



For Immediate release

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### **Burnham Plan Centennial Announcements Advance Region's Lasting Green Legacy**

(Chicago) The Burnham Plan Centennial Committee will announce several significant new developments designed to expand the region's open space and increase public access to natural areas today. The announcements will be made at *Our Green Metropolis: The Next 100 Years*, a Burnham Plan Centennial event today at **6:00 pm at the Spertus Institute's Feinberg Auditorium, 610 S. Michigan Ave.** Among the notable announcements:

**Last 4 Miles of Chicago Lakefront:** Legislation to transfer unused International Port District Land on Chicago's south side to the Chicago Park District will begin the process of opening the last 4 miles of Chicago lakefront up to public access and add 91 acres of land to the Calumet Open Space Reserve. Sponsors are *State Representative Marlow Colvin* and *State Senator John Cullerton*.

**New Wildlife Refuge:** A formal request by *Governor Patrick Quinn* to the *U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service* begins a process that will ultimately establish the Hack-ma-tack National Wildlife Refuge, a new wildlife preserve on 10,000 acres of protected land in northeastern Illinois and southeastern Wisconsin.

**Critical Bike Route Link:** A partnership between *ComEd* and the *Illinois Department of Natural Resources* to develop recreational green space on a one-mile segment of the Burnham Greenway gap will be executed in the next few weeks. The Burnham Greenway Gap is the missing link in a set of trails that link Chicago's lakefront to the Mississippi River and to cross border trails in Indiana and Wisconsin.

**Access to National Tall Grass Prairie:** The selection of a Chicago design firm – *Wheeler Kearns* – to create a new Prairie Learning Center at the Midewin National Tallgrass Prairie will provide the public with new access to this 19,000 acre site, the largest preserve in northeastern Illinois.

**Preservation of More Open Space.** A commitment by *Chicago Wilderness* to protect 1.8 million acres of open space by the year 2060.

“Our region's interconnected network of open spaces and natural areas – greenways and trails, wetlands, parks and forest preserves – link communities across our region from southeastern Wisconsin through Illinois to northwestern Indiana. But, like Daniel Burnham a century ago, we

stand at a turning point in our region's history," said George Ranney, who is co-chair of the Burnham Plan Centennial Committee with John Bryan, and also is President and CEO, Chicago Metropolis 2020.

"We have to move much more aggressively throughout the region. We need to set more ambitious goals, with firm deadlines to complete the work of safeguarding the natural network – the green infrastructure – comprised of our woods and open spaces, savannas and river banks, streams and urban forests. I think we have been dawdling too much, and time is against us not for us," Ranney added.

The five announcements are among 21 Green Legacy Projects identified by the Burnham Plan Centennial Committee and Openlands as closing gaps in the region's "green infrastructure." All held events or made significant progress during the Burnham Centennial year.

"We commend the Burnham Plan Centennial and Openlands for the significant progress they have made to advance Daniel Burnham's vision for improving the quality of life for Chicago-area residents," said Steve Solomon, president of the Exelon Foundation, environmental sponsor of the Burnham Plan Centennial. "The Green Legacy projects support the Exelon Foundation's goals of encouraging respect for the environment and strengthening the social and economic fabric of the communities Exelon's operating companies serve."

The year 2009 is the 100th anniversary of the publication of Daniel Burnham's and Edward Bennett's "Plan of Chicago", one of the world's first and most visible comprehensive regional plans. Burnham's admonition to "make no little plans" has been a guiding principle for Chicago and for generations of planners and builders in cities around the globe. One hundred years later, the Burnham Plan still inspires the region to be visionary, think regionally, recognize the value of beauty and conservation, and act deliberately to turn our plans into reality for the benefit of all the people of the region.

More than 250 Partners including museums, professional associations, civic and community organizations, educational institutions and others are collaborating to develop programs that will shape the Centennial and engage a broad audience. For more information, please visit the website at: <http://burnhamplan100.uchicago.edu/>.

The Exelon Foundation is the Burnham Plan Centennial Presenting Sponsor for the Environment. Additional support for green legacy initiatives was provided by the Gaylord and Dorothy Donnelley Foundation, Hamill Family Foundation and Northern Trust. Leadership funding for the Burnham Plan Centennial was provided by The Chicago Community Trust, our region's community foundation. The Trust is joined as a Burnham Plan Centennial Founding Sponsor by The Elizabeth Morse and Elizabeth Morse Genius Charitable Trusts.

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