

SUBCOMMITTEE ON LANDMARKS, PUBLIC SITINGS

AND DISPOSITIONS

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CITY COUNCIL  
CITY OF NEW YORK

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TRANSCRIPT OF THE MINUTES

Of the

SUBCOMMITTEE ON LANDMARKS, PUBLIC  
SITINGS AND DISPOSITIONS

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June 4, 2024  
Start: 1:19 p.m.  
Recess: 2:07 p.m.

HELD AT: 250 BROADWAY - COMMITTEE ROOM, 14TH  
FLOOR

B E F O R E: Kamillah Hanks, Chairperson

COUNCIL MEMBERS:

Justin L. Brannan  
Amanda Farías  
Oswald Feliz  
Christopher Marte  
Sandy Nurse  
Yusef Salaam

OTHER COUNCIL MEMBERS ATTENDING:

Alexa Avilés

SUBCOMMITTEE ON LANDMARKS, PUBLIC SITINGS  
AND DISPOSITIONS

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A P P E A R A N C E S

Beth DeFalco, Deputy Commissioner for Public  
Affairs and Communications at the New York City  
Department of Environmental Protection

Eric Ilijevich, Director of Coastal Resiliency at  
the New York City Department of Design and  
Construction

Joseph Menzer, Vice President, Director of  
Operations at NV5

Victoria Alexander, self

SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: This is a microphone check for the Committee on Landmarks, Public Sitings and Dispositions. Today's date is June 4, 2024, located on the 14th Floor Room, recording done by Pedro Lugo.

SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Good afternoon, and welcome to the New York City Committee on Landmarks, Public Sitings and Disposition.

At this time, please place your phone on vibrate or silent mode.

If you want to submit testimony, send it to [testimony@council.nyc.gov](mailto:testimony@council.nyc.gov). Once again, that's [testimony@council.nyc.gov](mailto:testimony@council.nyc.gov).

At any time during this hearing, do not approach the desk.

Thank you for your cooperation.

Chair, we are ready to begin.

CHAIRPERSON HANKS: [GAVEL] Good afternoon and welcome to the meeting of the Subcommittee on Landmarks, Public Sitings and Dispositions. I am Council Member Kamillah Hanks, and I'm the Chair of the Subcommittee. I am joined today by my Colleagues, Council Member Brannan, Farías, Marte, Nurse, Salaam, and Avilés.

1  
2           Before we begin today's agenda, I will  
3 remind everyone that this meeting is being held in a  
4 hybrid format. For members of the public who wish to  
5 testify remotely, we ask that you first register  
6 online, and you may do so now by visiting  
7 [www.council.nyc.gov/landuse](http://www.council.nyc.gov/landuse) to sign up, and then sign  
8 into the Zoom, and remain signed in until you have  
9 testified.

10           For anyone with us today in person  
11 wishing to testify, if you have not already done so,  
12 please see one of the Sergeants to fill out a  
13 speaker's card, and we will call your name at the  
14 appropriate time.

15           For anyone wishing to submit written  
16 testimony on the items being heard today, we ask that  
17 you please send it via email to  
18 [landusetestimony@council.nyc.gov](mailto:landusetestimony@council.nyc.gov). Include the land  
19 use number and/or project name in the subject line of  
20 your email. Video and audio testimony will not be  
21 accepted.

22           I will remind members of the public that  
23 this is a government proceeding, and that decorum  
24 shall be observed at all times. As such, members of  
25

1  
2 the public shall remain silent unless and until  
3 called to testify.

4           The witness table is reserved for people  
5 who wish to testify. No video recording or  
6 photography is allowed from the witness table.

7 Further, members of the public may not present audio  
8 or visual recordings as testimony, but may submit  
9 transcripts of such recordings to the Sergeant for  
10 inclusion in the hearing record.

11           Now I will open up the public hearing for  
12 LU 84 and 85, an application bought by multiple City  
13 agencies, NY Department of Transportation, Department  
14 of Design and Construction, Department of Citywide  
15 Administrative Services, and Department of Parks and  
16 Recreation, for the acquisition of real property and  
17 changes to the City map to facilitate the Red Hook  
18 Coastal Resiliency Project, a project aimed at  
19 reducing flood risk along Brooklyn's Red Hook  
20 waterfront in Council Member Avilés' and Hanif's  
21 District.

22           Protecting the climate against climate  
23 change is essential. This innovative project's flood  
24 protection system includes flood walls, deployable  
25 barriers, raised streets, and other infrastructure

1 designed to mitigate coastal storm flooding.

2  
3 Importantly, the project achieves these goals while  
4 maintaining neighborhood connectivity and access to  
5 an active waterfront and ensuring minimal disruption  
6 to pedestrians, cyclists, and vehicles.

7           Appearing today on this proposal, we have  
8 Eric, I'm sorry, can you say that?

9           DIRECTOR ILIJEVICH: Hi, Eric Ilijevich.

10           CHAIRPERSON HANKS: Ilijevich, thank you,  
11 from the Department of Design and Construction, Beth  
12 DeFalco from the Department of Environmental  
13 Protection, and Joseph Menzer from NV5.

14           Those wishing to testify must register  
15 online by visiting the Council's website at  
16 council.nyc/landuse.

17           Counsel, would you please administer the  
18 affirmation?

19           COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Panelists, would you  
20 please raise your right hand and state your name for  
21 the record?

22           DIRECTOR ILIJEVICH: Eric Ilijevich.

23           DEPUTY COMMISSIONER DEFALCO: Beth  
24 DeFalco.

25           DIRECTOR MENZER: Joseph Menzer.

1  
2 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Do you affirm to tell  
3 the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth  
4 in your testimony before this Subcommittee and in  
5 answer to all Council Member questions?

