



**FOR RELEASE**

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## **Burnham Plan Centennial Launches at GreenTown in Aurora** *Year of 'Bold Plans, Big Dreams' aims to Inspire New Wave of Regional Planning*

**CHICAGO (Oct. 2, 2008)**—In 1909, architect Daniel Burnham gave the Chicago region a visionary plan for becoming one of the most livable, prosperous places of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century—with a spectacular lakefront, open spaces and dynamic transportation systems.

In 2009, a regional celebration of Burnham's sweeping, world-famous plan will inspire big new Burnham-like ideas to make our region one of the world's great places to live and work in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century.

Today, the Burnham Plan Centennial Committee announces next year's three-state celebration of Burnham's "Plan of Chicago." The celebration will feature hundreds of high-profile events that mirror the Plan's tremendous local impact, its vast geographic scope and its global influence.

With the theme "Bold Plans, Big Dreams," the Centennial is designed to inspire residents and leaders to take concrete steps toward a new vision that builds on Burnham's success and positions this region as a leader amid global economic competition.

While many events and programs will recognize the history of the Plan, the Centennial's main thrust will be to create major regional legacies—such as expansion of parks, trails and open spaces and a world-class transportation system. Centennial activities also will help shape the region's official government master plan, called "GO TO 2040," being developed by the Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning.

"The original Plan set the first gold standard for inspired regional planning," said George A. Ranney, co-chairman of the Centennial Committee. "It remains recognized around the world.

"But this isn't just about celebrating the past," Ranney added. "This is about taking decisive actions to secure our region's future in the competitive global marketplace. It's time for us to work together to once again plan—and act—boldly for the future just as Burnham and his colleagues did. That will be the real legacy of the Centennial. We expect it to inspire people to shape the future of the region."

Adele Simmons, vice-chairman of the Centennial Committee, announced the celebration today in Aurora at a conference on sustainable development—"GreenTown: The Future of Community."

"This conference and our host city represent the vision of Daniel Burnham and the Centennial," said Simmons. "His plan was bold, comprehensive and regional and—like Aurora with its ambitious

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downtown riverfront plan—it recognized that land use, public open space, transportation and infrastructure must be planned together to make a metropolis thrive.”

Ranney is chairman and chief executive officer, and Simmons is vice chairman, of Chicago Metropolis 2020, a regional civic organization that is one of the leaders of the Burnham Plan Centennial.

Aurora is among approximately 250 Centennial Partners that will produce events and programs next year – exhibits, conferences, lectures, festivals, concerts and building projects. Partners include cultural institutions, libraries, schools, colleges, civic groups, professional organizations and local governments from throughout the region described by Burnham as reaching from Kenosha through DeKalb to Michigan City.

The Centennial Partners range from regional museums—such as the Elmhurst Art Museum, Lake County Discovery Museum and the Lubeznik Center for the Arts in Michigan City—to some of the area’s largest, including the Art Institute of Chicago, The Field Museum and the Museum of Science and Industry. The National Museum of Mexican Art and the DuSable Museum of African American History also plan significant programs.

The Chicago Architecture Foundation will feature tours, exhibits and public programs in the Santa Fe Building, the Burnham-designed structure where the 1909 plan was written. The Newberry Library is developing an exhibit that will be shown at 50 public libraries from Kenosha to South Bend to Chicago, and at O’Hare International Airport. The exhibit also will be available on the Internet. Many libraries are scheduling events and exhibits to highlight their own towns’ links to the original Plan.

In Chicago, the “Bold Plans, Big Dreams Community Showcase” is an umbrella over a variety of programs in the city’s neighborhoods, designed to generate local pride and build momentum for bold new plans at the neighborhood level.

Many programs and events will focus on open spaces, sustainability and environmental concerns. Aurora, for example—which already has set a high standard for its thoughtful development and restoration projects downtown and along the Fox River—plans to fill the last remaining gaps in the Fox River Trail, extending it to more than 60 uninterrupted miles for walking and biking. Other legacy projects being implemented by conservation leaders, in collaboration with Openlands, will include improvements to the lakefront and to regionally significant open-space preserves.

Students can participate in and out of school in programs at all grade levels, from elementary school through university graduate classes and seminars. Research and public seminars are planned at several colleges, including DePaul University, the University of Illinois at Chicago and the University of Chicago. Lake Forest College and other partners plan a “virtual Burnham” project that will allow individuals to see how the recommendations in the 1909 plan compare to today’s metropolitan landscape, and to interact with the Plan online with Google Earth technology.

Some Centennial events will take place early in 2009, but most will be scheduled from June through October. The official opening, June 19, will reveal the two pavilions designed for Millennium Park by world-renowned architects Zaha Hadid of London and Ben van Berkel of Amsterdam. The temporary pavilions—and related dynamic programming about designing the future—will remain open for five months before being dismantled and recycled.



