



Daley weighs ambitious plan to promote 'green'

Proposal's hurdles include tight budgets, spotty record for earlier efforts

By David Greising
Tribune chief business correspondent

Wind turbines on Sears Tower and a "green" roof on the Merchandise Mart are two high-profile concepts on the drawing board as part of a wide-ranging,

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environmentally friendly development plan under consideration by the city.

The Chicago plan, still being drafted and not scheduled to be announced until early next year, comes as cities such as New York and Seattle have rolled out their own agendas, said members of a civic task force convened by Mayor Richard Daley.

The idea is to coordinate large government outlays with private investment and reduce total annual emissions of

- Daley's tax proposal clears a hurdle in city council. **METRO**
- Recycling program delayed. **PAGE 2**

carbon dioxide—the key greenhouse gas—25 percent from 1990 levels, according to interviews and planning documents for the "Chicago Climate Action Plan," obtained by the Tribune.

To achieve those goals, though, the plan would require an investment of \$2.7

billion in transportation improvements at a time when the CTA has repeatedly floated "doomsday" budget-cut scenarios. The planning also takes place against the backdrop of city and county tax in-

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It's not cheap being 'green'

Some of the city proposals:

- \$2.7 billion**
In transportation improvements over 10 years
- \$1.65 billion**
Amount homeowners would be asked to spend to reduce energy use
- 23 metric tons**
Goal for city emissions by 2020, down from 41
- Wind turbines** for Sears Tower?

GREEN: Clinton plan will retrofit buildings

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creases, and Daley's own record of falling short on prior efforts to help Chicago go "green."

The plan also includes a proposal to coax owners of existing homes to spend a total of \$1.65 billion through 2010 in a push to reduce their energy consumption 30 percent. To do that, the city would provide programs aimed at reducing homeowners' out-of-pocket expenses, said Sadhu Johnston, Daley's deputy chief of staff and co-chairman of the mayoral task force.

A first step toward Chicago's plan will be revealed Wednesday when former President Bill Clinton visits Chicago to announce assistance for retrofits of large commercial buildings. Chicago will pilot test the "Clinton Climate Initiative," a program backed by \$5 billion in funding from some of the

world's largest banks.

Under the program, the Clinton Foundation will help fund improvements aimed at reducing energy use by commercial buildings. The program will connect building owners with environmental consulting firms, which will design reduction plans. The actual cost of retrofits will be repaid over time from the energy savings created by the rehab work.

The Clinton Foundation could not be reached. At least 10 major Chicago buildings are expected to receive support in the initial phase of the program, including the Merchandise Mart, Sears Tower and the Art Institute of Chicago, said sources familiar with the plans.

Aid for retrofits

Under a separate city program, JPMorgan Chase will contribute at least \$25 million to help owners of large residential buildings make environmental retrofits. The mechanism for reimbursing costs is modeled after the Clinton initiative.

The city has invited business leaders to a "summit" Tuesday, at which the mayor's climate task force will lay out the broad strokes of their planning. The task force met Monday with community and advocacy

groups and religious leaders, all of whom could be affected.

The city's record on green issues hasn't always met the mayor's ambitious predictions.

For instance, the city's emissions of greenhouse gases have soared in the six years since Daley first promised to make Chicago a leader in reducing emissions, the Tribune has reported.

Moreover, Daley once promised the city would get 20 percent of its electricity from green energy sources by the end of 2006. Yet nearly all of the power for City Hall and other government buildings still comes from nuclear and coal-powered plants.

Chicago also has fallen behind other major cities in green programs. Chicago's 12 large cab fleets are required to operate just one hybrid or alternative-fueled taxi, compared with New York City, which is switching all its 13,000 cabs to more fuel-efficient models by 2012.

Against that backdrop, Chicago's task force is seeking to achieve daunting goals. By 2020, the group aims to cut Chicago's emissions of carbon dioxide and equivalent gases to 23 million metric tons, down from 41 million metric tons.

The group would need to cut energy consumption from exist-

ing buildings by 30 percent. New commercial buildings would have to consume 70 percent less energy, and new homes consume half as much as existing ones.

The \$2.7 billion in transit outlays would be designed to transform the way people move in and around the city. To obtain the city's objective of reducing car trips by 35 percent per person, the group might have to create a "gas guzzler" tax based on a car's gas mileage.

Other proposals include plans for high-occupancy-vehicle lanes and a substantial redesign of the city's freight-handling systems.

'These are big issues'

Adele Simmons, the former MacArthur Foundation president who co-chairs the task force, said "These are big issues that have to be addressed to show that we can compete in the global economy."

Howard Learner, a task force member who heads the Environmental Law and Policy Center, said the transit proposals could prove a tough sell. "There are challenges in achieving greenhouse gas reductions on the transportation side when the CTA and public transportation are in crisis," he said.

A blue-cart recycling setback

By Laurie Cohen
Tribune staff reporter

After waiting years for Mayor Richard Daley's administration to provide an effective recycling program, thousands of Chicago residents are going to have to wait a little longer.

Daley's revised 2008 budget plan, designed to limit tax, fee and fine increases, calls for a delay in rolling out suburban-style recycling to city households.

The city is phasing out its blue-bag recycling program and replacing it with a pickup program that uses blue carts similar to garbage containers.

Under the mayor's original

budget, the city planned to spend \$6.7 million next year to bring blue carts to 131,000 more homes. That would have meant that a total of 211,000 residences—or about a third of the homes with city garbage service—would have been covered by the program.

Now the Daley administration is proposing to save \$2.4 million by delaying the program's expansion until July 1. Wendy Abrams, a spokeswoman for the city's Budget Department, could not say how many new homes will be included in the program next year but acknowledged that "fewer households and fewer wards will get expanded recycling."

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Even some of the building retrofits won't prove simple. Though "green" roofs on top of the Merchandise Mart and Sears Tower likely will happen, wind turbines at Sears Tower could be a challenge.

"We are exploring the idea," said Sundee Wislow, director of sustainability for U.S. Equities

Realty, which manages the building. "It's kind of tricky to do that so up high in areas where the wind is so unpredictable."

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