

A low-angle photograph of the Eiffel Tower in Paris, France, set against a clear blue sky with light, wispy clouds. The tower's intricate iron lattice structure is the central focus. On one of the lower levels, the five Olympic rings are prominently displayed. The rings are colored blue, yellow, black, green, and red from left to right. The overall composition is dynamic, with the tower's lines converging towards the top of the frame.

FROM PARIS TO CAPE TOWN

Insights and ideas from the Cape Town 2040 learning mission
to the Paris 2024 Olympic Games

Cape Town 2040 is a think tank focused on exploring how a future Olympic and Paralympic Games could benefit Cape Town and the Western Cape. We assess the potential impact of the Games on sustainable development, resilience, and regional integration. Through research, strategic planning, and engagement with urban practitioners, government bodies, athletes, and local communities, CT2040 aims to understand how the Games can accelerate investments and drive long-term positive change for the region.

CT2040 is spearheaded by Guy Briggs, Partner & Executive Director as well as the urban design principal at dhk Architects, and Rashiq Fataar, CEO of Our Future Cities, who bring a wealth of expertise and vision to the endeavour.

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About the Learning Mission

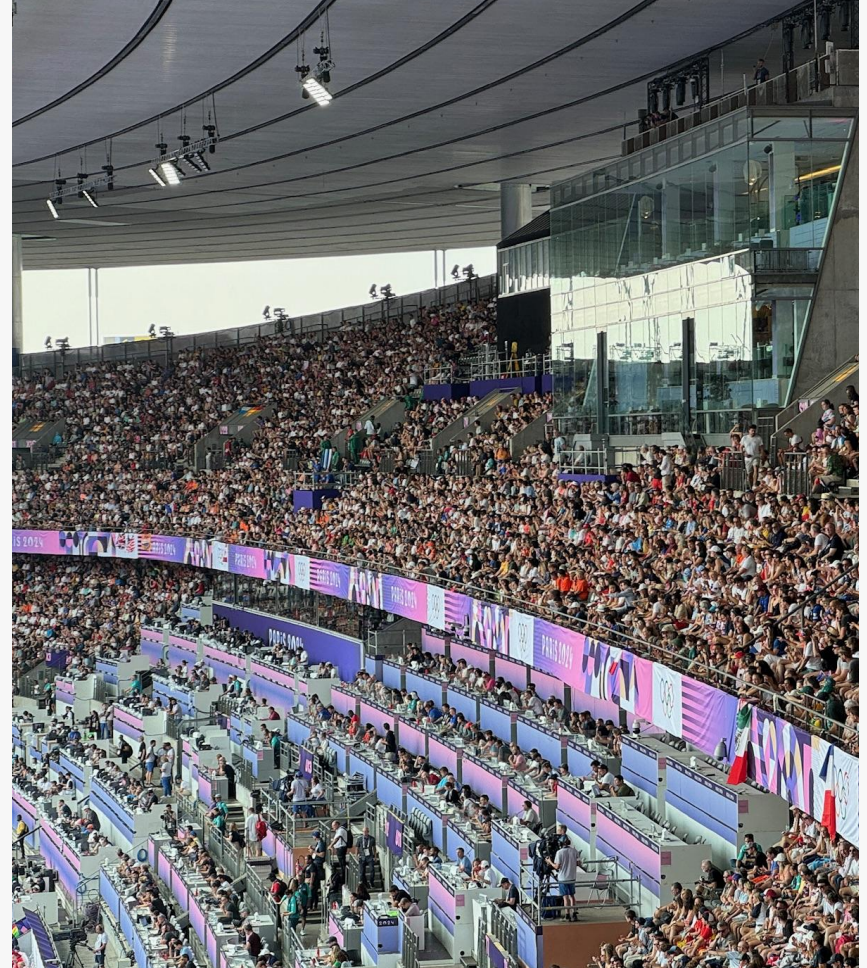
From 23 July to 9 August 2024, the Cape Town 2040 Think Tank conducted a Learning Mission at the Paris 2024 Olympic Games, focusing on venue design, legacy planning, and community engagement.

Sports venues visited included:

- Stade de France (Athletics and Rugby 7s)
- Parc des Princes (Football)
- The Olympic Aquatic Centre (Water Polo, Diving, Artistic Swimming)
- La Défense Arena (Swimming, Water Polo Finals)
- Les Invalides (Archery)
- Roucas-Blanc Marina in Marseille (Sailing)
- Stade Velodrome in Marseille (Football)
- Roland Garros (Tennis and Boxing)
- The Grand Palais (Fencing and Taekwondo)
- Urban Sports Park at Place de la Concorde (Skateboarding, 3x3 Basketball, Breaking, BMX).

In addition to attending sports events, CT2040 observed and documented other Games-related initiatives, including:

- Parc des Nations at La Villette
- Club France at Parc de la Villette
- Olympic Esplanade at Hôtel de Ville
- Olympic Festival at Parc Monceau
- Olympic Experience at Jardin des Tuileries
- Olympic Pavilion at Cité des Sciences et de l'Industrie
- Olympic Cultural Hub at La Villette



Editorial by Rashiq Fataar

The Olympic Games are a transformative opportunity for any city. Paris 2024 exemplified this through bold leadership from Tony Estanguet, Anne Hidalgo, and President Macron, who prioritised climate action, long-term planning, and legacy over short-term wins, often in the face of opposition. Through the ethos of Jeux Ouverts or Games Wide Open, elements of the Games—whether the Torch Relay, Cauldron, or the Ceremony itself—were reimagined, with sustainability embedded throughout, setting a benchmark for future host cities and opening the Games to more people.

This ambitious approach prompts reflection: What would it mean for Cape Town to host the Olympic Games, and how could we creatively express the principles of Agenda 2020+5, which calls for innovation and flexibility? How can our city's distinct character and strengths authentically embody the spirit of Olympism in a forward-thinking, African way?

Our Learning Mission to Paris provided a valuable lens to explore these questions. We visited 12 venues in Paris, as well as sailing and football events in Marseille. Beyond sport, we experienced cultural exhibitions and vibrant spaces like Parc des Nations, illustrating how Paris utilised its public spaces as enduring gifts to the Games.

This report is divided into two parts: Celebrating the Games, which explores ideas for hosting the Olympics in a uniquely Cape Town way, and Designing for the Games and Beyond, which considers how Cape Town could adapt Paris' lessons to build a lasting legacy.

I extend my heartfelt gratitude to everyone—sponsors, colleagues, hosts, friends, and the Our Future Cities team—who supported this mission and inspired us. You have enriched our exploration of what it would mean for Cape Town to host an Olympic Games that transforms our city, inspires our continent, and leaves a legacy for the youth of our country.