6 DIRECTOR ILIJEVICH: I do.

7 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER DEFALCO: I do.

8 DIRECTOR MENZER: I do.

9 CHAIRPERSON HANKS: Thank you, applicant  
10 panelists. Please begin.

11 DIRECTOR ILIJEVICH: Hi, good afternoon,  
12 Council Members and all. Thank you so much for your  
13 time today. Again, my name is Eric Ilijevich. I'm  
14 Director of Coastal Resiliency at the Department of  
15 Design and Construction. Thank you for your time  
16 today to look over the land use actions included in  
17 the ULURP for the Red Hook Project, S-A-N-D-R-D-H-K.  
18 I'll just go through the agenda, which is on the next  
19 slide.

20 We're going to talk briefly about a very  
21 high-level project overview and schedule, talk about  
22 the existing conditions and how we hope to mitigate  
23 the flood risk, go through the design review, refresh  
24 folks on the environmental review, and then take a  
25 closer look at the land use actions in the ULURP, and

1  
2 then summarize and look at the next steps so the next  
3 slide, please.

4                   This is for the project overview and  
5 schedule, and we can go right to the next slide,  
6 please. Thank you.

7                   So, again, at a very high level, we're  
8 providing coastal flood risk reduction while  
9 maintaining the connection and access to the active  
10 waterfront, which we do with an entirely passive  
11 system at eight feet. We have some deployable  
12 measures, but if we don't even deploy those, we'll  
13 have protection up to eight feet. We increase that  
14 level of protection to 10 feet by including those  
15 roller gates and flip-up gates, which will address  
16 99.9 percent of historic storms in the Red Hook area  
17 and, throughout the design process, we were able to  
18 include improvements to open space by adding  
19 improvements to the BWG, or the Brooklyn Waterfront  
20 Greenway.

21                   The next slide, we'll talk about the  
22 schedule and, just moving from top down, we are in  
23 the process of submitting our Public Design  
24 Commission project, and for their review and  
25 approval. We're at the final stage of ULURP, which



1 is, again, presenting to you all for your  
2 acknowledgement of the land use actions in our ULURP.  
3 Other than a brief break for COVID in 2021, we have  
4 met the community many times at the CBs as well as in  
5 small group sessions, and we've also submitted the  
6 environmental assessment.  
7

8 Our next slide shows us a brief overview  
9 of, again, of how we... I'm sorry, this is the actual  
10 milestones of the community engagement that we've had  
11 throughout the life of the project, going all the way  
12 back to 2016 and 2018 in feasibility, all the way up  
13 until now in final design and ULURP. Okay. The next  
14 slide, please.

15 We'll remind folks again about the flood  
16 protection alignment, and the next slide shows how we  
17 do that. This is an image of the project area, and  
18 then just looking from top down, there's a faint  
19 black dotted line, which is the natural topography at  
20 an elevation 10 so we tie into that with two sections  
21 of flood protection, both at the Atlantic Basin  
22 section, which is at the top of the screen, as well  
23 as the Beard Street section at the bottom, and those  
24 blue lines are the composition of both flood walls,  
25 flood gates, and raised streets and sidewalks for

1  
2 both of those areas. Again, those separate components  
3 are tying back to high ground at 10 feet, elevation  
4 10 feet, which is that black dotted line. Let's take  
5 a closer look at some of the actions, again, that are  
6 specific to this application. The next slide.

7           This is the land use composition. This is  
8 a picture which shows a whole host of different land  
9 use uses in different colors throughout the area with  
10 the alignment of the flood protection, and so this  
11 land use composition includes an active industrial  
12 waterfront with inland residential areas. There is a  
13 strip of mixed-use space between these two areas,  
14 including one-story warehouses to six-story  
15 multifamily buildings consisting of light  
16 manufacturing, artist studios, restaurants, and a  
17 host of varying local businesses. Some of the larger  
18 standouts that you can see here are the Ikea, as well  
19 as the Red Hook houses, which is the largest NYCHA  
20 development in Brooklyn where there are 24 six-story  
21 buildings where about 70 percent of Red Hook's  
22 approximate 11,000 residents reside. Please also  
23 recognize that the vast majority of the waterfront is  
24 privately owned, except for only a few public  
25 waterfront access points, including the Valentino

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Pier and the waterfront esplanades at Ikea. This entire area is surrounded by navigable waters under a federal jurisdiction, and the handful of historic buildings, particularly along Beard Street, were originally designed and located to take advantage of their close proximity to a working waterfront and to facilitate all of the commerce and industry associated with that waterfront connection. This patchwork of ownership was the key driver for the final alignment of the flood protection system, and that is, again, indicated in the black line that you see here. The next slide, please.

This is an image showing the different areas in the Red Hook area. Medium to heavy manufacturing zones are mapped along the waterfront with an M2-1 district along the neighborhood's western shoreline and an M3-1 district along the southeastern shoreline. A light industrial M1-1 zone was mapped to serve as a buffer between the industrial waterfront and the residential core of the neighborhood. Low-to-medium-density residential zones with limited commercial overlays are located in the center of the neighborhood, and a local truck route

1 wraps around the neighborhood on Van Brunt, Beard,  
2 and Bay Streets. The next slide.

