

NO GAMES CHICAGO

BOOK OF EVIDENCE

**FOR THE INTERNATIONAL
OLYMPIC COMMITTEE**

Why Chicago Should NOT Be Awarded the 2016 Olympic Games



BETTER HOSPITALS • HOUSING • SCHOOLS AND TRAINS

**NO
GAMES
★★★★★
CHICAGO**



Dear Members of the International Olympic Committee:

We are citizens from Chicago, Illinois who are opposed to our city hosting the 2016 Olympic games.

We see four major reasons why Chicago should not be awarded the Games.

- (1) Lack of Finances. Our nation, state, county and city are broke and running massive deficits. There's no way to guarantee that we will have the many billions needed to complete the work needed. Chicago is famous for going way over budget on any large construction project it tackles.
- (2) Lack of Competence. Our state, county and city are notoriously corrupt and populated with incompetent officials who line their pockets and make choices based not on effectiveness or the public good, but rather on how much money can be made by friends and family members. This directly translates into bloated construction projects that go massively over budget and suffer repeated delays. (Block 37 is a project that is 30 years old and still incomplete, Millennium Park was just four years late). Also, there are a number of very high-ranking corruption investigations under way and our former Governor faces trial in 2010. It's entirely possible that many of the Chicago officials the IOC has been working with may be under investigation.
- (3) Lack of Infrastructure. Our city is falling to pieces around us. Our roads are pitted with pot holes and our mass transit system is badly in need of repair and upgrading. Regrettably, there are no plans for improving it over the next few years and we seriously doubt whether it can do the job of moving the crowds that come with a summer Olympics.
- (4) Lack of Public Support. Despite what you are being told, the people of Chicago DO NOT want the games. When people realize that they will be picking up the tab for the games, they oppose the bid by an overwhelming majority.

We have compiled a small collection of articles that document these concerns. We'd like to call your special attention to the April 2, 2009 column by Ben Joravasky, a prominent Chicago investigative reporter. His "Open Letter to the IOC" sums up our position.

We hope you will heed our wishes and grant the 2016 Olympics to another city.

No Games Chicago
312-235-2873
nogameschicago@gmail.com
www.nogameschicago.com

An Open Letter to the IOC**Why you don't want to give Chicago the Olympics**

By Ben Joravsky - April 2, 2009

Dear members of the International Olympic Committee Evaluation Commission:

Welcome to Chicago!

I know you're here for the next few days to check out our lovely city to determine if we—as opposed to Madrid, Tokyo, or Rio—have the best plan for hosting the 2016 Olympics.

Just so you know from the outset, I hope you don't give us the games. I've been against it from the start, and I could fill a book with the reasons. But I'm not here to tell you how paying for the games would cripple my hometown—if you want that, see chicagoreader.com/2016_olympics. This letter is about your needs, not ours. I'm here to tell you some things about Chicago you'll never hear from Mayor Daley, who's acting like a used-car salesman, trying to sell you an old beater without letting you look under the hood.

Here's the fundamental problem: We can't afford the games. We're broke—and I mean damn near destitute. The public school system is about \$475 million in the red and the city's facing its own deficit of at least \$200 million. Just a few months ago Mayor Daley said he'd balanced the budget by raising fees and fines and slashing the city payroll, but already expenses have risen and revenues have dropped faster than anticipated. His aides have warned that more cuts could be on the way.

The Chicago Transit Authority, which runs our public transportation system, is busted too, in more ways than one. CTA officials are in the thick of their annual budget crisis, warning of fare hikes and service cuts that could affect traffic in every part of town. They don't have enough money to replace the old buses or repair the tracks that are falling apart.

I know it's not your concern if it takes ordinary Chicagoans ever more time and money to get to work, especially since the 2016 bid committee has made it clear that it won't depend on the CTA to shuttle athletes, reporters, and spectators back and forth from hotels to venues.

But thousands of people here are quietly stewing over these budget problems, since they're the ones who always have to fork over taxes, fees, and fines to make up the difference. Mayor Daley has acknowledged that citizens won't stand for another property tax hike, especially with thousands of families losing their homes to foreclosure during the economic meltdown.

So instead he's hiking fees that hit tourists as well as residents. It costs more than ever to park, go to a play or restaurant, or stay in a hotel. And he's selling off pieces of public property, including Midway Airport and the city's parking meters. It's starting to sink in here. A day doesn't go by when I don't get a call from an outraged resident bitching and moaning about how much it costs now to park at a meter—or to pay off parking tickets.

And then there are the TIFs: \$550 million a year in property taxes siphoned from the schools and parks to feed slush funds that Mayor Daley controls with virtually no oversight. At the moment, the public is conveniently in the dark about them because they're too complicated for the mainstream press to cover and our tax bills don't reflect how much we're paying to keep them funded. But every year the TIF take rises and sooner or later the public will catch on. (If you'd like to bone up on the subject, see chicagoreader.com/tifarchive.)

Again, I know it's not your problem if the city is selling off public assets or keeping two sets of books. But I do think you'll want to keep these things in mind as you consider whether the bid committee's financial guarantees are worth the paper they're written on.

The committee says it can put on the Olympics here for less than \$5 billion, since it won't have to acquire a lot of land or do a lot of construction. Don't believe it. London, the host for the 2012 games, is now expected to spend \$16.5 billion, nearly twice

what it first estimated. And Chicago has a fine track record of delays and cost overruns on public projects. The mayor may take you on a tour of Millennium Park while he's here, but he probably won't mention that it cost \$475 million to build—a mere \$325 million more than originally projected. You might like to take a stroll along the Chicago River, but the latest extension of the riverwalk won't be finished until June. It's cost taxpayers \$22 million—double the original estimates.

Take a drive down State Street while you're here and see the enormous construction zone between Randolph and Washington. Block 37, as it's known, has taken the city more than 20 years and tens of millions of dollars to develop, and under those newly constructed buildings is an unfinished train station that's cost \$250 million so far—more than twice the initial price tag.

Chicago's bid committee has told you that it'll raise the money through "public-private partnership." That is, they'll get private donors to kick in all the cash, and if somehow they don't, they'll be able to dip into various rainy day funds, insurance payoffs, and \$500 million in taxpayer money authorized by the Chicago City Council and another \$250 million guaranteed by the state legislature.

Given our financial situation, where's that money going to come from?

People around here are going to be very, very displeased if they're asked to cover the mayor's enormous bet. Think of the citizenry of Chicago as a big sleeping giant. One day that giant will be stirred from his slumber. Someday, possibly very soon, it will dawn on Chicagoans that all the meters they've been feeding, all the taxes they've been paying, all the fines and fees they've forked over, still can't pay the teachers and the police and the firefighters and fill the potholes and collect the garbage and remove the snow, and wonder how it is that we can still afford two weeks of international fun and games. And they will erupt.

I know it sounds like a long shot. But I've seen it happen before. Back in 1979, when folks got so angry they ousted one mayor—a guy named Bilandic—in favor of a relatively unknown out-of-work city employee named Jane Byrne.

And if it happens between now and 2016, guess who the public will blame? That's right—the Olympics will be public enemy number one around here. You might even have to hand the games off to some other city, like you did with the winter games back in 1976. I know you remember that fiasco. In 1970, you awarded the games to Denver. Two years later, Coloradans voted to deny public funding for the games and you wound up having to shuffle them to Innsbruck, Austria.

If there's a revolt over the Olympics in Chicago, it will probably be a messy one, made toxic by matters of race. Mayor Daley has been careful to include pictures of happy children from a variety of backgrounds in the public relations packets he's been sending you. Obama's historic election-night celebration in Grant Park made us look like one big charming melting pot. And race relations are a lot better around here than they were in the 1980s, when white folks lost their freaking minds over the prospect of electing a black mayor.

But Chicago remains one of the most racially segregated cities in the country, with a nervous tension just beneath the surface that flares every now and then over issues like crime, police misconduct, or the worth of black politicians such as Senator Roland Burris or Cook County Board president Todd Stroger. Mayor Daley usually contains the animosity by plying his black political supporters with just enough patronage to keep them happy. But the Olympic plan is perceived by many as a thinly disguised urban renewal project. They worry that Olympic "improvements" will drive working-class African-Americans from the near south side.

Granted, so far there have been no large public outbursts against the Olympic bid. You can't even find an alderman with the guts to ask routine questions before approving the mayor's Olympic initiatives—like \$86 million in public funding for the Olympic Village. If people haven't raised a stink yet, it's because they're not putting two and two together yet—2016 seems so far away, and meanwhile there are parking meters to be outraged about—or they're scared to take on the mayor.

But it's not because they love the idea of hosting the Olympics. The mayor waves around a poll his Olympic bid committee took a year ago that found 76 percent of Chicago-area residents favor bringing the Olympics to town. But a Chicago Tribune poll taken in February found that 75 percent are against using public money to pay for them.

Several aldermen have told me that they've gone along with this boondoggle because they're afraid of enraging the mayor by voting no. I know he's probably been pretty charming to you. But you wouldn't like Mayor Daley when he's angry. Some aldermen—and even a few of the business leaders who've kicked in money to the Olympic campaign—tell me they're hoping you'll do the dirty work of killing the games.

So please do us all a favor: Give the games to Rio. Or Madrid. Or Tokyo. Send them anywhere but here. And let's all pretend like this cockamamie idea of holding them in Chicago never left the confines of Mayor Daley's skull.





BETTER HOSPITALS * HOUSING * SCHOOLS AND TRAINS

**NO
GAMES

CHICAGO**

Lack of Finances. Our nation, state, county and city are broke and running massive deficits. There's no way to guarantee that we will have the many billions needed to complete the work needed. Chicago is famous for going way over budget on any large construction project it tackles.



CHICAGOBUSINESS
— POWERED BY CRAIN'S —

[Print Story](#) | [Close Window](#)

Printed from ChicagoBusiness.com

City job cuts deeper, budget gap widens to \$300M

By Greg Hinz
June 12, 2009

(Crain's) — The city of Chicago announced Friday that it has been forced to send layoff notices to 1,504 unionized employees, job losses it claims could have been avoided if union leaders would have agreed to bargain on certain contract concessions.

While the cuts were expected, the total number tops the 1,000 Mayor Richard M. Daley had mentioned on Thursday.

The cuts affect virtually every corner of city government, except for sworn police officers and fire fighters. Hardest hit are Chicago's Streets & Sanitation, Department of Water Management and non-uniformed police.

Also on Friday, city budget officials also disclosed that the gap in Chicago's 2009 budget is nearing \$300 million, a shortfall that likely will force City Hall to further dip into proceeds from recent asset leases, said Gene Safford, Chicago's chief financial officer.

Layoffs will take effect on July 15 unless the city and its unions can reach an agreement on furlough days, pay cuts, overtime and other matters, according to a letter Mr. Daley sent to affected employees.

5-8-09

City workers' painful choice: 1,100 layoffs or 14 furloughs

CITY HALL | notice to unions no 'scare tactic': Daley ally

BY FRAN SPIELMAN

City Hall Reporter
fspielman@suntimes.com

More than 1,100 city employees — none sworn police officers or firefighters — will receive layoff notices in the next two weeks unless their unions agree to take 14 days off without pay and comp time instead of cash overtime, alderman were told this week.

"It's not a scare tactic. It's a legal requirement," said Ald. Pat O'Connor (40th), Mayor Daley's unofficial City Council floor leader.

Most union contracts require employees targeted for layoffs to be notified 30 days in advance.

During closed-door brief-



Mayor Daley

ings this week, aldermen were told that city department heads were in the process of identifying employees and that 1,100 layoff notices were imminent.

"They're looking at a certain amount of savings coming from these concessions or layoffs. They need to know in the next week or two to start the ball rolling toward layoffs to accomplish the same savings," O'Connor said.

"I would be surprised if the

unions saw it as a [scare] tactic. They know these requirements are in their contracts. It's a necessity if we can't get concessions."

Chicago Federation of Labor President Dennis Gannon could not be reached for comment.

Earlier this week, Gannon said there was no hope for union concessions unless Daley agrees to a two-year, no-layoff guarantee.

"Nobody wants to see anybody lose their jobs. But we can't go through this drill every quarter. We have to put some stability into their lives," Gannon said.

On Friday, Daley reiterated that he is no position to make a no-layoff promise when nosediving revenues threaten to blow a \$300 million hole in his 2009 budget.

"There's predictions of next year being worse. That's the thing you're really concerned about. . . . Is [the shortfall] gonna be \$350 or \$400 million? I wish I could . . . predict it, but I cannot," he said.

Last fall, Daley threatened to lay off nearly 1,000 employees and ended up cutting deals with union leaders that reduced the final number to 420.

During this week's briefings, aldermen were not told which departments and city services would bear the brunt of the layoffs.

But sources said the Office of Emergency Management and Communications alone has been asked to eliminate 97 positions by June 1.

It was not known whether 911 dispatchers and calltakers would be among those on the hit list at a time when manpower shortages continue to force excessive overtime.

Comment at suntimes.com.

New CFO: 'This is probably the most challenging time the city has faced'

BY FRAN SPIELMAN
City Hall Reporter

A municipal finance expert who works with Mayor



CATHLEEN FALSANI

is taking a day off

Daley's brother and spent 10 years on the Chicago Board of Education was chosen Thursday to become the city's \$164,000-a-year chief financial officer.

Gene Saffold is managing director for national accounts for JP Morgan Chase, where William Daley serves as Midwest chairman. Saffold re-

places Paul Volpe, who is now the mayor's 12th chief of staff.

Saffold, an alum of Harlan High School, takes the city finance reins at a perilous time.

Nose-diving revenues threaten to poke a \$200 million hole in Daley's '09 budget, turning up the heat for more layoffs and union concessions.

"I wish I was riding in with

a silver bullet that was gonna provide the answers. . . . This is probably the most challenging time the city has faced," said Saffold, 54.

Saffold said he doesn't know yet whether the city can avoid more layoffs. But with the Chicago Board of Education poised to raise property taxes, he said, "Tax increases

are the last, last, last resort."

As bad as things are in Chicago, they're even worse elsewhere, Daley said.

"Other cities are taking drastic four-day workweeks. . . . They're having really major layoffs in police and fire. They're closing firehouses and police [stations]. They're cutting libraries, even closing

schools," the mayor said.

Budget Director Bennett Johnson III resigned in early December after backing a \$6 billion budget precariously balanced with 420 layoffs and \$52.5 million in taxes, fines and fees. His revenue estimates proved to be too rosy, as union men had feared.

Comment at suntimes.com.

Lou Phillips, business manager of Laborers Union Local 1001, said Thursday he's prepared to "sit and listen" to city demands for union givebacks, but said, "I'm not jumping into the water. There are some things on the front burner that need to be addressed."

Comment at suntimes.com.

City budget headed for 'the sewer'

BY FRAN SPIELMAN
City Hall Reporter

Nose-diving revenues have forced Chicago's 2009 budget at least \$10 million deeper into the hole — to a gap of well over \$60.5 million — turning up the heat for more layoffs and union concessions.

Mayor Daley's \$6 billion budget, passed in December, was balanced with 420 layoffs, slow police hiring and \$52.5 million in taxes, fines and fees. At the time, Daley insisted his numbers should hold up "unless everything really goes into the sewer system."

Welcome to the sewer.

November sales tax collections fell \$3.2 million short of projections. The January take from the corporate personal property tax was \$4.6 million off the mark. And February real estate transfer tax collections fell to \$3.3 million. That's \$4.5 million below projections, and the worst monthly total since March 1996.



- Font Size
- Home
- Top Video
- Local News
- Weather
- Entertainment
- U.S. & World
- Traffic
- Sports
- 2 Investigators
- Politics
- Business
- Health
- Consumer
- Obama
- Olympics 2016
- Food
- Pets
- Water Cooler
- Wireless



Local News



Jewish Celebrities

- The Tattooed Ladies of Hollywood
- Celebrities Hitting The Big 4-0 In 2009
- Top 10 Smartest And Dumbest Dog Breeds
- Celebrity Watcher: Real Or Fake?

E-mail Print

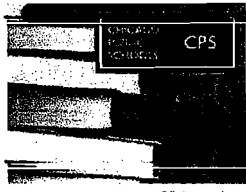
Mar 11, 2009 5:43 pm US/Central



Schools Budget Crisis: \$475 Million Deficit



CHICAGO (CBS) — Some of the stimulus money is on the way to Chicago Public Schools, but it's not even close to being enough to solve the shortfall. Washington is sending \$190 million. But as CBS 2's Kristyn Hartman reports, the district will still have a \$475 million hole in its budget.



1 of 1 Click to enlarge

CBS

Related Slideshows

- Celebrities Separated At Birth?
- The Tattooed Ladies of Hollywood
- This Could Be The Ugliest Cat Ever
- Hottest Redheads
- Who Is My Celebrity Parent?

District leaders say between now and June they will lay out a series of steps to close the budget. They have some ideas, but nothing is firm just yet. They did say they would like more money from the state, and they did say there would be trimming.

"The projected \$475 million budget deficit that Mr. Huberman has outlined today is very real, and very serious," said Board of Education President Michael Scott.

If it's another budget crisis conversation - this time, the folks from the Chicago Public Schools are the ones talking about a dire \$475 million deficit they need to close.

If you're a parent of a student, you might be wondering: how will potential cuts affect my child's education?

Here's the short answer:

"We are preserving core education and we're preserving classroom size," said Schools CEO Ron Huberman. "We're not laying off teachers."

They say they are looking into tightening spending.

"We're going to reduce our staffing in the president's office by better than 10 percent," Scott said.

That's one of the little things on the table.

A much bigger deal: It is possible they could hit up the property taxpayer in these tough economic times.

"I can say with some degree of certainty that the revenue will have to come from some place, and I suspect that's where it will come from, at least some of it," Scott said.

A chunk will come from stimulus money CPS is getting. They can't use all of it, they say, because they're told how they have to spend it.

And then there's the question of how to handle one of the biggest cash drains - pension contributions will increase in the next budget year by \$130 million.

"When these costs go up, they come out of our operating budget, they come out of the same budget that we use to pay for teachers and classroom activities," Huberman said.

Huberman says because the district and so many other agencies share the pension dilemma:

OTHER WAYS TO GET NEWS

Newsletters & Alerts
XML Feeds

MORE FROM CBS2

- Digital TV FAQs
- CBS 2 Phone Numbers
- Morning News
- Links & Numbers
- CBS Shows Online
- More+

COLLECTIONS

Video
Slideshows

ABOUT US

- TV Schedule
- News Team
- Station Info
- CBS 2 Jobs
- Contact Us

LIFESTYLE

- Beauty & Style
- Family
- New Baby

IN OUR AREA

- CBS 2 In The Community
- Contests
- Community Calendar

OUR PARTNERS

- CBSnews.com
- CBS.com
- Northwest Herald
- WBBM 780AM

LAST CHANCE TO SEE TOPOL
THE STAR OF THE MOTION PICTURE
"THE FIDDLER ON THE ROOF"

TOPOL
in
Fiddler on the Roof

THREE WEEKS ONLY!
MAY 10 - 28

FOUR CENTER FOR THE PERFORMING ARTS
ORIENTAL THEATRE
www.BROADWAYINCHICAGO.com

Local News

- Direct Selling An Option In Bad Economy 1 hr 50 mins ago
- Soriano Leads Cuts To 6-3 Win Over Reds

From this week's In Other News

Nowhere to hide

By: H. Lee Murphy April 20, 2009

At least 10 Chicago-area companies lost two-thirds of their market value or more in the first three months of the year in a sell-off that was remarkable for the breadth of its carnage.

Companies ranging from menswear specialist Hartmarx Corp. and ethanol maker Aventine Renewable Energy Holdings Inc. to condominium lender Corus Bankshares Inc. and dot-com travel broker Orbitz Worldwide Inc. all saw massive slumps in their stock prices.

"In the first quarter, investors were aggressively selling almost any company with poor fundamentals," says James Oberweis, president of Lisle-based Oberweis Asset Management Inc., whose own portfolio has shrunk to \$600 million in assets from a high of \$2.7 billion in late 2007.

Local stocks fared worse than broader indexes, with the *Crain's* Chicago Index, a list of the top 134 area companies compiled by Bloomberg L.P., falling 14.4% in the quarter, compared with an 11% drop in the Standard & Poor's 500 Index.

Some of the most troubled local companies sought refuge in Bankruptcy Court. Chicago's Hartmarx, whose stock dropped 87% in the quarter, filed for Chapter 11 protection on Jan. 25; Chicago-based Smurfit-Stone Container Corp., which lost 85.5%, filed for bankruptcy protection a day later. Pekin-based Aventine followed suit on April 8 after its shares fell to penny-stock range.

The weak economy was one of the main factors behind declines in some industrial stocks and the region's banks.

Lincolnshire-based Sauer-Danfoss Inc. suffered a 72.1% drop in its stock value in the quarter as it forecasted a 30% to 40% drop in sales for the year. Its customers, such as Caterpillar Inc., are seeing demand for their products shrink, which means fewer orders for Sauer-Danfoss. The company recently closed a valve plant in Oregon, resulting in 200 job losses, and reduced employment at a large factory in Ames, Iowa, to 850 from 1,150.

"We don't think things will improve significantly until 2010," says Kenneth McCuskey, a vice-president at Sauer-Danfoss.

Shares of Chicago's Orbitz fell 66.8% in the quarter when rivals cut customer fees — a revenue stream that contributed about half of Orbitz's operating earnings.

Along with Chicago-based Corus, whose shares lost almost 76% of their value in the quarter, stocks declined in banking concerns First Midwest Bancorp (-57%), Amcore Financial Inc. (-55.8%) and Wintrust Financial Corp. (-40%).

Surprisingly, several local manufacturers saw their stocks rise smartly in the first quarter.

Warrenville-based truckmaker Navistar International Corp. was among the top performers, rising 56.5% on the back of improved prospects for its military contract work and demand for heavy-duty trucks.

Elgin-based Middleby Corp., which makes cooking equipment for restaurants, benefited from falling prices for steel, as well as a positive reaction to its Jan. 5 acquisition of Dallas-based rival TurboChef Technologies Inc., a maker of high-speed ovens. Expansion efforts overseas, which account for 20% of sales, helped push the stock up 19% in the quarter.

Mr. Oberweis applauds Middleby's deal-making. TurboChef's ovens are used to heat breakfast sandwiches in coffee shops like Starbucks, he notes. "They're a good product, but TurboChef wasn't executing with it. That's likely to change now," Mr. Oberweis says. "Companies still producing profits are being rewarded in the stock market right now."

©2009 by Crain Communications Inc.

Torched by the Olympics?

45-09

Representatives of the International Olympic Committee arrived last week to get a first-hand look at Chicago, one of four cities still in the running for the 2016 Summer Games. If locals are lucky, the IOC team will admire our architecture,



Steve Chapman

stroll our lakefront, enjoy our restaurants, praise our plans—and then give the Games to someone else.

I can see how it might be fun to hold the Olympics here, just as it would have been a treat to attend the wedding of Tom Brady and Gisele Bündchen. But get-

ting picked to put on the Games is like being asked to let B&B take their vows in your backyard and throw a huge bash for them afterward. It's a nice deal for the betrothed, but not so great for the host, who would probably be cleaning up the debris and paying the bills for some time to come.

If you like vanity projects, you'd be hard-pressed to find a bigger or better one than the Olympics—a two-week extravaganza featuring thousands of athletes and hundreds of thousands of spectators, plus a worldwide TV audience.

But what does Chicago really stand to gain from it? It's not

like we were unknown, even before a Chicagoan went to the White House. And it's hard to believe all the publicity has a long-term payoff. How many people do you know who were inspired to visit Calgary after the 1988 Winter Games?

Boosters promise gains in the form of infrastructure improvements and a boom in tourism. But Victor Matheson, an economist at College of the Holy Cross, has found that the glow of staging major sporting events like the Super Bowl, the World Cup or the Olympics "tends not to translate into any measurable benefits to the host city."

Many residents would get to see Olympic events in person, something they would never do otherwise, which is worth something. But for most of the rest of the people in the region, it will be a major hassle, a minor hassle or an irrelevance.

It will most likely also be an expense. The people running the Chicago 2016 committee say taxpayers won't be out one thin dime for the privilege, and Mayor Richard Daley echoes that promise. But to back up the bid, the city had to promise to cover any operating deficit up to \$500 million.

Chances are good it will have to make good on that promise. The festivities have a maddening habit of costing more than the prime movers say they will.

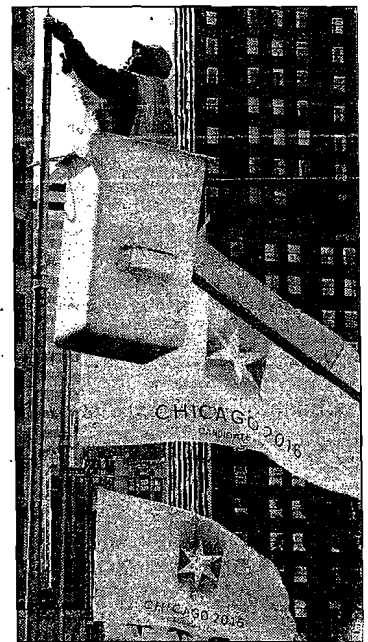
The 2004 Summer Games in Athens cost \$1.7 billion more than expected, largely because of heightened security demands after the Sept. 11, 2001, terrorist

attacks. The Royal Canadian Mounted Police says the budget for security at next year's Winter Games in Vancouver is likewise insufficient. Sponsors had planned to spend just \$175 million, even though protecting the last Winter Games in Salt Lake City cost \$300 million.

The total price of the 2012 Games has nearly tripled since London won the bid. "London is shaping up in many ways to be a financial catastrophe," sports economist Stefan Szymanski of City University London recently told Tribune correspondent Laurie Goering, pointing out the dismal fact: "You only get the Olympics by paying more than they're worth."

Patrick Ryan, head of Chicago 2016, brags that the Olympics have strong support among Chicagoans. That's true. What doesn't have strong support is paying for them. Asked in a poll if they favored using tax dollars to help cover the cost, 75 percent of Chicago-area respondents said no.

What those people may not have considered is that even if they don't pay for the privilege through higher taxes, they will pay in other ways. Has anyone considered how pleasurable it will be—and how prolonged the pleasure—to drive from the South Side to the North Side during that fortnight? Or do anything that is not related to the Games? Has anyone considered all the institutions that will suffer because donations and entertainment outlays will be diverted from them to the



A city worker installs a Chicago 2016 Olympics flag on Michigan Avenue. KUNI TAKAHASHI/TRIBUNE

Olympics?

Olympic skeptics are admonished for such petty concerns by supporters who brandish the words of Chicago's visionary urban planner Daniel Burnham: "Make no little plans." But the Olympics may prove that a big plan is not the same as a good plan.

Steve Chapman is a member of the Tribune's editorial board and blogs at

chicagotribune.com/chapman

schapman@tribune.com

Insurance is city's Olympics hurdle

Daley, Ryan must sell IOC on unusual financial formula

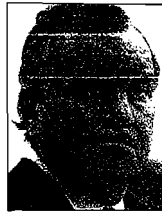
BY JOHN PLETZ

Pat Ryan and Mayor Richard M. Daley will be performing a high-wire act this week for the International Olympic Committee: convincing its evaluation team that Chicago's unorthodox combination of limited city and state financial guarantees—plus an undefined insurance policy—will be as good as the unconditional government commitments being offered by Madrid, Rio de Janeiro and Tokyo.

The insurance idea is risky: While IOC President Jacques Rogge recently said the organization wouldn't insist on the blanket guarantee it has re-



Pat Ryan



Richard M. Daley

quired in the past, the insurance plan is untested in Olympic circles. And it will be much harder to do a deal now that insurers have been hammered by the financial crisis than when the idea was first proposed two years ago.

Either way, Mr. Daley could find himself pressured to make the guarantee he has vowed not to. Though he contends no U.S. city has lost money outright by

See OLYMPICS on Page 8

Novel financial package clouds city's Olympics bid

OLYMPICS from Page 1

hosting the games, the possibility of putting taxpayers on the hook for an undefined tab is political kryptonite in a city that has a history of cost overruns on big projects.

"Knowing the IOC, (insurance) sweetens the pot, but they pretty much want a total guarantee," says Deedee Corradini, who was mayor of Salt Lake City when it won the 2002 Winter Games with the help of a guarantee from the state of Utah.

The sales job will fall primari-

Mr. Ryan insists the game would generate a \$450-million profit, meaning neither taxpayer money nor insurance would be needed. But if Chicago loses the money, it would use the \$50 million insurance policy to supplement its own \$500-million commitment and another \$2 million pledged by the state.

Barry Sanders, who chaired Los Angeles' failed bid for the 2016 games, also was counting on insurance to satisfy the IOC. But he has doubts about the viability of the idea now.

"Could you get it done today? Probably not," he says. "It's not an environment to do out-of-the-ordinary deals, and this is not of the ordinary."

Los Angeles has two companies lined up to provide up to a

billion of coverage, Mr. Sanders says. But, "one of the companies we were dealing with was AIG. I think they're probably focusing on other things right now."

AIG declines to comment.

'IT'S DOABLE'

The bigger issue is cost, says Don Urbanciz, a former commercial insurance executive in Chicago. He says such a policy would be handled by a group to spread the risk. Likely candidates, alongside AIG, are "Lloyd's, Munich Re and a whole lot of companies out of Bermuda."

"It's doable," says Mr. Urbanciz, who estimates such a policy would cost from \$10 million to \$75 million. "Because of the visibility of the Olympics and it's Pat Ryan's baby, people will be willing to look at it. But it's definitely going to cost you more, and it will get a hell of a lot more scrutiny."

"KNOWING THE IOC, (INSURANCE) SWEETENS THE POT, BUT THEY PRETTY MUCH WANT A TOTAL GUARANTEE."

[Deedee Corradini, mayor, Salt Lake City]

ly to Mr. Ryan, who leads the bid committee and made his mark building Aon Corp. into the world's No. 2 broker of business insurance. Even if he can sell the IOC on the insurance idea, he'll face a big challenge finding companies willing to provide the coverage.

"I wish them luck," says Bill Bannon, vice-president of advisory and special-risk services for BWD Group LLC in Jericho, N.Y., which provides insurance to professional sports teams. "With the whole credit crunch and collapse of the credit markets, I would think it would be very difficult to do right now."

Mr. Ryan says he has several companies lined up, but he declines to name them, saying it could cause a conflict when the policy is put out for bid. "We've talked with several companies willing to provide this type of insurance," a bid committee spokesman says. "We'd take it to market at the appropriate time."

Contact: jpletz@crain.com

[BECOME A MEMBER!](#)

[What's this?](#)

Become a member of our community!

[Sign In](#)

[Register](#)

Mayor Daley sees intensifying storm despite positive trends in economy

[Comments](#)

May 19, 2009

BY FRAN SPIELMAN City Hall Reporter

Forget about the positive trends in the stock market and the uptick in the housing market. Where some see a ray of sunshine in the economic clouds, Mayor Daley sees an intensifying storm.

"It's like a tsunami. It's all coming together," Daley said as he urged Chicago businesses to make their employees aware of government assistance programs.

"This is not a recession that we've seen in the past that's one part of the economy. This is the financial industry. This is retailing. This encompasses manufacturing. It encompasses everything you see in society."

He added, "Everybody wants a glimmer of hope. I do, too. I want the sun to come out. But, the glimmer of hope is not what we're talking about here. ... I've talked to many, many business leaders. They have the same perception. This is much longer and stronger. ... It's much different from any recession they've ever seen in the last 40, 50 years."

But, aren't dire predictions by political leaders somewhat self-fulfilling prophecies? Don't they make consumers even more frightened and less willing to shop in Chicago stores, dine in the city's restaurants and patronize its theaters and museums?

"It's not gloom and doom," Daley said. "I could say, 'Everything's rosy. Everything's happy. Don't worry. Be happy.' [But], you have to tell the truth. If you don't tell the truth on this issue, then you're kidding yourself."

Gloom-and-doom talk about the economy is nothing new for Daley.

Last fall, the mayor said he'd been warned by a parade of corporate CEO's that a blizzard of job cuts were about to bury the souring Chicago economy.

He turned out to be right. It's been an avalanche that included 420 city employees. And furlough fever is raging through private companies and government agencies alike to try and save jobs or at least reduce the number of layoffs.

Now, a potential \$300 million year-end shortfall has the mayor demanding that city employees take 14 unpaid days off by Dec. 31 and warning of 1,100 more layoffs if organized labor fails to do the same.

So far, union leaders are holding out for a two-year, no-layoff guarantee that Daley says he can't give.

[BECOME A MEMBER!](#)

[What's this?](#)

Become a member of our community!

[Sign In](#)

[Register](#)

Daley: City Hall botched parker meter privatization

[Comments](#)

May 19, 2009

BY [FRAN SPIELMAN](#) City Hall Reporter

Mayor Daley acknowledged Tuesday what Chicago alderman and motorists have known for months: City Hall botched the privatization of Chicago's 36,000 parking meters by not transferring meters to a contractor more gradually.

"I'll take the responsibility. I'll take it. . . . There should have been a transition -- a much better transition -- and there wasn't. That's one thing we learned. There should have been a three-month transition," the mayor told reporters at an unrelated event.

Referring to other major assets turned over to private contractors without incident, he said, "The Skyway, parking garages -- everything else worked out. There should have been a three-month transition into it because the parking meters were not in the best of shape."

Ald. Leslie Hairston (5th), who has led the charge against Chicago Parking Meters LLC, welcomed the mayor's mea culpa. But Hairston said it's not enough for motorists who lost money and time after parking at improperly calibrated downtown meters.

"I'm glad that he's stepping up. Then it becomes what do we do make people whole," Hairston said.

"This company knew something was wrong and did not report it and continued to take peoples' money. Everywhere I go, I'm talking to people who put three quarters into the slot and didn't get any time," she said. "There has to be some type of restitution. Everybody is not gonna be able to get their quarters back. But we need to set up a fund and make a good-faith effort."

Earlier this week, the contractor that paid \$1.15 billion to lease the meters was taken to the City Council woodshed amid accusations that it blew the takeover, concealed problems and "stole" money from downtown motorists.

The outrage was so great about a 75-year deal tied to a steep schedule of rate hikes, several aldermen believe there may be grounds to cancel the \$1.15 billion lease with Chicago Parking Meters LLC.

Never mind that \$150 million of the money was used to balance the city's 2008 and 2009 budgets and that \$200 million more will be used to offset shortfalls through 2012.

On Tuesday, Daley defended the deal, even as he fell on his sword.

"If we didn't have that [cash infusion], you're talking about a serious economic crisis for Chicago," the mayor said.

He added, "In the long run, this is the best thing. . . . If you had the foresight in your companies to do things we're doing -- to shore up our budget, to shore up our infrastructure and to shore up our long-term debt -- your companies would be better off. But you don't have the foresight in your companies."

Five months ago, the City Council approved the parking meter deal with only five dissenting votes.

The Feb. 13 takeover turned sour when the private contractor underestimated the resources required to reprogram meters and make timely collections so they wouldn't get jammed with quarters.

That resulted in a rash of broken, overstuffed and mismarked meters. Chicago motorists have vented their anger with a spike in vandalism and a drop-off in on-street parking.

Dressing Up Montague Parking Meters

From Brownstoner

Man Stole \$170,000 From Parking Meters

From Offbeat News

The views expressed in these blog posts are those of the author and not of the Chicago

Sun-Times.

joe the chicagoan wrote:

lee star wrote: So Mayor Short Shank will take responsibility, wow what a white thing to do. And if he hadn't, you'd have criticized him for failing to do so. He couldn't do the right thing by you if he took responsibility or not.

5/19/2009 3:39 PM CDT on suntimes.com

[Report Abuse](#)

chief501 wrote:

Im glad to see the Mayor taking responsibility- YOUR FIRED!!!

5/19/2009 3:17 PM CDT on suntimes.com

[Report Abuse](#)

jrz40 wrote:

I live in the city and now it is easy to find a parking spot, less cars are in the city and is more enjoyable, I understand that with this economy motorist are paying more but now they are thinking twice before driving, good for the environment...use public transportation.

5/19/2009 3:14 PM CDT on suntimes.com

[Report Abuse](#)

marvin8 wrote:

I know that the city is on the hook for a certain minimum to Chicago Parking LLC if they don't raise enough money for the meters. The figure is somewhere around \$20 million minimum guarantee. What "I" wanna know is whether that minimum increases every year or not. If it does, we got royally screwed on the deal. If it doesn't, the Parking Meter company got screwed. Either way, the citizens got screwed because of the ridiculous meter rates, which will only get worse. I PRAY that the minimum guarantee is supposed to remain the same, but I doubt it.

5/19/2009 2:53 PM CDT on suntimes.com

[Report Abuse](#)



Red Line or Blue Line?

Search the Reader

Digg this | Post to del.icio.us | E-mail this | Facebook

- APARTMENTS
- HOUSES/CONDOS
- JOBS
- MATCHES
- CLASSIFIEDS

- STRAIGHT DOPE
- HOT TYPE
- SAVAGE LOVE
- BLOGS

- RESTAURANTS
- MOVIES
- MUSIC
- THEATER/PERFORM
- FASHION
- FREE SHIT

- STAND-UP COMEDY
- IMPROV/SKETCH
- ART
- DANCE
- READINGS
- SPOKEN WORD
- READER RECOMMENDS
- DAILY SPECIALS
- LISTINGS SEARCH

- READER'S GUIDES
- ARCHIVES
- BOOKSHELF

SIGN UP FOR OUR E-NEWSLETTERS:

enter e-mail address

OK

Reader Info

Advertising, subscriptions, staff, privacy policy, contact info, freelancers' guidelines, etc.



CLOUT **** CITY

Reader Flickr



How Daley and his crew hid their process from the public, ignored their own rules, railroaded the City Council, and screwed the taxpayers on the parking meter lease deal

By Ben Joravsky and Mick Dumke

April 9, 2009

No one in Chicago has been happy about the recent hike in parking meter rates, but by last week the frustration had become outrage, and the outrage had become a political problem. Since the city's speedy decision in December to lease the meters for 75 years in return for

about \$1.2 billion in quick cash, what you get for your quarter has declined precipitously. Worse, residents are fed up with the tickets they're receiving thanks to broken meters and outdated labeling. Some are boycotting meters by parking on side streets or not driving at all; others have tagged or vandalized them.

Finally, on March 31, city officials called a press conference to confront the problem—or at least to offer up someone who could take the blame so the Daley administration didn't have to. They presented one Dennis Pedrelli, chief executive officer of Chicago Parking Meters, the private entity that's now responsible for operating the meters. Pedrelli delivered a mea culpa. "We regret any issues that occurred," he said. "We are working as quickly as possible to address those issues." He promised that the company wouldn't raise rates or write any more tickets until it had fixed the broken meters and posted accurate information.

But the event didn't touch on what's really behind the parking meter problems: the deal that put the city's 36,000 meters in the hands of Pedrelli's company. Once city officials decided to privatize the meters, they rushed into a deal with little regard for the financial risks or potential impact on the public, turning control of a revenue-generating city asset over to a company that had just qualified for federal bailout funds.

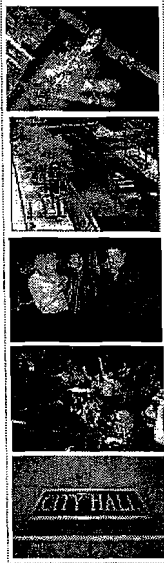
The origins of the meter debacle actually date back to 2005, when Mayor Daley began selling off public property for up-front cash payments without much scrutiny from the City Council or the public. Then last year, when tax revenues plummeted, the mayor increased the pressure, directing his staff to be "creative" in attacking budget problems. But even as city officials celebrated privatization agreements for Midway Airport and the meters, both worth billions of dollars, they refused to release the most basic information about how they'd been reached—such as which firms had bid, how much they'd offered, and short- or long-term cost-benefit analyses. Both plans were hustled through the City Council in less than a week. As one alderman told the Reader, but not for attribution, during a hearing on Midway: "Somewhere in this deal we're getting screwed. I just can't figure out where yet."

We can help with that. First off, a private company gives the city—i.e., the mayor—a big pile of cash that conveniently isn't subject to the same oversight as the rest of the budget. Eventually the private company will make a fortune off the deal—but by then



Who I am: life moves too fast for me sometimes... other times it seems to...

[Advertise here!](#)



everyone now running the city will be gone. In the meantime, fees are raised and management is moved out of the reach of voters.

With the parking meter deal the mayor has figured out how to get the public to pay more for less control. Daley gets more control over resources—and less responsibility for delivering services in return.

The ever-fearful City Council let him run roughshod over them, passing the deal with virtually no consideration. The citizenry never even had a chance. Now, thanks to the Freedom of Information Act, we've obtained documentation of the process that should have been made public in the first place. We've still got some unanswered questions, but we've managed to fill in some holes in the chronology of how the process got hijacked. Here's how it went down.

January 24, 2005 Mayor Daley signs a deal to lease the Chicago Skyway for \$1.83 billion to the Cintra-Macquarie Consortium, based in Spain and Australia, for 99 years. The dailies praise the deal—the Tribune calls it a “windfall”—and public officials around the country hail it as a model for privatizing public assets, indicating that it'd be a good way to manage the upkeep on toll roads and highways. Daley says he'll be looking into other lease agreements. And so it begins.

October 13, 2006 Daley announces plans to lease four parking garages under Millennium Park and Grant Park to a division of Morgan Stanley, the Wall Street investment bank, for \$563 million. Daley calls the 99-year lease an “outstanding deal for the taxpayers of Chicago,” which “allows for a massive shift of capital resources from downtown parking garages to neighborhood parks.”

February 8, 2008 The city issues a request for qualifications (RFQ) inviting firms to present credentials for leasing the rights to the city's 36,000 parking meters (PDF). Collecting parking fees and fines is one thing the city seems to be pretty good at—with operating expenses of \$4 million it hauled in almost \$23 million in 2007. But chief financial officer Paul Volpe says a private company would do a better job managing the meters. The RFQ asks bidders to demonstrate their “financial capability” as well as outline plans to manage the system and provide service to meter users. Responses are due in March.

February 11, 2008 The Chicago Park District announces it's spending \$22 million to buy the office it's been renting at 541 N. Fairbanks, in Streeterville. The building's owner donated \$50,000 to Mayor Daley's 2007 reelection campaign; Park District officials say there's no connection.

Money for the purchase comes out of the \$563 million the city and Park District received from Morgan Stanley for leasing the parking garages. Much of the money is already earmarked to pay off debt and after this deal there's only about \$100 million left over for neighborhood parks. It turns out they'd have benefited more if the city had held on to the garages.

March 28, 2008 Ten groups have submitted packets detailing their “qualifications” for leasing the city's parking meters, including Morgan Stanley, JPMorgan Chase, Lehman Brothers, and partnerships led by Macquarie Capital Group and Cintra, the overseas firms that leased the Skyway (see sidebar for PDFs). Several promise quick technology upgrades to make street parking easier for users and more lucrative for operators. Morgan Stanley says it would hire another company to manage the meters—LAZ Parking, a national firm based in Hartford, Connecticut. Morgan Stanley says LAZ would place a big emphasis on maintenance: “Since broken or jammed meters cannot bring in revenue, we will address preventive measures to ensure a reduction in malfunctioning meters.” City officials keep the bids to themselves, declining to show them to the public and refusing a direct request from us. When we ask for details about the process, they say they'll spend the next few weeks determining whether the interested parties are qualified to continue with the bidding process.

RFQ Packets (PDF format)

[Abertis-Saba \(2, 3\)](#)

[ACS-Lehman Brothers \(2, 3, 4\)](#)

[Chicago OnStreet Alliance \(Macquarie\)](#)

[Cintra-Dornier \(2\)](#)

[CPS](#)

[JPMorgan Chase](#)

[Mad Park](#)

[Kenny Project Services/Plainfield Asset Management/Impark](#)

[Morgan Stanley](#)

[Worldwide Park](#)

August 14, 2008 The administration announces that its budget projections are a bit off—the city is \$420 million in the hole. The figure grows to nearly \$500 million in the following weeks as the housing market implodes and revenues from real estate transfer taxes dry up. Volpe rules out raising property taxes but admits, “We're going to have to make some tough choices.” He declines to provide

specifics, saying, "We're not here today to talk about solutions."

September 22, 2008 A week after Lehman Brothers is liquidated amid the biggest Wall Street crisis since the Great Depression, Morgan Stanley and Goldman Sachs, the largest remaining investment banks in the United States, announce they will become bank holding companies, which are subject to stricter regulation. The firms "requested the change themselves," according to the New York Times, "a blunt acknowledgment that their model of finance and investing had become too risky. . . ." The Times calls this "a turning point for the high-rolling culture of Wall Street, with its seven-figure bonuses and lavish perks for even midlevel executives."

September 30, 2008 Two years after talks begin with federal and airline officials about privatizing Midway Airport, Mayor Daley announces the city has reached a \$2.5 billion, 99-year deal with Midway Investment and Development Company. The consortium includes John Hancock Life Insurance and YVR Airport Services, a Canadian company that manages airports. City officials say six firms went through the initial round of the bidding process, but they won't name them or reveal which ones submitted formal offers until the deal is closed. Daley staffers call aldermen downtown for closed-door briefings over the next couple days.

October 3, 2008 Fearing a run on banks, Congress props up the industry by passing the Troubled Asset Relief Program (TARP)—the \$700 billion bailout bill. About \$10 billion goes to Morgan Stanley. JPMorgan Chase—whose midwest chairman is the mayor's brother William Daley—gets \$25 billion. A few weeks later JPMorgan announces plans to buy a new fleet of corporate jets. Morgan Stanley quarterly dividends are paid out on schedule.

October 6, 2008 The Chicago City Council holds the first of two hearings to approve the proposed Midway lease. Many aldermen complain they haven't had enough time to study the details. Volpe says after paying off its debts the city should have about \$900 million left to put toward pension obligations and \$100 million for discretionary spending. He says aldermen will be consulted at a later date about where this money will go.

Under questioning from 38th Ward alderman Tom Allen, Volpe reluctantly concedes the city will probably have to spend at least \$1 billion on police and fire protection for Midway over the next 99 years, meaning the deal is essentially a money loser. Nevertheless, the council's finance committee approves it, which virtually assures its passage.

October 8, 2008 The full City Council approves the Midway lease deal by a vote of 49-0. One alderman who's been critical of the deal speaks frankly to us on the condition that we not identify him: he says he didn't really think the mayor would withhold services from his ward in retaliation for a nay vote but he voted yes anyway, figuring, "Why take a chance?"

Another admits that privatizing assets gives city officials cover when fees are jacked up. If aldermen voted to raise the tolls on the Skyway or the price of parking downtown, citizens might get upset at them, he says—so why not let a private company take the heat while the city gets a quick injection of cash?

October 15, 2008 Mayor Daley releases his 2009 budget, which he says will be balanced despite the city's "financial challenges." It hinges on hundreds of layoffs, hiking various fees and fines, and an expected \$150 million infusion from a parking meter lease. Many aldermen say this is the first they've heard that the city is close to such a deal.

November 19, 2008 The City Council approves Mayor Daley's budget by a vote of 49 to one. It projects a balance by firing workers, hiking various fees and fines, and leasing the parking meters. Daley and the aldermen congratulate themselves on working through a dire financial situation together. "Often the City Council is looked at as a body, that if we all vote one way or another, it's a rubber stamp," says 46th Ward alderman Helen Shiller. "But that doesn't fit the times." The lone dissenter, the 26th Ward's Billy Ocasio, has a different take: "Yes, these are hard times," he says. "But I think in this budget we haven't been that responsible."

November 21, 2008 Unbeknownst to the public or the City Council, the city receives two official bids for leasing the parking meters. (At deadline budget department spokesperson Peter Scales had not been able to provide an explanation of how the pool was winnowed down from ten.) According to the documents obtained by the Reader through the Freedom of Information Act request, the bids came from Morgan Stanley, for \$1,008,500,000 ([PDF](#)), and the Macquarie partnership, for \$964,226,025 ([PDF](#)).

December 1, 2008 Final bids on the parking meter lease are due. "We open the envelopes and the winning bidder is the highest bidder," Lisa Schrader, a spokesperson for the budget department, tells us later that day. In the last week Morgan Stanley has upped its bid to \$1,156,500,000 (PDF). The Macquarie group's final bid comes in at \$1,019,022,803 (PDF).

At 8:34 AM finance committee chair Ed Burke calls a special meeting for December 3 to discuss the deal; aldermen still have no information about who has bid or how much. At 3 PM, the mayor submits paperwork to the city clerk's office calling a full council meeting for December 4 "for the sole purpose" of approving the agreement.

December 2, 2008 Daley holds a press conference to announce that his administration has agreed to lease the meters for 75 years to Chicago Parking Meters LLC, a newly created entity led by Morgan Stanley, for nearly \$1.2 billion. In its bid documents Morgan Stanley lists itself as the sole vendor, with no reference to creating Chicago Parking Meters or any other offshoot involving other investors.



The deal "comes just at the right time," says Daley. Parking rates will go up, he says, but some of the money will help pay for social services.

The mayor and his aides won't reveal the names or number of other bidders or how much they bid. "We do not disclose information that is part of the competitive bidding process until the transaction is closed," explains a budget department spokesman.

Aldermen are invited to a briefing with city officials, who distribute an eight-page summary. It reads in part, "City Council retains the right to set rates, hours of operation and designate meter locations. However, reduction in meters, rates or hours that negatively impact the overall value of the meter system could result in a payment by the City to the Concessionaire." Due to the short notice some aldermen aren't able to attend.

December 3, 2008 An ordinance is required to finalize the lease deal, and the finance committee meets to consider it. Ten minutes into the meeting some aldermen point out that they still haven't seen it. After copies the ordinance have been provided, many remain confused. Where are the details of the agreement? What's the rush? Why haven't you kept us informed before now? And who in the heck is the company that will be managing the meters?

Volpe tells the aldermen it's critical to finish the deal quickly, since interest rates are at an all-time low and any upward movement will cost the city money. But he also assures them that the city will replace the \$20 million it now clears annually from parking meters with 5 percent interest on the \$400 million it intends to put in the bank. No one bothers to remind him that in the current economic meltdown nothing is generating a 5 percent return.

Alderman Berry Stone praises Mayor Daley's fiduciary prowess by explaining that the lease will help avoid tax hikes: "You can't avoid death, but you can try to avoid taxes." Other aldermen pause to reflect on the deeper meaning of his remark.

Alderman Richard Mell points out that workers employed to write tickets and empty the meters won't be subject to the federal ban on patronage hiring. That means they could work the precincts or contribute to the campaigns of powerful politicians. The aldermen appear to consider the possibilities.

"We're rushing through this," says Alderman Robert Fioretti. "Why?"

"We've been working on this for the better part of a year, so we haven't been hasty," Volpe insists.

"You had a year, but you're giving us two days," says Alderman Ike Carothers.

To help aldermen understand some of the terms, Jim McDonald, a lawyer for the city, reads some legalese from the proposed agreement.

Ocasio bellows: "What does that all mean?"

City officials then pass out a corporate flow chart to offer some "clarity" on who exactly will be leasing the meters. At the top of the chart it says "Chicago Parking Meters LLC." It looks like the plan for a Rube Goldberg invention.

Judging from the chart, Chicago Parking Meters investors include various arms of Morgan Stanley, JPMorgan Chase, the Teachers Retirement System of Texas, and other insurers and pension funds. Several aldermen turn the chart upside down to see if it makes more sense that way.

McDonald says the new company supplied the law department with its economic disclosure statement—required by city law—"yesterday." Meaning December 1. Even though according to the original request for bids in February, "Qualified Bidders will be required to submit an Economic Disclosure Statement and Affidavit and comply with certain other requirements before submitting final bids."



Alderman Burke warns that LLC stands for limited liability company, designed, as the name suggests, to help the owners avoid liability if they're sued. "It can be a shell," says Burke, who's recently delivered a series of populist speeches against the abuses of corporate America. "This is why we don't trust Wall Street. It's why they've brought us to the brink of financial disaster."

Still, after a couple hours Burke and his colleagues

conclude it's too good a deal to pass up, and the finance committee gives its stamp of approval.

December 4, 2008 The full council meets to consider the deal. Many aldermen privately concede they still don't understand it. Alderman Scott Waguespack unveils an analysis his staff has put together that shows the city would make far more money if it just held on to the meters—he estimates their value over 75 years is about \$4 billion. "I argued that the city was not getting a good deal, and that at a minimum the Council should see the City's numbers," he later writes in an e-mail to constituents. "They instead argued our numbers were wrong (without having seen them). I was then told I could see some numbers, but not before the vote."

Others are less critical. Alderman Mell contends the council has had more than enough time to study the deal: "How many of us read the stuff we do get, OK? I try to. I try to. I try to. But being realistic, being realistic, it's like getting your insurance policy. It's small print, OK?" From the council floor Alderman Stone assures any citizens who are listening that "this money is not going to be spent like a drunken sailor."

The full council approves the deal 40-5, with the nays coming from Toni Preckwinkle, Leslie Hairston, Rey Colon, Waguespack, and Ocasio. Five aldermen—Shiller, Carothers, George Cardenas, Ariel Reboyras, and Sandi Jackson—manage to miss the vote.

January 21, 2009 Mayor Daley suggests that newly inaugurated president Obama follow his lead in learning to "think outside the box" and start leasing public assets. "If they start leasing public assets—every city, every county, every state, and the federal government—you would not have to raise any taxes whatsoever," he says. "You would have more infrastructure money that way than any other way in the nation."

February 13, 2009 The city announces that it's finally finished all the final legal work and closed the deal with Chicago Parking Meters LLC and day-to-day management of the system will be turned over to LAZ Parking. Rates go up at some meters within days.

February 25, 2009 The Reader submits a Freedom of Information Act request asking for documents related to the parking meter lease agreement, including the materials submitted by all bidders at each stage of the bidding process—in short, all the stuff the city never got around to revealing during council meetings. By state law, the city is required to respond within seven working days.

March 10, 2009 Having received no response to our FOIA request, we follow up with

several phone calls to the city's budget department. Eventually we receive an e-mailed form letter explaining that our request "cannot be compiled by the agency within the time limits prescribed" under state law. The department needs more time because the records are not readily available.

March 20, 2009 The Tribune's Jon Hilkevitch reports that all hell is breaking loose on the parking meter front—the meters can't handle all the extra quarters required by the new rates. In some places the rates aren't posted clearly, and drivers are furious that they're getting ticketed as a result. City spokesman Ed Walsh tells Hilkevitch: "We feel it is too early to evaluate performance." Walsh also suggests that motorists report broken meters to the city's 312-744-PARK hotline so "this can be used later as a defense to an issued ticket, if need be." Thousands of grateful motorists thank Ed for his legal advice. Just kidding.

Meanwhile, Mayor Daley is in San Diego, speaking to a group of CEOs about the benefits of privatization. "Government can only do so much," Daley says, according to the San Diego Union-Tribune. "Government has to be more welcoming to business."

Later that day, we call and e-mail the budget department, asking for an update on our FOIA request.

March 22, 2009 Sun-Times columnist Carol Marin describes an emerging parking meter boycott. She quotes the Parking Ticket Geek, the blogger behind theexpiredmeter.com, on his efforts to reach someone with LAZ Parking: "I called for a week straight. . . . I am friendly and nice and polite on the phone . . . and never ever get a call back."

March 23, 2009 We send another e-mail asking about the bid documents. Peter Scales writes back, apologizing for the delay: "I'm still waiting for some documents to be returned to me. I should have them in a day or so. I'll turn this around in a couple of days."