The June 19 opening also will showcase the world premiere of a symphonic and choral work commissioned for the Grant Park Music Festival. Composed by Michael Torke and based on the language of the original “Plan of Chicago,” it will be performed free to the public at Millennium Park’s Jay Pritzker Pavilion.

On Sept. 9, 2009, the Pritzker Pavilion will offer another free event, the premiere of “Make No Little Plans,” a documentary film on Burnham’s life and career produced by Judith Paine McBrien. The documentary will be broadcast later in the year on PBS.

An early Centennial event is “Burnham Day,” Nov. 2 of this year during the Chicago Humanities Festival. Two panel discussions will examine the past century of Chicago city planning and imagine the global city of the future. The Humanities Festival’s overall theme this year is “Thinking Big,” in anticipation of 2009 Centennial.

Daniel Burnham was an acclaimed architect who directed the design and construction of the “White City” for the World’s Columbian Exposition in 1893. The contrast between the beautiful but temporary exposition and the dirty and congested City of Chicago inspired him to envision the ideal city. He drew inspiration from international cities, and included summaries of plans for Rome, Paris, Vienna and London in one of the Plan’s opening chapters.

“The 1909 Plan gave Chicago a blueprint for major improvements that we achieved throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> Century,” said John Bryan, co-chair of the Centennial committee. “It provided many of the iconic places of today’s city – North Michigan Avenue, the two-level Wacker Drive, Grant Park, the forest preserve system and the public lakefront. Millennium Park continues this tradition.

“We intend to come out of the Centennial year with exciting new projects,” Bryan said.

As important as the 1909 Plan itself was the civic involvement of business and political leaders who implemented it. Centennial co-chair Ranney noted, “It was a results-oriented regional effort that lasted for decades. We can do the same here in 2009 and the decades that follow.”

The 1909 plan was sponsored by The Commercial Club of Chicago. The Commercial Club has continued its commitment of civic improvement through its support of Chicago Metropolis 2020 and the 2009 Burnham celebration.

Burnham believed that the city had to be an integral part of its broader region, with highways, railroads, open spaces and public buildings designed to make it easy for people to circulate from home to work to leisure. He also championed art and culture as factors that would attract employers and jobs by making the region a desirable place to live.

The Centennial organizers share that key belief with Burnham. As his Plan said, “The people of Chicago have ceased to be impressed by rapid growth or the great size of the city. What they insist on asking now is: How are we living?”

The Burnham Plan Centennial will be a year-long opportunity for the region to engage in a broad-based conversation about this question, and to point to new directions for the next century.



### About the Burnham Plan Centennial Committee

John Bryan, retired chief executive of Sara Lee Corporation, and George A. Ranney, chief executive officer of Chicago Metropolis 2020, are committee co-chairs along with Valerie Jarrett, chief executive officer of The Habitat Company. Vice chairman is Adele Simmons, vice chairman and a senior executive of Chicago Metropolis 2020. The 26 members of the committee represent major companies, civic organizations and cultural and educational institutions from throughout the region.

The committee is orchestrating the Centennial and convening the many communities, municipalities, organizations, schools, institutions and others that will plan related programs. Staff support is provided by Chicago Metropolis 2020, a business-backed civic organization founded by the Commercial Club of Chicago. The Commercial Club sponsored the original Plan of Chicago.

The Committee gratefully acknowledges the following early leadership gifts: Founding Sponsors, The Chicago Community Trust and the Elizabeth Morse Genius and Elizabeth Morse Charitable Trusts; Presenting Sponsor for Environment, the Exelon Foundation. Additional support is provided by The Allstate Corporation, the McCormick Foundation, Northern Trust, the Hamill Family Foundation, Mr. and Mrs. Marshall Field, The Boeing Company and other businesses, foundations and individuals. More information can be found at the Centennial Web site, [www.burnhamplan100.org](http://www.burnhamplan100.org).

### About Chicago Metropolis 2020

Chicago Metropolis 2020 is a nonprofit civic organization created in 1999 by The Commercial Club of Chicago to promote long-term planning, better regional cooperation, and smart investments in the Chicago region and its people.

### **For more information:**

For additional information on the Burnham Plan Centennial, more details about its approximately 250 program partners and how you can participate, please visit [www.burnhamplan100.org](http://www.burnhamplan100.org) or contact Elizabeth Florina at 312.255.3074 or [e.florina@burnhamplan100.org](mailto:e.florina@burnhamplan100.org).

In the “Newsroom” section of the Web site, you will find background on the Burnham Plan and its legacies; biographies and high-resolution photos of Centennial leaders; an explanation of the Centennial logo and the original Burnham map that inspired it; a list of Burnham Plan Centennial Committee members; and a list of the Partners planning Centennial-related programs or activities. (NOTE: The document describing each organization’s plans is more than 25 pages long and can be obtained in hard-copy format by contacting Elizabeth Florina.)

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