3  
4 We take a look at some of the policy that  
5 affects the area. This is an image, again, that shows  
6 the black line of the flood protection system as well  
7 as some of these specific zoning areas which I'll  
8 describe. The zoning has been consistent largely  
9 since 1961, but there have been some changes to note,  
10 including the following. In 1996, CB6 approved the  
11 197-A plan for Red Hook, which is the area outlined  
12 in the pink dotted line. The plan has two goals,  
13 which are essentially to increase housing supply and  
14 preserve the growing neighborhood's industrial  
15 economy. This plan also included a number of  
16 proposals, including a mixed zoning study, increased  
17 public waterfront access, and truck route  
18 modifications. Following the 197-A plan, the Red Hook  
19 store's rezoning area was mapped as one of the City's  
20 first mixed-use districts in 2002 as well as the Ikea  
21 rezoning in 2004. Also established in 2006, the  
22 majority of the Red Hook project is located within  
23 the Southwest Brooklyn Industrials Business Zone, or  
24 IBZ, which is shown in purple, and the IBZ spans Red  
25 Hook's industrial waterfront and extends to Columbia

1  
2 Waterfront District to the north, and Sunset Park to  
3 the south.

4           Let's take a look at the next slide,  
5 which shows the flood risk to the area. A majority of  
6 the neighborhood shown here in the blue-green is the  
7 1 percent annual chance flood hazard area, or the  
8 100-year flood plain, and that means that every year  
9 there's a 1 percent chance of a 100-year flood in  
10 this area, and just one thing to note, that this area  
11 has an elevation generally from about 4 to 8 feet,  
12 and a reminder that that's what our system protects  
13 to just passively. The area in orange are the 0.2  
14 percent, or the 500-year flood plain, which has a  
15 much lower risk of flooding due to the natural  
16 topography of the area with an elevation at around 10  
17 feet and, again, that's the reminder of when we  
18 deploy our gates, we get to that level of 10 feet.

19           The next slide shows the actual flood  
20 protection components as part of our design review.

21 Next slide, please. Thank you.

22           This dark blue line is the alignment of  
23 the concrete flood wall. It's very hard to see here,  
24 but there's a dark blue line there. The yellow and  
25 orange markers are the locations of the flip-up gates

1  
2 and roller gates, respectively. The light blue  
3 markers include areas of the street and sidewalk  
4 reconstruction, which again are some street raising  
5 or some regrading, and the purple areas are  
6 independent flood protection components around  
7 critical areas outside of the public right-of-way,  
8 and those are mainly protection of electrical power  
9 substations or mechanical equipment. That again is  
10 the overview of the actual components of the system.  
11 The next slide, please.

12           This is a close-up of what those elements  
13 actually look like. The flood wall on the left is  
14 again steel-reinforced concrete. That formwork that  
15 you see there, you may be able to start recognizing  
16 throughout the city, most notably on the Eastside  
17 Coastal Resiliency Project, which a large component  
18 of that project is already complete so that formwork  
19 again was decided upon based on that previous design  
20 decision for recognizability around the city, and  
21 then the center is the roller gate, which again is in  
22 its deployed position, but mostly these gates will be  
23 stored in their open and locked position unless  
24 exercised, maintained, or again deployed during an  
25 actual coastal flood event, and then the flip-up

1  
2 gates on the right, which are stored in their locked  
3 and down position, allowing access and mobility on  
4 top of those and then, again, flipped up, deployed by  
5 our agency partner, which will be the DEP Bureau of  
6 Coastal Resilience, either for an exercise or for an  
7 actual coastal flood event, and those are  
8 hydraulically deployed or manual. Next slide, please.

9           Just to remind folks, the next slide is a  
10 brief overview of the environmental review and the  
11 land use actions so the next slide talks about the  
12 environmental assessment, specifically. We have  
13 completed and we met all of the requirements at the  
14 federal, state, and local, the NEPA, the SEQRA with  
15 an S, and CEQR with a C level. The lead agencies  
16 throughout that process were NEPA for FEMA as well as  
17 for the state and local, the Mayor's Office, and we  
18 can go to the next slide, please.

19           We'll take a closer look at specifically  
20 what brings us here today, which are the land use  
21 actions in the ULURP so this is an image which shows  
22 the project area. It shows the alignment and then,  
23 again, the actual land use actions that are included  
24 in our ULURP, which includes changes to the City map  
25 as well as acquisitions. I think that it was

1  
2 mentioned that the acquisition is an acquisition of  
3 real property, but we are seeking acquisitions  
4 through easements only. We are not actually acquiring  
5 any property through this process and, again, the  
6 line of protection is the blue line that you see  
7 here.

8           The next slide is specific to the changes  
9 in the City map. This is changes in legal street  
10 grades. We're going to be mapping Sullivan Street  
11 west of Ferris Street as well as mapping new  
12 parklands to enlarge Todd Triangle so those are the  
13 specific changes to the City map.

14           Then the next slide talks about the  
15 acquisitions. Again, this is acquisitions to  
16 facilitate easements on 20 private lots. Even though  
17 there are 20 private lots, the separate lots may have  
18 a similar owner. I believe our list of owners is  
19 limited to six, even though there are 20 individual  
20 lots. Again, we just want to remind folks that all of  
21 the flood protection system elements are located  
22 within City-owned right of way, and the City only  
23 needs to seek an interest by way of easements, not  
24 real property transfer in order to operate, maintain  
25 and inspect those elements, and this easement is



1  
2 roughly 15 feet out from the center line of the  
3 alignment, and we can reassure everyone that all  
4 existing structures, businesses, or homes subject to  
5 these easements are proposed to remain intact.

