

# DAILY COMMERCIAL NEWS

## AND CONSTRUCTION RECORD

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Pan Am Games win a boost for Greater Toronto construction industry

Venue work will help fill stimulus gap

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Greater Toronto Area construction stakeholders are excited by the opportunities that will come from the 2015 Pan Am Games. Toronto's bid was selected as the winning one in the first round of voting Nov. 6, defeating bids from Lima, Peru and Bogota, Colombia.

"We are absolutely thrilled," said John Mollenhauer, president of the Toronto Construction Association. "It will generate work and will find an alternative way to rationalize spending some money on things that would otherwise not have been done and are badly needed. We cannot think of anything but the upside."

The winning bid, though Toronto-centred, is regionally focused, with existing facility improvements and new facilities slated for Golden Horseshoe locations such as Hamilton, Markham, and Oshawa.

The regional impact for construction is readily evident, said Andy Manahan, executive director of the Residential and Civil Construction Alliance of Ontario.

"Certainly when you have a major event like this you will have all levels of government focusing to meet construction deadlines and that has to be good for this region," said Manahan.

"We were concerned with the federal infrastructure stimulus program ending in March 2011, that it would create one of those boom-bust cycles. However, now, we can see now across the entire region where the Games projects will be built that projects will continue post-2011."

The winning bid carries a projected \$1.4 billion price tag for sporting venues and events. A \$1 billion Pan American Athletes Village is slated for the West Don Lands on Toronto's eastern waterfront.

After the Games, it is slated to become a mixed-income community serviced by transit.

Among the construction benefits for Hamilton will be a stadium that will house track and field events and a 3,500 seat, 250m, velodrome adjacent to it.

The Hamilton Halton Construction Association (HHCA) said local contractors are excited about the potential work. The association looks forward to working with city staff and providing procurement process input for the Games, as it already does regularly.

"The reaction among contractors is good because of the new builds for the Pan Am Games facilities," explained Sandy Alyman, general manager, HHCA.

"It is a shot in the-arm. The potential for the improvements to the downtown, as well as the waterfront, are important. The city has been trying to make improvements to the waterfront development and increase downtown renewal projects as well as the rapid transit system."

Three potential locations of the Pan American Stadium in Hamilton have been discussed, from near the airport to down by the waterfront. Alyman said the city is currently working on a Games business plan to be presented by February 2010 that will outline construction details.

“We do not know when construction will start or what the sequence of events is going to be,” she said.

Toronto’s construction capacity to respond to the Games’ transit, infrastructure and facility needs is there, whenever the city unveils its construction plan, said Mollenhauer.

“We have been and are on a bit of life support system from the infrastructure work,” explained TCA’s president. “It is always very difficult to transition back, just as it was to transition from all of the private sector work to infrastructure work for some.

The Pan Am Games will help because it creates a demand for projects in preparation for 2015 that will keep industry booming.”