

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:**

**4240 Architecture & Gensler's HYDROGENerator  
Wins Silver Spark Award for International Design Excellence**

**San Francisco, October 29, 2009**

4240 Architecture teamed with Gensler to create a proposal that transforms Chicago's abandoned Bloomingdale rail line into a three mile long greenhouse and hydrogen generator that provides 10 acres of farm land year round, powers city schools, and creates a beacon for the city.

**4240 Architecture and  
Gensler examine abandoned  
and underused infrastructure  
for new energy bearing  
technologies.**

Chicago's Bloomingdale railroad viaduct runs through the city's heart, connecting neighborhoods, the city's park system, and the Chicago River. The three-mile long elevated rail line was abandoned in the 1980s and currently sits neglected, overtaken by vegetation, garbage, and debris. It is at once an eyesore as well as a beautiful wilderness set against a dense urban backdrop.

"Our city's challenges are too significant and the Bloomingdale Line's potential too great for it to be just another park, said Gensler design director Brian Vitale. "The Bloomingdale Line is worthy of a greater purpose, one that will directly affect people in most need within the city."

While the greenhouse above produces food, the hydrogen generator below creates electricity to split water molecules into pure Hydrogen and Oxygen. This new fuel cell energy will be used to power nearby Chicago Public Schools, in turn helping the CPS reverse its budget shortfall from last year which resulted in teacher layoffs to offset rising utility bills. Simply put, Hydrogen = Teachers. The excess Hydrogen will be sold to alternative fuel vehicles at depots throughout the line.

As it produces this much needed food and energy, the Hydrogenerator simultaneously releases oxygen as the by-product of photosynthesis and hydrogen production -- a truly sustainable loop. 4240 Architecture design director, Robert Benson reiterates "The Hydrogenerator system stands as a symbol for a new future, a new paradigm that involves examining abandoned and underused infrastructure for new energy bearing technologies. The more local, the more clean the energy, the more stable and healthy the society."

**About SPARK:**

Spark is a bold new competition-a unique crossroads of design, where the interests of all participants in the community are represented and their strengths brought to bear. Spark leaps beyond the mid-century view of design. In this new world, how do the best ideas and best designs gain recognition? SparkAwards will validate superlative designs from professionals. But we also need a filter for the best novice designers and innovators, too. The world is now participating in design-let's enable the best formgivers to rise to the top.

Spark is about Change--designed change. Change for the better: studied, researched, cognizant of criteria like sustainability, suitability, context, inventiveness, process, universality-and yes, beauty.

Ultimately, one must ask why this is important. Commerce is important, but it is a means to an end. We might call the real goal "betterment." Better lives, better health, better water, better air. Great design can help us get there. Do your part-make designs that make a difference. SPARK'll help.

*Background:*

*4240 Architecture is an award-winning team of architects, planners and interior designers. 4240 designs sustainable, high performance buildings, community frameworks, and spaces ranging from entire neighborhoods, resorts, public and commercial architecture to interiors and private homes. Established in 2003, the firm's studios in Chicago [located at 42° latitude] and Denver [located at 40° latitude] comprise "4240." The firm is an effective, visionary team of professionals who are equally fluent in designing for urban settings and high-mountain properties – and for just about every context in between.*

**The Hydrogenerator**

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*For more information, please visit  
[www.4240architecture.com](http://www.4240architecture.com)  
[www.gensler.com](http://www.gensler.com)  
[www.sparkawards.com](http://www.sparkawards.com)*

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