Rashiq Fataar, CEO of Our Future Cities and Co-Lead of Cape Town 2040

CELEBRATING THE GAMES

- *Build a brand to bring the city and regions alive*
- *Take the ceremonies beyond the stadium*
- *Bring games celebrations to more people*
- *Create new attractions and enhance existing attractions*
- *Share the games experience beyond the centre*
- *Enhance the experience of attending events*
- *Share the games across the country*

DESIGNING FOR THE GAMES AND BEYOND

- *Maximise use of existing venues, sites, and assets*
- *Host multiple sports and events within a venue*
- *Use the games to kickstart urban projects*
- *Design the “right-size” venue for needs of the city-region*
- *Make walking and cycling a priority*
- *Develop neighbourhoods with sport, culture, and tourism*
- *Get the governance right to deliver infrastructure*
- *Hold firm on legacy targets and goals*
- *Deliver the maximum affordable housing legacy*
- *Invest in transport infrastructure for long-term city needs*
- *Tie games into long term development and regeneration plans*
- *People are at the heart of making games a success*
- *Use the games as an opportunity for meaningful and creative public participation*
- *Use the games to create jobs for social impact*

CELEBRATING THE GAMES



From Paris

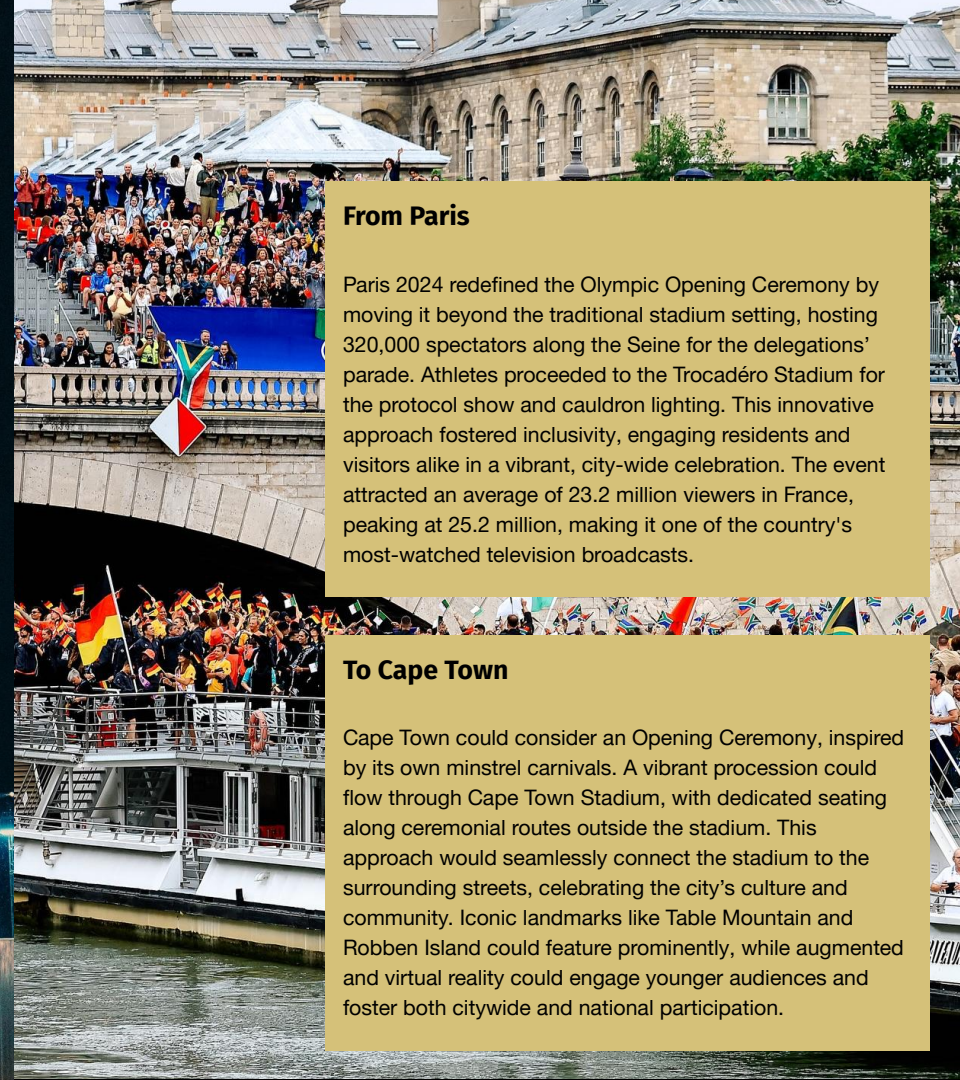
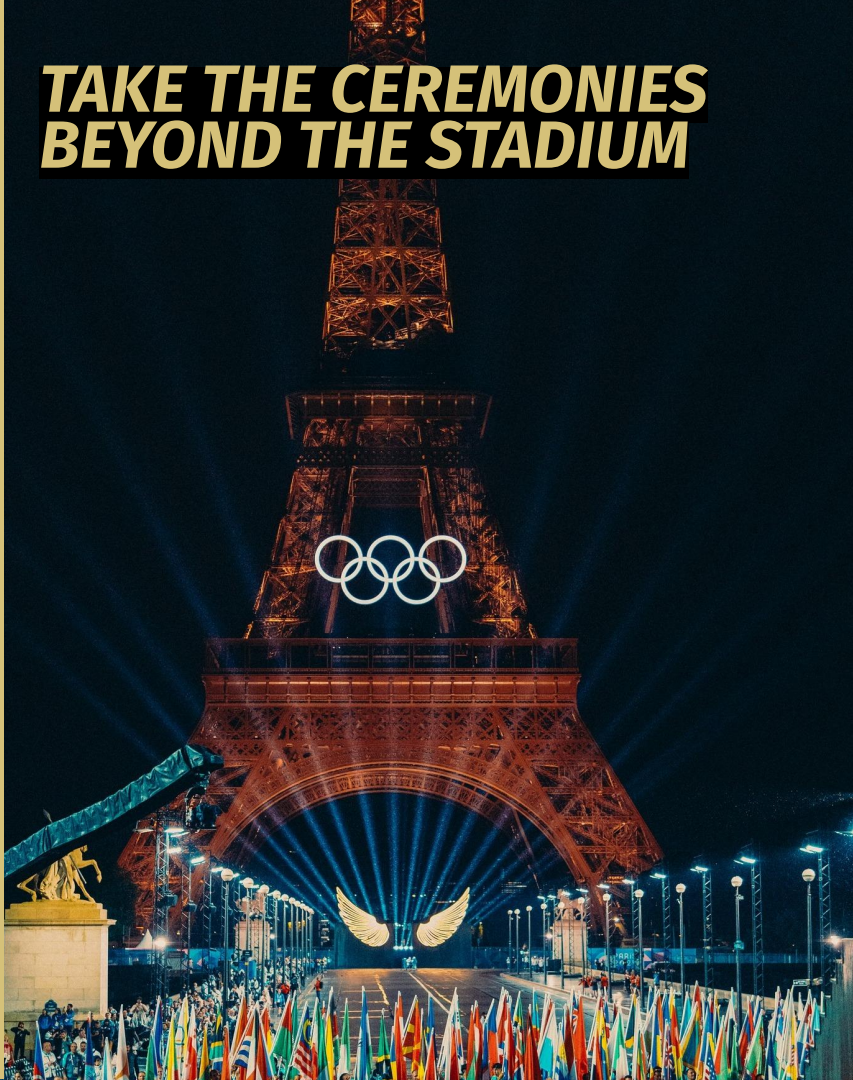
The vibrant purple and pink shades seamlessly extended the “Look of the Games” across all venues, from the Stade de France’s iconic purple athletics track to trains, metro stations, and wayfinding systems. These bold colors were not confined to official venues but also brought cohesion to unbranded public spaces, appearing in creative forms such as lighting installations and painted walkways near event sites.

