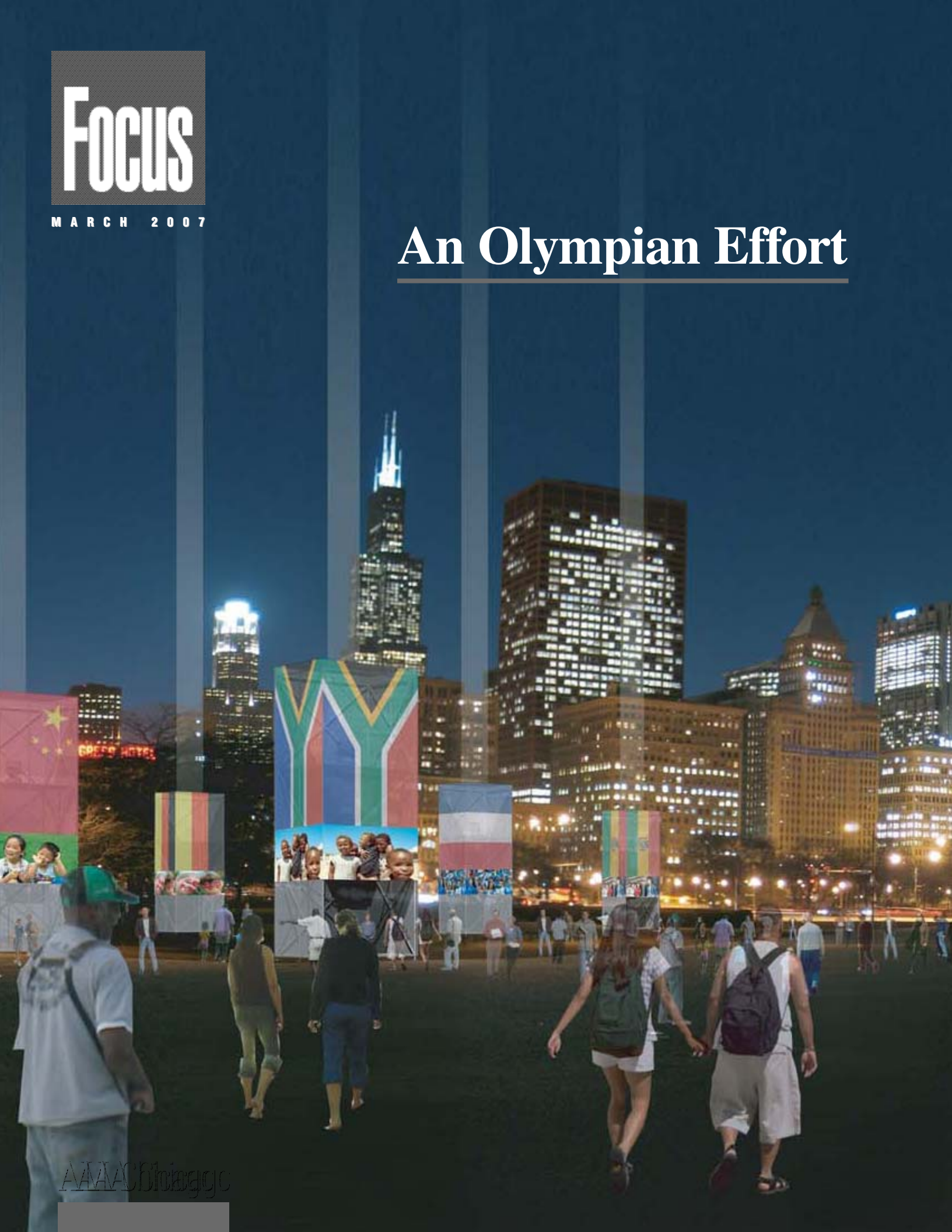


# Focus

MARCH 2007

## An Olympian Effort



# Olympian Effort

## Chicago Goes for the Games

By Laurie Petersen

**A**rchitects are accustomed to working in concentrated bursts of creativity on projects that take years to come to fruition. Even by those standards, a monumental effort was required for Chicago's submission of a bid for the 2016 Olympic Games. There were only a few months to create plans and conceptual designs for structures with complex requirements that will be needed a full decade hence. There was the additional challenge of needing to constantly shift focus, from the smallest logistical detail to the larger urban canvas, and from the temporary requirements of the Olympic venue to the permanent structure that would remain. Commitment to sustainability and to design excellence were also integral to the task.

The key to harnessing the requisite talent and resources was teamwork. "Architects played an exceptional role in the Olympic bid process," according to Patrick Ryan, executive chairman of Aon and chairman of the Chicago 2016 Bid Committee. "They came together as a community and helped create an opportunity to highlight what could be achieved with Chicago as a host city." Led by Skidmore, Owings & Merrill (SOM), an impressive roster of 30 architecture, engineering and consulting firms collaboratively worked pro bono to produce a comprehensive physical plan for 30 Olympic venues.

