THE BURNHAM PLAN CENTENNIAL

Creating Tomorrow’s Green Region
Like Daniel Burnham a century ago, we stand at a turning point in our region’s history. If we choose business as usual, we will continue to poison our air, grind up our prairies and farmland, drain our water sources and drive up temperatures. But, if, like Burnham, we are up to the challenge, we will commit ourselves, here and now, to safeguard the woods and backyards, the savannas and river banks, the streams and urban forests, the air and water and soil that form the natural network supporting all life here.

Like the “gray” infrastructure of roads, utility lines, alleys, water mains and railroad tracks, the region’s green infrastructure provides myriad economic benefits. When a meadow sops up rainfall, that water doesn’t have to be transported and treated by a sewer system. When a garden across a rooftop lowers the building’s temperature, less energy—and money—are expended for air conditioning.

We nurture our green infrastructure when we build energy-efficient buildings. We are good stewards of our green infrastructure when we reduce, reuse and recycle our waste.

The natural world  Look at the satellite view of the Chicago region to the right. That’s the natural world in which we live, a world without government boundaries. It’s a world that’s a single fabric, each element linked to the other.

If we are to safeguard and nurture this green infrastructure for ourselves and future generations, we need to think beyond boundaries. We need to make connections across the region.

Making connections was a key element in 21 projects that were part of the centennial celebration of the Plan of Chicago. These projects—ranging from McHenry County to Kankakee, and from the Indiana lakeshore to Kane County—are examples of how the rich green legacy of the Burnham Plan continues to be carried forward.

For each of these “green legacy” projects, goals were set, partnerships were formed, commitments were vowed—and progress was made.

And, with the momentum of this year’s work, progress will continue.

As this booklet details, some of the “green legacy” projects moved forward with giant strides, some with small steps. Yet, more will need to be done in the future—not only on these projects but across the region.

**We can do great things**  Chicago Wilderness, for instance, says that, in order to ensure the vibrancy of the green infrastructure, we need to protect the natural character and functioning of 1.8 million acres of the seven million acres in the greater Chicago region by the year 2060. In already developed areas, this may be as simple as promoting rain gardens and incorporating conservation principles into municipal land use ordinances. Elsewhere, it is essential to set aside open space as nature reserves to guarantee the landscape’s health and resiliency.

That goal and others listed at the end of this booklet can be accomplished—if we put our will behind them. They must be done.

As Daniel Burnham showed, if we think big and dream boldly, we can do great things.
If we are to safeguard and nurture our green infrastructure for future generations, we need to think beyond political boundaries to protect, restore and connect green space.
1. **Bloomingdale Trail**  
   Design work begun for new linear park (page 11).

2. **Burnham Greenway**  
   Serious talks to close the gap (page 6).

3. **Calumet Open Space Reserve**  
   The city took possession of a key marsh (page 11).

4. **Calumet-Sag Trail**  
   Plans refined for 26-mile trail (page 6).

5. **Chicago Riverwalk**  
   Path extended to nearly three-quarters of a mile (page 8).

6. **Deer Grove Preserve**  
   State protection granted (page 11).

7. **Des Plaines River Trail/Liberty Prairie Reserve connection**  
   Planning done to make a key link (page 6).

8. **Englewood Open Space Plan and New E.R.A. Trail**  
   Grassroots plan completed (page 11).

9. **Fox River Trail**  
   Aurora to close gap in 60-mile trail (page 7).

10. **Hack-ma-tack National Wildlife Refuge**  
    Illinois Governor requests federal action (page 12).

11. **Heritage Park**  
    Downtown master plans for Joliet and Lockport anchored by this eight-mile corridor (page 13).

12. **Kankakee Riverfront Trail**  
    First phase of trail completed (page 8).

13. **Kankakee Sands**  
    More than 7,000 acres now protected (page 13).

14. **The Last Four Miles**  
    Detailed plans to make Chicago’s lakefront all parkland (page 8).

15. **Marquette Greenway Trail**  
    New plan adopted to close nine-mile gap in 50-mile trail (page 7).

