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## Lakefront plan snares city award

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By [Dan Moran](#)  
STAFF WRITER

WAUKEGAN — The name Daniel Burnham is synonymous with urban planning and the mention of his name very often triggers his most memorable pronouncement.

"Make no small plans," said Ray Vukovich, Waukegan's director of governmental services, quoting a sentiment that appears to have been in mind when the Chicago-based Metropolitan Planning Council issued its 2005 Burnham Award for Excellence in Planning.

Whatever the case, the MPC recognized that there is nothing physically small about Waukegan's plan to redevelop more than 1,400 acres in its lakefront and downtown areas.

"With its Lakefront-Downtown Urban Design Plan, the city of Waukegan undertook a thoughtful, inclusive planning process to boldly envision the largest piece of vacant Lake Michigan lakefront between Chicago and Wisconsin as a recreational, residential and commercial 'harbor city,'" said MarySue Barrett, MPC president, in announcing the award.

Barrett added that "big dreams are admirable," but Waukegan was judged to have gone "a critical step further to guide the creation of a feasible, long-term plan for preserving, rehabilitating and redeveloping this regional gem."

According to Vukovich, Waukegan was nominated for the Burnham award by the Congress for New Urbanism, which tabbed the city's redevelopment plans last summer as one of 14 worldwide to receive a 2005 Charter Award for urban restoration.

The Burnham award — which is scheduled to be accepted by Waukegan officials Wednesday at a Chicago ceremony — has been handed out annually since 1988 to "innovative plans and projects throughout the Chicago region (that) have significantly improved the livability of the communities they've shaped," according to the MPC.

The 2004 winner of the Burnham award was the city of Chicago's Metropolis 2020 plan, which was subtitled "Preparing Metropolitan Chicago for the 21st Century." Past winners also include the Illinois Institute of Technology for its Main Campus Master Plan (2003), Will County for its Land Resource Management Plan, and the village of Arlington Heights for its downtown rehabilitation effort (1999).

In Waukegan's case, implementation of the 2003 Skidmore, Owings & Merrill Master Plan is in the earliest of stages, but Vukovich could point Monday to a handful of projects that are starting to move forward.

On Sheridan Road between Washington and Water streets, demolition crews

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began the process Monday of taking down a vacant Community Action Project building to pave the way for the planned 247-unit condominium project by Libertyville-based Marquette Enterprise Group.

Along with the CAP building, the former Jordy's hot dog stand on Sheridan also has to come down, and work crews will then focus on remediating any environmental hazards left from a gas station that sat there back in the 1970s.

Once all that work is completed, Marquette will be able to put up a sales trailer for the 68-unit first phase. Vukovich said the trailer will likely be up by December.

Also in December, the City Council will likely field proposals for redevelopment of the property on the northwest corner of Genesee and Clayton streets formerly occupied by the Academy Theater, which burned down a year ago. The city put out a request for proposals (RFP) in August for the 27,980-square-foot parcel.

While Vukovich kept matters close to the vest, he did say that "a number" of proposals were expected to work their way before a subcommittee of the Waukegan Renaissance Commission in the coming weeks. Final proposals will then be screened by the full commission before coming to the council in early December, Vukovich said.

Meanwhile, work continues on the lakefront at the former coke plant site, which has been undergoing an environmental cleanup since last fall north of the city's municipal beach.

With an estimated 30,000 to 40,000 cubic feet of contaminated soil having been removed over the past 10 months, Vukovich said the work is now focusing on setting up a treatment facility for groundwater pulled off the site.

"They're in the final phase, (but) there are a couple of issues that they need to work out with the water treatment facility," he said. Once the work is completed, the city will seek RFP's for condominiums on the 40-acre site, but Vukovich declined to offer a timeline on when the process will begin.

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