

01

THE TERRITORY OF THE ROHAN AND LIBEŇ ISLANDS

In the eyes of the public
and key actors



01

OBSAH

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Introduction and method

This section is a synthesis – **a description of the entire area** of the Rohan and Libeň islands. It primarily covers topics affecting the territory as a whole, but also topics unrelated to any particular place. (Locally specific suggestions are discussed in detail in Chapter O2: Locations of the Rohan and Libeň Island). It provides information on the personality, character, main features and specificities of the island. It reviews the current positive and negative aspects, presents a number of comparisons, personal evaluations and interesting observations from its users. It also addresses the desired future form and functions the public believes should be represented here.

Territory features

The natural questions to ask in the early phases of the research were questions relating to the character and key features of the area. Model questions: “What is Rohan Island to you? What are the main features of the area? What things are typical there?”. Analyzing responses to the questionnaire sent to key actors in the territory gave us the initial insight presented here. It is important to note these are the perceptions of entities operating in the territory. The four main features of the area as a whole from the perspective of the stakeholders involved are:

- **The vastness of the area**, a fact which is mirrored in both the description of the size of the whole area (such large areas are rare in Prague) and the description of its potential for development. Other descriptive words: size, vastness, openness,
 - no architectural development.
 - **Greenery** - the presence of vegetation is characteristic of the area. This carries aspects of on the one hand quantity (there is a lot of greenery) as well as a certain specific quality, which is expressed in phrases such as “a chunk of nature in the city”,
 - the “natural character” of the location , “Urban steppe” or “urban wilderness”.
- The **link to water**, proximity to the Vltava River - a feature of the area that is perceived very strongly, and which has two sides: a) its unquestionable value enriching the whole area, b) the presence of water is also a limiting factor and implies
- the perception of flood risk. At the same time, a lack of access to the river is one of the main problems.
- The perception of it as a **location in the city center** including good transport accessibility (metro, tram) is another clearly stated characteristic.



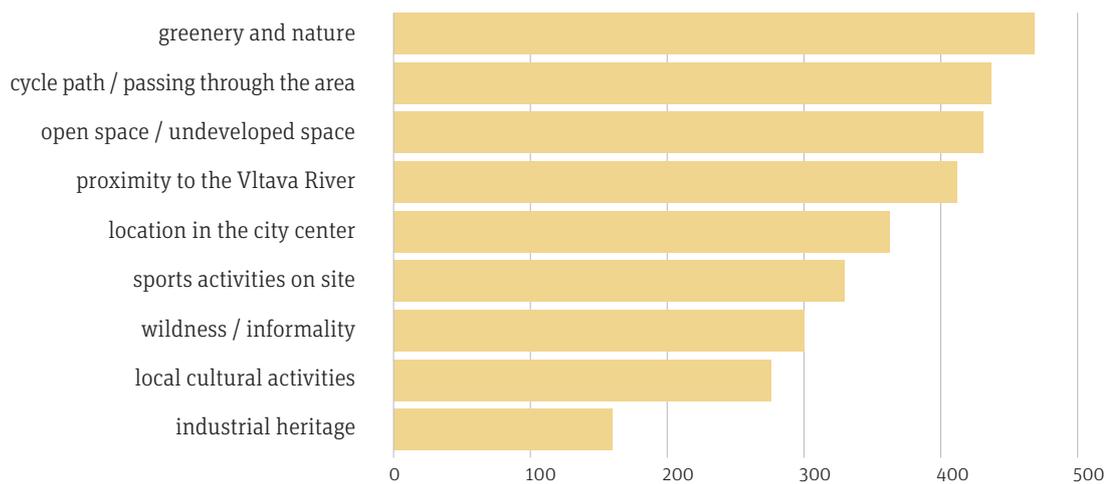
In addition to the strong overarching themes, there are a number of less frequent yet thought-provoking observations in the evaluation.

- **Attractiveness** – it is a place that entices and attracts. Housing and leisure. People with money and those without.
- **Grassroots energy** – what works here was created from below – by the efforts of local actors, rather than as a result of centralized planning.
- **Historical memory** and proximity to cultural values – the place already has a strong identity, with much to build on.
- **Landscape** – large-scale landscape features are visible here (the effects of water, interactions between landscape and city, interactions between water and city terrain).