16. **Midewin National Tallgrass Prairie**  
    Design concept selected for new learning center (page 13).

17. **Northeastern Illinois Regional Water Trails Plan**  
    After just a decade, trail system now 88 percent complete; celebration on Little Calumet River (page 9).

18. **Old Plank Road Trail**  
    Twenty-one-mile trail completed (page 7).

19. **Openlands Lakeshore Preserve**  
    Ravine/bluff ecosystem opened to the public (page 9).

20. **Rock Run Greenway**  
    Gap in nine-mile greenway closed (page 7).

21. **Waukegan Open Space**  
    Implementation started, in the remaking of the downtown shoreline (page 9).
In little-noticed ways, the green infrastructure knits together the Chicago metropolitan region in a single fabric. Water flows, birds fly, wildflowers grow without regard to boundary lines on a map.

Similarly, the hiking and biking trails in our ever-growing network help to weave the people and communities of the region together.

For instance, the Fox River Trail, one of this year’s “green legacy” projects, will combine with the McHenry County Prairie Trail to stretch for 60 miles from Wisconsin south to Kendall County—through Richmond, Crystal Lake and McHenry, through South Elgin and St. Charles and Geneva and Batavia and Oswego—once a key gap in Aurora is closed.

Another important gap that needs to be addressed is in the 11-mile Burnham Greenway, a second “green legacy” project. When completed, this greenway will be a hub connecting five present and planned regional trails, including the 500-mile Grand Illinois Trail, a majestic loop across the northern border of Illinois, down the Mississippi River, across the state along the Illinois River and Hennepin Canal, and up the eastern edge.

**Burnham Greenway** Significant negotiations took place in 2009 to close the two-mile gap in the 11-mile greenway on Chicago’s Far Southeast Side. Once complete, the trail will connect Chicago with the village of Burnham. The connections to regional trails is expected to provide and economic boost by creating a link between the Chicago trails and those in the south suburbs. Partners: the Illinois Department of Natural Resources, the Village of Burnham, Commonwealth Edison, Openlands and the City of Chicago. **Next step:** Lease right of way from Commonwealth Edison; obtain funds for engineering.

**Calumet-Sag Trail** The Calumet-Sag Trail Coalition and the National Park Service refined plans for this 26-mile east-west trail to connect 14 south and southwest suburbs. On June 6, National Trails Day, the coalition sponsored a progressive series of trail route dedication ceremonies. **Next step:** Start construction.

**Des Plaines River Trail/Liberty Prairie Reserve connection** Planning efforts by the Lake County Forest Preserve District focused on fixing a key gap in the regional trail system by linking the 32-mile Des Plaines River Trail with the 5,800-acre

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**The Old Plank Road Trail links Joliet and Chicago Heights.**

Dedications on June 6 reaffirmed commitments to a 26-mile Calumet-Sag Trail. The map at far right shows how closing a two-mile gap (dashed green) in the Burnham Greenway would create a major hub for a regional trail system of hundreds of miles.
public-private Liberty Prairie Reserve in the Grayslake area. This link will make possible a later connection to the 35-mile Millennium Trail, now under development. **Next step:** Secure the right of way for the connection from the property owner.

**Fox River Trail**  Aurora, the second largest city in Illinois with 157,267 residents, will soon break ground on the final 1.3-mile segment of this 60-mile trail and begin construction of RiverEdge Park, a key element in the redevelopment of the city’s downtown. Partners: the city of Aurora, Fox Valley Park District, Kane County Department of Transportation, and the Kane County Forest Preserve District. **Next step:** Complete construction and connect to the Virgil Gilman Trail between Montgomery and Sugar Grove, a link to the Grand Illinois Trail.

**Marquette Greenway Trail**  This trail is a key component of the Marquette Plan, a Burnham-like strategy to recapture at least 75 percent of the northern Indiana lakeshore for public access, create a continuous trail network and boost the local economy. In October, the Northwestern Indiana Regional Planning Commission, working with the Lake Michigan Coastal Program and the Indiana Planning Association, announced a plan to close a nine-mile gap separating two sections of the 50-mile greenway trail in the Indiana Dunes National Lakeshore. **Next step:** Start detailed engineering and construction studies.

