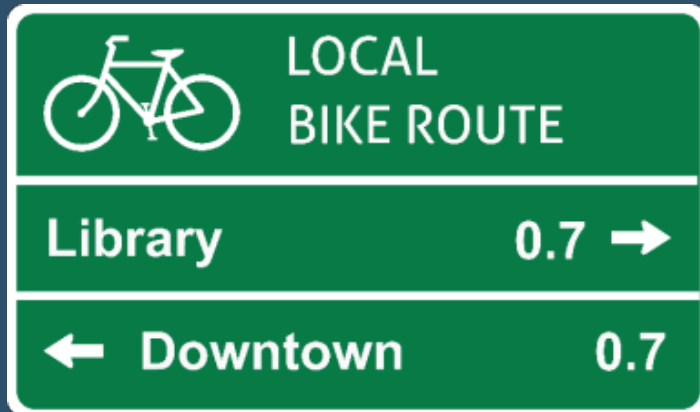


# Getting from Point A to B

## A Guide to Bike Route Signage



### Southwest Region Pedestrian and Bicycle Committee Meeting

Thursday, May 21, 2015

Norman Cox, PLA, ASLA

**The Greenway Collaborative, Inc.**

[norm@greenwaycollab.com](mailto:norm@greenwaycollab.com)



The Greenway  
Collaborative, Inc.

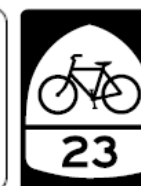


# Signs Exist to Answer Specific Questions

- Where am I?
- What type of route is this, what can I do here?
- Where does this go?
- How far is that?
- What direction am I heading?
- What do I do here?
- Is this the trail I am looking for?



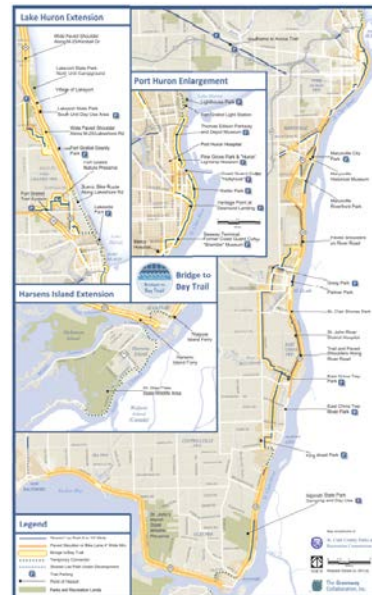
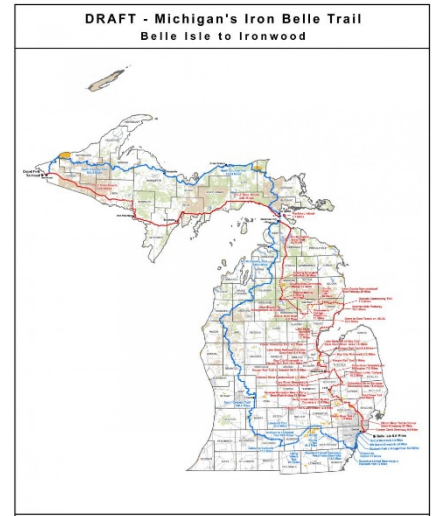
Hello this is 911, where are you located?





# Sounds Straight Forward, So What's the Catch?

- How does your route fit in to the bigger picture?
  - National
  - State
  - Regional
  - County
  - Local
- Someone probably has a say in what that sign looks like
- What do you sign and what don't you sign
- Should you brand?