These topics and hypotheses were subsequently transferred into an electronic questionnaire and tested to see how they were viewed in the eyes of the general public. The strength of the perceived values can be read from the following graph, which shows a ranking of the different features. They were rated as “very important and relevant”. The first rungs are represented by features where there is general agreement. It is worth noting here, though it is not uncommon, that the **“green space and nature” overwhelms other significant features of the area**. The proximity of the river may also be overridden to some extent by its current poor accessibility. The area is largely defined by its primary function – a pass-through area / a cycle path.

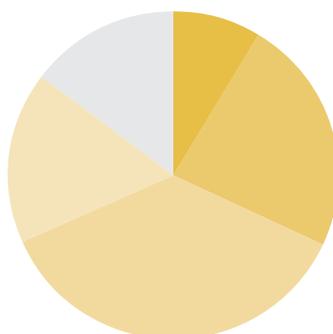
The bottom two rungs (**wildness/informality** and **industrial heritage**), on the other hand, display characteristics where the evaluation is **inconsistent** – it is more balanced on both sides of the spectrum and has a strong center (not visible in the graph). This can be illustrated using the example of industrial heritage. For a large number of people this is a strong element of the territory, while for many others this is “completely unimportant”. This inconsistency may in a way be confirmed by the strong presence of “neutral” evaluations. It may also be related to and indicate the degree of preference – strong element = should be retained, unimportant = should be abandoned.

Main characteristics of the area [electronic questionnaire, spring 2021, 491 responses]



characteristics of the area – industrial heritage

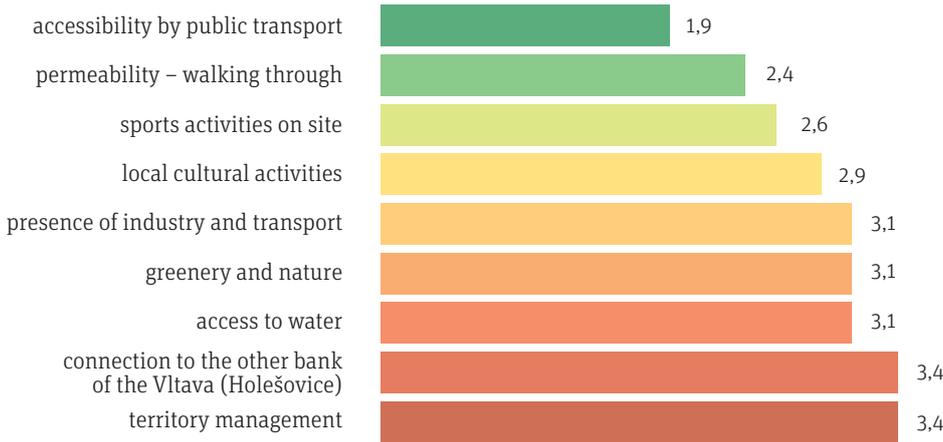
● very important	43
● important	114
● neutral	178
● unimportant	83
● completely unimportant	71



The next question (in the el. questionnaire) was aimed at **assessing the current popularity of several pre-selected functions** and features of the area in the eyes of the respondents. Respondents could mark them with a grade like in school (1=perfect, 5=failing). These values were then averaged to produce the grades shown in the table below. It is worth noting the **negative evaluations of the area's otherwise strong points (greenery and nature, access to water)**. The low evaluation of the area's governance is also significant. Culture and sports received the highest number of average marks, indicating a high potential for improvement. The **accessibility of the area by public transport** is almost seamless.

