

THE SECRET PARKS & PIERS OF RED HOOK

by Clarence Eckerson Jr.

Since it's the middle of winter, we'll keep this one short. In fact, at under eight miles, this jewel of a joyride can also be done on foot. This month, we're visiting the burgeoning community of Red Hook, located on Brooklyn's Western toe. Neglected for decades (thanks primarily to the monstrous BQE) this area is now experiencing a renaissance with an infusion of artists, waterfront development, and cunning entrepreneurs.

You'll visit four newly reconstructed piers from which you can enjoy unmatched views of New York Harbor and lower Manhattan. Bring a book or snack and immerse yourself in the solitude of these magnificent, secluded lands. The endpoint is the Brooklyn Heights Promenade, making this a perfect adventure on a sunny, winter afternoon.

START: Brooklyn side of the Brooklyn Bridge bike path. Closest subway: Borough Hall (2, 3, 4 & 5) and join the ride at Joralemon Street. The A, C, F, G, M, N & R trains stop within blocks of the start.

- 0.0 Go south on the brand-new, Adams Street bike lane!
- 0.3 (R)ight on Joralemon.
- 0.8 (L)eft on to Furman Street.
- 1.0 Ahead is Columbia Street. Future plans for the Brooklyn waterfront include separate off-street bike paths on this and adjoining streets.
- 1.4 R on Degraw St.
- 1.6 L on Van Brunt
- 2.7 At dead end, road becomes Beard Street Warehouse/Pier. Check out the vintage trolley car and train tracks being restored by Bob Diamond. Also, don't miss the eccentric sculptures at the pier's end. Spend some time and reverse out via Van Brunt St.
- 2.8 Next L is Reed Street.
- 2.9 R on Conover - BUT before continuing, visit the Red Hook Garden Pier to your left. Anchored here is the unique Lehigh Valley No. 79, a floating wooden barge which hosts art exhibits and a free concert series in the summer. Fact: Over 300 tons of silt and muck were pumped from its hull to get it to float.
- 3.1 L on Coffey St. (cobblestones!) to another dead end. This is Louis Valentino Park which offers some more spectacular views of the waterfront and Statue of Liberty.
- 3.4 Reverse direction and head back out Coffey.
- 3.8 R on Ostego - then quick L on Sigourney St.
- 4.0 R on Columbia St. Continue to the Columbia Street Esplanade and use the bicycle path on the sidewalk. Don't miss the twisted relics and dilapidated warehouses on the opposite shore. Ride to the end and reverse out.
- 5.4 R on Bay Street
- 5.7 L on Clinton St. Careful crossing under the BQE, Clinton continues on the other side.
- 7.4 L on Montague. Ride to the end for the world famous "movie view" of Manhattan from the Promenade.



Kick back on the Columbia Street Esplanade, one of the newest greenways along the Brooklyn waterfront.



Back to the Future? Bob Diamond wants to restore trolley service in Red Hook. Monitor his progress at the Beard Street Warehouse.