

# Harnett says thank you to Milton for 'stepping up to the plate'

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Now under construction at Tremaine Road and Louis St. Laurent Avenue — in the greater Golden Horseshoe area.

"Thank you, Milton, for stepping up to the plate to make that happen," he said to a crowd of about 100 at Town Hall, his enthusiasm clearly evident. "Milton is going to be the epicentre for success in the world of track cycling. Congratulations."

Offering credit for the Town's support of the velodrome, Harnett couldn't help tease Mayor Gord Krantz, suggesting he may be a medal favourite for the master's division for the 3,000m individual pursuit.

"If you don't know what that (individual pursuit) is, you soon will," assured the former Olympian.

Wednesday night's countdown held a distinct air of excitement, with talk of how roughly 100 elite-level cyclists will be vying for more than a dozen medals over two weeks in 2015.

Among those contenders will likely be 2012 Paralympian and 2011 Parapan Am silver medalist Shelley Gautier, who offered an inspiring address about her experiences on the world racing stage.

"I was able to show how disabled sports are important," said the physio-therapist, joined on the podium by Quebec native and former Olympic triathlete Isabelle Turcotte Baird (see related story on page 12), who moved to rural Milton two years ago and added to the night's bilingualism by speaking in her native French. "I'll be home for the next Games, so that's kind of special. I promise to do my best for me, my country and my family."

Helping mark the two-year countdown was the raising of Pan Am/Parapan Am flag and the unveiling of a cycling-themed Milton Pan Am mural hand-painted by renowned sports artist David Arrigo.

Young Milton Talent Contest winner Gavin McLeod kicked things off by singing O Canada, and helped Krantz read a proclamation about the Games — complete with an amusing 'Here ye, here ye' introduction.

Krantz credited Harnett for his guidance and expertise during the initial stages of the velodrome project, which he believes will "put Milton on the cycling map."

Added TO2015 Chair Roger Garland, "Let's celebrate, because there's a lot to celebrate. It's time to get excited... the Games are coming."



Above, from left, TO2015 Chair Roger Garland, Oakville MPP Kevin Flynn, Halton MP Lisa Raitt and Mayor Gord Krantz unveil Milton's Pan Am/Parapan Am Games mural. Below, former Olympian Curt Harnett leads dignitaries and members of the public on a circuit ride around Town Hall. For more photos of the event, visit [insidehalton.com](http://insidehalton.com). *Graham Paine / Canadian Champion (Follow on Twitter @halton\_photog)*

Meanwhile, Halton MP Lisa Raitt touched on how the velodrome — which along with a 250-metre oval cycling track and 1,500 permanent seats will be an all-purpose fitness facility — will be a viable sports destination long after the Games.

The celebration included a number of cycling and sports-related vendors at Victoria Park, as well as a live musical performance by the Retrievers.

A couple dozen Miltonians — including a few on tri-cycles being closely followed by their mom or dad — joined Harnett on the circuit ride.

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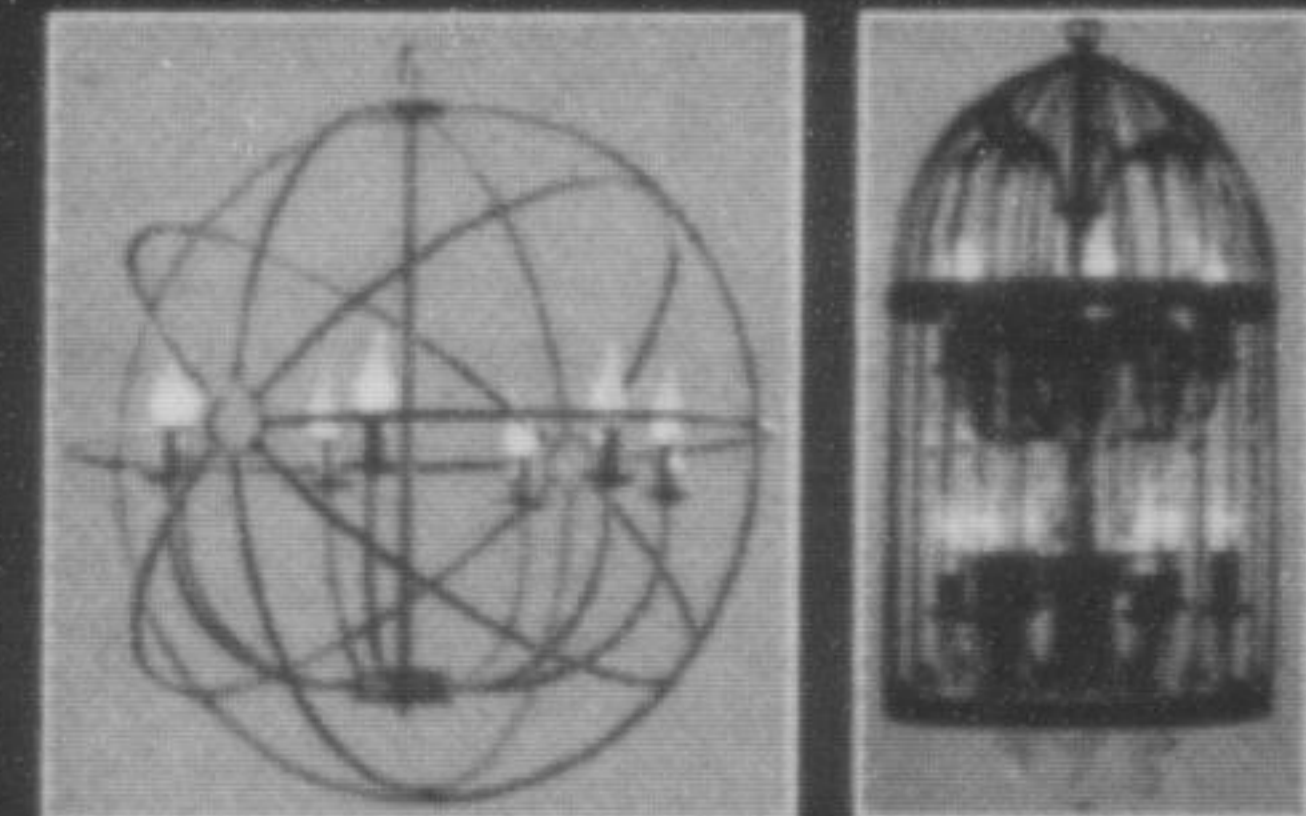


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