

URBAN HEALTH - TUNING HUMAN & ENVIRONMENTAL RHYTHMS

Synchronizing, Tuning and Augmenting the Dynamic Rhythms of City and Citizens



Potential Long-term Plan for Coney Island - A Balance of Raised and Flooded Areas

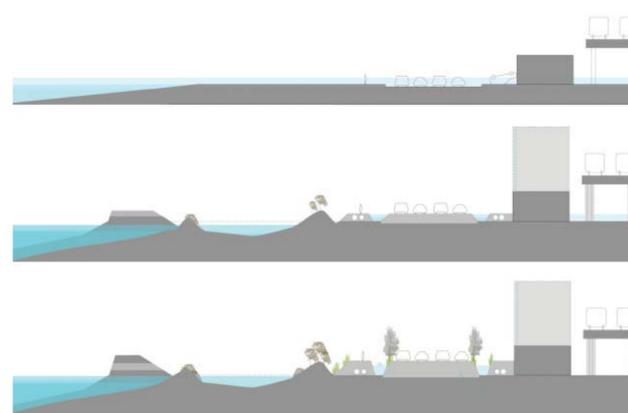
Doctors know that if you want to treat a boil on the skin, you have to treat the whole body. It's the same for the City. Michel Cantal-Dupart, French urbanist



New Lake and Wetland on Coney Island



Street Festivals revitalize the Local Economy



Multi-Phase "Cut and Fill" Strategy

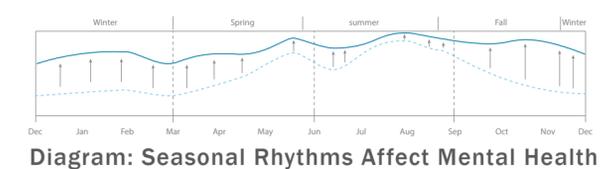
This long-term plan for Coney Island is built upon the premise that the health of the city and that of its citizens are related, and that their various rhythms should be synchronized, tuned and augmented through an inclusive public process.

The big design idea is to sync the rhythms of nature (daylight, seasons, tides, storms etc...) with the rhythms that affect people's mental and physical well-being (hormones, chemical cycles etc...). This is important because mental conditions - from mood swings to severe mental disorders - are directly affected by local physical and social environments. Residents of Coney Island, as well as many other coastal dwellers have a high rate of mental disorders, especially those affected by social isolation, economic stress and the threat of flooding.

This urban design aims to create a balance between humans and nature by slowly returning some of the land back to the sea, in a way that reduces sudden impacts from flooding. This is achieved by a "cut and fill" strategy that elevates some land above the storm surge line in a configuration that facilitates a self-organizing system of public programs and seasonal festivals.

Furthermore, the design aims to reduce social segregation by creating a series of public spaces and streetscapes where the community, as well as tourists can congregate. These spaces are designed to host hundreds of imaginative neighborhood-based festivals that celebrate local customs, music, children, food, comedy and more... The timing and rhythms of these festivals will be synchronized with the days of the year that are known to correlate with increased mood swings, depression or suicides. See diagram below.

This proliferation of well-timed seasonal festivals will economically empower citizens by creating local jobs and businesses while revitalizing neighborhood culture. An expanded and diversified tourist industry will result in economic benefits that are more equitably distributed across Coney Island. A stronger local economy will encourage the gradual flood-proofing of land and urban infrastructures. As sea levels rise, local residents will choose which areas to elevate and deliberately flood, through an inclusive and self-organized planning process. As a result, Coney Island will become a physically and mentally balanced urban district.



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