### The Master Plan

SOM spearheaded the effort, with Tom Kerwin, FAIA, as the firm's lead partner for the Olympic Games and Coordinating Architect for Chicago 2016, and Philip Enquist, FAIA, as the planning partner. The team analyzed many different sites throughout the city and created a master plan that takes full advantage of Chicago's assets: the lakefront, the extensive park and boulevard system, and the numerous mass transit lines. Venues are concentrated in four primary clusters—central city and neighborhoods to the south, east, and west—to create a layout that involves all three sides of the city yet is very compact. All athletes will be housed in a single Olympic Village just south of McCormick Place that is less than 15 minutes from 88% of the sites.

**"Architects played an exceptional role in the Olympic bid process."  
- Patrick Ryan**

The plan builds on Chicago's strengths and provides benefits that will remain long after the Games are over. Transportation improvements will follow the city's current initiatives, in some cases on an accelerated schedule, for additional or upgraded El stations and enhancement of the bus corridor between McCormick Place and Randolph Street, among other things. The parks and boulevards will benefit from additional tree planting and improvements in landscaping and lighting. The Olympic Village will revitalize a south side neighborhood by connecting it to the lakefront and providing housing on

underutilized land. Enquist says of the effort, "There is a real passion behind this idea of helping the city leverage itself to compete.... This is in the spirit of huge international events like the world's fairs of 1893 and 1933."

### The Process

The team recommended at the outset that the bid submission go well beyond the United States Olympic Committee's requirement to provide a site plan and field of play diagram for each sport. This is where the participation of additional firms gave the project a great boost. "They really stepped up, on very short notice, and engaged in an open, collaborative process," says Kerwin. In addition to the required plans, firms produced a conceptual design for each venue that includes three-dimensional imagery. The goal was to prove that the venues would be not only functional but inspirational.

The logistical requirements were daunting. With security always in mind, each venue must accommodate at least four constituencies: athletes, the Olympic Family (coaches and support staff), spectators, and last but certainly not least, the media. While meeting these criteria, architects kept in mind two overarching themes: sustainability and legacy.

Chicago has strong potential to make its Olympic Games a showcase for sustainability. The city's mass transit network will serve almost all of the venues. The venues' structures, both temporary and permanent, can be energy-efficient and in many cases can be powered by renewable sources. Construction can use recycled or non-traditional materials, and entire temporary structures can be disassembled and the components re-used. The city's system



The proposed Olympic Stadium by Ben Wood Studio Shanghai and Goettsch Partners

Image courtesy of Ben Wood Studio Shanghai and Goettsch Partners

of interconnected parks and reclaimed land can show how literally “green” an urban environment can be.

“The concept of legacy—that what is left behind is just as important as what we build for the Games—was talked about at every group meeting,” says Douglas Garofalo, FAIA. Each site has its own set of ideal outcomes, from restoration of existing conditions to a major new facility. And in addition to the transit and neighborhood improvements cited above, there would be the lasting effect of having Chicago in the global spotlight during the Games.

### The Olympic Stadium

The stadium is the centerpiece of any Olympic bid. The perpetual challenge is to create an inspiring container for 80,000 people that has a useful life after the closing ceremonies.

Chicago’s solution is a dynamic stadium whose superstructure will vanish after the Games, leaving a playing field surrounded by an amphitheater. Having chosen a site in Washington Park, SOM turned to Ben Wood Studio Shanghai and Goettsch Partners for the stadium design and to Peter Lindsay Schaudt for landscape architecture.

Wood’s design pulls all operational and support spaces out of the stadium so that it can be about 50 percent smaller. Because access points are on the perimeter of the gated grounds, not at the portal of the stadium itself, separation of seating and services is not a problem (think golf tournament rather than baseball game). This would also make it possible to sell tickets to this part of the park, allowing participation by those who do not have stadium admission. The seating bowl is a simple, repetitive structure made of reusable parts and

enlivened with fabric panels. The panels as illustrated are printed with huge images, but future technology may provide other options such as video projection.

The siting of the stadium in an historic Olmsted park calls for the utmost care in planning the post-Olympic legacy. The playing surface for track and field events will be depressed four feet and after the Games it will be surrounded by a six foot grassy berm to conceal it while providing amphitheater seating for 5,000. Existing baseball and cricket fields will be replaced and the area east of the amphitheater will be reforested. Schaudt points out that transforming the park for a global event is in the tradition of Olmsted, who reworked his 1871 design for Washington Park to adapt it for the 1893 World’s Columbian Exposition.