# If It Involves Roads, It is Regulated

- MUTCD – Manual of Uniform Control Devices
  - Sets “Standards” for all signs used on roads
  - It is why traffic signals and signs look the same across the country
  - State, county and local road agencies will require that you follow these signs
  - Specific rules regarding colors and fonts
  - But lots of room for interpretation and a process to experiment

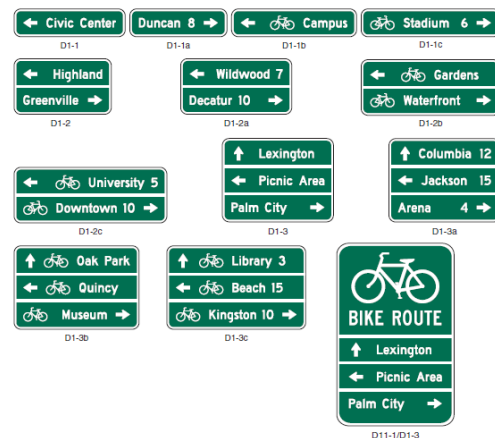
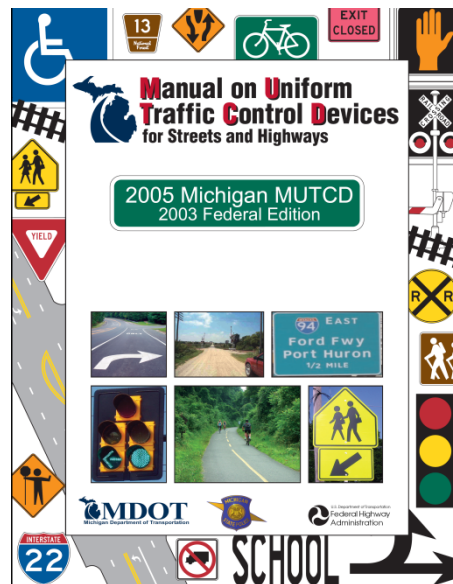


Figure 9B-5. Example of Signing for the Beginning and End of a Designated Bicycle Route on a Shared-Use Path

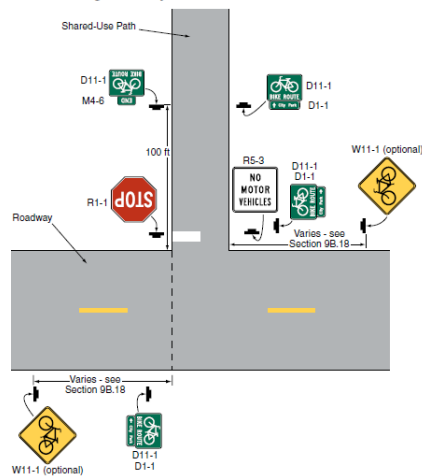
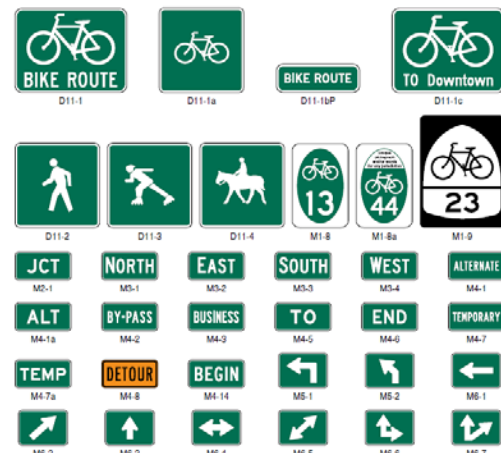