6           The next slide is a little bit more of a  
7 close up in detail to the specific land use actions  
8 and the particular parcels of land. I don't want to  
9 get into the actual details or specific of each one  
10 of these, but we can if there are any specific  
11 questions to those. Again, this is an outline of the  
12 map, the flood protection as well as the land use  
13 actions related to each property owner. Yellow is the  
14 mapping actions, and the magenta is for the  
15 acquisitions or easements. One thing to note here is  
16 there has been a recent announcement about the Port  
17 Authority property here in relation to EDC now  
18 managing this for a master plan so we found out about  
19 that on the day we were presenting at EDC so, just to  
20 reassure folks that we are in communication with EDC  
21 as they continue through the planning of that section  
22 so we're looking forward to working with them on  
23 that.

24           Then the next section is for the Beard  
25 Street. That was Atlantic and Atlantic Basin, and now

1  
2 this is the Beard Street for the next slide which,  
3 again, is a similar fashion outline about the coastal  
4 flood protection system as well as the particular  
5 property owners in relation to those land use actions  
6 and, again, if you have specific questions, we can  
7 tackle that.

8           To bring it all together in the next  
9 slide, this is again our summary and next steps. As I  
10 mentioned, we are in the final stages of the final P,  
11 S, and E, the Plan, Specs, and Estimate, review of  
12 the coastal flood protection, which again is passive  
13 at eight feet and active at 10 feet. This is again  
14 the final milestone with you all to seek your review  
15 of the land use actions in the project. If all goes  
16 well, which we hope it does, we're going to hope to  
17 plan for procurement by the end of this year and  
18 begin groundbreaking next year, early 2025, and have  
19 a three-year construction duration for that.

20           Then the next slide is just again a brief  
21 overview of those steps. The top one is again some of  
22 the design-related items and, of course, the bottom  
23 one is the ULURP and, again, which brings us all to  
24 you here today.

1  
2           We have some contact information on the  
3 next slide. If you have any information, our contact  
4 information is there. We have a project-specific  
5 website and we look forward to answering your  
6 questions now. Thank you.

7           CHAIRPERSON HANKS: Thank you so much. I  
8 have a few questions but, before that, I just want to  
9 recognize Council Member Feliz has joined us.

10           Before I put it off to Council Member  
11 Avilés, I just have two questions, one of which you  
12 answered already. This is truly an exciting project,  
13 and you answered the question regarding the Port  
14 Authority property around the Atlantic Basin, so  
15 thank you for that.

16           My question is, how are flood protection  
17 projects like this in Red Hook coordinated with  
18 regional efforts like the U.S. Army Corps of  
19 Engineers Harbor Study?

20           CHAIRPERSON HANKS: We do have folks from  
21 DEP here today, which we may open that up to them,  
22 but this is an exciting time for all of us who do  
23 this type of work in coastal resiliency because of  
24 that new announcement of that Bureau at DEP. If you  
25 haven't had a chance to engage with Laurian Farrell

1  
2 and team, I hope you get a chance soon because we are  
3 excited that they are now on board and they have  
4 direct lines of communication with those entities. I  
5 don't know if we want to speak specifically about  
6 those particular touch points, but...

7 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER DEFALCO: Hi,  
8 everybody. I'm Beth DeFalco with DEP. Unfortunately,  
9 I think Laurian had to leave. Our new...

10 CHAIRPERSON HANKS: Are you on?

11 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER DEFALCO: Laurian is  
12 our new Deputy Commissioner for Coastal Resiliency,  
13 and she'll be able to tell you that and, if you do  
14 get a chance to meet with her afterward, that would  
15 be great. These will all incorporate and are taken  
16 into account together. Of course, Army Corps is  
17 taking a big portion of a lot of the other coastal  
18 resiliency projects, but these were also, and DDC  
19 can, I think, back me up, they were designed together  
20 so East Side Coastal Resiliency as well as Red Hook  
21 Coastal Resiliency were designed together and we  
22 will, in the new Bureau of Coastal Resiliency, will  
23 be taking operations over once they're complete so  
24 that we can work in tandem with NYCEM, Mayor's  
25

1  
2 Office, everybody else on when those are actually  
3 deployed and not deployed.

4 CHAIRPERSON HANKS: Thank you so much.

5 Could the design be modified in the future if higher  
6 level of flood protection is needed?

7 DIRECTOR ILIJEVICH: Since I mentioned  
8 that we are tying back to existing topography at 10  
9 feet, that does present some challenges. If we want  
10 to add to that, we would have to build upon that  
11 existing topography to get higher so there are some  
12 challenges to adaptability, but it's not saying that  
13 we can't. It's just that to be so specific about the  
14 East Side Coastal Resiliency Project, we do have that  
15 adaptability built into that so we were able to  
16 include foundations that could support an additional  
17 two feet as needed but since, again, the dial for  
18 resiliency, you can turn it up as high as you want,  
19 but again, that's going to add walls, it's going to  
20 add complexity, it's going to add costs, it's going  
21 to add further penetration into the neighborhood so  
22 that's where we landed where we did on the sweet spot  
23 of 10 feet but, again, it doesn't preclude any  
24 adaptability. It's just that that's where the project  
25 landed after many years of design consideration.

1  
2 CHAIRPERSON HANKS: Thank you. That  
3 concludes my questions. Being from a coastal district  
4 of Staten Island, I hope this project will set an  
5 example to all of our coastal districts around New  
6 York City so bravo. This is great. Council Member  
7 Avilés.

8 COUNCIL MEMBER AVILÉS: Thank you, Chair,  
9 and thank you all for being here today. Thank you for  
10 the eight years of work that has been put into this  
11 from the moment of feasibility to, and we're still  
12 not done.