March 24, 2009 The New York Times reports that Morgan Stanley paid chief financial officer Colm Kelleher \$2.1 million last year to cover the expense of having to work in New York even though he lives in London. Kelleher also receives a monthly housing allowance of \$28,600. Walid Chammah, a Morgan Stanley copresident who also lives in London, received benefits worth \$790,150 in the form of flights on the corporate jet. CEO John Mack "informed the board that he would start reimbursing Morgan Stanley for his personal use of the company's corporate jet." No word on what impact this will have on parking meter rates in Chicago.

March 25, 2009 The Sun-Times notes a surge in parking meter vandalism, and Marin suggests that the meter rate hikes and breakdowns could ignite a voter backlash similar to the one that drove Mayor Michael Bilandic from office back in 1979, after his response to a blizzard was perceived as inadequate.

March 26, 2009 Mayor Daley sends out city work crews to fix broken parking meters, even though Morgan Stanley and LAZ Parking are supposed to be responsible for maintenance now.

March 31, 2009 City officials stage the press conference with Chicago Parking Meters CEO Dennis Pedrelli. In addition to promising not to raise rates or write tickets till the system's been cleaned up, he announces plans to reimburse the city for the labor of its work crews.

March 31, 2009 The Sun-Times reports that the Midway privatization deal is on hold: Midway Investment and Development Company LLC is having trouble lining up the funds. City officials say they'll give Midway Investment up to six months to get the money together.

April 1, 2009 Mayor Daley holds a press conference in Douglas Park to assure the world that the city has a plan to pay for the 2016 Olympics that "protects taxpayers."

April 3, 2009 On a Friday six weeks after our original request, we call and e-mail the budget department about those documents again. At 7 PM, we're told they're ready.

For more on the parking meter lease deal, see our politics blog, [Clout City](#).

Send a [letter to the editor](#).

Comments

[Flag as inappropriate](#)

Brian Chambers at 11:22 PM on 4/8/2009

chicagotribune.com

EDITORIAL

Daley's meter debacle

June 3, 2009

"By giving up control of the parking-meter system for 75 years, the city relinquished future parking-meter revenue that has a present value of approximately \$2.13 billion. This means that the city received about \$974 million less for the parking-meter system than it was worth to the city -- or, alternatively, that the city leased the system for a price that was 46 percent lower than its value to the city. The report's calculations are quite conservative ..."

-- Report of Chicago Inspector General David Hoffman, June 2, 2009.

Translation: Mayor Richard Daley's meter debacle is even more wrongheaded, more costly to Chicago's future finances, than you thought. By leasing the meter system for \$1.15 billion to meet short-term needs, City Hall may have left almost that much booty -- \$974 million! -- on the table.



Go ahead, beef about meters that cost too much on the days when they work. Those driver-unfriendly aspects aren't the essence of this damning report from Hoffman. The real value here is that Hoffman and finance experts on his staff have given Chicagoans what a high-pressure Daley administration didn't offer, and what an intimidated City Council didn't demand: an *independent* review of this lease and how Chicago bumbled into it.

Let's posit that some leases or sales of public assets make sense, some do not. But precious few deals of any sort make sense during the sort of bum's rush that characterized this one: The Daley administration announced a lease agreement on Dec. 2 and the City Council approved it Dec. 4 by a vote of 40-5. Due diligence? Fiduciary responsibility? Simple scrutiny? No time.

One troubling result, Hoffman reports, is that City Hall didn't assess other options -- when, "in fact, there were valid alternatives to this lease deal that could have solved the city's short-term budget problems" without raising rates so high or ceding control of the meters for three generations. Instead, says the report, the Daley administration argued that "the city had to take the best deal the market would offer at the time, whether good or bad."

The report contends that a much shorter lease (20 or 30 years), with revenue-sharing between Chicago and a vendor, would have been smarter for the city over time.

How to keep City Hall from swindling itself in future deals to lease Midway Airport or other valuable

assets?

On Wednesday the council likely will consider an ordinance that would require a 15-day review for many privatization deals when a winning bidder has been chosen.

That would be better than the status quo. But Hoffman's office recommends that aldermen hire *independent* analysts to conduct a 60-day review after the administration has decided on its terms for leasing or selling city assets but *before* companies place their bids. Once aldermen know and accept the privatization terms, "a two-week period should be more than enough for the City Council to hold a hearing and debate whether the winning bid is a bid the city should accept."

Aldermen, you helped get Chicago into this fiasco. Make sure whatever changes you adopt halt the next fiasco in its tracks.

Copyright © 2009, Chicago Tribune

From Crain's Chicago Business

May 13, 2009

By John Pletz

Challenges rise in developing Olympic Village

(Crain's) — Real estate developers are starting to get a glimpse of the challenges they'll face in developing the athletes' village if Chicago is chosen to host the 2016 Summer Olympics. Among them is building up to 2,500 residential units that will hit the market all at once, obtaining financing and meeting the needs of the Olympics and those of the private market, which is the final destination for the project. Cassandra Francis, who is spearheading the project for the Chicago 2016 bid committee, offered some details during a luncheon Wednesday sponsored by the Chicago School of Real Estate at Roosevelt University.

The village is the highest-priced item to be built for the games. It's a nearly \$1-billion project on the site of the former Michael Reese Hospital on the city's South Side. Although Chicago is buying the site for \$86 million, the city and the Olympics organizing community are counting on private developers to construct and finance the housing project. That has become an increasingly dicey proposition since London and Vancouver, British Columbia, sites of the next two Olympics, have needed government help to keep privately developed villages on track.

Financing could be hard to line up because banks are no longer lending as generously as they did before, raising questions about whether private developers can handle the project alone. "That's one of the concerns the (International Olympic Committee) has," Ms. Francis said. "We do believe we can get traditional financing." She said the bid committee also is looking into federal financing for portions of the project that involve affordable housing, housing for seniors and student housing.

If Chicago is chosen in October, the city and bid committee will quickly put out a request for developers to lead the project. With commercial and condo developments all but coming to a halt because of weak demand and tight financing, developers are eager for the prospect of the Olympics to keep them working. But they've got plenty of questions.

"Financing is the biggest obstacle," said Jerry Karlik, a principal at Kargil Development, which has done projects in the South Loop and responded to a bid committee request for expressions of interest in the Olympic Village earlier this year. "There's going to have to be some sort of assistance: guarantees, tax credits or something.

Mr. Karlik, who attended the luncheon, said he figures lenders today won't finance more than 60% to 70% of a project, compared with 80% to 90% before the recession. "Someone's going to have to come to the table to fill the void," he said.


The project will be challenging in other ways, balancing the needs of Olympic athletes against the tastes of private owners. The IOC favors buildings not more than 14 stories tall, while developers have favored much larger towers for condos near the lakefront to maximize their returns. Much of the housing, which must be designed and built in just six years, will have to be reconfigured between the time the athletes use it and private owners take possession. A typical two-bedroom condo will require temporary walls so it can house eight athletes in four bedrooms. Kitchens will either be walled off or rendered inoperable because the IOC doesn't allow athletes to eat outside the dining hall. Athlete facilities such as an amphitheater and nightclub will be temporary, as well. ##

FLY THROUGH YOUR DAY WITH THE BLACKBERRY® CURVE™

U.S. Cellular® combines its 3G Network with great offers on the BlackBerry® Curve™ to help you stay connected to your business.

U.S. Cellular

[Learn more](#)



Quinn: Hike tax or slash spending 37%

By Greg Hinz
 May 18, 2009

(Crain's) — Gov. Pat Quinn brought a dire message to a downtown civic club Monday: If he doesn't get his budget, state spending will have to be cut 37%.

That would mean, among other things:

- 14,300 public school teachers would be laid off, a \$1.5-billion cut.
- 400,000 college students would lose scholarship aid in a \$554-million reduction.
- 650,000 people would lose health care benefits in cuts totaling \$1.2 billion.
- 271,000 seniors would not be taken care of in the wake of \$368 million worth of reductions, cutting things like the state Department on Aging's Circuit Breaker program, and services to help seniors remain in their homes and fight elderly abuse.
- 6,000 prisoners would be let out of jail early.
- \$769 million in human services cuts would mean 5,000 disabled people would lose home care services and 45,000 people would no longer get addiction treatment and prevention.
- Mass transit cuts of \$549 million would eliminate all public funding for public transit and Amtrak.
- Local aid to state government would be cut \$1 billion.
- Another \$1 billion in cuts have yet to be determined.

Greg Hinz blog

If you want to get something done in government, declare a crisis — preferably a good one. Gov. Quinn certainly took that old political adage to heart Monday, unveiling his first full-length slasher production.

Read more on Greg's blog.

Mr. Quinn's speech to the City Club of Chicago comes just two weeks before the General Assembly is expected to wrap up its work in Springfield. He wants lawmakers to pass a budget that includes a 50% increase in the state income tax rate 4.5%, up from 3%, to help close a budget deficit of \$12 billion.

The cuts he detailed in his speech total about \$7 billion.

The governor also wants lawmakers to pass ethics reform measures in the wake of the scandals that ousted his predecessor, former Gov. Rod Blagojevich, from office.

(The Associated Press contributed to this report.)



- Font Size
- Home
- Top Video
- Local News
- Weather
- Entertainment
- U.S. & World
- Traffic
- Sports
- 2 Investigators
- Politics
- Business
- Health
- Consumer
- Obama
- Olympics 2016
- Food
- Pets
- Water Cooler
- Wireless

OTHER WAYS TO GET NEWS

Newsletters & Alerts
XML Feeds

MORE FROM CBS2

Digital TV FAQs
CBS 2 Phone Numbers
Morning News
Links & Numbers
CBS Shows Online
More+

COLLECTIONS

Video
Slideshow

ABOUT US

TV Schedule
News Team
Station Info
CBS 2 Jobs
Contact Us

LIFESTYLE

Beauty & Style
Family
New Baby

IN OUR AREA

CBS 2 In The Community
Contests
Community Calendar

OUR PARTNERS

CBSnews.com
CBS.com
Northwest Herald
WBMM 780AM

Local News



Jewish Celebrities

- The Tattooed Ladies of Hollywood
- Celebrities Hitting The Big 4-0 In 2009
- Top 10 Smartest And Dumbest Dog Breeds
- Celebrity Watcher: Real Or Fake?

E-mail Print

Mar 12, 2009 7:47 am US/Central



**CTA: Service Cuts, Fare Hikes A Last Resort
Stimulus Money Coming For Blue Line Renovation, New Articulated Buses**

CHICAGO (CBS) — The Chicago Transit Authority is warning once again of service cuts and rate hikes, but the agency says they will only happen as a last resort.

The transit agency is now facing a \$155 million budget deficit, which they will plug in part with internal cuts. Funds from the RTA should make up the rest, the CTA said.

But if there is still a shortfall after that, the CTA may be forced to reduce service and increase fares.

Upon taking over as the new president of the CTA on Wednesday, Richard Rodriguez said, "Even in these challenging economic times, we have to find ways to manage and deliver services more efficiently."

Currently, while CTA ridership is high, the budget deficits are blamed on lower collections in sales tax and real estate transfer taxes.

The CTA has also blamed losses in revenue on a free ride program for seniors that then-Gov. Rod Blagojevich introduced in January 2008. Proposals are now pending to eliminate the program.

The CTA has been plagued by chronic budget problems for several years. Before former CTA President Ron Huberman left to take over the Chicago Public Schools, he had to raise fares across the board. The agency had suffered losses due to declining tax revenue and former Gov. Rod Blagojevich's order that seniors ride free.

Both Huberman and his predecessor, Frank Kruesi, on separate occasions threatened "doomsday" budgets that called for the elimination of routes and steep fare hikes. In 2004, the agency barely averted cuts of several bus routes and all overnight 'L' train service.

Meanwhile, the CTA is in line for a \$241 million windfall from the federal stimulus package, according to a top aide to Mayor Richard M. Daley.

Mayoral chief of staff Paul Volpe said last Friday the agency will use the money to purchase hybrid articulated buses, rebuild aging buses and rail cars and replace Blue Line subway tracks.

The STNG Wire contributed to this report.
(© MMIX, CBS Broadcasting Inc. All Rights Reserved.)

Editor's Picks

- CBS 2 WeatherTrak Forecast
- Gay Celebrities
- Famous People Pigging Out



1 of 1 Click to enlarge

(File Photo)
Chicago Transit Authority

Related Stories

- Rodriguez Officially Takes Helm At CTA (3/11/2009)
- CTA To Collect \$241 Million In Stimulus Funds (3/7/2009)
- Free Public Transit For Seniors May Be Eliminated (2/27/2009)
- New CTA President Will Face Serious Challenges (2/26/2009)
- Pulled CTA Buses To Remain Out All Of Next Week (2/21/2009)

The 2009 Kia Spectra
starting at \$14,200*

DISCLAIMER Dealer Locator 84058 GO


10 YEAR WARRANTY build & price special offers KIA KIA MOTORS

Local News

- **NEW** Direct Selling An Option In Bad Economy 1 hr 40 mins ago
- Soriano Leads Cubs To 6-3 Win Over Reds
- Quinn Takes Budget Plan To The Pulpit
- Residents On Edge After 3 Deaths In Hanover Park
- Rookies Help Tribe Top White Sox

Top News Stories

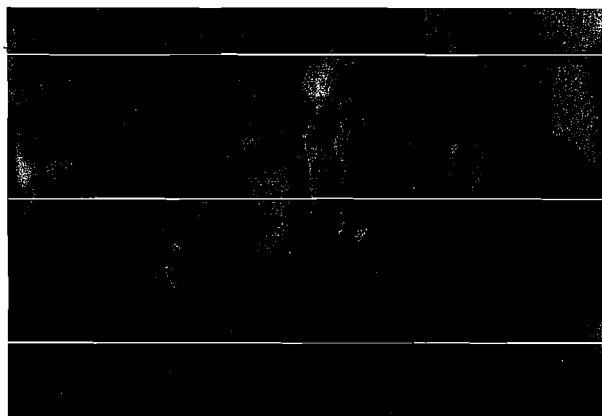
- Residents On Edge After 3 Deaths In Hanover Park
- Quinn Takes Budget Plan To The Pulpit
- 2 Charged In Northwest Shooting That Wounded Teens
- Blago: Phone Conversation Was Not 'Inappropriate'
- Police Bid Farewell to Fallen Officer

CHICAGO LOCALS ONLY**PRINTTHIS**Powered by **Clickability** [Click to Print](#)[SAVE THIS](#) | [EMAIL THIS](#) | [Close](#)

Mental Health Reprieve Daley relents on mental health centers slated for closure

By [STEVE RHODES](#)

Updated 9:00 AM CDT, Wed, Apr 8, 2009

Related Topics: [Local Politics](#) | [Politics](#)

Getty Images

Back to supporting mental health.

Apparently, in just the right doses of outrage, political threat, and embarrassing media coverage, dissent can work when it comes to Mayor Daley.

Daley has "issued a temporary reprieve to four South Side mental health clinics slated to close," the *Tribune* reports.

"Daley also said the city was looking into computer problems that, according to documents, led to a loss of nearly \$1.2 million in state funding for the clinics this year.

"In January, Daley blamed the closings on the lost funding, contending the city had no choice. But Tuesday he acknowledged the city's billing may have played a role.

"We are looking into that,' Daley said of the computer issues, first disclosed by the online publication

Chi-Town Daily News.

The *Daily News* reported on Tuesday that "The Chicago Department of Public Health lost more than \$1 million in state funding by failing to fix computer problems with its billing system, public records show, sparking a funding crisis and the scheduled closure of four South Side mental health centers today.

"City officials have previously blamed the closures in large part on state budget cutbacks.

"But a trail of official paperwork, obtained by the Daily News through the Freedom of Information Act, shows that the department's new computerized billing system was so flawed that patient bills weren't submitted to the state for six months in 2008.

"Billing the state was crucial to getting funds because of the way the state allocates dollars for mental health services."

On Monday, clinic advocates protesting the scheduled closings staged a brief sit-in at the mayor's office, winning a meeting with a top mayoral aide.

"I think they finally got the concept of what the people in the community feel,' said Darryl Gumm, chairman of the Community Mental Health Board, an advisory group, after meeting with chief of staff Paul Volpe," the *Tribune* reports.


"Jacquelyn Heard, the mayor's spokeswoman, said officials were 'trying to discern whether there's any way to keep some of these clinics open for a short time to determine if there's a way to keep them open for a longer period'."

Steve Rhodes is the proprietor of The Beachwood Reporter, a Chicago-centric news and culture review.

Copyright NBC Local Media

Find this article at:

<http://www.nbcchicago.com/news/local/Daley-Relents-on-Closing-Mental-Health-Clinics.html>

 **Click to Print**

[SAVE THIS](#) | [EMAIL THIS](#) | [Close](#)

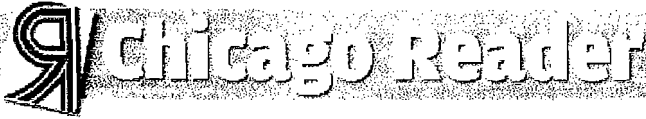
Check the box to include the list of links referenced in the article.

AROUND THE WORLD IN 80 DAYS

Written and Directed by Laura Rason - Adapted from the novel by Jules Verne



Lookingglass Theatre Company
in the Water Tower Water Works
APRIL 16 - JUNE 1



Search the Reader

[Digg this](#) | [Post to del.icio.us](#) | [E-mail this to a friend](#)

- APARTMENTS
- HOUSES/CONDOS
- JOBS
- MATCHES
- CLASSIFIEDS

- STRAIGHT DOPE
- HOT TYPE
- SAVAGE LOVE
- BLOGS

- RESTAURANTS
- MOVIES
- MUSIC
- THEATER / PERFORM
- FASHION
- FREE SHIT

- STAND-UP COMEDY
- IMPROV / SKETCH
- ART
- DANCE
- READINGS
- SPOKEN WORD
- READER RECOMMENDS
- DAILY SPECIALS
- LISTINGS SEARCH

- READER'S GUIDES
- ARCHIVES
- BOOKSHELF

Reader Info

Advertising, subscriptions, staff, privacy policy, contact info, freelancers' guidelines, etc.



LEAW YOU

TBKs at the Riv

You are the smart, sexy and very funny brunette in black, named Cellia. I asked you to join me for a drink after the

The Works Thar She Blows

The white whale lurking behind the mayor's new tax increases

By Ben Joravsky

October 25, 2007

The first thing you need to know about Mayor Daley's

budget, released on October 10, is that it's nothing more than a projection. The mayor's bean counters calculate how much money the city can expect to take in through fees, fines, and taxes over the next year and balance that against the amount they plan to spend. If, one year later, the city brings in more or spends less than anticipated, there's a surplus and taxpayers would theoretically get a refund (ha ha ha). If it brings in less or spends more, there's a deficit, requiring new fees and taxes to make up the difference.

Last October Daley, feeling pretty good about the city's economic condition, projected that he could fund city services—policing streets, clearing snow, hauling garbage, etc—without demanding much in the way of new taxes. Holding the line on taxes was a key theme in his subsequent reelection campaign.

Now, a year later, ensconced in office for another four years after his easy win in February, the mayor's reversed himself. The real numbers are in and his assessment of the future is gloomy: he says he'll need about \$293 million in new fees, fines, and taxes to keep the city afloat.

The budget speech he gave announcing the news was classic Daley. He blamed everyone but himself for the city's woes, starting with state legislators, who he said were too stingy with funds and too slow to pass residential property tax relief (keep in mind that he barely lifted a finger to lobby on either front). "If I propose raising taxes, it's because we've exhausted every other option," he said.

He promised to use some of the new tax revenue to "build or renovate more than ten libraries across the city." That pledge caught most listeners by surprise. Nothing against libraries. But with all the problems facing the city—failing schools, mass layoffs of teachers, nurses, and prosecutors, the CTA yet again threatening to raise fares and shut down routes, and the county crying for its own huge tax hike—are branch libraries really a top priority? Most aldermen figured the mayor was using them to conceal his true purposes.



Photo: M. S. ...

BACKSTAGE PASS
JUST A FEW MINUTES WALK TO YOUR FAVORITE JAZZ CLUB.

Luxury condos from the 1930s - 1940s
- Rooftop amenities
- Best Value in South Loop

Library Tower.com
Experience Live Chat

©2007 Learner Corporation

MEET ME



I'm a young old man with an old soul. I drank from the same fountain...



concert, but I lost you. Would like to pick up where we left off. Contact me if interested.



Readr Flickr



In fact, the budget address raised a number of questions about the mayor's motives, not the least of which is why he's proposing to raise taxes and fees at a time when many people are already buckling under the burden. Remember, Daley's proposed tax hike comes on top of the whopping second-installment tax bill home owners will be receiving in the next few weeks. If November's tax bill doesn't drive you out of your house, next year's first installment bill threatens to.

It's hard to see any dramatic difference between this year and last year that would justify such steep increases. Yes, the housing market is softening, but it's not that soft, at least not yet. And the downturn in housing sales was predicted by many experts last year, when the mayor was so upbeat. Politically, it's just plain stupid to raise taxes when services remain so poor. The more we pay the less we get.

So what's really going on? The budget itself won't tell you. For one thing, it doesn't itemize the city's fastest-growing drain on revenue, tax increment financing districts. There are now 156 TIFs in the city, consuming more than \$400 million in property taxes annually. Originally intended to eradicate blight in low-income communities that would otherwise get no investment, they're mainly used to hand out money to developers and businesses in the Loop and on the near west and south sides. If Daley truly wanted to ease the tax burden, he'd start shutting down the TIFs. Instead he insists they're untouchable and keeps creating new ones.

So if the budget won't explain the pressing need for higher taxes and fees, where can we find an answer? One place to start is page eight of the *Tribune* sports section from October 14. In a short article squeezed between a story about the Bulls and an ad targeting erectile dysfunction, Phil Hersh reported the latest development in Daley's impassioned pursuit of the Olympics: representatives of Chicago 2016, the committee of business and civic leaders overseeing the city's bid, were off to Lausanne, Switzerland, that week to attend the International Olympic Committee's applicant cities seminar.

There, my friends, is a clue to where your future tax dollars will be going and why they need a major boost. And it has nothing to do with libraries. Chicagoans may think of the Olympics as a pipe dream, too far down the road and too unlikely to come here to be worth worrying about. But as Hersh's article indicates, the fight to win the Olympic bid is on. By January 14, 2008, the seven cities still in the running for the 2016 games will have to submit a "mini bid book"—a detailed description of their vision, plans, budget, and funding—to the IOC. (Aside from Chicago, the other bidders are Tokyo; Rio de Janeiro; Madrid; Prague; Doha, Qatar; and Baku, Azerbaijan.) In June the IOC will eliminate three candidates, narrowing the field to four entrants, who will vie for the prize that will be announced in 2011. For Daley and his Olympic planners it's crunch time.

The IOC will be taking a close look at how much money each applicant is willing to put on the line for Olympics-related building: stadiums, arenas, housing, and so forth. In this regard Prague is already in trouble. The center-right Christian Democrats, who wield considerable influence in the Czech Republic, have announced their opposition to spending public money on the games.

Mayor Daley, of course, spent the better part of a year promising not to spend any public money on the Olympics. He only openly committed to doing so after the U.S. Olympic Committee forced his hand. "We definitely want the government to have some skin in the game," Bob Ctvrtlik, an official with the USOC told reporters in March. "We had been assured by the mayor that this is the case with the city of Chicago."

Apparently, while Daley was telling the public we wouldn't have to pay for the games he was privately assuring U.S. Olympic officials we would. Within a week of Ctvrtlik's remarks the mayor pushed legislation through the City Council guaranteeing up to \$500 million in public money for financing.

But \$500 million will only be a start. At last report, estimated costs for the London games in 2012 were up to \$18 billion, triple the original estimate. Athens wound up paying twice as much as anticipated for the 2004 Olympics. It's hard to believe Chicago would get off any easier.

Earn \$500 to \$5,000+per week!

The perfect home biz!for people who love\$\$\$but hate to sell!!Shy people wanted!you must see this fully automated cash system!please!!let us do the telling and selling!!IF you looking to make \$500 to \$5,000+per week or more!go to website and prepare to be amazed!!
[Read more...](#)

CHICAGO TANGO ACADEMY

Argentine TANGO, the Dance of Passion!!! New Class session Saturday May 3rd. 2 Drop-in Classes: Beginners 8:00 p.m. Intermediate 9:00 p.m. Milonga (Open Dancing) 10:00 p.m. \$15 Whole Event. Light Buffet, B.Y.O.B. Singles and Couples Welcome, all ages. 1803 W. Byron (#214) - Chicago. [Click here for more info!!!](#)
[Read more...](#)

TRAVEL SMART'

Hot travel deals and steals'on airfare,cruises/hotel stay,car rental,you can book online and save!quality service'saving-here multiple search all in one p!ce/save up to 70% on travel now!!check us out at the name that say it all'travelforless'
[Read more...](#)

[Advertise here!](#)



Mayor Daley continues to claim that private backers have been lined up to underwrite the games, but neither he nor Chicago 2016 has released any names. He says he has to keep the investors secret to avoid divulging critical trade secrets to rival cities.

But I suspect the bulk of the games will be financed with money from the city's TIF accounts. That's why Daley's proposed tax hikes are so critical. TIFs work by freezing the amount of property tax

revenue the parks, schools, county, and other taxing bodies can draw on. As property values rise, the TIF funds get all the additional tax money the property generates. By calling for a hike in the property tax rate, Daley's accelerating the amount of money pouring into TIF funds at the same time he's looking to impress the IOC with Chicago's ability to pay for the games—a master stroke.

Best of all, Daley alone controls the TIFs, as I'm sure his Olympic planners will make clear to the IOC. The TIFs are off budget. They're not on tax bills, so few taxpayers even know they exist. Almost no one, except a few TIF geeks, pays attention to how TIF money's spent. The TIF oversight boards are rubber stamps filled with mayoral appointees who know enough not to ask questions. TIF rules and regulations are riddled with so many loopholes they might as well not exist. TIFs truly function as a mayoral slush fund—that's why Daley likes them so much.

Most outside observers rank Chicago as a long shot to win the games. But don't underestimate Daley's determination: he's like Ahab, obsessed with the great white whale. Schools, parks, trains may fall apart, folks may be forced from their homes by taxes and gentrification, but Daley's going to get his games, ship be damned.

I really can't say I blame the mayor for thinking he can get away with it all. At no point during his 18-year reign have voters ever held him accountable. Besides, a mass delusion seems to have set in at City Hall when it comes to TIFs. I've heard everyone from the mayor to aldermen to planning department officials say they don't really raise taxes. They may even believe it. If you look at it from this perspective, the games are magically free even if they cost us a fortune.

Send a [letter to the editor](#).

Comments

[Hide comments](#)

Mark L. at 12:41 AM on 10/25/2007

[Flag as inappropriate](#)

Daley & co. are crooks; the whole world knows it. Chicago voters are idiots to elect & re-elect him. This city is corrupt to the bone. My property taxes (etc. etc. etc.) will drive me out. I'm a proud 3rd generation Chicagoan, & I love the feel & people of this city, but swine like Daley make it unliveable. I will shake the dust off my feet when I get out of this den of thieves. May they rot in hell.

Sam at 8:16 AM on 10/25/2007

[Flag as inappropriate](#)

Ultimately what will be much more costly to taxpayers than TIFs is Daley's failure to take the unions to task and bargain hard for much-needed pension and benefit reforms and offer them an unheard-of decade long gravy train, all in the name of avoiding any embarrassing strikes all the way through the Olympics (which is a long shot to begin with). Ben - I'd like to see you take the mayor to task for this much more resource-draining issue than TIFs. (or is this not a progressive enough cause for you to take up? - to demand pensions and benefits for the public sector that are much more in-line with what is typical in the private sector?)

School closings OK'd

BOARD HIT | Critics say members in dark on details

BY ROSALIND ROSSI

Education Reporter
rossi@suntimes.com

Chicago School Board members Wednesday approved plans to shutter or shake up 16 schools, despite angry complaints that they didn't tour all of the buildings or read any transcripts of the public hearings.

Board members sat silently after teacher Kristine Mayle asked if they had read transcripts of 22 public hearings on the proposals.

"If you haven't read them, then I don't think you have any business closing any of these schools," Mayle said.

Critics called for a moratorium on closings until an independent study can be done on the impact of 61 school closures since 2001.

Teachers contended board members should have toured targeted schools to ensure they were not basing their decisions on flawed data.

Chicago Teachers Union President Marilyn Stewart noted that new schools CEO Ron Huberman had been on the job only three weeks when he withdrew six shake-up proposals.

"How can the new CEO and board President Michael Scott say they trust the infor-



Protesters opposing the shakeup or closing of 16 schools march Wednesday in the 100 block of North La Salle. | JOHN J. KIM/SUN-TIMES

MORE ONLINE

SEE A MAP OF THE SCHOOLS

suntimes.com/news/education

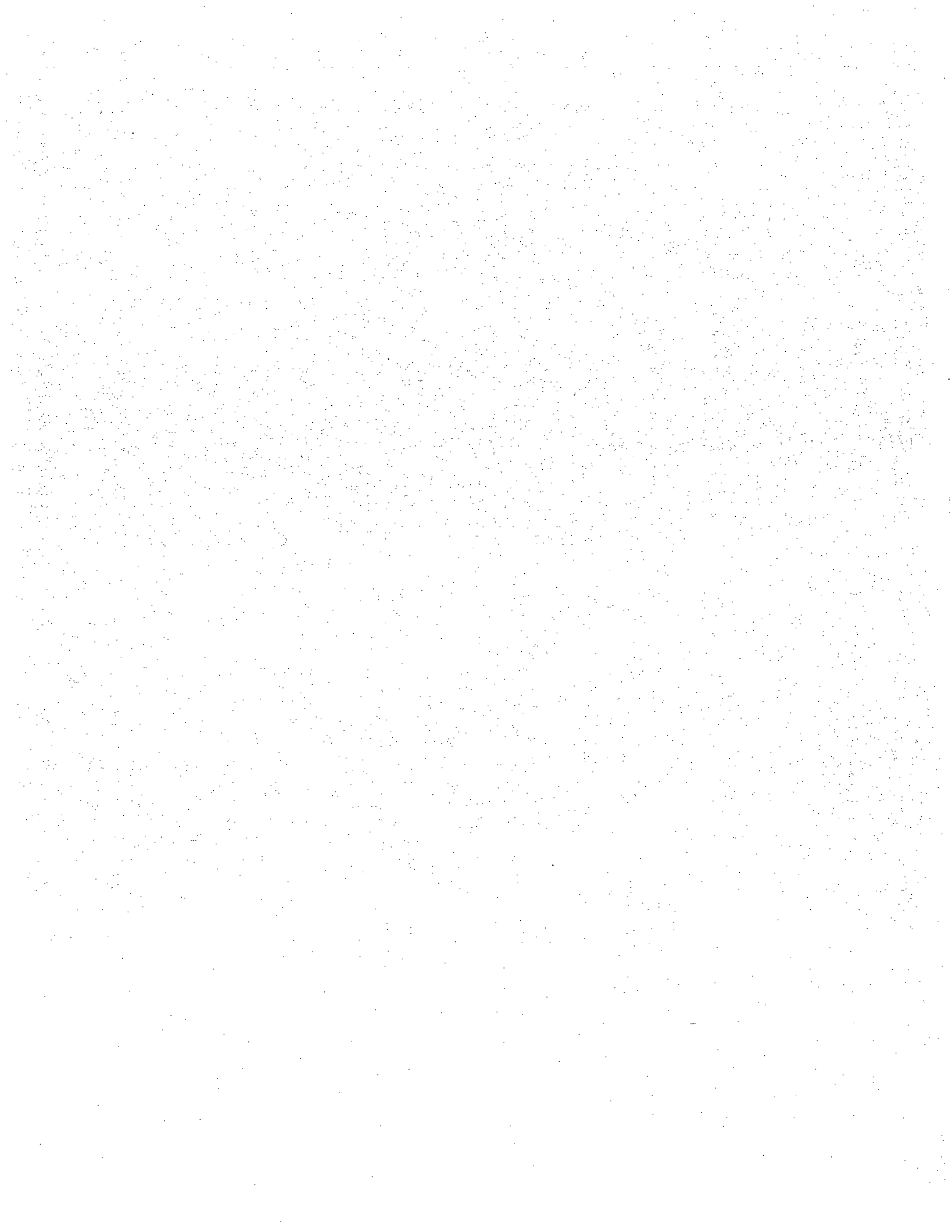
mation given to them by CPS staffers after [Huberman] pulled six schools from the list for faulty information?" Stewart asked.

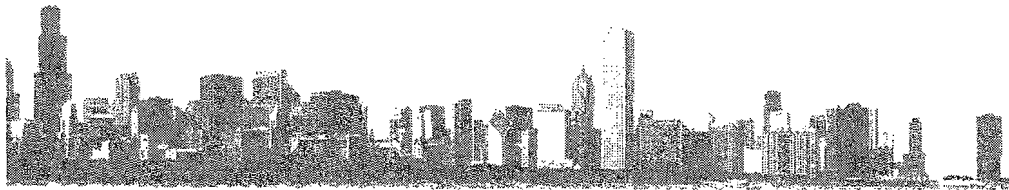
However, Huberman said it was "unfair" to let kids in chronically failing schools wait for the results of a study. And Scott said it made no sense to keep half-empty school buildings open.

Scott left early because his sister was in surgery.

Six other board members approved academic turnarounds at Dulles, Johnson, Bethune and Fenger High. Cleared for closure, phaseout or consolidation with other schools because of low enrollment were Nia, Foundations, Princeton, South Chicago, Carpenter, Lathrop, Reed, Best Practice High, Abbott, Davis Developmental, Medill and Schiller.

At least two board members indicated they had attended at least one hearing. Another, Tariq Butt, said he had read hearing officer summaries of the hearings. [Comment at suntimes.com](http://suntimes.com).





BETTER HOSPITALS * HOUSING * SCHOOLS AND TRAINS

**NO
GAMES

CHICAGO**

Lack of Competence. Our state, county and city are notoriously corrupt and populated with incompetent officials who line their pockets and make choices based not on effectiveness or the public good, but rather on how much money can be made by friends and family members. This directly translates into bloated construction projects that go massively over budget and suffer repeated delays. (Block 37 is a project that is 30 years old and still incomplete, Millennium Park was just four years late). Also, there are a number of very high-ranking corruption investigations under way and our former Governor faces trial in 2010. It's entirely possible that many of the Chicago officials the IOC has been working with may be under investigation.

Chicago doesn't deserve 2016 Olympics

Blatantly corrupt or simply stupid? City unworthy of 2016 Games

BY RICK TELANDER Sun-Times Columnist - June 5, 2009



There are times when you get sent to your room without dessert.

Without dinner, even.

This is such a time.

The City of Chicago, led by Mayor Daley and a vast and tumorous army of aldermen and bagmen and yesmen and opportunists and spineless, parasitic political-machine halfwits of forms never seen outside the roiling cesspool of governmental slop-trough greed, has proven itself unworthy of something as potentially delicious and fulfilling as the 2016 Olympic Games.

There was an opportunity there.

But the pitiful stuff just keeps on comin', warnings be damned.

Best ever was the city parking meter deal that gave a private company the rights to all the quarters Chicago parkers can shove into sidewalk machines until 2084.

"Duh Mare," who could still be in office in 2016, and his boys pushed that one through so fast it boggles the mind.

Forget the fact the city took an estimated \$974 million less than what the 75 years worth of revenue was worth. Or the fact any fool can jack up meter rates and provide meters that don't work.

The City Council rubber-stamped Daley's idea for gaining some upfront whip-out cash. When the machines didn't work, Daley said ... *Hey, lay off. Does your own computer work all duh time?*

The politics of pay-for-play and skimming and old-fashioned, suspender-snapping, cigar-chomping, big-bellied "Where's mine?" clout is so vibrant and alive and grotesquely arrogant here in Chicago that it is very nearly a breathing, slime-dripping creature worthy of a Star Wars-style nuclear assault.

There must be ramifications for being blatantly corrupt and/or stupid.

There must be.

Put on a sporting display for the world in 2016?

No.

Big shots blew it

Sorry, all you business and political big shots who are trying to ram this Olympics-are-good-for-you thing down the citizens' throats.

You blew it.

You didn't change your appetites, your sloth, your animal dumbness.

Why, just a month ago, Michael Scott, the president of the Chicago Public Schools board, sent an e-mail to all the city's school principals telling them to raise the Chicago 2016 Olympic flag and start promoting Mayor Daley's pet project.

Think that's unbiased?

Think there might not be, uh, "problems" for reluctant or skeptical principals?

This is the town where boating clubs have already been warned by the Chicago Yachting Association that there might be "retribution" for opposing the Olympic bid and the water and harbor difficulties the Games will create.

I myself will be expecting some kind of tax auditing or car-booting or camera-surveillance for my rebellious views, or, who knows -- leg-breakers? -- to help me "understand" the benefits of the Games to our town.

Mayor Daley's Chicago regime is a joke that plays like an old whoopee cushion.

We won't even bring up the fact former governor "Hot Rod" Blagojevich was once an instrumental part of Chicago's 2016 Games bid. If there was more clown greasepaint that his family could put on, it would need a face the size of a billboard to do it.

Former Illinois first lady Patti Blagojevich is on a reality TV show -- because her gerbil-cheeked, heavily-indicted husband was forbidden by the law to be on it -- eating bugs and being humiliated and semi-tortured for cash.

We're down to slapstick

Dear God, we don't ask for decency in Chicago or Illinois politics. We don't even ask for intelligence. But is it wrong to ask for something less than slapstick?

Yet things just get worse and worse with our political leaders.

What, 26 aldermen have been to prison in modern times?

Alderman Isaac Carothers, a longtime West Side Daley hack and political operations insider, is allegedly so corrupt that even wearing a wire for the feds (which he did) didn't prevent him from being indicted the other day for fraud and bribery.

Michael Jordan and even Barack Obama himself are going to speak out for the Chicago Olympic bid.

Who cares?

Do you know how much money Chicago stands to lose in this deal? Are you a wheeler-dealer? A connected guy? A Daley relative hooked up to pension-fund investments?

You'll pay, if you're not.

I guarantee you.

I promise you.

The Chicago bid folks have a massive public-relations war chest.

All we citizens have is common sense, and the knowledge of what goes on here.

In Louisiana, they have governmental corruption that is so over-the-top it's funny. Ours is just dumb as snot.

Bad kids should be punished.

To bed. No food. The end.

Comments

mr b. wrote:

Beautiful column.

We need more of this: contempt straight up with a twist of ridicule.

Maybe with a continuing stream of indictments and Hoffman refusing to back down the tide will finally turn against Daley and his band of merry morons. Because there aren't enough tulips in Holland to pretty up the open sewer his psycho "management" style has turned this city into.

Perhaps the sages of the Olympic committee will wake up and figure out that maybe they don't want any part of this embarrassing nonsense.

Here's hoping.

6/8/2009 12:42 AM CDT on suntimes.com

hot pursuit wrote:

Rick Telander hit a home run, right on the money. I can't believe the bloodsuckers commenting on how great it would be to host this event; I guess there is more to their comments, like maybe greed. If they seem to think this is Shangri-La, maybe they should leave their couch, get out and take a good look at what's happening to "our" city. That's right, "our" city, not Daley's, he's on borrowed time and I think the people are ready to show him the door. But I got a feeling that Fitzgerald will get there first.

Thanks again for a very direct, non-biased article. The corruption has to stop!

6/7/2009 12:46 PM CDT on suntimes.com

lcky9 wrote:

NO truer words were ever printed and I am SHOCKED... it's in the Sun-Times. I am impressed.

6/7/2009 11:16 AM CDT on suntimes.com

cheryl wrote:

We don't need the games; we need a whole new city government.

6/7/2009 10:35 AM CDT on suntimes.com

stjacks wrote:

Right on Rick, I only hope that one day the U.S. Attorney gets the real offender of all this corruption in this city, DALEY, DUH MAYOR, aka SHORTSHANKS.

6/7/2009 9:06 AM CDT on suntimes.com

kip wrote:

Thank you for the article. It's wonderful to see people stand up to Mayor Daley. The Chicago Reader even said Telander for Mayor!

6/7/2009 8:22 AM CDT on suntimes.com

stevesewall wrote:

This is the best I've seen since Mike Royko. This event will benefit only those Chicagoans who are directly profiting from it. Chicago doesn't need the Olympics; it needs a new Mayor and a new way of doing politics. God knows where a decent candidate will come from, but the time for him or her sure is right.

Thanks Mr. Telander - and Sun-Times don't you dare pull the rug out from under this man. He speaks for Chicagoans who for decades have been voiceless in the decisions that affect their lives.

6/7/2009 8:19 AM CDT on suntimes.com

peter zelchenko wrote:

So much for a Chicago that is "almost unanimous" in wanting the Olympics

6/7/2009 12:52 AM CDT on suntimes.com

knivesout wrote:

James Reyes. The message we can send to the Chicago "fat cat" politicians IS TO OPPOSE THE OLYMPICS.

You are not seeing past the slick marketing smokescreen that the politicians are corporations are putting up. Perhaps you don't live in Chicago or perhaps you're just gullible. I don't know where you belong, but I think Rick adequately expresses the frustrations of everyone in Chicago who has to put up with Daley's shenanigans.

The corruption stops now. It stops with voting these idiots out of office and it stops with punching down Chicago's Olympic bid.

6/6/2009 11:43 PM CDT on suntimes.com

james rey wrote:

Rick Telander is a hypocritical gutless wonder. Chicago isn't good enough to host the often corrupt Olympics because of crooked politicians. Which, by the way, is a redundant phrase. He doesn't think we should boycott sports despite their constant scandals, though.

Let's have the Olympics if we can get it. But send a message to the fat cat politicians that they better shape up.

A protest along the lines of the tax day tea parties would be in order. Tentatively titled "Take Your Grandma To Work Day." People would do whatever they legally could to make sure meters didn't make any money. They would

take public transportation, carpool, walk, bike, roller blade, take taxis, limos, ponies, unicycles, rickshaws or even pony back rides [the latter modes done more for the street theater value rather than practicality].

The only vehicles that would park at meters would be those that were exempt from paying, such as police cars and cars with handicapped plates or placards [hence the Grandma reference].

All you people that are good at organizing things should get right on this.

----James Reyes

6/6/2009 10:50 PM CDT on suntimes.com

reasonableperson wrote:

I did not read all of the comments but I was shocked at the few that I did read. I cannot believe that people are bashing you for this article!

I applaud you for writing this ever-so-true article. You absolutely hit the nail on the head; keep up the good work Rick!!!

I'm willing to bet that those who denounced you are Daley cronies.

Chicago is a crooked as it gets. I can't wait to see more indictments to come down.

6/6/2009 6:15 PM CDT on suntimes.com

anonymous said wrote:

Oh my GOD! Thank you Rick. Thank you. Now if your colleagues will only do the same!

6/6/2009 2:23 PM CDT on suntimes.com

mc hammer wrote:

Rick,

The truth will set you free. If you need somewhere to hide before you join Mr. Hoffa and own cement shares permanently, just e-mail me as I have a great place on a mountain lake in Tennessee. I got the heck out of the capital of corruptness, also know as Chicago, IL.

6/6/2009 11:50 AM CDT on suntimes.com

liz elm wrote:

Rick, You got it exactly right! I've been trying to put my feelings about the Olympics and the corruption in Chicago government into word for months and you did it for me. THANK YOU!!

Your description of the "tumorous army of aldermen..." is the best sentence I've ever read. I'm going to frame this column and hang it up! We can only hope the Olympic Committee is smart enough to pick a city other than Chicago. If we do get the Olympics, and I still live here in 2016, I'm going to rent out my house for thousands of dollars and leave the country for two weeks. Richie's cronies and family shouldn't be the only ones to benefit.

6/6/2009 11:06 AM CDT on suntimes.com

concerned in chicago wrote:

This may be the best column ever to appear in the Sun-Times. Thank you for standing up and speaking truth to power.

Of course don't expect to get any decent seats at any Olympic event in 2016 if Chicago does get the games. You'll be blackballed by those same big shots with the animal dumbness.

But I don't think you have much to worry about. The selection committee would have to have rocks for brains to pick Chicago. There's not enough money on the planet for a bribe big enough.

6/6/2009 10:27 AM CDT on suntimes.com

adellutri wrote:

Thanks for writing this Telander. From a Chicagoan.

6/6/2009 8:53 AM CDT on suntimes.com

uoficpa wrote:

Very easy to be critical from the cheap seats in Lake Forest....

6/6/2009 7:18 AM CDT on suntimes.com

newguy wrote:

Thank you for writing something actually worth reading in you paper.

6/6/2009 7:10 AM CDT on suntimes.com

eddie16 wrote:

A CLASSIC ARTICLE!!! AN HONEST TRUTHFULL PIECE OF WRITTING!!!!

6/6/2009 6:38 AM CDT on suntimes.com

loomis wrote:

Well, I'll drink to that!!!! The political corruption in the City of Chicago is without end. The money that is destined to be made by the politically connected and the "outfit" is staggering. The taxpayer gets the bill.

6/6/2009 3:18 AM CDT on suntimes.com

cpdcoppurr wrote:

Clap my hands together. My God Rick you hit the nail on the head. THANK YOU, from a Chicago Police Officer. You are doing us and our citizens' right by telling the truth, and shining a light on the cockroaches in this city. Bring Daley down!!!! The Aldercreatures are a joke. You are a gentleman and a scholar!!!

Thank you!!!!!!!!!!

6/6/2009 3:08 AM CDT on suntimes.com

john mccain's rice bowl wrote:

The Highest Praise I ever heard in my life was my Olympic guru, Bud Greenspan, say about a Kenyan runner who finished the Marathon about 6 hours behind the winners, because he had badly hurt his knees. He said, "All Honor to xxxx, because he refused to quit in the face of personal pain".

Today, after reading Rick's column, I can say, "All Honor to Rick Telander for refusing to drink the Kool-Aid".

You Sir represent Chicago with Honor more than anyone in City Hall, The County Building or the State Assembly. God Bless You.

Keep working for a Free Chicago.

6/6/2009 2:39 AM CDT on suntimes.com

chicago-the next detroit wrote:

Wow, well said. Keep this up Sun Times and maybe even I'll get a subscription. Daley and his henchmen have got to go. That's not just a sentence. HE HAS TO GO! He is destroying a fine city. Let's take it back. Keep up the pressure. Come on Fitzpatrick! Take them all down and you can be mayor!

6/6/2009 1:27 AM CDT on suntimes.com

lorica wrote:

THANK YOU FOR TELLING THE TRUTH!!!!

The Sun-Times has for too long been a cheer leader for Da Boss and the Messiah. During the election Obama's face was in the Sun-Times on an almost daily basis. For someone from this rag to challenge the Mayor and the Machine takes great courage.

6/5/2009 11:44 PM CDT on suntimes.com

tourney wrote:

Outstanding!!! Best article yet Telander!

6/5/2009 10:53 PM CDT on suntimes.com

kevinp wrote:

Parking meters may be to 2009 what snow removal was to 1979.

6/5/2009 10:09 PM CDT on suntimes.com

ken kunz wrote:

Excellent article Rick, you are the only media creature that has the guts to say what the majority of Chicagoans are thinking about Daley's Olympic nightmare! How can Daley talk about laying off eleven hundred city workers one day, and plan an Olympics that will cost the citizens of Chicago many billions of dollars the next? He is an Incompetent, that's how! Daley doesn't want the Olympics because he is a lover of sport, he wants the Olympics as a tool to force Black working class families out of the South and West sides. It's a typical racist Daley move. Gazillionaires like MJ and Obama will not be affected by this mess, but the average working class taxpaying family in this city will take it in the shorts! It is time for the editorial board of the Sun Times to take back its support for this hair brained scheme. The potential for international embarrassment with a thick tongued clown like Daley at the helm makes me both laugh and worry. Chicago is a great city, but it is a city with many, many problems. Let us attempt to fix those problems before we spend billions of tax dollars to enrich the already wealthy, or to inflate this thug of a mayor's ego!

6/5/2009 9:41 PM CDT on suntimes.com

jammell wrote:

Mr. Telander, Thank you for so eloquently expressing what I have been too frustrated to put into words. If I may just add one thing or two. I would hope this parking meter debacle and the selling of the skyway and the fact that everyone of these deals were orchestrated by Daley's family and friends is enough for Chicagoans to say enough is enough and not elect him as mayor again. I also hope Fitzgerald is taking a close look at Daley and his selling of Chicago for personal gains. I do not believe for one second that Daley didn't get something on personal level for each one of those asinine deals he his family and friends brokered that defrauded Chicagoans of revenue to fix potholes and a broken public school system. I want to see this man go to jail for the crimes he has committed against Chicago. Also Mr. Telander, Daley is not so stupid that he didn't realize he was defrauding the city... he was hoping that the public would be so stupid as to not say a word as we didn't when he sold the Chicago Skyway.

6/5/2009 9:39 PM CDT on suntimes.com

jeez wrote:

Dead spot on Rick my boy, Dead spot on...

6/5/2009 9:25 PM CDT on suntimes.com

cityemployee wrote:

Rick, Bravo!

I'm a Shakman exempt City employee who can be squashed like a bug, but I'm just plain disgusted by all the gutless

lemmings that have overtaken City Hall.
Keep up the good work.
6/5/2009 9:22 PM CDT on suntimes.com

tom from rino wrote:

Hi Rick- I love your viewpoints on all things sports related. On this one very important Chicago topic I have to disagree.

For Chicago to lose the 2016 Olympics over more routine Daley machine politics (ho hum...like you've stumbled on something newsworthy here?) to me is like throwing the baby out with the bath water.

In my opinion, even if it's more "Grease The Wheels" rather than "Stir the Soul", if Chicago can in fact secure the 2016 Olympics, there will be hundreds, maybe thousands of jobs ready for not only the Evil Empire's cronies, but also I assume for "true" professionals.

There is an incredible talent base in the Chicago land area (I feel to be one of them) who will be ready, willing and able to wield "real" influence by utilizing our Olympic-sized skills to ensure that the 2016 Olympics will be an incredible success.

There are so many talented and deserving professionals who will be able to showcase our creative talents to the world and even if it means bagging some "Benjamin's" under the table to be involved, where can I deposit the brown bag? In this case Pay for "Play" works for me.

And sure, we can moan and groan about a miserable 75 year parking meter deal fiasco, but the way to fix that is to VOTE out every dim-witted Alderman who let this happen next time they are up for election. I mean who's the dumb one here, the Mayor or the City Council?

See you in '16 at the Opening Ceremonies.

Thanks Rick.

6/5/2009 9:13 PM CDT on suntimes.com

larryj wrote:

Has anybody figured out what a catastrophe financially this is going to be? Look at Millennium Park, the darn thing is only about 20 acres, and 90% of it is either grass or concrete. Original estimate was \$150 million, but final cost was more than triple (almost \$500 million). And it was supposed to be finished in 2 years, but took 6.

Now imagine the same idiots (Daley people) trying to build the structures and for the Olympics. It will be a disaster. But a lot of Daley cronies will cash in big time.

Average citizens will pay for it, not to mention traffic construction headaches for years close to the sites.

I think Daley knows that the cost overruns will be huge, which is why he is desperately raising extra cash.

How does this man keep getting elected? Shame on us!

6/5/2009 8:52 PM CDT on suntimes.com

george taseff wrote:

Mr. Telander: I am a downstater from Peoria whose son will attend DePaul University this fall. I love the City of Chicago as my second home and have been blessed over the years by countless Chicagoans who treated me and my family as friends and neighbors when we visited the City for Taste and the Marathon. My heart aches that we may lose the Olympics, but you are right, our leaders have lost their moral compasses, and we do not deserve to be on the world's main stage in such a deplorable condition. Thank you for the courage to state what we know is the truth. Until we citizens take back our government, we will continue to get the same sleazy group of pols who are dragging us down. Keep up the great work with your thoughtful and provoking columns.

6/5/2009 8:48 PM CDT on suntimes.com

stop_the_corruption! wrote:

THANK YOU, Mr. Telander, for having the courage and moral ethic (missing from everyone in City Hall) to speak the truth. I applaud you. The mayor and his crooked cronies are all salivating at the chops for a piece of the 2016 Olympics. CHICAGOANS better wake up and put all of those crooks out to pasture. The city stinks from the corruption. That idiot (mayor) is selling out everything that is not nailed down. WHY HAVEN'T THE FEDS BROUGHT HIM UP ON CHARGES?

6/5/2009 6:45 PM CDT on suntimes.com

sonny1961 wrote:

100% right, Mr. Telander. Whereas the original Olympic bid movement might be seen as noble and worthy, it's now time for Chicagoans and Illinoisans to realize that this Olympic bid has become a colossal waste of time, effort, and money. Under the current mayor, Chicago is a rudderless ship, led by a babbling fool who'll sell away everything the city instead of doing what is fiscally responsible, yet politically damaging. And, Mayor Daley is the last person to be leading anything, with the level of graft that he has managed to create for his family and his friends. That plus the fact that this entire Olympic bid is nothing but an expedited gentrification of the south Lake Shore Drive corridor, and he wants it to expand southward like the area around UIC spread south and west of the campus. His true motives are as transparent as Saran Wrap - he put people out of River North near Cabrini, near the United Center at Henry Horner, on the West Side at Rockwell, and Near West Side near Little Italy, and threw all of them into neighborhoods where crime has skyrocketed. After 20 years in office, he is a complete waste, his council is a monumental waste, and they have all outlived their usefulness.

6/5/2009 6:32 PM CDT on suntimes.com

ead wrote:

I would love to design the new city sticker, it would show a parking meter and Daley's face imprinted on it and RIP.
TIME FOR CHANGE .CITY COUNCIL INCLUDED!
6/5/2009 5:27 PM CDT on suntimes.com

mevicker wrote:

desa wrote: "Boy, I wish I could be a Columnist for the Times and get paid for just moaning."

Well, you certainly seem qualified!

6/5/2009 4:59 PM CDT on suntimes.com

butler v. adams wrote:

So what about the corruption.

Just because you have issues with Daley and his crew over recent decisions, doesn't mean that the rest of us should suffer by your scream of us not deserving the Olympics. Your posturing isn't amusing. If you're so pissed at him, vote for the other candidate next time!

I don't think they are trying to force anything down citizens throats with the Olympic proposal, I think that many people are unwilling to listen, and to and learn about the benefits the Olympics will bring. Many people have their own ideas and fears about what would happen.

The ramifications you speak of are called voting the people you don't like out.

6/5/2009 4:57 PM CDT on suntimes.com

hardscrabble wrote:

tjg:

Are you referring to the former Boyce Park? The one with the beautiful brand spanking new field house? You gotta be kidding me! I can't believe you have the nerve to complain about a delay in getting your new park when other neighborhoods have the same field houses for over 100 years. I hope your Alderman sees what ingrates he's dealing with and remembers this when its time to redraw his ward boundaries.

6/5/2009 4:45 PM CDT on suntimes.com

chiserf wrote:

Thank you Mr. Telander for telling the truth.

I guess now that newspapers are in trouble, they feel they have nothing to lose by saying what should have been said 20 years ago.

Deep down, Daley hates and fears anyone who is not connected to the gangster clans that run this place. He has been waging class war against the middle class since the moment he was elected mayor.

For the terrible botch that he did on the parking meter deal, Daley should resign and appoint one of the 5 aldermen that had the guts to vote against it to replace it.

