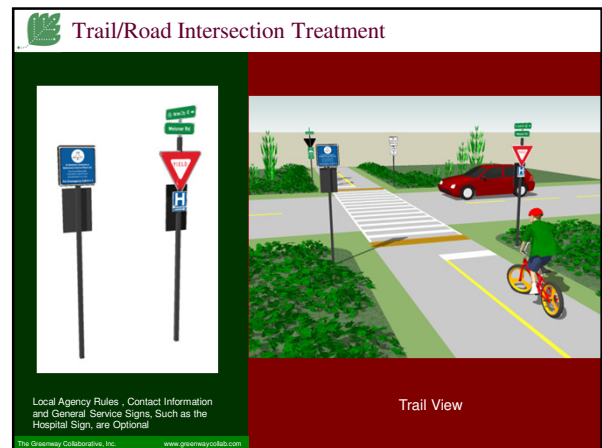
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Questions or Comments

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