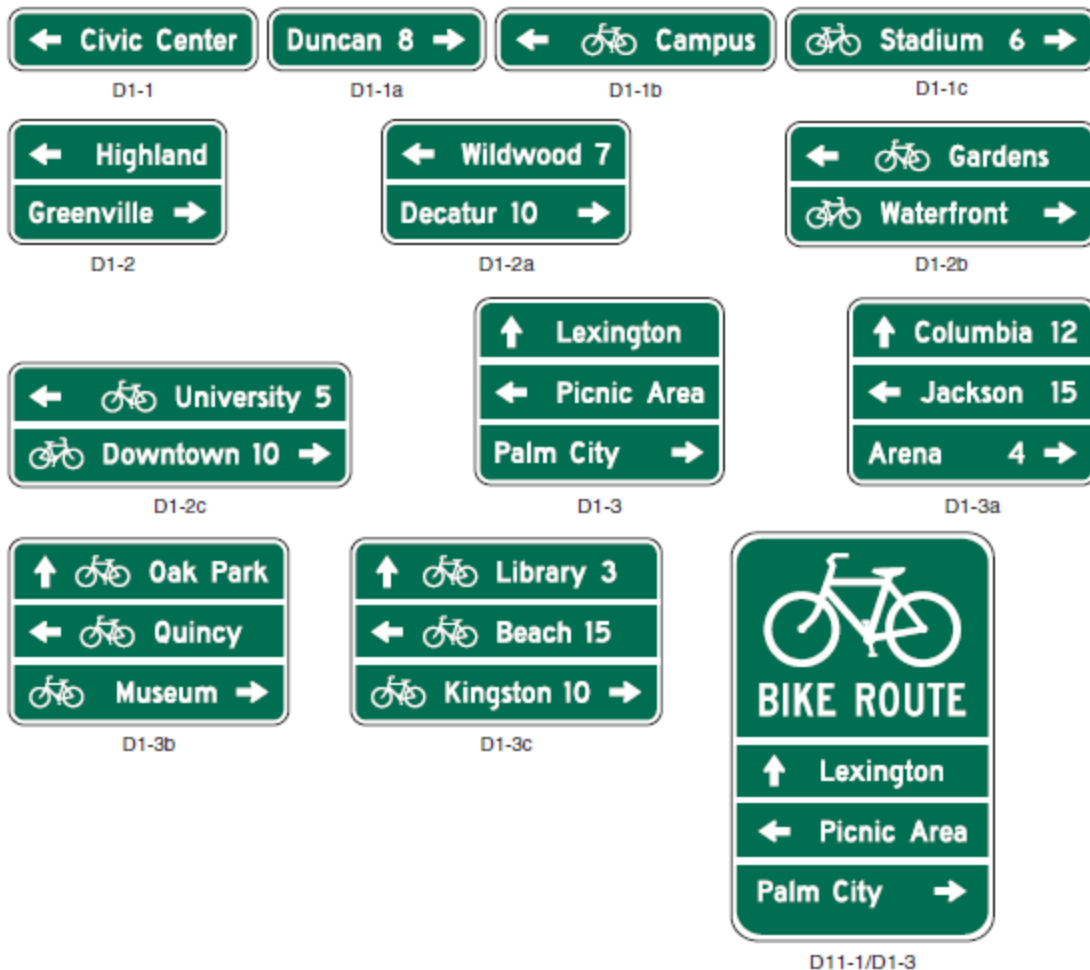
Figure 9B-4. Guide Signs and Plaques for Bicycle Facilities (Sheet 2 of 2)





# Choosing Destinations

- Don't try to sign everything, stick to the major landmarks or adjacent communities
- Private commercial destinations are a slippery slope but districts and “downtown” are generally safe if done equitably
- Some destinations may not be directly on the route as the route may not be “bike friendly”
- Some place may not want to be signed





# Where to Stop

- Probably some of the hardest decisions
- Rarely are you signing a defined linear or loop route – typically it is a network
- Pointing to side destinations is tricky
  - Should be a short, obvious and appropriate route, or...
  - Sign that route as well
- No one cares where the city or county limits are



The signs do not have to cover everything – these can be seen as complements to printed and on-line maps



# Managing Expectations

- There are no rules for what should be signed as a bike route
- A US Bike Route has a different target audience than a local bike route to the park, but...
  - what about a rural county bike route?
  - what about a back-country dirt road route?
- How can you convey what to expect?
- This is probably the biggest issue right now

## Non-Standard Approaches



## MMUTCD Standard Approaches:



Can be a name or description





# Identification and Branding

- Does the thing you are going to sign already have a name or brand?
- It is not easy to design an iconic logo
- Naming and numbering local routes can quickly get out of hand
  - What purpose does it really serve?
- Save the names and numbers for something that warrants one
  - Numbers work with maps and over long-distances