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## The Olympic Village

The other major component that can be a boon or a bane to the host city is the housing for athletes and support staff. Chicago's Olympic Village will be the most prominent and lasting legacy of the Games. Using air rights above a truck staging area just south of McCormick Place, the Village will fill in the last remaining stretch of undeveloped lakefront. Improvements to Burnham Park and construction of a new harbor at 31st Street will serve all city residents. The neighborhood to the immediate west will benefit from a greatly strengthened connection to the lakefront and new housing that will include hundreds of affordable apartments.

The design concept of SOM's Ross Wimer, AIA, and William Baker, SE, PE, calls for a residential zone to the west and a plaza with temporary common facilities on the waterfront. The 14 mid-rise residential buildings are organized in pairs around courtyards with lake views. The scheme has drawn enough interest from developers that it will probably go forward regardless of the outcome of the Olympic bid.

The Village, like all Olympic venues, will be constructed to Chicago's stringent accessibility code. Shortly after the Games, the Paralympics will use many of the same facilities.

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## The Venues

Kerwin assembled a team of 30 firms (see page 18) to work on the many venues, and his colleagues Sean Kinzie, AIA, and Beth Erickson, AIA, coordinated their efforts. Stanley Tigerman, FAIA, design advisor on the Olympic Village, put forth the names of several younger architects for some of the key sites. Tigerman would like the Chicago Olympic Games to feature the designs of a generation of local architects who he says "will be at the apogee of their design capacity in 2016." Many of these firms paired up to collaborate on one or more venues, and they were unanimously enthusiastic about the experience.



The concept design for the Olympic Village by Skidmore, Owings & Merrill with Tigerman McCurry Architects

Image courtesy of Skidmore, Owings & Merrill with Tigerman McCurry Architects

**“The concept of legacy...was talked about at every group meeting.”**  
- Douglas Garofalo, FAIA

Garofalo Architects collaborated with David Woodhouse Architects on the tennis venue in the northern end of Lincoln Park. The scheme incorporates the historic Waveland clocktower building and leaves behind upgraded tennis courts. They developed the idea of printed scrims on a framework to camouflage the support buildings, and this concept was subsequently adopted for many other venues.

In the case of boxing, the UIC Pavilion is perfectly suited to the needs of the sport. Garofalo Architects and Studio Gang Architects decided to surround the building with the same type of temporary framework covered with graphics to enliven the facades and signal its Olympic status.

David Woodhouse’s firm worked with Valerio Dewalt Train on a group of venues to occupy Northerly Island. Joseph Valerio, FAIA, comments that the site is “a clean sheet of paper” that offers an opportunity to be a great public space both during and after the Games. The nature preserve will be in place on the south end of the island; the north end, which will have temporary volleyball and cycling venues, can become an active area for concerts or other activities. Corporate hospitality areas for Olympic sponsors will be on barges anchored around the Adler Planetarium to provide guests with spectacular shoreline views.

**The Northerly Island venues for volleyball, cycling and hospitality, designed by David Woodhouse Architects and Valerio Dewalt Train Associates**

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**The proposed Olympic Tennis Center at Lincoln Park by Garofalo Architects and David Woodhouse Architects**



Image courtesy of Garofalo Architects and David Woodhouse Architects



Image courtesy of David Woodhouse Architects and Valerio Dewalt Train Associates

**Timeline of Key Dates**

**May 2005** Mayor Daley appoints Patrick Ryan to lead a Chicago 2016 Bid Committee

**June 2006** Five cities present qualifications to the U.S. Olympic Committee (USOC)

**July 2006** USOC names Chicago, Los Angeles and San Francisco as finalists (San Francisco drops out in November when stadium plans fall through)

**September 2006** Cities submit Answers to USOC Questionnaire

**January 9, 2007** USOC announces it will submit a bid for an American host city to the International Olympic Committee (IOC)

**January 22, 2007** Chicago and Los Angeles submit Bid Books to USOC

**March 2007** USOC evaluation team to visit Chicago

**April 14, 2007** USOC to choose the American candidate city

**September 15, 2007** U.S. applicant city submission due to IOC

**October 2009** IOC chooses host city for 2016 Olympics

One of the most exciting venues is not for sports but for the athletes and the public. At the heart of the five-block “live site” in Grant Park will be an interactive, international gathering spot. John Ronan Architect went beyond the typical program—a big open space with video screens—to create an interactive global village. Each Olympic nation will have its own pavilion with a two-way Web cam link to a site in that country. Chicagoans and visitors will have a place to meet the athletes, and all three groups will be able to communicate with people in other countries. This could well be the centerpiece of what Patrick Ryan foresees as a true “people’s Olympics.”

