



THE BURNHAM PLAN CENTENNIAL



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“Make Big Plans” Explores the Roots of Our Future

More than 60 libraries region-wide simultaneously mount Newberry exhibit

CHICAGO—June 30, 2009—The Newberry Library has carried the Burnham Plan Centennial into a neighborhood near you by mounting its “Make Big Plans” multi-format exhibition simultaneously in more than 60 public libraries and other sites from Kenosha, Wis., to South Bend, Ind. The exhibit, also on view at the Newberry, shows how the 1909 *Plan of Chicago* by Daniel H. Burnham and Edward H. Bennett influenced the next century of development in metropolitan Chicago.

The Newberry created “Make Big Plans” to engage broad audiences with the region’s history, encouraging them to consider how visionary projects from the past can prompt creative thinking about current and future regional issues. The exhibition photo-panels—featuring maps, photographs, and illustrations from the *Plan of Chicago* and other sources—were installed last week in 61 libraries, at O’Hare and Midway airports, and other sites around the region.

Together with a digital slide show, online exhibition, and the “Unfinished Business” video produced for the Centennial by Kurtis Productions, “Make Big Plans” will create a forum for broad public discussion of the continued relevance of the Burnham *Plan*. Complementary public programs will enhance audiences’ understanding of the *Plan’s* lessons for urban and regional planning in the 21st century.

The exhibition focuses on five central themes:

- 1) The *Plan’s* creators, historical context and national impact;
- 2) How its transportation designs crystallized issues that confronted American cities throughout the 20th century;
- 3) How its proposals to expand metropolitan Chicago’s public lakefront and parklands created a national legacy for open space;
- 4) How it saw presciently that planning for the city and its larger region could best be accomplished together; and
- 5) The *Plan’s* relevance to today’s bold plans for addressing critical regional issues—including solutions to challenges in areas such as transportation, conservation, energy, water, and sustainable design.

“The Newberry’s curators and designers bring history to life in this one exhibit for one region, and make it relevant to a wide audience. ‘Make Big Plans’ came about through the extraordinary leadership and collaboration of the Metropolitan, North Suburban and DuPage Library Systems and the Chicago Public Library,” said Committee executive director Emily J. Harris, who encouraged the public to visit burnhamplan100.org for their nearest “Make Big Plans” location.



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James Akerman, co-curator of the exhibition and director of the Newberry's Hermon Dunlap Smith Center for the History of Cartography, points out, "Like Burnham, the Newberry considers metropolitan citizenship as the foundation for urban policy, design, and culture. In working on this project, we have been gratified and stimulated by the opportunity to collaborate with the Burnham Plan Centennial Committee and our colleagues in libraries across metropolitan Chicago."

"We have especially appreciated the opportunity to mine the Newberry's rich holdings in cartography, American visual culture, and the history of the Chicago region to find fresh and exciting material for the exhibition—material that prompts us to think about the *Plan of Chicago* in new ways," adds co-curator Diane Dillon, assistant director of Research and Education at the Newberry.

Burnham Plan Centennial Committee support for "Make Big Plans" was made possible through the generous sponsorship of the National Endowment for the Humanities, the William G. McGowan Charitable Fund, Deloitte LLP, and Marsh & McLennan Companies.

ABOUT THE NEWBERRY LIBRARY

The Newberry Library provides a home to a world-class collection of books, manuscripts, and maps, and also to a growing community of readers. Our collections, spanning many centuries, feature a wide range of materials, from illuminated medieval manuscripts to rich genealogical resources, and from early printed books to the personal papers of Midwest authors. The Newberry offers highly acclaimed programs for serious readers: fellowships for scholars, seminars for undergraduates, professional development activities for teachers, and a variety of adult education seminars, public lectures, and workshops. Visit us online at www.newberry.org or in person at 60 W. Walton St., Chicago.

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 South Bend, 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. For more information visit www.burnhamplan100.org.

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