## US Bike Routes in Michigan:







# Three Examples and Lessons Learned

- The Great Lake-to-Lake Trail System
  - Statewide system
- Bridge to Bay Trail
  - County system
- Springboro, Ohio
  - Local Bike Route System





# The Great Lake to Lake Trails

- Goal was to establish a brand that would attract visitors from around the great lakes region to a cross state trail
- Hook was the idea of traveling from one great lake to another great lake
- Each trail has a distinct sense of place
- Each route is actually comprised of numerous trails with existing identities and connecting on-road routes



**PURE MICHIGAN**  
See the best of Michigan

Experience five unique slices of Michigan. Each trail will take you completely across the state, from one great lake to another. Spend time strolling world class beaches then cross the peninsula to get to know the historic small towns and friendly people that make up Michigan's heartland. Along the way taste the bounty of Michigan's farms, orchards and vineyards, which can only be described as Pure Michigan.

**Five Slices of Pure Michigan:**

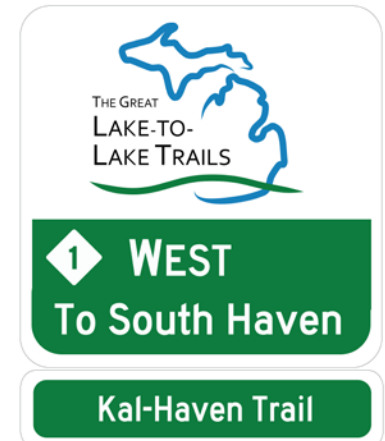
- **South Haven to Port Huron** ♦  
Beaches, light houses and a cornucopia of local produce along this 260 mile route (existing)
- **Muskegon to Bay City** ♦  
A 210 Mile through the transition zone between the agricultural south and rustic north (under development)
- **Charlevoix to Alpena** ♦  
The "Tip of the Mill" offers a lovely 120 ride including a ride around car free Mackinaw Island (under development)
- **Manistique to Marquette** ♦  
Abundant wildlife, mining history, stunning sandstone cliffs may be found along this 80 mile ride (under development)
- **Escanaba to Porcupine Mountain State Park** ♦  
Experience the rugged beauty of the Western Upper Peninsula (under development)





# The Great Lake to Lake Trails Issues

- Need to Conform to MMUTCD on the Roads
- Took some liberties with the off-road trail signage
- Need to be able to adapt how local trails would like to be identified





# Bridge to Bay Trail, St. Clair County, Michigan

- Goal was to knit together a variety of trails types and routes into a cohesive system
- People often wondered if they were on the Bridge to Bay Trail
- In some places it is a pedestrian and bicycle route, other places a bicycle route
- Got FHWA permission to experiment by adding a pedestrian icon to standard bike route sign





# Bridge to Bay Trail Issues

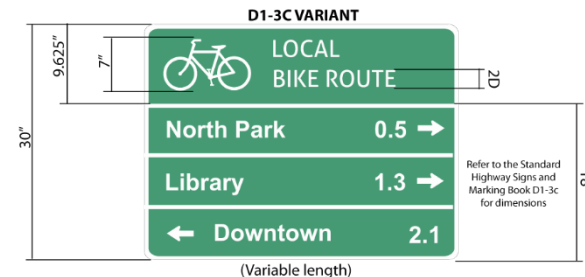
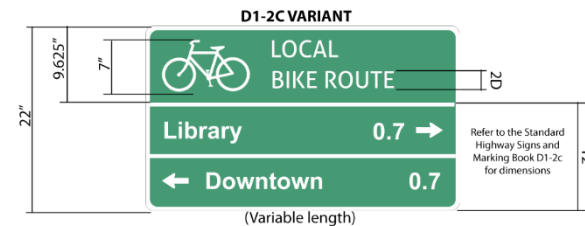
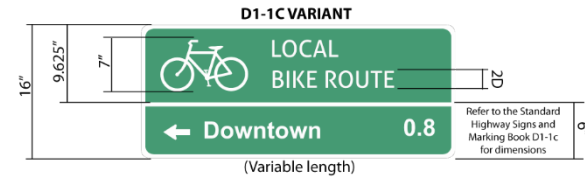
- Destination signs turned out to be hard to read from some angles
- The use of both pedestrian and bicycle icons can get pretty busy on some types of signs
- Needed to simplify some change in direction signs at complex junctures
- Perhaps tried to combine too many signs on one post – height is an issue