*For a list of Chicago 2016 architecture, engineering, and construction consulting contributors, please see page 18.*

**The Legacy**

The figure of Daniel Burnham continues to loom large in Chicago’s history. His two most prominent achievements were planning the city’s global debut at the 1893 World’s Fair and applying City Beautiful principles to the entire urban region in his 1909 Plan of Chicago. The 2016 Olympic host city will be chosen in 2009, the centennial of that urban planning milestone. With its basis in creative collaboration and its focus on the importance of transportation, the park system and the lakefront, the Chicago Olympic plan extends Burnham’s legacy into the next hundred years. ■

Laurie Petersen is the associate editor of the AIA Guide to Chicago. Her article about Harry Weese appeared in the January issue of Focus.

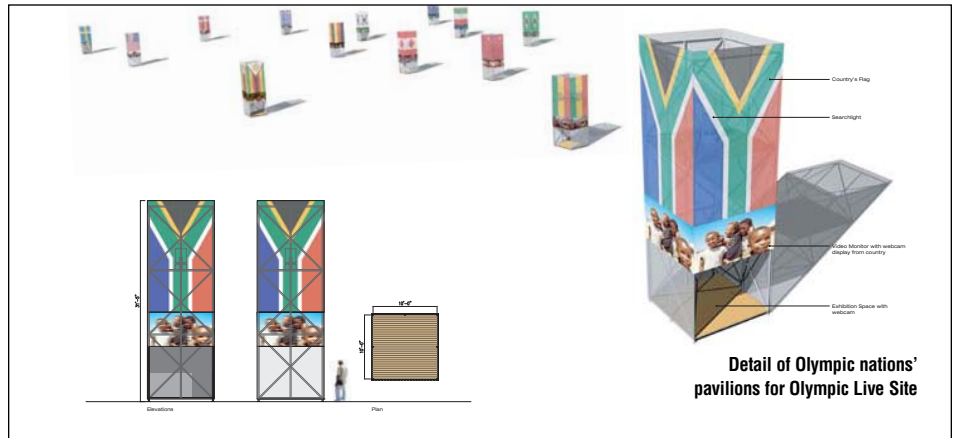


Image courtesy of John Ronan Architect



Image courtesy of John Ronan Architect

# CHICAGO 2016

## ARCHITECTURE, ENGINEERING AND CONSTRUCTION CONSULTING CONTRIBUTORS

**Skidmore, Owings & Merrill LLP**  
Coordinating Architect and Master  
Planner, Olympic Village Architect and  
Engineer

**Michael Halchak**  
Operations Planner

**Ben Wood Studio Shanghai**  
Architect - Olympic Stadium

**Brininstool + Lynch, Ltd.**  
Architect - Transportation Gateway

**David Woodhouse Architects LLC**  
Architect - Beach Volleyball, Cycling  
and Tennis Venues, Sponsor Hospitality

**Epstein**  
Architect - McCormick Place Venues,  
International Broadcast Center, Main  
Press Center

**Garofalo Architects, Inc.**  
Architect - Aquatics, Boxing and Tennis  
Venues

**Goettsch Partners**  
Architect - Olympic Stadium and  
Football Venue

**Griskelis Young Harrell**  
Architect - Preliminary Football Venues

**JJR, LLC**  
Architect - Sailing, Rowing and Canoe-  
Kayak Venues

**John Ronan Architect**  
Architect - Archery Venue and Live Site

**Studio Gang Architects**  
Architect - Aquatics and Boxing Venues

**Tigerman McCurry Architects**  
Architect - Olympic Village Advisor

**Valerio Dewalt Train Associates, Inc.**  
Architect - Beach Volleyball, Cycling  
and United Center Venues, Sponsor  
Hospitality

**3D Design Studio**  
Architect - Equestrian and Shooting  
Venues

**Peter Lindsay Schaudt Landscape  
Architecture, Inc.**  
Landscape Architect - Olympic Stadium  
and Hockey Venue

**CH2M Hill**  
Environmental Consulting

**Parsons Brinckerhoff**  
Environmental Consulting

**Arup**  
Transportation Consulting

**Metro Transportation Group, Inc.**  
Transportation Consulting

**Bovis Lend Lease**  
Construction Cost Consulting - Olympic  
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**Construction Cost Systems, Inc.**  
Construction Cost Consulting - Olympic  
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**Davis Langdon LLP**  
Construction Cost Consulting - Venues

**Turner Construction Company**  
Construction Cost Consulting - Olympic  
Stadium

**Sako & Associates, Inc.**  
Security Consulting

**Crystal CG**  
Architectural Rendering

**Kathleen Newman**  
Architectural Rendering

**Visualized Concepts**  
Architectural Rendering

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Printing

**Steinkamp Photography, Inc.**  
Photography

**Tigerhill Studio**  
Photography

**Chicago Guarantee Survey Co.**  
Surveying

Rendering of North Gate of  
proposed Olympic Stadium