To Cape Town

Cape Town could craft a brand that reflects the city, Western Cape, and South Africa’s diversity, celebrating iconic landmarks and cultural richness. Each neighborhood could express its unique identity, activating public spaces with vibrant, non-commercial elements to create a cohesive, inclusive visual identity that unites the city, region, and country.



TAKE THE CEREMONIES BEYOND THE STADIUM



From Paris

Paris 2024 redefined the Olympic Opening Ceremony by moving it beyond the traditional stadium setting, hosting 320,000 spectators along the Seine for the delegations' parade. Athletes proceeded to the Trocadéro Stadium for the protocol show and cauldron lighting. This innovative approach fostered inclusivity, engaging residents and visitors alike in a vibrant, city-wide celebration. The event attracted an average of 23.2 million viewers in France, peaking at 25.2 million, making it one of the country's most-watched television broadcasts.

To Cape Town

Cape Town could consider an Opening Ceremony, inspired by its own minstrel carnivals. A vibrant procession could flow through Cape Town Stadium, with dedicated seating along ceremonial routes outside the stadium. This approach would seamlessly connect the stadium to the surrounding streets, celebrating the city's culture and community. Iconic landmarks like Table Mountain and Robben Island could feature prominently, while augmented and virtual reality could engage younger audiences and foster both citywide and national participation.

BRING GAMES CELEBRATIONS TO MORE PEOPLE



From Paris

The Champions Park at the Trocadéro Gardens near the Eiffel Tower hosted daily Olympian parades, live broadcasts, and cultural performances, including hip-hop shows by Mourad Merzouki. Thousands attended each day, with medalists like Léon Marchand and Claisse Agbegnenou engaging with crowds each evening. Its proximity to iconic landmarks allowed seamless transitions between events, blending sport, culture, and community into an unforgettable Olympic experience.

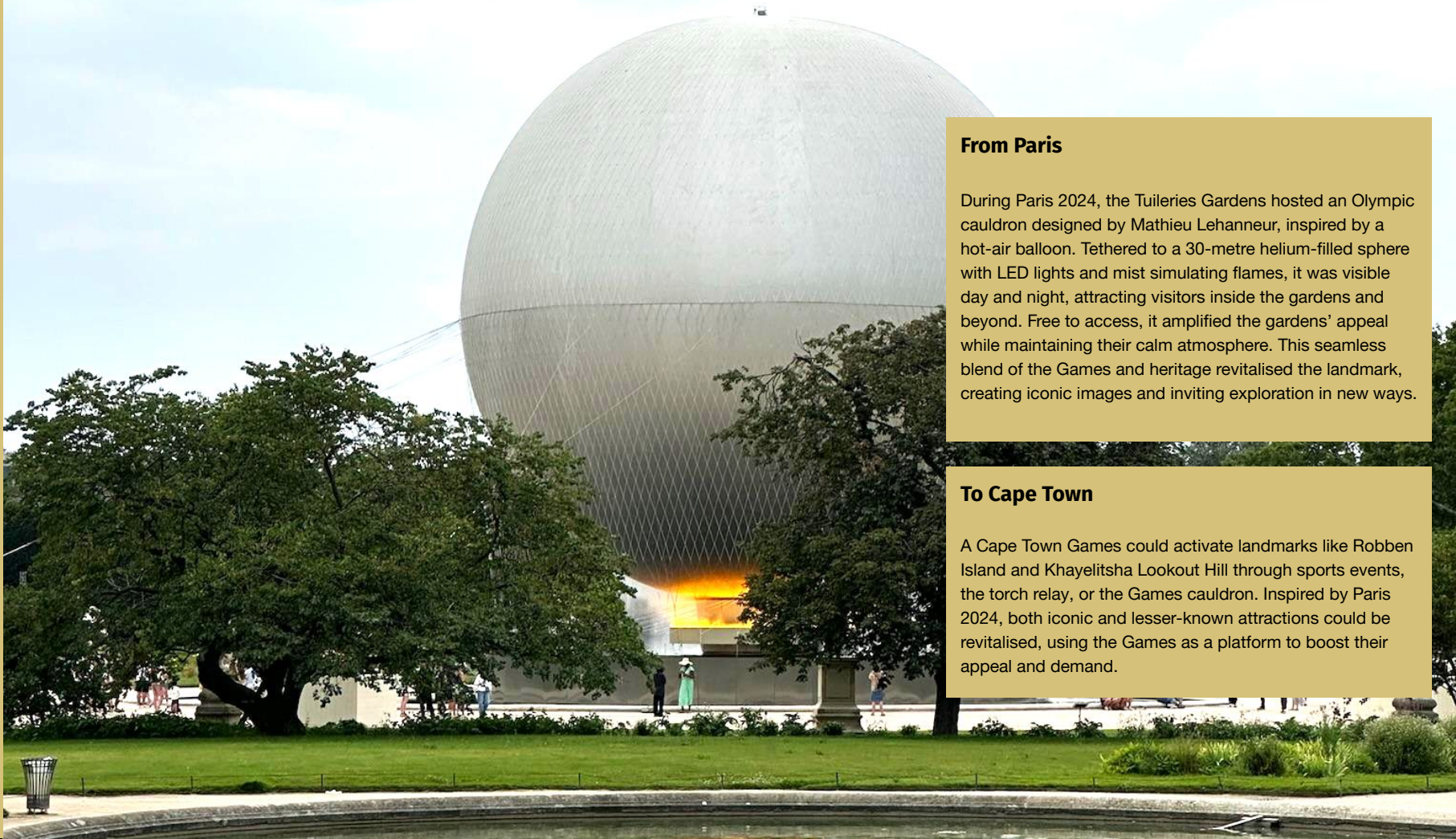
To Cape Town

Cape Town could expand on its 2010 FIFA Fan Park at the Grand Parade by creating a central hub for celebrations, similar to Paris 2024's Champions Park. It should also utilise public spaces across the city and region for activities, viewings, and events, bringing the Games experience to diverse communities and ensuring broad participation.