# Springboro, Ohio

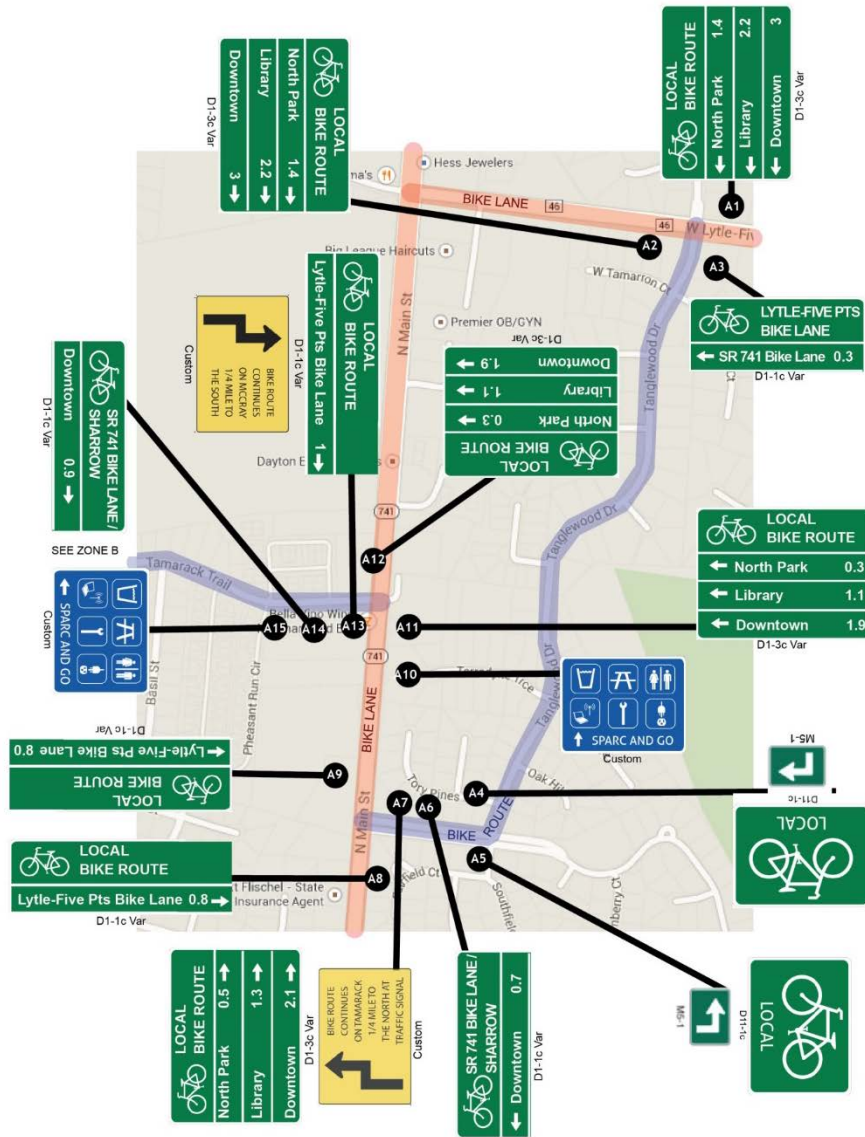
- Goal was to define family friendly, low stress bike routes through town using local roads and trails
  - Neighborhood Connectors
- Used a variant of the D1-1C approved by FHWA
- Wanted to distinguish a “local bike route” from regional routes





# Springboro Issues

- Politics – some logical destinations may not want to be named
- What to do when there are two ways to get there:
  - Longer local bike route
  - Direct route on a busy road with bike lanes or sharrows
- How to explain the tricky parts?
- What to do with signs that apply to both cars and bikes?