Territory evaluation

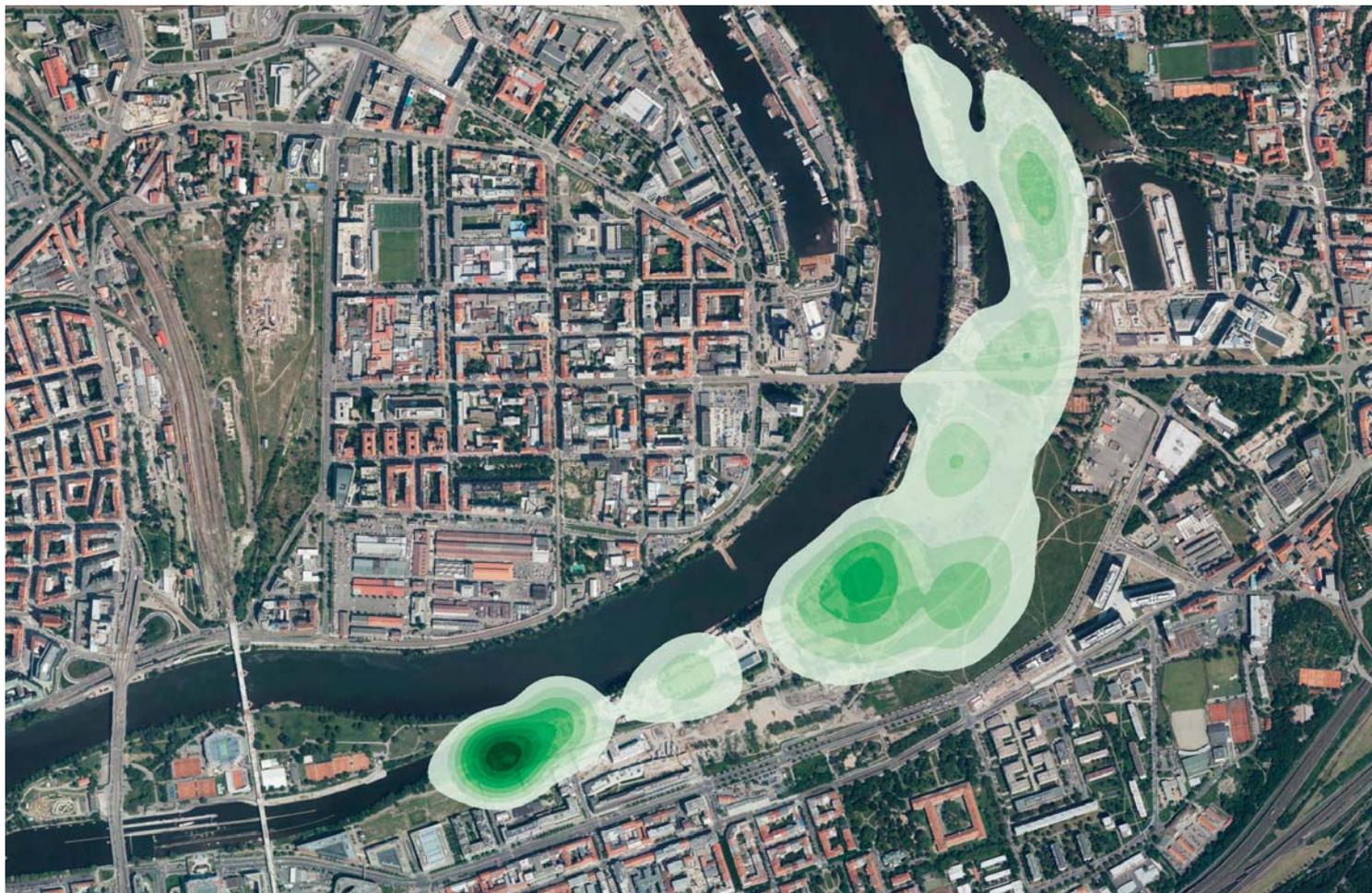
[electronic questionnaire, spring 2021, 491 responses]





Things you like

Do hodnocení pozitivních aspektů celého území se propisují významné rysy území jako blízkost k vodě, vysoké zastoupení zeleně či přítomnost cyklostezky. Míru opakování či významu určitých pozitivně laděných komentářů ukazuje heatmapa. Ta je vytvořena na základě dat z elektronického dotazníku ze dvou kategorií “Co v území máte rádi” a “Kde vnímáte potenciál pro změnu či rozvoj”. Sytější zelené oblasti ukazují nejvyšší koncentraci podnětů. Čím je oblast světlejší, tím je koncentrace nižší.



místa vnímaná pozitivně

Přístav 186 00

The most frequent positive evaluations were addressed towards the company Přístav 18600, with emphasis on the opportunities for **gatherings, refreshments, culture and sports activities**. A common and oft-repeated evaluation is the **informality** and openness of the space. To a lesser extent, the creation of a space as the result of a citizens' initiative. The area also contains a lot of forward-looking comments (potential). These mainly relate to **the new connection to Holešovice** and the general cultivation of the area near the ferry station, including the addition of other functions (a playground, workout area, mooring for private boats or small boats for rent).

“It's an important cultural institution whose value lies in its informality.”