To Daley: RESIGN!

6/5/2009 4:39 PM CDT on suntimes.com

tjg wrote:

Well let see if I can add A little fuel to your fire and vice versa, Mr. Telander. I am a Grammar School baseball and football coach at a grade school on the south side of Chicago, Mark Brown wrote A wonderful article about our theater guild a couple months back, St Gabriel in Canaryville. I bring up our theater guild because it is just another one of the activities for the kids of the neighborhood to get involved in, and it keeps them outta trouble. Which is tough to do with two rival gangs being prevalent in a neighborhood that is a mile long and a mile wide. I bring all of this up because I am a 27 year old man trying to keep the neighborhood kids involved in things and get them through those impressionable years when money, alcohol, and drugs could draw them towards the gangs. Our neighborhood has been promised a new park at 41st and Union which is currently called Taylor Lauridson for going on 12 to 15 years now. Through all this time we have been patient and understanding but enough is enough!!!! We recently had the news broken to us by alderman Jim Balcer (11th Ward) that our park will not be refurbished in the manner that was tirelessly promised to us. I believe there were federal and state funds that were allocated for the construction of a new field house and a 120 yard football field as well as various baseball/softball diamonds. As it is we are the only team in our league (Catholic Grade School Conference) that does not play in the neighborhood that their school is in. We are forced to play our home games at DeLaSalle Institute which we are thankful for. But I am forced to think back to when I was a kid, when the league allowed us to play on the 80 yard field, and the pride seething outta our neighborhood as 200 people came out to watch a grammar school game. I was so looking forward to that same environment as a coach this upcoming football season. Now with the new field house up, and the old asbestos ridden field house that they are now not tearing down because of cost, and not refurbishing our fields at all. Our kids are getting the short end of the stick again. We are trying to keep a hold of our neighborhood but doesn't seem like we're getting the respect or the services we deserve. If the city and park district couldn't properly budget and manage the money that was allocated for our new field house and fields to complete the job promised, what makes anyone think that they can manage building Olympic size stadiums and villages on the dime of the feds when they couldn't manage the destruction of an old field house, construction of a new field house, and refurbishing of our field on the funds they are quoted many times saying were allocated for all three to be done. I wonder if any of our park money went towards any of these hundreds of Olympic signs you see popping up all over the city. Mayor Daley if it helps our cause any I'll mention that our football program has welcomed the kids of Bridgeport Catholic Academy with open arms since they don't have enough kids for a team. Our neighborhood is fed up with all the games and run around we've gone through and we are ready to do something about it. We were considering boycotting the ribbon cutting ceremony for the new field house (whenever that may be???) but someone had a better idea. We are going to attend the ribbon cutting ceremony and let all of our children

ask why they aren't getting what they were promised at the groundbreaking ceremony last year. Hopefully there is plenty of media there and the whole city will get to see Ald. Balcer or King Richard himself (Doubtfully) squirm!!!

Seriously Disappointed
6/5/2009 3:39 PM CDT on suntimes.com

javi wrote:

Good Job Telander! I wish you can write in Spanish, so you can mention how HDO still well and alive in the figure of Victor Reyes lobbying in Springfield for Mayor Daley...

6/5/2009 2:57 PM CDT on suntimes.com

jim0218 wrote:

I'm not even going to do your article justice by reading it. But do you really think that politicians in other cities aren't corrupt? The very definition of politician includes the word corrupt. The fact of the matter is that the Olympics will put billions of dollars in to the Chicago economy, mainly the construction industry over the next 7 years and beyond, providing thousands of jobs. Are you against providing Chicagoans with jobs? Yes we might pay for it, but we will also benefit from it, due to the improvements in infrastructure and public transportation among others. I'm not a Daley fan but I will say this city is a lot better than it was 20 years ago. Telander congratulations on writing another pointless opinion column.

joe the chicagoan wrote:

You're right and you're wrong, desa. You're right about the hugely positive difference Daley's tenure has made in keeping Chicago a great city and in his political courage in taking on the school and public housing problems when every mayor prior (including his father) kept an arm's length from those thorny problems. Daley's many accomplishments account for some of his continued popularity despite the various controversies surrounding his administration.

But you're wrong if you think some of these controversies aren't legitimate criticism of his record. He does deserve criticism when a program is mishandled as badly as the parking meter privatization. He also does open himself to just criticism when the rules of government or of fairness are being ignored or bypassed.

The real problem with the criticism is that most people see things one way or another: Daley has been great for the city or he is destroying the city. The truth is at neither extreme, and one-sided criticism carries no weight. I personally discount the moaning of the "Daley belongs in jail" crowd, just as I discount the people who would canonize him. He's got a mixed record, some absolutely great accomplishments and some serious mistakes. It probably is inevitable to have both trying to steer the course of a major city in this day and age. So don't be too hard on his critics--they have some legitimate points buried in the invective. But your overview of his success and the fact that there are reasons to take great pride in Chicago are feelings shared by a lot of people as well, so you are not alone on that score.

desa wrote:

Boy, I wish I could be a Columnist for the Times and get paid for just moaning. As a Chicagoan, I am so thankful to be living in such a magnificent city. No politician is perfect. They will be criticized for not doing enough or having too much power and doing too much. In these hard economic times, I am so grateful not to be living in California or Detroit, Cleveland to name a few. There have been problems, but I think we are all forgetting since it has been a while, how this city was before Daley. Downtown was a ghost town after 5pm. No politician would even have the nerve to take on Housing and Schools the dramatic way Daley did. Are there still problems, sure. Mainly because people need to take some responsibility for their own well-being.

This city is a gem and it would not be this way without Daley's vision whether people want to admit it or not. So instead of the moaning, lets have some solutions along w/being proud of the city we live in and share our pride w/the rest of the world. It's your city too.

south side wrote:

Thanks. I must be stupid.

I read the article the other day very good. But there is no mention of it in this article. I said I liked his passion but it comes off as whiny and self righteous which makes most people turn the page. I know city politics is corrupt. I never vote for the red faced nut either. I always look for the best candidate regardless of party. In Chicago politics that is hard to find.

cloudy & humid wrote:

To I Must Be Stupid -

If you give your real name, I'll give mine.

RE Telander: To be paid a six-figure salary to provide extremely untimely and preaching-to-the-choir commentary is lousy and lazy journalism.

What other news and obvious information does he have for us Sunday that the Bears won the 1986 Super Bowl? Duhhh.

mpb wrote:

On the other hand if the Olympics come in 5 times over budget and we suffer international ridicule for our third world public transportation system we may finally have the catalyst for meaningful political change in this city.

6/5/2009 1:12 PM CDT on suntimes.com

olympic fund wrote:

Well join the crowd, Rick. For over a year we've been saying the exact same stuff you just said in your article. Send this to the Olympic Committee!

tyray wrote:

You see got the 2 flunkies Jordan and Obama. This is one city that doesn't deserve it.
thank you

jorge golightly wrote:

I want to frame this and hang it in my office!! Bravo Rick for speaking the truth. I always wonder why "mayor pothole" claims we're broke. Where does that money for selling the skyway and parking meters go? Certainly not for repairing roads unless you live by the where the proposed Olympic Stadium will be. This mare is a joke....he claims to be a "green" mayor yet we're the only major city without a recycling program. Our town home association doesn't use the city for garbage pick up. The city owes our association over \$5000 for having our own garbage picked up but won't reimburse us. I haven't voted for him or any of his corrupt cronies the past two elections. I love it when "mayor pothole" gets defensive he goes into his "Chuckie" defense mode. We have no one to blame but ourselves. What a shame.

6/5/2009 12:52 PM CDT on suntimes.com

gdp wrote:

I appreciate Rick's rant. In Illinois politics, bad kids are not punished. Nor are incompetent ones. They set their own rules which allow us to rant and rave but little else. When they can't fool us, they trick us instead, and they are very good at that. Practice makes perfect.

But in the greater scheme of things, Rick's rant is just sound and fury, signifying nothing.

6/5/2009 12:45 PM CDT on suntimes.com

i must be stupid wrote:

South side, here's the title of the article.

More city money for mayor's nephew. Vanecko, partners net \$480,000 from lease on building bought with pension funds

6/5/2009 12:40 PM CDT on suntimes.com

i must be stupid wrote:

South Side, did you read the paper yesterday? Below are some numbers for you.

"The city paid \$480,408 to Vanecko and his partners between March 17, 2008, and May 26 of this year, according to records on the city's Web site. That's far more than the \$50,026 the city paid the previous owner during all of 2006 and 2007, records show."

6/5/2009 12:38 PM CDT on suntimes.com

south side wrote:

Mr. Telander,

Although I love the passion and I am a regular subscriber to the Sun-times, I just don't see your point. You just sound like you are whining. Where are the facts? I know this is an editorial but there is nothing in here that shows any real facts or numbers. Okay maybe numbers aren't truly being reported. Then say that. As far as this deal with the parking meters. You seriously think any company in their right mind would pay face value upfront. It would help if someone could tell us what is being done with all that money and the money from the Skyway deal. It is interesting that people always complain about how slow the government works but are quick to judge when something gets done quickly. I know there is corruption in our government. However, it should be noted that large rich corporations get away with a whole lot more simply because they have all the money and control the government.

Mr. Telander I like your columns usually but this just sounds like whining. Keep the passion lose the whining.

6/5/2009 12:35 PM CDT on suntimes.com

mayor cermak wrote:

Telander-

You're 100% right, Chicago 2016 is 100% BULL. The real truth is in Chicago 2016's financial proposal.

Here's one clue: Chicago 2016 plans to build a new stadium in Washington Park (with no existing sewers, water, electric or gas utility infrastructure) for \$375 million in 2015.

BUT --

The REMODEL of SOLDIER FIELD (another deal ramrodded through the state and city) cost \$640 million (in 2006 dollars)!

Mayor Daley, Pat Ryan, and Chicago 2016 have all but told the taxpayers they are lying about the upside on the Olympics.

It's time to RECALL DALEY! Michael Madigan can I get some help on that?

6/5/2009 12:23 PM CDT on suntimes.com

i must be stupid wrote:

Cloudy & Humid, Rick wrote the article and his name appears next to it. He's not shooting off his mouth and hiding behind a screen name. I believe that's the definition of coward.

6/5/2009 12:20 PM CDT on suntimes.com

dm60462 wrote:

CHALKIE for Mayor!

6/5/2009 12:15 PM CDT on suntimes.com

cloudy & humid wrote:

Rick this is wonderful and insightful but yes, Obama is going to push for it and Chicago is most likely going to be saddled with it. So. Where were you and other columnists years ago during the first cut before our globally popular president was elected and this sort of column really could've made some kind of impact? Oh I know. Sitting around waiting to see which way the public-opinion wind would blow. There's a word for that: It's Coward.

6/5/2009 12:12 PM CDT on suntimes.com

joe d wrote:

Thank you Rick Telander. You have said what the majority of the working and voting citizens of Chicago have been feeling for years. When Da Mare talks about his VISION for Chicago, he fails to take into account the people who live here. He cares only about himself and his politico friends.

If the Sun Times keeps up this type of article I will start buying it again. Thank you so much.

As for "Joe the Chicagoan", come on Joe, identify yourself. Are you Patrick Ryan or Paul Volpe? You sure seem have your face up close and personal to Da Mare's backside. And if you really think the average person in Chicago is going to see any benefit out of the Olympics other than perhaps a few token pennies then you are delusional!

6/5/2009 12:05 PM CDT on suntimes.com

theanswer wrote:

Not baiting you Rick, but I'm pretty sure Steinberg responds to his detractors on the blog... I'm not sayin, I'm just sayin...

6/5/2009 12:03 PM CDT on suntimes.com

theanswer wrote:

Not bad Telander...feels like you're still hold something back though...

Is that true about you punting? Paul Burton - I think his name was - was the punter during my time his dad was also an alum you guys punting pals?

6/5/2009 12:02 PM CDT on suntimes.com

savelincolnpark.org wrote:

If you want to stop the Olympic Scam go to <http://www.nogameschicago.com> and sign our petition, sign up for news alerts, donate via PayPal, call the White House to tell the President to stay home.

We've been on this since December 0f 2008. No Games Chicago is the only group in the city fighting the Olympic bid.

6/5/2009 11:58 AM CDT on suntimes.com

james rey wrote:

You are such a moron. Do you really think most Olympic cities are worthy? Look at all the good stuff left over from the Columbian Exposition. Do think those guys were choir boys? Half the Daley crew will be in jail come 2016 anyway.

-----James Reyes

6/5/2009 11:58 AM CDT on suntimes.com

i must be stupid wrote:

Uoficpa, do you work for the Mayor? You sound upset about the truth.

6/5/2009 11:56 AM CDT on suntimes.com

adambomb wrote:

The point is moot: Rio de Janeiro is a mortal lock for the 2016 Games, as no South American city has ever hosted an Olympiad. IOCC politics trumps all.

No, there will be other factors in this decision, such as where the Olympic Committee itself can make the most money. They're not just in it for the glory of sport competition.

6/5/2009 11:53 AM CDT on suntimes.com

uoficpa wrote:

"There are times when you get sent to your room without dessert.
Without dinner, even."

I hope with writing like this that you did not attend the Medill School of Journalism at Northwestern. As a football player, albeit only a girly-man punter, you must have majored in basket weaving because this level of writing is not worthy of Northwestern University.

6/5/2009 11:49 AM CDT on suntimes.com

future is now wrote:

"In Louisiana, they have governmental corruption that is so over-the-top it's funny. Ours is just dumb as snot."

The best quote from the article. Month after month we sit aghast at the sheer brazen boldness and stupidity revealed by each new indictment. To borrow a line mouthed by Jimmy Dean in a James Bond movie, what the heck happened to us and what can we do about it? Is leaving the state our only solution?

I, however, view the Olympics much differently than you. Rather than a reward, I see it as a punishment. We should be SENTENCED to host an Olympics and have to cough-up the billion or two it will require. The storm of corruption, graft, cronyism, and plain theft that such a conviction precipitate would surely prompt many of us to flee what has become a Midwest Banana Republic. The pols and payrollers would then be left to simply steal from each other.
6/5/2009 11:45 AM CDT on suntimes.com

uoficpa wrote:

I guess Telander will move from Lake Forest because his mindedness will not allow him to live in town that was home to so many who made their fortunes ripping off Chicago back in the day of the Ogden Gas (forerunner of Peoples and North Shore Gas) scandal and the 99 year lease for the traction cars .(forerunner of CTA)
6/5/2009 11:45 AM CDT on suntimes.com

admanc wrote:

Great writing...and so true. Every year, it seems like it just gets more and more expensive for the honest, hard-working citizens of Chicago to keep Daley and all his shady pals afloat and in business. The cost to live in this city just keeps going up and up and up at a time when it should only be going down. Each year, they hit us with increases in taxes, raise our public transportation fares, jack-up permit fees, give out twice as many bogus parking and traffic tickets and they just expect us to eat it without having a say in the matter. What the Daley regime has made itself into is a one fat and bloated tick on the rear of all who are just trying to make a life here. The problem is, this tick's appetite is voracious.
6/5/2009 11:43 AM CDT on suntimes.com

i must be stupid wrote:

We all know the Mayor will respond to this article with his usual child like antics and wining

andre wrote:

Your column was magnificent, Rick. I am forwarding it to all my fellow Chicagoans who are fed up with this administration and the direction the city is headed.
I nominate you for our next Mayor!

tpaine wrote:

Bravo Rick! Unfortunately the IOC is just as corrupt as the Daley administration so don't be surprised if Chicago wins the bid and we find out in 2018 that members of the IOC were able to buy condos that were set aside for low income people. Rick did leave one group of stupid people out, all the people who vote these clowns into office. You get the government you deserve.

ennny wrote:

A big THANK YOU for Rick. Next article you can talk about when there is corruption found that it is usually a relative of Mare Daley or an Alderman. And we sheep go on. Rod didn't have enough family in politics to cushion his corruption.

hammer wrote:

I love the description of all the complacent cattle who work for the city, " spineless, parasitic political-machine halfwits of forms never seen outside the roiling cesspool of governmental slop-trough greed,"
Read an excerpt from "One Hundred Percent Guilty," @ <http://consulthammer.com/page8.html>

mhobart wrote:

Such nice words. Too bad nobody reads the Sun Times anymore.
6/5/2009 11:08 AM CDT on suntimes.com

len cavender wrote:

Thank you Rick, for the column in this morning's Sun-Times. Your very first paragraph describes my exact feelings for Chicago's corrupt government. Many have been punished and jailed, and many will be jailed in the near future. But it's to late, most of them already have had their dessert! They pass it along to their families and friends, and banks in Paris. Thanks again for having the balls too speak out.

scattered wrote:

The Olympics is just another red herring in an attempt to distract attention from Daley's maladministration

troyst wrote:

Good one Rick. I wish more would speak out who are in positions like yours. I truly hope everyone that is so fed up with Daley, the City Council, Stroger, etc., put their votes where there mouths are, and try to get rid of the whole lot of

capt paddy wrote:

My inside side guy downtown told us city workers, Daley is fuming at this article. He is cussing up and down. Nice job!

6/5/2009 10:16 AM CDT on suntimes.com

demon wrote:

Well at least somebody has the ONIONS to put it in print, like many I'm hoping and praying that the Olympics ends up in another country - this is just a disaster waiting to happen if it ends up here. I don't think that I could afford it. The CITY draws enough blood from me, any more any they'll kill me

6/5/2009 10:16 AM CDT on suntimes.com

chicago blue wrote:

BRAVO, Mr. Telander!

BRAVO!

BRAVO!

How refreshing and inspiring to see someone say what so many of us are thinking and feeling!

Again, BRAVO!

6/5/2009 10:15 AM CDT on suntimes.com

hardscrabble wrote:

Telander,

It's unbelievable that a Chicago sports "columnist" would condemn the City and its leaders who are attempting to secure the Olympics. You should be pushing for this event and the lasting positive legacy it would have on Chicago, and, especially, South Side neighborhoods. When it's all said and done, you and all the other holier-than-thou scribes will scratch your heads and say, "Geez, Daley was right all along." By the way, would you dare call Harold Washington "Duh-Mare" and be as critical of him? Doubt it. You're a bum and should be ashamed of yourself.

6/5/2009 10:14 AM CDT on suntimes.com

"change has come to america" wrote:

"Blatantly corrupt or simply stupid?"

Just Democrats, my friend, just.....Democrats.....

6/5/2009 10:12 AM CDT on suntimes.com

pat l wrote:

Best thing I've seen come out of Chicago in a long long time!!!! TOUCHE' Rick.

6/5/2009 10:09 AM CDT on suntimes.com

yosh wrote:

Rick,

Best, absolutely the best, you have EVER written.

You should be keeping on this theme, as a Keith Olbermann protégé.

Reading yesterday's paper about ol fast Eddie Burke wanting to add more bureaucracy and patronage jobs by hitting the citizens with his 'traffic school' insult, got me hot. Burke should put some effort in trying to find out how the mayors kids and relatives keep ending up with goldmines, after investing in half empty warehouses and start-up businesses.

Of course that would be too tough for someone like Eddie to figure out.

Anyone see the little mention today, about the mayor's daughter getting 'appointed' to a lead position in the 'arts community'. Hope she's more articulate than the mayor is :))

6/5/2009 10:07 AM CDT on suntimes.com

skiparoo wrote:

Our country has been destroyed by governmental and institutional fraud at all levels. It's the economy stupid; and that is what they destroyed with their greed and corruptions in nearly every industry and all levels of government. And they bought off most of the prosecutors, judges, and regulatory agencies along the way to economic collapse.

6/5/2009 10:06 AM CDT on suntimes.com

tommy b wrote:

Almost every column written by Telander blows...

This one is maybe the best ever at the ST.

6/5/2009 10:05 AM CDT on suntimes.com

james1908 wrote:

"...uoficpa wrote:

I guess there is a reason Rick writes in the Sports section.

Sounds like you must have played football without a helmet for those terrible Northwestern football teams..."

Sounds to me like you didn't make the first string football team back in high school yourself and never got over it. That's why you're bean counting today. Snap that towel!!!

6/5/2009 9:57 AM CDT on suntimes.com

asspeckratio wrote:

them next election. We are truly a dumb electorate if we vote any of them back in. This crap has gone on for far too long!!!

6/5/2009 11:04 AM CDT on suntimes.com

gorgan zola wrote:

Rick:

Feel better now? Stick to socks, jocks and T-shirts. Everyday Olberman proves he's out of his element. Don't join him.

6/5/2009 11:01 AM CDT on suntimes.com

kmac31 wrote:

Rick, your comments are right on. I would be willing to be bet that right now, Daley, Quinn and Stroger would each impose a tax on the Olympic Committee, because that is what they do. They don't realize the chaos that would occur should this happen. Heck, they can't manage day to day operations, how do they figure to take on the mega-extra this would take. I only wish all would realize that the numbers are probably more against this than for. Any way you could get your column and the following comments in the hands of the OC???

6/5/2009 11:00 AM CDT on suntimes.com

milton sanchez wrote:

Go Rick!!!! Gangster Daley and his boys have been finally outed. Long live Rick.

6/5/2009 10:58 AM CDT on suntimes.com

"change has come to america" wrote:

"Blatantly corrupt or simply stupid?"

Democrats, my friend, just.....Democrats.....

6/5/2009 10:54 AM CDT on suntimes.com

joe the chicagoan wrote:

As everyone reads Mr. Telander's column and the comments in response to it, I hope you will consider these facts:

1. Even if you agree that Daley doesn't "deserve" the Olympics for any failings in his administration, our getting the Games would pump hundreds of millions of dollars (or more) into the local economy and create many thousands of new jobs during the six years of preparation for it.
2. Much of this money would come from private investments and a significant chunk would be from federal dollars, since it would not just be Chicago hosting the Games but also the USA.
3. With all the Daley administration controversies, it is likely that every contract issued by the city or the Olympic committee would be very carefully scrutinized, not just by the media but also by law enforcement agencies.

Daley can be "punished" by "sending him to bed without his supper," but it also will punish the thousands of people who will lose the job opportunities that will not exist otherwise, and it will punish all Chicagoans who would benefit from the infrastructure improvements that would be required to prepare for this international event.

Give these up if you must, but please be aware of all we would be giving up--it's not just the politicians and "fat cats" who would benefit, but everyone in the city. I'd support whatever decision provided the most benefit to our citizens as a whole.

6/5/2009 10:51 AM CDT on suntimes.com

elvislawless wrote:

Beautiful! I can see the headlines now. "Daley insider charged for fraud in Olympic construction probe" Or, "Daley's nephew and other insiders made millions while taxpayers get Olympic shaft" Encore! Encore!

6/5/2009 10:40 AM CDT on suntimes.com

i must be stupid wrote:

This is perfect!! I couldn't have said it better myself and I've been waiting for a journalist to speak up and it finally happened! You're great and you have a lot of guts!

6/5/2009 10:33 AM CDT on suntimes.com

notblk wrote:

Telander for mayor!

6/5/2009 10:32 AM CDT on suntimes.com

uoficpa wrote:

Say James 1908, for a 101 year old fartz, you type pretty good. Not logical, but at least you can work the keyboard.

pd wrote:

Bring the Olympics to Chicago!

6/5/2009 10:20 AM CDT on suntimes.com

skydriver wrote:

Majestic, awe inspiring, magnificent, bold!!!

One for the annals. A truly Olympian effort Mr. Telander.
suntimes.com

6/5/2009 10:17 AM CDT on

Mayor Daley Arrested-
Chicago Mayor Richard Daley escorted in hand cuffs to jail for theft.
(this would be a headline I would frame)
6/5/2009 9:55 AM CDT on suntimes.com

trc wrote:

Telander, Hats off to you
6/5/2009 9:51 AM CDT on suntimes.com

omar little wrote:

This is the best column ever in the Sun Times.
I wish that idiot Mark Brown would write like this.
Telander should be on the 2nd page.
Spot on--WE CANNOT AFFORD THE OLYMPICS
THERE IS TOO MUCH CORRUPTION IN CHICAGO
TIFS ARE SLUSH FUNDS
CHICAGO HAS THE HIGHEST SALES AND GAS PRICES IN THE USA
6/5/2009 9:49 AM CDT on suntimes.com

uoficpa wrote:

I guess there is a reason Rick writes in the Sports section.
Hey Rick, leave the heavy lifting to those who have a better grasp and stick to sniffing jockstraps in the locker room and ogling naked men.
BTW - Chicago is not YOUR town, you live in Lake Forest. You only pypm the city's sports teams for coverage.
Sounds like you must have played football without a helmet for those terrible Northwestern football teams.
6/5/2009 9:46 AM CDT on suntimes.com

james1908 wrote:

"...a vast and tumorous army of aldermen and bagmen and yesmen and opportunists and spineless, parasitic political-machine halfwits of forms never seen outside the roiling cesspool of governmental slop-trough greed..."
Perhaps the best paragraph published in a newspaper in the past 20 years.
6/5/2009 9:43 AM CDT on suntimes.com

asspeckratio wrote:

STANDING OVATION MR. Telander! STANDING O!
That was frickkkkin awesome.
We are all Shlubs footing the bill for the connected. We Suckers, rubes, mass of lemmings working to pay for the expanding Chicago and cook county corrupt inept connected nepotistic government.
DALEY STROGER MADIGAN JACKSON JR ALL OF EM NEED TO BE Tar and feathered
6/5/2009 9:42 AM CDT on suntimes.com

braulio wrote:

WOW, it's about time someone tells it like it is. Thank you Rick T. I hope to see another article soon, that is if the machine doesn't put a stop to "free thinking".
6/5/2009 9:40 AM CDT on suntimes.com

sock ray blue wrote:

Rick, as an old Chicagoan that moved out of that political nuthouse in 1971, I nominate you for the "Royko" award.
6/5/2009 9:33 AM CDT on suntimes.com

uoficpa wrote:

If the sun-times is still in business in 2016, Rick will be the first in line trying to get glory on this.
6/5/2009 9:33 AM CDT on suntimes.com

northsidejoe wrote:

Great article, don't always agree with you either but this was a good one...and you went lite on them as well.
The whole Political scene here needs to burn to the ground, and now!
6/5/2009 9:28 AM CDT on suntimes.com

lucidone wrote:

What took you so long to write this? This town is so corrupt and filled with criminals disguised as politicians that bank robbers are kicking themselves for not be politicians in Chicago.
6/5/2009 9:28 AM CDT on suntimes.com

the truth speaks out wrote:

WOW --- the truth in print.
Great story Rick T.

Vote da mayor out of office.
Stop being scared of the machine.
6/5/2009 9:26 AM CDT on suntimes.com

archie wrote:

Best column, of any kind (news, sports, weather, movie reviews, etc) that I've read in a long time. Mr. Telander, YOU NAILED IT!

6/5/2009 9:25 AM CDT on suntimes.com

conscience wrote:

Folks...This one is in the bag...Obama knows and play Chicago-style politics...he has put his best friend Marty Nesbitt on the committee some months ago...Daley will not run for re-election [already agreed upon]...in return Daley will get to complete the O'Hare project...Obama and appointee Ray LaHood will make sure he has everything...Daley will retire with his pockets fat and knowing his pet projects will be completed and be with his ailing wife. Watch for the kid Patrick to run two terms from now to try and take back the Throng. These other countries in the running need things...not only the Olympics...USA control almost every entity they are after...IMF, NATO, UN, trade ,etc. Obama/USA control them pretty much. Obama will give them something down the line...It's a done deal.

6/5/2009 9:22 AM CDT on suntimes.com

chynaman66 wrote:

Thank you Rick Telander, thank you so much.

6/5/2009 9:21 AM CDT on suntimes.com

nr bovee wrote:

kbdog-the city taxpayers are not paying you to surf the internet. Put down the computer and get back to work. (Or sleep as most of youse guys at city hall do.)

6/5/2009 9:21 AM CDT on suntimes.com

dave w wrote:

I had to check and then double check to make sure i was really reading this in the sun-times. I'm sure that you will experience the wrath of mayor "chucky" for writing this column Mr. Telander; I can't wait to se Da'mare, face beet red, spitting and stuttering in front of the cameras. I'm glad you had the stones to speak the truth about these morons that run the city of Chicago.

6/5/2009 9:18 AM CDT on suntimes.com

oldbob wrote:

"King" Richie Daley and his merry men (aldermen) along with Todd (Urkel) Stroger and O'Bozo will do everything to get the Olympics. They need to have their names go down in history with all the other crooks - Big Bill Thompson, Al Capone, etc!

6/5/2009 9:16 AM CDT on suntimes.com

jughead wrote:

Rick Telander. There are pros/cons to your article; mostly "pros". This is for you my brave man. In The Arena

It is not the critic who counts; not the man who points out how the strong man stumbles or where the doer of deeds could have done better. The credit belongs to the man who is actually in the arena, whose face is marred by dust and sweat and blood; who strives valiantly; who errs, and comes short again and again, because there in no effort without error or shortcoming; who knows the great enthusiasms; the great devotions; who spends himself in a worthy cause; who at the best knows in the end the triumph of high achievement, and who at the worst, if he fails, at least fails while daring greatly, so that his place shall never be with those cold and timid souls who know neither victory or defeat. Theodore Roosevelt 1910.

It takes a prominent person as yourself to step out on the limb and say what the majority of Chicagoans are saying in their hearts. The most powerful men and women of this city; the elected officials; the powerful Tribune and Sun-Times have let Daley slide for 20 years; Yet, my friend, you have come out with courage. I commend you. You deserve the greatest award Journalism can bestow on your cogent piece; and, your history of good work in this field. From another journalist who is working not in the profession.

6/5/2009 9:15 AM CDT on suntimes.com

63dollarbill wrote:

Great article Rick. Thanks. It is refreshing to see a Chicago paper not tripping over itself to fawn on duh mare's ambitions.

my favorite part:: "The City of Chicago, led by Mayor Daley and a vast and tumorous army of aldermen and bagmen and yesmen and opportunists and spineless, parasitic political-machine halfwits of forms never seen outside the roiling cesspool of governmental slop-trough greed, has proven itself unworthy of something as potentially delicious and fulfilling as the 2016 Olympic Games."

Awesome.

6/5/2009 9:13 AM CDT on suntimes.com

thisbudz4me wrote:

WOW! Rick, I don't always agree with you, but you nailed this one. Thanks you so much for speaking the truth!

6/5/2009 9:13 AM CDT on suntimes.com

kbdog wrote:

Telander...you're a moron. Get out political commentary and stay in sports. Write about Derrick Lee's inability to pitch and why the Cubs bullpen sucks. Stay out of politics...you're embarrassing.
6/5/2009 9:11 AM CDT on suntimes.com

chicago lar wrote:

Olympics or no Olympics, Daley and the Chicago Machine make Boss Tweed and Tammany Hall look like Mother Theresa and Gandhi.

I've often puzzled how these crooks keep being elected. Surely there can't be that many stupid people in Chicago? Then the answer occurred to me.

Elections are so rigged and fraudulent in Cook County that these polecats would still be elected even if they didn't get a single legitimate vote.

But I'm pleased to see that at least one writer at the Chicago papers has awakened to that fact.

As to the cost of the Olympics to the taxpayers, BOHICA.

6/5/2009 9:00 AM CDT on suntimes.com

machaleno wrote:

I'm with Jean Marc "I was a longtime supporter of Daley but enough is enough" - after watching corruption scandal after corruption scandal rock the city govt this parking meter deal is the last straw for me. Next time, I'm voting for a change.

As for the Olympics, I can't figure out where I stand. While I'd hate to see all the corrupt bastards line their pockets, I also think it "could" help out a lot of common folk financially. I think it remains to be seen how it would play out, hence my hesitation to denounce it or get behind it.

6/5/2009 8:59 AM CDT on suntimes.com

jack12345 wrote:

Of course, Chicago should be sent home without its supper.

However, the Olympic Committee doesn't care anything about that.

All they want is there behinds kissed, and nobody is better at that than a Chicago politician.

They also want their guaranteed money, which might be the sticking point for Chicago--not the corruption.

Look at Beijing. You heard about Tibetan protesters before the games, not now. There was "Tienanmen Square Forgetfulness Day" a couple of days ago. Do you think the Olympic Committee cares?

They are more likely to listen to Bette Midler when she sings "what good is Rio, when you can't even peeo."

6/5/2009 8:54 AM CDT on suntimes.com

u do not know me wrote:

I don't believe Chicago will be awarded the Olympics. I HOPE we do not get the Olympics. This City is falling apart thanks to the Mayor and the 50 useless aldermen. They need to get back to the basics and focus on what's important - fixing this broken City. FORGET THE OLYMPICS!!! Fix the crime, Fix the crumbling infrastructure, Fix the corruption, Fix the local (and county and state) budget(s), Fix the public school system, bring back businesses to Chicago, bring back jobs to Chicago, work towards alleviating these ridiculously high taxes, STOP MILKING US FOR EVERY DAMM NICKLE AND DIME TO PAY FOR TWO WEEKS IN 2016!!! LIVE IN THE PRESENT! Get rid of at least half of these useless aldermen, get rid of City workers who don't work and keep those who truly want to serve the public. GET BACK TO BASICS!!! This is not rocket science.

6/5/2009 8:51 AM CDT on suntimes.com

skb wrote:

I can't believe you put this article on the front page. The Olympics and Parking Meters are related....how?

Getting the Olympics is much bigger than something as trivial as parking, and something like this should certainly not be used to slam our Olympic bid.

We are one of the lucky cities where people don't have to drive, and you know what, if people have to pay a lot for parking meters, maybe they will take the El and stop clogging up traffic - and Chicago will be a greener city for it [and wouldn't that be good for the Olympics]. So what if the mayor wants to sell the meters - at least the city makes some money now, and who knows what the situation will be 75 years from now.

6/5/2009 8:50 AM CDT on suntimes.com

futureman wrote:

Ha this guy looked at his own newspaper lately?

6/5/2009 8:41 AM CDT on suntimes.com

grover 799 wrote:

Yes, having the Olympics in Chicago could be a good thing, jobs, tourism and all put together. Unfortunately, Mr. Telander is correct in the fact that having any of this run by Mayor Daley and/or any of his cronies is a bad, bad mistake. Graft, corruption and price over runs will be beyond belief, even for Chicago and Illinois.

Can't wait to here Da Mayor go off on this one; it should be a classic for all time.

6/5/2009 8:34 AM CDT on suntimes.com

jean-marc wrote:

I couldn't agree more with your article. It is time to organize to oppose the games in Chicago. The parking meters fiasco is just too hard to take - and it's nothing compared with what's in store with the games. I was a longtime supporter of Daley but enough is enough. I can't let go anymore, when my property taxes are going through the roof as the economy falters... the arrogance has to stop somewhere...

6/5/2009 8:28 AM CDT on suntimes.com

scott warren wrote:

Thank you, Thank you, Thank you, Mr. Telander for stepping up and saying what needs to be said.

We, the people, do not want this corrupt Daley and his goons to get their greedy hands on the Olympics.

Olympic Committee: Be forewarned, you'll be sorry if you pick Chicago. Rio is a much better choice!

6/5/2009 8:16 AM CDT on suntimes.com

people please wrote:

Oh boy, now all the Daley e-thugs, minions, and political operatives will now post on this message board stating how crazy you are. You Daley BOO BOO MAKERS, get off of city computers and back to work while you still have a job.

6/5/2009 7:55 AM CDT on suntimes.com

raoul duke wrote:

If you leave out words like "the city", "alderman" and "the mayor". You are describing the Sun-Times under Sir Conrad Black!

6/5/2009 7:48 AM CDT on suntimes.com

itzscott wrote:

I'm sure that Telander did his research on Los Angeles, Atlanta and Salt Lake City to make sure that those city officials didn't have any dirt under their fingernails before determining they were worthy of The Olympics' high ideals.... As if the Olympics themselves haven't been proven to be just as corrupt and smarmy as the cities that host them!

6/5/2009 7:48 AM CDT on suntimes.com

zbt wrote:

Daley is the real problem, not Stroger - Jackson Jr. - Burriss. The televised media needs to follow Rick Telander's lead and report on who the real culprit is.

6/5/2009 7:44 AM CDT on suntimes.com

mayor cermak wrote:

Telander - Ignore stooges like Joe the Chicagoan, he must have a "no show" City job or a fat City contract.

Telander you are right about Mayor Daley and his band of Merry Olympic Crooks (MOCs) who spread lies like flies spread disease. Daley and his MOCs are stupid, and they think the taxpayers are even dumber.

Simply put Chicago 2016 is the biggest of Daley's 20 years of Mayoral lying.

Here's the clue:

The REMODEL of SOLDIER FIELD (another deal ramrodded through the state and city) cost \$640 million in 2006 dollars.

How can Chicago 2016 build a new stadium in Washington Park (with no existing sewers, water, electric or gas utility infrastructure) for \$375 million in 2015?

I know, Daley will not allow his crooked friends to get rich on inflated contracts, that will balance the stadium budget.

Ha, Ha, Fat Chance. Richie Daley and his Criminal Pals will get richer and the taxpayers will be soaked.

I suggest a \$200/YR. breathing tax sticker (to be worn on Chicago residents foreheads) will help pay for Daley's Olympic Boondoggle

6/5/2009 7:43 AM CDT on suntimes.com

itzscott wrote:

Who anointed Telander, a sports journalist covering one of the most corrupt and slothful businesses, as Guardian of Public Morality???

Does this sports personality have any clue to the number of JOBS the Olympics would create at a time when they're MOST needed?

Maybe it's time he got out of his pristine and insulated North Shore nest and dropped in on an unemployment office to see the desperation going on around him.

6/5/2009 7:38 AM CDT on suntimes.com

johnadams wrote:

WOW!! I tip my hat to you sir! I will hold off on tipping my hat to the Sun Times because HISTORY has shown that they will keep ENDORSING THE MACHINE & ENTOURAGE! Awesome article none the less!!

Someone has finally said it! Me personally I think they are that "Blatantly Corrupt"! I think the world thinks this also! By our refusal to remove this collusion & corruption we are headed towards destruction from within!

A crook never thinks they did anything WRONG ergo: The Illinois Democratic Machine that extends NATIONWIDE now!

An average Joe doesn't stand a chance in this city! You have to be juiced in somewhere!

We have budgetary problems and we are spending millions to take in thousands? Does this sound right? I forgot we

the citizens do NOT have a RIGHT to this 411 !!!!

KING RICHARD HAS SPOKEN!!!

6/5/2009 7:36 AM CDT on suntimes.com

joe the chicagoan wrote:

Since Telander feels so strongly about this--and he is very much entitled to his opinion--I think he should put his money where his mouth is and declare he will not cover the Olympics if Chicago does get the Games. That will show he's truly serious about Chicago being morally undeserving of this event, rather than just writing to stir up controversy. Since true sports must be conducted honestly and with integrity, how can Telander provide coverage if the Olympics do come here when he feels this way? Especially when he and his newspaper would benefit enormously if Chicago is indeed picked. Let's see you live your words, Rick.

6/5/2009 7:22 AM CDT on suntimes.com

ike wrote:

This would all be funny if it wasn't so tragic...a tragi-comedy.

I love this town...but I HATE this town.

6/5/2009 7:19 AM CDT on suntimes.com

denice miles wrote:

You're funny; I am wishing your legs the best!

6/5/2009 7:14 AM CDT on suntimes.com

ice wrote:

And da mayor thinks the city is broke more like being mismanaged for he residents of the city of Chicago but managed only for da mayor's friends and relatives!

6/5/2009 7:05 AM CDT on suntimes.com

pb1222 wrote:

To think, we elected someone as president who cut his political teeth here. Daley has worked hard to get a compliant city council that will do what he wants and Obama is moving to get the US Congress in a similar shape.

The damage mounts...

6/5/2009 6:50 AM CDT on suntimes.com

walleyeking23 wrote:

Fantastic take! And it is about time someone started calling it like it is! There has never been an article about city politics that was so true. I can't even imagine who the fools below me are who are bashing Mr. Telander for stating the truth. I could not agree more with Mr. Telander and we need more of this blatantly calling out of our political fools. DUMP DALEY! should be the cry of all citizens next election.

6/5/2009 6:37 AM CDT on suntimes.com

wizards23 wrote:

Years ago, when Atlanta hosted the Olympics, Daley was asked if Chicago would ever try to do the same. With his trademark snort of a laugh he dismissed the idea saying "Why would Chicago ever want to do that?" He cited all the traffic and security problems. I guess he's figured out why. So he can line his buddies' pockets full of Olympic loot at the taxpayers' expense.

6/5/2009 6:34 AM CDT on suntimes.com

mr marco wrote:

Fix the damned potholes, and then we can talk about the Olympics.

6/5/2009 6:23 AM CDT on suntimes.com

shane menken wrote:

And another thing.

The Daley administration is very adept at lip service, but never delivers tangible benefits. If the Mayor loves bicycles so much, and wants to have these bike the drive days and wants the Olympics, why oh why has the City been totally unable to develop a velodrome? Prove we can handle the Olympics by developing a velodrome complex and hosting nationwide bike races. If they can do that.....

There used to be one in Humboldt Park, many years ago.

6/5/2009 5:52 AM CDT on suntimes.com

uoficpa wrote:

I guess there is a reason Rick writes in the Sports section.

Hey Rick, leave the heavy lifting to those who have a better grasp and stick to sniffing jockstraps in the locker room and ogling naked men.

BTW - Chicago is not YOUR town, you live in Lake Forest.

6/5/2009 5:45 AM CDT on suntimes.com

shane menken wrote:

Absolutely correct.

One can only imagine what kind of corruption will take place, without public comment, as the city "takes" public land for the private corporation known as the Olympic Committee. They can't get busses to run on time, or streets to stay paved, or parking meters to work. Does anyone think the City can manage an Olympics? With every Alderman looking for a handout.

Telander is right. Imagine how world -class our humiliation will be when 2016 comes and nothing is ready, and nothing works. Daley will not be Mayor in 2016, as he will not be there to take the flak for the Olympics greatest failure, the Chicago Bribeathon.

6/5/2009 5:45 AM CDT on suntimes.com

disco demolition dave wrote:

They (the LA Times) said the '84 Olympics would be a nightmare. Girdlock/Gangbangers/Riots.

I was livin' there at the time and it was groovy!

Seems a lot of folks split Dodge before the Big Show.

Maybe you ought to Split Chicago. Just don't wait for the Olympics

6/5/2009 4:51 AM CDT on suntimes.com

geeman2159 wrote:

HEY Ricky...

You worried They gonna hold the "crochet" competition up there in YOUR North Shore neighborhood???

It's primarily us "REAL" City Dwellers who'll suffer the most. Your train, in and out the city will be fine.

6/5/2009 3:55 AM CDT on suntimes.com

mister johnny wrote:

Darn, I was hoping to sell my house to the Zimbabwe Bobsled team!

6/5/2009 1:57 AM CDT on suntimes.com

nathan telschow wrote:

Thank Rick Telander. Maybe this can save Chicago from itself. Knowing the City of Broad Bribings, I doubt it.

6/5/2009 1:34 AM CDT on suntimes.com

billy buoy wrote:

Sammy Sosa should be tapped to shill for the Chicago Olympics. He's representative of what Daley and his cronies have become---cheaters, lousy team players, louts, and can dummy up on a moments notice.

Rio, I'm rooting for you.

6/5/2009 12:50 AM CDT on suntimes.com



PRINTTHIS

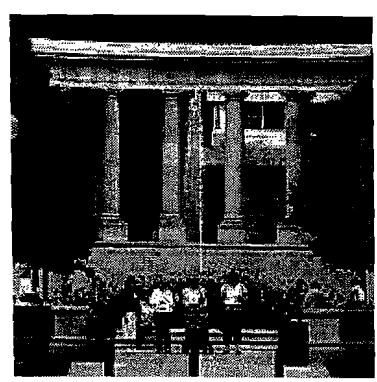
Powered by Clickability

Click to Print

SAVE THIS | EMAIL THIS | Close

Chicago finally gets its Millennium Park

CHICAGO (AP) — The millennium is finally dawning on Chicago's lakefront.



Visitors pass millennium monument, rebuilt in the same location, and a nearly full-size replica of the original built in 1917.

By M. Spencer Green, AP

**PARK
A YEARS LATE
\$300 MILLION
OVER BUDGET**

Four years behind schedule, the \$475 million Millennium Park, a pet project of Mayor Richard Daley's, is set to officially open in July with a fountain, elaborate gardens and a swooping, shimmering band shell designed by architect Frank Gehry.

Supporters expect the park to revitalize Chicago's reputation for great architecture and culture and draw more people to Grant Park, the city's "front yard" that stretches for a mile along Lake Michigan.

"We're the city of big shoulders and we like to make big, bold statements," said Lois Weisberg, the city's commissioner of cultural affairs.

But the project has been beset by years of construction delays and cost overruns. It was initially budgeted at \$150 million — less than one-third its actual cost — and was to open in 2000 as part of the city's millennium celebration.

Although an ice rink and 1,500-seat theater for music and dance are already in use, most of the park remains hidden behind construction fences and tents.

The one major piece visible is Gehry's contribution — a 120-foot high music pavilion with a stage surrounded by billowing ribbons of stainless steel and a trellis of curling steel pipes that will support the sound system high above the audience.

Ned Cramer, curator of the Chicago Architecture Foundation, predicts the city will be "wowed" by the opening, even if it is four years late.

"The sheer novelty of what's happening there is guaranteed to do exactly what it's supposed to do, which is to draw people's attention," Cramer said.

Daley proposed the park in 1998 on the 24-acre space between the lake and bustling Michigan Avenue, which used to have a rail yard and parking lot that marred the northwest corner of otherwise elegant Grant Park.

The mayor was heavily involved in the park's planning — he demanded that there be indoor bathrooms instead of portable toilets and worried that a Gehry-designed bridge would overshadow other features.

Daley blamed Gehry for costly delays after a 2001 investigation by the Chicago Tribune found that poor planning, design problems and cronyism led to skyrocketing costs. Daley backed off the assertion days later.

Officially, many factors have been blamed for the delay: a vision that grew more grand as time went on; structural problems with the underground parking garages; and the engineering challenges inherent in building Gehry's immense band shell, including a crane so heavy it had to arrive in pieces for fear it would crack the street below.

- CLASSIFIED
- Cars
- Jobs
- Real estate
- Apartments
- Local stores & deals
- Dating
- Pets
- Items for sale
- Place an ad

- SHOPPING
- TRAFFIC
- WEATHER

- NEWS
- Local
- Nation/World
- Politics
- D.C. bureau
- Religion
- Education
- Death notices
- News obituaries
- Columnists
- Special reports
- Photos/Multimedia
- Corrections
- Off topic

BLOGS

OPINIONS

BUSINESS

SPORTS

ENTERTAINMENT

LIVING

TRAVEL

- RESOURCES
- Newsletters/alerts
- Mobile
- RSS feeds
- MyNews
- Send a news tip
- Site map

- NEWSPAPER SERVICES
- Today's paper
- Subscribe now
- Subscriber Advantage
- Tribune Store
- Vacation hold
- Delivery issue
- Pay bill
- About us
- Contact us
- Archives
- News in education

CITYSCAPES
 A daily Chicago journal about the buildings and urban spaces that shape our lives.
 By Blair Kamin

Cityscapes RSS
 Follow
 >> About this blog
 >> About Blair Kamin

« How Trump Tower opened while still adding on floors | Main | South and Gill's "eco-bridge": Coming to Chicago's lakefront? »

Originally posted: June 12, 2008

CTA hub in Block 37 hits skids; officials delay plans for express trains to airports

From today's print edition

By Jon Hilkevitch
 Tribune reporter

Faced with runaway costs, the CTA and City Hall slammed the emergency brakes Wednesday on ambitious plans to build a "super station" in downtown Block 37 to speed express trains to both Chicago's airports.

A combined \$213 million has been spent on the project, yet there's not much more than a massive hole in the ground to show for it.

At least an additional \$100 million would be needed to complete the subterranean station, the CTA estimated.

"The Block 37 curse continues," said Joseph Schwieterman, a transportation and urban planning professor at DePaul University who has for years doubted the viability of the transit project.

Since the 1980s, myriad plans for how to develop Block 37, including a proposal to build a city-owned casino, have fallen through. The 2.7-acre parcel, bounded by State, Dearborn, Washington and Randolph Streets, had been the last major undeveloped lot in the Loop.

The CTA had envisioned building the crown jewel of stations at the prime location in a bid to emulate the express train stations of world-class cities such as London and Tokyo. Upgraded trains, outfitted with airline-type seats and operated by a private contractor, were intended to serve the Block 37 station starting this year.

But CTA President Ron Huberman disclosed Wednesday that the agency was looking at cost overruns well in excess of \$100 million to complete the station and a connector tunnel linking the State Street and Dearborn Street subways.

Acting on Huberman's recommendation, the CTA board indefinitely delayed the controversial station—but not before agreeing to spend an additional \$45.6 million. That money will be used to pour concrete slab floors and do other preliminary work on the skeleton of the future station and to complete the shell of the connector tunnel, all by the end of the year, officials said.

Without spending the additional \$45.6 million, Huberman said, the CTA would have virtually no chance of attracting private developers to rescue the transit project.

Although the CTA board voted 6-1 to spend the extra \$45.6 million, several members accused Frank Kruesi, Huberman's predecessor, of misleading them to believe the project had been proceeding on time and within budget. The super station and express train service to the airports had been Kruesi's pet project.

"This project has been a disaster," said board member Susan Leonis, who cast the lone vote against spending more money. "Some of us wanted to put this money into [transit in] the neighborhoods instead."

"Time after time we were told that everything is great," said CTA Chairman Carole Brown, who indicated she had tried in vain to get straight answers from Kruesi and his

MAJOR LOOP PROJECT UNDER DEVELOPMENT SINCE 1979

Last 10 posts

- Old Chicago post office to be auctioned
- A detailed look at the 'Last Four Miles' proposals by Friends of the Parks
- Chilean architect Alejandro Aravena wins Marcus Prize for Architecture
- The last four miles: Friends of the Parks unveils a plan for an entirely-open Chicago lakefront
- A model city: Chicago displayed in miniature; CAF shows a scale model of the Loop and nearby areas
- The grim numbers for the business of architecture and engineering
- High speed rail: Biden praises Midwest plan to enhance passenger train system; federal officials laud Midwest pitch for upgrade funds
- Turmoil over landmark law making waves in and outside Chicago
- Quotable: Architecture critic David Dillon on the Dallas Cowboys' new stadium
- 'Hail Mary' time: Preservation Chicago pushes a city landmark district at Michael Reese Hospital

Most Popular

- In-town perspectives on the Modern Wing: Let's hear from you (Recommended by 4 people)
- The last four miles: Friends of the Parks unveils a new plan for an entirely-open lakefront (Recommended by 66 people)
- CHA architecture gets it right with Dearborn Homes; new limestone decorations transform the... (Recommended by 24 people)
- Turmoil over landmark law making waves in and outside Chicago (Recommended by 6 people)
- High speed rail: Biden praises Midwest plan to enhance passenger train system; federal officials... (Recommended by 2 people)

Categories

- Aqua
- Architectural compensation
- Architectural education
- Architecture
- Architecture awards
- Architecture books
- Architecture business
- Architecture competitions
- Architecture criticism
- Architecture exhibitions
- Architecture films
- Architecture lectures
- Architecture magazines
- Architecture on television
- Architecture tours
- Art Institute of Chicago Modern Wing

[?]

chicagotribune.com

Public housing limbo

Thousands of families displaced. Hundreds of millions of dollars spent. Years behind schedule. What went wrong with Chicago's grand experiment.

By Jason Grotto, Laurie Cohen and Sara Olkon

Chicago Tribune reporters

July 7, 2008

Chicago's grand experiment to transform public housing is lagging far behind schedule after Mayor Richard Daley's administration turned to private developers to shape the future of housing for the city's poor.

Conceived amid a rising housing market, the city's Plan for Transformation used hundreds of millions in taxpayer dollars and virtual giveaways of public land to reverse decades of neglect that confined the city's poorest residents to racially segregated ghettos.

Demolition of Chicago's reviled high-rises became a national symbol of change and hope, but little attention has been focused on what happened next as rhetoric collided with realities.

A Tribune investigation found that almost nine years into what was billed as a 10-year program, the city has completed only 30 percent of the plan's most ambitious element—tearing down entire housing projects and replacing them with new neighborhoods where poor, working-class and wealthier families would live side by side.

In fact, of those public housing units that have been built, nearly half went up before the plan officially started in 2000.

The Chicago Housing Authority points to its success in rehabbing thousands of traditional public housing units and apartments for seniors, and says it has completed nearly 65 percent of the work called for under the overall plan. But the agency acknowledges that it can't say exactly when it will finish replacing thousands of units it has torn down.

"This isn't a race," said Lewis Jordan, the CHA's chief executive. "We are methodically moving forward."

Hundreds of additional units are under construction, and Jordan said the current goal is to complete the plan by 2015. But some insiders concede it might take another 10 years beyond that.



PROTECTED HOUSING FOR YEARS

Former residents may be the least surprised by the situation. From the start, many predicted they would be displaced and forgotten while developers grabbed coveted swaths of city real estate for re-development and private profit.

In pushing the plan, the Daley administration, the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, and Habitat Co., the court-appointed overseer of public housing construction, placed what amounted to a high-stakes wager:

Upscale homes in the new developments would not only raise the aspirations of public housing families but also spur the construction of badly needed housing for the poor and affordable housing for working people struggling to buy a home.

Instead, the market-rate homes have proven in some cases to be an albatross.

From the beginning, construction at the new communities moved slowly, held up by bureaucracy, politics and complex financing.

Now, the downturn in the housing market threatens to bog down the plan even further because developers are struggling to sell high-priced homes amid a glut of new construction across the city.

In interviews with the Tribune, city and Habitat officials now say they need to reconsider some of their strategies. Valerie Jarrett, Habitat's chief executive, said the company will seek the advice of housing experts from across the country and also ask developers to come up with new ideas.

The sputtering effort also has translated into higher costs—with some public housing units totaling more than \$300,000 to build, more than the price of a home in many Chicago neighborhoods.

And the plan has added to the growing housing crisis for the poor in Chicago, where more than 56,000 have been on a waiting list for years to get public housing. The list has been closed to new applicants since 2001.

The consequences of these failures go far beyond Chicago. The federal government also prodded dozens of cities across the country to adopt similar blueprints for fixing their public housing sites. Since then, many of those projects have stalled as well.

As the largest redevelopment of public housing ever undertaken in the country, Chicago's effort mirrors the ambition of other Daley efforts to reshape the city. It also parallels major Daley endeavors in featuring a roster of high-profile allies and friends.

At what once was Stateway Gardens, part of the most infamous wall of public housing in the world, construction is being overseen by a team that includes Allison Davis, a powerful developer with close ties to City Hall. The new Park Boulevard on South State Street sits not far from U.S. Cellular Field, home of the White Sox, on what has become prime real estate. It also stands as the most dramatic example of troubles with the city's strategy.

As of the end of March, Davis' team had managed to complete just 53 of the 439 public housing units planned—the lowest number of any CHA development. Another member of the development team has filed for bankruptcy in the wake of the national housing slump.

Amid all this, one aspect seems to be prospering: On the site's northeast corner, a Starbucks, Jimmy

Chicago Tribune

FOUNDED JUNE 10, 1847

SCOTT C. SMITH, *Publisher* · ANN MARIE LIPINSKI, *Editor*

R. BRUCE DOLD, *Editorial Page Editor*

GEORGE DE LAMA, *Managing Editor, News* · JAMES WARREN, *Managing Editor, Features*

TIMOTHY J. McNULTY, *Public Editor*

Editorials

Why trust City Hall?

