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Come On, Chicago, Let's Vogue

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Oh, Chicago, put away your scrunchies, cover your midriff and, for heaven's sake, abandon those low-fitting jeans.

Your fashion-forward Mayor Richard Daley is trying to put Chicago on the fashion map.

As New York City belongs to Kate Spade, and Donatella Versace creates designer odes to Sout Beach, Chicago has, uh, businesswomen in suits and tennis shoes.

Some fashion experts even suggest, gently of course, that Daley, who is known for his traditional gray and navy suits and ties, should start with himself, choosing more colorful ties and perhaps a bright handkerchief tucked into his lapel.

Daley, whose father was on national best-dressed lists during his mayoral tenure, announced Wednesday the creation of a Fashion Advisory Council to unite local designers and fashion leaders in what has been a fragmented industry. The council wants to persuade local designers to stay here rather than move to New York City or Los Angeles.

"When I think of fashion, I don't Chicago," said Amanda Hodor, 19, a fashion design major at Columbia College in Chicago who had figured she would have to move to either coast to launch her career. "I would love for more fashion to be here so I don't have to leave."

After the success in 2005 of Fashion Focus Chicago, a festival of local designers and stores, Daley concluded the fashion industry needed to centralize its operations.

"If they had more of a promotion about Chicago fashion, I would have definitely considered that, for sure," Mullin said. "New York is so expensive and a hard place to live that it would be nice to have another city that did the fashion stuff and gave people more options."

With time, designers will find out that they can launch careers right here, said Cyndi Chan, who moved to Chicago from New York to design clothing.

"Talent in Chicago? We have plenty," Chan said. "You don't have to go to New York to get discovered. We can get discovered here."