

# LANDSCAPE-ARCHITECTURAL PROPOSAL OF THE RECREATIONAL AND EDUCATIONAL EQUIPMENT OF THE CYCLE PATH

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## Abstract

Paper presents landscape architectural proposal of the cycle path in Partizánske region. The proposed trail connects villages: Brodzany, Krásno, Kolačno, Chynorany, Turčianky and city Partizánske. The aim of the proposal was to create a safe and educational cycling route for all age categories, which would combine a recreational experience with knowledge of history, fauna, flora and natural processes. The route is equipped with information boards, interactive elements and rest areas with benches, shelters and bicycle racks, thus increasing the comfort of the ride.

Emphasis has been placed on safety and sustainability - problematic sections have been paved and supplemented with orientation signs. The cycle route offers not only active movement, but also space for relaxation and exploring the natural and cultural heritage of the region.

**Key words:** leisure time, recreational activities, educational boards, landscape architecture, Partizánske

## Introduction

The landscape of recreation, leisure and free time has undergone significant transformations in recent years (Tóth, 2022), influenced by technological advancements, societal shifts and environmental considerations (Bell, et. al, 2009).

Outdoor recreational activities lead to improved of the physical and mental health, reduction of the stress, support lifelong learning and overall satisfaction with the life of contemporary society (Eigenschenk et al., 2019, Mandziuk et al., 2021). Engagement with natural environments through recreational activities can enhance individuals' appreciation for nature (Brown et al., 2010) and support well-being of the society (Fekete, Abuhayya, 2023).

Gudaitytė, Valantinė, (2014) investigated factors influencing residents' choices to engage in active leisure time at outdoor fitness sites. The study (in Kaunas, Lithuania) identified key motivators, including the free nature of the service, a quiet environment, a variety of equipment, and favourable geographical location.

The contributions of leisure studies to the active living agenda have been examined by Henderson and Bialeschki (2005). They argue that leisure activities provide opportunities for self-regulation, social interaction, and personal competence, which are essential components of an active and fulfilling lifestyle. Cieszewska et al. (2010) refer to economic and social benefits of forest recreation, integrating it into the rural economy and nature tourism in forests. Unique research was done by Fornal – Pienak, et.al. (2023), who examined relationship between forest ecosystem services and willingness of young people to pay for it in chosen European cities. Mandziuk et al. (2021) examined social preferences of young adults regarding urban forest recreation management in Warsaw, Poland. Their research indicated that higher development levels of forests, including recreational infrastructure, increased the frequency of visits among young people. Interestingly, the willingness to pay for forest amenities was more influenced by the level of development than by the respondents' income, suggesting that well-developed forest areas are more valued for leisure activities.

Forests have been identified as restorative environments with significant physical and psychological benefits. According to Oh et al. (2017), forest environments positively influence cardiovascular and immune health while also promoting psychological relaxation and stress reduction. In a Central European context, Bielinis et al. (2019) demonstrated that young Polish adults experienced reduced blood pressure and improved mood after short forest-based recreational interventions. These findings underscore the importance of incorporating forested areas into recreational planning, such as cycle paths, to support community well-being.

Agricultural landscapes provide more than just food, they offer aesthetic and recreational benefits that contribute also to human well-being and possibilities for the short term recreation (Supuka et al. 2013). The accessibility of the landscape by pedestrian and cycle paths, supporting the small entrepreneurs, promoting the cultural and natural heritage will also help the micro regions in their development (Čibik

et al., 2022). It is not only about the equipment, and services provided for the society, but also about the supporting ecological and environmental network in the open landscape.

### Material and methods

The proposed cycle route leads through the territory of the municipalities of Brodzany, Chynorany, Krásno, Turčianky, Kolačno and Partizánske city. The location is in the western part of Slovakia, near Tribeč mountains. Total length of the route is approximately 40 kilometres. It is divided into two main parts - urbanised section (passing through the urbanised area of the villages and town) and natural part (leading mainly through forest and open agricultural landscape). Approximately half of the cycle route is situated in a forest environment, dominated by mixed vegetation typical of the region. The tree composition of the forest consists mainly of beech (*Fagus sylvatica*), various species of oak (*Quercus* sp.) and hornbeam (*Carpinus betulus*).

The villages through which the proposed cycle route passes, together with the Partizánske city, are localities with rich historical and cultural tradition. Development of this region was closely linked to feudal ownership, which determined its economic structure and the way the land was farmed.

