



## Planning Chicago

By D. Bradford Hunt, Jon B. DeVries

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### **Planning Chicago** By D. Bradford Hunt, Jon B. DeVries

Urban planning might have been born in Chicago ("Make no little plans"), but that was more than a century ago, in a very different city. Today's city is not the product of Daniel Burnham, the White City, or Mrs. O'Leary's cow. It's the Rust Belt Metropolis That Could — the one that has not only thrived but shouldered its way onto the list of global cities. But what did planning have to do with it? Where did planning steer the city right, where did it fail, and where was it ignored? Most important, what does planning have to offer the city today?

In *Planning Chicago*, Hunt and DeVries tell the real stories of the planners, politicians, and everyday people who shaped contemporary Chicago, starting in 1958, early in the Richard J. Daley era. Over the ensuing decades, planning did much to develop the Loop, protect Chicago's famous lakefront, and encourage industrial growth and neighborhood development in the face of national trends that savaged other cities. But planning also failed some of Chicago's communities and did too little for others. The Second City is no longer defined by its past and its myths but by the nature of its emerging postindustrial future.

*Planning Chicago* looks beyond Burnham's giant shadow to see the sprawl and scramble of a city always on the make. This isn't the way other history books tell the story. But it's the Chicago way.

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## **Planning Chicago** By D. Bradford Hunt, Jon B. DeVries Bibliography

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## Editorial Review

### Review

Hunt and DeVries have delivered a candid and unromantic account of how things get planned—or not planned—in a postindustrial Chicago striving for a place on the short list of truly global cities.

(John McCarron)

Hunt and DeVries have pulled off the impossible: they have produced an impartial treatment of postwar planning in a city where every decision to alter the built environment is politicized and contentious. A combination of meticulous research and years of experience with the projects and policies they describe allow them to navigate this high road. Happily, the authors do not just rehash well-trodden narratives of great men and their grandiose visions for the downtown or Lakefront; planning for neighborhoods, industrial districts, and the Chicago River share the stage with the Loop, filling out our understanding of who makes planning decisions and why they ultimately succeed or fail.

(Rachel Weber, University of Illinois at Chicago)

Hunt and DeVries have written an accessible, handy grand tour of Chicago's planning history, which from City Beautiful to urban renewal to Millennium Park, mirrors the history of American planning at large.

One-stop shopping for all that is Chicago planning: a remarkably wide ranging set of ideas and facts and history, both confirming what we know about Chicago's planning and also surprising us too.

Though many take Chicago's current economic and cultural vibrancy for granted, between the boom years of the early 20th century and the current era lay the crisis of deindustrialization and outmigration from the 1950s into the 1980s. Hunt and DeVries concisely describe the transformational rebranding of Chicago from the industrial city to the globalized city and the resulting contradictions and long-term vulnerabilities: booming tourist-friendly islands and persistent poverty, inequality and demographic decline elsewhere.

The book both celebrates the best of Chicago's planning but doesn't shy away from asking hard questions, concluding with a call for the reassertion of formal city planning in an era where TIFs and other financial policies serve as a problematic substitute for planning. Hunt and DeVries astutely expose a sobering irony about Chicago: this city, known as a birthplace and showcase of modern American planning, has arguably witnessed the devolution and devaluation of planning in recent decades.

(Scott Campbell)

### About the Author

•**D. Bradford Hunt** is an associate professor of social science and history at Roosevelt University in Chicago.

•**Jon B. DeVries** is director of the Marshall Bennett Institute of Real Estate at Roosevelt University.

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