13 I guess I'd like to run through a couple  
14 of questions. Can you, again, for the record explain  
15 the rationale around not including locations like  
16 Food Bazaar and other small businesses around the  
17 perimeter?

18 DIRECTOR ILIJEVICH: Yeah, again, there  
19 were some challenges because of, well, there's  
20 several, so first would be the land ownership, and  
21 those are specifically privately owned parcels of  
22 land that touch on the federally managed navigable  
23 waters so putting or sowing that line of flood  
24 protection just within that brief or small space is  
25 very challenging and, if you talk about real property

1  
2 acquisition, it could increase costs and complexity  
3 so that's one of the reasons. Plus, if you also think  
4 about how these buildings were originally designed or  
5 their intent or thought was to, again, be located  
6 close to that waterfront commerce to provide access,  
7 to provide ease of facilitating that industry and  
8 commerce so those buildings were designed basically  
9 at grade in order to facilitate that so they are  
10 somewhat left at that elevation because of that  
11 original intent so that, again, presents a challenge  
12 to putting that line of flood protection next to  
13 those buildings where everything is located so close  
14 to the grade so those, again, are some of the  
15 challenges that, again, were considered by this team.  
16 We did think about going further out in all different  
17 directions of this, but that's where we landed,  
18 again, because of those design criteria for the  
19 benefit/cost analysis, for the actual level of  
20 protection, and that's where we landed on the  
21 alignment that we did.

22 COUNCIL MEMBER AVILÉS: In terms of the  
23 data that was used, I think a common piece of  
24 feedback we've heard from residents was the data  
25 doesn't reflect the current reality, right, it's old

1 data and we know the new reality is a lot more water.  
2 We are contending with both water from the sky, water  
3 from the ocean, water from underground, so could you  
4 respond a little bit to the data that was used and  
5 how you address the gap of the data and the current  
6 situation?  
7

8 DIRECTOR ILIJEVICH: Sure. So, again, we  
9 hear all of the concerns about the different sources  
10 of the water, like you mentioned, coming from the  
11 coastline, also coming from the sky but, again, I  
12 just want to remind folks that the Red Hook Coastal  
13 Resilience Project, again, addresses that issue from  
14 the coastal storm surge, and the data that we used,  
15 again, was historic data and we also included the New  
16 York Panel on Climate Change projections for sea  
17 level rise, which is where we landed on the level of  
18 protection that we did and this 10 feet, considering  
19 that data, manages 99.9 percent of those historic  
20 coastal storms so that's where we landed on the  
21 alignment that we did.

22 I don't know if anyone else wants to  
23 discuss about any further details about the data.

24 DIRECTOR MENZER: Sure. I can just add  
25 that the data goes through the year 2020 so it's not



1  
2 historic data and it's not that far off from the  
3 current timeframe, and so it takes into account  
4 almost 95 years of data from 2000 to 2020.

5 COUNCIL MEMBER AVILÉS: Great, and I guess  
6 it's something we'll continue to closely monitor as  
7 conditions evolve, because they certainly will.

8 One of the serious concerns of the Red  
9 Hook community has been, again, related to this where  
10 the water is coming from, is the groundwater and how  
11 stormwater is managed, and the concerns around what  
12 is the actual plan for Red Hook around how to deal  
13 with the water that would be inside of these  
14 floodgates, the stormwater, the groundwater, so could  
15 you maybe, DEP, talk about some of the current plans  
16 and then the long-term plans, which obviously will be  
17 an ongoing conversation about how we are going to  
18 also address those issues for the water within the  
19 barriers?

20 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER DEFALCO: Sure,  
21 Councilwoman. I know that you and I have talked about  
22 this plenty, and certainly for those of you who don't  
23 know, I'm a proud member of the Red Hook community  
24 and live right in the middle of what would be a  
25 bathtub effect, or that people have talked about a

1 bathtub effect. One of the hard parts to remember is  
2 that we've got different types of flooding. When  
3 there's water coming in your house, you don't  
4 necessarily care. You just want to get rid of the  
5 water. But understanding the type of flooding helps  
6 us understand what the solution is, so this is a  
7 coastal protection. This is going to protect us  
8 against storm surge, like we saw with Hurricane Sandy  
9 and, given that we've had an awful hurricane season  
10 predicted this year, it's something I'm particularly  
11 concerned with, what the future looks like and how  
12 fast this project can get done and start protecting  
13 people from that storm surge, that high tide. In  
14 addition, we also have projects that we are working  
15 on for stormwater or rain from the sky and how that  
16 is going to affect Red Hook. We've got a 50-million-  
17 dollar project, the Columbia Street project, that  
18 will add and upsize the sewers between 20 to 25  
19 percent. That will certainly be a benefit to the  
20 community. That starts in 2027, and then we also have  
21 a lot of different, and DDC can certainly talk about  
22 this as well, that there is drainage built in and  
23 pumps built in inside of the coastal protected area,  
24 inside of the walls, to help drain. Now some of those  
25

1  
2 can't be activated until your tide goes down, which I  
3 tell my neighbors. We had a high tide incident in  
4 January so tide came up, came in about a block or  
5 two. We can't do anything until the tide goes down  
6 but, within two hours, that street was bone dry, and  
7 that's because the pumps started working exactly as  
8 they were supposed to so we've built in that  
9 infrastructure to complement all of the actual walls  
10 and other flood protection measures.