CREATE NEW ATTRACTIONS AND ENHANCE EXISTING ATTRACTIONS

Paris 2024 reimagined the Olympic cauldron, traditionally placed in a stadium, as a modern installation of gas and light in the Tuileries Gardens near the Louvre and Arc de Triomphe du Carrousel. Glowing brilliantly at night, it was positioned in an accessible space where many could view it without tickets. Open to all and free, the cauldron became a new attraction, amplifying the iconic landmarks' appeal and showcasing how the Games can creatively enhance and reimagine existing destinations.





From Paris

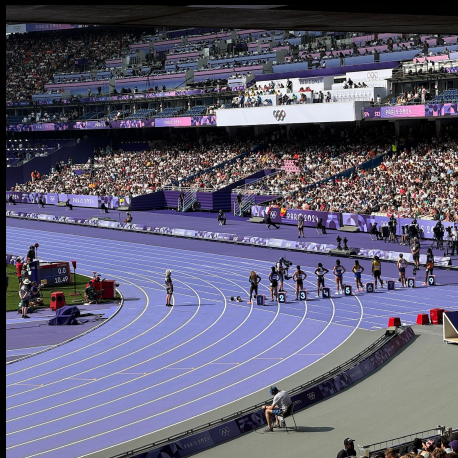
During Paris 2024, the Tuileries Gardens hosted an Olympic cauldron designed by Mathieu Lehanneur, inspired by a hot-air balloon. Tethered to a 30-metre helium-filled sphere with LED lights and mist simulating flames, it was visible day and night, attracting visitors inside the gardens and beyond. Free to access, it amplified the gardens' appeal while maintaining their calm atmosphere. This seamless blend of the Games and heritage revitalised the landmark, creating iconic images and inviting exploration in new ways.

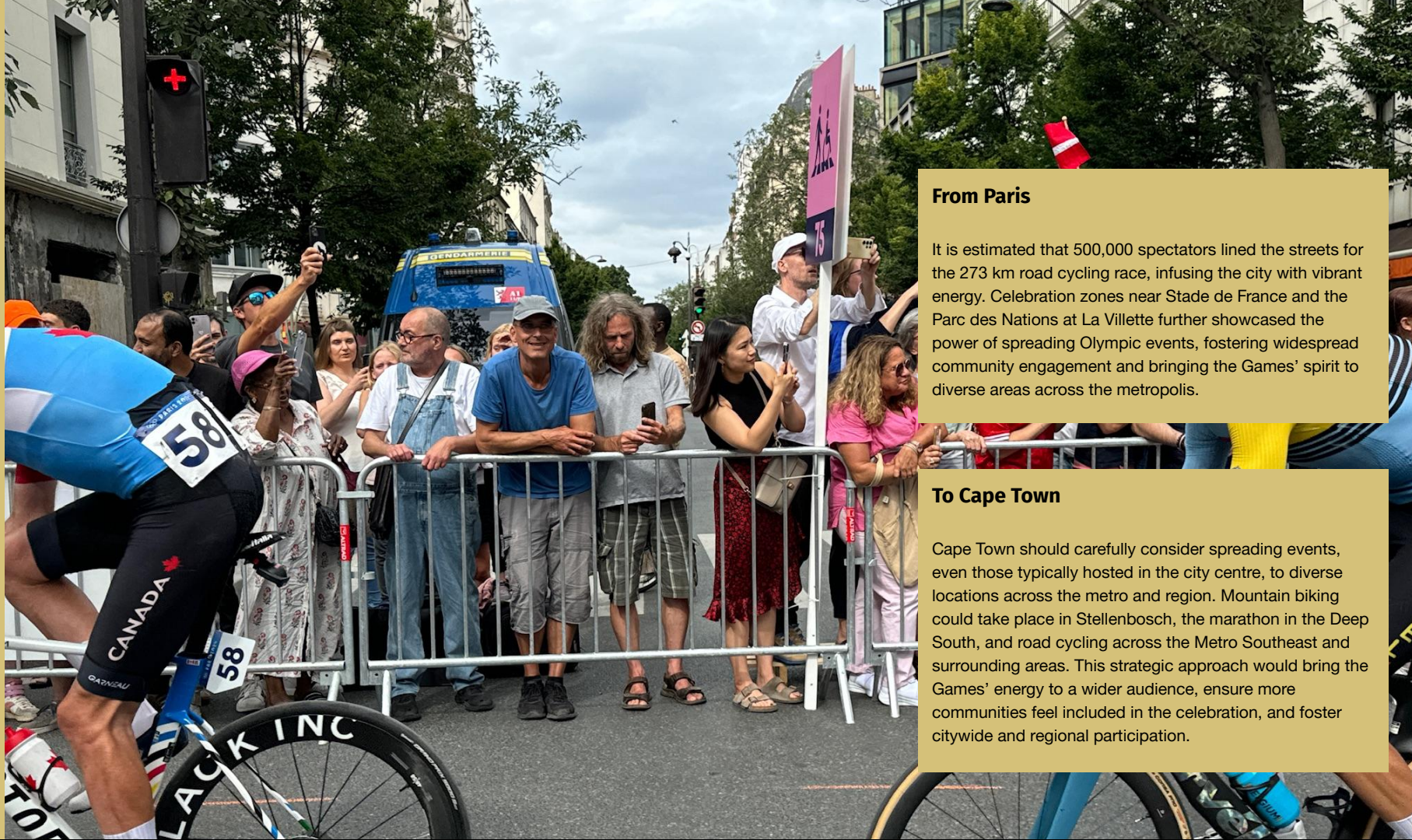
To Cape Town

A Cape Town Games could activate landmarks like Robben Island and Khayelitsha Lookout Hill through sports events, the torch relay, or the Games cauldron. Inspired by Paris 2024, both iconic and lesser-known attractions could be revitalised, using the Games as a platform to boost their appeal and demand.

SHARE THE GAMES EXPERIENCE BEYOND THE CENTRE

Paris 2024 showed how hosting events citywide, beyond the centre, fosters inclusivity and a broader celebration. High-quality venues like Vaires-sur-Marne for rowing and Versailles for equestrian events, along with free-to-watch sports such as road cycling and the marathon, brought the Games' atmosphere to diverse communities. This strategy ensured the entire metropolitan region, not just the centre, felt engaged, highlighting the value of involving outlying areas to create a shared and memorable Olympic experience.





From Paris

It is estimated that 500,000 spectators lined the streets for the 273 km road cycling race, infusing the city with vibrant energy. Celebration zones near Stade de France and the Parc des Nations at La Villette further showcased the power of spreading Olympic events, fostering widespread community engagement and bringing the Games' spirit to diverse areas across the metropolis.