"When you read through the criminal complaints that were filed in this case and—and the pleas that were entered—the sense of violation that I think anybody who loves the city has is almost overwhelming. . . . I certainly am going to look more carefully at representations made in this particular case in the future."

—U.S. District Judge Wayne Andersen, Aug. 2, 2005

Yes, Judge Andersen fumed from the bench, he was disappointed. For years, he said, he had "taken at face value" the claims of lawyers for Chicago's City Hall. The lawyers swore that Mayor Richard Daley's regime was abiding by the Shakman decrees against most political hiring. Patronage? Clout? Heaven forfend!

The federal prosecution of Daley's former patronage chief, Robert Sorich, and four other former Hall employees showed what truly was afoot: City insiders were rigging tests and faking interviews to give jobs and promotions to Daley loyalists. The city's flunkies were doing election grunt work for Daley's Democratic machine.

The day Andersen talked about the "sense of violation," he appointed a monitor with broad powers to oversee City Hall personnel decisions.

On Dec. 17, 2007, in her latest report to Andersen, monitor Noelle Brennan charged that Daley's administration actually had slipped backward in efforts to eradicate patronage: High-ranking Daley aides skirted the rules to give jobs to favored candidates; officials circumvented rules by sticking preferred job-seekers on payrolls of outside contractors;

many city employees who violated hiring rules weren't punished.

Brennan's most explosive accusation was that city lawyers repeatedly gave her false or misleading information about city hiring problems.

So we were stunned by Andersen's ruling that he'll let a City Hall office oversee . . . City Hall's corruption-plagued hiring system. Andersen rejected Brennan's strong urging that the oversight job go to city Inspector General David Hoffinan. He's the former federal prosecutor whom Andersen has praised for his independence from "the normal chain of command" in Daley's regime.

Andersen did order that the person who is chosen to oversee hiring compliance cannot be a current or former city employee or have any connections to Chicago

politics. The judge also is pleased that Anthony Boswell, the Denver import who heads the mayor's new Office of Compliance, has no prior ties to City Hall.

"The city will be given an opportunity," Andersen wrote, "to show that the skepticism is ill-founded."

This is a win for Daley and a loss for Andersen's own eyes and ears on this case, Noelle Brennan.

Andersen's trust in City Hall to end hiring crimes that his monitor says haven't been curtailed is a triumph of unwarranted hope over experience.

If the city continues to flout rules of fairness, Andersen could refuse to end his Shakman oversight next year. And if that happens, he can deliver a stern speech: the same one he gave Aug. 2, 2005.

*A triumph of
unwarranted hope
over experience*

Picking face of Games

Ben Joravsky's column in the current Chicago Reader discusses many of the costs if Chicago is awarded the 2016 Summer Olympics, including the inevitable outlay for an official mascot.

Creative teams, artists and designers will no doubt put in hundreds of hours to come up with a Chicago version of Cobi, the dog in a business suit that was the face of the 1992

Summer Olympics in Barcelona; Howdy and Hidy, the polar bears in cowboy outfits that represented the 1988 Winter Olympics in Calgary; or Schuss, the little skier that started the tradition by serving as unofficial mascot of the 1968 Winter Olympics in Grenoble.

If history is any gauge, the Chicago mascot will be embarrassing, trite, generic and forgettable. Stuffed, emblazoned and animated, appearing everywhere, it will drive us all mad.

The line-item cost of the project has yet to be determined.

Chicago 2016 spokesman Patrick Sandusky said the \$10.5 million figure in the Reader actually reflects the \$10.8 million overall communication and marketing budget for 2014, the year our mascot will be introduced.

But still. At Change of Subject I floated the idea that we won't need a top-dollar creative team to generate a fitting mascot for our Olympics. Volunteer Tribune readers can do the job.

And folks, you came through. Here are edited versions of some of the prototype ideas posted online:

Gimme (an alderman holding fistfuls of cash)

Grafty the Pig

Kickback the Fat Cat

Casper the Friendly Ghost Payroller

Dibs (an anthropomorphic piece of household junk)

A flaming cow

Re-purposed Sasha and Malia dolls

Abe Lincoln with a clothespin on his nose

Lockup (a Chicago politician in prison jumpsuit)



MRS. O'LEARY'S
FLAMING COW

RICK TUMA/
TRIBUNE ILLUSTRATION

out of it)

Car (a deep-dish pizza), **Diac** (a Chicago-style hot dog) and **Arrest** (an Italian beef sandwich)

Wally (a giant wallet on legs that is always being pursued by his co-mascot **Taxy**, a giant hand)

Rusty (a disintegrating segment of elevated train track)

A giant greased palm

Pidge (a giant bird wearing a sash bearing the city's unofficial motto, "Ubi Est Mea?" or "Where's Mine?")

A weasel

A bedbug

Bagman (a man in a fedora and raincoat holding a black satchel with money popping



KICKBACK
THE FAT CAT

GRAFTY THE PIG



CASPER THE FRIENDLY
GHOST PAYROLLER

Many readers were enthusiastic about "Chalkie," an outline of the body of a murder victim holding the Olympic torch. That idea first appeared at the SecondCityCop blog and now has its own Web site, where enthusiasts can order souvenir hats and T-shirts.

I'm still collecting suggestions online and I'll forward them all soon to Chicago 2016. Their thanks will be all the payment we need.



Change of Subject

Add your two cents at Eric Zorn's blog: chicagotribune.com/zorn

chicagotribune.com

Mayor Richard Daley's nephew Robert Vanecko quits firm in inquiry

Resignation comes after city pension boards subpoenaed

By Dan Mihalopoulos

Tribune reporter

June 10, 2009

Mayor Richard Daley's nephew Robert Vanecko has quit a real estate firm he started, departing less than two weeks after federal investigators began probing investments that city employee pension funds made with the company.

In a statement Tuesday, Vanecko and his partners in the city deals said he would no longer be a general partner or investor in DV Urban Realty.

Though the move comes 13 days after city pension fund boards received federal subpoenas, the statement said Vanecko's resignation was not a response to "unfounded charges."

"Robert felt it was the best way to further the important work of the partnership while minimizing unwarranted distractions from our core purpose," said the statement by Vanecko and partners Allison Davis, a Daley ally, and his son, Jared Davis.

A Daley spokeswoman declined to comment.

Several city pension fund boards agreed in 2006 to invest \$68 million in DV Urban.

In March, City Hall Inspector General David Hoffman launched an investigation into how DV Urban obtained the pension fund business. But after pension board officials would not provide the records Hoffman requested, he proposed a joint investigation with U.S. Atty. Patrick Fitzgerald's office.

On May 27, federal investigators sent subpoenas for records pertaining to DV Urban to the pension boards for the police, laborers and municipal employees, all of which had invested in the real estate firm.

Investigators also sent a subpoena to the firefighters' pension board, which declined a chance to invest in DV Urban.



6-9-09

TUES

Daleys in turmoil over nephew's deals: sources

PENSION FUND | After year of family urging, Vanecko to quit post

BY FRAN SPIELMAN

City Hall Reporter/fspielman@suntimes.com

The tightly knit Daley family is struggling to solve an internal crisis caused by a nephew who they say refused to stop embarrassing his uncle.

Sources said Robert Vanecko was told nearly two years ago that his uncle, Mayor Daley, wanted him out of a risky real estate venture involving city employee pension funds. Another Daley nephew, Patrick Thompson, was given the same directive one week earlier — and promptly dropped out as an attorney representing the Children's Museum at heated community meetings on the controversial Daley-backed plan to build a new Children's Museum in Grant Park.

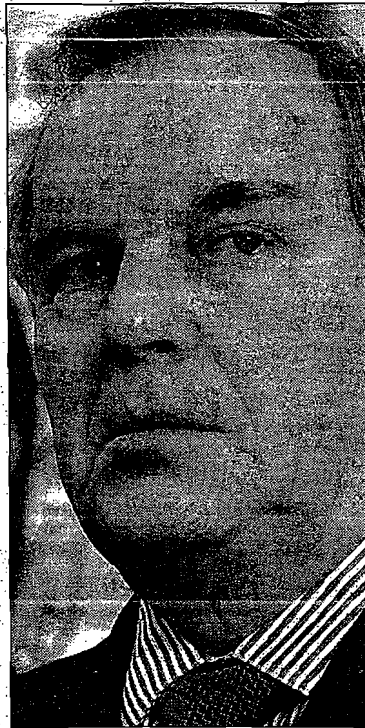
Unlike his cousin, Robert Vanecko ignored the mayor's advice — apparently until this week.

Vanecko "has resigned as a general partner for DV Urban Realty," according to an e-mail sent Monday afternoon to police pension board members from John J. Gallagher Jr., executive director of the pension fund. "A press release will be issued [today] about this resignation, and other than that, no further information was provided at this time."

It was unclear whether Vanecko can get completely out of the pension-fund deals because of the collapse of the real estate market. Meanwhile, the Daley family is stuck with a headline that won't quit and a federal investigation into how DV Urban won \$68 million in pension investments in the first place.

"It's a terrible situation. Everyone wishes this wasn't going on. In hindsight, it looks bad. And it's obvious this is gonna continue," said one family member, who asked to remain anonymous.

"It's not easy watching your



"Everyone wishes this wasn't going on. In hindsight, it looks bad."

A Daley family member talking about Robert Vanecko's (left) pension deals

nephew being trashed. We all feel sorry for him. But he's finding out what we all learned 30 years ago — that if you stay around [government] long enough, you're gonna get burned."

Sources said other family members have been trying for some time to persuade Vanecko to dissolve his partnership with developer Allison Davis because of the perception that Daley family clout landed the deal.

Vanecko told them he was in the process of getting out, sources said. But that apparently didn't happen until this week.

Mayor Daley was described as livid and distraught about the controversy, but dead-set against touching off a family feud by publicly criticizing Vanecko, the eldest of Richard J. Daley's 22 grandchildren.

In September 2007, the Chicago Sun-Times disclosed Vanecko had formed a partnership with Davis and persuaded city employee pension funds to invest \$68 million with their start-up company.

Davis and Vanecko are guaranteed \$8 million in management fees — \$2.7 million of it paid so far — under the deal that expires in 2014.

They can also share in any profits from their real estate investments.

They've invested pension funds in eight Chicago properties, but that portfolio has declined in value.

Attempts to reach Vanecko and Davis were unsuccessful.

Mayor Daley has insisted he had no control over how city employee pension funds invest their money — or over the professional lives of his nieces and nephews. "It could be any business. They could be in real estate. They could be in development. They could be anything," the mayor said.

Asked whether city pension funds should be making such speculative investments at a time when they're saddled with unfunded liabilities, he said, "I am not on that board. They make decisions."

Last month, a federal grand jury subpoenaed pension fund records after pension officials refused to comply with similar subpoenas issued by Inspector General David Hoffman. It's Hoffman's second joint investigation with federal authorities into Vanecko's businesses.

The other involves the undisclosed ownership stake Vanecko and the mayor's son, Patrick Daley, held in a sewer cleaning company that won millions of dollars in no-bid contract extensions from City Hall.

Vanecko and Patrick Daley have said they sold their investment in the company in late 2004. That's when Patrick Daley enlisted in the Army and Vanecko forged his partnership with Davis.

Last week, the Sun-Times disclosed City Hall has paid nearly \$500,000 in the last 15 months to lease space at a South Side site owned by DV Urban, which bought the land with city pension money.

Contributing: Tim Novak and Chris Fusco
Comment at suntimes.com.

[Back to regular view](#) [Print this page](#)

Feds probe city pension deals with Daley's nephew

SUBPOENAS | Mayor Daley's nephew Robert Vanecko and ally Allison S. Davis are at the center of grand jury probe on how they snared city employee investments

Comments

May 30, 2009

BY **TIM NOVAK** Staff Reporter

City pension officials have been hit with subpoenas from a federal grand jury trying to determine how a start-up company co-owned by Mayor Daley's nephew won \$68 million in pension investments.

The grand jury issued the subpoenas Wednesday, nearly two months after city pension officials refused to comply with similar subpoenas issued by the City of Chicago's inspector general, David Hoffman.

Hoffman said Friday that he and federal investigators are now jointly investigating the investments with DV Urban Realty Partners, a minority certified business co-owned by mayor's top African-American allies, Allison S. Davis, and Daley's nephew Robert Vanecko.

This is the second joint investigation that Hoffman and federal authorities are conducting into Vanecko's businesses.

The other investigation involves the hidden ownership stake Vanecko and the mayor's son, Patrick Daley, held in a sewer-cleaning company that won millions of dollars in no-bid contracts from City Hall. Vanecko and Patrick Daley have said they sold their investment in the company in late 2004 when Patrick Daley enlisted in the Army and Vanecko went into business with

Hoffman began investigating Vanecko and Patrick Daley in the wake of Chicago Sun-Times investigations into the mayor's son and nephew during the last two years.

Davis, 69, and Vanecko, 43, set up their company hoping to get money from public and private pension plans for real estate investments. But they were rejected by several private and government pension plans until 2006, when the five city pension funds agreed to invest \$68 million with them.

Davis and Vanecko are guaranteed \$8 million in management fees -- they've been paid \$2.7 million so far -- under the eight-year deal that expires Dec. 31, 2014. They can also share in any profits from their real estate investments.

They've invested the pension funds in eight Chicago properties, but all of their real estate deals have declined in value, partly because of the recession.

Davis and Vanecko are also trying to prevent the loss of \$7.9 million in pension funds they invested in a stalled project to build a Dominick's grocery store and condos at 3030 N. Broadway. They have been feuding with the developers, Michael O'Connor and Jon Zitzman, and are trying to find people to buy out O'Connor and Zitzman at an auction set for June 5 in the law offices of Patrick Daley Thompson, another mayoral nephew.

City pension officials refused to comply with Hoffman's subpoenas, arguing he had no authority to demand records from them. The federal grand jury stepped in, demanding records from the pension plans for Chicago municipal employees, laborers, police officers and firefighters, even though the firefighters pension fund refused to invest any money with Davis and Vanecko.

The other two pension funds that invested with Vanecko and Davis -- Chicago teachers and the CTA -- haven't received any subpoenas from Hoffman or the grand jury.

Bookmark & Share

- | | |
|----------|-------------|
| Email | Favorites |
| Print | Delicious |
| Digg | Google |
| MySpace | Live |
| Facebook | StumbleUpon |
| Twitter | More ... |

[A Mushrooming Pension Fund Scandal](#)

From Blog For Arizona

[Pension Funds Ditch Hedge Funds... or Do They?](#)

From Richard Wilson's HedgeFundBlogger.com

The views expressed in these blog posts

Chicago Tribune Clout Street Blog

Originally posted: May 29, 2009

Feds probe Daley nephew's city pension deal

Posted by Dan Mihalopoulos and Steve Mills at 3:10 p.m.; updated 4:38 p.m.

Federal law-enforcement authorities are probing the controversial investment of city employee pension fund dollars in a real estate firm involving Mayor Richard Daley's nephew Robert Vanecko.

A federal grand jury issued subpoenas Wednesday to the pension funds for police, laborers and municipal employees, according to records obtained today by the Tribune.

Prosecutors with U.S. Atty. Patrick Fitzgerald's office are demanding fund officials turn over documents regarding their dealings with DV Urban Realty, which includes Vanecko and longtime Daley ally Allison Davis. The police fund's board voted in 2006 to invest \$15 million in DV Urban, part of a \$68 million deal that also involved other local government pension funds.

The federal subpoena is a virtual carbon copy of the subpoenas sent to four pension funds in March by City Hall's inspector general, David Hoffman. But fund officials refused to comply with those requests, arguing that Hoffman's office does not have the authority to investigate them.

Now the DV Urban deal has become the focus of the latest in a growing number of joint investigations involving the feds and Hoffman, a former assistant U.S. attorney in Chicago.

While the pension funds made public many of the documents that Hoffman sought, the police fund's board would not release audio tapes of closed meetings where trustees discussed the deal with Vanecko and Davis's firm.

Besides the police fund, four other pension funds – representing teachers, municipal employees, laborers and CTA workers – invested in DV Urban.

Hoffman had subpoenaed records from the funds for laborers, police and municipal employees, as well as the firefighters' pension fund, whose leaders declined a chance to invest in DV Urban.

The pension funds for police, municipal employees and laborers provided a copies of the subpoena to the Tribune, but officials there declined to comment. DV Urban officials could not immediately be reached.

Stench from parking meter deal worse every day

BY THE PARKING TICKET GEEK

A big steaming plate of garbage. That's what Chef Daley cooked up for us up back in December.

With a smiling face, he served up a \$1.15 billion parking meter lease deal that reeked worse than certain rank corners of Lower Wacker Drive.

It smelled then. It smells worse now.

Since December, Daley has been trying to feed Chicagoans his putrid plate of poor parking and privatization policies, while telling us how great it tastes.

First, he ladled bowlfuls of his stinky deal to the City Council. While many of them initially recoiled in disgust, Chef Daley force fed them until all but five aldermen, after just two days of alleged deliberation and without any real information, chowed down.

Chicago motorists first began smelling something funny when the now quadrupled rates began showing up on meters. The stink grew worse with the shocking realization of longer daily hours of feeding the meters, and no more free Sundays or holidays.

A smog of frustration spewed over the skyline from Daley's City Hall kitchen when the transition from city to the now privatized parking meter system, under the control of Morgan Stanley — aka Chicago Parking Meters, LLC — and their operations partner, LAZ Parking, went terribly wrong.

A rash of broken and intentionally vandalized and mislabeled meters confused motorists. Meters overflowed with quarters because rates had been quadrupled but there were not enough personnel for quarter collections. And meters registering wrong times or no time angered motorists in every corner of the city.

That stench stuck even after the city and the new lessee claimed they had fixed all the problems a few weeks ago. And just last week there was a massive failure of more than 250 of the new Pay & Display pay boxes, leaving an even worse taste in the mouths of Chicagoans.

A hurricane of complaints overwhelmed ward offices, along with a flurry of negative press. And now the formerly meek aldermen, suddenly, shockingly, removed their nose plugs long

enough to sing a chorus of mea culpas and rationalizations. The fear of losing an election cleansed their political palate like a lemon sorbet.

Last Friday, Attorney General Lisa Madigan found it politically convenient to begin sniffing around, opening a fraud investigation.

And on Tuesday, City Hall Inspector General David Hoffman, after five months of looking around the mayor's kitchen and taste testing the deal, weighed in with a scathing review of what Chef Daley has forced down our collective throats. "No stars!" the IGO's report exclaimed.

But Daley continues to claim the swill he cooked up is tasty and healthy for the city because Morgan Stanley's \$1.15 billion dollar payment not only filled the budget gap, but allegedly insured a balanced budget through 2012, saved jobs and gave the city a

Chicago motorists first began smelling something funny when the now quadrupled rates began showing up on meters.

\$400 million rainy day fund.

Bistro Daley's current maitre d', mayoral chief of staff Paul Volpe, responded to the IGO report, saying, "This transaction provided great benefit to Chicago taxpayers and residents, allowing us to continue providing vital services and avoid steep tax increases during this difficult economy."

Unfortunately, the reality is that Daley had driven Chicago into such a weakened financial state that he had to grasp for the first quick and easy money that came around.

Seared, souffled, sauteed, baked, fried, who cares.

No matter how Chef Daley tries to sell this dish, it's garbage.

The Parking Ticket Geek, who says he has "bright orange seared" into his retina from more than 20 years of getting parking tickets in Chicago, runs the Web site theexpiredmeter.com.

chicagotribune.com

Chicago parking meters: City Council belatedly questions deal that privatized parking meters

After \$1.2 billion lease passed in a rush, council members propose limitations

By Dan Mihalopoulos

Tribune reporter

April 23, 2009

Less than five months after the Chicago City Council quickly and overwhelmingly approved the deal, aldermen buffeted by public complaints pushed a slew of ordinances Wednesday targeting the \$1.2 billion lease of Chicago's parking meters to a private company.

One measure calls for hearings to examine the deal, which ushered in dramatic rate hikes at 36,000 meters across the city. Another would halt rate increases until all meters are uprooted and replaced with "pay and display" equipment allowing motorists to pay with credit cards and place tickets on their dashboards. Yet a third would require a 30-day waiting period before aldermen could approve any plan to privatize city assets.



The proposals appear aimed at giving aldermen political cover amid widespread discontent and technical problems as the parking meter system transitions to private control.

Facing a huge budget deficit, aldermen agreed in December to take a massive, upfront payment from a consortium doing business as Chicago Parking Meters LLC. Though many council members complained Mayor Richard Daley gave them only two days to review the deal, the vote was 40-5.

The new private company received the right to operate the meters and collect revenues for 75 years, and rates shot up Jan. 1. Last month, the Tribune revealed outdated fee and violation-enforcement information still posted on many meters, meters that charged the wrong hourly rates, a surge in broken meters, and stepped-up ticket writing for violations.

Parking company officials did not return calls seeking comment on the proposed ordinances.

In other council action Wednesday:

↳ Aldermen approved an agreement promising contracts and job opportunities to minorities and affordable housing at the 2016 Olympic Village development on the South Side. Before approval,

however, several black aldermen angrily responded to comments reportedly made by former Illinois Senate President Emil Jones. According to the Chicago Defender newspaper, Jones called the agreement a "sham." Ald. Ed Smith (28th) shot back: "Where is his brain? ... I want to give him a kick in the pants, because that's what he needs." While in Springfield, Smith said, Jones "wasn't able to pass gas." Aldermen reworked the agreement with the 2016 bid organization to require that 30 percent of contracts go to minorities and 10 percent to women -- up 5 percentage points in each category from the deal originally announced.

¿Ald. Ed Burke (14th) gave a long speech blasting the Art Institute of Chicago for its plan to increase admission fees. But he kept his resolution voicing opposition to the fee hikes from coming to a final council vote.

¿Aldermen approved an ordinance requiring the city to place documents about 160 tax-increment financing districts on its Web site.

¿Ald. Howard Brookins (21st) introduced a measure that he said would clear the way for Chicago's second Wal-Mart store in his South Side ward. The retailer's expansion attempts in the city have stalled due to concerns from organized labor.

dmihalopoulos@tribune.com

Copyright © 2009, [Chicago Tribune](#)

chicagotribune.com

Daley's Parking Meter Deal: Shortshanks' House of Cards?

John Kass

June 4, 2009

Under siege for imposing his huge parking meter increase that has finally enraged his docile subjects, Mayor Shortshanks on Wednesday got behind his castle walls.

Actually, he stood near a series of large charts and graphs at Chicago's City Hall, arranged like so many gigantic playing cards to protect his flanks, and so they had something of the fortress look about them.

One chart was a confusing time line. Another a confusing line graph. One featured a weird squiggle. As I'm a professor of The Chicago Way, allow me to translate what the mayor's charts really mean:

"It's Not Mayor Daley's Fault! The aldermen did it! Blame them!"

Daley said as much, just after aldermen finished shrieking that the mayor in December forced them to approve the lease of the city's 36,000 meters, causing them to take the blame when the private company jacked up the rates.

The Boss of Chicago is also outraged about a damning report issued by Inspector General David Hoffman, which said the mayor's parking deal was rammed through without public debate and that city government could have made almost a billion dollars more if Daley hadn't privatized the meters.

"Yes, people can criticize," Daley said of those who say he rules with a wrought iron fist. "But for them to say they have no voice -- that's really unfair."

But true.

Just then, the mayor did something odd. He moved off to the side and began arranging his charts and graphs, pulling them closer together, one forward, one back, so they'd have more stability. As he hunched over, yanking gently on the corner of a chart, I almost asked about the chart that was missing.

The Hickenlooper Chart.

A Hickenlooper wouldn't confuse anyone. It would clearly show voters so angry over a ridiculously high parking meter increase that they give a complete political unknown 65 percent of the vote for mayor.



It happened a few years ago in Denver. The unknown who got those votes is Mayor John Hickenlooper, now in his second term.

The former geologist and Denver pub owner was minding his own beer-brewing business when Denver's City Hall pushed a whopping parking meter increase to cover a budget shortfall, after years and years of wasteful spending. Sound familiar?

Many didn't give him a chance in the campaign, but he had a novel platform, the size of a quarter.

When Denver meter readers would walk down the block, he'd run out and start pumping quarters into the meters to protect his patrons from parking tickets. He called the meter increase an example of "The Fundamental Nonsense of Government"

The idea was soon featured in a political commercial that ignited his campaign. It is still on YouTube, and should be required viewing for any Chicago politician thinking about using the meter increase to end the Shortshankian Dynasty.

"We do the commercial, sort of like 'High Noon,' though I'm not Gary Cooper," Hickenlooper told me last year during the Democratic National Convention in his town. "We had a great actor, heavysset, sort of like Broderick Crawford, giving out parking tickets. And I walk on, to say how bad it was that the city raised the parking. And just before he writes a ticket, I put a quarter in somebody's meter. It was a great commercial."

Back then, nobody was talking publicly about raising the meter rates in Chicago. Not even Daley.

With taxpayers already angry about decades of political corruption and waste under Daley's watch, the last thing City Hall should have done was to make the corruption tax easy to grasp for the voters.

Like those 28 quarters in your pocket that you need to feed the meters downtown and pay for all the waste and the deals.

These days, the mayor says everybody knew he was going to do it and they didn't stop him.

"This started in 2007," Daley said. "This wasn't an idea just picked out of a hat. This has been talked about for almost two years."

The bill was presented to the aldermen two days before they had to vote on it, without specific numbers and with virtually no debate. If they didn't vote his way, Daley threatened to blame them all for a property tax increase.

They were muscled by Shortshanks. His administration received \$1.15 billion for leasing the parking meters for 75 years. The citizens got an Olympian tax hike in the guise of a parking rate increase, with more to come.

At City Hall, after he was finished arranging them, Daley's parking meter charts were balanced against each other, edges touching, offering support, like so many aces and kings and jacks balanced on a coffee table, making a castle of cards.

The mayor was careful not to bump them. The last thing he needs is for them to all fall down.

jskass@tribune.com

Originally posted: June 3, 2009

Daley defends parking deal; City Council split on snafu

UPDATE AT 5:26 IG Hoffman: "We stand by our report."

UPDATE AT 1:51 p.m. Mayor Daley responds

Posted by Dan Mihalopoulos

Mayor Richard Daley today issued a vigorous defense of his controversial deal to lease the city's parking meters to a private company, even as the City Council took steps to protect themselves from continued fallout over their quick approval of his plan.

The mayor was not in the chamber as the council debated a measure to require more time before approving such lease deals. But he appeared afterward to address a new report by city Inspector General David Hoffman suggesting Daley and the aldermen moved too fast without considering whether the city could make a better deal.

"Like anything else, you can issue any type of report," Daley said. "I can criticize anything. Constructive criticism [is] accepted. But all of a sudden you're challenging all the financial people about this financial area. If you want to, so be it."

Asked if he had appointed the inspector general to issue such reports, the mayor shrugged and replied, "Today, everybody can do anything they want, I guess."

Inspector General David Hoffman issued a one-sentence response to Daley's comments today: "We stand by our report and encourage people to read it."

Daley said he had no problems with the 15-day waiting period before future votes on such privatization deals: "They can have 20, 30 days. I don't care."

He rebutted criticism that he rushed the council to vote on it.

"This started in 2007," Daley said. "This wasn't an idea just picked out of a hat ... This has been talked about almost for two years."

The mayor seemed to take particular offense to Hoffman's criticism of his top advisers. He also defended William Blair & Co., the financial consultant that concluded the city would do well to get an offer of \$1 billion for the parking meter system.

"I will put [chief of staff] Paul Volpe here and [chief financial officer] Gene Saffold against anyone in regards to competency. I will take William Blair and all the people we hired -- talk about competent people -- look at all these people."

Volpe conceded that the city chose its financial analysts on the deal without seeking bids for the advice. "There are very few firms that are qualified in this particular area," Volpe said, noting that William Blair also advised the city on the privatization of its downtown parking garages. ~~Chicago Skyway toll road.~~

Posted by Dan Mihalopoulos at 12:25 p.m.

Spurred by the ongoing parking meter snafu, Chicago City Council today approved a measure that would require a 15-day review period before a vote on future proposals to privatize city assets.

But the measure unleashed a broader debate about the new report by city Inspector General David Hoffman

criticizing the mayor's office and the council for moving so quickly to approve leasing the city's parking meters.

Aides to Mayor Richard Daley briefed aldermen on the agreement only one day before the council ratified it by a 40-5 vote in December. Ever since, aldermen have been hearing complaints from people about the higher rates and ongoing problems with the new meter system.

"It's easy to be a Monday morning quarterback," said Ald. Edward Burke (14th), chairman of the Finance Committee. "This (deal) was not exactly something done in the dark of night."

Another longtime Daley loyalist, Ald. Bernard Stone (50th), echoed top mayoral aides who questioned Hoffman's standing to analyze the deal.

"He's not an MBA. He's not even a CPA," Stone said.

Stone said aldermen who voted for the deal but now said they made a mistake are "copping out."

"Be proud of what you did. Because you made a good deal," he said.

Ald. Leslie Hairston (5th), who voted against the deal, shot back at Stone.

"I'm proud of my vote because I voted no," she said.

Hairston blasted the Daley administration for not providing aldermen with more information about the deal. "I was taught to read and I was taught to ask questions," she said.

"A lot of people are looking back and wondering if they made the right decision," said Ald. Rey Colon (35th), another of the five who voted against the parking meter lease.

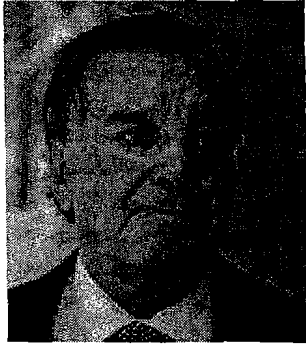
Ald. Joe Moore (49th) said he wishes he had not voted for the deal. "We have shirked our responsibility to really examine these deals closely," Moore said, praising Hoffman.

dmihalopoulos@tribune.com

From Chicago Reader's "Clout Street" blog

Originally posted: June 2, 2009

Daley declines to call on indicted alderman to step down as police chairman



Posted by Dan Mihalopoulos at 12:15 p.m.

Mayor Richard Daley today declined to call on indicted longtime ally Ald. Isaac Carothers to step down as chairman of the City Council's Police and Fire Committee.

"In America (you are) innocent until proven guilty. Like anything else, he has a right to defend himself," said Daley in his first public comments since Carother was arrested on corruption charges last week.

Carothers, the 29th Ward alderman, was conspicuously absent from today's news conference where Daley and Police Supt. Jody Weis announced summer anti-crime initiatives.

Before federal prosecutors accused him of bribery, Carothers was a regular at such events in his role as police committee chairman. Carothers has professed his innocence and reappeared at City Hall on Monday to attend committee meetings.

Asked about federal court records indicating that Carothers wore a secret recording device, Daley replied, "I don't know anything about that" and declined to take further questions.

The mayor's reticence to talk about Carothers echoed his lack of comments after the recent corruption conviction of former Streets and Sanitation Commissioner Al Sanchez.

Like Sanchez, Carothers was heavily involved in organizing pro-Daley groups of campaign workers who received jobs and promotions as reward for their

CAROTHERS WORE WIRE FOR A YEAR

INDICTED | Daley ally charged with fraud and bribery despite reported cooperation with feds in probe of officials, developers

BY NATASHA KORECKI,
FRAN SPIELMAN AND TIM NOVAK

Staff Reporters

One of Mayor Daley's closest allies on the City Council has been wearing a wire and secretly recording "public officials and real estate developers" for more than a year, a City Hall bombshell that was revealed in a federal court document Thursday.

Ald. Isaac "Ike" Carothers (29th) was charged Thursday with fraud and bribery for allegedly accepting \$40,000 in home improvements and other gifts from a politically connected developer, but he has been cooperating with the feds since April 2008, according to court papers.

A government motion filed in February asked to keep under seal the indictment of the developer — Calvin Boender — until May. It was unsealed Thursday.

The document identifies Carothers as "Public Official A" — with clear identifiers pointing to him, including a reference to one of his family members running for Congress in 2004.

The government filing says Carothers, 54, had been "consensually recording conversations with individuals suspected of engaging in ongoing criminal conduct."

"These recorded conversations include meetings Public Official A has had with other public officials and real estate developers. The government expects Public Official A to continue his cooperation into late May 2009."

There's no indication where Carothers' year of cooperation led.



Alc. Isaac Carothers is charged with accepting \$40,000 in improvements for his West Side home and other gifts. | BRIAN JACKSON-SUN-TIMES

His lawyer, Larry Beaumont, would not comment on the unsealed document. "We expect we will plead not guilty at the arraignment and look forward to trial," Beaumont said.

It's not clear how many of his colleagues Carothers might have ensnared. He has been somewhat radioactive since the Sun-Times reported last year he was under federal scrutiny. Colleagues have been suspicious he has been wearing a wire, City Hall sources say.

And Carothers was not that popular to begin with because he leapfrogged over more senior colleagues to become Daley's hand-picked Police and Fire Committee chairman and lectured those who dared to oppose Daley's tax in-

creases on the City Council floor.

On Thursday, as a result of an FBI and Internal Revenue Service investigation, Carothers was indicted for allegedly accepting improvements to his home in the South Austin neighborhood from Boender, as well as meals and 2005 White Sox playoff tickets.

Carothers allegedly took the perks — which he didn't disclose — in exchange for pushing through zoning changes for Galewood Yards, the largest undeveloped tract of land in the city.

The last alderman in recent memory to wear a wire was Allan Streeter (17th), who taped colleagues in the Silver Shovel City Hall corruption investigation. Meanwhile, former Ald. Ambrosio

Troutman (25th) was hailed by some for refusing to wear a wire. Attorney Patrick Fitzgerald did not disclose Carothers' cooperation in a news conference Thursday. But it might explain why Carothers wasn't arrested the way another alderman — Arentz — was in 2007.

"We'll make arrests when we think it's appropriate," Fitzgerald said. "We'll allow people to surrender when we think it's appropriate."

Fitzgerald said the Carothers case should send a message to anyone who wants to bribe their way into City Hall access.

Boender sought to redevelop a 50-acre former rail yard and industrial site on the West Side into a residential and commercial neighborhood.

The rezoning meant the property was sold for about \$6 million more than would have been realized with out the zoning changes, according to federal authorities. Boender allegedly pocketed \$3 million from that sale, prosecutors say.

Boender is also accused of making third-party donations to Carothers' aunt, Cook County Circuit Judge Anita Rivkin-Carothers, when she made a run for Congress in 2004.

In late 1990, Rivkin-Carothers was attorney for Tina Olson, mother of Baby T — the child who now lives with Ald. Edward Burke (14th) and his wife Supreme Court Justice Anne Burke.

Carothers' father, former Ald. William Carothers (28th), went to prison in 1983 for extorting up to \$32,500 in remodeling work for his ward office from the builders of Bethany Hospital.



Ald. Isaac Carothers talks to reporters last July during a Council meeting. —BRIAN JACKSON-SUN-TIMES

A Council first: He could follow ex-alderman father into prison

BY FRAN SPIELMAN

City Hall Reporter
fspielman@suntimes.com

ONLINE: Read the indictment, U.S. attorney press release | suntimes.com/news/metro

In the history of City Council corruption that has seen 30 aldermen convicted since 1973, there has never been a son who has followed his father to prison.

Ald. Isaac Carothers (29th) could be the first.

His father, former Ald. William Carothers (28th), went to prison in 1983 for extorting up to \$32,500 in remodeling work for his ward office from the builders of Bethany Hospital.

Now, Ike Carothers stands accused.

"It's sad. I'm stunned. It would surprise me even if his father hadn't [gone] to prison," said Ald. Emma Mitts (37th), an Ike Carothers protege.

A longtime Carothers ally, who asked to remain anonymous, said he had "heard the rumors" about the Carothers investigation for months but "didn't believe it because he had the example of his dad."

Ike Carothers is an old-school politician who got his start in the Water Department and rose to become a deputy streets and sanitation commissioner before joining the City Council in 1999.

Four years ago, Carothers' name surfaced in connection with the Hired Truck scandal. During the trial that culminated in the 2006 conviction of Daley's former patronage chief, Carothers' name also appeared on a notorious "clout list" as the sponsor of nearly 100 city job seekers.

Ike Carothers is not likely to win any popularity contests among City Council colleagues. Most view him as a bully.

But that's a label he has worn before.

In 1985, a federal judge ordered William Carothers to help pay \$152,000 in damages for organizing from prison a campaign of physical violence and intimidation against a political opponent that involved Carothers' sons, who were both Cook County deputy sheriffs.

At the time, U.S. District Judge Charles Kocoras said Isaac Carothers appeared to be the ringleader and "organized their acts of intimidation" by force while the other son used his position to verbally threaten the plaintiffs. Isaac Carothers was ordered to pay \$25,000 of the damages.



Former Ald. William Carothers, father of Isaac Carothers, was convicted in 1983. —SUN-TIMES LIBRARY

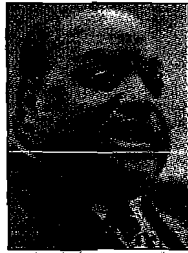
ALDERCROOKS

In the last 36 years, 30 sitting or former aldermen have been convicted of corruption or other crimes. Here they are, along with the year each was convicted.

1. Fred Hubbard (2nd), 1973
2. Joseph Jambrore (28th), 1973
3. Casimir Staszczuk (13th), 1973
4. Joseph Potempa (23rd), 1973
5. Frank Kuta (23rd), 1974
6. Thomas E. Keane (31st), 1974
7. Paul T. Wigoda (49th), 1974
8. Donald Swinarski (12th), 1975
9. Edward T. Scholl (41st), 1975
10. Stanley Zydlo (26th), 1980
11. William Carothers (28th), 1983
12. Louis P. Farina (36th), 1983
13. Tyrone T. Kenner (3rd), 1983
14. Chester A. Kuta, (31st) 1987
15. Clifford P. Kelley (20th), 1987
16. Wallace Davis Jr. (27th), 1987
17. Perry Hutchinson (9th), 1988
18. Marian Humes (8th), 1989
19. Fred Roti (1st), 1993
20. Ambrosio Medrano (25th), 1996
21. Allan Streeter (17th), 1996
22. Joseph Martinez (31st), 1997
23. Jesse Evans (21st), 1997
24. John Madrzyk (13th), 1998
25. Larry Bloom (5th), 1998
26. Virgil Jones (15th), 1999
27. Percy Giles (37th), 1999
28. James Laski (23rd), 2006.
29. Ed Vidolyak (10th), 2008
30. Aranda Troutman (20th), 2008

Alderman, builder

Isaac Carothers
was paid to grease
zoning changes,
prosecutors say



**By Jeff Coen,
Todd Lighty
and Dan Mihailopoulos**
TRIBUNE REPORTERS

A local developer who needed zoning changes to clear the way for a lucrative project on one of the city's largest pieces of undeveloped land took the age-old Chicago approach: bribing an alderman, authorities say.

Ald. Isaac Carothers (29th), a longtime ally of Mayor Richard Daley, was indicted Thursday on charges he accepted \$40,000 in home improvements in 2004, as well as meals and tickets to a White Sox playoff game for supporting the zoning changes. Also charged was developer Calvin Boender, who transformed a 50-acre former rail yard—much of it in Carothers' West Side ward—into a residential and commercial project known as Galewood Yards.

Carothers is the second alderman in two years to be charged criminally for taking payoffs from developers. Former Ald. Arenda Troutman (20th) pleaded guilty last fall to demanding bribes from builders, making her the 27th Chicago alderman convicted of wrongdoing since 1972.

Carothers, chairman of the City Council's Police and Fire Committee, is accused of essentially committing the same crime as his father. Former Ald. William Carothers (28th) was sentenced to 3 years in federal prison in 1983 for extorting remodeling work for his ward office.

The case against Isaac Carothers again highlights how the singular control that al-

dermen hold over zoning decisions in the city has regularly invited deep-pocketed developers to get their way by illegal means. The Tribune's "Neighborhoods for Sale" series last year documented how politicians have raked in millions of dollars in campaign contributions from developers who benefited from zoning changes.

The Tribune chronicled how Boender overrode the opposition of city planners to Galewood Yards after enlisting the support of Carothers and U.S. Rep. Luis Gutierrez (D-Chicago). Gutierrez, who had just received a \$200,000 loan from Boender for his own real estate investments, personally lobbied Daley.

Gutierrez wrote Daley a letter on U.S. House stationery backing the plan and vouching for Boender's character, but he has insisted his support for Galewood Yards and the loan from the developer were unrelated. Gutierrez has not been charged with wrongdoing, and a spokesman for the congressman said Thursday that federal investigators have never contacted Gutierrez about Galewood Yards or Boender.

U.S. Atty. Patrick Fitzgerald said the investigation, led by the FBI and IRS, continues.

Boender and his associates have donated about \$55,000 to Carothers and \$41,000 to Gutierrez, according to campaign contribution records.

Authorities alleged that the zoning changes enabled Boender to pocket an additional \$3 million in profits from the sale of part of Galewood Yards.

The indictment also al-

FRIDAY, MAY 29, 2009 | SECTION 1 | CHICAGO TRIBUNE

9

CHICAGOLAND

indicted



Ald. Isaac Carothers was charged with accepting favors to help the Galewood Yards developer. ANTONIO PEREZ/TRIBUNE FILE PHOTO

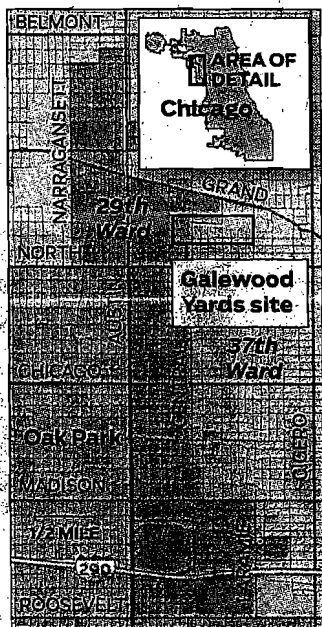
Key events in Galewood Yards

July 2000: Calvin Boender acquires the Galewood Yards property, an industrial site that straddles the border of the 37th Ward and Ald. Isaac Carothers' 29th Ward.

June-September 2004: Thursday's indictment alleges that Boender pays for about \$40,000 worth of improvements to Carothers' residence.

March 2006: Carothers attends two city hearings to speak in favor of rezoning Galewood Yards into a mixed-use commercial and residential project. Later that month, Carothers votes in favor of the development as the City Council approves it.

SOURCES: City of Chicago, Tribune reporting



TRIBUNE

leged that Carothers asked Boender to make campaign contributions to a relative who was running for Congress in 2004 and that Boender enlisted two donors to make contributions of \$2,000 each on his behalf—and then reimbursed them to evade

federal donation limits. Carothers' aunt, Anita Rivkin-Carothers, ran unsuccessfully in 2004 against incumbent U.S. Rep. Danny Davis (D-Ill.).

Records show that Rivkin-Carothers' campaign received \$4,000 from Boender



U.S. vs. Boender and Carothers

Read all the details of the alderman's indictment at chicagotribune.com/carothers

and his wife as well as another \$4,000 from a partner in the Galewood Yards deal, Robert Finnigan, and his wife.

Rivkin-Carothers, now a circuit judge in Cook County domestic violence court, and Finnigan did not return calls.

Carothers, charged with four counts of wire and mail fraud and one count each of accepting a bribe and filing a false federal income tax return, issued a statement Thursday declining comment because he had not seen the charges. His lawyer, Lawrence Beaumont, said Carothers would plead not guilty and looked forward to trial.

Boender was charged with four counts of wire and mail fraud, two counts of obstruction of justice, two misdemeanor counts of violating federal campaign finance laws and one count of paying a bribe. He could not be

reached for comment Thursday.

In a statement, the mayor expressed surprise at Carothers' indictment, calling him "a hardworking, dedicated public servant."

Carothers has been an alderman since 1999. In supporting Boender's plan at a public meeting in 2006, he said it would be "one of the greatest projects you've seen in Chicago in a long time."

On Thursday, however, a sign in front of the new gated community—now known as The Enclave at Galewood Crossings—advertised an auction next month for dozens of unsold homes.

Tribune reporters Robert Becker and Hal Dardick contributed to this report.

jcoen@tribune.com
lighty@tribune.com
dmihalopoulos@tribune.com

Trashing the taxpayers

October 9, 2008 - <http://www.suntimes.com/news/commentary/index.html>

In many ways, the city's latest debacle, the garbageman scandal, is all too familiar.

City workers get paid millions of dollars a year -- at least \$14 million of your tax dollars, in this case -- to do nothing.

Instead of working, they get a snack at McDonald's or Subway, hit the Y or wash the car, and finish off the day having a few beers and relieving themselves in the alleys they're supposed to clean -- all on city time.

They break up their days by taking 90-minute lunch breaks, at home.

And at the heart of the problem are poor city supervision and years of clout hiring.

In case you missed the news, the city's dogged inspector general, David Hoffman, released a report Wednesday revealing the results of an investigation of city garbage workers. Hoffman's investigators did surveillance on 222 garbage workers across 10 wards, doing one ward a week. During that time, the inspector general did not find one garbage worker who put in a full eight-hour day.

You read that right.

Not one.

On average, garbage crews worked less than six hours a day, the inspector general found.

To look at it another way, you could slash the garbage work force by 25 percent and get the same results, if every worker put in an honest eight hours each day.

We have no doubt there are workers who put in an honest day. They do a dirty, dangerous job, and we appreciate their efforts to keep our city clean.

For their labor, they are well-paid. The typical driver makes nearly \$64,000 a year. The typical laborer a little less, about \$60,000. They get up to five weeks of vacation, an excellent pension and good health insurance for themselves and their families.

Which makes what the inspector general found all the more galling.

Understand one key point that may get lost in the news coverage of this scandal: Investigators did not tail the garbage crews every minute of every day. Rather, investigators found the abuses during periodic surveillance. So the estimate of waste and fraud is, if anything, on the low side.

The investigation is making the unions howl. They're calling it a hit job, timed to help Mayor Daley lay off city workers to plug his gaping budget hole.

This response is not helpful or persuasive. A report that shows the City that Works doesn't work when it comes to one of the most basic of municipal tasks, picking up the trash, does Daley no favors.

In fact, it's embarrassing.

Worse still is an obvious issue that the inspector general's findings happen to underscore.

For years, the Daley administration has used city jobs in Streets and Sanitation to reward political workers. The bloating comes with a price, and now we know it -- about \$21 million a year. That, according to the inspector general's report, is the total when you add up the money spent on the city wages for no work, plus other lost savings.

That's \$21 million Chicagoans pay every year for nothing.

The city's long-term response to the findings will speak volumes about the Daley administration. Often, when investigators uncover waste and corruption in city government, City Hall tries to downplay the problem. Just a few bad apples.

But this time around, as the investigation shows, the loafing and fraud are systemic.

Supervision of garbage crews must improve. As the report notes, any boss "mildly interested" in making sure their garbage crews were working wouldn't have to do much to ensure they were. It doesn't take an agent from "CSI" to notice a garbage crew worker sleeping in his car.

It doesn't take Sherlock Holmes to notice when a worker goes missing for two hours for a leisurely lunch -- as the inspector general's team noticed.

It's up to the mayor and the aldermen to set things right.

Not just with a few bad apples.

But for the 222 workers who couldn't be seen working a full day.

Garbage crews 'paid to do nothing' city surveillance finds

October 9, 2008 - BY FRAN SPIELMAN City Hall Reporter

Chicago garbage collection crews work fewer than six hours a day -- and get "paid to do nothing" for 25 percent of their time on the clock -- costing taxpayers at least \$14.3 million a year, according to an internal investigation denounced as a "witch hunt."

During a 10-ward, 10-week surveillance, Inspector General David Hoffman found that waste and falsification of time in the Bureau of Sanitation is "systemic and pervasive and extends to all wards," aided and abetted by poor supervision by layer upon layer of middle management.

Laborers and truck drivers whose movements were eyeballed and tracked by undercover investigators were found to be in bars and restaurants, relaxing at home, sitting in their cars or standing around drinking and, in one case, urinating on the street when they were supposed to be hard at work.

Of the 145 laborers whose daily movements were tracked, investigators "did not see a single laborer doing a full day's work." The worst ward had crews slacking off for an average of two hours, 28 minutes a day. In the best-performing ward, laborers were paid to do nothing for one hour, 38 minutes.

When the cost of employee benefits and the price tag for maintaining and fueling trucks is factored in, the annual waste citywide approaches \$21 million, the inspector general found.

The malingering is so pervasive, the city could pick up the same amount of garbage with 25 percent fewer employees, provided the survivors work a full 8.5-hour shift with 30 minutes off for lunch.

chicagotribune.com

Blagojevich co-defendant resigns post

Tribune staff report

December 13, 2008

John Harris, Gov. Rod Blagojevich's co-defendant in a sweeping political corruption case, resigned Friday as the governor's chief of staff.

Harris dropped off his letter of resignation and will not be going back to the office, according to his lawyer, Terry Ekl. A Blagojevich spokesman confirmed Harris quit.

Harris and Blagojevich were arrested at their homes Tuesday morning on federal corruption charges. Authorities alleged the two conspired in a scheme to shake down campaign donors and politicians for high-paying posts and millions of dollars in campaign contributions.

Harris, 46, came to the Blagojevich administration in September 2005 after working in various roles for Mayor Richard Daley. Harris was being paid \$157,032 annually.

—Ray Long and David Heinzmann

Copyright © 2009, Chicago Tribune

go on.
pass
the ball

Have an idea?
Share and watch it grow.

Share now

Cisco
webex

 CISCO

From Chicago Tribune Originally posted: February 15, 2009

State of corruption: A history of insatiable greed

From Sunday's print edition:

By Bob Sexter

Tribune reporter

OK, Illinois, let's be honest about our dishonesty.

We've put an impressive collection of cheats and boodlers into public office over the decades, and the public outcry has never led to more than a token crackdown by government.

So why should the curious case of Rod Blagojevich now make things different? One reason, perhaps, is that the December arrest of Illinois' now-ousted governor has reduced Illinois politics to a late-night TV punch line. ("Scumdog Million-Hairs" is Jon Stewart's nickname for the amply maned Blagojevich.)

There's an even more compelling reason, and it's one to contemplate as you write that enormous property tax check this month or when you file your state income tax return in April: Pernicious corruption costs you every day in bloated government and inefficient services.

No-bid contracts get inflated to cover the costs of the campaign cash needed to grease them. Public jobs too often go to the connected and lazy instead of the best, brightest and most eager.

We all pay.

That's hardly a revelation. But all of a sudden, in the wake of Blagojevich's downfall, the new buzzword in Springfield has become accountability. Even veteran pols who have yawned past earlier high-profile scandals are scrambling to one-up each other with reform gestures.

Pat Quinn, the self-styled crusader who succeeded Blagojevich as governor, formed a corruption commission. Legislative leaders countered with their own in-house panel of experts. Separately, Atty. Gen Lisa Madigan, a likely Quinn rival for governor in 2010, is positioning herself as the champion of open government.

But if it seems like you've heard it all before, it's because you have. As the Tribune begins a campaign against the Illinois culture of political sleaze, it's worth noting that the history of that culture is long and sullied, and that past efforts to reform it have been half-hearted. Think of all the blue-ribbon ethics panels, their reports typically gathering dust in a file drawer right next to all those expert studies on how to reform school funding.

Reform chatter often spikes when the feds swoop down on City Hall or the Statehouse—a stunningly frequent happening. Mostly, such talk is just that.

Tsunamis of cash still flood political coffers in one of the most wide open and loosely regulated campaign-finance systems in the country. Insiders still score the big

government contracts. Government records remain hidden from public view.

There's an old joke about the loosey-goosey ethical climate of Chicago and Illinois politics:

The devil promises boundless fortune and perpetual re-election to a prominent local officeholder.

"The only thing is that you must give your immortal soul for all time," the devil warns.

"What's the catch?" the politician asks.

Rod Blagojevich didn't invent crooked politics in Illinois, though if the charges of rampant shakedowns and hanging a "for sale" sign on a vacant U.S. Senate seat are true—and he insists they are not—he may have raised the art form.

Consider this recent box score toted by political scientists at the University of Illinois at Chicago: 1,000 public officials and businessmen convicted of public corruption in Illinois since 1970, including three governors, 19 Cook County judges and 30 Chicago City Council members.

Corruption has been embedded in Illinois' political DNA since pioneer days. European immigrants found jobs and housing easier to come by if they helped keep the powers-that-be in power.

"The social compact in this state was built on corruption," said Cindi Canary, director of the Illinois Campaign for Political Reform. "It worked very well for some people."

In the 1880s, the utilities and streetcar companies that helped transform the city into an industrial powerhouse gained exclusive franchises through huge payoffs to public officials. By Prohibition, Al Capone had much of City Hall and the police force in his pocket.

Truth be told, many of us sometimes get a perverse kick out of the bad-boy image of our state.

But the toll can go beyond mere dollars and cents. At its heart, the licenses for bribes scandal that sent former Gov. George Ryan to prison was a boilerplate case of arrogance and greed. Its symbol, though, became the haunting faces of six children who died in a fiery crash caused by an unqualified trucker who illegally bought his license.

Ryan's downfall spurred both the election of Blagojevich, who campaigned as a reformer, and another round of reform talk. All this was just another example of how reform gets turned on its head.

Inspector general posts at top state agencies were created to root out miscreants on the public payroll. But the law mandated that virtually all details of wrongdoing uncovered by internal watchdogs be kept secret.

Speaking of the legislature, state lawmakers long have also made sure they are not bound by the some of the same laws imposed on other public bodies in Illinois to force them do their work in the open.

Springfield isn't the only place where "reform" measures resemble Rube Goldberg-like contraptions that serve to shield those who designed them.

Mayor Richard Daley in 2005 issued an executive order barring donations to him from city contractors, their owners or the owner's spouses. It was chock full of loopholes. Earlier, Daley's patronage office devised an elaborate ruse to get around a court-order barring politics in hiring. Federal prosecutors finally caught on and five former aides to the mayor were convicted.

Chicago also has an inspector general, former prosecutor David Hoffman. But the City Council has voted to wall itself off from Hoffman's prying. "In some of our investigations, this has stopped us from moving in certain logical directions," said Hoffman.

One thing that sets Illinois apart from other states is the almost complete lack of limits on political fundraising. That has bred a high stakes money game where the line between legitimate fundraising and extortion is razor thin. Savvy politicians dance on the edge by adopting a wink-and-a-nod code with special-interest donors.

A decade ago, then-City Treasurer Miriam Santos skipped the nuance and went to prison for ordering a city contractor to "belly up" with a \$10,000 contribution—or else. The irony was that Santos tried the squeeze to meet a fundraising quota demanded of her by state Democratic Party Chairman Michael Madigan, who was not implicated.

As Illinois House Speaker, Madigan is spearheading the legislature's post-Blagojevich reform drive. He has been a Springfield powerhouse for nearly four decades and no one has ever accused him of being a change agent. That may be a secret to his longevity, explained Rutgers University political scientist Alan Rosenthal.

"Members are comfortable with the rules they've played by, and when you change those rules there's increased uncertainty and members don't like it," said Rosenthal, an expert on ethics in state legislatures.

If the status quo is finally broken, in a perverse sense we may have Rod Blagojevich to thank.