11                   DIRECTOR ILIJEVICH: Yeah, and I'll just  
12 add to that, that the specific project actually  
13 improves some of the drainage issues in the area by  
14 some of those grade changes that are incorporated in  
15 the project so the street raising and the grade  
16 changes actually improve the drainage.

17                   COUNCIL MEMBER AVILÉS: Great. In terms of  
18 the maintenance of the infrastructure, who will be in  
19 charge of the flood protection system, everything  
20 from making sure it's operational to sweeping up all  
21 the garbage that we know is going to be surrounding  
22 the infrastructure?

23                   DEPUTY COMMISSIONER DEFALCO: That's going  
24 to be the new Bureau of Coastal Resiliency and, given  
25 that we've got Eastside Coastal Resiliency coming

1  
2 online before this project will come online, we will  
3 already, by the time this is fully up, have that  
4 process down so we've got a team that's going to  
5 literally be dedicated to the maintenance of all of  
6 these flood gates, both the roller gates, flip-up  
7 gates, everything else, and that also includes trash  
8 and making sure there's not anything that would block  
9 it, and so it'll be both for Eastside Coastal  
10 Resiliency and then also Red Hook.

11 COUNCIL MEMBER AVILÉS: Great. Thank you.  
12 Was there any green infrastructure incorporated into  
13 the new design of Todd Triangle or any other part of  
14 the design?

15 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER DEFALCO: I'll let you  
16 talk about that.

17 DIRECTOR MENZER: Not specifically into  
18 Todd Triangle. There are aspects of that area which  
19 are green, but there is green infrastructure along  
20 some of the project streets as part of this project,  
21 along Beard and along Ferris Street.

22 COUNCIL MEMBER AVILÉS: Can you give me a  
23 couple of examples?

24 DIRECTOR MENZER: Exact locations?

25 COUNCIL MEMBER AVILÉS: Yeah, maybe not.

1

2

DIRECTOR MENZER: No, not exact locations.

3

I apologize.

4

COUNCIL MEMBER AVILÉS: That's okay.

5

6

DIRECTOR MENZER: But we can share the  
design plans at some point, and it is part of the  
project.

7

8

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COUNCIL MEMBER AVILÉS: Okay. We'll be  
able to highlight it for community members. In terms  
of the, if the flood protection system is certified  
by FEMA, does it change the flood insurance rate map,  
or FIRM?

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DIRECTOR ILIJEVICH: It does not.

14

COUNCIL MEMBER AVILÉS: It does not.

15

16

DIRECTOR ILIJEVICH: It's for a 10-year  
storm. The FEMA flood insurance rate maps are based  
on the 100-year flood plane.

17

18

19

COUNCIL MEMBER AVILÉS: Okay. Great. In  
terms of, were any trees disturbed during the  
process, or will be disturbed, and/or will you be  
planting more trees? If so, how much and where?

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21

22

DIRECTOR ILIJEVICH: Yeah, we do obviously  
recognize the importance of trees in our urban  
environment. They sequester CO2, they help with  
stormwater runoff, they help with infiltration, and

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they provide shade, which again helps with the heat island effect, so we don't like to remove trees at all but, if we do, we do have a robust tree restitution, or Parks Department has a robust requirement that we do an analysis, we do a tree inventory, and if we remove any, we assess a value for each of those so we have to replace in the project area where we can and, if we cannot do that within the project limits, this dollar value gets provided to the Parks Department to locate those new trees, either in that specific area, or in the borough, or in the city based on that review. The Parks Department has been along for the ride. They have recognized that they have over 150 species that they can choose from but, for coastal areas, they limit that to about 49, I believe, which are based on their ability to be resilient to saltwater inundation, other items so, again, we do have to remove some trees. We are replacing them. We're replacing more than we're removing and, if we're not able to reach, I don't believe we're able to reach that same restitution value, we will be funding Parks to relocate trees or to add new trees in the area.

1  
2 COUNCIL MEMBER AVILÉS: Will you be able  
3 to tell us specifically where, I guess, as we're  
4 further down the line, exactly where those are going  
5 to be placed?

6 DIRECTOR ILIJEVICH: Absolutely. We have a  
7 tree planting plan within our project specifically,  
8 we can share specifically, and then as we work with  
9 the Parks Department, we can absolutely ask them what  
10 they plan to do with that balance of trees that we're  
11 not able to incorporate in our project. We'll  
12 definitely provide that information.

13 COUNCIL MEMBER AVILÉS: Sure. Yes, the Red  
14 Hill community is absolutely... Trees are so critical,  
15 given that we lost 500 trees for the resiliency  
16 project at the NYCHA campus, and it is hot, hot, hot.  
17 It's really problematic.

18 Can you note where all the traffic  
19 calming infrastructure will be placed, in particular,  
20 the raised intersections, so I know we talked about  
21 probably two raised, is that what it's called, the  
22 raised speed bumps? I call them speed bumps. Is that  
23 what they are?

24 DIRECTOR MENZER: We're raising two  
25 intersections.

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COUNCIL MEMBER AVILÉS: Yes.

DIRECTOR MENZER: The intersections are at  
Conover and Reed, and then at Conover and Van Brunt.

COUNCIL MEMBER AVILÉS: Can you tell us  
why those two intersections were chosen to be raised?

DIRECTOR MENZER: So, specifically, the  
one at Conover and Reed allows us to carry the 10-  
foot protection without any deployable features  
across the roadway using the raised crosswalk or the  
raised intersection, in that location it's a raised  
crosswalk, and connects two walls by raising the  
intersection and, in doing that, by not providing a  
barrier of any sort even during a flood event, that  
street will always be open and in use for vehicles to  
be able to traverse during an actual storm event.