To Cape Town

Cape Town should carefully consider spreading events, even those typically hosted in the city centre, to diverse locations across the metro and region. Mountain biking could take place in Stellenbosch, the marathon in the Deep South, and road cycling across the Metro Southeast and surrounding areas. This strategic approach would bring the Games' energy to a wider audience, ensure more communities feel included in the celebration, and foster citywide and regional participation.

ENHANCE THE EXPERIENCE OF ATTENDING EVENTS

Paris 2024 demonstrated that enhancing the atmosphere inside and around venues is vital for a well-rounded spectator experience. Recognising that attending the Games often means long days, Paris integrated leisure spaces, interactive zones, and family-friendly activities, transforming venues into vibrant hubs. Even a beach in Marseille was activated as part of the Sailing venue. Cultural exhibits, sports demonstrations, and relaxation areas catered to diverse groups, including families and casual attendees, encouraging broader participation and making the ticketed Games experience more inclusive and memorable.





From Paris

At Paris 2024, Place de la Concorde was a hub of activity, featuring sports demonstrations, viewing areas, and interactive experiences. Across other venues, activities like archery tryouts, sponsor activations, and live music kept spectators engaged. At Roland Garros, mini courts allowed children to participate, creating a more inclusive and dynamic atmosphere. These features demonstrated how diverse on-site activities can enhance the spectator experience and foster greater connection to the Games.

To Cape Town

Cape Town and the Western Cape could enhance the spectator experience by integrating natural and cultural assets into ticketed sports venues. Inspired by Paris 2024, secure venue zones could offer more than just sport—featuring access to beaches, rivers, or mountain trails, alongside South African music, food, and cultural activities, creating a vibrant and immersive experience.

SHARE THE GAMES ACROSS THE COUNTRY

Paris 2024 embraced the principles of Olympic Agenda 2020+5 by utilising venues across France, highlighting regional diversity and extending the spirit of the Games beyond the capital to celebrate the entire nation. Nine cities outside the Île-de-France region hosted events, including Marseille (sailing, football), Lille (basketball, handball), Lyon, Bordeaux, Saint-Étienne, Nantes, and Nice (football), Châteauroux (shooting), and Teahupo'o, Tahiti (surfing).

Within the Île-de-France region, five additional locations were used: Versailles (equestrian, modern pentathlon), Vaires-sur-Marne (canoe, rowing), Saint-Quentin-en-Yvelines (cycling), Colombes (hockey), and Le Bourget (sport climbing).





From Paris

Paris 2024 demonstrated how cities beyond the capital contributed to the Games. Marseille hosted sailing and football, using existing facilities like the Marseille Marina and showcasing the city's distinct character. Surfing in Tahiti utilised its renowned conditions, illustrating how geographically diverse locations can support the Games, optimise resources, and provide unique settings for events.

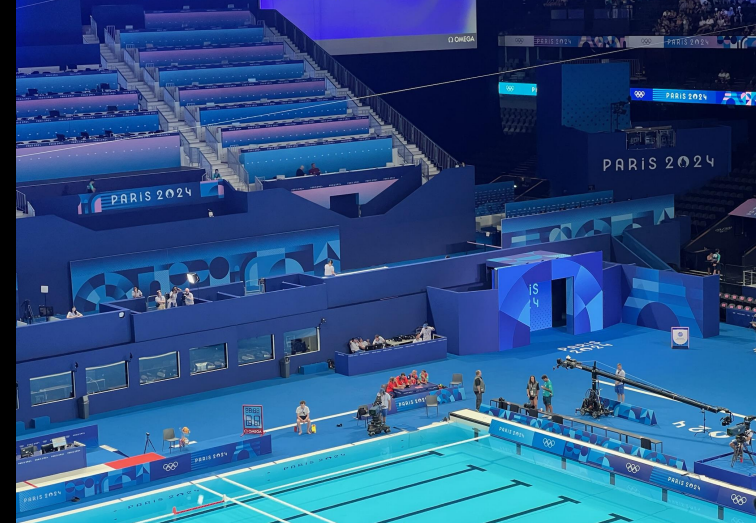
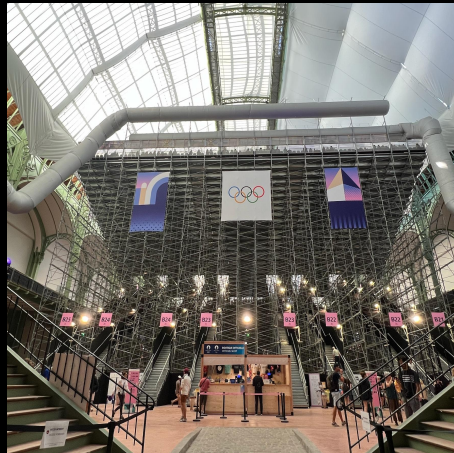
To Cape Town