# Springboro Bicycle Centered Placemaking

“Spark And Go” a wayfinding and support hub

- Branding
- Maps
- Water
- Restrooms
- Bike repair stand
- Downtown bike parking
- Also serves as an emergency community information center
- Bicycle police station





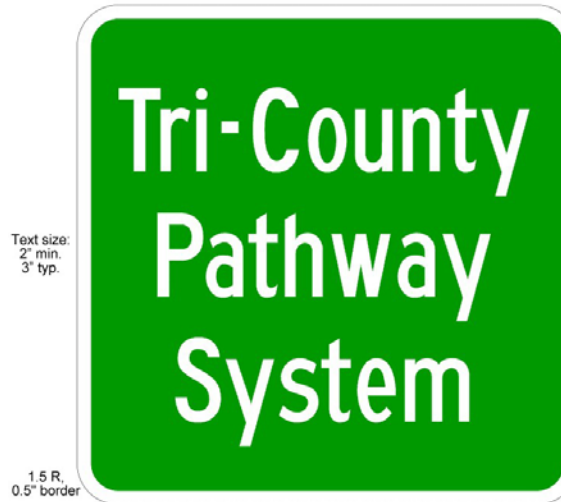


# NCUTCD Bicycle Technical Committee

## Wayfinding Sign Proposals

- Wayfinding Signs for Shared-use Paths
- Non-numbered Bike Route Signage
- Also Nine other Proposals on the Table
- Notice of Proposed Rulemaking anticipated between July – Dec 2015
  - Need input from bicycle community!

All text centered



Text size:  
2" min.  
3" typ.

1.5 R,  
0.5" border

M1-x (word legend)  
18" x 18" size (Roadway)

Graphic centered



Pictograph  
size:  
12" x 12"  
min.  
16" x 16"  
max.

1.5 R

M1-xa (graphic)  
18" x 18" size (Roadway)

Text & graphic centered



Graphic  
size:  
12" x 8"  
min.  
16" x 16"  
max.

Text:  
2.5" pref  
2" min.

1.5 R

M1-xb (graphic + words)  
24" x 18" size (Roadway)

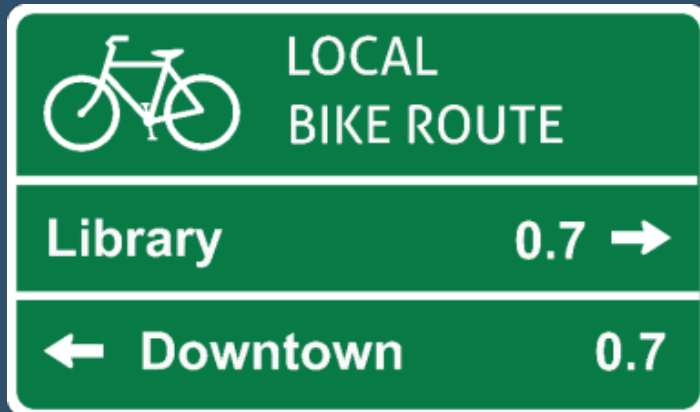


# Few Parting Thoughts

- No one has got this all figured out just yet
- Prototypes and demonstration projects help work out the bugs
- Signs don't last very long
- Sign clutter is an issue
- Pavement marking complement
- Who makes and installs the signs is a significant factor for costs, maintenance and design
- Bike routes signs are TAP Funding eligible



# Questions?



## University Region Pedestrian and Bicycle Committee Meeting

Wednesday, April 15, 2015

Norman Cox, PLA, ASLA

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