Urban savannah

The area between the concrete plant and the golf course is often referred to by names such as urban savannah, concrete wilderness or urban steppe. People praise the presence of **wild** and **informal nature**, the **unique character of the vegetation** (steppe) and the presence of relatively **rare fauna and flora**. On the other hand, the area resonates on the map because a large number of people see it as **a place with a potential for change** - transformation into a nature park with new facilities, cleaned-up and made accessible, and the displacement of the homeless people. It is clear these two positions are very much at odds with each other and it will not be easy to balance, although on the other hand these are crucial issues to maintaining the character of the place.

| *“The wilderness... there should be a piece of it left... the ability to walk through the bushes in the middle of the city... a piece of nature for adults, children, animals.”*

| *“Make a park plaza, café, bar, summer cinema – an absolutely unused space!!!”*

Gardening colony

The evaluation of the garden colony (as a city feature) was primarily positive. Locally, emphasis was placed on the **long tradition** (the oldest colony in Prague), the unique atmosphere (“lost in time”) and a whole number of **leisure functions**, all with a common majority focus on **youth and children**. The evaluation of **informality** as one of the key values of the territory was also expressed strongly here. The potential for change lies primarily in a greater openness towards the general public.

| *“Lost in time and a place between places.”*

Golf and open space

The golf course area was also evaluated ambivalently, but with a slight preponderance of positive ratings. This is mainly due to the **presence of cultivated greenery, including mature trees**. It is one of the few places in the vicinity that is looked after. The opportunity **to play golf** itself also has value and motivates a number of people to go to the area. The course, thanks to its vastness and **visual openness, also offers views** of the city, the river and sunsets, something which has been noted by a surprisingly high number of reviews (not only by golfers). The negative evaluations were mainly directed at it being closed to the general public.

| *“You like to watch golfers hitting their shots.”*

Cyklostezka

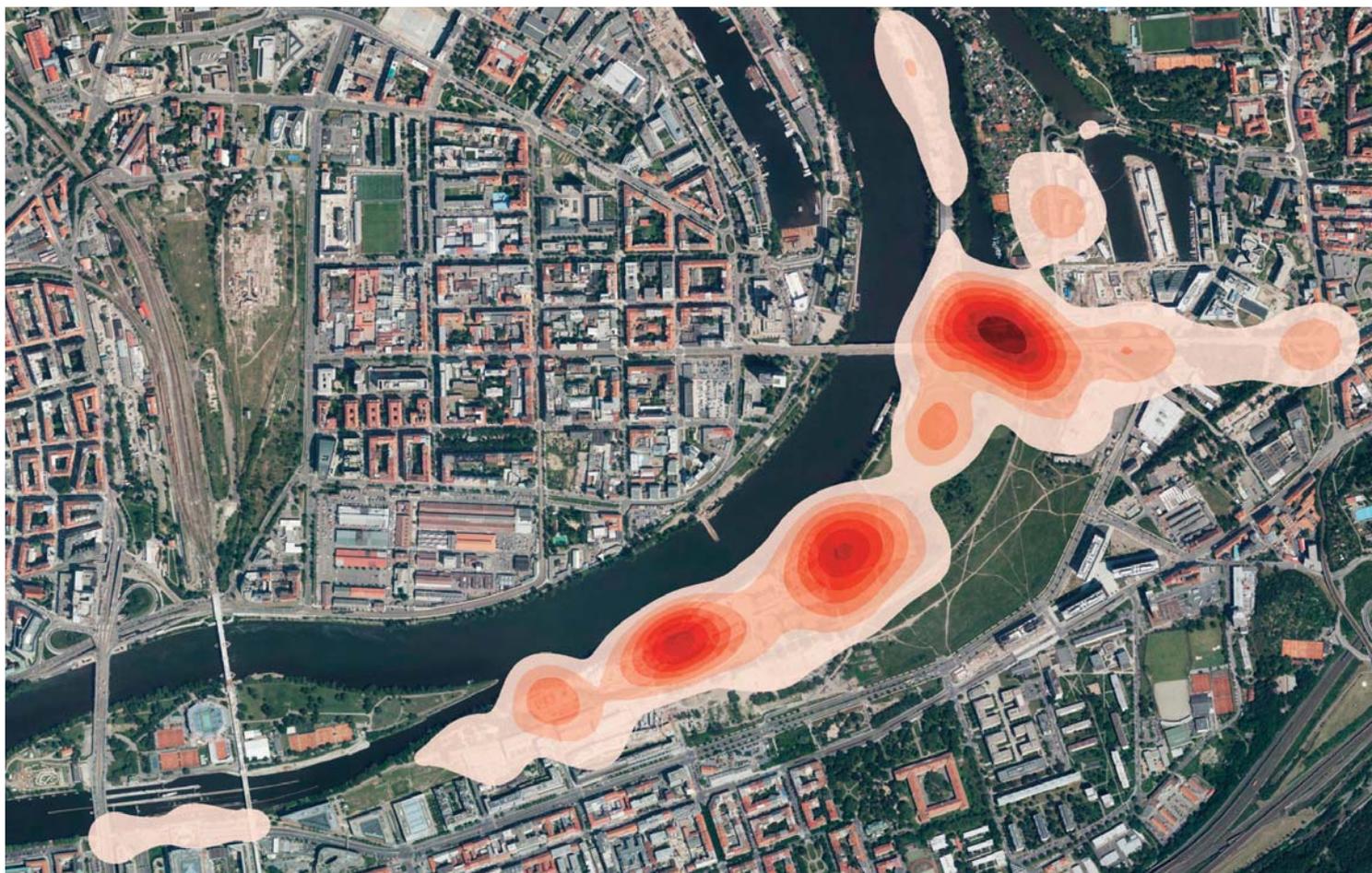
Území funguje jako skvělá spojnice, je to nejkratší a pěkná cesta bez aut. Obyvatelé tudy přejíždí na kole mezi domovem, svými pracovišti a dalšími místy, užívají si lokalitu a oceňují výbornou ne-městskou atmosféru, vhodné stezky a řeku. Vnímají to jako stezku s přívětivým okolím, navíc navázanou na Karlín a další městské části a místa podél Vltavy. Někteří zmiňují dobrou atmosféru mezi dalšími cyklisty a sportujícími lidmi. Dobrým zázemím pro cyklisty je občerstvení Koleto, kde se mohou setkat s dalšími cyklisty a kamarády.

