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# NEWS-STAR

NEWS OF ROGERS PARK, EDGEWATER, UPTOWN & ANDERSONVILLE

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Mayor Rahm Emanuel is rumored to be offering a \$1-billion bribe if city residents would go along with his Lucas Museum plans: an extension of Lincoln Park further north on the lakefront.

## Chicago's greatest asset - its lakefront parks - now in political play

BY DON DEBAT  
*The Home Front*

Chicago's greatest asset—its coveted Lake Michigan parkland—is in political play along Lake Shore Dr. from Evanston south to the Indiana border.

Desperate to end a legal battle between the city of Chicago and the Friends of the Parks over the proposed Lucas Museum of Narrative Art being built on a lakefront parking lot near Soldier Field, insiders say Mayor Rahm Emanuel is offering a \$1-billion bribe.

Apparently, Mayor Emanuel is willing to support development of 525 acres of new in-fill lakefront parkland and extend public access to four miles of new green space along Lake Michigan from Hollywood to Howard St. on the Far North Side to 71st to 95th streets on the Far South Side.

All the Friends of the Parks have to do is drop its lawsuit regarding the Lucas Museum, and the public-interest group would win a tempting victory that could possibly bring the ambitious 1909 Burnham Plan of Chicago to completion.

Foremost under Daniel Burnham's original goals was reclaiming the lakefront for the public. "The Lakefront by right belongs to the people," Burnham wrote. "Not a foot of its shores should be appropriated to the exclusion of the people."

The plan recommended expanding the parks along Lake

Michigan's shoreline with landfill and much of that was done in the early 20th Century, and after the Chicago Fire, to create Grant Park.

Of the city's 29 miles of lakefront, all but four miles are public parkland today. The plan also called for creation of manmade islands, such as Northerly Island, along with lagoons, beaches, harbors, meadows and playfields.

By "creating new acreage from landfill, excavated material and general wastage from the city," the Burnham Plan envisioned lakefront improvements stretching from Chicago's northern suburbs south to the edge of Indiana.

Historians say Lake Shore Dr. started as a carriage path along the downtown area, with horses limited to a six mile per hour speed limit. In 1933, LSD was extended from Belmont Ave. (3200 north) to Foster Ave. (5200 north). In the 1950s, it was extended to Bryn Mawr Ave. (5600 north) and then in 1957 to Hollywood (5700 north).

The 1950s LSD extension utilized landfill, rubble and debris from the destruction of homes raised for construction of the Congress Expressway (now called the Eisenhower Expressway).

In 2004, the Chicago Park District [CPD] considered a feasibility study to extend Lake Shore Dr. about 2.5 miles north through Rogers Park and into Evanston. Activists say the plans

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## North Side takes biggest hit from record property tax hikes

North Side property owners should prepare themselves, they're about to get hit hard by the next property tax bill. Property owners can expect them in their mailboxes by the end of the month.

Illinois residents already pay the second-highest property taxes in the nation, according to the Tax Foundation, but if reports from the Cook County Assessor's office prove true, some North Side neighborhoods will see a tax increase of 50% on their next bill.

And this is just the start. North

Side homeowners can expect even higher property tax increases for years to come as the city, county and other taxing bodies deal with their worst financial crisis since the Great Depression.

On average, Chicago property owners face a 12.8% increase this year, according to a press release from the Cook County Clerk's office. That figure translates to a median \$412.87 hike.

But the Assessor's office warns that residents and commercial property owners on the Gold

Coast should expect up to a 50% increase in their next tax bill.

Other North Side communities will not be spared either... this means property owners in Lincoln Park, Lakeview, Lincoln Square, North Center, Wicker Park and Bucktown - among others - will also see their tax bills shoot up dramatically.

This tax hike was not unexpected considering the massive debt load the city and other taxing bodies

TAX HIKE see p. 4

## Sheriff Dart says a lot of his inmates don't belong in jail

BY PATRICK BUTLER

Tom Dart spent much of his earlier career as a prosecutor whose job was to put people in jail.

Now as Cook County Sheriff, he's trying to get as many inmates as possible out of the Cook County Jail.

That may not be part of the official job description, but as far as the one-time state lawmaker is concerned, there are still some "evil people who need to be kept away from the rest of us for as long as possible."

But as far as Sheriff Dart is concerned, a lot of the inmates at 26th and California just don't belong in his jail.

"People shouldn't be kept locked up just because they're poor or mentally ill," Dart told a recent Lake View Kiwanis Club luncheon at Ann Sather's, 909 W. Belmont, ironically mere steps from the city's number one address for emanating 911 calls.

Yet that's what's been happening for years, Dart said, noting that his jail is not only the biggest county lockup in the country (with a population averaging about 12,000), but also the nation's largest mental health facility.

Sheriff Dart estimates he has between 2,000 and 3,000 prisoners with diagnosable mental illnesses in his custody on any given day, adding "That's a horrible statement for me to have to make, but it's true."



Sheriff Tom Dart  
Photo by Sheila Swann

SHERIFF see p. 9

## Three municipalities working together on Howard St. improvement project

BY MIRA TEMKIN

In an effort to improve the Howard St. thoroughfare as it goes through the City of Chicago, the City of Evanston and the Village of Skokie, the three municipalities have banded together to make major improvements. This new infrastructure improvement project is designed to advance the safety and traffic flow for motorists and pedestrians on Howard from Sacramento to the bridge over the North Shore Channel.

The Howard St. project will include several improvements: a new traffic signal at Sacramento, the update of the existing signal at Kedzie, as well as a complete

resurfacing of the street and improvements to the intersections and sidewalks. The project will also include wider sidewalks and new ADA ramps, which will increase safety for pedestrians, particularly those with disabilities.

"The Howard St. project will improve safety and ease traffic flow for both motorists and pedestrians," said Ald. Debra Silverstein [50th]. "The project will make it easier for residents of Chicago, Skokie and Evanston to travel between municipalities and will decrease congestion on a major thoroughfare," she continued.

Ald. Silverstein said, "The new traffic signal at Sacramento

and Howard should immediately improve safety. It will make it much easier for motorists and pedestrians to cross over from Chicago into the shopping center and onto Howard St. The traffic signal modernization at Kedzie will also help remove confusion and ease congestion at a very busy intersection. The road resurfacing will improve traffic flow on Howard and make for a much less bumpy ride."

Work began this week at Kedzie Ave. and will be completed in four stages. During construction, one lane of traffic in each direction will be maintained on Howard at

PROJECT see p. 5