At Reed and Van Brunt, the intersections,  
again, were raised to allow the cars to traverse the  
intersection but also raised so the sliding gate has  
a flush foundation to slide on and connect the two  
retaining walls, and the same similar thing happens  
at a raised crosswalk at Beard and Van Brunt, and  
that raised crosswalk is across Van Brunt and for the  
same reason, to allow the sliding gate a flush



1 foundation to slide across and make the connection  
2 between two retaining walls, the flood walls.

3  
4 COUNCIL MEMBER AVILÉS: Got it. Thank you  
5 for that.

6 Are you at all concerned, given the  
7 amount of last-mile facilities we have, giant tractor  
8 trailers that will be traversing those raised  
9 intersections, is there a maintenance plan for making  
10 sure that they stay raised?

11 DIRECTOR MENZER: None of those  
12 intersections are on the actual truck route, with the  
13 exception of, I guess, the one-way or the dead-end  
14 street that is Van Brunt, so that one section of  
15 roadway that is dead-end that goes down to the Food  
16 Bazaar, there are going to be heavy vehicles, trucks  
17 that will use that route, but the major truck route  
18 comes down Van Brunt and then turns onto Beard so  
19 none of the other raised features are on the truck  
20 route.

21 COUNCIL MEMBER AVILÉS: Okay. You know,  
22 trucks don't follow the truck route, right? I'm just  
23 saying.

24 Lastly, I guess, we talked about  
25 potential opportunities for engaging Red Hook artists

1  
2 and youth in any part of community improvements  
3 related to the resiliency projects. Do you foresee  
4 any of those possibilities and, if so, when, maybe?

5 DIRECTOR ILIJEVICH: You mean specific to  
6 the flood protection components themselves?

7 COUNCIL MEMBER AVILÉS: Yes.

8 DIRECTOR ILIJEVICH: So because of their  
9 actual function as flood protection, we want to  
10 enable our operating agency to be able to access them  
11 to do the inspection, to see if there are any cracks  
12 or any potential failure points to those so that  
13 limits our ability to actually affix or paint or do  
14 anything to those specific elements. Regarding public  
15 art, we've been considering that throughout the life  
16 of all of our projects, especially East Side Coast  
17 Resiliency, because those walls are a little bit  
18 taller but, again, we're limited to actually doing  
19 murals because of that inspection requirement. We  
20 also at some point considered making them green or  
21 growing or living walls or actually climbing walls,  
22 actually doing but, again, unfortunately, they have a  
23 specific and very important function and with that  
24 function becomes a specific requirement for  
25 inspection so we're limited to actual public art on

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2 these actual elements but, throughout the life of  
3 construction, we did have an engagement with school-  
4 age youngsters to actually propose drawings for the  
5 actual construction fencing so we'll be looking for  
6 opportunities like that throughout the life of Red  
7 Hook construction, so we'll be likely doing the same  
8 thing.

9 COUNCIL MEMBER AVILÉS: Great. Wherever we  
10 can get opportunities to engage, not only in learning  
11 about what the apparatus is and the science and  
12 engineering that goes into it, but certainly making  
13 them beautiful. Thank you.

14 I guess lastly, for residents who are  
15 concerned and really can't imagine like how this  
16 actually operationalizes, can you walk us through  
17 like, storm is coming. What next?

18 DIRECTOR ILIJEVICH: Yeah, absolutely. For  
19 all of these coastal resiliency projects, we have an  
20 operations and maintenance plan, and part of that is  
21 an appendix called the ERP, the Emergency Response  
22 Plan, which has a specific countdown to deployment  
23 based on emergency management essentially giving out  
24 the signals for their coastal activation playbook,  
25 and that starts sometimes as early as 128 hours but

1  
2 likely at 96 hours ahead of zero hour, which is  
3 maximum sustained winds at 39 miles per hour, so we  
4 will be working to finalize that work plan with our  
5 operating agency, DEP Bureau of Coastal Resilience.  
6 They'll have that plan in hand, and they'll be at the  
7 emergency operations center at Emergency Management,  
8 and they'll be counting down the clock and, when that  
9 specific schedule says deploy this gate at this  
10 intersection, DEP will have that plan in hand and  
11 will actually be ready to go by actually deploying  
12 these measures for not only for Red Hook, but for all  
13 of the coastal resiliency projects.

14 COUNCIL MEMBER AVILÉS: Great. Lastly,  
15 we'd love a commitment from DEP and any other agency  
16 that is involved here to make sure that we have  
17 enough community engagement and awareness building  
18 around what the expectations are and just  
19 preparedness in general so that we're all not running  
20 around crazy, although community members are always  
21 prepared and figure out how to respond accordingly,  
22 but it would be great to do a good amount of  
23 awareness building around how we protect ourselves.  
24 If whoever is supposed to be deployed cannot get  
25

1  
2 there, this community is going to have to figure out  
3 how to support itself and manage its own apparatus.

4           DEPUTY COMMISSIONER DEFALCO: I think that  
5 the community will actually see us out there quite a  
6 bit, especially as not only maintaining, but doing  
7 those drills, and it'll be a great opportunity and an  
8 educational opportunity to talk to people about what  
9 we're doing, how we're doing it, why you've got to  
10 use, in some cases, machines, in other cases it's  
11 purely manual, and it's intended to be that way for a  
12 lot of different reasons, but then also there will be  
13 a long lead-up, when we're looking at a storm of this  
14 size that comes into the city, we don't find out  
15 about it 48 hours in advance. We usually have a  
16 pretty good idea and then you spend days and days and  
17 days on calls so, yes, certainly both transparency  
18 and notification of the community would be a large  
19 part of that.