### Results

The aim of the project was to create a cycling route for all ages, which would combine a recreational experience with educational elements: information about the history, fauna, flora and nature. The route is equipped with information boards, interactive panels and areas for resting. Emphasis has been placed on safety and sustainability. The cycle route not only connects the settlements but also offers the space for relaxation and exploring the natural and cultural heritage of the region.

It starts in the village of Brodzany near the manor house. There is parking plot, bus station and a small restaurant. In the village Veľké Bielice our proposed cycle route is connected to the existing one. Afterwards it leads along the Nitra river to Chynoranský mill and continues to the Chríb hill, which offers a beautiful scenery to the open landscape. There are also a cross and an old cemetery.

The cycle route continues through the forest, offering stops at several points with views and resting points at the highest points of the route. About halfway along the route, the hill Koláčná is reached, which is an important point with an attractive view. The final section is along the river, and returns back to the Brodzany.

### Discussion and Conclusion

Environmental consciousness is driving demand for sustainable leisure activities. Eco-tourism, green recreational activities, and sustainable travel options are gaining traction among consumers seeking environmentally friendly experiences. The role of outdoor leisure activities in personal development increase and play crucial role in healthy development of the society. Assessing future recreation demand involves understanding various drivers, including demographic changes, economic factors, and environmental concerns.

Forest-based recreational infrastructure, including cycling and walking paths, is recognized not only for its contribution to health and well-being but also as a tool for sustainable regional development. The proposal of a cyclo path in the Partizánske region of Slovakia aligns with broader European strategies that encourage non-motorized transport and outdoor leisure, particularly in rural and peri-urban areas. The proposed cycle route connects the natural values and historical-cultural heritage of the area, thus creating a complex recreational and cognitive element in the region. It allows visitors to actively move in the natural environment with the possibility of discovering local historical and cultural monuments.

At the same time, it contributes to the development of cycling and ecological mobility, thus supporting the sustainable development of the region.

The construction of proposed cycle route can increase attractiveness and accessibility of the region, attract more visitors and promote sustainable tourism in the region. The promotion options, which could be developed:

1. Online and digital promotion (website, social media, mobile app or interactive maps,...)
2. Printed materials and physical promotion (information brochures and leaflets, route maps, information boards by the forest, promotional items,...)
3. Events and community activities (organising cycle tours, competitions and challenges, cooperation with cycling clubs, school and family activities,...)
4. Media presentation (media coverage, collaboration with influencers and bloggers, documentaries and videos,...)