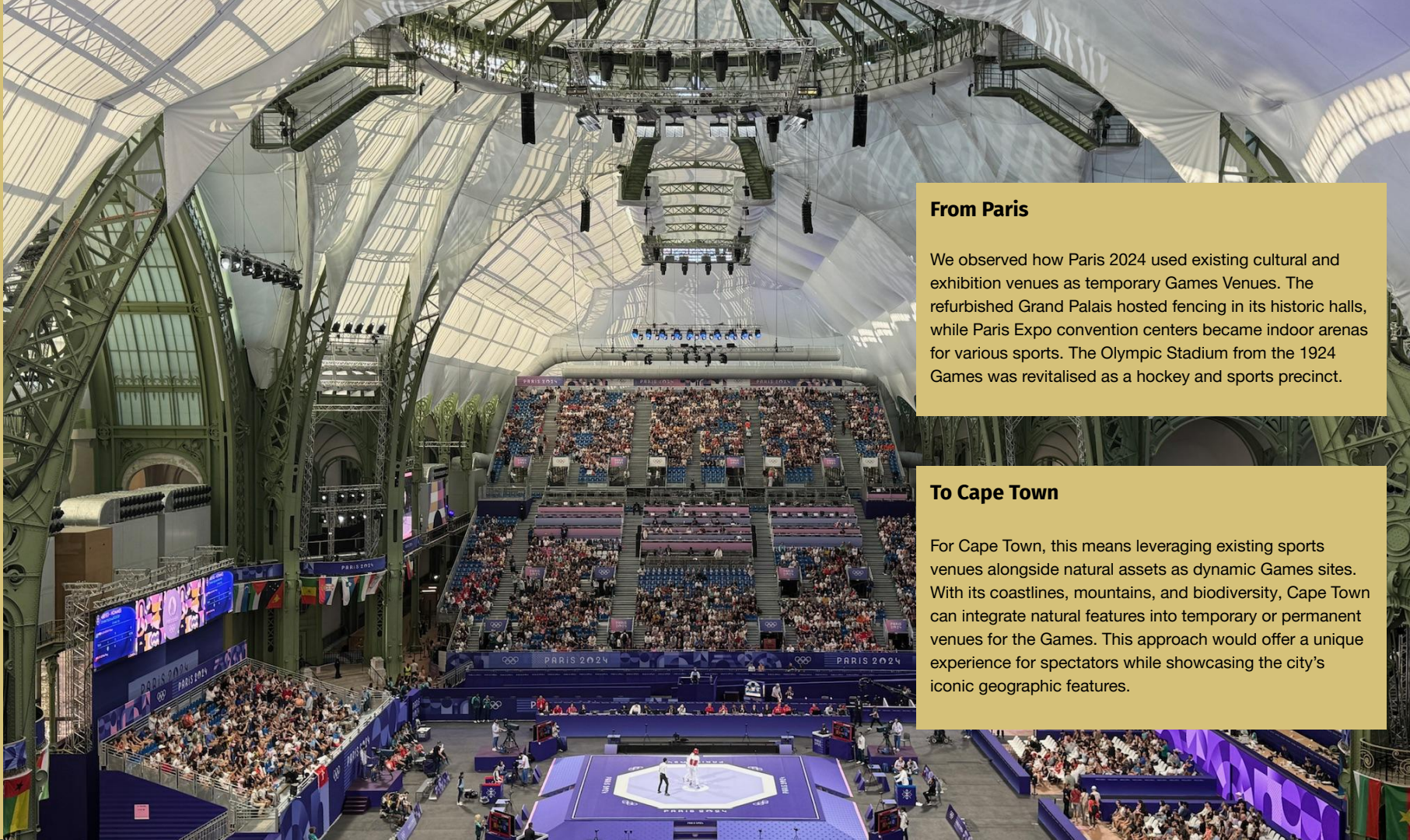
While Cape Town and the Western Cape would be the main hosts, Agenda 2020+5 allows for broader involvement across the country. Events at iconic venues like Soccer City, host of the 2010 World Cup final, and J-Bay, a world-class surfing spot, would showcase South Africa's landscapes, cultures, and communities, turning the Games into a national celebration of unity and diversity.

DESIGNING FOR THE GAMES AND BEYOND

MAXIMISE USE OF EXISTING VENUES, SITES, AND ASSETS

Paris 2024 embraced the principles of the Olympic Agenda 2020+5 by combining traditional sports venues with cultural landmarks and public spaces. Iconic sports facilities like Stade de France, Parc des Princes, and Roland Garros were complemented by innovative use of non-sports venues. The Grand Palais hosted fencing, Les Invalides staged archery, and Place de la Concorde transformed into an urban sports park. This approach demonstrated sustainable planning by maximising existing assets and integrating sport with culture and public life.





From Paris

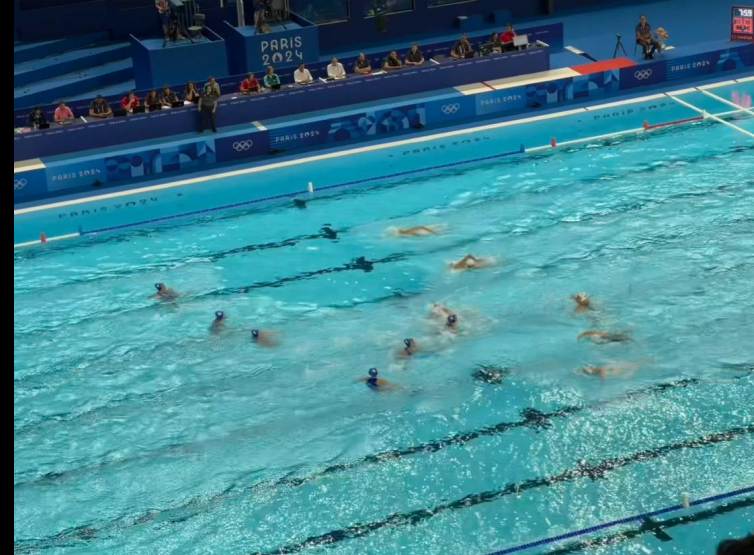
We observed how Paris 2024 used existing cultural and exhibition venues as temporary Games Venues. The refurbished Grand Palais hosted fencing in its historic halls, while Paris Expo convention centers became indoor arenas for various sports. The Olympic Stadium from the 1924 Games was revitalised as a hockey and sports precinct.

To Cape Town

For Cape Town, this means leveraging existing sports venues alongside natural assets as dynamic Games sites. With its coastlines, mountains, and biodiversity, Cape Town can integrate natural features into temporary or permanent venues for the Games. This approach would offer a unique experience for spectators while showcasing the city's iconic geographic features.

HOST MULTIPLE SPORTS AND EVENTS WITHIN ONE VENUE

The Paris 2024 Olympics highlighted the efficiency of venue sharing, where one venue hosted multiple sports, ceremonies, and events across the Olympic and Paralympic Games. Rapid turnaround between events made this approach both practical and sustainable through appropriate test events before the Games. This now-common practice reduces the need for additional infrastructure, optimising resources while supporting diverse uses.





From Paris

From Paris, we observed venue sharing in action. Stade de France hosted Athletics, Rugby 7s, and the Closing Ceremony. Roland Garros hosted tennis as well as the boxing finals, while the Grand Palais accommodated fencing and taekwondo. Place de la Concorde, which was the home of four urban sports, was transformed into the Paralympic opening ceremony site.

To Cape Town

For Cape Town, this could mean Cape Town Stadium hosting Rugby 7s, Football, and possibly ceremonies, with the CTICC accommodating multiple indoor sports. Parks like Nantes Park could also host multiple sports, reducing the security and operations costs while infrastructure upgrades have the potential to leave a lasting legacy.

USE THE GAMES TO KICKSTART URBAN PROJECTS

The Paris 2024 Olympic Games catalysed significant urban projects, including the €250 million transformation of the Champs-Élysées into a more pedestrian-friendly environment. The initial phase, focusing on Place de la Concorde, was completed ahead of the Games and included greening and redesign efforts to improve pedestrian accessibility and sustainability.

The full transformation of the Champs-Élysées is expected by 2030. Renovations include upgraded pathways, enhanced greenery, and expanded pedestrian zones, preparing the iconic boulevard to welcome visitors during the Games while setting the stage for a vibrant, sustainable future.





From Paris

During the Games, the Champs-Élysées became an "Olympic Boulevard," a pedestrian- and cycle-friendly corridor allowing spectators, visitors, and stakeholders to move seamlessly between venues like the Grand Palais, Place de la Concorde, and other nearby sites. It showcased the avenue's potential as part of its 2030 vision.