**Old Plank Road Trail**  This 21-mile trail into Joliet, completed in 2009 by the Forest Preserve District of Will County, passes through rare railroad prairie and a wetland habitat with more than 200 native plants and 160 species of birds. **Next step:** Rejuvenate the connecting on-street bike route through downtown Joliet and, on the east end, build a link through Chicago Heights to the Thorn Creek Trail.

**Rock Run Greenway**  The acquisition of the Theodore Marsh in Crest Hill closed the last unprotected gap in the nine-mile greenway, which features a continuous trail through 1,200 acres of high quality wetlands and uplands. Partners: the Forest Preserve District of Will County, Lockport Township Park District, Channahon Park District, Joliet Park District, and Joliet Junior College. **Next step:** Preserve additional land to expand the greenway.
For Daniel Burnham, rippling water was a balm for the soul. In the Plan of Chicago, he described Lake Michigan as “living water, ever in motion, and ever changing in color and in the form of its waves...In its every aspect it is a living thing, delighting man’s eye and refreshing his spirit.”

What was true a century ago is still true today. And, because of three decades of the environmental movement, it’s as true now for our rivers and streams as for the lake.

Hemmed in daily by concrete and steel, city and suburban residents find rest and refreshment watching the flow of our waterways. And an important component in the “green legacy” projects has been helping people get to the waters for biking, hiking and strolling, and into the waters for fishing, boating, canoeing, and kayaking.

The Last Four Miles project will complete Burnham’s vision, spelled out in the Plan of Chicago, of a city lakefront filled with parks from one end to the other. Another project in Waukegan takes a page out of the Plan with a blueprint for remaking that north suburban city’s downtown and lakefront.

Chicago Riverwalk  This summer, the city of Chicago opened new sections of the riverwalk under the bridges at Michigan Avenue and Wabash Street. The path now extends nearly three-quarters of a mile from State Street to Lake Shore Drive along the south bank. **Next step:** Complete the design for extending the riverwalk to Lake Street.

Kankakee Riverfront Trail  Construction of the 2.3-mile first phase of the 9.2-mile-long trail, which will link the city of Kankakee with the Kankakee River State Park, began in the spring and was completed in the fall. **Partners:** The Community Foundation of Kankakee River Valley, Kankakee County, the city of Kankakee, Kankakee Community College, Kankakee River Valley Forest Preserve, Kankakee Valley Park District, Kankakee Township and Shapiro Development Center. **Next step:** Implement the rest of the trail plan and connect to the Wauponsee Glacial Trail in Will County.

The Last Four Miles  In June, The Friends of the Parks unveiled a detailed plan for developing beaches and parks along the remaining four miles of Chicago’s 30-mile lakefront not now accessible to the public. **Next step:** Introduce legislation to transfer lakefront land
on the South Side from the Illinois International Port District to the Chicago Park District.

**The Northeastern Illinois Regional Water Trails Plan**  A decade ago, the sponsors of this ambitious trail plan envisioned an interconnected 500-mile network of trails for non-motorized craft, such as canoes and kayaks. During this year, signage and access points were added to bring the system to 88 percent completion. For the first time, paddlers could easily travel through the entire 500 miles. In June, a paddling event on the Little Calumet River in South Holland celebrated the regional trail's impressively rapid success. Partners: Openlands, the Illinois Department of Natural Resources and the Illinois Paddling Council. **Next step:** Link the network of trails to systems in Wisconsin, Indiana and Michigan.

**Openlands Lakeshore Preserve**  For the first time in a century, Chicago-area residents were able to visit one of the area's last intact ravine/bluff ecosystems when this preserve on Lake Michigan opened in September at the former Fort Sheridan in Highland Park. Openlands is the sponsor and owner/manager of the Preserve. **Next step:** Develop the upland trail, address storm water concerns, install public art and continue education programs.