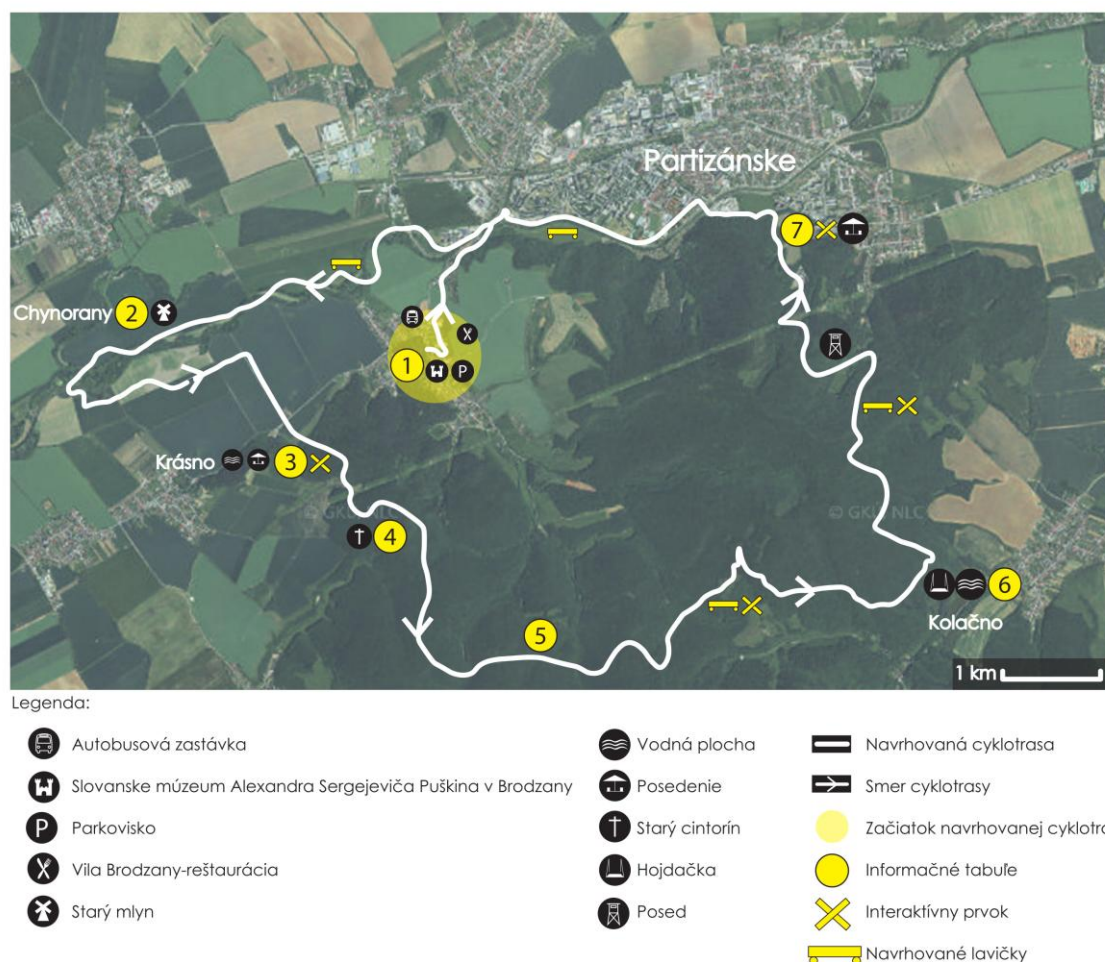


Fig. 1: Landscape-architectural proposal of the cycle road (Zajícová, 2024)

To increase the attractiveness and educational character of the cycle route, seven information boards were proposed. The content of the boards refer to the most interesting information from the region: The extraordinary story of the village; The mill of time; Fauna and Flora; Historical monuments; Beauty from faraway; A view that enchants and The forests of my route.

For the youngest cyclists, an interactive play elements with rotating discs has been created. Equipment for relaxation were placed along the route.

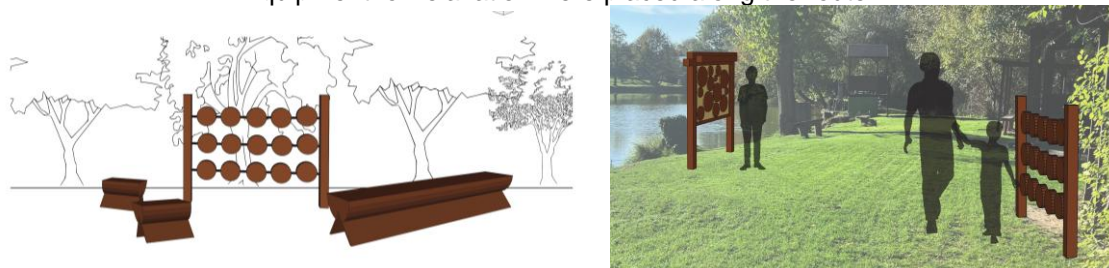


Fig. 2: Propose of the interactive elements and benches (Zajícová, 2024)

Fig. 3: Visualisation of the chosen stand (Zajícová, 2024)

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### Souhrn

Príspevok predstavuje krajinársko-architektonický návrh cyklostezky v regiónu Partizánske. Navrhovaná stezka propojuje obce: Brodzany, Krásno, Kolačno, Chynorany, Turčianky a mesto Partizánske. Cieľom návrhu bolo vytvoriť bezpečnú a naučnou cyklostezku pro všetky vekové kategórie, ktorá by spojovala rekreačný zážitok s poznáním historie, fauny, flóry a prírodných procesů. Trasa je vybavena informačnými tabulemi, interaktívnymi prvky a odpočívadly s lavičkami, prístřešky a stojany na kola, čímž se zvyšuje komfort jízdy.

Důraz byl kladen na bezpečnost a udržitelnost - problematické úseky byly zpevněny a doplněny orientačními značkami. Cyklostezka nabízí nejen aktivní pohyb, ale také prostor pro odpočinek a poznávání přírodního a kulturního dědictví regionu.

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