"Right this moment we have the perfect storm of scandal, public anger, a huge financial crisis and a citizenry not completely sure they still trust the foxes to guard the henhouse. Not to mention we are an international joke." Canary said.

"All of these things combine to give us an opening we've never had before."

Tribune reporters Todd Lighty and Ray Long contributed to this report.

bsector@tribune.com

STATE OF CORRUPTION



Set to testify: Rezko, Monk, Harris, Greenlee. (File)

Cleaning up after Rod Blagojevich

With ex-friends lined up to testify against the former governor, who needs enemies?

State of corruption: Father-son lawyers may join Rod Blagojevich team

Family Secrets judge to handle Blagojevich trial

Madigan moves against school tied to Blagojevich

Online search: Who gave money to whom?

Will campaign finance laws work?

Ill. could look to other states for ethics laws

New proposals aim to clean up state government

Gov., legislative leaders increase private meetings

Most corrupt state: La. ranked higher than Ill.

Illinois open records law often a closed door

The push is on for public records access in Illinois

Tribune poll: Ethics reform could end corruption

State of corruption: A history of insatiable greed

Clout Street

Your one-stop shop for complete coverage of city, county and state politics.



Vox Pop

Go behind the scenes of the Chicago Tribune Editorial Board.



OPINION & EDITORIALS

First, save the incumbents!

In 1991, political consultant Art Hanlon was a genius. His Republican clients in the Illinois legislature -- literally by the luck of the draw -- won the right to make maps that would set district boundaries for the next decade. Hanlon's legal but creative mapping paid off for Republicans: After the 1992 election, they held 32 of the 59 state Senate seats.

If not for those wiretaps ...

Yes, this is far too outlandish for real life, but work with us for a moment:

Big money

Please rise and face south-southwest toward the Downstate town of Carlyle. Raise your right hand--thumb properly tucked--and salute former Democratic state Rep. Kurt Granberg for his career as acting director of the Illinois Department of Natural Resources. Your solemnity honors Granberg's distinguished leadership of DNR between Jan. 16, when Gov. Rod Blagojevich appointed him to the post, and Feb. 4, when Gov. Pat Quinn fired him.

Campaign exposure

When advocates of clean government talk about how to clean up the pervasive corruption in Illinois, they start with the state's campaign finance laws--or the lack of them. Illinois has few rules on how political campaigns are funded, making it what critics call "the Wild West of campaign finance."

Complete Blagojevich case coverage



Former Illinois Governor Rod Blagojevich was arrested December 9, 2008 and indicted on April 2, 2009 on federal fraud charges, for among other things, trying to sell Barack Obama's Senate seat. Get the latest on his case here.

Impeachment trial of Rod Blagojevich Photos
Blagojevich media blitz Photos
Rod Blagojevich Photos

Al Sanchez hiring trial



Former Chicago Streets and Sanitation Commissioner Al Sanchez was convicted of mail fraud and of funneling jobs to his political workers in the once-powerful Hispanic Democratic Organization.

Prosecutors say Sanchez, the highest-ranking mayoral aide indicted in the federal corruption probe of City Hall hiring, routinely accepted personal favors, cash and gifts as he led the Latino patronage army.

Friends gather to help support convicted Daley aide
Chicago Sanchez trial: Closing arguments given in hiring fraud trial
Al Sanchez trial: Ex-Streets and Sanitation boss says he was too busy to rig hiring

The Tony Rezko case



In July, 2008 a federal jury

chicagotribune.com

Chicago a longtime host to Outfit puppet show

John Kass

April 24, 2009

Deputy U.S. Marshal John Ambrose sat in federal court on Thursday to hear lawyers portray him two ways:

An honorable screw-up hoping to impress an Outfit-friendly father figure, or a criminal conduit to reputed Chicago mob boss John "No Nose" DiFronzo.

Either way the jury decides, the relationship between the U.S. marshal's office and the FBI is at best icy these days, though they won't formally admit it. But you could see the two tribes in the gallery in U.S. District Judge John Grady's courtroom, sitting stiffly as if in church at a wedding, the in-laws glaring, already at war.

The marshals in their street clothes, shoulders hunched, not happy, sitting behind their man Ambrose. The FBI agents and prosecutors impassive, across the aisle, sitting behind their team.

The cause of the deep freeze? Ambrose himself.

Ambrose has been charged with leaking extremely sensitive information to the mob about the most important federal witness in Chicago's history -- turncoat Outfit hit man Nicholas Calabrese. And with lying about it to federal agents until he later confessed to the FBI about what he'd done.

But according to his lawyer Frank Lipuma, all Ambrose really confessed to was screwing up, bragging to a family friend that he was protecting a major Outfit witness.

Ambrose's friend was William Guide, a former crooked cop with Outfit connections, who spent time in prison, convicted with Ambrose's father, Thomas, in the Marquette 10 police drug dealer shakedown scandal.

What Ambrose said about Calabrese ended up in recorded prison conversations beginning in January 2003 between Mickey Marcello and his Outfit boss brother Jimmy.

What also came out during the trial is that Ambrose apparently thought that by leaking a little information, he could win favor from the Outfit and use their street network as a source of information to find fugitives.

At least, that was his story as told to senior FBI agents Anita Stamat and Ted McNamara when they finally caught him in 2006.

The International Olympic Committee might not know this, so don't tell them, but Chicago has a history of law enforcement conduits to the mob. The job has been held by many -- a patrol officer in the

evidence section, hit men in the Cook County Sheriff's office, even the chief of detectives of the Chicago Police Department.

Since the time of Paul Ricca, the Outfit has had puppets, in politics, on the bench, in business and law enforcement. That's how it survives, while politically unsophisticated street gangs suffer legal troubles. And what was so unique about Ambrose is that he was a federal law enforcement officer guarding a federal witness.

"He screwed up ... shot his mouth off," said Lipuma, a former federal prosecutor himself, in a riveting closing argument, full of passion, trying to poke holes in the case. "John Ambrose admitted he broke policy. He broke procedure. It may have been a violation of policy. ... But he's an honest man."

Prosecutor Markus Funk was once the new guy on the federal organized crime team. But now he's the veteran, with the most significant convictions in Chicago history under his belt: Jimmy Marcello, Joey "The Clown" Lombardo and others from the Family Secrets trial.

"This is straightforward theft," Funk told the jury. "The defense is throwing up these vast smoke screens to confuse you. He confessed. Not once, not twice, but three times. He shot his mouth off? There was no criminal intent? He admitted it. That's not a legal defense. That's a crime."

The defense also brought my column up again, the one of Feb. 21, 2003, that broke the story that Nick Calabrese had disappeared from prison and speculated (correctly) that he was in the witness protection program.

Lipuma said the column was the "linchpin" of the defense because after it ran, Calabrese's cooperation was common knowledge. But a month before the column was published, Jimmy and Mickey Marcello were already talking about Calabrese's federal "baby-sitter" funneling information to them.

If Ambrose were, say, a plumber, you might excuse him for screwing up and talking about a federal witness to an Outfit messenger boy.

A plumber might be excused, because a plumber wouldn't be expected to know about witness protection. But Ambrose is no plumber, is he?

He's a deputy U.S. marshal.

For now.

jskass@tribune.com

Copyright © 2009, Chicago Tribune

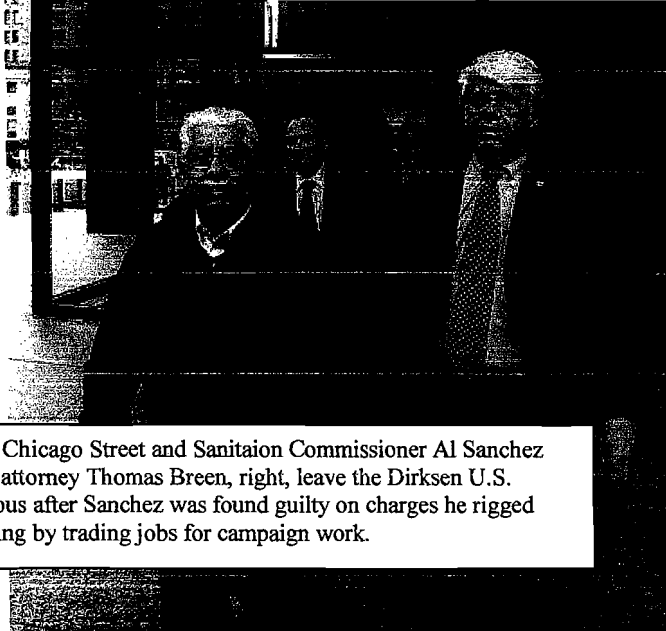
space, displacement of indigenous peoples, and increasing profits for the rich. Saying NO! to the Olympics means saying no to nationalism and militarism, to political repression, to racism, to corporate greed, and to the suppression of indigenous rights.

www.chicagotribune.com/news/local/chi-sanchez-trial-24-mar24,0,5648897.story

Al Sanchez convicted: Ex-Daley aide guilty in Chicago hiring fraud trial

Juror believes the verdict 'says everybody's aware of what's going on and let's clean it up'

By Jeff Coen and Dan Mihalopoulos - Tribune reporters - March 24, 2009



Former Chicago Street and Sanitation Commissioner Al Sanchez and his attorney Thomas Breen, right, leave the Dirksen U.S. Courthouse after Sanchez was found guilty on charges he rigged city hiring by trading jobs for campaign work.

The kind of machine politics that hands coveted city jobs to loyal campaign workers seems to be as old as Chicago itself, but to a juror who helped decide the outcome of the latest hiring-fraud trial to cast a shadow on City Hall, that doesn't make it right.

"The buck's got to stop somewhere," said Arlene Kaminski, a member of the jury that convicted former Streets and Sanitation Commissioner Al Sanchez on Monday. "And I think [the jurors] saying what we did, it says everybody's aware of what's going on and let's clean it up."

The jury determined Sanchez was guilty of four of the seven counts of mail fraud he faced at his federal trial. His alleged right-hand man, Aaron Delvalle, also was found guilty of lying to a grand jury about the corrupt hiring system.

But the case extended well beyond a set of simple accusations against Sanchez, the only former member of Mayor Richard Daley's cabinet convicted in the federal hiring investigation. In presenting their case, federal prosecutors delved deeply into how city hiring was corrupted to maintain and enhance the mayor's control over local politics, particularly in Chicago's growing Latino communities.

And the defense, too, made the case about more than just the charges against Sanchez. Certain unnamed city fathers should share blame for Sanchez's supposed sins—"whoever created and oiled this fine hiring machine that we've been convicted of participating in," Sanchez attorney Thomas Breen said.

The 2006 trial and conviction of Daley patronage chief Robert Sorich revealed that the generations-old Chicago tradition of patronage hiring had continued to thrive in secret since the beginning of the mayor's reign.

The Sanchez trial also explored an important cog in the new Daley machine, the Hispanic Democratic Organization. Prosecutors said Sanchez essentially used city jobs "as currency" to build HDO, a pro-Daley patronage army that campaigned for Daley and his endorsed candidates for everything from alderman to governor.

Although none of the evidence against Sanchez directly implicated Daley, the trial exposed the involvement of the mayor's top advisers in building the campaign organization.

After the verdicts were announced, Daley repeated his long-held assertion that he had done nothing wrong. "I never have or ever will support any activity that is illegal," the mayor said in a statement.

Evidence in the trial linked Daley's political strategists—including his brother William Daley—to the creation and rise of HDO. And witnesses said it all began before Daley even became mayor, as he waged his first successful campaign for the office some 20 years ago.

According to one prosecution witness, top Daley strategist Timothy Degnan met with Sanchez and promised city jobs in exchange for the support of Latino activists from Sanchez's Southeast Side power base in the 1989 mayoral election. Another former HDO leader told jurors that Degnan and William Daley met with him to seek the support of North Side Hispanics who eventually formed one arm of HDO.

chicagotribune.com

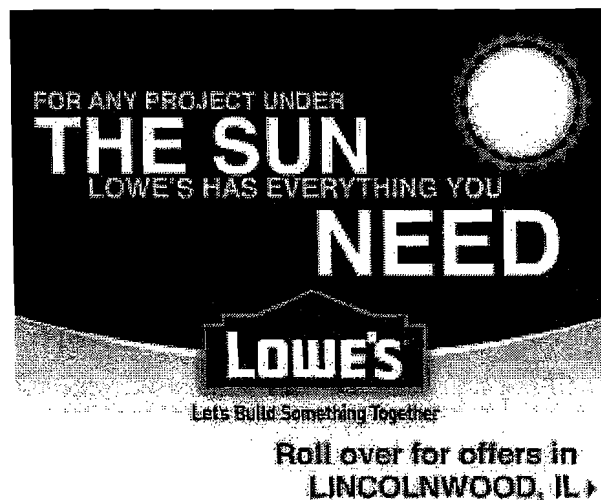
NEIGHBORHOODS FOR SALE: FOLLOWUP

Feds: City building inspectors bribed

By Jeff Coen and Dan Mihalopoulos

Tribune reporters

May 22, 2008



A mole wore a wire for a year while acting as a bagman carrying bribes from developers and contractors to Chicago building inspectors, exposing systemic corruption in the Zoning and Buildings Departments, authorities said Thursday.

Even for a town that has turned payoffs into an art form, the operative uncovered brazen misconduct, investigators alleged.

City inspectors ignored problems, fabricated reports and sped up paperwork in exchange for envelopes of cash, work on their homes and tickets to skyboxes for Bulls games, the federal charges alleged. One inspector took \$10,000 to approve two illegal basement units in a building, while another allegedly took \$7,000 to "inspect" plumbing that was already covered by concrete, investigators said.

Local and federal authorities said the charges marked a new phase in an investigation dubbed Operation Crooked Code. Last year, workers in the Buildings Department were charged. The new allegations involve the Zoning Department, which is tied closely to powerful Ald. William J.P. Banks (36th). Banks has been chairman of the City Council's Zoning Committee since Mayor Richard Daley took office in 1989.

City Inspector General David Hoffman, whose office worked with the U.S. Postal Inspection Service and the FBI on the case, said taxpayers should be dismayed that city workers were acting as if they were employed to ensure that corrupt developers benefited in a backward system.

"What they actually did with their jobs was to make absolutely sure that the laws were violated," Hoffman said at a news conference called to announce the charges against seven city inspectors and eight developers, contractors and others. "Everything was the exact opposite of the way it should be."

In the first phase of the investigation, which started last year, five individuals, including four city Buildings Department employees, were convicted; charges are pending against a sixth defendant, a former city inspector. In a related state probe, two additional former city workers were convicted on bribery-related charges and a third awaits trial.

U.S. Atty. Patrick Fitzgerald, who is usually mum about the future course of investigations, flatly declared: "There's every reason to think that there will be more charges to come in the future."

"It's clear that people casually pay and take bribes in the permitting process," Fitzgerald said. "And the second thing that's clear is that last year's arrests did not make enough of an impact."

It was the first investigation involving Hoffman's office in which federal wiretaps were used, officials said.

The city employees charged were William Wellhausen, a zoning investigator; Mario Olivella, a plumbing inspector; MacArthur Milam, a supervisory ventilation and furnace inspector; Phyllis Mendenhall, an inquiry aide in the Buildings Department; Anthony Valentino, a zoning investigator; Thomas Ziroli, a ventilation and furnace inspector; and Louis Burns, a Buildings Department clerk.

A collection of builders was charged along with architect Ronald Piekarz and real estate developer Beny Garneata, whose phones were tapped during the probe. Garneata was the first arrested, on Wednesday, and was considered central to the case in part because of his broad connections to politicians such as Banks.

Garneata has donated \$4,000 to Banks' Democratic ward organization. The alderman's nephew, zoning lawyer James Banks, is the registered City Hall lobbyist for Garneata, city records show.

Wellhausen, one of two zoning inspectors charged Thursday, has deep roots in Banks' Democratic organization in his Northwest Side ward.

The 36th Ward Democrats sponsored Wellhausen's efforts to get a city job as early as 1990, according to the "clout list" released in the 2006 trial of the mayor's patronage chief, who was convicted and is in prison. The list featured political campaign workers seeking to obtain city jobs in exchange for their loyalty to the mayor's political organization.

Wellhausen's daughter works as an aide to Banks in the Zoning Committee's office at City Hall.

Valentino, the other zoning inspector facing charges, also has been a political worker for the 36th Ward organization, according to sources. He donated \$400 to Banks' political group in 2005, state records show. Banks did not return calls seeking comment; an aide said he was out of town.

Investigators said their secret operative, who is expected to be charged eventually, began working in May 2007, acting as a "bagman" and recording conversations. Agents watched as Valentino met the operative at a doughnut shop and then listened to a later call between them.

Valentino allegedly was upset about having to jump through more hoops to get bribes to the right places.

"It's getting more and more difficult I know for everybody to do what they need to do," Valentino was quoted in the charges as saying.

Authorities said the inspectors would often tell developers that their work would pass even though they had never seen the properties in question.

Corners were cut at developments around the city and at a South Loop hotel. Inspections of everything from plumbing to fire systems were undermined, said David Colen, assistant inspector-in-charge of the U.S. Postal Inspection Service in Chicago.

"The administration of building and zoning permits only works when those involved in the process don't weigh their personal financial benefit against the best interests of the city," Colen said.

The mayor called the alleged behavior "appalling and regrettable" and said he wished he could do something to end such corruption "for once and for all." But he declined to accept the notion that the problems are widespread.

As Daley often does after corruption charges are leveled, he insisted that the accused are not representative of most employees in his administration.

"You cannot condemn everybody for a few," Daley said. "I don't know if it's systemic, but you can't indict everybody on that."

In the new anti-corruption sweep, the mayor noted, developers and other private-sector employees were accused along with public officials. "It takes two to tango," he said.

But the city workers certainly were willing to dance, according to the charges.

Mendenhall in the Buildings Department is alleged to have helped Piekarz and Garneata obtain a certificate of occupancy for a project in exchange for a few hundred dollars, and agents listened in on a tapped line as the men discussed her work on their behalf.

"She handled us with kid gloves," Piekarz allegedly told Garneata. "She said to tell Beny G. to settle down. God has the power."

Tribune reporters Hal Dardick and Robert Becker contributed to this report.

jcoen@tribune.com

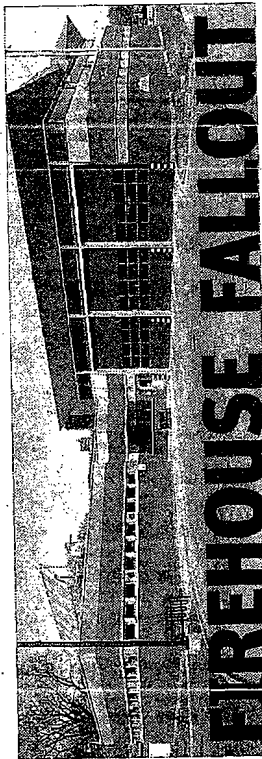
dmihalopoulos@tribune.com

Copyright © 2009, [Chicago Tribune](#)

«« The charges came one day after this story appeared in the Sun-Times.

THE WATCHDOGS

6 | FEBRUARY 14, 2008



FIREHOUSE FALLOUT

Many practices raise questions on city monitoring of minority subcontractors. This report first ran on 6/20/07. Clark is the focus of a lawsuit filed by Castle Construction Corp. | A. Greenwald/Sun-Times

Major city contractor charged

CASTLE CONSTRUCTION | Accused of failing to give minority subcontractors their fair share of business

BY TIM NOVAK
Staff Reporter
tnovak@suntimes.com

A major contractor for the city of Chicago was indicted Tuesday on fraud charges, accused of failing to give minority subcontractors their share of business on the construction of a fire station and of CTA train- and bus-washing facilities.

Castle Construction Corp. and its owner, Robert C. Blum, were charged with 10 counts of fraudulently obtaining public money reserved for disadvantaged businesses and one count each of mail fraud and wire fraud.

Blum 56, of New Lenox, is a close friend of Christopher Kelly, who was a top adviser and campaign fund-raiser to former Gov. Rod Blagojevich.

The 24-page Cook County grand jury indictment of Blum came a day after the Chicago Sun-Times reported that his company had been awarded a \$10 million contract by Mayor Daley's Public Building Commission to build a Rogers Park fire station, promising to subcontract the masonry work to a minority-owned company but then firing the subcontractor and instead giving

the work to a white-owned business.

"Castle Construction never would have received these public contracts without employing deceptive practices, and, because of that, the company prevented other legitimate businesses from securing contracts intended to help provide business growth opportunities for minority-owned businesses," said Illinois Attorney General Lisa Madigan.

Madigan's Office of Public Integrity began investigating Blum and his company in the fall of 2007, after the CTA's inspector general found that Castle had shortchanged a minority subcontractor on a \$9.8 million project to upgrade three CTA washing facilities for trains and buses. Castle told the CTA that it had given a \$2.96 million subcontract to Mid-City HVAC, a minority-owned company, but the contract was only for \$550,000, according to the indictment.

That same year, Castle got the \$10 million contract from Public Building Commission to build a fire station at 6030 N. Clark. Castle said it would subcontract 25 percent of the work to minority-owned companies, including \$1.5 million to George Anthony

Garth Masonry, a minority-owned business. Instead, Blum hired a white-owned masonry company, LSC Construction, which it then fired after most of the work was done.

Castle submitted records to the commission indicating Garth's company did the masonry work.

Blum and his attorney, John Eannace, couldn't be reached Tuesday for comment.

The city has a long history of problems with contractors skirting regulations that general contractors hire subcontractors owned by minorities and women. Such schemes were rampant in the city's scandal-plagued Hired Truck Program, where white men operated companies in the names of female family members or minority associates to get a piece of the \$40 million-a-year program.

Over the past decade, the city has given Castle more than \$140 million in contracts to build police stations, schools and other public buildings. Three weeks ago, the city Aviation Department awarded Castle a \$4.5 million contract to make repairs to a parking garage at O'Hare Airport.

A City of Chicago...
A major contractor...
...indicted Tuesday...



CTA equipment...
...indicted Tuesday...

City Hall...
...indicted Tuesday...

City worker with clout a drug dealer, feds say

Water Dept. engineer, 2 others on payroll among 9 charged

BY FRANK MAIN, MARK J. KONKOL,
FRAN SPIELMAN AND CAROL MARIN
Staff Reporters

A politically connected Water Management Department employee and two other city workers were arrested Wednesday on charges of conspiring to sell heroin, prompting Rep. Jesse Jackson Jr. (D-Ill.) to call on Mayor Daley to "drain all the sewage out of the Water Department and his entire administration."

George A. Prado — a \$62,000-a-year hoisting engineer for the Water Management Department and a deputy registrar for the Hispanic Democratic Organization — was also a heroin distributor with ties to Colombian traffickers, federal prosecutors said.

The five-month drug investigation was separate from the federal Hired Truck corruption probe that has led to 27 criminal charges and 11 guilty pleas, said U.S. Attorney Patrick Fitzgerald. But that did not stop Jackson, a potential challenger to Daley in 2007, from ripping the administration.

"The fraud and corruption happening right under the mayor's nose is apparently winding up in the veins of too many Chicagoans," Jackson said.

Asked if the arrests of three city employees on drug charges embarrassed him, Daley said bluntly, "No, I didn't sell it." The mayor rejected the notion that the arrests demonstrate a continuing culture of corruption at City Hall.

"It's an epidemic," he said of heroin dealing. "You have federal and state and local employees selling it. You have private employees selling it."

HDO not involved, lawyer says

Prado is charged with eight other people, including his 45-year-old brother-in-law Anthony C. Ritacco, a cement mixer in the city Department of Transportation, and Michael D. Hart, 39, a Water Management employee. On Wednesday, the city fired Ritacco and moved to fire Prado and Hart.



U.S. Attorney Patrick Fitzgerald announces the drug arrests. Behind him are FBI agent Mitchell Marrone (left) and IRS agent Byram Tichenor. —JIM FROST/SUN-TIMES

Sources said Ritacco is the brother of Frank Ritacco, one of nine Water Management employees fired last week after a city investigation found they were being punched into a time-card reader at the Jardine Filtration Plant even though they were not on duty. The scandal led to the ouster of Water Management Commissioner Richard Rice.

Prado, Ritacco and Hart appear to have been conducting their alleged drug activity during normal business hours, Fitzgerald said. But federal investigators "have not checked their punch-in, punch-out" status to confirm they were on city time, he said.

Prado, 47, was hired by the city in 1990. In 2001, he contributed \$850 to the campaign of state Sen. Antonio "Tony" Munoz, a leader of the Daley-created Hispanic Democratic Organization, records show.

"HDO does not have anything to do with this case," said Prado's lawyer, Joseph Lopez. "He's been involved in politics for many years. This case does not deal with [political] corruption. This case deals with something else other than their city jobs."

Indeed, federal prosecutors painted Prado as a ruthless drug dealer who threatened to kill a courier who lost a one-kilogram heroin shipment.

The dope was seized May 24 from a truck driven by the alleged courier, Vito Renteria. State Police had stopped him for driving 45 mph in a 30 mph zone. His license was suspended because of a DUI, officials said.

Prado was furious that his shipment was seized, and he did not believe Renteria's explanation that he was stopped for speeding, prosecutors said. Prado was secretly tape-recorded telling Renteria "he is f----- with the wrong people" and needed to come up with \$60,000 to cover the loss, according to an FBI affidavit.

Co-worker a key witness

In a separately recorded conversation with a New York-based heroin supplier, Prado allegedly said that if he decided Renteria was lying, "they will get the knives out, and they will f--- him up."

Fearing for Renteria's safety, authorities quietly arrested him soon after that conversation.

Lopez scoffed at the notion that Prado threatened to kill Renteria, noting that they were "friendly to each other in the courtroom" Wednesday.

An unidentified co-worker of Prado's became a key witness for investigators. He allegedly accepted one heroin delivery outside

their city work place March 10 after Prado contacted him. Prosecutors did not disclose the address.

Search warrants executed Wednesday at five Chicago addresses yielded about a quarter kilogram of heroin, 16 kilograms of cocaine, a gun and \$50,000 in cash, officials said.

Last year, Prado was arrested on a misdemeanor charge of failing to have a state firearm owner's identification card after Chicago Police executed a search warrant at his home and said they recovered four guns, including a military-style Norinco SKS 7.62-millimeter semiautomatic weapon. The case was dismissed in March.

The government witness who worked with Prado told investigators he and Prado had discussed the 2004 search, according to the FBI.

Prado told the witness that at the time of the search, he had enough drugs in his home "to put him away for life," but the police did not find the stash, the FBI said.

'Thought he won the lottery'

The allegation does not make sense, said Lopez, who also represents Anthony Ritacco and alleged heroin distributor Javier Hernandez. A special police unit used drug-sniffing dogs during the search, Lopez said.

"The police officers were diligent and professional," he said. "If there were drugs in that house, they would have found them."

Prado, a fixture in the neighborhood along Taylor Street, had operated a bar there and a restaurant in southwest suburban Summit, Lopez said.

"He's always been a businessman," he said.

In one of his real estate forays, Prado unsuccessfully tried to buy the Taylor Street home of Judith Pedraza for \$1.2 million in 2004, the 75-year-old widow said. Prado's parents were tenants in a building that Pedraza's parents had owned at Bishop and Taylor, she said.

Last year, he drove up in a black Mercedes and tried to buy her building, which houses Chiarugi's Hardware, she said.

"My husband just died, and I was vulnerable," she said. "He told me he would call that night. But I did not answer his calls."

Even though he moved to a different neighborhood on the South Side, he was frequently seen along Taylor Street. Prado did not seem to hold any ill feelings toward Pedraza for not selling her home, she said.

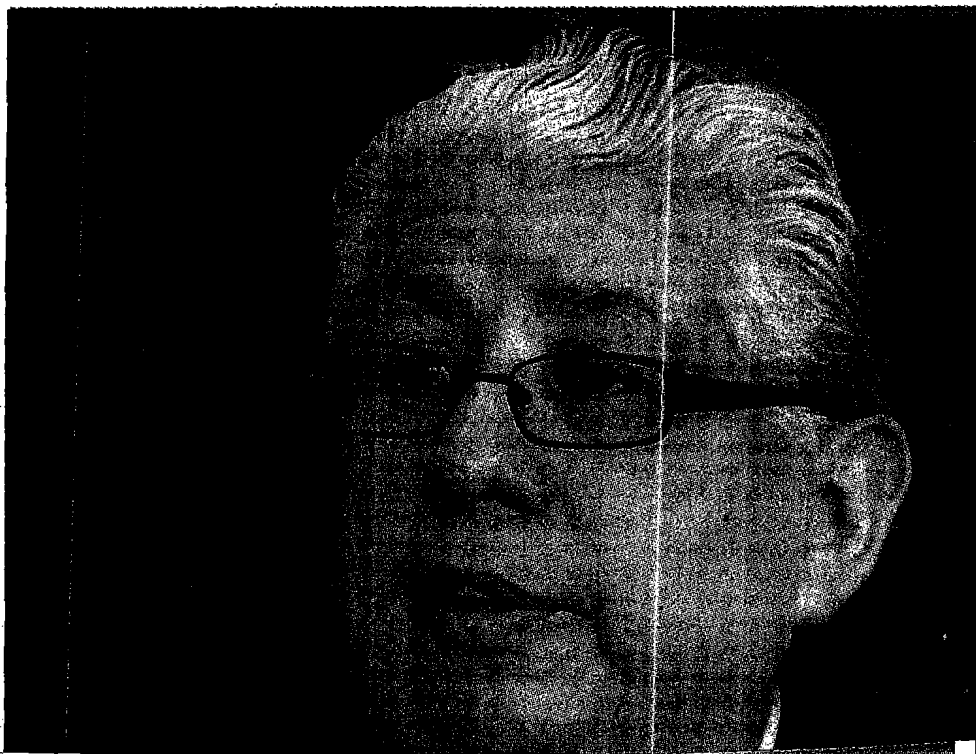
"I see him at the White Hen buying coffee in the morning," she said. "He says, 'Hi, Judy,' and I say, 'Hi, George.' He's real nice."

Still, Prado's alleged wheeling and dealing was somewhat of a mystery in the neighborhood.

"We knew he had a lot of money, but everybody thought he won the lottery," Pedraza said.

Ex-Daley aide indicted

Sanchez rigged hiring for political workers, U.S. says



Al Sanchez, former Streets and Sanitation commissioner, cheated the system to benefit members of a pro-Daley political group who sought jobs, federal prosecutors say.

Tribune file photo

By Jeff Coen, Todd Lighty and Dan Mihalopoulos
Tribune staff reporters

A former top aide to Mayor Richard Daley was charged Thursday with rigging city hiring for members of a pro-Daley political group, becoming the highest-ranking mayoral ally indicted in the federal investigation of City Hall.

Former Streets and Sanitation Commissioner Al Sanchez, was accused of playing a prominent role in a scheme to reward loyal campaign workers for the Hispanic Democratic Organization from 1994 until 2005, when he quit Daley's Cabinet.

Prosecutors say Sanchez cheated the system to benefit members of HDO who sought jobs, promotions, overtime, pay raises and transfers.

"It's not fair to the taxpayers and it's not fair to the people who apply for jobs," U.S. Atty. Patrick Fitzgerald said.

Sanchez was charged with nine counts of mail fraud. Also indicted on one perjury count Thursday was HDO coordinator Aaron Del Valle, a former Streets and Sanitation employ-



Tribune photo by José Moré

MORE INSIDE

- Fitzgerald gets a ribbing over 'mediocre' rating. **PAGE 21**
- Profiles of Al Sanchez and Victor Reyes. **PAGE 21**
- **John Kass:** Sanchez once made sure nothing got spilled. **PAGE 2**

ee and Chicago police officer who allegedly aided Sanchez. Del Valle was accused of lying to a federal grand jury investigating the hiring fraud this year.

Daley was on a business trip to Europe when the indictment was announced, one day after a proposed settlement of the fed-

PLEASE SEE **HIRING**, PAGE 21

HIRING: Ex-aide got home repairs, gifts, U.S. says

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

eral civil case restricting political hiring by City Hall.

The mayor issued a statement that mirrored comments he made when his former patronage chief Robert Sorich and three other aides were indicted on similar charges in 2005. All four were convicted last year in a hiring scheme that prosecutors said was centered in the mayor's office.

"Naturally, I'm disappointed to hear about this indictment," Daley said of Sanchez. "It will be up to the courts to determine whether he violated the public trust. I have known Al Sanchez for several years and know him only to be hardworking and dedicated."

Like Sorich, Sanchez is accused of depriving people of the right to expect "honest services" from government. Sorich and his co-defendants have appealed, claiming they did not personally benefit from the scheme.

Lawn care, snow removal

In the first such example in the hiring investigation, prosecutors alleged that some members of HDO who got preferential treatment in their city jobs provided Sanchez with home repair work, snow removal, lawn care and gifts.

Charges against Sanchez were widely expected since the Sorich trial, when prosecutors described Sanchez and HDO chairman Victor Reyes as "co-schemers" in the fraud. Reyes has not been charged and has denied wrongdoing.

The indictment was the latest blow to what once was the most powerful street army in Daley's campaign organization.

Sanchez, 59, led the group's Southeast Side operation, which had as many as 500 campaign workers, authorities said. Those workers were sent out to help candidates for mayor, City Council, Illinois House and Senate, statewide posts and federal offices.

Sanchez was listed as the sponsor of 112 people who

Who's who in the hiring investigation

Al Sanchez

Former Streets and Sanitation Department commissioner and a leader of the Hispanic Democratic Organization, a pro-Daley patronage army. Sanchez retired from the city in June 2005. He was deputy commissioner of the department from 1995 to 1999 and before that worked in the city's Health Department and the Mayor's Office of Inquiry and Information.



Sanchez

Victor Reyes

Former director of the mayor's Office of Inter-governmental Affairs and chairman of the Hispanic Democratic Organization. According to court documents, Reyes is also "Individual A," a co-schemer suspected of arranging promotions for politically connected city employees. Reyes has not been charged and denies wrongdoing.



Reyes

Aaron Del Valle

Hispanic Democratic Organization commander on the Southeast Side under Sanchez and a city police officer. Del Valle joined the city in 1997 as an administrative assistant in the Mayor's Office of Inquiry and Information. He became a police officer in 2000 but took leaves of absence to work as a top deputy in Streets and Sanitation.

sought city jobs and promotions for their political work, according to a "clout list" maintained in the mayor's office and entered as evidence against Sorich.

Sanchez and other HDO leaders lobbied mayoral aides to reward workers with coveted, blue-collar jobs such as truck driver, streetlight-maintenance worker and laborer, according to the indictment. The scheme allegedly involved falsifying hiring records and conducting sham job interviews.

Neither Sanchez nor Del Valle was in custody Thursday, with prosecutors saying they would arrange to have them appear in court to face the charges.

Sanchez's lawyer did not return calls seeking comment, and Del Valle could not be reached.

Key ally of Vrdolyak

The son of a steelworker, Sanchez was raised in the "Slag Valley" section of the South Deering neighborhood, near the Calumet River. He served in the Army during the Vietnam War.

He began working for the city in 1974 and became a key member of the 10th Ward Democratic political organization of then-Ald. Edward Vrdolyak. "He was a good precinct captain," Vrdolyak said Thursday.

When Vrdolyak faded from the City Hall scene, Sanchez began working for Daley and rose to greater prominence as HDO's influence grew.

After the mayor appointed him Streets and Sanitation commissioner in 1999, Sanchez said: "We have helped the mayor in all his elections, and it is because he has done a good job. We feel Hispanics have to get more involved in the political process."

Prosecutors declined to estimate how many HDO members Sanchez allegedly helped. A 2002 Tribune investigation found at least 500 HDO members on the city payroll, many in Streets and Sanitation.

Sanchez retired from the city weeks after federal investigators raided the mayor's office in 2005. He receives a monthly city pension of \$8,120.

Three weeks before leaving City Hall, Sanchez sent a memo to employees as "a reminder that political/campaign activities . . . cannot be mingled with city work or resources."

He remained involved in city politics, even in last month's City Council election. Sanchez worked for the successful reelection bids of Ald. George Cardenas (12th) and state Sen. Martin Sandoval (D-Chicago), state records show.

On Thursday, Cardenas praised Sanchez as a great "alley commissioner" who made sure the garbage was picked up and the snow plowed.

"A lot of people out there judge him for his work," Cardenas said. "I'm sure things will work out for him in this case."

Del Valle, 34, also did paid campaign work for Cardenas and Sandoval in recent years and ran for 25th Ward alderman in last month's election, winning just 5 percent of the vote.

The winner of that race, Ald. Daniel Solis, said he believes Del Valle ran only to pull votes from him and force a runoff election.

"Al and Aaron were good friends. They hung out together after work," said Solis, a former HDO member who has quarreled with Sanchez and Reyes.

Del Valle became an administrative assistant in the mayor's Office of Inquiry and Information, the same office where Sanchez once was first deputy.

Soon after Sanchez became Streets and Sanitation commissioner, he brought Del Valle into that department. Del Valle became a Chicago police officer the following year but took leaves of absence from the police force to work as a top deputy to Sanchez.

Stripped of police powers

Police spokeswoman Monique Bond said Del Valle was scheduled to return from another leave of absence Thursday but was stripped of his police powers after the indictment.

Del Valle is accused of lying about his role in the hiring scheme. Another HDO Southeast operative, Water Management worker John Resa, also was charged late last year with lying to a grand jury when he testified that he had not sought city jobs for HDO workers.

Federal agents have scoured the working-class neighborhoods of the Southeast Side in recent months to interview patronage workers.

Sanchez often presided over HDO meetings at the Crow Bar, a tavern in the East Side neighborhood. Bar owner Pat Carroll said he was upset that Sanchez, a longtime friend, was indicted.

"Everyone who gets a city job knows someone," Carroll said. "That's how it's always been. That's not criminal. It's political."

jcoen@tribune.com
tlighty@tribune.com
dmihaopoulos@tribune.com

AT CITY HALL

Workers without clout want their piece of pie

By Mickey Ciokajlo
Tribune staff reporter

City worker Mike Sullivan said whenever he tried to get a promotion or a prized overtime shift in the Department of Streets and Sanitation, someone with political clout would ace him out.

The city has already agreed to pay him \$25,000 in damages, but Sullivan said that won't cover what the cheating cost him.

He intends to be one of the first workers to seek money from a \$12 million city fund that's part of the proposed settlement to a decades-long civil lawsuit accusing the city of discriminating based on political pedigree.

"I figured in overtime I was cheated out of \$50,000 or \$60,000," Sullivan said. "The promotion was probably another \$10,000 over the years."

On Thursday, as prosecutors accused former Streets and Sanitation Commissioner Al Sanchez of hiring fraud, court officials were beginning to tally the cost of patronage.

Noelle Brennan, the court-appointed monitor over city hiring, will be in charge of reviewing claims back to January 2000 and determining payouts under the settlement.

"I anticipate that we are going to get a significant amount of claims, and I imagine that the funds will be distributed com-

PLEASE SEE SHAKMAN, PAGE 20

\$12 million isn't enough

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

pletely," Brennan said of the \$12 million.

Sullivan lives in the clout-heavy Bridgeport neighborhood, but he said he has been punished because he is one of the rare vocal critics of the Daley family's 11th Ward Democratic Organization.

He said the \$12 million won't be enough to compensate everyone who was left behind because they wouldn't do campaign work for Mayor Richard Daley or his political allies.

"I'm guessing there's at least 1,000 people at Streets and San who could ask for \$50,000," Sullivan said. "That's \$50 million."

The fund is one part of the settlement announced Wednesday in federal court that would end the decades-old federal consent decrees banning politics from most city personnel decisions. The decrees are named for attorney Michael Shakman, who first sued the city to end patronage in 1969.



Tribune photo by Charles Cherney

Department of Streets and Sanitation, says the \$25,000 the city has to compensate for all his losses due to political favors.

Shakman expects the largest group of claims will come from those who were not hired because someone with political connections was picked instead. After that would come temporary workers who couldn't win permanent status, followed by employees who lost sought-after overtime and job assignments to favored workers.

The civil decrees would be replaced by an executive order from the mayor against political hiring. Brennan will continue to help regulate city hiring until

'These corruption scandals have shown that the Shakman decrees are still needed.'

—Ald. Leslie Hairston (5th)

the end of 2008. Beginning in June, the city's inspector general—a mayoral appointee—would investigate complaints of politically based hiring, firing and promotions.

The settlement requires City Council approval.

Many council members have griped openly about the rising cost to taxpayers of Brennan and her lawyers, who have been paid \$1.65 million. Some espouse the view that patronage is a time-honored practice that helps the city run smoothly.

But other aldermen Thursday noted the irony of indicting Sanchez and a former assistant the day after the Shakman settlement was announced.

Ald. Leslie Hairston (5th) isn't sure the Daley administration will be ready to police itself when court oversight ends.

"These corruption scandals have shown that the Shakman decrees are still needed to ensure a level playing field in city hiring," Hairston said.

Ald. Joe Moore (49th) expects the council to approve the settlement, although he expects there "may be a few speeches extolling the good old days of patronage."

U.S. Atty Patrick Fitzgerald said prosecutors were hopeful that whatever system the city puts in place to replace the Shakman decree will discourage fraud. But he said prosecutors would continue to step in if the safeguards don't work.

"What the taxpayers should care about is everyone who works in the city should have an equal right to a job," Fitzgerald said. "Everyone should have an equal right to a promotion, everyone should have an equal right to overtime, and there ought to be a level playing field."

"And it shouldn't depend on what your politics are," Fitzgerald added.

Tribune staff reporter Jeff Coen contributed to this report.
mciokajlo@tribune.com

Millennium Park kickbacks charged

U.S. says ex-official got cash, massage, vacations

**By Matt O'Connor
and Liam Ford**

Tribune staff reporters

A former Chicago Park District official accepted cash, vacations to ski resorts, a pricey bicycle and even a manicure for steering millions of dollars in work at Millennium Park to a suburban landscaping company, federal authorities charged Thursday.

Shirley McMayon, the Park District's former director of natural resources, pocketed more than \$137,000 in financial benefits from two executives of James Michael Inc., the Mundelein-based landscaper, an indictment charged.

In return for the payoffs, McMayon, 47, now of Park City, Utah, improperly used her influence to steer about \$8 million in Park District work to the firm

between 2000 and 2004, authorities charged.

Michael Lowecki, the company owner, and Kevin Haas, its former chief operations officer, were also charged in the indictment.

"They used the Park District coffers as sort of their personal playground," U.S. Atty. Patrick Fitzgerald said at a news conference announcing the charges.

Fitzgerald said that "one of

the kickers in this case" was that the contractors didn't pay for most of the bribes themselves, instead padding their invoices to pass the cost of about \$60,000 in payoffs to taxpayers. Among the phony invoices was a bill for about \$10,000 for a non-existent global positioning system, he said.

"This is the \$10,000 GPS that

PLEASE SEE **KICKBACKS**, BACK PAGE

part of payoff

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

can't be found," Fitzgerald quipped.

The indictment marked yet another public corruption probe launched by federal investigators. The U.S. investigation of City Hall for political influence in hiring and contracts has been heating up, and former Gov. George Ryan is set to go on trial soon on bribery-related charges.

It is the first federal investigation to reach into the Park District since a former contract-compliance officer was convicted in Operation Silver Shovel in 2000 of falsely certifying a government mole's business as a woman-owned enterprise.

At the news conference, Robert Grant, the special agent in charge of the FBI in Chicago, said the case against McMayon "has led to other investigative leads that are aggressively under investigation."

In a telephone interview, Tim Mitchell, the Park District's general superintendent and chief executive officer, said his office learned of the investigation when it was subpoenaed for records by federal prosecutors in January.

McMayon, known as "Shirl," had resigned her \$92,700-a-year post in November, citing personal reasons, Mitchell said.

Jacquelyn Heard, a spokeswoman for Mayor Richard Daley, said that McMayon expressed interest in a job at City Hall "but never saw the mayor on it" and wasn't offered a position.

McMayon pocketed cash and checks totaling about \$123,800 and took vacations worth about \$7,300 with her family to Wisconsin Dells, Wis., Galena, Ill., and ski resorts in Michigan and Utah—all paid for by Lowecki and Haas, the government alleged. She also was given tickets to a Green Bay Packers football game during a paid vacation to a resort in Elkhart Lake, Wis., authorities said.

Vacations at the Dells

McMayon vacationed for free at one resort at the Dells in May 2000, complained about the accommodations to Lowecki and Haas, and was placed in a more expensive lodge for another Dells vacation two months later, according to the charges and sources.

The landscapers also spent more than \$22,000 to pay off McMayon's loan on her 1999 Dodge Durango and paid \$250



Tribune file photo by Nancy Stone

A James Michael Inc. employee works with decorations in Millennium Park in March. A former Chicago Park District official has been charged with taking kickbacks to steer business to the firm.



Tribune photo by Scott Strazzante

U.S. Atty. Patrick Fitzgerald announced the indictment Thursday.

for her massage, manicure and haircut at a Mario Tricoci salon, about \$1,500 for a LeMond Buenos Aires bicycle and more than \$4,000 for two computers.

The charges disappointed Roger Post, general manager of Christy Webber Landscapes, which has done limited work for the Park District in recent years.

"We play by the rules, and obviously others were not," Post said. "If people were winning contracts for reasons other than the best bid, it makes you angry."

Outside James Michael's offices Thursday, a handful of former employees picketed, complaining they had been retaliated against for joining a union.

McMayon and Lowecki were each charged with nine counts of fraud and bribery. Haas was charged with two counts of fraud.

McMayon's lawyer, Donald Young, said he expects that McMayon will resolve the charges before trial. "She has been cooperating with the government," Young said.

A lawyer for Lowecki, 45, of Libertyville didn't return telephone calls seeking comment.

Attorney Michael Ettinger, who represents Haas, 56, of Gurnee said his client is cooperating in the investigation and expects to plead guilty. Haas left the landscaping firm in November 2001, well before the alleged kickback scheme ended.

Prosecutors Scott Levine and Nancy Miller said McMayon supervised an evaluation committee that made recommendations to the Park District board as to which companies should get contracts. "She was then able to direct more work to James Michael than to other contractors," Levine said at the news conference.

According to a civil lawsuit in Lake County, an attorney for James Michael indicated the firm first obtained "very large" contracts from the Park District in 1999 and 2000 and went through "almost an explosion" in its business. Its business quickly grew about fivefold to \$10 million, the lawyer said.

A stray check

In a deposition in that lawsuit, Carleen Haake, a bookkeeper for James Michael, testified she discovered that the firm had paid off McMayon's car

loan when she found the check on a copying machine at the office. "They left their original on the glass," she said.

The firm primarily worked at Millennium Park, planting trees and shrubs and mowing lawns, and it also installed Christmas lights at the park, Buckingham Fountain and other locations, authorities said.

Millennium Park has become a major Chicago tourist attraction, but during construction, it was mired in controversy as its cost ballooned to about \$490 million, more than half to be paid by taxpayers.

Before working at the Park District, McMayon was horticulture manager for the Golden Nugget Mirage Resorts in Las Vegas, according to a biography of her in a 2001 issue of Illinois Parks and Recreation magazine. A graduate of the University of Southwest Louisiana with a degree in horticulture, she also had been director of horticulture for a foundation in Louisiana and had owned a landscaping business.

Her attorney said she is now working at a golf course in Utah.

McMayon was hired by the Chicago Park District in July 1999 as deputy director of landscaping and was promoted to head the new Department of Natural Resources in early 2001.

McMayon was often the public face for beautification efforts in Chicago parks, traveling to conferences across the country and abroad.

Tribune staff reporters Charles Sheehan, Gary Washburn and Lolly Bowean and freelance reporter Barbara Bell contributed to this report.

*moconnor@tribune.com
lford@tribune.com*

U.S. DISTRICT COURT

4-5-06

35th person convicted in Hired Truck scandal

A Dolton man pleaded guilty Tuesday to bribing two Chicago city foremen to obtain at least \$45,000 in city-owned asphalt for private paving projects.

Carl Edwards, 34, a private truck driver, said in a plea agreement that he paid bribes to Patrick Stillo and Robert Laino from April 2002 to November 2004.

Edwards used bribery to obtain at least 75 truckloads of city-owned asphalt, worth about \$600 each, according to the plea agreement.

In exchange for Edwards' guilty plea and cooperation, prosecutors agreed to recommend a 9-month prison sentence. The plea agreement allows Edwards to argue for a lower term, including probation.

Edwards is the 35th defendant convicted in the federal probe of the city's Hired Truck Program.

Both Stillo and Laino pleaded guilty last year.

chicagotribune.com

Tomczak given 47 months

Ex-water boss helped U.S. with Hired Truck inquiry

By Rudolph Bush

Tribune staff reporter

November 10, 2006

From his desk at the Jardine Filtration Plant, Donald Tomczak spent years running the city's Water Department, commanding a political army of patronage workers and accepting stacks of cash bribes.

Once the department's powerful first deputy commissioner, Tomczak, 71, was sentenced Thursday to 3 years, 11 months in federal prison for taking about \$400,000 in payoffs from companies that wanted business from the city's corrupt Hired Truck Program. He agreed to pay \$175,000 in a forfeiture and was fined \$15,000.

One of the highest-ranking city officials charged in the Hired Truck scheme, Tomczak admitted on the witness stand that he built a political army of city workers who helped elect candidates backed by Mayor Richard Daley.

In return for their political service, many of the workers were rewarded with well-paying, blue-collar city jobs and plum promotions, Tomczak testified this year.

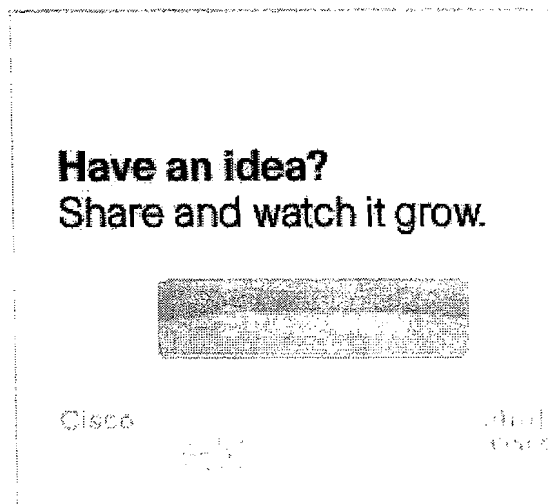
"Mr. Tomczak's crimes were stunning in their scope and duration," Assistant U.S. Atty. Patrick Collins said. "There was bribe-taking that occurred over a 20-year period, corrupting a variety of city programs."

His crimes were condoned and facilitated by high-ranking individuals at City Hall, Collins said without elaborating.

Tomczak could have faced a much stiffer sentence but received leniency for his cooperation in the Hired Truck investigation.

He was the first person to tell prosecutors that former City Clerk James Laski took Hired Truck bribes, a revelation that led to Laski's resignation and his conviction for fraud this year.

In June, Tomczak testified in the corruption trial of Daley's former patronage chief, Robert Sorich, and



three other former city officials.

Based in part on Tomczak's testimony, Sorich and two of his co-defendants were convicted of rigging the city's hiring and promotions system to favor pro-Daley political workers. The fourth defendant was convicted of lying to federal agents.

Daley lashed out at Tomczak Thursday, saying he had "disgraced his name."

"He disgraced his family. Basically, he destroyed himself," Daley said.

Tomczak served briefly as the Water Department's first deputy commissioner under Mayor Jane Byrne. When Mayor Harold Washington took office in 1983, Tomczak was fired and went to work for powerful 14th Ward Ald. Edward Burke.

Soon after Daley was elected mayor in 1989, Tomczak returned to his former position and remained in the Water Department until his retirement in 2003.

"I didn't fire people," Daley said. "I didn't care what allegiance they had as long as they were doing the job.... My father taught me that, and my church beliefs taught me that--never be vindictive against people."

From the time he returned to serve as first deputy commissioner under Daley, Tomczak became a loyal political commander for the mayor, according to his testimony in the Sorich trial.

During elections, he dispatched his patronage army according to directions he received from the mayor's Office of Intergovernmental Affairs, where Sorich was a top official.

He said top Daley advisers Timothy Degnan, Victor Reyes and John Doerrer, all of whom are former directors of that office, gave those directions.

In 2000, Tomczak used his workers in the service of his son, Jeff Tomczak, who successfully ran for Will County state's attorney as a Republican. Jeff Tomczak lost that office in 2004 amid allegations that the Chicago political machine influenced his first election.

During Thursday's sentencing hearing, defense attorney Patrick Cotter described Tomczak as a vestige of "old Chicago" who failed to change his ways as times were changing around him.

"It's a very hard thing to be in the autumn of your life and discover the world you grew up in ... the way you were taught it should be done, is no longer acceptable," Cotter said.

Collins responded that a child would understand taking bribes is wrong.

U.S. District Judge Samuel Der-Yeghiayan agreed, calling Tomczak the "common denominator" of corruption in the Hired Truck Program.

"Because of your avarice, you betrayed the public trust," Der-Yeghiayan said. He imposed the prison sentence that prosecutors and Tomczak had agreed upon prior to the hearing.

After the hearing, Jeff Tomczak defended his father as a "good man who made some bad choices."

He said his father was truly sorry for shaming "the city that he loves" and excoriated members of the

Daley jobs chief

Jury convicts 4 in city hiring fraud; feds

The verdicts

The verdicts against Mayor Richard Daley's former patronage chief Robert Sorich and ex-city officials Timothy McCarthy, Patrick Slattery and John Sullivan.

COUNT 1

Mail fraud charge regarding the 2004 hiring of a truck driver, dismissed earlier by judge for lack of evidence.

COUNT 2

Sorich and McCarthy guilty of mail fraud in the 2002 hiring of a house drain inspector in the Sewers Dept.



COUNT 3

Sorich guilty of mail fraud in the 2001 hiring of a foreman in the Water Dept.