**Waukegan Open Space**  Like a modern-day Burnham Plan, the 21st Century Vision for Waukegan's Downtown and Lakefront will remake the shoreline as a natural amenity for the city's residents. **Next step:** Build interpretive facilities and a boardwalk to protect the beach and improve access.
When it comes to the green infrastructure, another way of saying open space is “breathing space.”

That’s what Daniel Burnham was getting at a century ago when he wrote: “All of us should often run away from the works of men’s hands and back into the wilds, where mind and body are restored to a normal condition,….He who habitually comes in close contact with nature develops saner methods of thought than can be the case when one is habitually shut up within the walls of a city.”

This breathing space can range from a huge nature preserve, such as the Midewin National Tallgrass Prairie, south of Joliet, the largest grassland restoration ever initiated east of the Mississippi, to the two-mile linear park that forms the keystone of the Englewood New E.R.A. Trail and Corridor Development.

Like trails and waterways, these open spaces form a network across the metropolitan landscape. And the more these open spaces are interconnected with others, the stronger and healthier they—and our region—will be.
Englewood may seem far from Joliet, but, small and large, each piece of open space is linked to all the others as part of the green infrastructure.

**Bloomingdale Trail**  Design and engineering work is underway to transform an abandoned elevated railroad line into this 2.8-mile linear park, extending from the Chicago River west, linking the economically, racially, and ethnically diverse populations of the neighborhoods of Wicker Park, Logan Square, Bucktown, and Humboldt Park. Partners: Trust for Public Land, the city of Chicago and the Friends of Bloomingdale Trail. **Next step:** Continue acquisition and development of small ground-level parks as trail access points.

**Calumet Open Space Reserve**  The city of Chicago took possession of the newly acquired 300-acre Big Marsh, an important habitat for native and migratory birds such as the white-rumped sandpiper. Long-range plans call for habitat restoration, recreation areas and trail connections across 4,800 acres on the heavily industrialized Far Southeast Side. **Next step:** Seek funding for a system to eliminate severe fluctuations in water levels and for the construction of the Ford Environmental Center.

**Deer Grove Preserve**  This area in Palatine, the first land acquired nearly a century ago by the Forest Preserve District of Cook County and now covering 1,800 acres, won greater protection this spring when it became the 500th site in the Illinois Nature Preserve System. Restoration of 160 acres of wetlands began in October. Partners: the Forest Preserve of Cook County, Openlands and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. **Next step:** Complete restoration and begin work to protect more acres.

**Englewood Open Space Plan and New E.R.A. Trail**  An innovative, community-generated plan, announced in August, aims to transform a two-mile-long abandoned above-grade rail line and more than a dozen vacant lots into community gardens to increase parkland, improve the quality of life and provide an economic boost to the Englewood neighborhood. Green businesses are also proposed along the former rail line. Partners: Openlands, Local Initiative Support Corporation/Chicago, Teamwork Englewood, Sustainable Englewood Initiatives, Greater Englewood Gardening Association, and Stay Environmentally Focused. **Next step:** Complete cultural mural, begin installing community gardens and acquire ownership of rail line.
Hack-ma-tack National Wildlife Refuge
This proposed refuge, sprawling across 10,000 acres in northern McHenry County in Illinois and southern Walworth County in Wisconsin, would protect a dramatic glacial landscape and an ecosystem that is home to diverse communities of fish and animals. Late in the year, Illinois Gov. Pat Quinn and Wisconsin Gov. Jim Doyle each asked the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to study the proposal and ask Congress to create the refuge. Meanwhile, conservationists completed a report on the economic boost the refuge would bring to the area. Partners: Friends of Hack-ma-tack, Trust for Public Land and Openlands. **Next Step:** Carry out a U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service feasibility study and seek congressional approval.

The design for a new Prairie Learning Center at the Midewin National Tallgrass Prairie, from the architecture firm of Wheeler Kearns, employs rammed earth support walls to create an intimate connection with the land.

