

## (April 19, 2007) Supporters Say Olympics Boost SW Side

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The city of Chicago has won the U.S. bid for the 2016 Summer Olympics, and now will have to wait until 2009 to find out if it will indeed host the Games.

Mayor Daley has been pushing for the Olympics, and was very excited at the announcement.

"This is an honor for Chicago, and I want to thank the United States Olympic Committee for this vote of confidence in our city," said Daley at a rally earlier this week.

If Chicago were to get the Olympic games, the Southwest Side and suburbs might be involved. According to Cong. Dan Lipinski (D-3rd), Palos Park and Bridgeview might host some events.

"As it stands right now, Toyota Park (in Bridgeview) would host some soccer games and the Palos Park District would host the mountain bike events," said Lipinski.

Lipinski also said that plans are still in the beginning of development and the committees are still figuring out what sites are going to hold what events.

Lipinski is excited about the improvements that would be made to the city's transportation industry.

"Mass transportation will get an uplift. The Orange, Pink and other CTA Lines will get improvements," said Lipinski.

funding for the city's highways.

Ald. Michael Zalewski (23rd) said transportation to and from Midway would improve as well as the areas around the airport.

"It would be a great place to showcase Cicero as well as improve streets in Archer Heights and surrounding neighborhoods," said Zalewski.

State Sen. Ed Maloney (D-18th) said that the Olympics would be an opportunity to help everyone throughout the city and suburbs.

"All the restaurants, and hotels would benefit, and Chicago would be on the worldwide stage. (And it would give the city) a chance to showoff for subsequent Games," said Maloney.

Maloney also said that the Games would encourage more tourism to the city even after the the Olympics have concluded.

"The Games would have a positive economic impact on the entire city, but if Bridgeview is able to hold soccer games, then the Southwest Side and suburbs will also benefit," said Maloney.

Zalewski said he initially had doubts about the Olympics, but after researching what was done in Atlanta, he changed his mind and now favors Chicago bidding on the event.

"This would be good for the city and (would) improve certain areas here on the Southwest Side and in the 23rd Ward," said Zalewski.

Local businesses could be in line for improvements and redevelopment, he said.

Anita Cummings, executive director of United Businesses Association of Midway, said she wishes the Games would be here sooner than 2016.

"No way can this be negative for the city. It will bring people into the city and Midway," said Cummings.

According to Cummings, many local business owners have a wait-and-see attitude because the announcement will not come until 2009.

But, she says, there are a few business owners who are excited now and want to get started on redeveloping their businesses.

"With the support and dedication of local aldermen and community leaders, we can make this successful," said Cummings.

Ald. Frank Olivo (13th) also said that the economic development would be great for the city.

"The economic impact would be great for all the local restaurants and hotels, and making transportation like the Orange, Purple and Brown lines better," said Olivo.

Cong. Bobby Rush (D-1st) also agrees that the Olympics would have a great positive effect on the city.

"As the chairman of the House's subcommittee on Commerce, Trade and Consumer Protection, I believe that the Olympics can and must be an economic development boom for all of Chicago," said Rush.

Rush also said that he believes the Games will provide great benefit to all of Chicago, including his constituents in the 1st District.

Daley believes that the decision in favor of Chicago is great for the city's children.

"Every child in Chicago will benefit from the spirit and excitement surrounding the Olympic movement. And that is one of the main reasons why we are pursuing the Olympic Games - the lasting legacy they'll leave to the children of Chicago and around the world," said Daley.

Lipinski believes that the Olympics will be an opportunity to showcase Chicago to the world.

"People from all over the world will come to Chicago and bring more tourism into the future, going beyond the 2016 Games," said Lipinski.

Daley will be heading to Washington, D.C. today (Thursday) to discuss with leaders what Chicago needs to ensure a bid from the International Olympic Committee.