

RED HOOK BE DAMMED

As sea levels rise and storm patterns become more severe, low-lying Red Hook is at risk of severe flooding and imminent destruction. Although any honest approach for developing a future vision of this neighborhood cannot ignore these conditions, an opportunity exists for Red Hook to redefine its future. Combining its infrastructure, leisure and transportation needs, Red Hook can transform itself into a sustainable neighborhood with a unique and truly progressive character.

A dam rises to surround Red Hook and provide protection from flooding while creating, as a byproduct, a new bicycle and pedestrian path. Circumscribed within this ring, a secondary inner loop completes the transformation of Red Hook into a bicycle and pedestrian safe zone; an island in a sea of cars. Stitching the two loops together, a network of bicycle stations is distributed throughout the neighborhood. These “bike barns” not only provide adequate storage and bicycle services for commuters, residents and visitors alike, but are coupled with additional programs that introduce new uses and economic opportunities to Red Hook.

The marriage of infrastructure and leisure can facilitate the realization of a vision, revealing new funding opportunities and galvanizing political will where there is none. The scale and cost are certainly commensurate with its true usefulness. This proposal seeks to avoid irrelevance and hopes to instigate the need to consider a truly integrated and holistic approach as we envision the future of any neighborhood and the city as whole.

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