To Cape Town

Cape Town could accelerate major urban projects already planned or underway, using the Games as a catalyst to fast-track initial phases or complete broader visions. Examples include the Mowbray Golf Course redevelopment, Athlone Stadium precinct, Bellville CBD, ACSA's Swartklip site, and other projects currently in planning stages.

DESIGN THE “RIGHT-SIZE” VENUE FOR NEEDS OF THE CITY-REGION

Paris 2024 demonstrated its commitment to sustainability and adaptability through its Venue Masterplan Review, which prioritised cost, legacy, and feasibility. A key decision saw the Aquatics Centre reimagined: instead of building a temporary 15,000-seat venue, swimming events were held in a temporary pool at La Défense Arena, a rugby stadium. A new permanent 5,000-seat Aquatics Centre in Saint-Denis was constructed with a focus on long-term community use.

This reflects Paris 2024's emphasis on delivering functional, community-focused facilities with a lasting legacy.





From Paris

The new Aquatics Centre was designed as a "right-sized" venue, providing 5,000 seats for the Games. Post-Games, the seating capacity is reduced to 2,500 become a community multi-sport complex featuring pools, fitness areas, and courts. Similarly, Roland Garros' outdoor courts highlighted that large venues are not always necessary to deliver a memorable and impactful Games experience.

To Cape Town

Cape Town should adopt a 'right-size' approach to venue design, balancing the need for Games requirements with the long-term community needs. For instance, a temporary pool installed in Athlone Stadium for larger swimming events, paired with a smaller, permanent/upgraded aquatics centre, could serve both purposes effectively. Similarly, temporary venues for less frequent events, like tennis, can provide exceptional experiences while minimising costs and environmental impact.

MAKE WALKING AND CYCLING A PRIORITY

Paris's long-standing commitment to pedestrian and cycling infrastructure was further amplified in preparation for the Olympic Games. For over a decade, the city has invested heavily in active transportation, including €250 million between 2021 and 2026 to develop 180 kilometers of new bike lanes and thousands of bicycle parking spots.

During the Games, these efforts were enhanced with over 400 km of bike lanes, including 88 km of protected routes, ensuring safe access to venues. These measures integrated walking and cycling into the Games, showcasing Paris' enduring focus on sustainable urban mobility.





From Paris

The Games are made for walking. Walking was an integral part of the spectator experience at the Paris Olympics. Attendees regularly walked 1–2 km from transit hubs to venues, within venues, and across the city. Clearly marked pink bike parking areas and pedestrian-only lanes in key neighbourhoods highlighted Paris’s focus on active mobility. Walking around Paris and its venues was both natural and enjoyable.

To Cape Town

While recognised for being walkable in some parts of the city, Cape Town would need significant investment in non-motorised transport infrastructure. Building on the success of the “Fan Walk,” the city should prioritise creating safe, comfortable walking areas within a 2–3 km radius of all venues and public transport hubs. The more walkable the broader city and its neighbourhoods are, the more successful the Games would be.

DEVELOP NEIGHBOURHOODS WITH SPORT, CULTURE, AND TOURISM

The Paris 2024 Games built on the Paris Plages initiative, launched in 2002, to enhance neighbourhoods by spotlighting their unique character through sports, culture, and tourism. Initially transforming parts of the Seine's banks into temporary beach resorts, Paris Plages introduced activities like concerts, sports, and open-air libraries.

For the Games, it expanded to Canal Saint-Martin, closing roads to vehicles and creating vibrant, pedestrian-friendly spaces. These efforts amplified the neighbourhood's existing identity, drawing visitors, celebrating local heritage, and integrating the energy of the Games into a broader cultural and tourism legacy. Great neighbourhoods designed for people naturally become great neighbourhoods to welcome the world.





From Paris

Paris used the Games to spotlight and enhance what was already present in host neighbourhoods. Initiatives like Station Afrique in Saint-Denis celebrated existing heritage and community values, showcasing African culture through concerts, exhibitions, and events. These efforts amplified local tourism experiences, drew in more visitors, and highlighted the neighbourhood's unique identity while leaving a lasting cultural and economic legacy.

To Cape Town

While the Games focus on sports and venues, they also offer an opportunity to showcase and develop Cape Town's tourism offerings. Highlighting the art, culture, heritage, and innovation of communities like Athlone, Khayelitsha, Woodstock, and Langa can celebrate the city's diversity. Integrating museums, heritage sites, and local culture alongside sports venues creates a multidimensional experience that drives tourism and neighbourhood development.

GET THE GOVERNANCE RIGHT TO DELIVER INFRASTRUCTURE

Delivering major Games infrastructure often involves establishing a Special Purpose Vehicle (SPV) with governance tailored to the local context. Paris created SOLIDEO, a public industrial and commercial entity (EPIC), to oversee Olympic infrastructure, including the Village, bridges, and new venues, while upgrading nearby facilities. Similarly, London's 2012 Olympic Delivery Authority (ODA) and Rio's 2016 CIO served as SPVs, focusing on coordination, governance, and delivery.

While differing in structure, these entities shared a common goal: managing complex projects efficiently, integrating public and private funding, and ensuring long-term legacy planning.



From Paris

SOLIDEO managed the construction of the Olympic Aquatic Centre, the Olympic Village, and several other infrastructure projects, collectively valued at approximately €4.5 billion. Funded largely through public-private partnerships, these developments were delivered on time and with a focus on sustainability. SOLIDEO's approach ensured that the Games left a meaningful legacy, integrating long-term benefits for the city and its residents into each project.

