

homs.about.past.books.e-mail me



## a weekly dose of architecture

***The New York 2030 Notebook*** edited by Jeff Byles and Olympia Kazi

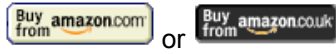
Institute for Urban Design, 2008  
Paperback, 72 pages

In late 2007 the Institute for Urban Design's symposium New York 2030: New York's Green Future brought together authors of Mayor Bloomberg's PlaNYC and a panel of urban design experts. The initial excitement and optimism about the Mayor's plan gave way to questions about its details, process, potential and other considerations in the months leading up to the event, after the plan's official unveiling in April of the same year. Adrian Benepe, Alexandros Washburn and others from the administration spoke positively yet realistically about the plan's goals (ten in three broad categories) in the morning, and academics and advocates questioned the goals and more in the afternoon session. This first in a series of notebooks by the Institute for Urban Design documents the New York 2030 discussion and adds other voices to the mix, "experts...invited to share their visions for an urban future."

For both the proceedings and the invited voices, brevity is apparent, fitting for a document calling itself a notebook. This results in a large number of contributions touching on numerous topics, from biking and street trees to environmental justice and citizen participation. The variety is most appealing, but those interested in learning more about a particular contribution's perspective are left to their own devices; the notebook does not proffer suggested readings. Also appealing are the news timeline that accompanies the essays in part two -- noting important events "both directly and indirectly affected by the plan" -- and the ticker tape at the bottom of each page that transcribes the 127 initiatives from PlaNYC's ten goals.

In effect the book is a layering of these four areas: New York 2030 symposium, invited contributions, news timeline, and PlaNYC goals and initiatives. The notebook can therefore be read in a number of ways, and the relationships between the four areas, while clearly focuses on the Mayor's plan, vary depending on one's approach as well as background. Without an index or another way of connecting the dots, the information basically floats on the pages, raising important considerations but then stepping aside. This characteristic of the notebook exhibits the complexity and diversity of the ideas swirling around the plan,

though ultimately it becomes clear that PlaNYC is just a start. Much more needs be considered, addressed and strived for if the plan is be successful *and* just.



what are we reading?

**book archive**

2009.10.05