

# York Region to house Olympic soccer facility

BY PATRICK CASEY  
Staff Writer

It's only fitting that Vaughan, a city with more than 6,000 youth players, will be home to an Olympic soccer venue if Toronto is granted the 2008 Olympic Games.

On Monday, the Toronto 2008 Olympic Bid committee unveiled plans to build a new pitch and adjoining 20,000-seat stadium at Vaughan Grove Sports Park on Martin Grove Road, just south of Hwy. 7.

Vaughan will commit \$2.4 million toward construction of an Olympic soccer field and stadium on the 34-hectare property, while the TO-Bid committee will kick in an additional

\$2 million to finance installation of 5,000 permanent seats, another 15,000 temporary seats and a parking facility.

"This would be great exposure for kids involved in soccer," said Alfredo Tamburini, vice-president of the Kleinburg Soccer Club. "To have the Olympics in Canada and Toronto, with soccer right in our own back yards, would be terrific."

Vaughan Mayor Lorna Jackson promised taxes would not be raised to finance the undertaking, instead allotting development charges to finance the project.

Over the past six weeks, Jackson has been critical of the Olympic dream because she is

concerned about traffic congestion as spectators converge on the city for preliminary round action.

But on Monday, Jackson said she remains confident transportation issues across Greater Toronto will be solved by 2008, including, she hopes, extension of the Toronto subway to Vaughan.

According to Leslie Woo, a sports and venues consultant with the TO-Bid committee, Vaughan will be one of six host sites for soccer matches. Soccer would also be played at the proposed 100,000-seat Olympic Stadium in Toronto.

Last month, the Olympic committee

announced the Richmond Green Sports Centre on Elgin Mills Road in Richmond Hill will host baseball if Toronto gets the Games.

And Markham is expected to host Olympic water polo at a new \$7-million facility adjacent to the Unionville GO station.

"We haven't done a detailed analysis yet, but you don't have to be too much of a rocket scientist to figure out the Olympics would have a huge impact for tourism in York Region," said Don Eastwood, the region's economic development director, adding his department will begin contacting former Olympic hosts to assess the impact of the Games at various cities.

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