Lockport and Joliet are planning new recreational and cultural facilities in Heritage Park, beside the I & M Canal.
Heritage Park  Lockport and Joliet are betting their economic futures on the green infrastructure by anchoring their downtown redevelopments on the area’s natural and cultural heritage. Each city published a downtown master plan this year built around this eight-mile corridor along the Des Plaines River and the I & M Canal. Heritage Park will extend from downtown Joliet through Lockport to Isle a la Cache in Romeoville. Lincoln Landing in Lockport was dedicated on Feb. 12. Partners: the city of Lockport, Openlands, the city of Joliet, the Give Something Back Foundation, Lockport Township Park District and the Forest Preserve District of Will County. Next step: Attract public and private investment for the many aspects of the redevelopment plans.

Kankakee Sands  In April, the addition of the Carl N. Becker Savanna Nature Preserve near Leesville increased the number of protected acres of black oak savannas in the bi-state Kankakee Sands area to more than 7,000. Partners: The Nature Conservancy, the Illinois Department of Natural Resources and the Illinois Nature Preserves Commission. Next step: Target other savannas for preservation.

Midewin National Tallgrass Prairie  In the fall, the U.S. Forest Service approved an innovative design for a new Prairie Learning Center. The Prairie, a sweeping 19,000-acre landscape on the former site of the Joliet Arsenal, is the largest protected open space in the region. Partners: Northeastern Illinois Chapter of the American Institute of Architects, the Illinois Chapter of the American Planning Association, the Illinois Chapter of the American Society of Landscape Architects, the U.S. Forest Service, Openlands and the Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning. Next Step: Obtain funding to build the learning center and continue working with adjacent jurisdictions and property owners to encourage mutually supportive land use.
We can— and must—safeguard our green infrastructure. To do that, we need to protect the natural character and functioning of 1.8 million acres of interconnected lands and waters in the seven-million-acre greater Chicago region by the year 2060, as envisioned in Chicago Wilderness’s Green Infrastructure Vision. In some cases, where development has already occurred, nurturing the green infrastructure can be as simple as promoting native landscaping, rain gardens and green roofs as well as incorporating conservation principles into municipal land use and building ordinances. Elsewhere, it is possible—and essential—to set aside and restore open space as nature reserves and steward this landscape to ensure its health and resiliency. The Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning (CMAP) will include the Green Infrastructure Vision in its comprehensive regional plan, GO TO 2040, up for approval in 2010.

We can—and must—find less destructive ways to live with the natural world. On Nov. 6, top scientists and environmentalists met at a summit conference at the Chicago Botanic Garden in Glencoe. Under the auspices of Mayor Richard M. Daley’s Nature & Wildlife Advisory Committee, they’ll be developing a plan of attack for an all-out research effort to determine the best ways to protect and bolster Chicago’s nature and wildlife.
We can—and must—do our part to lower the temperature of the planet. To do this, the Chicago Climate Action Plan, a model for the rest of the region, looks full-face at the future and lays out specific goals for how the city and its people can begin to address the challenges of higher temperatures. Among its many goals: increase energy efficiency; reduce, reuse and recycle 90 percent of the city’s waste; install rooftop gardens on 6,000 buildings; and increase the number of walking and bicycle trips to one million a year.

We can—and must—care for our trees and plant more. More and better trees reduce heat islands in urbanized areas, and, by 2020, the Chicago Trees Initiative is hoping to have 20 percent of the city’s land area shaded by its trees. Right now, it’s 17.2 percent. To reach that, we will need to help the present 3.6 million trees grow healthier and plant hundreds of thousands of new ones.

We can—and must—work together to improve the energy efficiency of our buildings and conserve our natural resources. One hundred and one municipalities and other organizations have signed the Greenest Region Compact, developed by the Metropolitan Mayors Caucus. In joining the compact, the communities have agreed to set environmental goals and to implement a variety of strategies, such as promoting residential water conservation, establishing electronic-waste recycling programs, increasing tree plantings and reducing air pollution and energy consumption. This year, the Caucus distributed 500,000 compact fluorescent light bulbs to participating city governments to spur broader use of the energy-efficient bulbs within those communities. In addition, under a $75,000 grant from the Chicago Community Trust, the Caucus will carry out pilot programs next year in water conservation techniques.

