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The Book that Transformed Chicago Turns 100 Today

Plan of Chicago 1909 presentation reprised with a new Centennial Edition

Chicago, July 4, 2009—One hundred years ago today, Chicago’s business leaders gave the City the gift of a book that transformed it and its metropolitan region. Today, a new *Centennial Edition* of the *Plan of Chicago* by Daniel H. Burnham and Edward H. Bennett will be released at the Chicago History Museum in that seminal book’s most affordable and best-ever graphic quality reprint.

Echoing The Commercial Club of Chicago’s July 4, 1909, presentation of the *Plan*, descendants of the two authors will join Burnham Plan Centennial Committee vice chair Adele Simmons in presenting the first copy to Chicago History Museum president Gary Johnson at the museum’s 50th annual Fourth of July festivities. Daniel H. Burnham V and Timothy Ryser Bennett, AIA, are scheduled to read some of the *Plan*’s most stirring quotations as part of the festivities’ 11:00 a.m. program.

With substantial support from The Commercial Club—and from scores of descendants of the *Plan*’s 1909 subscribers – the *Centennial Edition* was published by the Great Books Foundation in collaboration with the Chicago History Museum and the Burnham Plan Centennial Committee. About 50 families “renewed” their forebears’ subscription to the *Plan* and added the names of this generation to those of their predecessors listed in the reprint’s new front section—which includes a new introduction by Northwestern University professor Carl Smith, author of *The Plan of Chicago: Daniel Burnham and the Remaking of the American City* (this fall’s One Book, One Chicago selection). VSA Parnters, Inc. designed an elegant new cover for the *Centennial Edition*.

Creating a high-quality yet affordable reprint was a top goal of the Burnham Plan Centennial Committee, which has organized and managed more than 200 partner institutions in a year-long commemoration of the book that has come to be called the “Burnham Plan.” The Chicago History Museum generously provided a digital scan of the original 1909 document, which helped make it possible to offer this visually lively *Plan* to the public in soft cover for \$39.95.

“We are thrilled to be able to bring the Burnham and Bennett *Plan of Chicago* back to life with all the fine detail and dramatic colors of the original. As a descendant of some of the original subscribers, it is particularly meaningful for me that the soft cover edition of this best-ever reprint will be widely accessible to a new generation of Chicagoans as an inspiration for making bold plans and big dreams for the next 100 years,” said Simmons.

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The *Plan of Chicago* was 75 years ahead of its time in proposing that the city and the three-state metropolitan region it sustains be considered—and planned for—as one region with one future. In the century following its first publication, the *Plan* transformed the landscape and quality of life in Chicago and its region – from the creation of the city’s unique 26 miles of public lakefront parks and beaches to the 68,000 acres of the Cook County Forest Preserves, from double-decker Wacker Drive to the “Magnificent Mile” of North Michigan Avenue.

The *Plan* also captured the hearts and civic will of generations of “make big plans” Chicagoans down to the present day.

“The Burnham Plan Centennial is about the future. Our hundreds of Centennial Partners throughout the region are engaging the public in hundreds of diverse programs in education, environmental improvement, planning, library exhibits, and performances and much more—all focused on improving the quality of life and opportunity for all the 9.4 million people of our region. Each of our Program Partners will receive a copy of the soft cover *Plan of Chicago: Centennial Edition* to thank them for their involvement and inspire them to continue their bold plans and big dreams for our shared future,” said Centennial Committee executive director Emily J. Harris, who also attended the Lincoln Park event.

The 275-page 9.25” x 12” book is being reprinted by the same printer that made the first edition, R. R. Donnelley & Sons.

To learn more about the Burnham Plan Centennial and its Partner programs visit burnhamplan100.org.

About The Burnham Plan Centennial

The Burnham Plan Centennial includes more than 200 program partners from the three-state region spanning from Kenosha, Wis., through DeKalb, Ill., to Michigan City, Ind. In honor of Daniel Burnham’s 1909 *Plan of Chicago*, this Centennial year is stirring a region-wide community to action, working to build the best quality of life for people and planet alike. Our region's community foundation, The Chicago Community Trust, provided leadership funding for the Burnham Plan Centennial, and is joined by the Elizabeth Morse and Elizabeth Morse Genius Charitable Trusts as founding sponsors. Organizational and staff support for the Burnham Plan Centennial Committee is provided by Chicago Metropolis 2020.

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