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“Make Big Plans” – On display at 61 libraries and 5 other sites

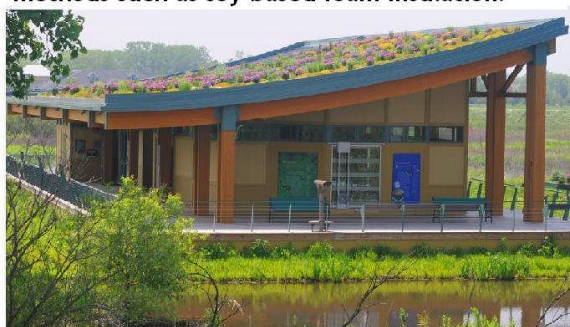
By Patrick T. Reardon on Wed., 07/24/2009 –6:06 am.

Robin Kohn was surprised to see that the Plan of Chicago was also a plan for Michigan City and the rest of Northwest Indiana.

“I think very few people here knew that we were part of the Plan --- including me, until I saw the display,” says Kohn, the public relations director at the Michigan City Public Library.



The “Make Big Plans” exhibit emphasizes the green legacy of the Burnham Plan today and in the future. One example: the energy-saving green roof of Chicago’s City Hall (above). Another is Glenview’s Tyner Interpretive Center (below), built with “green” construction methods such as soy-based foam insulation.



THE BURNHAM BLOG

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ABOUT THIS BLOG

This blog is about history, planning and the future. It’s rooted in the recognition that we live in a world that is created by plans – and by the failure to make plans. [\[MORE\]](#)

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

[Patrick T. Reardon](#) is a Chicagoan, born and bred. He has been writing about the city, its region and planning issues, mainly in the Chicago Tribune, for nearly 40 years. [\[MORE\]](#)

Hers is one of 61 libraries where a new exhibit about the Plan --- “Make Big Plans: Daniel Burnham’s Vision of an American Metropolis” --- is on view now through November or later.

The exhibition, which was curated by James R. Akerman and Diane Dillon of the Newberry Library, uses the 100th anniversary this year of the publication of the Plan to examine how it shaped Chicago and its region and to consider future issues facing the metropolitan area.

Prepared by the Newberry in collaboration with the Burnham Plan Centennial, “Make Big Plans” is in libraries from Kenosha, Wisc., to Michigan City, and even as far away as Springfield. It’s also at Midway and O’Hare International Airports, the Illinois Railway Museum, the Morton Arboretum and the University of Notre Dame. A digital version is online.

“How much the Plan meant”

In Elburn, in far western Kane County, Mary Alms, the director of the Town and Country Public Library, also learned something when the exhibit went up in her facility.

“I’m from Chicago, the South Side, and what always surprises me is, even though I was born and raised in Chicago, there’s so much I don’t know,” she says. “I just took all that for granted when I lived in Chicago. I didn’t understand how much the Plan meant in making the city so beautiful.”

“Make Big Plans” shows how Daniel Burnham and his co-author Edward Bennett recognized the need to plan for the region surrounding Chicago even though, a century ago, relatively few people were living beyond the city boundaries.

“Now living here and once having lived there --- I can see just how far removed Elburn once was and how it isn’t any more,” Alms says.

Up in Kenosha, the exhibit is at the Simmons Library, a structure designed by Burnham and opened in 1900. Later this year, it will move to the Southwest and Northside branches.

“We were lucky. Most of our lakefront was parkland,” says Sue Siewert, public services manager, after looking at the display. “We never had the [lakefront] trains that Chicago did, and we got rid of the rest of our factories on our lakefront, and now we have the HarborPark development.”

Melissa Panio, the public information coordinator for the Orland Park Public Library, says the exhibit for a natural for her village. Orland Park, she says, puts such a stress on planning that it's like a mini-Chicago.

"We can see Chicago"

Back in Michigan City, Kohn notes that residents are well aware of a strong connection between their municipality and the big city to the north.

"We have a lot of people who live here and work in Chicago," she says. "We have a great lakefront where you can get good homes at a fraction of the cost of the rest of the Chicago market.

"We can see Chicago from our lakefront. On a clear day, we can see the skyline."

The 61 libraries where the exhibit is on display:

Addison Public Library,

Albany Park branch, Chicago Public Library,

Arlington Heights Memorial Library,

Aurora Public Library,

Bloomington Public Library,

Blue Island Public Library,

Bucktown / Wicker Park branch, Chicago Public Library,

Chicago Bee branch, Chicago Public Library,

Chicago Ridge Public Library,

Clarendon Hills Public Library

Deerfield Public Library,

Des Plaines Public Library,

Downers Grove Public Library,

Eisenhower Public Library, Harwood Heights,

Elmhurst Public Library,

Evanston Public Library

Evergreen Park Public Library,

Forest Park Public Library,

Fremont Public Library, Mundelein,
Gail Borden Public Library, Elgin,
Glencoe Public Library,
Glenside Public Library District, Glendale Heights,
Glenwood-Lynwood Public Library District,
Hammond Public Library, Indiana,
Harold Washington Library Center, Chicago Public
Library,
Harvey Public Library,
Highland Park Public Library,
Illinois State Library, Springfield,
Indian Trails Public Library District, Wheeling,
Joliet Public Library,
Kenosha Public Library, Wisconsin,
Lansing Public Library,
Lozano branch, Chicago Public Library,
Lyons Public Library,
Michigan City Public Library, Indiana,
Morton Grove Public Library,
Newberry Library,
Niles Public Library District,
Northbrook Public Library,
Oak Brook Public Library,
Orland Park Public Library,
Palos Heights Public Library,
Palos Park Public Library,
Riverside Public Library,
Rogers Park branch, Chicago Public Library,
Roosevelt branch, Chicago Public Library,
Schaumburg Township District Library,
Skokie Public Library,

South Chicago branch, Chicago Public Library,
St. Charles Public Library,
Sulzer Regional branch, Chicago Public Library,
Town and Country Public Library District, Elburn,
Thurgood Marshall branch, Chicago Public Library,
Vernon Area Public Library District, Lincolnshire,
Vodak-East Side branch, Chicago Public Library,
Warren-Newport Public Library District, Gurnee,
Waukegan Public Library,
Westchester Township Public Library, Chesterton,
Indiana,
Wheaton Public Library,
Wilmette Public Library,
Woodson Regional branch, Chicago Public Library,
Five other locations where you can see the exhibit:
Illinois Railway Museum, Union,
Midway International Airport,
Morton Arboretum, Lisle,
O'Hare International Airport,
University of Notre Dame, Notre Dame, Indiana,