We can—and must—link together our region with an interconnected network of biking and hiking trails. CMAP aims to expand the hiking/biking trail system in the seven-county metropolitan region to 2,250 miles by 2060. As of today, there are 925 miles.

We know that we can—and must—act now. We are at a crossroads. If we act now, we can enrich our lives and protect our economy, save money and guarantee a future for our green infrastructure. If we act now, we will be able to pass along the Burnham legacy to our children and our children’s children. We will be able to guarantee they will have access to nature for better health, quiet respite, and a vibrant quality of life.

Failing to act is not an option.

The Greenest Region Compact
More than 100 local governments and organizations have signed this agreement to set environmental goals within their communities and to implement such strategies as residential water conservation and better stormwater management:

Addison  Evanston
Algonquin  Evergreen Park
Alsip  Flossmoor
Arlington Heights  Geneva
Aurora  Gilberts
Bartlett  Glencoe
Batavia  Grayslake
Bedford Park  Hainesville
Bolingbroke  Hampshire
Blue Island  Hanover Park
Bridgeview  Hickory Hills
Brookfield  Highland Park
Buffalo Grove  Hinsdale
Burlington  Hoffmester Estates
Calumet City  Island Lake
Carol Stream  LaGrange Park
Channahon  Lake County
Chicago  Lake County
Chicago Ridge  Lake County
Country Club Hills  Municipal League
Country Side  Lake Forest
Crette  Lake Zurich
Dekalb  Lemont
Des Plaines  Libertyville
DuPage Mayors  Liley Lake
and Managers  Lincolnshire
Conference  Lindenhurst
Elburn  Lisie
Elgin  Lombard
Evanston  Lincolnwood
Evergreen Park  McHenry County
Flossmoor  Council of
Geneva  Government
Gilberts  MetroWest Council
Glencoe  Government
Grayslake  Midlothian
Hainesville  Montgomery
Hanover Park  Mount Prospect
Hickory Hills  Oak Forest
Highland Park  Niles
Hinsdale  Northlake
Homewood  Northwest
Hoffmester Estates  Municipal
Island Lake  Conference
LaGrange Park  of Mayors
Lake County  Streamwood
Lake County  Sugar Grove
Municipal  Villa Park
League  Warrenville
Lake Forest  Wauconda
Lake County  West Central
Lake Forest  Municipal
Lake Zurich  Conference
Lemont  of Mayors
Libertyville  Streamwood
Liley Lake  Sugar Grove
Lincolnshire  Villa Park
Lindenhurst  Warrenville
Lisle  Wauconda
Lombard  West Central
Lincolnwood  Municipal
McHenry County  Conference
Council of  of Mayors
Government  Streamwood
MetroWest Council  Sugar Grove
Government  Villa Park
Midlothian  Warrenville
Montgomery  Wauconda
Mount Prospect  West Central
Oak Forest  Municipal
Niles  Conference
Northlake  of Mayors
Northwest  Streamwood
Municipal  Sugar Grove
Conference  Villa Park
of Mayors  Warrenville
Streamwood  Wauconda
Sugar Grove  West Central
Villa Park  Municipal
Warrenville  Conference
West Chicago  of Mayors
West Dundee  Streamwood
Winnetka  Sugar Grove
Wood Dale  Warrenville
Woodridge  Wauconda
Worth  West Chicago
Yorkville  West Central
Daniel Burnham wrote:

“While the keynote of the nineteenth century was expansion, we of the twentieth century find that our dominant idea is conservation….The time to secure the lands necessary for [regional parks] is now, while as yet the prices are moderate and the natural scenery is comparatively unspoiled.”

We of the 21st century recognize that the time to protect our green infrastructure—the network of nature that supports all life here—is now.

Our dominant idea needs to be a green future.

Burnham Plan Centennial Green Legacy Lead Partners

The Burnham Plan Centennial
Chicago Metropolis 2020
Openlands
Chicago Wilderness
Metropolitan Mayors Caucus
Mayor Daley’s Nature and Wildlife Committee

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