- | *“My living space.
I can come in here without a mask.
The emptiness calms me.”*
- | *“Gentrification has not
fully erupted here.
That has value to me.”*
- | *“Runners and people
on bikes, sports.”*
- | *“A big space, valuable territory,
I’m close by. I’ll probably keep
coming here.”*
- | *“It has its own charm.
There’s a piece
of history here”*
- | *“Nature, freedom,
undeveloped.”*
- | *“Sunshine and beautiful
mature trees.”*
- | *“A relaxing place
for people’s outings.”*
- | *“Greenery – that’s good
everywhere.”*
- | *“A place to fish.”*
- | *“When you go down from the bridge you’re no longer
in Prague, when you climb back up on the bridge
you’re in Prague.”*
- | *“A brownfield, a properly
forgotten area.”*
- | *“Release.
An empty big space.”*
- | *“A big meadow, let the dog go to
the river and chase the hares.”*
- | *“Natural spaces as a rarity, the plains fascinate
me; nature in the city, it’s undeveloped.
Prague is rich in parks, it’s properly balanced,
I appreciate it very much.”*
- | *“I take it as a shortcut to Žižkov. It’s
never my destination. I also see it as a
pathway and its surroundings more than
anything else.”*
- | *“Peace.
That’s my motivation
for coming here.”*
- | *“The pheasants are great.
I love nature.”*
- | *“A hipster waterfront –
unwashed, more natural.”*
- | *“An open space.”*



Things you don't like

When evaluating the problematic aspects of the whole area, recurring themes such as a lack of maintenance or rather a complete absence of administration (see the evaluation above) are reflected in a number of more or less specific or partial problems. Their strength in the territory is reflected in the topical heatmap showing the concentration of these “negative” comments resulting from the electronic questionnaire. The heatmap is drawn from suggestions in the categories: “What you don't like in the territory” and “Where you feel a reduced sense of security or discomfort”.



místa vnímaná negativně

The area around the Libeň Bridge system

A number of problems can be encountered here, ranging from the poorly designed intersection of the cycle path and Štorchova Street, the concentration of **undesirable functions (car dealerships)**, the **poor condition of the bridge** and its bad connections to the surrounding area. The increased presence of houseless people is also noted here.

