PLANNING AND DELIVERY OF SUBURBAN TRAIL SYSTEMS

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Tomáš Kvasnička

- pushed through the first purpose build trail system in Continental Europe – Singltrek pod Smrkem - now a bronze IMBA Ride Centre
- founder of the Czech Advocacy organisation – ČeMBA
- persuaded IMBA (US) that there needs to be IMBA Europe
- now working in trail consultancy and policy mainly in the Czech Republic
- creating several suburban trail systems
Why to have suburban trail systems

The antithesis of “the Alpine“:
big mountain, big berms, long travel, high expense, big money

• the benefits of recreation optimised trail infrastructure every afternoon

• the closeness and accessibility to masses of riders including beginners, women, young and poor

• small size trail systems make sense in suburban setting

• easy yet singletrack

• suburban trail system as tool for advocacy
legend:

non fall-line useable double track
· Heavily used and contested locations

CRUCIAL: SHARED-USE ETHOS to inform planning and realization

· prevent user conflict: real or perceived
· design-in low speed for MTB
· adopt size and character of TTFs
· design in difficulty relative to speed
Managed landscapes

- intensive use X valuable / recreational natural resource

- harmonise trails with other land uses through detailed planning and careful realization and management

- provide benefits to land managers non-restrictive visitor management ease the pressures on the natural resource
Trail system variables have a clear frame of reference to match achievable management responsibilities

Size: 6 - 25 km
Elevation (0) / 50 - 150 m
Difficulties 45% blue / 45% red / 10% black

design trails that grow in difficulty with speed

focus on trail system flexibility

where to develop play zones? separate from the trail system brown-fields / non-attractive parts
legend

blue trail
red trail
connectors
total 15km
Risk management

Protect yourself, protect the land manager, protect the user

• informed decision: signage and information at entry points

• continual management, monitoring and maintenance designate roles

• choose the subjects wisely: club, municipal services organisation, municipal forestry organisation

• establish achievable standards of care

• monitor the state of trails periodically: document and save for records
How to fund suburban trail development
NO ENTRY FEES!

- divide the project into manageable stages
- divide the construction into stages
- expect intermittent progress
- expect out-of-contract tasks
- municipal budgets
- grants / donations / foundation or charity funds
- crowdfunding
Use your volunteers wisely

use them for:

building public demand
city council meetings
PR and Press
corridor preps
hand finishing
slow-build sections
non-formal monitoring

do not use them for:

project planning
trail design
earthwork
Importance of professional planning & design

- municipalities want a professional partner need to tender and need a design for tender

- experience with solutions for contested situations minimising user conflict harmonising land uses

- „first right“ failure to deliver good trail system will damage the situation for years.
Thank you for your attention
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