

T.O. lays out welcome mat for Pan-Ams

Councillors vote to host Games

By **ANTONELLA ARTUSO**, QUEEN'S PARK BUREAU CHIEF

Last Updated: 3rd December 2008, 4:31am

Toronto has laid out the welcome mat for the 2015 Pan-Am games.

City Council voted 33-1 last night in favour of serving as the host city for the Pan-Am Games bid.

"I think we should be proud to put Toronto on the world stage," Mayor David Miller said. "But if we commit to this, we need to win." Miller said this bid has the support of both the federal and provincial governments.

Premier Dalton McGuinty personally asked the mayor to ensure that Toronto participates in the bid with enthusiasm, something other bidding cities will be watching.

'PRE-LEGACY'

Miller said he's requested a "pre-legacy" recreation program for Toronto kids, and asked that residents from across the city be hired to participate in the bid.

"I've also requested that if there are to be facilities built in Toronto -- because Toronto would be the centre of the bid -- that they be built in places that reinforce our transit plans," Miller said.

Miller said the infrastructure for the Pan-Am Games would be targeted.

For instance, athletes would be put up at the University of Toronto and other existing facilities to avoid the cost, expense and challenges that Vancouver has experienced in its construction of an Olympic Village, he said.

WALKER HOLDS OUT

The only council hold out was Councillor Michael Walker, who said any infrastructure money from the federal and provincial governments during this economic crisis should be spent on projects like public housing, transit, bridges and roads "and not building stadiums.

"I think we're into a long slump and I think we just do not have the luxury of spending \$2 billion of tax money on something like this," he said.

Councillor Howard Moscoe disagreed. "The important thing to do is to start investing money in the kind of infrastructure that would be required, to put people to work, to get jobs rolling,"