Urban savannah

This poetic designation can be used to encompass the area between the golf course and the concrete plant. The most frequent comments are directed towards the high **concentration of homeless people** (garbage, settlements and tents, fear of danger, feelings of visual discomfort, etc.). There is a strong criticism of **litter in the area** and **poor care** for the greenery, dangerous surfaces (concrete) and difficulties traversing the area (overgrown, wild).

The concrete plant

The presence of the concrete plant in the area resonates strongly in the comments. Respondents are most concerned that it **creates a barrier** in the area (it is impossible to walk through to the river or between it and the river), it encumbers the area **with dust and noise**, and it brings in **freight traffic** that also crosses the cycle path. In general, there is resistance to such an industrial function in the city.

Přístav 18600 and boarding the ferry

A significant trace on the map is left by the area where the ferry station and the business Přístav 18600 are located. Here the suggestions are mixed and reflect a number of generally unrelated comments. At the top of the list is the negative evaluation of missing connections (the upcoming footbridge), **the boarding access to the ferry station**, haphazard car parking and the poor condition of the cycle path. There was also a problematic evaluation of **Přístav 18600** – respondents were **bothered by the noise**, high **concentration of people**, the perceived messiness of the place and its **“punk” character**.

| *“The homeless people everywhere don’t do the place any good.”*

| *“It’s clearly not okay for people to look out their windows at a concrete plant.”*

| *“Loud music, noise and drunkards under people’s windows... no, thank you.”*

| *“Přístav 18600 could be made nicer looking and, although it’s already a place of culture, more cultured.”*

| *“The area doesn’t feel safe enough to be able to enjoy it fully.”*

| *“There are no people around.”*

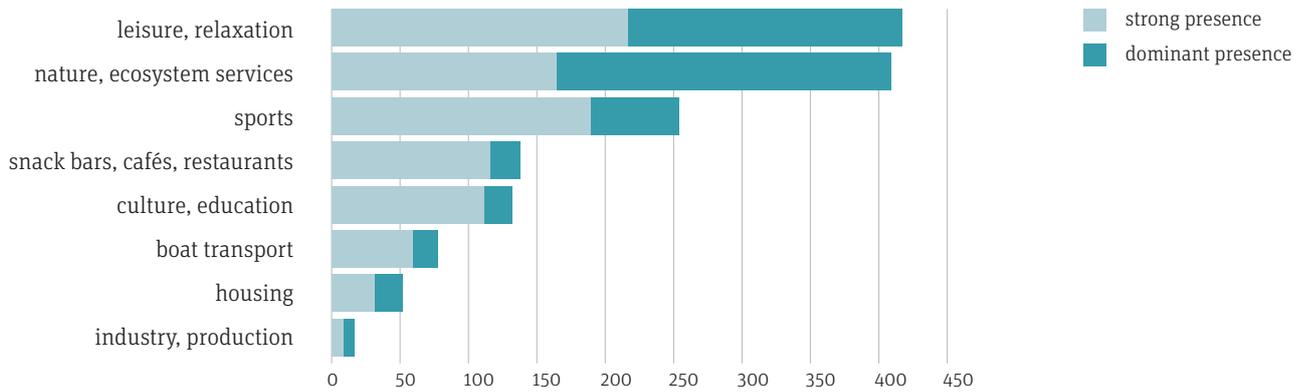
Other general topics

This is where we can list recurring themes relating to the territory as a whole, albeit often somewhat distantly. The number one such topic for respondents is **construction in the area** – whether ongoing or planned. This topic is important across the broader area (Karlín, Libeň), but here it mainly concerns the construction around the A2 cycle path and the related loss of open space people are used to. The second recurring theme, albeit significantly less so, is a certain resistance to the **ongoing gentrification of Karlín**. This is reflected in the increase in new construction for the wealthier classes, the arrival of new office buildings, the rise in prices and disappearance of local businesses and shops. Other topics are described below in individual locations.