COUNT 4

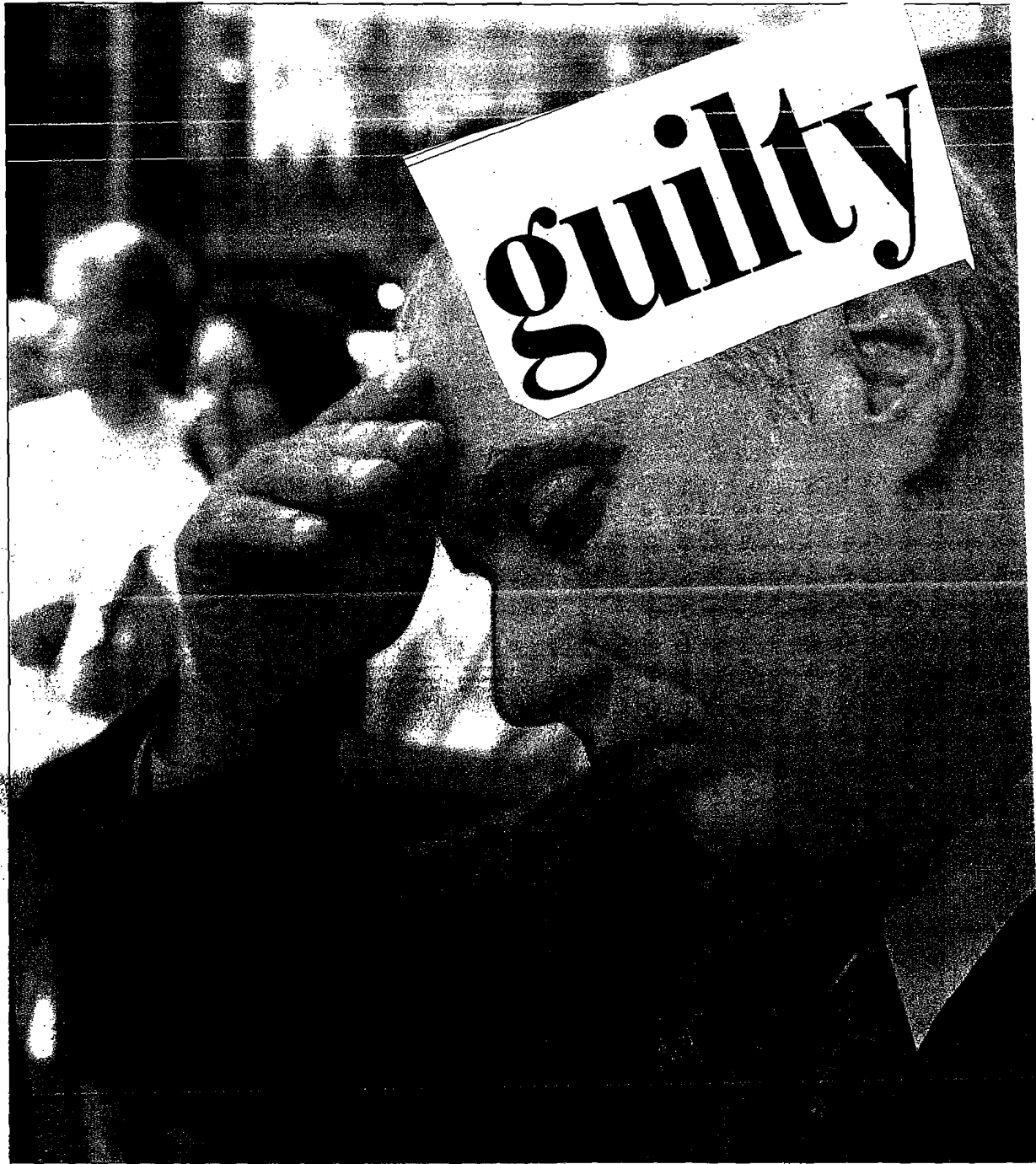
Sorich not guilty of mail fraud in the 2001 hiring of a driver in the Water Dept.

COUNT 5

Sorich not guilty and McCarthy guilty of mail fraud for the 2004 hiring of 19-year-old building inspector.

COUNT 6

Slattery guilty of mail fraud in connection with the 2004 hiring of laborers in Streets and Sanitation Dept.



Robert Sorich, Mayor Richard Daley's former patronage chief, leaves court Thursday after his conviction in the

Daley's choices, Sorich's guilt

Striking a resounding blow against what prosecutors called "a new machine" in Chicago politics, a federal jury Thursday convicted Mayor Richard Daley's longtime patronage chief of scheming to reward political workers with city jobs.

The prosecution of Robert Sorich and three other former city officials has reached more deeply into Daley's administration than any previous federal case, and prosecutors quickly promised that they are not done at City Hall.

"I really can't say anything more than 'stay tuned,'" said First Assistant U.S. Atty. Gary Shapiro.

The verdict was an important victory for the government over critics who said overzealous prosecutors were seeking to criminalize politics.

That success could have repercussions for Gov. Rod Blagojevich's administration as U.S. Atty. Patrick Fitzgerald's office investigates allegations of "endemic hiring fraud" in state government.

The City Hall hiring probe hits the heart of Daley's political organization—composed of what prosecutors dubbed patronage armies—less than a year before the mayor's current term expires.

Daley has not said whether he plans to run for re-election next spring, but the verdict directly contradicts his repeated assertions that machine politics had no role in his longtime dominance of local politics.

"I think that what we saw in this case was the revealing of the Chicago machine, the inner workings of the Chicago machine, perhaps for the first time," said jury foreman S. Jay Olshansky, a professor at the University of Illinois at Chicago.

Witnesses who marshaled pro-Daley political groups testified that they took campaign orders from top Daley aides and later got jobs and promotions from the mayor's office for loyal and effective political workers.

Sorich, 43, and Timothy McCarthy, 38, his former aide in the mayor's Office of Intergovernmental Affairs, were each convicted on two counts of mail fraud connected to rigging blue-collar city jobs and promotions. Sorich also was acquitted of two counts of fraud.

Sorich's best friend, former Streets and Sanitation official

Even before this criminal chapter in Chicago's history, only the newly arrived or the terminally naive thought merit determined who got city jobs here. Local lore and ample evidence—all those politically connected nephews on the city payroll—suggested the fix often was in. You learn something about how a city hires its workforce when one of its best political tomes is titled, "We Don't Want Nobody Nobody Sent."

But the federal trial that led to Thursday's convictions of Mayor Richard M. Daley's former patronage chief, Robert Sorich, and three other former City Hall officials has opened this city's eyes to patronage more abusive, more ambitious, than what many Chicagoans had figured. This wasn't just favoritism, it was fraud. It was a cunning, intricately documented scheme by which city government insiders rigged test results and faked interviews so they could give jobs and promotions to a chosen few. It was a clever way for Daley's loyalists to bribe armies of foot soldiers to do their political work in the streets.

It was also illegal.

And it created a debacle that didn't have to be.

Had Daley made different choices early in his mayoralty, he'd have spared himself the

ugly parlor game that now consumes Chicago: Who's next to be indicted? What racketeering statutes might the prosecutors now invoke? How high will this scandal reach? Because by no one's imagination is Thursday's conviction of Sorich, Timothy McCarthy, Patrick Slattery and John Sullivan the end of the Justice Department's crash remodeling project at City Hall.

During his 17 years as mayor, Daley has had five certifiable successes, some more complete than others. If only reform of the political culture his father helped create had been at the top of that list. What are those five successes?

Early on, Daley embraced the tree-planting and beautification projects that not only make the city more attractive to Chicagoans, but also have yielded more tourism dollars. He also launched the still incomplete process of school reform—a project that most of America's urban mayors, his father included, had dodged. Third, the mayor doesn't get the credit he deserves for dismantling many of the Chicago Housing Authority high-rises where, for generations, this city warehoused many of its poorest and most vulnerable families. Fourth, Daley committed himself in 2003 to lowering what had long been the highest big-city murder rate in America—a

realm where his excellent appointees and sensible policies deserve credit for saving lives by the hundreds. Fifth, he has improved Chicago's infrastructure in ways few Chicagoans discuss (sewer projects, new public safety buildings) and in ways that visibly build Chicago's future (concrete-and-steel improvements at O'Hare and Midway Airports).

In short, when Daley takes on challenges, he makes things happen. The challenge he didn't take on when he became mayor 17 years ago is the one that has risen like Godzilla to loom over his City Hall, his political future and his legacy.

Daley didn't spend political capital to halt the illicit patronage hiring that for many decades has bonded the futures of Chicago pols and their pals. He didn't reform a city contract-

ing system that cheated businesses whose lower bids or genuine minority status couldn't compete with the insiders' clout. Not until his administration was cornered by federal investigators did he overhaul city government's personnel and inspector general's offices.

The best reason to have taken those steps long ago is that Chicago would have had a government that gave citizens what they deserve: clean governance, fair chances at jobs, trustworthy ways of doing business. The *practical* reason to have taken those steps is that Daley would have avoided the City Hall corruption that now defines so much of his tenure as mayor. On the strength of his accomplishments alone, he likely would have been re-elected time and again—without all the illicit help he didn't really need.

Instead we have the Sorich trial, with its tawdry revelations and its new phalanx of federal convicts. Now it is the feds who, by virtue of their probes and prosecutions, are forcing the City Hall reforms that Daley did not.

So the questions hang in mid-air:

Who's next to be indicted? What racketeering statutes might the prosecutors now invoke? How high will this scandal reach?

Now it is the feds who, by virtue of their probes and prosecutions, are forcing the City Hall reforms that Daley did not.



Tribune photo by David Klobucar

Donald Tomczak was sentenced Thursday to 3 years, 11 months in federal prison.

Tomczak sentenced for Hired Truck role

Ex-city official gets leniency because he helped prosecutors

By Rudolph Bush
Tribune staff reporter

From his desk at the Jardine Filtration Plant, Donald Tomczak spent years running the city's Water Department, commanding a political army of patronage workers and accepting stacks of cash bribes.

Once the department's powerful first deputy commissioner, Tomczak, 71, was sentenced Thursday to 3 years, 11 months in federal prison for taking about \$400,000 in payoffs from companies that wanted business from the city's corrupt Hired Truck Program.

He agreed to pay \$175,000 in a forfeiture and was fined \$15,000.

One of the highest-ranking city officials charged in the Hired Truck scheme, Tomczak admitted on the witness stand that he built a political army of city workers who helped elect candidates backed by Mayor Richard Daley.

In return for their political service, many of the workers were rewarded with well-paying, blue-collar city jobs and plum promotions, Tomczak testified this year.

"Mr. Tomczak's crimes were stunning in their scope and duration," Assistant U.S. Atty. Patrick Collins said. "There was bribe-taking that occurred over a 20-year period, corrupting a variety of city programs."

His crimes were condoned and facilitated by high-ranking

TRO

FRIDAY NOVEMBER 10, 2006

TOMCZAK: 'He disgraced his family,' Daley says

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

individuals at City Hall, Collins said without elaborating.

Tomczak could have faced a much stiffer sentence but received leniency for his cooperation in the Hired Truck investigation.

He was the first person to tell prosecutors that former City Clerk James Laski took Hired Truck bribes, a revelation that led to Laski's resignation and his conviction for fraud this year.

In June, Tomczak testified in the corruption trial of Daley's former patronage chief, Robert Sorich, and three other former city officials.

Based in part on Tomczak's testimony, Sorich and two of his co-defendants were convicted of rigging the city's hiring and promotions system to favor pro-Daley political workers. The fourth defendant was convicted of lying to federal agents.

Daley lashed out at Tomczak Thursday, saying he had "disgraced his name."

"He disgraced his family. Basically, he destroyed himself," Daley said.

Tomczak served briefly as the Water Department's first deputy commissioner under Mayor

Jane Byrne. When Mayor Harold Washington took office in 1983, Tomczak was fired and went to work for powerful 14th Ward Ald. Edward Burke.

Soon after Daley was elected mayor in 1989, Tomczak returned to his former position and remained in the Water Department until his retirement in 2003.

"I didn't fire people," Daley said. "I didn't care what allegiance they had as long as they were doing the job... My father taught me that, and my church beliefs taught me that—never be vindictive against people."

From the time he returned to serve as first deputy commissioner under Daley, Tomczak became a loyal political commander for the mayor, according to his testimony in the Sorich trial. During elections, he dispatched his patronage army according to directions he received from the mayor's Office of Intergovernmental Affairs, where Sorich was a top official.

He said top Daley advisers Timothy Degnan, Victor Reyes and John Doerrer, all of whom are former directors of that office, gave those directions.

In 2000, Tomczak used his workers in the service of his son, Jeff Tomczak, who successfully ran for Will County state's attorney as a Republican. Jeff Tomczak lost that office in 2004 amid allegations that the Chicago political machine influenced his first election.

During Thursday's sentencing hearing, defense attorney Patrick Cotter described Tomczak as a vestige of "old Chicago" who failed to change his ways as

times were changing around him.

"It's a very hard thing to be in the autumn of your life and discover the world you grew up in... the way you were taught it should be done, is no longer acceptable," Cotter said.

Collins responded that a child would understand taking bribes is wrong.

U.S. District Judge Samuel Der-Yeghiayan agreed, calling Tomczak the "common denominator" of corruption in the Hired Truck Program.

"Because of your avarice, you betrayed the public trust," Der-Yeghiayan said. He imposed the prison sentence that prosecutors and Tomczak had agreed upon prior to the hearing.

After the hearing, Jeff Tomczak defended his father as a "good man who made some bad choices."

He said his father was truly sorry for shaming "the city that he loves" and excoriated members of the media for writing about his father's corruption for years.

Donald Tomczak continues to provide information to prosecutors about corruption at City Hall, Collins said.

His sentencing Thursday and Sorich's scheduled sentencing Nov. 20 are not expected to close the curtain on the hiring fraud investigation that prosecutors launched following the Hired Truck scandal.

Tribune staff reporters Gary Washburn and Tom Rybarczyk contributed to this report.
rrbush@tribune.com



Chicago Tribune

50¢ City & Suburbs; 75¢ Elsewhere

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 21, 2006

160TH YEAR — NO. 172 © CHICAGO TRIBUNE

Inside Daley's machine

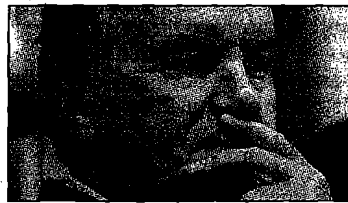
Map indicates mayor's 1995 campaign used its own operatives to get out the vote, and their names appear on a list of alleged job sponsors that surfaced in federal court

By Dan Mihalopoulos and James Kimberly
Tribune staff reporters

When Mayor Richard M. Daley geared up for his 1995 reelection campaign, he was not dependent on the Democratic ward organizations that rallied

city workers for the political machine of Richard J. Daley a generation ago.

Instead, in Chicago's 50 wards, the campaign installed its own political operatives to get out the vote, according to a map of Daley ward coordinators obtained by the Tribune.



Eleven years later, in federal court this week, the names of many of those same Daley loyalists re-surfaced hundreds of times as the alleged sponsors of applicants for city jobs and promotions in the 1990s.

Even as aldermen and committee members remain the public

faces of political power in Chicago, the true clout belonged to obscure city officials who could marshal their workers to campaign for Daley, judging by a hiring list allegedly kept in the mayor's office.

Read side by side, the jobs list and the ward map give a rare glimpse of how Daley amassed power and changed politics in Chicago during the 1990s.

It was not surprising to see Daley's allies in the Hispanic Democratic Organization described as backers of almost 400 job applicants in the list unveiled by prosecutors Monday.

But the map obtained by the Tribune suggests that many other longtime Daley campaign lieutenants who enjoyed great influence in hiring are familiar only to local political insiders.

The names of such operatives as Joyce Gallagher, Mike Vaske, Michael Harjung, Rich Pope, Duwain Bailey and Bob Price popped up frequently on the list of job sponsors that federal prosecutors unveiled Monday.

Eighteen ward coordinators for Daley's 1995 campaign were listed 771 times as sponsors of

PLEASE SEE DALEY, BACK PAGE

DALEY: Campaign coordinators are on list

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

job applicants, according to a Tribune analysis.

Isaac Carothers, who was a Streets and Sanitation Department official when the list was compiled, was Daley's 29th Ward coordinator in 1995. He was entered as the sponsor of 98 job seekers and has since become the powerful chairman of the City Council's Police and Fire Committee.

Al Sanchez, who was Daley's Streets and Sanitation commissioner from 1999 until 2005, was listed as the top 10th Ward coordinator for the mayor's 1995 campaign. He was listed as the sponsor of 112 job hopefuls.

Sanchez and other Hispanic Democratic Organization leaders, including state Sen. Antonio "Tony" Munoz and former top Daley aide Victor Reyes, together were named as sponsors of 380 applicants.

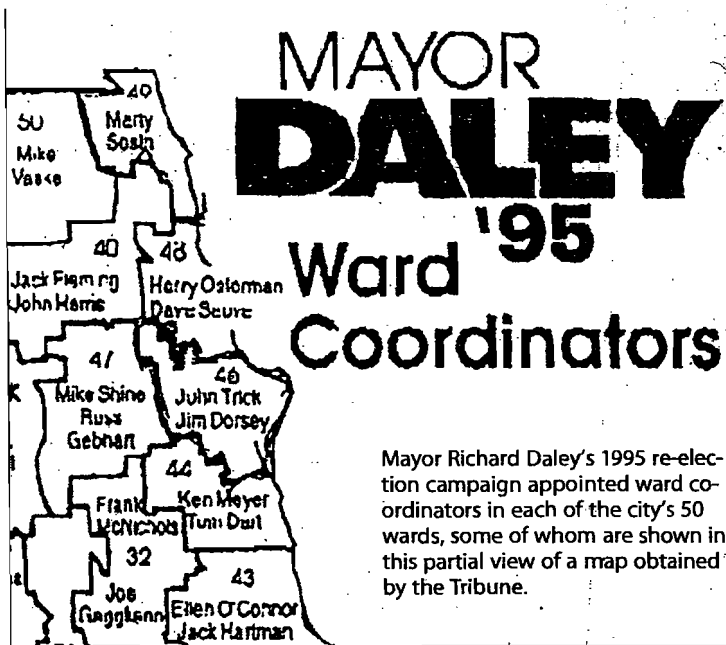
Two 1995 ward coordinators, former city officials Donald Tomczak and Joe Gagliano, have testified in the trial of Robert Sorich, Daley's former patronage chief, that they organized city workers into political groups and lobbied for jobs and promotions for their members.

Sorich and three other former city officials are charged with fixing city hiring and promotions for pro-Daley campaign workers.

Tomczak, who worked for Daley in the 41st Ward in 1995, appears on the jobs list 44 times.

Longtime political operative Thomas Simmons' name appears 182 times, more than any other individual on the list. Simmons, now a deputy commissioner in the city's General Services Department, said Tuesday he was shocked to hear that his name was cited that often.

"One hundred eighty-two



Mayor Richard Daley's 1995 re-election campaign appointed ward coordinators in each of the city's 50 wards, some of whom are shown in this partial view of a map obtained by the Tribune.

times? If I had that kind of influence for 182 people, heck, I should be mayor," he said.

Simmons acknowledged that he had recommended people for jobs and promotions, but it had nothing to do with politics, he said. Anyone he recommended, he said, was qualified.

Most aldermen and Democratic ward committeemen, who traditionally dispensed patronage in the old machine era, are hard to find on the list.

"I feel a little cheated," said one alderman whose name did not appear on the list.

A secretary in the mayor's office testified Monday that she kept the list to track political hires between Daley's election in 1989 and 1997 at the direction of mayoral aides.

The list bolstered long-standing claims that the mayor replaced the traditional Democratic power structure with a new machine of his own.

"The worst-kept secret in Chicago is out," said Ald. Joe Moore (49th).

Before the arrest of Sorich last year, city officials had insisted for years that hiring no longer was based on who applicants knew. Daley administration lawyers argued that they were abiding by a decades-old federal court decree restricting patronage.

And Daley repeatedly pronounced the death of machine

politics in a city that once was notorious for perfecting the practice of it. "My political organization is myself," he said last year.

Asked about the influence of Daley's 1995 coordinators in hiring, mayoral spokeswoman Jodi Kawada declined to comment Tuesday.

Other City Hall observers say the enduring power of patronage was crucial to Daley's dominance of local politics the past 17 years.

The mayor's political armies solidified his control over the City Council, said Ald. Thomas Murphy (18th).

The new pro-Daley groups recruited members from city departments, Murphy said. That led aldermen to fear that the groups would be deployed against their re-election bids if they crossed Daley, he said.

"[Daley] gutted the ward organizations and built his own organization," Murphy said. "The mayor's groups took people away from the ward organizations, because the workers saw that the way to get ahead was with these new groups."

Tribune staff reporters Rudolph Bush, Courtney Flynn, Gary Washburn, Darnell Little and Todd Lighty contributed to this report.

*dmihalopoulos@tribune.com
jkimberly@tribune.com*

Witness: Daley backers rewarded with jobs

CITY HALL HIRING TRIAL | Sanchez defense tries to downplay his clout

BY NATASHA KORECKI

Federal Courts Reporter
nkorecki@suntimes.com

A federal prosecutor drew a direct connection between illicit political hiring and Mayor Daley in a City Hall corruption trial Thursday, asking a key witness whether city hires were

also the mayor's most loyal and hardest-working political supporters.

Former Streets and Sanitation Department personnel director Jack Drumgould agreed that they were, testifying in the trial of former Commissioner Al Sanchez.

Drumgould testified that those who supported the mayor in political campaigns were rewarded with jobs. Among the hardest-working and most loyal of those groups was the Hispanic Democratic Organization, which Sanchez helped lead.

"If Mayor Daley were not re-

lected, isn't it true that Mr. Sanchez would probably lose his job?" Assistant U.S. Attorney Julie Ruder asked.

"Probably," Drumgould said.

Drumgould, who worked under Sanchez and testified with a grant of immunity, told a jury that test scores for coveted jobs were routinely falsified and interviews were rigged so the jobs went to politically ordained candidates. He said hundreds of applicants jockeyed for a job, but the fix was in — Sanchez allegedly wrote names of people he wanted, which were delivered to the mayor's pa-

tronage office. Those people were usually hired, he said. But Sanchez's lawyer, Thomas Breen, downplayed his clout, portraying him as an advocate for hardworking Hispanics.

Prosecutors objected when Breen asked if the best jobs, with the Department of Aviation, went to the "whitest, cloutiest people."

"Al was in charge of streets, sanitation and rats — isn't that the truth?" Breen said, raising his voice.

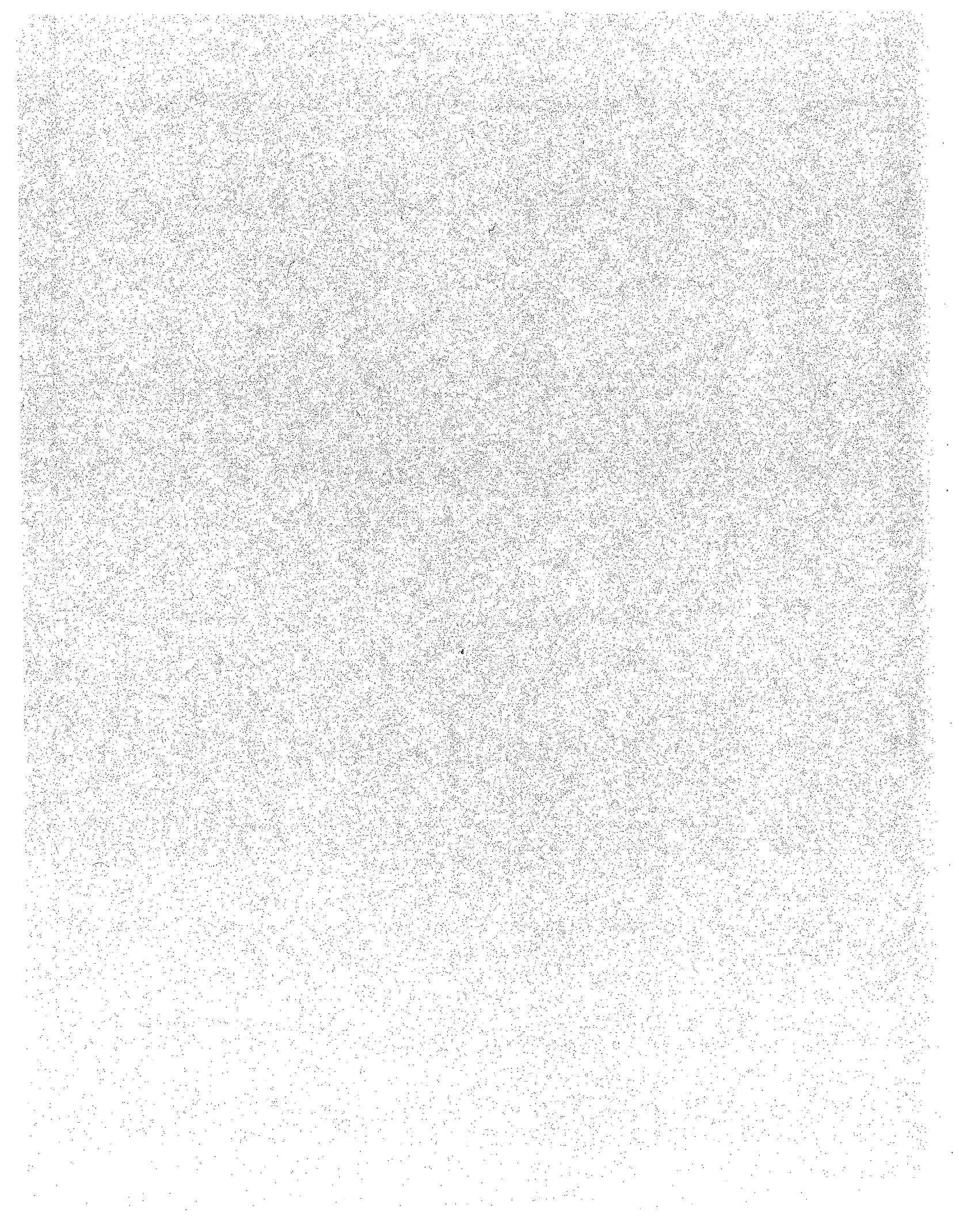
Breen pointed to the electricity bureau in Streets and San, which Drumgould agreed was dubbed

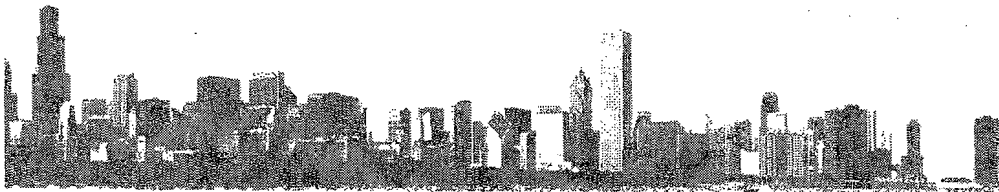
"Madigan Electricity" because it was perceived as House Speaker Michael Madigan's patronage arm.

Drumgould agreed Sanchez didn't have the final say in hiring applicants — that rested with the Intergovernmental Affairs Office.

As Sanchez stood trial, a federal hiring monitor Thursday filed a report sharply critical of the Daley administration's efforts to implement a hiring system free of politics.

Contributing: Fran Spielman and Lisa Donovan
Comment at suntimes.com.





BETTER HOSPITALS * HOUSING * SCHOOLS AND TRAINS

**NO
GAMES

CHICAGO**

Lack of Infrastructure. Our city is falling to pieces around us. Our roads are pitted with pot holes and our mass transit system is badly in need of repair and upgrading. Regrettably, there are no plans for improving it over the next few years and we seriously doubt whether it can do the job of moving the crowds that come with a summer Olympics.

Austin residents fill potholes themselves

April 8, 2009 6:47 PM | [15 Comments](#) | UPDATED STORY

What to do when there are potholes on your street and the city won't pave them fast enough?

Patch them yourself.

That's what a West Side organization did today. Residents from the Austin neighborhood bought four bags of Quikrete from Home Depot for \$50 and used shovels, rakes and a roller to fill about seven holes on the 4800 block of West Van Buren Street.



LEFT TO RIGHT: Zelma Cody, Elce Redmond, and Woody Taylor help fill about a dozen potholes on Van Buren Street on the West Side Wednesday. (Terrence Antonio James/Chicago Tribune)

"The city's not doing it so residents need to take the matter into their own hands," said Elce Redmond, organizer with the South Austin Coalition.

The group fronted the \$50 for the bags of asphalt mix. Neighbor Ernest Roberts luckily had a 50 pound roller in his garage -- left behind by a previous owner.

Roberts complained about Mayor Daley's slow efforts in repairing potholes in the neighborhood.

"He's too slow to getting around to here," he said.

Chicago Department of Transportation spokesman Brian Steele said that the agency plans repairs based on the volume of 311 pothole complaints and the amount of traffic streets experience.

CDOT received just one call about potholes in the 4800 block of Van Buren in the last two months, he said. The agency has repaired about 300,000 potholes since Dec. 1 and hasn't received state funding for resurfacing since 2006, he said.

-- Noreen S. Ahmed-Ullah

CHICAGO DEFENDER

A Daily-Evening-News Paper

Founded in 1905

Robert S. Abbott (Founder) 1905-1940

John H. Sengstacke (Publisher) 1940-1983

Frederick D. Sengstacke (Publisher) 1983 - 2000

Col. (Ret.) Eugene F. Scott (Publisher) 2000-2003

David M. Milliner (Publisher) 2003 - 2004

Michael House
President

Lou Ransom
Executive Editor

COLLAR

DI FOCUS

Editorial

Potholes wreaking havoc on the city

As surely as it is April, the weather will change once or twice even while you are reading this. Chicagoans know that spring is just a concept, not a season, and we are just as likely to have snow as we are to have warm temperatures... sometimes in the same day.

Unfortunately, those weather fluctuations play havoc with our road surfaces, giving us a pothole season that seems to last six or seven months. Great, gaping holes in the asphalt or concrete roadways are hazards to all vehicles.

Budget cuts and lack of state and federal funding has left the city's road resurfacing program way behind, and some citizens are coming up with novel ways to deal with it. A few neighbors on the West Side even went to the trouble to get their own hot asphalt and rollers and do some patching on their own. The city quickly came out to warn against that do-it-yourself roadwork, noting that the quality of

the work would not match city workers, and that they would not be safe working in the streets.

We are all for letting the professionals do it, but, unfortunately, the city has not been doing it. While it seemed tons of asphalt appeared overnight to repave some of the streets being shown to visitors from the International Olympic Committee, there are still streets in some neighborhoods waiting for the first pass of an asphalt truck.

While the Austin citizens who did the paving work were good natured about it, this is serious business.

It is not just the cars that actually hit the potholes, and wreck tires, rims, even axles. It is also the ones that swerve suddenly to miss those jagged craters, creating a different traffic hazard.

Calls to the city's pothole hot line shows at

least 13,000 daily calls about unpaved divots, which has caused the city to send out extra road crews to go after them. The city also mulled over an offer from KFC to patch some of the holes (emblazoned with a KFC logo).

But any street professional will tell you that patching is just that, a patch, and patches will be the first part of the street to come up. That's why the city has repaired an estimated 300,000 potholes from December to March, and April's up-and-down weather has contributed its own share.

The city is counting on stimulus money to help fund a massive resurfacing job that will pave over about 140 miles of Chicago streets.

Perhaps citizens out there paving the streets was enough to shame the city into doing a better job on non-Olympic streets. Maybe it is an idea that will catch on.

It can't come soon enough.



Workers rake leaves and spruce up Douglas Park, a potential Olympic venue. Ald. Sandi Jackson said attention should be paid to pothole-plagued roads first. **TERRENCE ANTONIO JAMES/TRIBUNE PHOTO**

Alderman: Fix potholes before Olympic sites

By Hal Dardick
and Laurie Cohen

TRIBUNE REPORTERS 9/20/09

As city crews repaired streets at another Olympic site Thursday, a Chicago alderman clashed with an aide to Mayor Richard Daley, telling him more heavily traveled, pothole-plagued roads should be fixed first.

Ald. Sandi Jackson's suggestion came a day after the Tribune reported the Daley administration sent contractors to smooth out streets at Washington Park, where the mayor wants to build an Olympic stadium should Chicago land the 2016 Games.

On Thursday, workers were sprucing up Douglas Park, the potential site of an Olympic cycling facility. A spokesman for the city's Transportation Department said the repairs in both parks were done ahead of other locations so they would be finished before a key visit by an International Olympics Committee team in early April. A nearly two-block stretch of Sacramento Drive in Douglas Park will be repaved in the next few days.

At an unrelated City Council hearing, Jackson (7th) grilled Transportation Commissioner Thomas Byrne, suggesting he had "been forced to do something like this because of an Olympics that we may or may not get."

The business of Games

To see the city's fiscal and other hurdles, please visit chicagogames.com.

"I think any alderman can give you a list of streets that have potholes that are more heavily traveled, more heavily trafficked, than this street that surrounds this park," Jackson said.

Byrne said he selected Washington Park "because of need."

"That patch that we made there yesterday will be enjoyed for a long time for the people of Washington Park and the neighborhood that it's in. We're not just going to roll that up after today or the Olympics, when they drive by. I'm not going to tear it up and put it back in the condition it was," Byrne said.

After Jackson ticked off a list of other streets she said were more important, including Lake Shore Drive, Byrne asked her, "What do you want to prioritize from one to a hundred?"

Later, transportation spokesman Brian Steele said the park locations were among "dozens if not hundreds" of severely deteriorated roadways that the city intends to resurface by the end

of the year. Workers also did repairs at two other non-Olympics-related locations Thursday and will be at three others Friday, he said.

In Springfield, the Illinois House approved legislation Thursday guaranteeing the state would put up \$250 million if a 2016 Summer Olympics comes to Chicago and loses money.

Backers argue the state's financial risk is not very high because it would be unusual for an Olympics held in the U.S. to operate in the red.

Rep. Will Burns (D-Chicago), whose South Side district would house the Olympic Village and several event venues, said the guarantee is viewed as a key component to have in place by the time an Olympics committee plans to review Chicago in April.

If the Olympics posted an operating loss, the city also would be on the hook for \$500 million, making the guarantee worth \$750 million between the city and state. According to the legislation, should the state have to dip into the \$250 million guarantee against operating losses, an equivalent amount would be spent outside Cook County on road projects.

Tribune reporter Ray Long contributed from Springfield.

hdardick@tribune.com
lcohen@tribune.com

Chicago's Olympic priorities: City repaves park roads first

Move paves way for IOC's crucial visit to assess the city's suitability for the 2016 Summer Games

By David Heinzmann and Laurie Cohen | Tribune reporters -March 19, 2009

<http://www.chicagotribune.com/sports/chi-olympic-park-19-mar19.0,1057820.story>



Workers put the finishing touches on a re-paved South Payne Drive in Chicago's Washington Park, in Chicago. One worker referred to the work as "the Olympic plan." The International Olympic Committee will arrive April 2 to scrutinize Chicago's suitability to host the 2016 Games. All along the lakefront and South Side, city workers have been sprucing up the potential Olympic sites. Meanwhile major arterial roads in the city are rife with potholes. (Tribune photo by Terrence Antonio James / March 18, 2009)

While commuters dodged potholes on workhorse thoroughfares like Stony Island Avenue and 55th Street on Wednesday, just a few feet away on the less traveled lanes winding through Washington Park, the air was redolent with hot, fresh asphalt.

Dozens of city workers marshaled a parade of trucks and heavy equipment, hustling to repave East Rainey and South Payne Drives, part of what one Chicago Department of Transportation worker on site called "the Olympic plan."

An International Olympic Committee team arrives the beginning of next month to scrutinize Chicago's suitability to host the 2016 Games. When they arrive, the international officials will see smooth, pitch-black pavement ringing the Washington Park ball fields where Mayor Richard Daley wants to build an Olympic stadium.

The work raised questions for some who that fear taxpayers will suffer as the city directs scarce resources toward impressing Olympic officials.

The city workers and contractors were racing to finish this project, even as Chicago is forgoing resurfacing projects on major streets because of funding shortfalls. Just this week, city Transportation Commissioner Thomas Byrne lamented that the city had been forced to patch thousands of potholes rather than resurface streets because of a three-year decline in state funding for paving arterial roads.

However, responding to questions Wednesday afternoon from the Tribune, the Transportation Department disclosed that the Washington Park project was part of a plan to resurface 39 miles of city streets in 2009. The plan started Wednesday with the Washington Park work as well as patching of two short sections of North Michigan Avenue, spokesman Brian Steele said.

The city had released a traffic advisory Wednesday morning noting the work, he said. But that notice mentioned



This copy is for your personal, noncommercial use only. You can order presentation-ready copies for distribution to your colleagues, clients or customers here or use the "Reprints" tool that appears next to any article. Visit www.nytreprints.com for samples and additional information. Order a reprint of this article now.

May 30, 2009

Long a Driver's Curse, Chicago Parking Gets Worse

By SUSAN SAULNY

CHICAGO — Motorists here long ago learned how to park a fine line.

Miss the diagonal markings on your spot? That's a \$50 violation. More than 12 inches from the curb? \$25, payable to the city. Two overdue tickets? You're getting a boot.

But while every city has its vehicular regulations, Chicago under Mayor Richard M. Daley has earned the reputation of being ruthlessly demanding on motorists as a way to collect much-needed revenue, particularly when it comes to the city's parking meters.

Now, the city is suffering what seems like a motorists' meltdown.

"First, take a deep cleansing breath," advises a premier blog addressing the problem, www.theexpiredmeter.com. "Inhale. Exhale. Everything is going to be fine."

In an effort to plug a gaping budget deficit, Mr. Daley pushed a deal through the City Council a few months ago that privatized management of the parking meters for 75 years in exchange for a lump-sum payment of \$1.15 billion.

In some areas, rates then rose fourfold. At most meters, there was no more free parking on holidays or Sundays, and some meters must be fed 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

Most vexing to drivers, however, is that thousands of newly installed credit-card and coin-taking parking meters simply do not work. They have been charging the wrong rates, failing to issue receipts (the only proof of payment) or not accepting money.

On Wednesday, so many of the downtown meters were out of order and spewing out error messages that the city did the unthinkable: it stopped writing parking tickets.

"I'll take the responsibility," Mr. Daley said at a news conference, angrily waving his hands in the air. "I'll take it."

Daryl Harris, 53, a janitor who works at a building in the central business district, has taken to carrying \$10 in quarters in his ballooning pockets just to make sure he gets through a workday without a ticket on his silver Chevrolet.

"I'm paying anywhere from \$50 to \$60 a week for parking," Mr. Harris said. "And I've never been

reimbursed for the meter's mistakes.”

Chicago Parking Meters LLC took over management of the city's 36,000 meters in February after an overwhelming majority of city aldermen voted in favor of the deal. A spokeswoman for the company did not return a call seeking comment.

Alderman Manuel Flores, who represents many highly trafficked neighborhoods on the North Side, said he regretted his vote in favor of the contract. Mr. Flores said the company had been “unprepared to implement” such a large system.

“I think it's unfair to the residents of Chicago to pay a violation when the meter's broken because of a broader breakdown or mismanagement of the system,” he said.

There is some talk about trying to penalize the company for a breach of contract, but for now, the meters are staying put, and the parking problem is the talk of the town.

“I hate them,” Jeff Sanders said about the meters, after parking his truck on North Wabash not far from the Chicago River. “It's just another ridiculous way to squeeze us.”

[Copyright 2009 The New York Times Company](#)

[Privacy Policy](#) | [Search](#) | [Corrections](#) | [RSS](#) | [First Look](#) | [Help](#) | [Contact Us](#) | [Work for Us](#) | [Site Map](#)



State legislators and transit officials inspect a crumbling roof shelter at the Metra stop in Cicero. ANTONIO PEREZ/TRIBUNE PHOTO

Legislators get a taste of the worst of transit system

Crumbling facilities show need for more funds, agencies say

By **Richard Wronski**

TRIBUNE REPORTER

At the risk of getting rust in the eye, eight lawmakers gazed Friday at the rougher edges of the Chicago area's mass transit network—a corroded metal roof at the Cicero Metra station; a decrepit, century-old 'L' platform and a cluster of beater-looking cars used on the Electric District line.

The participants called the Cicero station and other scenes of rust-streaked decay “eye-opening” and vowed to push their Springfield colleagues for a multi-billion-dollar program to maintain and upgrade equipment and facilities.

If it doesn't happen, Chicago could lose its world-

class stature and would be unworthy of the Olympic Games, said state Sen. Martin Sandoval (D-Chicago) who led the tour of four Metra and CTA stations.

“We looked at the [CTA 'L'] station upstairs—how aging and ... falling apart it is,” Sandoval said, referring to the 100-year-old 'L' platform at Madison and Wabash, which is overdue for a \$50 million makeover.

Sandoval, chairman of the Senate Transportation Committee, was accompanied by State Rep. Julie Hamos (D-Evanston), chairman of the House Mass Transit Committee, and a bipartisan delegation of city and suburban lawmakers. During the ride-along, they traveled by Metra and 'L' trains and PACE buses.

CTA President Richard Rodriguez spoke of slow zones and antiquated stations. Metra Executive Director Phil Pagano pointed

out those corroded Electric District train cars. Pace chief T.J. Ross said buses due for replacement at five years remain running after eight.

Legislators have until May 31 in the legislative session to produce a public works program. The Regional Transportation Authority has called for a five-year, \$10 billion state capital program to maintain, enhance and expand mass transit.

But legislators Friday hoped for a more modest \$1 billion-a-year capital program financed chiefly by a hike in the state gasoline tax.

The ride wasn't all gloom and doom. The CTA also showed off a new \$790,000 articulated hybrid bus. The agency plans to buy 58 more with federal stimulus funding.

rwrnski@tribune.com

Does our transit system stack up?

To win an Olympics, proximity, options, green commitment all important, experts say

By NICOLE COHEN AND MELISSA MAY

Medill News Service

In the late 1990s, the International Olympic Committee created an evaluation commission to review cities that wanted to host a summer or winter Olympics. The commission included a transit specialist, and bid cities scrambled to revamp local systems for getting residents, athletes and spectators around.

Since then, efficient public transit has played an increasingly important role in deciding which cities will host a games.

"You've got to have a clear-cut transportation plan that works," said Bill Martin, former president of the United States Olympic Committee. Last week, Chicago, along with Rio de Janeiro, Madrid and Tokyo, submitted their bid books to the IOC for the 2016 summer games. A decision is expected in October.

So what makes a good transit system in the eyes of the IOC?

Existing infrastructure and multiple options are key elements of a successful system, said Siim Sööt, interim director of the Urban Transportation Center at the University of Illinois-Chicago. The size of a transit system alone does not necessarily reflect its ability to handle an Olympic crowd, Sööt said.

Lots of train stations or bus lines might imply frequent service, but that is not necessarily as correlation between venue location and the density of a public transit system, one of Chicago's strengths when it comes to the race for 2016, according to Sööt.

A proposed venue like Grant Park is easily accessible by el, Metra trains, subway and bus. McCormick Place, which plays a big part in Chicago's bid, is served by a variety of bus lines, and the city is considering a new Green Line el station either at 18th Street or Cermak Road. And Lincoln Park is close to the Red Line and buses.

"I think one of the good things about the Chicago proposal is that most of the venues are eminently reachable by public transportation systems," Sööt said. "We don't have the extensive systems and frequency of trains that Tokyo and Madrid have, but our venues

are located where we have the most concentrated parts of our public transportation network."

Another thing Chicago has going for it is its experience in public transit systems. And the city also is no stranger to handling large crowds.

"With 8 million people in the region, we are accustomed to large activities," Sööt said, citing the Election Day events in Grant Park as an example. "We have a history of handling large crowds and the movement of large numbers of people."

Maria Choca Urban, transportation and community development program director at the Center for Neighborhood Technology in Wicker Park, said Chicago's experience operating a large public transit system goes in its favor. But what the city has in experience it often lacks in resources.

"We've neglected our transit system for way too many years," Choca Urban explained, saying job one should be a major overhaul of public transit facilities and infrastructure.

"By that I mean track, rolling stock, signals, switches, just to make sure that all of that was in the best shape that it can be for the Olympics," she said.

The growth of green initiatives, meanwhile, means environmentally friendly transportation could play a role in the battle for the 2016 games. Tokyo, for example, committed to using only zero- or low-emission vehicles in their bid.

Choca Urban said Chicago may find it difficult to make good on its promise to provide green transportation to athletes and Olympic officials.

"Environmentally, they're talking about using the greenest cars they can get for Olympic officials and athletes," she said. "But they're talking about importing a thousand buses to do this shuttling, and I don't know that they can say with certainty that those buses will be hybrid buses or be environmentally sound."

Choca Urban said beyond public transit, Chicago needs to be clear about its commitment to other non-car-based options.

"The mayor is big into talking about bicycle rentals and things like that," Choca Urban said. "Will there be facilities for [visitors] to park and lock their bikes and go watch their event?"

Despite some problems with Chicago transportation, many experts said the system's positives outweigh the negatives.

"If transportation were the only criteria," Sööt said, "then Tokyo would be the hands-down winner."

With 8 million people in the region, we are accustomed to large activities."

Siim Sööt

Urban Transportation Center, UIC

FOCUS

TRANSPORTATION

NEXT WEEK

Ports in a storm

Find out which employers around town are still doling out the most attractive perks—and how to improve your own workplace.

FOCUS: BEST PLACES TO WORK

CLUNE
Construction Company

QUOTE-WORTHY

“Reliability is when a bus arrives every 10 minutes, not that it is supposed to arrive every 10 minutes.”

Metropolitan Planning Council Vice-president Peter Skoskey

Where to spend the big bucks

The viaduct under the CTA Red Line at Ardmore Avenue shows signs of disrepair.

Can stimulus spending help Chicago repair crumbling transit infrastructure?

With the recent passage of a \$789.5-billion federal stimulus plan, Illinois stands to receive an infusion of billions of dollars to improve and rebuild roads, rails, bridges and other infrastructure. It's the kind of spending civic leaders hope can both bolster the economy and repair some of the area's most vexing transportation headaches.

Crain's asked experts to identify their top transportation priorities for Chicago—the big problems that they would like to see fixed first if and when the federal dollars start flowing.

Meghan Streit

CTA TRAINS AND TRACKS

Annual maintenance? Way short of the mark

The Illinois Legislature has not passed a capital funding bill in nearly a decade, and the Regional Transportation Authority's director, Steven Schlickman, says the result is a "deteriorating" system.

A transportation system the size of the Chicago Transit Authority typically requires \$1 billion in repairs and upgrades annually, he estimates. But with only about \$500 million to spend each year on maintenance, the CTA has failed to keep up.

Outdated trains, crumbling tracks and dilapidated stations all lead to longer (and less pleasant) commutes.

"You have to manage the system while meeting the highest safety standards, so that means slower service," says Mr. Schlickman, who adds that pushing for state funding for transportation is at the top of his 2009 priority list.

Metropolitan Planning Council Vice-president Peter Skoskey says the system needs new, technologically advanced trains to run more precise schedules.

Chicagoist.com

How's Your Brown Line Station Doing?

When I look down at the grey, weather-beaten, splitting-wood platform beneath my feet on the Rockwell Stop, I wonder what relation to any one of the Powers That Be owns a lumber yard. Because it just seems silly that you'd rebuild numerous El platforms and stations, and then use untreated, unfinished wood planks that fall apart months after the grand reopening of the Brown Line station. And then I think about the months-long period of time where the automatic door openers at the stations were on the fritz, making the doors almost inoperable to open without mechanical assistance. And I wonder: What's the deal, CTA? Am I the only one thinking these things?

But then I read [this story from the Chicago Tribune](#) today, and I realize that I'm not the only person that's had the same concern. Jon Hilkevitch on the Getting Around beat finds rusting steel, corroding rivets, splintering boards, and other concerns on the brand new rail stations. These are the stations that are supposed to last us into the next four decades. Okay, so things are falling apart. The bigger question Hilkevitch asks is: did the city even need a revamping of the Brown Line?

Numbers and lamentation after the jump.

Hilkevitch writes:

The Brown Line provides only about 44,000 rides a day at stations north of the Merchandise Mart, according to the transit agency. Even counting the Loop elevated stations, Brown Line total daily ridership is about 68,000—a fraction of the almost 1.7 million rides* the CTA provides each weekday.

So it's not that the old Ravenswood Line needed more and larger trains all day - just during the rush hour period, which makes you think twice about spending a half billion dollars on the shiny new stations, which aren't as shiny or new as we'd like them to be. Nor did the CTA follow through on the promise that stations would remain open during refurbishing, as Paulina, Wellington and Irving Park riders certainly know currently.

While we will have full handicap accessibility on all platforms, which is worth noting, we still have no other upgrades like travel times for incoming trains, barely any communication on service updates, or other "perks" that might have brought the CTA into last century. Instead, we plod forward as though we're transportation Luddites, thrilled that they no longer use coal to power the carriages.

One small detail - the story reports that there's no heat lamps underneath the shelters at the Rockwell stop, which is true. Go outside during the upcoming winter months, and you will indeed freeze. But the heat lamps inside the station itself are more than warm, so don't worry too much about me and my fellow commuters at Rockwell and Leland. We'll be inside, wondering how much more snow and ice our platform can handle.

**In case you're curious, we did the quick math: 1.7 million riders X about \$2 a ride X a full 365 days a year equals about 1 billion, 247 million dollars. Minus those freeloading seniors, of course.*

The Examiner

'L' problems could cost Chicago the Olympics

April 18, 2009



Credit: Seth Anderson

Eight state and local lawmakers took a tour of Chicago's mass transit system on Friday. Not a single one liked what he or she saw.

Unless billions are spent to fix the problems, says State Senator Martin Sandoval (D-Chicago), Chicago's shot at hosting the 2016 Olympics is all but gone.

Not only are snippets of outer-Metra platforms rusting and showing serious signs of decay, 'L' platforms right smack in the loop are falling apart. One hundred years of constant use appears to cause some wear and tear.

Older buses and rail cars are also badly in need of replacement, but so far, the money to pay for that hasn't been approved. The Regional Transportation Authority wants a \$10 billion capital plan. Lawmakers prefer a \$1 billion-a-year plan funded by a gas tax increase. The state has until the end of May to present a proposal.

Let's hope some funding gets thrown at the problem. The CTA barely avoided raising fares again to cover another budget shortfall this year. You can't even pay credit for a ticket on a Metra train. Only 58 of the 226 buses taken out of service for structural problems are being replaced, and only with help from the federal stimulus plan.

It's clear that lawmakers aren't made aware of Chicago's transit problems until they become so severe as to generate a high volume of complaints. By that time, the fix causes massive inconveniences, as 'L' riders can attest. Maybe it's our job, then, to wine and moan about the little issues as soon as they surface. That way, we might be able to keep the rides running smoothly (except over those potholes).

MAYOR DALEY'S 2016 DREAMS DEPEND
ON A CAPITAL PLAN THAT WILL FIX CTA

Olympic hurdle

5-19-08

For those who still believe public transit is a low priority for Mayor Richard M. Daley, a revealing episode occurred late last month.

On a Friday, the mayor pretty much blew off an incident that day in which hundreds of riders had to be evacuated from a stalled Blue Line subway train. But by Monday next, a red-faced Hizzoner was angrily berating the Chicago Transit Authority, demanding better performance now!!!

What changed? Though some speculate that one of CTA President Ron Huberman's City Hall enemies dropped the dime, a source who should know says Olympic officials phoned the mayor after his original comments to tell him such transit breakdowns would hurt Chicago's prospects to lure the 2016 Summer Games here.

The story fits the new reality at a City Hall that increasingly is focused on Olympics 24/7. If improving the CTA is needed to lure the Olympics, even a mayor who rarely if ever uses it will act. And that emerging reality is the reason why Springfield might yet—maybe—pass a major capital bill this year.

Plans for a big state capital program have been caught in a seemingly un-drainable political quagmire in Springfield. Even though funds are badly needed—for projects like western road access to O'Hare, renovation of the creaky CTA, ex-

EVEN THOUGH CAPITAL FUNDS ARE BADLY NEEDED, THE MORASS DEEPENS.

pansion of Metra, and the job-rich Create freight railroad plan—the morass deepens.

"I'm not at all encouraged," says Regional Transportation Authority Chairman Jim Reilly. "I wouldn't exactly say we're there," understates Rep. Barbara Flynn Currie of Chicago, the point person for House Democrats on a capital bill. "Not until the fall at least," confides a source close to Gov. Rod Blagojevich.

GREG
HINZ



Part of the problem is just plain old legislative squabbling. No one can agree on how much money to raise, how to raise it or what to spend it on.

Part of the problem is that there's no immediate crisis, like there was last winter when the CTA threatened to wipe out a huge chunk of its service on a certain date unless it got more money for day-to-day operations. Part of the problem is

that even some do-good groups, like the Metropolitan Planning Council, are worried that a lot of new money will end up in pork projects without tough standards.

But the major obstacle to passage of a big capital plan in Springfield is that no one there trusts anyone to keep their word.

Remember how Mr. Blagojevich at the last second rewrote that CTA operations bill to require free rides for seniors? Though the governor's camp insists he never promised not to pull such a stunt, major Springfield players are worried about what he might do if he got his hands on billions of dollars of new capital money. Particularly worried is House Speaker Michael Madigan, whose members lost scores of promised projects last year when the governor vetoed a budget deal that legislative leaders—but not G-Rod—had agreed upon.

Given that, there's only one person in the state who likely can persuade the speaker to go along with a deal. That would be the most powerful official in the state, Mr. Daley.

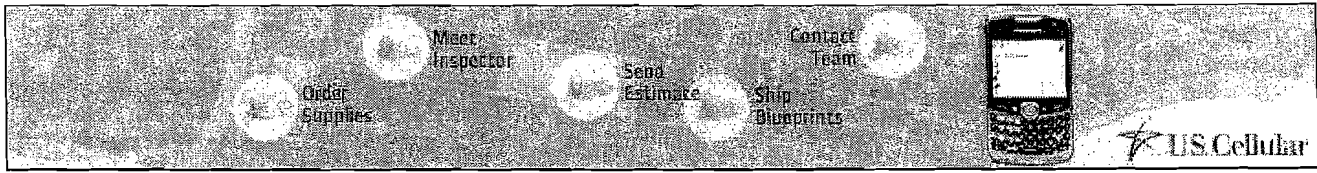
Admittedly, corraling the governor and Legislature is a lot tougher than, say, forcing Chicago aldermen to

their foie gras whether they like it or not. A deal over how to divide the spoils will have to be struck, and then the lawyers will have to find some way to absolutely, positively tie Mr. Blagojevich's hands. (Mr. Madigan once suggested letting Secretary of State Jesse White administer the capital program. That's fine with me, so long as none of his relatives are road builders.)

But once a deal is struck, only Mr. Daley, perhaps with an assist from Barack Obama, is in a position to really bring along the speaker.

No capital money, no snazzed-up CTA. No snazzed-up CTA, no Olympics. No Olympics, no legacy—or at least not as much of one. Keep that thought in mind, Mr. Mayor.

Contact: ghinz@crain.com



\$50B price tag to fix aging rail transit in Chicago, 6 other cities

April 30, 2009

(AP) — More than one-third of the trains, equipment and facilities of the nation's seven largest rail transit agencies are near the end of their useful life or past that point, the government said Thursday. Many have components that are defective or may be critically damaged.

A report by the Federal Transit Administration estimates it will cost \$50 billion to bring the rail systems in Chicago, Boston, New York, New Jersey, San Francisco, Philadelphia and Washington, D.C., into good repair and \$5.9 billion a year to maintain them.

Those seven systems carry 80 percent of the nation's rail transit passengers, or more than 3 billion passenger trips a year. They also include some of the oldest subways and commuter railroads. Some of their facilities date back more than a century.

"In a period of rising congestion and fuel prices, these services and the infrastructure and rolling stock that support them, are critical to the transportation needs and quality of life of the communities they serve," the report said.

"At the same time, this infrastructure is aging and the level of reinvestment appears insufficient to address a growing backlog of deferred investment needs," the report said.

Sen. Richard Durbin, D-Ill., one of 11 senators who requested the report, said older transit systems have received a declining share of federal rail transit aid as newer systems have come online. In 1993, the seven largest rail transit systems received 90 percent of federal modernization funds, compared with 70 percent today.

