

## **Chicago Central Area DeCarbonization Plan**

At the March 13<sup>th</sup>, 2010 Planning & Advocacy Division Summit, Gail Borthwick of Adrian Smith + Gordon Gill gave a presentation of the Chicago Central Area Decarbonization Plan. The P&A Division would like to thank Gail for taking the time to present this information; a summary of the Plan is provided below.

The Chicago Central Area DeCarbonization Plan is a comprehensive vision for helping the City of Chicago reach its carbon reduction goals in the downtown Loop. The plan lays out a methodology for meeting the goals of the Chicago Climate Action Plan, which would mean a 25% reduction in carbon emissions below 1990 levels by 2020, and the 2030 Challenge, which set a goal of 100% reduction in carbon emissions for new and renovated buildings by 2030.

The Chicago Central Area DeCarbonization Plan articulates eight key strategies to meet the city's carbon reduction goals.

- **Buildings:** How can existing structures can be upgraded to improve energy efficiency, increase the value of aging building stock and tap into the potential to transfer excess energy loads back to the grid, all while offsetting the need for new construction?
- **Urban Matrix:** Increasing the residential density of the Loop by enhancing amenities, adding schools and services and converting aging office buildings to residential.
- **Smart Infrastructure:** A look at how energy can be generated, stored, distributed and shared.
- **Mobility:** An assessment of transit and connectivity.
- **Water:** Examines how this critical resource is used and conserved.
- **Waste:** An assessment of citywide processes and systems for reducing, recycling and disposal.
- **Community Engagement:** Proposal of various programs to engage citizens in the green agenda.
- **Energy:** An examination of existing and new energy sources.

Work on the first phase of the plan is now complete. The second phase will focus on adapting the plan to meet the energy and carbon reduction goals of university and medical campuses, towns, cities, states and countries around the globe.

Among the DeCarbonization Plan's concepts and proposals:

- Completing and linking a below-grade pedway system that would make the Loop more walkable in extreme weather conditions.
- Creating a green corridor and below-grade inter-modal axis on Monroe Street that would offer a place of respite for residents, commuters and visitors.
- Repurposing the Loop's underground tunnels as a pneumatic waste disposal system.
- Extending the existing Chicago Riverwalk and bicycle paths to increase mobility within the Loop.
- Publishing *The Green City*, a textbook that would enter the public and private school curricula as a primer on urban design and decarbonization for public school students, in the manner of the original Wacker's Manual of the Plan of Chicago in 1911-1927

The DeCarbonization Plan also includes an analysis of the funding resources available to help developers and existing building owners defray the cost of green retrofits and other sustainable measures.