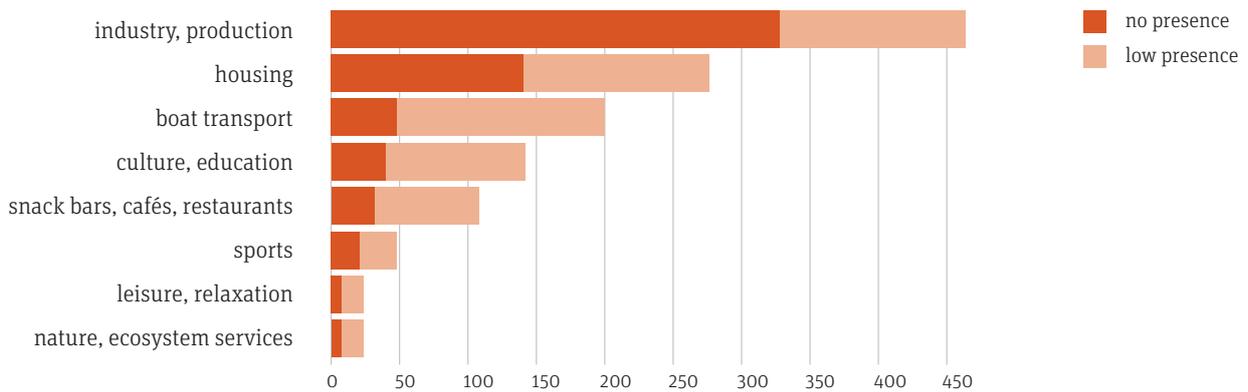
Future outlook

We asked respondents “What activities and functions do you think should take place in the area in the future?” We sorted the answers to this question into three categories. The first one shows the ratio of preferences for the strongly represented functions, the second one shows the ratio for functions that should be represented marginally or not at all.

Future outlook – strong representation [electronic questionnaire, spring 2021, 491 responses]

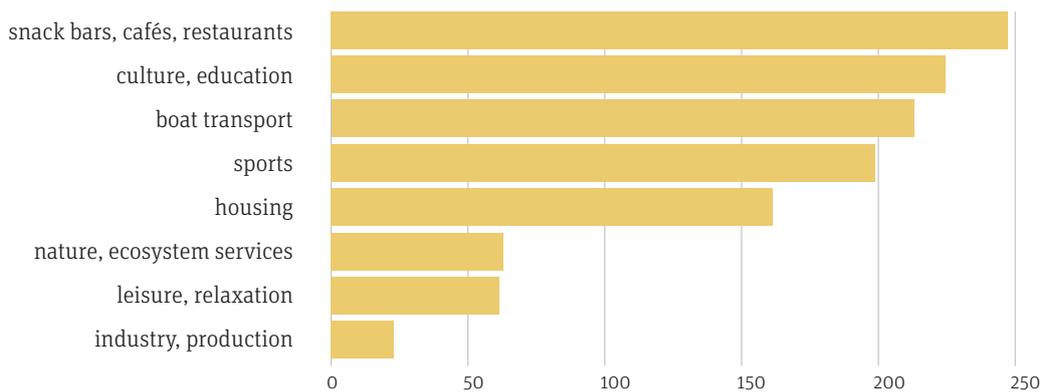


Future outlook – low representation [electronic questionnaire, spring 2021, 491 responses]



The third chart shows the representation of functions that respondents believe should be represented in the area, but the level of representation should be moderate and balanced. Caution should therefore be exercised with respect to the functions at the top of this chart, because they bring along some **concerns about overloading the area** with the function or activity in question.

Future outlook – balanced representation [electronic questionnaire, spring 2021, 491 responses]



In addition to the questionnaire data, we also present a selection of responses and individual suggestions from the field interviews.

- | *A park equipped for relaxation. Conceptually as a whole, yes, but different places should have different solutions.*
- | *Nature, mature trees, a meadow (“Something like the restored meanders of Rokytka”).*
- | *Keep things as they are now, just make it better.*
- | *Public toilets (not everyone can go behind a tree).*
- | *Benches, seating.*
- | *More refreshment options.*
- | *Wilderness, nothing overwrought.*
- | *A balance between nature and development. Development is OK. The flood provided an opportunity for a new neighborhood to grow.*
- | *Human-centric, no solutions “cooked up in the office”.*
- | *There should be works of art in the space, but quality, positive, photogenic art, not just art at any price.*
- | *Suppress construction, let the green belt live, don’t scrub it out clean; something like Rokytka.*
- | *Facilities for children (the young ones are growing up).*
- | *A quiet restaurant.*
- | *A better maintained park and more greenery.*
- | *A multifunctional space, half punk, not too regulated. A space suitable for larger events like the Signal festival, city concerts.*
- | *It shouldn’t cost a lot of money, low budget, cost-effective. No wasted billions.*

Zpracoval:

Ateliér pro veřejnou debatu

07/2021

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