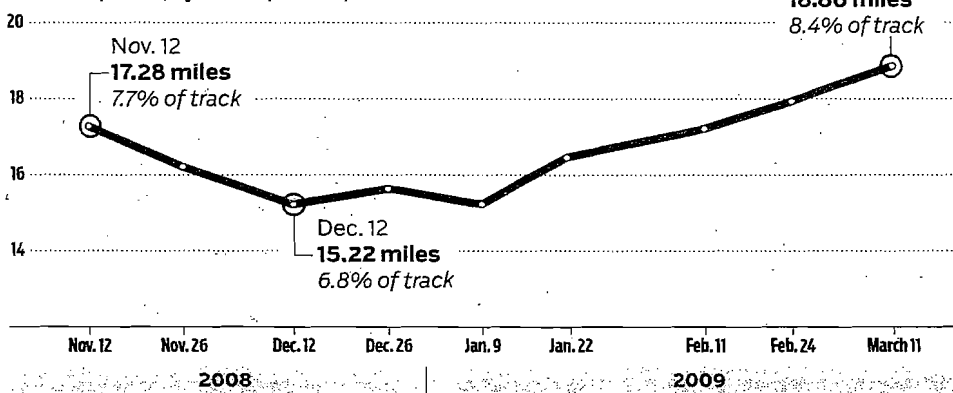
The study rated 8 percent of the assets of the seven rail transit agencies as in poor condition because they have outlived their useful life and are in need of immediate repair and replacement and may have critically damaged parts. An additional 27 percent were rated in marginal condition because they are near or past their useful life and may have defective or deteriorated components, requiring increasing maintenance.

Excluding the seven large system, less than 20 percent of the assets of rail transit systems nationally are in poor or marginal condition, the study said.

The study comes as Congress is gearing up to overhaul highway and transit programs over the next six years through soon-to-be-introduced legislation that some lawmakers estimated will seek about a half trillion dollars.

TOTAL LENGTH OF CTA SLOW ZONES

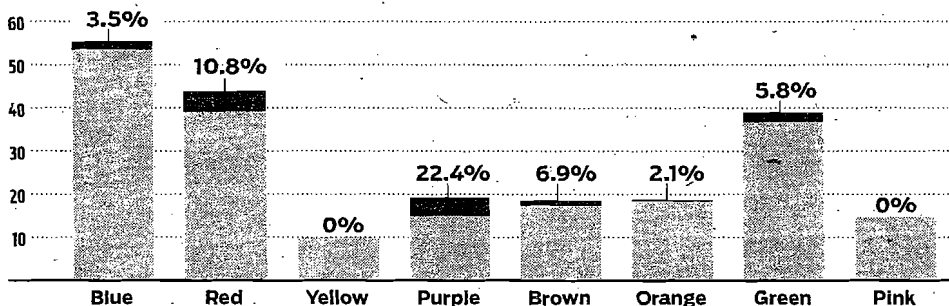
In miles of track, by date of CTA report



SLOW ZONES BY RAIL LINE

On March 11, 2009, track in total miles

■ Percent of track in slow zones



SOURCE: CTA

TRIBUNE

Slow zones on the 'L' crop up because of weathered track

By **Jon Hilkevitch**
TRIBUNE REPORTER

3-19-09

CTA trains are again operating at lower speeds over more track because of an increase in potentially unsafe conditions, a discouraging about-face for a transit agency that has worked hard for more than a year redirecting limited funds to reduce slow zones.

About 19 miles of track are under slow-zone orders, according to the latest CTA Rail Customer Impact Map. That's up from 15 miles systemwide in December. It marks the first setback since an effort to get rid of slow zones began in late 2007.

The CTA operates 224 miles of track over eight rail lines. A project to replace rotted rail ties and rusty tracks reduced slow zones from 23 percent of total trackage in October 2007 to 7 percent in December 2008. Since then, slow zones have crept up to more than 8 percent today.

CTA officials said it remains their goal to eliminate slow zones, which rank as the No. 1 complaint among train customers. Although the total cost for the budgeted slow zone repairs is \$321.5 million, money is not available for additional work, officials said. And if state and federal capital funding is not approved soon, slow zones

would inevitably increase.

The Purple Line/Evanston Express currently has the highest percentage of slow zones, almost one-fourth of the total trackage on the line, while the stretch of the Blue Line between O'Hare International Airport and Logan Square has seen the largest reduction in slow zones, from 35 percent in late 2007 to about 6 percent now.

Transit agency officials said there is no lack of commitment to wipe out slow zones. Rather, the work was put mostly on hold over the winter because of tough weather conditions, they said.

The erosion of ballast that helps secure the track was responsible for a spike in slow zones this year on the Congress branch of the Blue Line to Forest Park and the Dan Ryan branch of the Red Line to 95th Street, officials said.

Slow zones more than doubled to 13 percent this month from 5 percent in November on the Congress branch, according to CTA records. On the Dan Ryan Red Line, slow zones grew to 14 percent this month from 9 percent in November. The CTA is using money from the federal stimulus to cut slow zones over about 36,000 feet of track in the Blue Line Dearborn subway.

jhilkevitch@tribune.com

Mayor defending police after Taste violence

Tuesday, July 08, 2008 | 6:01 PM



By Charles Thomas

CHICAGO (WLS) -- A rash of gun violence last week during Taste of Chicago and the fireworks show on July 3 concerns Mayor Daley. One person was killed and at least three others wounded in what the mayor describes as the work of a few people among a sea of well-behaved festival-goers.

Mayor Daley is defending how police handled the crowds and the violence after the Taste last week. He was out of town last Thursday and Friday when shootings happened in the Loop after The Taste of Chicago had closed. But, ABC7 is told, the mayor was in touch with police soon after the first incident when neighborhood-style violence visited tourism-dependent downtown.

"Any type of shooting is serious, not just downtown, any part of this city, any type of shooting," the mayor said.

In his first public comments on the Loop violence, the mayor conceded the Taste of Chicago and the city's fireworks display did attract a fair number of gangbangers, most of whom, he says, behaved themselves.

"Yes, we had gangbangers down there. I will be very frank," said the mayor. "They didn't do anything wrong. They came down with families and everything else. Everybody knows that. We had no problems."

Only a few of the 1 million people on the street last Thursday night, said the mayor, were involved in the gunfire at Congress and Dearborn that resulted in one death and three injuries.

"We had a number of individuals in and around the CTA, had a disagreement, they all know each other, started shooting," Mayor Daley said.

Superintendent Jody Weis, who the vacationing mayor reportedly telephoned early Friday hours after the incident, increased police presence at the Taste.

"It was interesting that he brought in more people after the incident, so it also begs the question, were there sufficient people there to begin with?" said Ald. Isaac Carothers, 29th Ward.

After the festival closed Friday night, there was another non-fatal shooting outside the Cultural Center on Randolph.

CeaseFire's Tio Hardiman agreed that downtown got a taste of Chicago's violent South and West side neighborhoods.

"If these young people don't get the help they really, really need, what's gonna happen, it's gonna spill over outside of the community, downtown Chicago, North Side of Chicago, because we all have to work together," said Hardiman.

The mayor defended police strategies at the Taste, saying there was no legal way to determine which festival-goers were armed gangbangers and which ones were not.

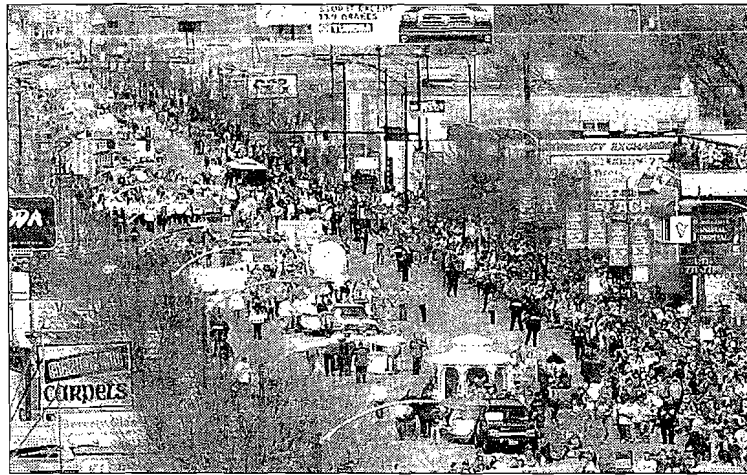
"You have to be cautious. You can't just send 100 policemen and grab, say, Gang X, African-Americans, or grabbing every African-American in this unit. You'd have a full-scale riot. You have to

3-10-09

LINK REAL CHICAGO VOICES

EDITOR

voting-by-mail option



The South Side Irish Parade in 2007. | MATT MARTON-SOUTHTOWNSTAR.

Olympic Committee should see South Side Irish parade

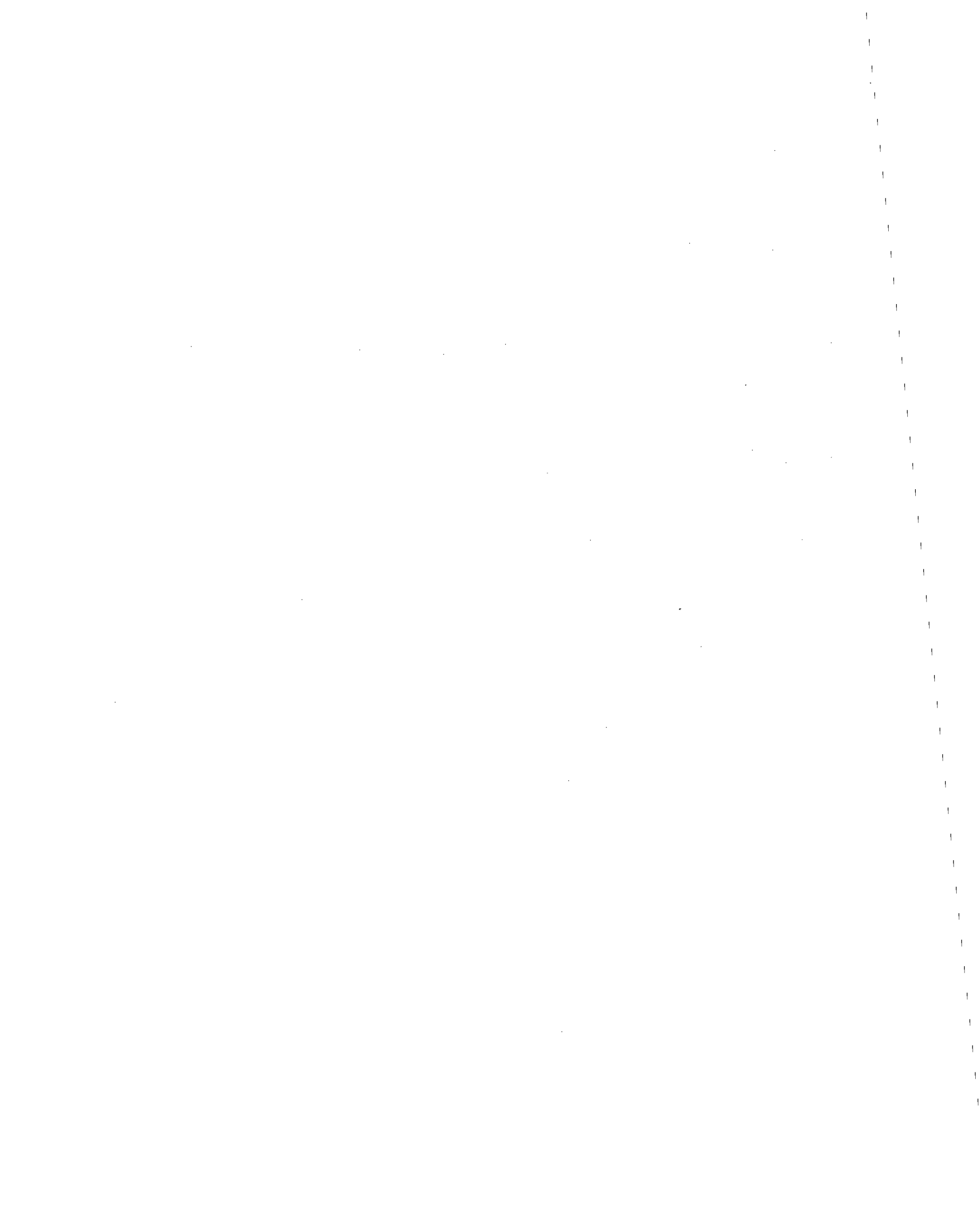
Before settling on a host city for the 2016 Summer Games, the Olympic Committee should visit Chicago in mid-March to experience the South Side Irish St. Patrick's Day Parade.

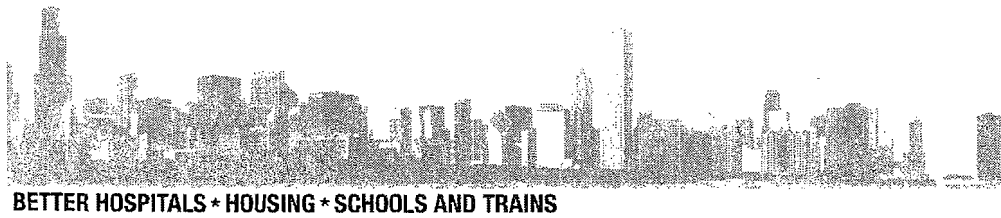
I've lived in Morgan Park for more than 30 years and have watched the parade evolve from a small, family-oriented event into a crowded, drunken fest where the neighborhood is trashed, underage kids walk around with open con-

tainers of alcohol, and never enough portable toilets (attendees simply relieve themselves in the alleys or on our lawns). The police and city services do their best to keep a lid on things, but they are stretched thin.

If Chicago can't handle a neighborhood parade, we certainly can't manage an international event that will draw even larger crowds.

**Mary Esterhammer-Fic,
Morgan Park**

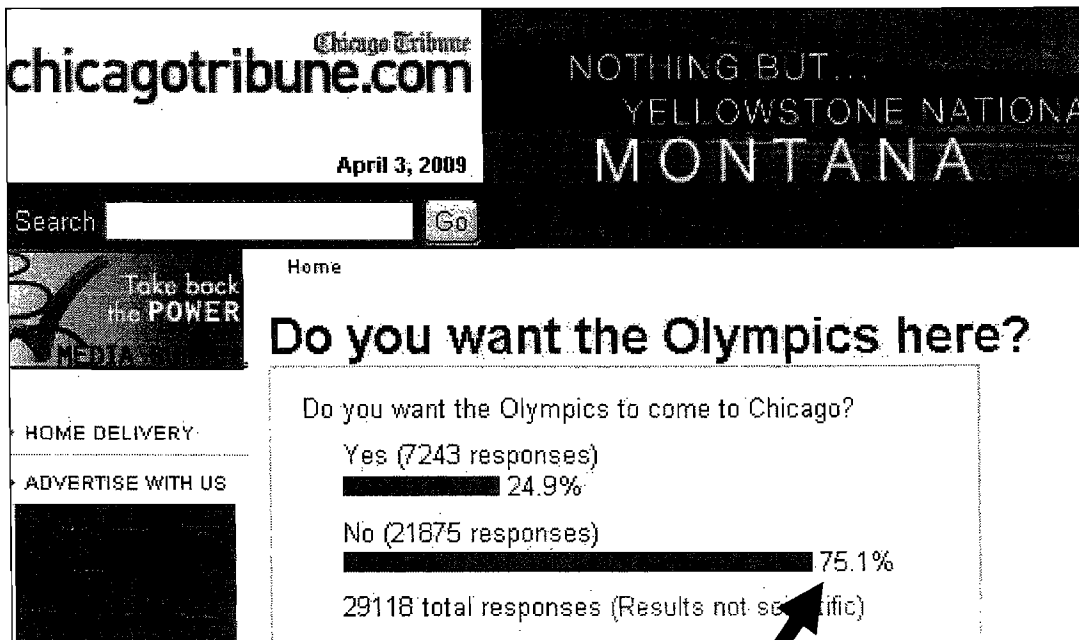
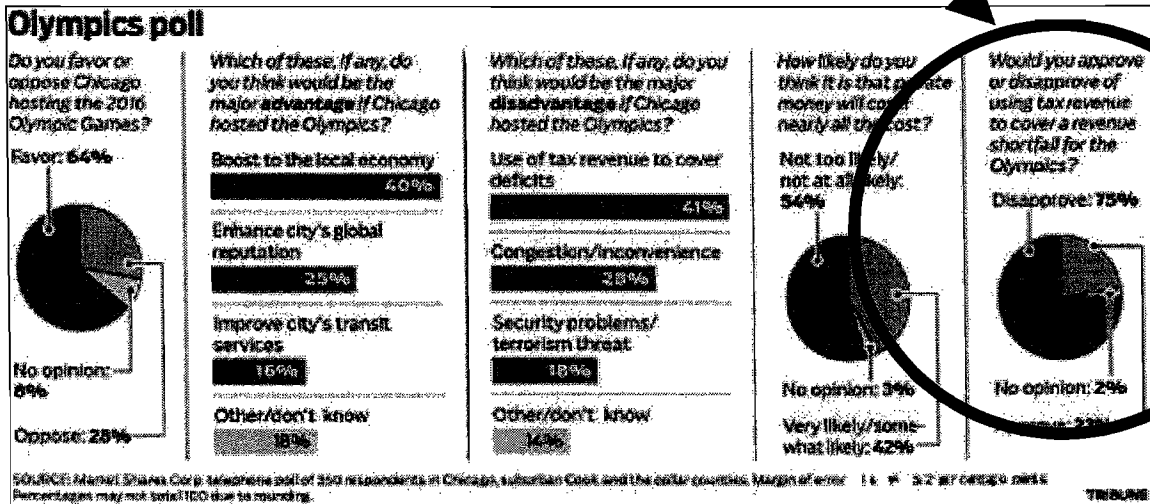




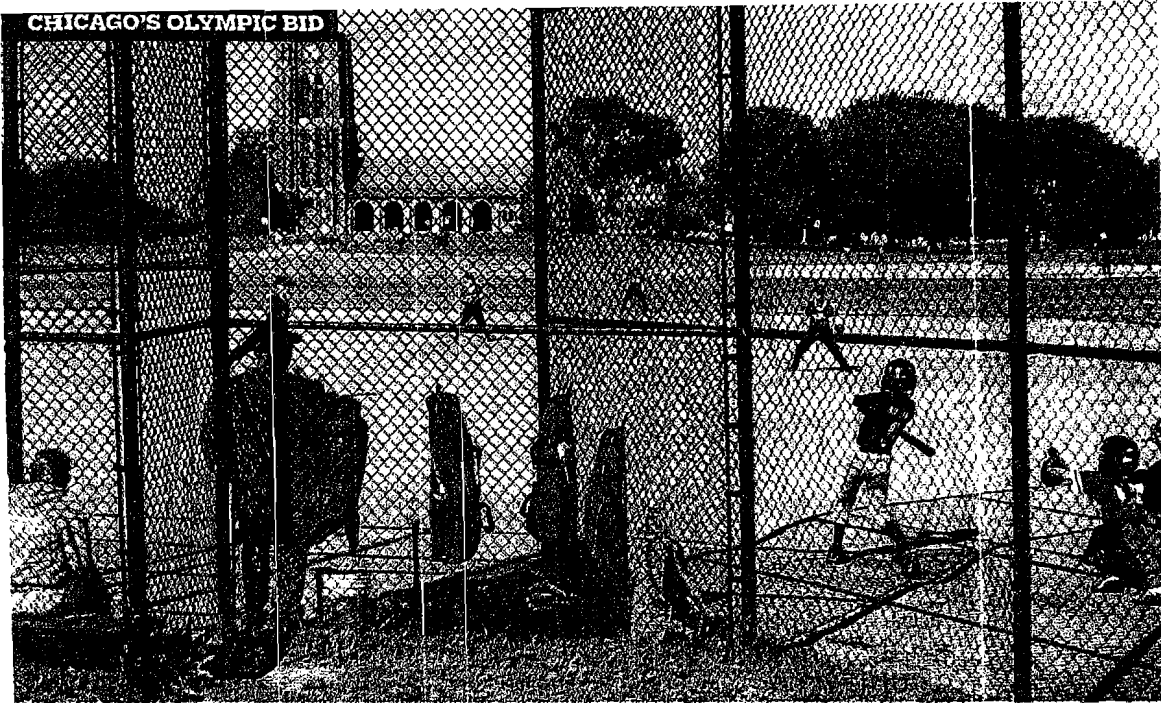
Lack of Public Support. Despite what you are being told, the people of Chicago DO NOT want the games. When people realize that they will be picking up the tab for the games, they oppose the bid by an overwhelming majority.

THE PEOPLE OF CHICAGO DO NOT WANT THE OLYMPIC GAMES

WHEN PEOPLE REALIZE THAT THEY WILL PAY FOR YEARS THROUGH HIGHER TAXES AND DECREASED SERVICES FOR THE GAMES, THEY OVERWHELMINGLY OPPOSE THE BID.



DESPITE THE FACT THAT THE 2016 COMMITTEE HAS OVER \$40 MILLION TO MARKET THE BID AND DESPITE THE FACT THAT THE MAYOR HAS SILENCED EVERY CIVIC GROUP IN THE CITY FROM CRITICIZING THE BID, WE FIND NO POPULAR SUPPORT FOR THE BID.



This baseball field in Lincoln Park is the proposed site of the tennis venue for the 2016 Summer Olympics. SCOTT STRAZZANTE/TRIBUNE PHOTOS

Parks' construction has athletes nervous

PARK USERS DO NOT WANT PUBLIC PARKS DESTROYED FOR GAMES

WASHINGTON PARK

"When they start tearing up the park, where are we going to play?"

—Billy Bean, co-owner and coach of the South Side Pirates, who says he is pro-Olympics but worries about losing the park



Many worry that Olympic work will force them out

By Kathy Bergen and David Heinzmann
TRIBUNE REPORTERS

Hands on his hips, his vision trained on the batter, coach Billy Bean calls out, "Let's go, babe, let's go."

Bean paces and pauses, his head swiveling as he tracks the young adults' game on this softly overcast Sunday morning in Washington Park. The batter checks his swing on a wayward pitch, and Bean responds with, "Good eye, good eye."

This dance is second nature to the retired machine operator—a ritual he has been performing in this South Side park since 1972. And it is one he fears losing.

If Chicago wins its bid for the 2016 Summer Olympics, the northern 200 acres of this sprawling park along with a host of other prime parklands will morph into multiyear construction zones in preparation for 17 days of international competition followed by nearly two weeks of Paralympic contests.

Indeed, the city's parks and lakefront are the bid's central selling point. "I don't think you can win without using the parks," bid chairman Patrick Ryan said. "Let's face it, the lakefront and the parks are very attractive facilities

WAVELAND COURTS

"I think, in general, it's going to be a nuisance for everybody. This is one of the most popular courts in the city."

—Erin Henry, 24, Columbia College theater student



LAKEFRONT BIKE PATH

"I wouldn't mind if Chicago got the Olympics, but because this is such a great trail, I guess it would sort of [stink] if it was interrupted."

—Sean MacDonald, 23, Columbia College film student



Budget cuts to cost 1,000 CPS jobs

\$475 MILLION GAP | Half of the non-classroom positions to be axed in two weeks

Up to 1,000 Chicago Public Schools non-classroom employees will lose their jobs this year under reorganization to save \$100 million.

June 10, 2009 - <http://www.suntimes.com/news/education/1615055.CST-NWS-cps-061009>

BY MAUDLYNE IHEJIRIKA Staff Reporter mihejirika@suntimes.com

Up to 1,000 Chicago Public Schools non-classroom employees will lose their jobs this year under a reorganization to save \$100 million.

About half the layoffs will hit central office -- 17 percent of employees there -- in the next two weeks, while another 500 will be cut from citywide positions over the next year, sources said.



Positions to be axed will be decided by a new executive team -- many culled from the CTA and city government -- introduced by new CEO Rea Huberman on Tuesday.

"We have identified areas where we can operate more efficiently," said Huberman.

The proposed cuts, to plug a looming \$475 million shortfall, are the largest since 2006.

The team of 16 put together by Huberman -- known as a performance-driven manager -- is strong in business management. Four come from his former agency, CTA; three worked for Mayor Daley; two are from the police department, and seven from within CPS.

"It's a good first start," said teachers union president Martin Stewart. "But some of these people coming in from City Hall and CTA are outside the education profession. There are a lot more MBAs than Ph.Ds."

www.chicagotribune.com/news/local/chicago/chi-harbors-city-zone-15-may15,0,820039.story

Chicago Park District set to add 2 new high-profit harbors

Park District prepares to boost capacity by more than 1,100 boats

By Jaime Adame - Special to the Tribune - May 15, 2009

Barring unforeseen problems with needed approvals, construction could begin next spring on two city harbors that would expand the number of mooring spaces for recreational boaters by about 20 percent and bring in more tourism dollars, Chicago Park District officials say.

The Chicago Gateway Harbor project involves a reinforcement of dilapidated Dime Pier, located about 480 feet south of Navy Pier and 400 feet north of Chicago Harbor Lock, and creation of nightly as well as hourly boating slips. The harbor could open in 2011, parks officials say.

"Gateway will be the only Park District harbor intended primarily for visiting boaters," said Park District spokeswoman Jessica Maxey-Faulkner. A lack of such docking opportunities "represents a loss in revenue and related economic impact potential," according to the Chicago Lakefront Harbor Framework Plan.

The second and larger of the projects, at 31st Street, was a proposed Olympic sailing venue, though bid officials now say Burnham Harbor would be used for sailing.

If Chicago is awarded the 2016 Olympics, displaced boaters could look to the new harbors for mooring spaces, park officials say.

PEOPLE UNDERSTAND CONNECTION BETWEEN LAYING OFF STAFF FROM PUBLIC SCHOOLS AND FINANCIAL NEEDS OF THE GAMES



No Games Chicago <nogameschicago@gmail.com>

IOC Poll Results

4 messages

2016 Olympic Bid <2016olympicbid@gmail.com>**Thu, May 7, 2009 at 6:27 PM**

Reply-To: nogames_discussion@googlegroups.com

To: nogames_discussion@googlegroups.com

The IOC poll showed 67 percent supported the Olympic bid, significantly lower than Chicago 2016's claim of 77 percent. However, even the IOC numbers may only reflect the City of Chicago and not the full region, which would likely lower the number significantly.

Note the last paragraph in the following article, which is why No Games Chicago is critical to stopping the bid...

Chicagoans' support lower, Olympic poll shows

May 7, 2009 5:10 PM | [1 Comment](#)

A public opinion poll commissioned by the International Olympic Committee showed Chicagoans' support for the 2016 Olympics to be 10 percentage points lower than the figure Chicago officials used in their bid book based on their own polling, the Tribune has learned.

The IOC poll showed 67 percent of Chicagoans supported having the Summer Games, according to sources familiar with the results.

Chicago's bid book listed 77 percent support from polling done by Zogby International late last year. Chicago 2016 spokesman Patrick Sandusky declined to comment on the poll numbers.

"That is for the IOC to report," Sandusky said, referring to the evaluation commission report that's to be released a month before the Oct. 2 IOC vote choosing the host city.

A poll of registered voters in Chicago and the suburbs commissioned by the Tribune in late January showed 64 percent support for an Olympics in Chicago.

Meanwhile, the Madrid bid committee understandably was ready to do something none of its three rivals for the 2016 Summer Games have done:

Release the results of the IOC's polling about public support for the Olympics in their city.

Manuel Cobo, vice-mayor of Madrid, told a press conference Thursday the IOC polling showed an impressive 85 percent support. That was very close to the 89 percent support from the city of Madrid in polling commissioned by the bid committee and included in the bid book submitted in Feb. 12.

A wire service story two weeks ago said Tokyo received just 56 percent in the IOC polling, done in each city on the same day in late February.

The Tokyo bid committee declined to confirm or deny that number, citing "respect [for] the IOC decision to release the data in their report."

The Tokyo bid book had reported the lowest support of the four, 69 percent in the city. In its bid book, Rio reported support from the state, not the city. It was given at 82 percent.

That Madrid would make the numbers public during the penultimate day of the IOC evaluation commission visit reflects a



1211 S. Western, Suite 203
Chicago, IL 60608

THE NORTH LAWNDALE COMMUNITY NEWS

FREE

Since 1999, More News, More of Your Issues, and More of Your Community Voices and Faces. "News that Improves Your Life"

Serving North Lawndale, East & West Garfield, Austin, Pilsen, Humboldt Park, Near Westside & South Lawndale

PUBLISHER: STRATEGIC HUMAN SERVICES

VOLUME NO. 11 - ISSUE NO. 21

ISSN 1548-6087

May 21 - May 27, 2009

PROVIDING INFORMATION ON RESOURCES AND EVENTS THAT IMPROVE THE LIFESTYLE OF INDIVIDUALS AND FAMILIES IN OUR COMMUNITY

Open Letter: Chicago 2016: A Legacy of Disrespect

The Lawndale Alliance hosted Community Awareness Meeting I: 2016 Olympics: Pros and Cons, at Dvorak School on May 12, 2009. The purpose of the meeting was to provide an overview of research of the Olympics conducted by DePaul University Egan Urban Center and to discuss the pros and cons of Chicago hosting the Olympics in 2016. Confirmed panelists included representatives from Chicago 2016, No Games Chicago, community organizations, and North Lawndale residents Alderman Sharon Dixon was invited to share her views, but did not attend the meeting. There were about 80 people in attendance, including members of the press.

The representative from Chicago 2016 confirmed his participation weeks ago, only to cancel the day before the meeting. As a result of this last minute withdrawal, area residents were unable to hear the most significant arguments promoting the Olympics, namely from Chicago 2016. Chicago 2016 indicated that they cancelled because of their recent decision to only participate in meetings sponsored by the Chicago Park District in concert with the Douglas Park Advisory Council.

This seems quite disingenuous, as Chicago 2016 did not invite this group to be a part of the Chicago 2016 Outreach Advisory Council—in spite of the fact that an Olympic venue is planned for Douglas Park. Equally disturbing is the fact that no one from the community seems to know who any of the Douglas Park Advisory Council members are. To the best of our knowledge, no Douglas Park Advisory Council members identified themselves at recent planning sessions held at Douglas Park.

Chicago 2016's decision not to participate cost North Lawndale residents an excellent opportunity to hear both the positive and negative aspects of bringing the Olympics to Chicago. Consequently, it is very difficult for us to make informed decisions. Most importantly, we missed an opportunity to hear how Chicago 2016 plans to address serious areas of concern, namely:

- Plans to demolish the existing Collins High School Campus gym for construction of the Olympic velodrome; the potential closure of the Collins building as a high school and the resultant displacement of North Lawndale College Prep and Collins Academy students.
- Collins High School is the only building in the community that was actually constructed for use as a high school, and is of significant social value to the community.

Lack of community engagement in the planning and decision-making process.

Use of TIF dollars to finance Olympics projects.

The need for an implementation plan that provides real economic opportunity for local residents and business owners.

Lack of transparency surrounding site plans, logistics and financial projections stemming from the Olympics.

Potential displacement of low-moderate income homeowners.

The role and membership of the Douglas Park Advisory Council.

If we cannot trust Chicago 2016 to keep commitments concerning a neighborhood meeting, then we cannot realistically expect them to keep their commitments to not use taxpayer funds for the Olympics, provide the Community Benefits outlined in the Chicago 2016 Ordinance and MOU, or to uphold their end of any other agreement. North Lawndale residents have been substantially excluded from discussions regarding the Olympics and the potential impact to our community. We deserve to have our issues addressed.

The Lawndale Alliance, 4911 West 21st Place, Chicago, IL 60623, Phone: 773-521-3137, Fax: 773-522-1832



May 13, 2009

Mr. Timothy J. Mitchell
General Superintendent, Chicago Park District
541 N. Fairbanks Chicago, IL 60611

RE: Freedom of Information Request

Dear Mr. Mitchell:

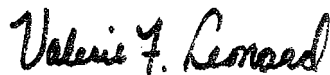
On May 12, 2009, the Lawndale Alliance hosted Community Awareness Meeting I: 2016 Olympics: Pros and Cons Overview of the Olympics by DePaul University and panel discussion with Chicago 2016, No Games Chicago, community organizations, and North Lawndale residents. Alderman Dixon was invited to share her views as well.

Mr. Arnold Randall, Director of Neighborhood Legacy for Chicago 2016, after confirming his participation weeks ago, cancelled a day before the meeting. As a result, the audience was not able to hear Chicago 2016's plans or perspectives. I respectfully request the following information, pursuant to the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA):

1. Description of the relationship between the Chicago Department of Planning, Chicago Park District, Chicago Public Schools and Chicago 2016 in the potential planning and development of venues and related structures stemming from the Olympics
2. Copies of any letters of support provided to the Chicago Park District on behalf of Chicago 2016
3. Description of any transactions involving the sale or transfer of property between the City of Chicago, Chicago Public Schools, Chicago Park District and/or Chicago 2016
4. Description of any required approval process to demolish the Collins High School gym and construct an Olympic velodrome
5. Date(s) of Chicago Park District board meetings and minutes relating to the proposed demolition of the Collins High School Campus gym and construction of an Olympic velodrome
6. List of the members of the Douglas Park Advisory Council
7. Calendar of meetings of the Douglas Park Advisory Council
8. Copies of any plans related to the 2016 Olympics, as they relate to the Chicago Park District

Your assistance in this matter is most appreciated.

Sincerely,



Valerie F. Leonard



- HOME
- OUR CITY
- OUR NATION
- OUR WORLD
- OUR FOCUS
- OUR VIEWS
- OUR HEALTH
- OUR BUSINESS
- OUR ENTERTAINMENT
- OUR CULTURE
- OUR FAITH
- OUR SPORTS
- OUR EVENTS
- CLASSIFIEDS
- PHOTOS
- ARCHIVES

HOME OUR CITY IOC GIVES CREDENCE TO OLYMPICS DISPLACEMENT CONCERNS

Wednesday, April 15, 2009

IOC gives credence to Olympics displacement concerns

by Wendell Hutson



After meeting with protest groups while visiting Chicago last week, members of the International Olympic Committee's Evaluation Commission said they are concerned about possible displacement should Chicago win the 2016 summer Games.

Several Chicago protest groups voiced their concerns about displacement during the IOC's visit including No Games Chicago, which met with the evaluation group.

"We met for 15 minutes with the IOC and told them about the number of projects here that ran past deadline and its budget," said Willie J.R. Fleming, a co-organizer for No Games Chicago. "Look at the redevelopment of public housing by the CHA and Millennium Park. No Games is not anti-Olympic, but we are for accountability."

Gilbert Felli, an IOC member, said after meeting with No Games Chicago and Housing Bronzeville, another community organization that is concerned about displacement, it now plans to wait and see how Chicago 2016 will address displacement concerns.

"This organization (No Games Chicago) is very concerned about displacement from the Olympics, which is always a concern with residents," said Felli. "It's always difficult to build housing for the Olympics and not displace anyone, and they (Chicago 2016) need to address this issue."

Chicago 2016 is the city's Olympics committee.

Related Content:

- Olympic Village attracts Chicago made a 'strong' impression
- Lawmaker: Trade Olympic aid for Olympic protesters take their Oprah Winfrey to attend dinner for Chicago touts \$1B safety net for

Related to:

- Olympics 2016 International Olympic Committee's Evaluation Commission
- No Games Chicago Olympics Chicago
- Olympic stadium 2016 Olympic Games

Felli said that the proposed Olympic Village site, at 2929 S. Ellis Ave., is beautiful and that the IOC's overall consensus was that the community supports the Games.

Mayor Richard M. Daley said residents should not worry about any displacement.

"There will be no displacement. We will not displace one person," he said while the IOC was in town.

The city chose the Michael Reese Hospital campus for the Olympic Village to avoid displacements, said Lori Healey, president of Chicago 2016.

"That's why we selected the Michael Reese site for the Olympic Village because it is an isolated location," she said.

Fleming is not sold on the idea.

"That sounds good on paper, but in reality we know that the Olympic Village will increase property values and force African-American renters out of Bronzeville," Fleming said.

Other community groups also believe that there is more to the city hosting the Olympics than what meets the eye.

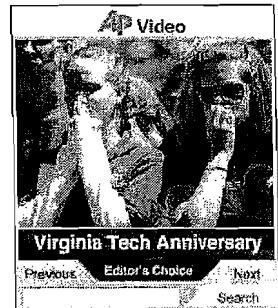
To read the rest of this article, subscribe to our digital or paper edition. For previous editions, contact us for details.

Member Log-In

Username:
 Password:

Forgot your password?

Search



AccuWeather.com

Chicago, IL

Hourly Info | 15 Days

Mostly Clear
51°F

RealFeel®: 47°F
Winds: NE at 7 mph

Weather Forecast | Weather Maps

Join Our Mailing List

Email:

SUBSCRIBE: GOO DIGITAL EDITION

Digital Edition

Poll

What are you most concerned with Illinois' stimulus money taking care of?

Myself (I need the money!)

Fixing the streets from potholes

HOME PHONE SERVICE
 START NEW RESIDENTIAL PHONE SERVICE WITH NO MONEY DOWN!
 1-800-480-4198
* If you are in one of the qualifying Federal Assistance programs.



Jackson Park/JPAC home. Olympics 2016 homepage (with more links to pages and sites). Parks home.

2016 Olympic proposals and Jackson Park, Chicago Illinois

Presented by Hyde Park-Kenwood Community Conference, its Parks Committee, and its website hydepark.org and by Jackson Park Advisory Council.

By Gary Ossewaarde

This page describes Olympic proposed hockey venue for Jackson Park, reactions of the Advisory Council, modified request in 2008, and location changes made at the end of 2008 (incompletely delineated). General Fifth Ward committees on benefits are in the Olympics homepage.

- **Summation**
- **JPAC initial position**
- **JPAC September 10 2008: 2016 presentation and summation of mtg. discussion, preceded and followed by media coverage**
- **JPAC letter of November 2008 modifying position to moving venue from lagoons and no enlarged road**
- **Changes announced December 2008**
- **JPAC response, request for presentation**

Jackson Park Council positions

Jackson Park Council was not consulted before either the initial decision or the details announced in January 2007 (which included Hockey field placement, in the soccer area between Hayes Drive and the Lagoons/Bob o link Meadow/ Golf Driving Range. JPAC members at first felt bowled over by the proposal, President Ross Petersen saying he was disappointed and (Herald, Jan. 31 2007) "We don't think that that's going to be a good spot. The site is not particularly accessible. It's very close to sensitive natural areas and it's going to displace a lot of people who use the field for soccer," Petersen said. Petersen said during the summer, high school students, college players and members of the American Youth Soccer Organization use the soccer field on a daily basis.

After discussions, in July 2007 JPAC passed its first resolution: **2007. In September 2016 made a presentation. Subsequently JPAC sent a letter to 2016 and Ald. Hairston outlining JPAC members' concerns.**

July 9 2007 Jackson Park Advisory Council passed a resolution of opposition to venues in that park:

"The Jackson Park Advisory Council opposes as ill-advised and inappropriate the siting of Olympic venues in Jackson Park."

Presentation and query. A largely-attended JPAC meeting with the Olympic Committee September 10 saw a serious engagement of question and answers and what might or might not work. JPAC passed no new resolutions and will continue to study and engage. Coverage ahead of the Sept. 10 meeting.



The Washington Post

Teachers union says Chicago forces Olympic support

Advertisement -- Your Ad here

The Associated Press
Sunday, May 3, 2009 6:15 PM

CHICAGO -- A teachers union says an e-mail from the Chicago school board appears to force principals to support the city's bid to host the Summer Olympics in 2016.

Chicago Teachers Union spokeswoman Rosemaria Genova says the April 22 e-mail from Board President Michael Scott appeared to force schools to participate in an event promoting the bid.

Scott's note for Olympic Week in America ended with: "You must sign up by Monday, April 27."

Genova says participation could be difficult as the city's proposal includes closing some schools near Olympic venues.

Scott said Friday that registrations were "absolutely voluntary" but acknowledged the e-mail was strongly worded.

© 2009 The Associated Press

Ads by Google

Olympic Airlines Flights

Find Cheap Flights Now. Compare Exclusive Airline Deals & Save Big!
Travelation.com/OlympicAirlines

Carl Thomas in Concert

Friday, May 29 at 7:00pm in Chicago Get tickets by clicking above.
www.kingcollegeprep.org

Teachers Salary

Get the career you really want with the right education. Degrees online
www.Phoenix-Degrees.com

Teachers recoil from school Olympic push

Board chief's note called heavy-handed, but he says participation is voluntary

by **David Heinzmann**
TRIBUNE REPORTER

The president of the Chicago Public Schools board, who is also a member of the Chicago 2016 Olympic committee, has asked all of the city's school principals to get on board with the push to bring the Summer Games to Chicago.

In an e-mail sent April 22 to principals, Board President Michael Scott said: "I am requesting that you register your school for Olympic Week in America. Please take a few minutes to identify a staff person who can register your school. ... You must sign up by Monday, April 27."

Olympic Week in America is a promotional effort to raise the profile of Chicago's bid starting Mon-

day.

Scott's e-mail stated that each school's participation would be graded as "gold, silver or bronze," with the lowest level including developing an "Olympic week proclamation," raising the Chicago 2016 flag at the school and including Olympic-themed activities in the classrooms. The e-mail also said that a person from Scott's office would be following up by phone with the principals.

Although teachers union officials said Scott's e-mail was a heavy-handed attempt to force school employees to support the bid, the board president said that's not what he intended.

"It's absolutely voluntary," he said Friday. He acknowledged that

Rio de Janeiro

The Olympic evaluation commission praises the Brazilian city. SEC. 1, PAGE 16

the e-mail was strongly worded in its urging to participate, but said school leaders shouldn't feel intimidated.

"There was no passion associated with the advocacy," he said. "There was passion with relation to the subject, but not to people's participation."

Not all principals have signed on to participate, and those who do not will face no retaliation, said Scott, who was appointed to both the presidency of the school board and the Chicago 2016 committee by Mayor Richard Daley. The mayor has made winning the Olympics a priority of his administration.

Scott has been heavily involved with the Olympic effort. He and for-

mer Chicago Housing Authority chief Terry Peterson were the lead negotiators between Chicago 2016 and community groups on the "community benefits agreement" dealing with minority hiring, affordable housing and other reassurances that the development of the Olympic Games would not adversely affect Chicago's neighborhoods.

Still, the move smacked of coercion for some, including the Chicago Teachers Union, whose officials said several schools located near proposed Olympic venues have been slated for closing.

"The language in the memo didn't seem to leave participants much choice," said Rosemaria Genova, press secretary for the Chicago Teachers Union. "Many people favor the idea of the Olympics coming to Chicago, but it is difficult for principals, teachers and staff to participate in Olympic-themed activities when schools are closing in areas

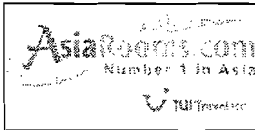
near Olympic venues."

The school system plans to close Lathrop School near a planned Olympic site in Douglas Park as well as a campus that includes multiple schools near the United Center, which also would be used if Chicago hosts the Games.

Other critics of the Olympic bid said Scott's request could have principals looking over their shoulders if they're not fully on board.

"If the principal's contract is renewed this year or next year, will it be renewed?" said Tom Tresser, an organizer of the No Games group, which opposes Chicago investing in sources in the Olympics. He added that principals also may ask themselves, "Do I have any discretion grants pending—those things are competitive—and am I going to register Scott or the mayor?"

dheinzmann@tribune.com



Special In
Asia!

BOOK NOW



SEARCH

[China Tour](#) [Beijing Olympic](#) [Online degree](#) [Cheap domain](#) [Debt problems](#) [Tibet Tour](#) [China factory](#)

Thousands protest against Olympic Games in Chicago

2009-04-03 11:07:47 [[Big](#) [Normal](#) [Small](#)] [Comment](#)

CHICAGO, April 2 (Xinhua) -- A group opposed to spending money on the Olympics rather than on basic needs such as housing and education, held a rally at downtown Chicago Thursday when the International Olympic evaluation team arrived to inspect Chicago's bid for 2016 summer games.

A group calling itself "No Games Chicago" says the city should be spending money on schools and housing, public transportations and improvement of environment.

"We don't want Olympic Games, we want houses, we want schools, we want clinics", the protesters shouted.

Babara, who is working in a financial institute in Chicago, told Xinhua that she is opposing the Games, because "we have budget crisis, we are under economic turndowns, we want the money to be used for our housing, education, public transit." she said Chicago should not follow Athens Olympic Games which lost more than 8 billion U.S. dollars.

Another protester named David said that he lives in the south of Chicago near the Washington Park, but the Chicago 2016 plans to build a Olympic stadium in the park. He questioned the legacy of an Olympic stadium in a park he considers his lawn.

"Such a plan will damage the green environment and lead to decrease of properties and hike of prices of properties", he added.

Chanting "no contract, no Olympics," more than a thousand off-duty Chicago police officers formed a picket line ringing the Chicago City Hall in the late morning to demonstrate their anger over troubled labor negotiations with the city administration.

Asked about the prospect of protests during a press conference, mayor Richard Daley said "Everyone has the right to demonstrate. Let them demonstrate."

Independent observers say protests have become quite common when cities are preparing to bid for or host Olympic Games.

Chicago is the first stop on the evaluation committee's itinerary. It will visit Tokyo, Rio de Janeiro and Madrid in the coming weeks, and the full IOC membership will select a host city from among the four finalists on October 2.

xinhuanet

Copyright © Chinadotcom All Rights Reserved

For advertising or other business potential, please E-mail to: english@bj.china.com

Chicago Tribune
chicagotribune.com

Archives Local

Archive for Monday, March 23, 2009

Chicago 2016: As IOC visit nears, protests getting louder

Foes of Olympics range from activists for the poor to preservationists



By Laurie Cohen and Kathy Bergen
March 23, 2009

Chicago won't appear as gung-ho as Olympics boosters would have hoped when international officials arrive in early April to assess the city's 2016 plans.

From an anti-Olympics rally downtown to pockets of unhappiness in some neighborhoods, opponents are making their displeasure known.

Some groups are dead set against the proposed Chicago Olympics, contending that the Games would use up money that would be better spent on crucial public needs. Others support the Games but oppose certain planned facilities that they contend would harm the environment or the city's historic architecture and parks.

Still others are jockeying to get their demands for Olympics benefits met before the International Olympic Committee's visit, when threats of protests are likely to carry the most weight with Mayor Richard Daley's administration.

"If [Daley] wants to air his dirty laundry to the world, that is entirely up to him," Denise Dixon, a member of a group pressing for contracts and housing for poor people and minorities, said at a City Hall news conference last week. "He doesn't want to see demonstrations in the street when they get here. He better come up with something."

Though public support is important to the IOC, the organization is accustomed to protests, and their effect on Chicago's chances is impossible to predict.

Asked about possible protests, Daley said the opposition might be premature because Chicago has not yet been selected.

"First of all, we don't even have it. ... This is not a sure thing. Maybe people think it is, but you do not have it," the mayor said.

Daley and other backers see the April visit as another step toward clinching the Games on Oct. 2, when IOC members will choose among Chicago, Tokyo, Madrid and Rio de Janeiro.

They say support remains strong, with 77 percent of Chicago residents backing the Games in a survey they commissioned in October. And they contend that the Olympics would bring huge economic benefits through construction, tourism spending and new jobs.

"We just want to make sure we show the IOC how excited we are about hosting the Games here," said Valerie Barker Waller, director of marketing for Chicago 2016, the group that's pushing the city's bid.

After being criticized by aldermen and others for not getting enough community input, Chicago 2016 quadrupled the size of its outreach advisory council last month. The council's 80 members include company officials and civic group executives with strong ties to City Hall, as well as some grass-roots activists who are likely to be more outspoken about their concerns.

Some expected protesters aren't just interested in sharing in Olympics resources. They want the resources to be used on projects other than the Games.

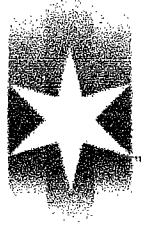
No Games Chicago, a recently formed group that is against a Chicago Olympics, is hoping to draw 2,000 protesters to a rally April 2 at Federal Plaza. The group will then march past City Hall to the Aon Center, where Chicago 2016 has its offices.

"We want to show the IOC that the people of Chicago do not want the Olympics," said Bob Quellos, a No Games organizer. Quellos said the protest also is intended to highlight the city's "mixed-up priorities."

- BLACK ENTERPRISE - <http://www.blackenterprise.com> -

Chicago's 2016 Olympics Bid Has Black Business Owners Concerned

Posted By [Chana Garcia](#) On March 12, 2009 @ 3:22 pm In [Business News](#) | [2 Comments](#)



CHICAGO 2016

CANDIDATE CITY



Among Chicago's black entrepreneurs, the Olympics is a subject that causes some uneasiness. There's little doubt about the financial opportunities the games would provide, but there's serious doubt about who would get first dibs on them.

As a candidate to host the 2016 games, Chicago has been heavily promoting the potential economic boon. But some of the more prominent black business professionals with connections downtown are looking for a formal policy of inclusion should the city's bid get accepted in October.

They don't want to leave anything to the whim of political bosses. In the Windy City, it's easy to get left out in the cold.

With seven months to go before the 2016 host is announced, it's still anybody's game. Chicago is competing against Tokyo, Rio de Janeiro, and Madrid. But with an endorsement from President Barack Obama, Chicago's most famous resident, members of the Olympic planning committee are hoping the odds fall in their favor. So are the city's black business owners.

"We have to make sure that we're involved in the planning stage, otherwise we won't be included," says Eugene Morris, president and CEO of **E. Morris Communications**^[1] (No. 15 on the B.E. Advertising Agencies list with \$41.3 million in billings). "It's very easy to say it will happen then when the time comes, it doesn't."

Chicago 2016^[2], the city's organizing committee, entered its bid two years ago, outlining plans to build the three largest arenas—the Aquatic Center, the Olympic Stadium, and the Olympic Village—in predominantly black neighborhoods on the South Side as a way to spark urban revitalization.

Chicago has the second largest black population in the nation and is home to 40,000 African American-owned businesses, including 12 B.E. 100s firms. Yet, it has been only recently that officials have started looking for buy-in from the black community, says the **Chicago Urban League's**^[3] David Thigpen. Since the black community stands to benefit the most from the estimated \$3.8 billion in revenues the games would attract, there's a level of suspicion about why it has been involved the least.

"Chicago 2016 has been working a closed shop," Thigpen says. "The upside to all this though is that we're now beginning to understand that if this is done right, there is a possibility for real economic benefit. Many are rightly thinking they ought to share in it."

At a luncheon sponsored by the Urban League last month, Mayor Richard Daley did his best to reassure the mostly black audience, which included the Rev. Jesse Jackson, Congressman Jesse Jackson Jr., and Atlanta Mayor Shirley Franklin. "This has to include everyone in the city, not leaving anyone out," Daley said.

With the Atlanta games as their benchmark, black professionals in Chicago realize all they have to gain. They're aware of the success of black-owned firms such as **H.J. Russell & Co** ^[4], (No. 13 on the B.E. Industrial/Service list with \$376.6 million in revenues), which profited nicely when it secured a contract to help build the \$200 million Olympic stadium in 1996.

They've mobilized, formed partnerships, and turned to community organizations such as the **Alliance of Business Leaders & Entrepreneurs** ^[5] (ABLE), a nonprofit comprised of Chicago's leading black CEOs.

"We're the city to get the Olympics," says Anthony Kitchens, president of ABLE and a member of Chicago 2016's business opportunities task force. "I think there will be tremendous opportunity for the small business community, and I'm hopeful that leadership remembers how it sold this—as an inclusive and diverse proposal."

Others such as Robert J. Dale, chief executive of **R.J. Dale Advertising and Public Relations** ^[6] (No. 14 on the B.E. Advertising Agencies list with \$43.9 million in billings), aren't that optimistic.

"We're trying to catch up and be included," Dale says, noting that contracts have already been doled out for the Olympic branding campaign, which is visible throughout the city. "It's not too late to participate, but it's too late to get our fair share."

Article printed from BLACK ENTERPRISE: <http://www.blackenterprise.com>

URL to article: <http://www.blackenterprise.com/business/business-news/2009/03/12/chicago%e2%80%99s-2016-olympics-bid-has-black-business-owners-concerned>

URLs in this post:

[1] **E. Morris Communications**: <http://www.emorris.com/>

[2] **Chicago 2016**: <http://www.chicago2016.org/>

[3] **Chicago Urban League's**: <http://www.cul-chicago.org/chicagourbanleague/site/default.asp>

[4] **H.J. Russell & Co**: <http://www.hjrussell.com/>

[5] **Alliance of Business Leaders & Entrepreneurs**: <http://www.ablechicago.com/>

[6] **R.J. Dale Advertising and Public Relations**: http://ablechicago.com/index.php/members/R.J_Dale_Advertising/

Copyright © 2008 BLACK ENTERPRISE. All rights reserved.

Cycling community feels left out of Chicago 2016 conversation

Christiana Johns
Staff Reporter

5-22-09

Members of the Yojimbo's Track Cats bicycle track racing group attended the recent Douglas Park Olympic Legacy community meeting to voice opinions over the use of park facilities after the 2016 Olympics.

Douglas Park is the proposed site for a velodrome where BMX bicycle races would be held should Chicago win the 2016 bid to host the Games and the cycling group is advocating for the facility to be permanent.

"The assumption is that no one will use it, but there are people here who would," said Brean Shea, a coach for Yojimbo's Track Cats. The cycling program is directed toward youth 14-18 years old who want to participate in track racing.

Shea said since the kids they train will be the average age of an Olympic athlete by 2016, having the Games in Chicago would attract more attention to the sport. He said the skills of the kids they coach should be nurtured now in order to potentially have local athletes competing here if

the Games are in Chicago.

Track racing is an Olympic sport, and there were 10 events for men and women at the 2008 Beijing Olympics.

Yojimbo's Program Administrator Chuck Cox said there is demand for a facility in the city as the popularity for the sport increases. He said his organization has to turn kids down because they don't have enough room in the program using only one facility and transportation to the Ed Rudolph Velodrome in north suburban Northbrook is a challenge.

"It's unfortunate the closest facility is in Northbrook," he said. "We could handle so many more kids if we had a central facility."

Cox said he thinks the cycling community has been disconnected from the Chicago 2016 planning committee because they have not been contacted directly regarding their opinions on the use of Olympic facilities. He said they heard of this meeting through word of mouth and that more cyclists would have attended the meeting except that

it was a prime race time.

Arnold Randall, director of neighborhood legacy for Chicago 2016 who led the meeting, said the goal of these meetings is to address concerns and learn what residents and communities want out of the park after the Olympics are over. He encouraged the group to keep attending meetings to give the planning committee their input.

Randall added that the velodrome could be used for several activities after the Games besides racing.

"It'll be a venue that's nothing like it in the city," he said. "There's an opportunity for people to turn it into something else or return it to green space. It's large enough to do multiple things with it."

Nicole Kemerer, another program administrator for Yojimbo's, said the velodrome in Northbrook is one of the biggest in the country, but having a facility in Chicago would benefit other areas too. "There are only 15 tracks around the country, and if there was one in the city of Chicago, multiple states could use it too like Indiana or Wisconsin."

VIEWPOINTS

[Letters]

Mr. President: Please preserve our lakefront

Dear President Obama,

Please help us preserve the gem of Chicago: its lakefront. As Chicagoans, I think we both revere the significance of this amazing jewel. The selfless vision of Daniel Burnham is the only reason we can enjoy it.

During this centennial year of the Burnham plan, we can, at least in part, repay his enormous gift to us by vowing to maintain its integrity in perpetuity. We owe him at least that much. Without his broad view and perspective on the future, it is unlikely that there would ever have been a Grant Park. Can you imagine that you might not have given your triumphant, historic Election Day speech at that fabulous venue, but perhaps in some hotel's ballroom?

As you may know, there are plans

afoot to create a 20,000-seat tennis stadium in connection with Chicago's aspiration to land the 2016 Olympics. The plan seeks to use the uniquely valuable meadow just north of the Bill Jarvis Bird Sanctuary where the Waveland tennis courts now exist. All sorts of possibilities abound.