20           COUNCIL MEMBER AVILÉS: Great. Thank you  
21 so much, and I know we have several years to go still  
22 yet with the building and just want to reaffirm the  
23 importance of communicating with the community and  
24 ensuring that things are transparent and, if things  
25 go sideways, that we do our best to be transparent

1  
2 about those things and the implications and how we  
3 kind of move forward together. Obviously, there's a  
4 ton of skepticism given the changing dynamics and  
5 just generally when City builds stuff, it's like  
6 residents are really nervous about it and a constant  
7 ask for consistent and ongoing communication across  
8 City agencies, which sometimes actually looks pretty  
9 good and then sometimes is appallingly not occurring,  
10 so thank you for your work on this and we'll continue  
11 to be in touch and thank you, Chair, for the time.

12 CHAIRPERSON HANKS: You're very welcome.  
13 Thank you all so much. There's no other Colleagues  
14 that wish to testify or have questions.

15 With that, thank you. This panel is now  
16 excused.

17 DIRECTOR ILIJEVICH: Thank you very much.

18 CHAIRPERSON HANKS: Counsel, are there any  
19 members of the public who wish to testify on this  
20 item?

21 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: I don't have anybody  
22 in person who signed up to speak. If you are  
23 interested, you need to fill out a card, and I also  
24 don't have anyone online who's indicated that they're  
25 interested in speaking. If you're online and

1 interested in speaking, you need to raise your hand  
2 or otherwise let the Zoom host know.  
3

4 CHAIRPERSON HANKS: If there are any  
5 remote public participants who wish to testify?

6 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: I think we do have  
7 some.

8 We'll move to online comments right now.

9 CHAIRPERSON HANKS: Okay, thank you.  
10 Members of the public will be given two minutes to  
11 speak. Please do not begin until the Sergeant-at-Arms  
12 has started the clock. We will now hear from the  
13 first panel.

14 CHAIRPERSON HANKS: This is Victoria  
15 Alexander.

16 VICTORIA ALEXANDER: Thank you. My name is  
17 Victoria Alexander. I'm a resident of Red Hook. I've  
18 also been a member of Resilient Red Hook for over a  
19 decade since Hurricane Sandy and was part of the New  
20 York Rising program. We still have several concerns,  
21 and we've been trying to engage with DCC and DEP  
22 about the issues that we still have not feel like  
23 there's clarity on how this will actually look for  
24 our neighborhood besides there being huge walls  
25 everywhere, which is a large concern. I think I want

1  
2 to thank everybody for their time also and appreciate  
3 it so we feel like there should be a comprehensive  
4 analysis of our current infrastructure. We have been  
5 asking for a sewer study for over 10 years for this  
6 neighborhood, a comprehensive sewer study. We've  
7 asked about two projects, the HWK700A and 700B that  
8 have been delayed over 20 years. Those are upgrades  
9 to our sewer system that still have not happened.  
10 Also understanding the last mile warehouse  
11 implications that are happening in this neighborhood  
12 and how those will impact this project and work  
13 together to resolve some of the negative benefits  
14 that we're having. We have not seen a detailed  
15 cost/benefit analysis and risk analysis of this  
16 project to know that the funds that are being used  
17 are the best way to spend these funds to protect the  
18 neighborhood. One of the biggest issues that we've  
19 had that we continue to ask for and don't seem to get  
20 an answer that seems reasonable is that why we cannot  
21 preserve Red Hooks' cobblestone streets as a crucial  
22 neighborhood characteristic and part of our heritage.  
23 We've lost so much of it because of Amazon and other  
24 projects that have just torn it up. The answers from  
25 the DDC were that it wasn't cost effective, that



1  
2 would cause tripping problems. They don't want to  
3 maintain it basically and don't think there's funds  
4 to maintain it, but that's not a reason to destroy  
5 our historic culture and unique character of this  
6 neighborhood and ends up being one of the reasons  
7 that people come to this neighborhood. We're  
8 concerned about the CSO pollution and the flood wall  
9 design and installation stop check valves that will  
10 mitigate creating the bathtub effect that we have not  
11 heard answers where we feel that those...

12 CHAIRPERSON HANKS: We're going to ask you  
13 to wrap up. Do you have any more? Yes?

14 VICTORIA ALEXANDER: I have a long list of  
15 our issues so I will submit them online.

16 CHAIRPERSON HANKS: Thank you for  
17 submitting that testimony. I appreciate that. Thank  
18 you.

19 Council Member, do you have any  
20 questions?

21 If there are any remote public  
22 participants who also wish to testify and not have  
23 done so, please press the raise hand button now. If  
24 you are here with us in person, please see the  
25 Sergeant-at-Arms to fill out a speaker card.

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2                   With there being no other members of the  
3 public who wish to testify regarding Land Use 84 and  
4 85, Red Hook Coastal Resiliency Project, the public  
5 hearing is now closed and the items are laid over.

6                   That concludes today's business, and I  
7 would like to thank the members of the public, my  
8 Colleagues, Subcommittee Counsel, Land Use Staff,  
9 Sergeant-at-Arms for your participation today. This  
10 meeting is hereby adjourned. [GAVEL]

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C E R T I F I C A T E

World Wide Dictation certifies that the foregoing transcript is a true and accurate record of the proceedings. We further certify that there is no relation to any of the parties to this action by blood or marriage, and that there is interest in the outcome of this matter.



Date July 4, 2024