While I am not particularly knowledgeable about the "committee work" aspects of the potential land grab, the implications are clear and troublesome. They may portend trouble for the future of our lakefront. If that land gets sold out, there will be no further assurance that the remainder of the lakefront will ever again be protected against privatizing opportunists.

Such short-sightedness and greed will make Burnham's dream a thing of the

past. All civilized societies have had to grapple with how to strike a reasonable balance between development and preservation. Lamentably, we have already seen

how Mayor Daley stealthily razed Meigs Field in the middle of the night.

I appeal to you, President Obama, to protect Burnham's elegant and noble gift to us. What more beautiful legacy might you bequeath to your daughter's grandchildren?

We must always remain vigilant to be sure that Chicago is never known as a city that is for sale, no matter what the rationalization. Your influence will provide the needed impact to help ensure the enduring future of this magnificent urban resource.

Leon Hoffman
Lake View

**Protect Burnham's
elegant and noble
gift to us.**

"Well, you tell the birds. Tell them, 'Sorry, these years we're having Olympic tennis. Wait and come back when we're done.'"

—Charlotte Newfeld, to Olympic bid representatives



Business

Chicago Tribune

SUNDAY, JANUARY 25, 2009

SECTION 4

Ruffled feathers

Chicago bid team's proposal to put tennis center near sanctuary riles birders

By **Kathy Bergen**
and **Laurie Cohen**

TRIBUNE REPORTERS

Standing ankle-deep in fresh snowfall, Charlotte Newfeld gazes at an undulating stretch of woodland and marsh and observes, "We have this nice feeling of quiet here. And they're going to put up an Olympic tennis venue?"

Yes, the Chicago 2016 Olympic bid organization is planning to

erect a \$25.8 million tennis center just north of the lakefront Bill Jarvis Migratory Bird Sanctuary in Lincoln Park, which Newfeld and her corps of some 300 volunteers have nurtured over the past dozen years.

The plan for a multicourt complex at the existing Waveland tennis courts, with temporary seating for 17,000, aggravates Newfeld, as do assertions by the 2016 team that the plans will not harm the sanctuary.

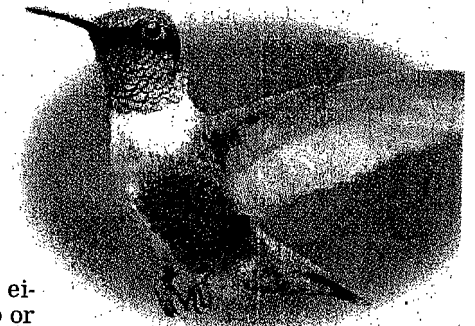
"Well, you tell the birds," she told bid representatives at a recent community meeting. "Tell them, 'Sorry, these years we're having Olympic tennis. Wait and come back when we're done.'"

The bird-sanctuary standoff is but the latest in a series of environmental fights that have dogged the Olympic bid organizers, who, like their rivals, are aggressively touting their bid's "green" attributes to the International Olympic Committee.

The IOC on Oct. 2 will select either Chicago, Madrid, Tokyo or Rio de Janeiro as 2016 host city.

In Chicago's case, the city's green jewels—namely its lakefront and historic parklands—are the setting for many major venues, a route that eliminates the need to tear up neighborhoods. Inherent in such a plan is a natural tension: Can the city showcase its natural charms to

Please turn to **Page 6**



Who flies in for a visit

Four notable birds seen at the Bill Jarvis Migratory Bird Sanctuary.

PAGE 6



4 for your list

Notable birds seen at the Bill Jarvis Migratory Bird Sanctuary.

Cooper's hawk

Accipiter cooperii

Length: 15.5 inches

Wingspan: 28 inches

Adult: Red eye. Black cap. Blue-gray back and upperwings. White breast, belly and underwing feathers marked by fine, thin, reddish bars. Tail, blue-gray above and pale below, barred with black bands. Flight feathers, blue-gray above and pale below, with dark bars. Females much larger than males.

A Cooper's hawk in New Orleans. **ALEX BRANDON/AP**

SOURCE: U.S. GEOLOGICAL SURVEY'S PATUXENT BIRD IDENTIFICATION INFOCENTER



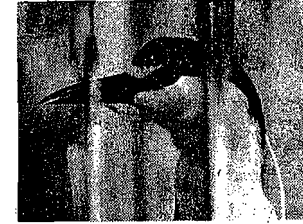
TRIBUNE FILE

Magnolia warbler

Dendroica magnolia

Length: 4.25 inches

Adult male: Black mask. White feathers above eye and broken eye ring. Pale gray crown. Black back. Golden yellow underparts. Heavy black streaks across breast and onto flanks. Gray wings with thick white edging. Female's plumage duller.



E. JASON WAMBSGANS/TRIBUNE

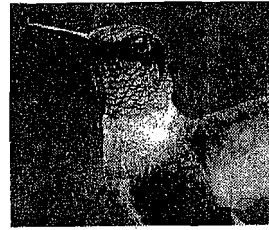
Black-crowned night heron

Nycticorax nycticorax

Length: 20 inches

Wingspan: 44 inches

Adult: Red eyes, yellow legs. Black bill. Black crown and back. White face, throat, chest and belly. Blue-gray wings. Two long, white, filamentous plumes extending from back of head in alternate plumage.



MARK A. DUNCAN/AP FILE

Ruby-throated hummingbird

Archilochus colubris

Length: 3 inches

Adult male: Iridescent scarlet throat feathers. Black face, chin. Dark forked tail.

Female/Immature: White chin and throat with variable amounts of thin dark streaking. Dark, shallowly forked tail with white tip on outer tail feathers.

Ruffled feathers: Tennis court plans cause flap

Continued from Page 1

the world without damaging them in the process?

"It is a huge challenge and it does require sensitivity as far as detailed site plans," said Jerry Adelman, executive director of Openlands, an urban conservation group.

The city's most well-known tree-lover, Mayor Richard Daley, is also the driving force behind the Olympic bid. And his lieutenants say the city has a long history of hosting big events in parks—from the World's Columbian Exposition of 1893 to the much more recent Lollapalooza rock concerts—without harming the environment.

"It's part of the beauty of what Chicago is all about," said Arnold Randall, a former city and park district official who is now director of neighborhood legacies for Chicago 2016.

Still, there have been instances where Chicago's 2016 group has moved venues after environmentalists and community groups chafed at certain locations.

The equestrian venue was moved to a private facility after protests over plans to use a Lake County forest preserve that is a habitat for some threatened species, such as the sandhill crane. And the

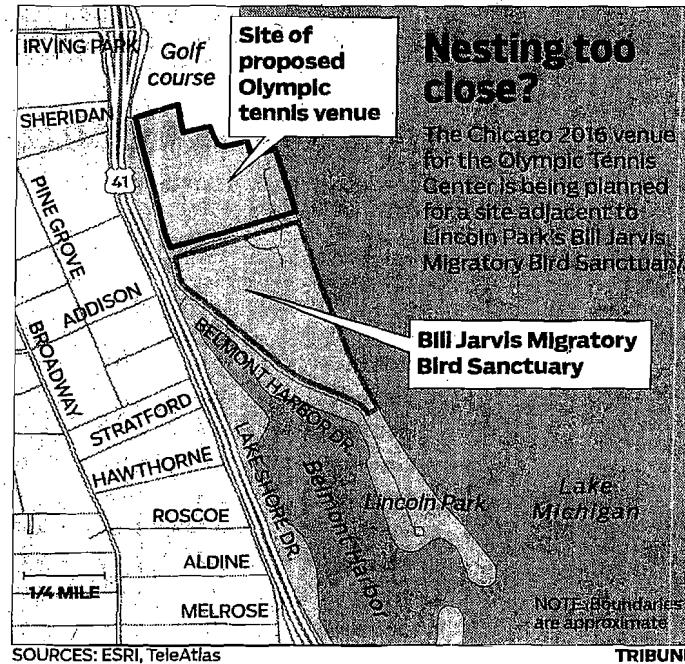
field hockey site was moved to a different location in Jackson Park to distance it from environmentally sensitive areas, including Wooded Island, which sits in a lagoon behind the Museum of Science and Industry.

And the tensions are likely to continue. Greater detail on venue plans will become available Feb. 13, when Chicago 2016 unveils its formal bid book. Parks advocates, many of whom have reserved judgment so far, will evaluate whether the plans mesh well with various parks' environmentally sensitive features and their historic design elements.

Sure to draw attention are plans to leave behind an outdoor amphitheater and a swimming pool in Washington Park and a multiuse sports facility in Douglas Park, both of which are historic parks.

"Everything is contingent on the details," Adelman said.

Yet some details have been hard to come by. A number of Lincoln Park residents, for instance, expressed frustration that Chicago 2016 officials came to a recent informational forum without copies of environmental assessments done on the Waveland tennis plans, even though



concerns were raised a year ago.

"You knew this was very important to us," said Becky Rossof, a former science teacher at Francis Parker School.

The officials initially promised to share the reports and said a Field Museum ornithologist endorsed the findings. Later they said only the bid book would be made public, on Feb. 13. This 375-page document will contain sum-

maries of environmental assessments on each venue but not the full reports.

"I think people will be quite happy with the level of detail on the environment at that time," Chicago 2016 spokesman Patrick Sandusky said.

That remains to be seen, but continued opposition seems likely.

"I believe the impact of construction equipment, thousands of people and untold numbers of cars/buses would

How to volunteer

Those interested in volunteering may call Charlotte Newfeld at 773-327-5053 or e-mail her at cnewfeld@sbcglobal.net. The sanctuary hot line is 773-348-4965.

be devastating to the bird life at Jarvis Sanctuary," Sigrid Schmidt, president of the Chicago Ornithological Society, said in an e-mail.

Chicago 2016 officials say construction will not be as heavy-duty as building construction, given the temporary nature of the viewing stands. And crews will avoid working during migratory seasons, Randall said.

Officials also note that no cars will be allowed at the site during the Games. The sanctuary is a fenced-in area with a public viewing platform.

Adam Schwerner, director of natural resources at the Chicago Park District, said he hasn't been consulted about the tennis center, but his experience has shown that any negative impact on the Jarvis sanctuary would be temporary.

"Birds are savvy enough to know when the disturbance has ended," Schwerner said.

Nonetheless, Ald. Helen Shiller, whose 46th Ward is

home to the park and sanctuary, thinks this debate is unnecessary cause there are less used and less sensitive sites at the Montrose Avenue and Lincoln Park.

"I'd like to see them do it," she said. "It's less impactful on the neighborhood clearly it's less impactful on the birds."

Chicago 2016 prefers Waveland site because of its long history as a tennis venue, Randall said.

As well, the Olympic tennis plan, which is expected to be paid for with Games revenues and private donations, calls for renovating the derelict clock-tower building in the park and refurbishing outdoor tennis courts, both of which would benefit the community, Randall said.

"It's an opportunity to use additional resources to prove facilities that get a use," he said.

For bird sanctuary supporters, the lure of Olympics isn't worth the cost.

"Everybody's talking about going green and the environment," Newfeld said. "people seem to care about only when it's not in way."

kbergen@tribune.com
lcohen@tribune.com

[Digg this](#) |
 [Post to del.icio.us](#) |
 [E-mail this](#) |
 [Facebook](#)

[APARTMENTS](#)
[HOUSES/CONDOS](#)
[JOBS](#)
[MATCHES](#)
[CLASSIFIEDS](#)

[STRAIGHT DOPE](#)
[HOT TYPE](#)
[SAVAGE LOVE](#)
[BLOGS](#)

RESTAURANTS
MOVIES
MUSIC
THEATER/PERFORM
FASHION
FREE SHIT

STAND-UP COMEDY
LIVPROV/SKETCH
ART
DANCE
READINGS
SPOKEN WORD
READER RECOMMENDS
DAILY SPECIALS
LISTINGS SEARCH

READER'S GUIDES
ARCHIVES
BOOKSHELF

SIGN UP FOR OUR E-NEWSLETTERS:

Reader Info

Advertising, subscriptions, staff, privacy policy, contact info, freelancers' guidelines, etc.



Read Flickr



The Works

Will the Games Displace Their Games?

Washington Park's users fear the Olympics will leave them nowhere to play.

By Ben Joravsky
May 11, 2007

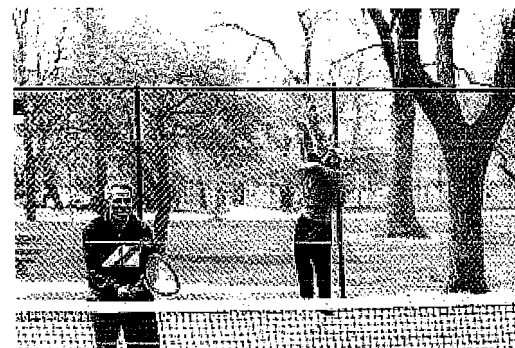
TO HEAR SOME tell it, when Chicago was selected as the U.S. candidate for the 2016 Summer Olympic games a few weeks ago, the citizenry rejoiced. "Chicago sports fans cheer a victory unlike any other," read a headline in the April 15 *Chicago Tribune*; the article went on to describe the joyous celebration at ESPN Zone in River North.

The idea of a Chicago Olympics might be very popular over by Rush Street, but it's hardly going over well in the south side's Washington Park, where many of the actual events would be staged. I spent the better part of a day there last week and I couldn't find a single person who wants the Olympics to come. Baseball players, softball players, picnickers, dog walkers, kids playing catch, old-timers walking around the track, tennis players, even the security guards and police—all had the same reaction: bring the Olympics to Washington Park and they'll have nowhere to go.

Sprawling from 51st to 61st Street and from Cottage Grove on the east to King Drive on the west, Washington Park is one of the city's largest green spaces. In addition to hosting softball, baseball, soccer, and cricket leagues from spring through the fall, it's home to the Washington Park Forum, a group that for more than 75 years has been meeting to debate topical issues. Putting up parking lots and an Olympic stadium—even a temporary one—would effectively shut down all of this activity for at least four years. More importantly, many park users see the plans to bring the Olympics to Washington Park as a proxy for a larger strategy: pack 'em up and move 'em out.

"This all about moving people out, brother," said Louis Carter, a softball player. "You know it and I know it—ain't no sense beating around the bush."

About midday I hooked up with a retired city worker who goes by the single name Bodhi. He was busy gathering signatures on a petition calling for Daley to stage the



In Washington Park; Alphonso Akins is the tennis player on the left

Jon Randolph

Get up to **\$100** by Mail-In Rebate when you purchase a set of four select Goodyear tires!

Offer valid 05/01/07 - 06/30/07. Subject to credit approval.

Get Rebate Form!

GOODYEAR
Get there



i just turned 24, i like walking my dog, going to the zoo, riding my bike

\$3,509 Monthly Residual Income!

Join our team...We recruit for you...Very Simple...Watch Our Video Presentation.If you are looking to change your life and your family you have to check this out!!go to website to learn more!
Read more...

Advertise here!



Opposition Grows Over Proposed Olympic Village

Chicago Defender, News Report, Wendell Hudson, Posted: Aug 18, 2008 [NT News and Politics](#)

CHICAGO – As Mayor Richard M. Daley takes in the Olympic festivities in Beijing, opposition mounts over a proposed housing complex that would be built in Bronzeville, should Chicago be awarded to host the 2016 Olympics

More than 100 community groups have joined forces to campaign for a legally binding written agreement with the city that would ensure local residents would not lose their homes or jobs if the Olympic Village is built in Bronzeville. The \$1.1 billion development would be built on the site of Michael Reese Hospital and Medical Center, 2929 S. Ellis Ave., after it closes by year-end.

The Communities for an Equitable Olympics 2016, a nonprofit organization in Chicago, organized the campaign.

"We want to make sure that residents and small businesses in Bronzeville are not displaced as a result of this project," said Shirley Smith, executive director of the North Kenwood Action Council, a non-profit organization. "I don't think it's fair to say we are totally against this project but we are opposed to the way the city has went about informing the community on it and the potential displacement it could cause."

Research shows that when the Olympics was previously hosted in U.S. cities such as Los Angeles, low-income residents and low-wage jobs were displaced, said Mary Carter, a spokeswoman for Service Employees International Union Healthcare Illinois & Indiana, which represents many of the low-wage employees at Michael Reese Hospital.

And while the hospital's closing had nothing to do with the Olympics, community groups said the city wasted no time in securing the property, which they said made them curious.

"The hospital is not due to close until December and already the city of Chicago has hammered out a deal with the land owner for \$85 million," said Pearl Tucker, executive director of Future Bronzeville, a non-profit organization. "This puts pressure on the hospital to hurry up and move and scares off potential investors who may were considering lending a hand."

If the city does not get the bid to host the 2016 Olympics, the site would be sold to a developer.

The Olympic Village development plan calls for construction of a maximum of 7,500 permanent units and 1,000 rooms that could be converted into residences. A traditional street grid would also be created, along with retail, parks, schools and other amenities.

Bronzeville residents, especially those living in low-income apartment buildings, said they fear their buildings would be converted into condominiums if the city wins the Olympics.

"I am afraid that if the city wins their Olympic bid, it would displace many of us poor, Black folks," said Cathy Weatherspoon, 88, who lives at the Lawless Gardens apartment complex at 3550 S. Rhodes. "My building is three blocks from the Olympic Village site, and I can't see the city spending all that money to build the darn thing knowing that welfare folks live a few blocks away."

Lawless Gardens is owned and managed by East Lake Management and Development Corp., a Blackowned real estate company in Chicago. Eileen Rhodes, a vice president at East Lake, said the company has no plans to sell the 750-unit building or convert the predominately low-income units into condos.

"We have owned that complex for some years now and are not looking to sell or redevelop it into condos," Rhodes said. "Many of the tenants there have lived there for years so they are like family to us, and East Lake treats its family well." Some seniors are also worried because of their fixed income.

"I am on a fixed income, and I cannot afford to go nowhere else. I have lived here for 20 years, and if the Olympic Village causes me to move, I do not know where I could go and still be close to the lake and have good public transportation," said Marian Jefferson, 76, who lives in the Lake Grove Village complex at 3555 S. Cottage Grove Ave.

"It's just not fair that we have to be displaced for some people who will only be here for the summer. That's crazy if you ask me." Chicago is competing against Tokyo, Madrid and Rio de Janeiro for the 2016 Olympics. A decision on where the Olympics will be held is expected by October 2009.

Related Articles:

- [Chicago's Olympic Bid Faces Opposition](#)
- [Chicago's Olympic Bid Faces Opposition](#)
- [Chicago's Olympic Bid Faces Opposition](#)

ADVERTISEMENT

NAM
Ethnic Media
Directory

More than 2000
national listings



- 57 million ethnic Americans
- 2500 ethnic media outlets
- 150 languages
- 50 states
- 1 news service



The Other Inte

Re: "The Silent Minority" t
at chicagoreader.com, Apr

Mr Aoki is simply not
about the internment of
when he restricts that t
knows that Germans a
with them in internm
and Seagoville, Texa
and Ellis Island an

His omission m
Japanese were co
matter if interne
the European in
while their los

I was inter
Woodward J
Texas, with
Japanese i
Hondura
was sent
Septem

Inci
Cinci
othe
whi
th
I
(

ing my arrest in
d in detention, with 37
4800 S. Ellis, Chicago,
ment of Justice leased for
on, becoming age 18 there
egister for the draft to Cook
ere there was a draft board
ae war. In July of 1943 I was sent

Eberhard Fuhr
Palatine

chicago Reader September 3, 1993,
Enemy Alien, by Kitry Krause
[Fuhr is the subject -ed.]

Does Anyone Even Want the Olympics?

Re: "An Open Letter to the IOC" by Ben
Joravsky, April 2

Your article was brilliant. It did a wonderful
job of tying together all of the major issues in
the city right now, and it got to heart of the
matter without hyperbole or vitriol. I read the
piece while driving in the car on Saturday with
my husband driving, and I couldn't help but
read the best parts aloud to him—over 3/4
of the article. Over the years, your articles on
TIFs have consistently been right on the mark,
and I wish there was something that could be
done to wake folks up to the danger they pose.
You'd think the statistics you cited in your
most recent article would do it. But I guess for
a while longer, you have no choice but to keep
up the fight.

Jane Banner
From the 50th Ward
Where we still ain't ready for reform

Daley's hidden motive for the Olympic
Games is to have journalists report about
Chicago's Olympic bid instead of writing
about the ubiquitous corruption in the Daley
administration. Chicago's Olympic bid has
been a sham just like the mayor himself.

Jay Stone

People are putting two and two together.
They're tired of being lied to, they're tired of
being manipulated and conned into a corner,
and they will rise up. It's only a matter of time,
and Daley's time is running out.

Mia

Thank you for writing this. Bottom line,
Daley's going to screw the Chicago taxpayer!

I don't know anyone who is for the Olympics
coming to Chicago, which might add up to
100 people, but they don't know anyone either.
Where are all these "supporters"? I'm getting
the impression that it's only Daley and all the
spineless representation in City Hall!

Flores

How about telling the portage story?
Something the early settlers of Chicago did.
They ported their canoes from Lake Michigan
to the Des Plaines River to keep a flowing
trade route. When are you going to tell us
about how TIF money, when contiguous to
another TIF district, can be ported, moved
along, just as the settlers did with their canoes?
What better place to reinvest in housing, but
the south side? What better use of TIF funds?
Port it all down there. Make the preparations
for the Olympics. Fix that blighted area.

In the summer will you expose the big
pots of leased tollway money and the parking
meter stash? Then will you tell about how
we're stuffing eight quarters at a time so the
parking meter company can pay its purchase
price back to the city, and the city can funnel
more quarters down to develop the south-side
Olympic sites?

Look at all that land to be had! If only we
can get the low-rent-payers out and set up
difficult situations making it impossible to get
back into the neighborhood—oh, but that's
being done. As Low-Income Housing Tax
Credits end their 15-year commitments, land
owners are getting ready to sell off the stock.
They're just waiting for the juicy Olympics.

Is that when you'll tell us these stories, Ben,
in the summer when the heat and the guns
crackle? Or, have you been telling us all along
and we just haven't been listening?

Les Kniskern
Rockwell Crossing

As it happens, Ben has addressed "portages."
Please see chicagoreader.com/tifarchive. —ed.

Another well written piece by Ben Joravsky
and he came so close to identifying the key
argument against this. What are the two main
reasons that the IOC would award this bid to
Chicago? 1. Barack Obama. 1A. Mayor Daley.
No matter what Ben says about parking meter
outrage, Daley will not lose an election. Daley
has this set up so that he can step out of office
with a successful Olympics as his legacy in
about a decade.

Problem with this: in a few years he will be
reaching the age that his father was at on that
fateful day in City Hall, and he has had some
health issues of his own. So here is the scenario
that the IOC should contemplate: Chicago is
awarded the 2016 bid and gets cracking on the
huge amount of work required. Mayor Daley
wins another uncontested election and all
looks rosy. One day in let's say late fall of 2011
the Grim Reaper makes another call to City
Hall and a scramble ensues for a successor.

Now, Ben can say what he wants about the
mayor, but he is the definition of "the evil that
we know." Maybe we end up with another
Eugene Sawyer—nice guy, but probably not
what the IOC had in mind. Around this time
people start figuring out that someone has to
pay for the outlandish spending of our other
political son and taxes and interest rates start
going through the roof. It is hard to unseat
a sitting president, especially one as popular
as Obama, but a lot will occur in this country
over the next few years.

So the IOC awards Chicago the Olympics

due to a powerful mayor and a popular
president and has neither to deal with as the
games grow close.

David G.

Ben and your paper are a joke! I can guarantee
the *Reader* will be one of many papers running
special Olympic editions in 2016 in order to
capitalize on all of the extra money stimulus being
spent in Chicago (just like Obama's stimulus).

Wait—let me append. The *Reader* won't
be around in 2016. This paper is becoming
irrelevant. What is your circulation now?

Puddles1971

If you don't agree with the very substantive
facts of Mr. Joravsky's piece, then it would be
more effective for your argument to present
your own facts and thoughts rather than
resorting to name calling of the readers and
the paper. Just sayin'.

Thanks for this Ben—awesome piece. I am
forwarding it to everyone I know. I hope the
sleeping giant wakes up sooner rather than
later. Perhaps something as small as parking
meters will do the trick.

A Better Approach

Let's make the Mayor a deal. We'll help him
get the Olympics if he agrees to resign and
help set up a whole new government without
aldermen and a mayor.

Draft the Chicago City Club or the Chicago
2020 plan people to come up with a manager
and completely redo the government from top
to bottom.

Wm

I don't get the point of writing this sort of
thing to the IOC members. I did read Ben's
article, but it does come across as small-
minded and provincial—something like a
petulant child telling his father's customers to
go shop somewhere else because the storeroom
in the back isn't so pretty and he was late last
month paying the gas bill. Please.

Modern American Olympics haven't lost
money. The USOC doesn't want us to lose
money because it makes everyone look bad,
and they will be watching every step.

I love Madrid, and I'm sure Tokyo could
put on a nice games, but neither are any less
expensive to visit than Chicago, and both have
their own financial issues right now. Spain's
housing crash is even worse than America's.

If anything, your "commentary" is more of
an argument against ANY Olympic Games,
anywhere, ever, than it is against Chicago hosting
them. That you don't see that reveals how narrow
your exposure to the larger world really is.

Eric M

I like that. There are a lot of problems in every
city. I can see a lot of progress that groups are
trying to make in our city (like Chicago 2020).

If the Olympics were coming here, these
groups would certainly include that in their
plans. If the Olympics are about city PR, then
I see no reason why any city official would
not try to take advantage of these resources to
leave a lasting legacy on the city.

reader

What everyone else said but I bet Rio, Madrid,
and Tokyo feel the same way about the I.O.C.
in their town.

Dear I.O.C.

Just build your own "Olympic Island"
somewhere between the Philippines and

LETTERS & COMMENTS



- HOME
- OUR CITY
- OUR NATION
- OUR WORLD
- OUR FOCUS
- OUR VIEWS
- OUR HEALTH
- OUR BUSINESS
- OUR ENTERTAINMENT
- OUR CULTURE
- OUR FAITH
- OUR SPORTS
- OUR EVENTS
- CLASSIFIEDS
- PHOTOS
- ARCHIVES

HOME OUR CITY OLYMPIC PROTESTERS TAKE THEIR CONCERNS TO CHAIRMAN

Thursday, September 25, 2008

Olympic protesters take their concerns to chairman

by Wannell Hudson

On Wednesday, about 100 protesters made up of community and labor groups marched outside the downtown office of Chicago 2016 Chairman Patrick Ryan to voice their concerns about the city bidding for the Olympics.

The protest was organized by the Coalition for an Equitable Olympics 2016, a Chicago non-profit organization, whose main concern is to ensure residents living around proposed Olympic sites, like the 37-acre Michael Reese Hospital & Medical Center campus at 2929 S. Ellis Ave., will not be displaced.

"We have sent two letters to Mr. Ryan as much as a month ago. To this day, we have not even had the courtesy of a formal response," said James Long, a Coalition for Equitable Olympics 2016 member.

"We have expressed that we are not against bringing the Olympics to Chicago. We are concerned, however, that residents of the impacted communities benefit and residents not be displaced."

But some residents have said they are now breathing a sigh of relief over the latest development surrounding the proposed \$1.1 billion Olympic Village project in Bronzeville.

Related Content:

Wis. governor offers support for Olympic bid book doesn't reveal IOC tour proposed Olympic sites Olympic bid is a chance to Chicago made a 'strong' impression Students earn \$157 million in

Related to:

Chicago Olympics Mayor Daley Patrick Ryan Olympics 2016

Mayor Richard M. Daley said while he still favors building the Olympic Village on the Michael Reese Hospital site after it closes this year, he is open to alternative locations.

"In negotiations, you have to play hardball. You cannot be weak in regards to any negotiations. You can't give up on it," Daley said. "You keep working at it. If that doesn't (work), you look at other sites as well. We have a lot of options."

But the city may not have a choice but to look elsewhere if it cannot negotiate cleanup costs with the property's owner St. Louis-based Medline Industries. Originally, the city estimated the cost at \$20 million, but that has since ballooned to \$32 million and could end up being higher.

Developers said other possible Olympic Village locations include building near the McCormick Place or south of 31st Street on land owned by Draper & Kramer Inc.

Chicago is competing against Tokyo, Madrid and Rio de Janeiro for the summer games.

A decision on where the 2016 Olympics will be held is expected by fall 2009.

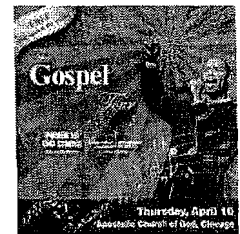
Copyright 2008 Chicago Defender. All rights reserved. This material may not be published, broadcast, rewritten, or redistributed.

Member Log-In

Username:
 Password:

[Forgot your password?](#)

Search



HOME PHONE SERVICE
 START NEW RESIDENTIAL PHONE SERVICE WITH NO MONEY DOWN!
1-800-480-4198
*If you are in one of the qualifying Federal Assistance programs.



AP Video
 Virginia Tech Anniversary
 Previous Editor's Choice Next
 Search

AccuWeather.com
 Chicago, IL

Hourly Info | 15 Days
 Mostly Clear
51°F

RealFeel®: 47°F
 Winds: NE at 7 mph
Weather Forecasts | Weather Maps

Join Our Mailing List
 Email:

SUBSCRIBE: GO DIGITAL EDITION

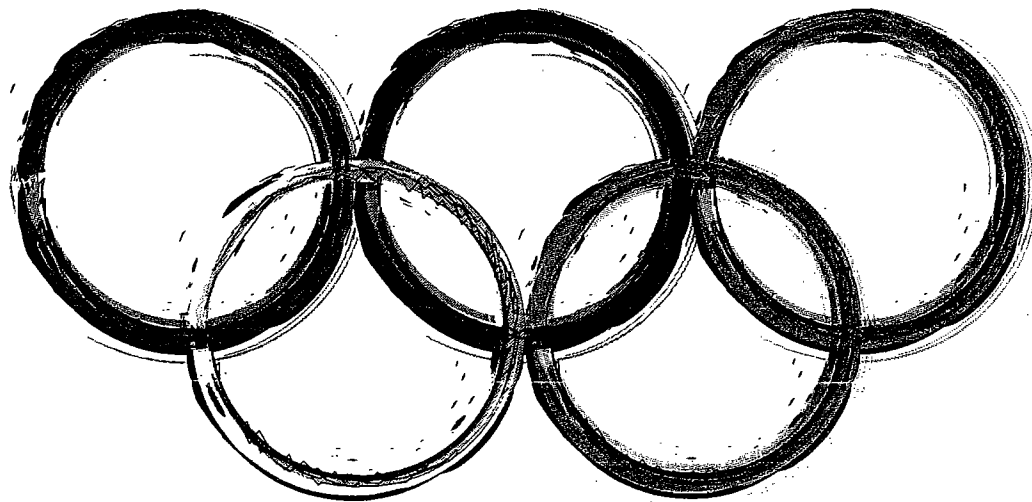
Digital Edition

Poll

What are you most concerned with Illinois' stimulus money taking care of?

Myself (I need the money!)

Fixing the streets from potholes



THE OLYMPIC HUSTLE

Chicagoans are already beginning to fear what hosting the 2016 Summer Games might do to their city

BY MISCHA GAUS

YOU COULD SEE HIS lip curl, the beginning of a sneer. Mayor Richard M. Daley, head of Chicago's government for 18 years, was not pleased. His parade was getting rained on.

The U.S. Olympic Committee was in town, and the March weather was not cooperating. The suits were preparing to survey Washington Park, one of the proposed sites for the 2016 Olympics, on the city's south side.

The park, closed to the public for the VIP visit, had never been cleaner. No amount of preparation, though, would keep the visitors' feet from sinking into soggy turf.

It wasn't the image Daley wanted to project to the committee to help convince them to give the 2016 Summer Olympics to Chicago, and J.R. Fleming wasn't helping. A public-housing organizer and leader in an anti-Olympic coalition, he was yelling into a megaphone three feet away from Daley, Chicago Olympics Chief Patrick Ryan and National Olympic Committee members as they sat in a city bus, waiting to embark on their visit to Washington Park.

"Is the profit that important?" he taunted. "Don't bring the Olympics to Chicago.

There's too much racial tension."

Despite Fleming's warnings, on April 14 the national committee announced that Chicago had beaten out Los Angeles as its candidate to host the 2016 Summer Games. Chicago will now compete against Rio de Janeiro, Madrid, Tokyo and a handful of other cities in its quest to bring its first Olympics since 1904, when Chicago lost the games to St. Louis, which was hosting the World's Fair.

That is, unless Fleming and a growing band of doubters can convince the International Olympic Committee to take the games somewhere else. Much like the fairs of yesteryear, the Olympics has become a force unto itself, able to transform a city dramatically. The ambition to host the games fits the agenda of a city leadership enamored of gigantic, splashy projects and overweening power.

Until eight labor-backed insurgents settled last year's living-wage battle by unseating incumbents in the spring elections, the city had one gravitational pull—City Hall's fifth floor, the mayor's office. Daley's grip on power has been so absolute he promised revenge in 1999 when five of the city's 50 aldermen voted against his pick for fire chief.

Daley's autocratic "leadership style" and the international Olympic industry match perfectly. Both prefer to make decisions behind closed doors, obscure their sordid histories, send budgets through the wash to achieve the desired result and build playgrounds for the rich.

What the Olympics hath wrought

The toll the Olympic industry takes on host cities is made worse because it's so predictable. Their destructive impact is documented in an extensive study of the seven most recent cities (Seoul, Barcelona, Atlanta, Sydney, Athens, Beijing and London) chosen to host the Summer Games. It was released in June by the Centre on Housing Rights and Evictions (COHRE), based in Geneva, Switzerland.

The worst abuses COHRE documents have taken place under the most repressive regimes. Beijing will displace 1.5 million people to host the 2008 Games, as it doubles the already frenzied pace of its urban redevelopment. Often without notice, officials cut off electricity and water to convince residents to leave. If that's unsuccessful, garbage and sewage are allowed to pile up in entryways. Left without re-

early as the first trimester whether their fetus is at increased risk for Down syndrome. Previously, only pregnant women 35 and over were encouraged to undergo amniocentesis to diagnose Down syndrome in their fetuses. At age 40, the risk of a Down syndrome birth jumps to 1 in 100. However, 75 percent of babies with Down syndrome are born to women under 35.

THIS NEW FIRST trimester risk assessment examines two blood samples followed by a sonogram—called a neuchal fold translucency—that looks for physiological signs indicating Down syndrome. The first-trimester procedure eliminates the small miscarriage risk associated with second trimester amniocentesis. But the blood test/sonogram method is not diagnostic; rather it tells parents how likely their baby is to be born with a genetic abnormality. A full 5 percent of fetuses that test positive for increased risk under the blood test/sonogram procedure are born without any disability. The result is given as a ratio; for example 1:4,000, meaning of 4,000 babies born who exhibit these test results, one will have Down syndrome. Eighty-five to 90 percent of women who receive a definitive prenatal diagnosis of Down syndrome choose to terminate their pregnancies. A 2000 study published in the journal *Obstetrics & Gynecology* suggests most women would prefer to risk an amniocentesis-related miscarriage than give birth to a baby with Down syndrome.

Disability rights advocates fear such statistics speak to the public's lack of understanding of disability. A 2005 Senate bill cosponsored by Massachusetts Democrat Edward Kennedy (whose sister, Rosemary Kennedy, had Down Syndrome) and Kansas Republican Sam Brownback (who is staunchly anti-choice) sought to require that medical professionals provide expectant parents undergoing genetic screening with detailed information on genetic test failure rates and information meant to encourage raising a child with Down syndrome, despite the costs and stress. But the bill included little funding to improve the lives of people living with Down syndrome, and never came to a vote.

Nevertheless, disability rights activists remain committed to many of the bill's tenets. While all people with Down syndrome are intellectually handicapped, their mental abilities vary greatly, and to-

day many of the health problems associated with Down syndrome, such as heart disease and intestinal problems, can be treated with childhood surgery. These are facts pregnant women should know before undergoing genetic screening, says David Tolleson, executive director of the National Down Syndrome Congress, which defends the rights of people with Down syndrome. "Women are very often

particularly considering how poor genetic counseling is in this country."

The Center for Genetics and Society hopes to build bridges between feminists and the disability community by hosting a series of roundtable discussions emphasizing common ground. One recent discussion focused on pre-implantation genetic diagnosis of test-tube embryos, a largely unregulated field.

'The goal of a [genetic] counseling session is to realize that if you do the test, it takes you down a certain path. There are a lot of people who regret that they ever did the test ... because of the anxiety.'

just given a blood test as part of their general prenatal testing. Doctors can be very general about what those tests are for. We believe that women should be fully informed as to what the tests are. We're not saying you don't need to take the test; we're not commenting on that."

BECAUSE THE ACOG recommendations for first-trimester screening are so new, it is unknown how many, if any, state Medicaid plans are covering the procedure. Beginning in 2008, California is planning to offer it to all women for the same price as second trimester screening. But lack of insurance coverage, the scarcity of genetic counselors available to explain the complicated test, and the very small number of ultrasonographers certified to perform the neuchal fold analysis are sure to limit access to this early-intervention procedure.

For some disability rights activists, this is a good thing. And even abortion rights advocates worry about increasing access to genetic screening without first ensuring that low-income and non-white women aren't pressured to end pregnancies because of concern they won't have the resources to raise a disabled child. "Genetic screening takes place in a medical model of disability where the assumption is that the problem is the medical condition, not the social context within which people experience disability," says Sujatha Jesudason of the Center for Genetics and Society, an organization with a skeptical view of reproductive genetic technologies. "Given that most medical institutions and systems are very non-supportive of disability, it becomes very hard to then argue for access and affordability for genetic screening,

But advocates for increased access to reproductive technologies continue to view the issue through a pro-choice lens, worrying that only affluent women will have the choice of whether or not to raise a child with a genetic abnormality. Women with family histories of genetic disorders such as sickle cell anemia and cystic fibrosis, which are most common in specific ethnic and racial groups, need extra attention so they can plan not only pregnancies, but also prepare for the challenges of raising a disabled child. "We need to get Medicaid to do a better job of funding carrier testing and screening," says Kirsten Moore, president and CEO of the Reproductive Health Technologies Project.

Genetic counselors can help expectant parents probe their family histories and decide whether to undergo genetic tests. But for such genetic counseling to be covered under Medicaid in most states, Congress would have to amend the Social Security Act to recognize genetic counselors as allied health care providers. A 2006 report from the Department of Health and Human Services recommended just that, and also suggested governmental certification of genetic specialists.

Expanding our health care system's ability to offer professional, affordable and non-directive genetic counseling might be the best way to help expectant parents navigate the increasingly complex word of reproductive genetics. Each year, our ability to map a future person's genetic makeup, appearance, sex and abilities grows exponentially. But new medical technologies lead to harder choices. "Technology gives you information and it may give you options," says Moore. "But it never gives you answers." ■

course, a few residents threatened suicide. Some succeed; others are arrested for creating public disturbances.

Beijing's brutality is hardly unique. COHRE details how South Korea's military dictatorship cleared out 720,000 people for the 1988 Seoul Games. Private security forces roamed the streets at night, using rape, beatings and arson to break community resistance.

In Chicago, the recent fate of public housing gives Fleming reason to fear the Olympics. "We've always called Mayor Daley Slobodan Milosevic," Fleming says. "The same thing is taking place—except it's urban and economic cleansing. We're watching this city be re-segregated by forces of greed."

In 1999, Daley took back the Chicago Housing Authority from the federal gov-

the city a whopping 600 affordable units at best, in a city where almost half of its 1.1 million households live in housing they cannot afford.

Who would be left to purchase the remaining thousands of market-rate condos that would flood the market following the games remains unclear. The Multiple Listing Service of Northern Illinois, which tracks real-estate transactions, says in

Atlanta gained notoriety among Olympics watchers when it had police pre-print arrest citations with the words 'African-American,' 'Male,' and 'Homeless' already filled in.

But it doesn't take a one-party state to bring out the jackboots when the Olympics come to town. Atlanta gained notoriety among Olympic watchers when it declared the central business district a "sanitized corridor" and had police pre-print arrest citations, with the words "African-American," "Male," and "Homeless" already filled in. In the lead-up to the games the city arrested about 9,000 people, a "crime" that has significant implications because people with criminal records are not eligible for public housing. Some of the homeless were given one-way bus tickets out of town.

What mass-produced arrest citations and bulldozers don't accomplish the market's invisible hand usually does. Real-estate speculation and ballooning rents push out vulnerable populations with inescapable regularity. Barcelona, touted as the most successful recent games, registered a 240 percent increase in new house prices in the run-up to the Olympics.

ernment and subsequently destroyed entire blocks of the city's infamous public-housing towers, packing people off to shoddy rental units without tracking where those evicted went. If the relocation plan was next to nonexistent, the blueprint for the destroyed sites was all too clear. Townhouses starting at \$500,000 now sit on the land that was once the infamous Cabrini-Green housing project.

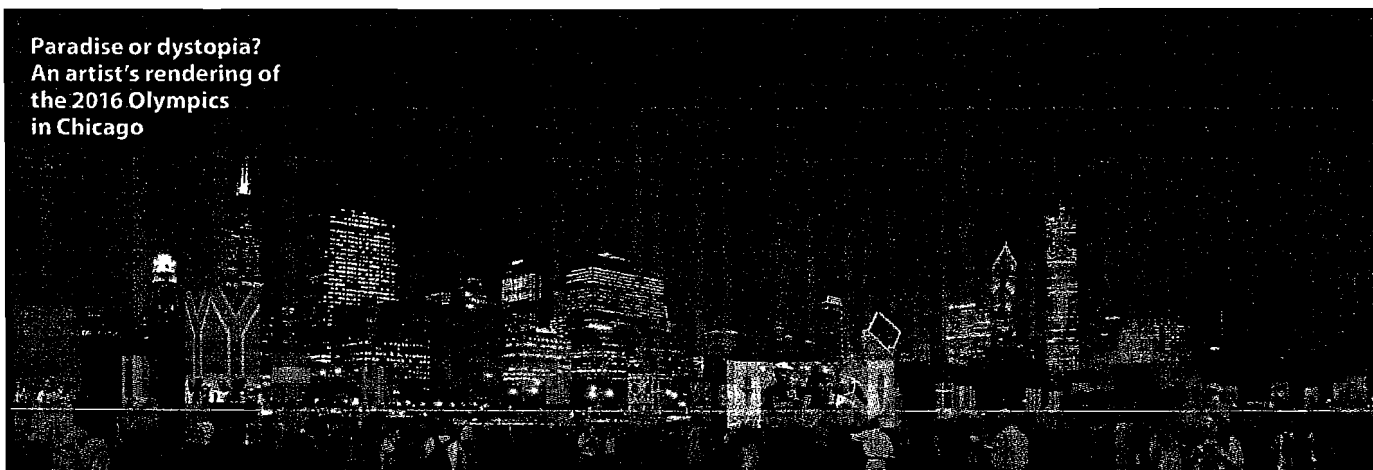
Fleming and other housing advocates see the city's Olympic bid as a way to speed up gentrification on the city's mid-south side, the six mile gap between the middle-class island of Hyde Park and downtown. Between 2,500 and 6,000 condos and apartments would be converted from Daley's proposed 6,000-unit Olympic Village. No specifics have been released on what percentage will be affordable vs. market-rate, but Daley established a 10-percent rule in the affordable-housing law he pushed through the council in May. Using that as a guide suggests the games would net

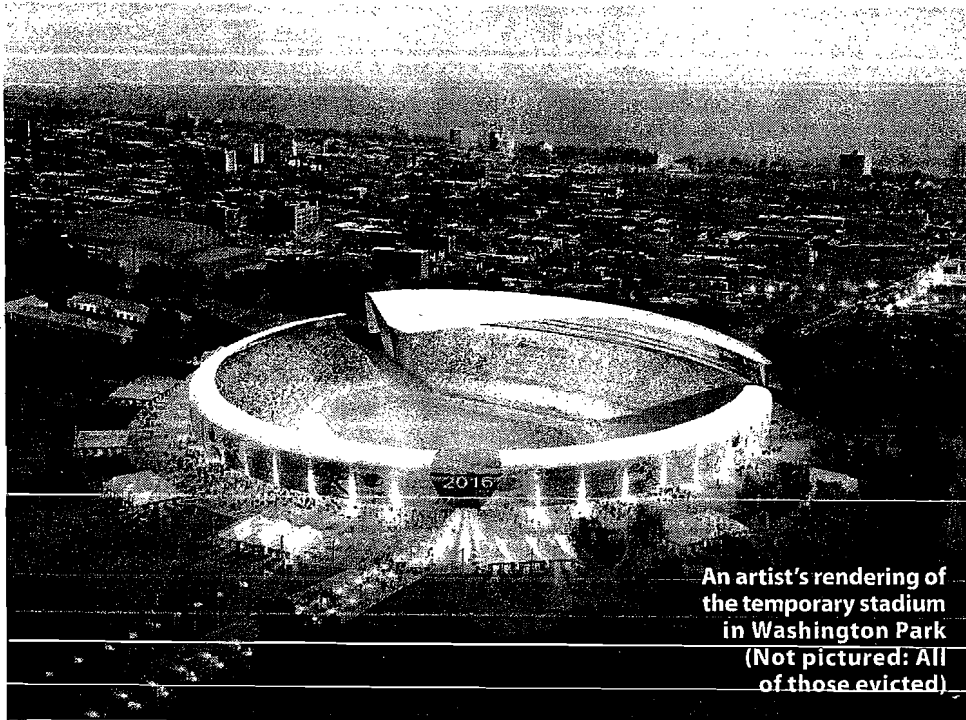
each of the last three years between 800 and 1,100 were sold in the Loop.

Then things got messy

Toni Preckwinkle, the city councilor whose ward would absorb the Olympic Village, fought and lost a battle to raise the affordable housing rate to 15 percent. She says she will demand inclusion of the 15-percent rule, as well as provisions for hiring first among neighborhood residents, paying prevailing wages for construction work, and other requirements for community inclusion into the bid that Chicago will submit in September. Preckwinkle is assembling what's become known as a "Community-Benefits Agreement (CBA)," legally binding deals negotiated between developers and coalitions of local groups. Well-designed agreements are typically written into the contracts that developers sign with cities.

But some southside community leaders say Preckwinkle began discussions with bid





An artist's rendering of the temporary stadium in Washington Park (Not pictured: All of those evicted)

IMAGES COURTESY OF WWW.CHICAGO2016.ORG

officials before consulting neighborhood groups. They include the housing-rights group, Southside Together Organizing for Power (STOP), and the Kenwood-Oakland Community Organization (KOCO), the largest grassroots group in the neighborhoods that bridge the four miles between the proposed Olympic Village and Washington Park. Neither Preckwinkle nor the bid committee have brought their plans before community groups, although KOCO Director Jay Travis says that bid officials visited a neighborhood meeting in May and apologized for their lack of transparency. "You don't really see a sincere attempt to remedy this sort of clandestine planning," she says.

The indifference the city and Olympic boosters have shown toward the people affected by their plans is troubling to Greg LeRoy, director of Good Jobs First, a national group that backs community-benefits agreements. LeRoy says no CBA worthy of the name scurries from public scrutiny.

"If it's completely top-down and secret, it's P.R.," LeRoy says. "If they didn't sit down and ask anybody, how do they know those are the real issues?"

A test case of how CBAs can go wrong is New York City's Atlantic Yards development. The developer of the massive basketball arena-cum-highrise project in Brooklyn went behind closed doors with the anti-poverty group ACORN to sign a "historic" deal. Two years later, its terms keep getting worse. (Since sig-

natories to CBAs are obligated to support them, ACORN still approves of the agreement even though the percentage and definition of affordable housing continues to shrink.)

Forest City Ratner, the Atlantic Yards' development firm, donated hundreds of thousands of dollars to other signatories, many of which were created just in time to approve the deal. Ratner's pet groups had black leaders, while existing community groups—many with white leadership—were shut out. Consequently, many neighborhood groups now view CBAs as a slick divide-and-conquer tool of real-estate interests.

"What's truly astonishing is that people don't even realize this particular script has been played again and again," says Patti Hagan of Prospect Heights Action Coalition, which agitates against the Atlantic Yards project. "They're being led around by the promise of a little bit of money."

Ebonee Stevenson, a leader in Chicago's fledgling Olympic CBA coalition, says the best CBAs are backed by heavyweights, like a central labor council, that can transcend petty neighborhood concerns. That leaves Chicago in a Catch-22, because unions have told Stevenson's group they're waiting until the Olympics look certain.

Olympic activists elsewhere say that's too late, because once the games are secured dissent is equated with treason, and leverage disappears.

"They'll bring out athletes with flowers in their hair," says Chris Shaw, a leader of

2010 Watch, based in Vancouver, which will host the Winter Games in 2010. "If you can't shift the frame you're fighting Santa Claus and motherhood."

Beyond the opaque approach to community involvement are more difficult questions. Applying community-benefits agreements only make sense if the sports development is actually going to bring economic benefits, says Chris Van Dyk, leader of Citizens for More Important Things, which has campaigned successfully against sport subsidies in the Seattle region. "The only thing to ask for is that they pay their own way, like any small business," he says.

Olympic critics doubt the community-benefit model can be easily adapted to a political environment sticky with sweet-heart deals between both local and international actors. "The Olympics can't be reformed or changed or made into the thing you want it to be," Shaw says. "We're seeing a re-growth of activism in our poorest neighborhoods where people are realizing they got totally suckered by the people they trusted to watch out for their interests."

The COHRE report on the social impact of Olympic Games lauded Vancouver for signing multiple binding commitments protecting environment, housing and civil rights. But three years before the city's games, watchdog groups say the promises are melting away. Vancouver's Impact on Community Coalition gave the city's Olympic organizers a "D-" grade in a May report card, noting a rise in evictions, preference for destroying forests, and resistance to opening its books and meetings.

They make money, right?

In Chicago, boosters argue that Olympic construction, tourism and spillover business will bring relief to the city's long-suffering south side. Experience teaches a different lesson.

Lake Forest College sports economist Robert Baade mulched a mountain of data after the Atlanta Olympics, revealing that the city and state could actually have lost jobs in the long-term, because Olympic mania captured public and private dollars that could have had more sustained economic impact. (Forty percent of Games-related jobs vanished after the two-week party left town.)

"I'm not against the games per se, but don't try to sell it as an economic bonanza,"

Baade says. "Prior to a mega-event, people tend to stay away. Prices for virtually everything are higher than they otherwise would be. And we know from research around the world that residents leave a city hosting a mega-event. They take their money and spend it elsewhere."

And University of South Florida economist Philip Porter discovered that in Atlanta the kind of tourist income games

of Toronto sociologist who has written three books on the Olympics, says games-related development projects stomp on democratic rights. "Citizens may not have wanted it right there, at that site, at that time," she says. "They may have had different priorities but they had to pay up."

Allowing something as important as the Olympics to come before the voters would break with Daley's legacy of government

a majority African-American community with one of the city's lowest per-capita income rates, had no "pet service providers."

What the Olympics could do to other public services is reason enough to oppose them, says James Pfluecke, an organizer with the Coalition to Protect Public Housing. "It's going to drain every penny from every corner," he says.

Besides starving out other services, host-

Recent host cities have woken up after the Games with nasty hangovers. Athens took on \$9 billion in debt. Even the vaunted Barcelona Games stuck taxpayers with a \$1.4 billion tab.

backers always promise didn't materialize. Hotel vacancies, retail sales, and airport use all stayed essentially the same despite the Olympics. Since the surplus rarely materializes, debt surely follows.

Olympic committees fix their budgets by deleting the costs of infrastructure projects from their balance sheets, because keeping them in makes the games look like not such a great deal. Recent host cities have woken up after the games with wretched hangovers. Athens is swimming in \$9 billion of debt, Sydney took on \$3.2 billion, and the vaunted Barcelona Games stuck taxpayers with a \$1.4 billion tab. The 2012 London Games has already spent twice its budget, and estimates for Beijing's bonanza come in around \$80 billion.

Still, these big projects create the "legacy" used to entice otherwise reluctant groups to support Olympic bids. Bigger airports, convention centers, cultural facilities, new roads and trains are the usual mix of enticements. Best of all for developers, the International Olympic Committee's unforgiving deadlines create an artificial rush to build, pushing social and environmental assessments to the wayside.

City leaders have promised the Olympics will bring Chicago its first new train line in two decades, a long-coveted circle line to connect the radial spokes that emanate from downtown. But the route favored by the Daley administration ignores the wide swaths of Chicago's west and south sides without train service. Known as the "yuppie line" among transit activists, it is the buckle in the Daley administration's belt of gentrifying neighborhoods circling downtown.

Helen Jefferson Lenskyj, a University

of Toronto sociologist who has written three books on the Olympics, says games-related development projects stomp on democratic rights. "Citizens may not have wanted it right there, at that site, at that time," she says. "They may have had different priorities but they had to pay up."

Allowing something as important as the Olympics to come before the voters would break with Daley's legacy of government by fiat. Five years ago, when Soldier Field, home to the Bears football franchise, was renovated at a cost of \$632 million, taxpayers kicked in two-thirds of the renovation's cost, but weren't granted a referendum to voice their opinion on the matter.

The renovation gutted the stadium, built in 1924, landing what appears to be an alien craft atop its neoclassical colonnades. Those were left intact because tearing down the entire stadium would have required a public vote, says University of Chicago sports economist Allen Sanderson.

"The sense was, 'If we go to a referendum we might lose,' he says, "so let's take a half loaf instead of no loaf."

But the renovation proved shortsighted. Because the new Soldier Field cannot accommodate the 80,000 seats needed to host an Olympics, the city will be forced to finance a "temporary" stadium. Early official estimates have put its cost at \$366 million, but that number is considered so low they've been forced to stipulate that the cost could rise due to inflation.

Capital, altius, fortius

The games provide the kind of grand excuse dreamed of by the interests who hold Daley close to recast the city in their image—they couldn't be happier. The Olympics would boost business-service providers that, according to Dick Simpson, a former alderman who researches city politics at the University of Illinois-Chicago, have steadily increased their campaign contributions during Daley's reign.

The other local winner would be developers, one of whom complained to the *Chicago Sun-Times* that the neighborhood,

ing the Olympics leaves a city with a flocilla of white elephants. Within months of the 2000 Games, one of Sydney's privately financed stadiums needed \$20 million in public money to rejuvenate the stadium area, which by virtue of its distance from central Sydney is losing out to the old stadium complex. Montreal, host to the 1976 Games, converted its velodrome—a circular track for bicycle racing—into a biosphere, not exactly residents' first development priority. As the games grow ever larger, they demand more extensive and specialized accommodations that have little post-Game public use.

"I've been able to restrain the urge to go lunging," says Steve Pace, who led an Olympic watchdog group in Salt Lake City in the '90s. "So have 99.5 percent of the state's residents."

The air of inevitability isn't as thick as games boosters would have you believe. In an anti-sprawl mood, Colorado voters rejected the 1976 Denver Winter Games after it was awarded them. Local opposition in Toronto, Berlin and Nagoya, Japan, is credited with preventing the Olympics from landing on those cities.

Not that the International Olympic Committee would admit it. The IOC's official report after being greeted by 15,000 angry Berliners declared that "whilst vocal opposition to the bid exists, this is a minority group."

Arrogance and executive fiat aren't going to quell Chicago's Olympic doubters. While the battle is just beginning, the resistance is already starting to stiffen.

"Given the power around the table," says Ebonee Stevenson, "words mean nothing." ■