To Cape Town

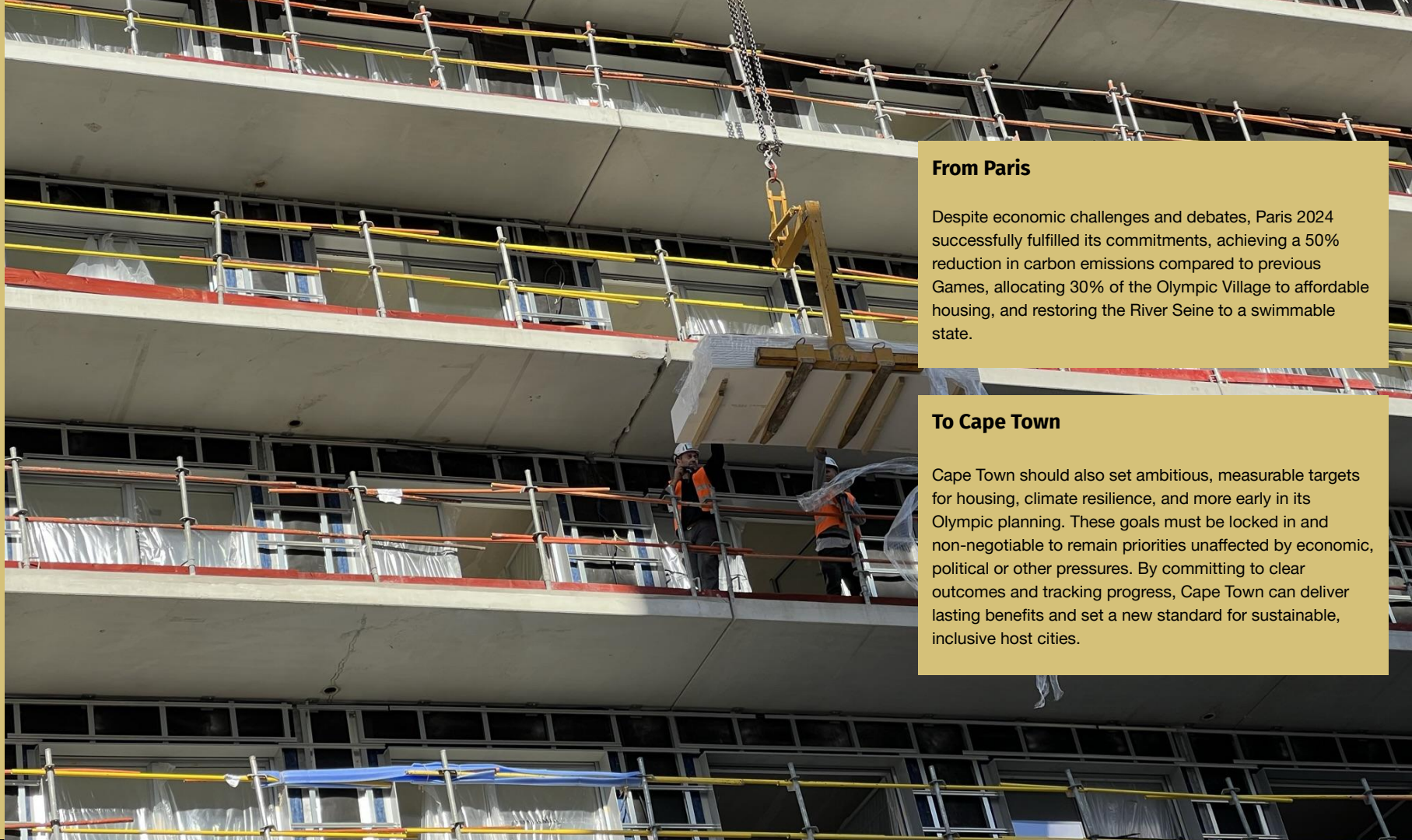
For Cape Town and the Western Cape, Games related infrastructure projects could benefit from specialised governance structures, such as a dedicated entity or SPV, similar to Paris' SOLIDEO or London's ODA. These structures enable collaborative and efficient delivery, access to private funding, and integrated long-term planning.



HOLD FIRM ON LEGACY TARGETS AND GOALS

Paris 2024 set a benchmark for sustainable and socially impactful Games. Climate action, affordable housing, and urban regeneration were central to its vision. Key initiatives, such as cleaning the River Seine for swimming events and integrating 30% affordable housing into the Olympic Village, demonstrated Paris's commitment to long-term urban transformation and a legacy-focused approach.





From Paris

Despite economic challenges and debates, Paris 2024 successfully fulfilled its commitments, achieving a 50% reduction in carbon emissions compared to previous Games, allocating 30% of the Olympic Village to affordable housing, and restoring the River Seine to a swimmable state.

To Cape Town

Cape Town should also set ambitious, measurable targets for housing, climate resilience, and more early in its Olympic planning. These goals must be locked in and non-negotiable to remain priorities unaffected by economic, political or other pressures. By committing to clear outcomes and tracking progress, Cape Town can deliver lasting benefits and set a new standard for sustainable, inclusive host cities.

DELIVER THE MAXIMUM AFFORDABLE HOUSING LEGACY

From Paris

The Paris 2024 Olympic Village includes 2,800 units, with 30% allocated to affordable, intermediate, and student housing. The Media Village in Dugny, designed for 1,300 units, prioritises social housing, with 77% of the area already social housing. Both villages aim to meet local housing needs, converting post-Games into residential areas to accommodate thousands of residents.

To Cape Town

With its substantial housing backlog and far fewer hotel rooms than Paris, Cape Town would need to build at least twice as many housing units as the Paris Games. However, this challenge presents a unique opportunity: by prioritising a mix of diverse housing types—social, student, and more—through the Athletes' and Media Villages, Cape Town could turn the Games into its largest housing programme, addressing critical long-term needs while creating a lasting legacy.

INVEST IN TRANSPORT INFRASTRUCTURE FOR LONG-TERM CITY NEEDS

Paris 2024 demonstrated how the Olympics can align with long-term urban development plans. The Grand Paris Express, initiated in 2009, includes 200 km of new metro lines and 68 stations, significantly improving regional connectivity. A key project, the Metro Line 14 extension to Orly Airport, was completed in June 2024, creating a direct link from Saint-Denis Pleyel to the airport. These initiatives were planned well before the Olympic bid, with some accelerated for the Games, while others will continue afterwards. This approach prioritised long-term urban mobility, with the Olympics fitting into and complementing ongoing development strategies.





From Paris

Paris boasts a robust public transport network, including the Métro, RER, and bus systems, which have been integral to the city's infrastructure for decades. The Grand Paris Express, a significant expansion of the Métro, is part of a long-term development plan aimed at improving connectivity and reducing congestion. While some projects were accelerated in preparation for the Games, they were not initiated solely for the event but were part of ongoing urban development efforts.

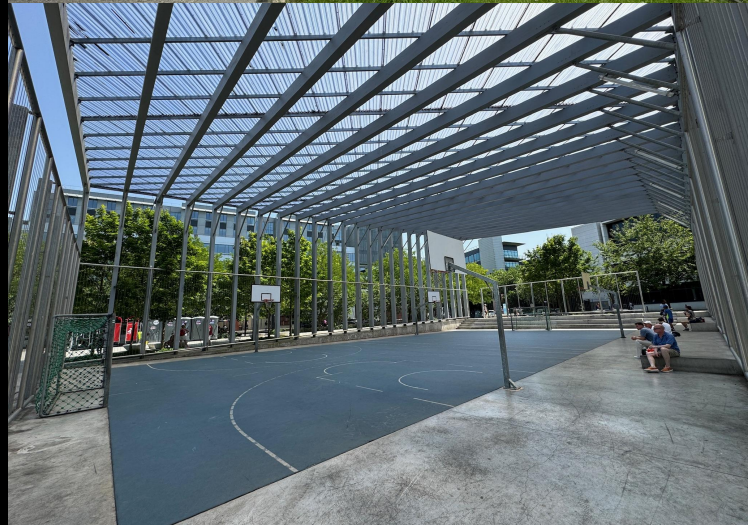
To Cape Town

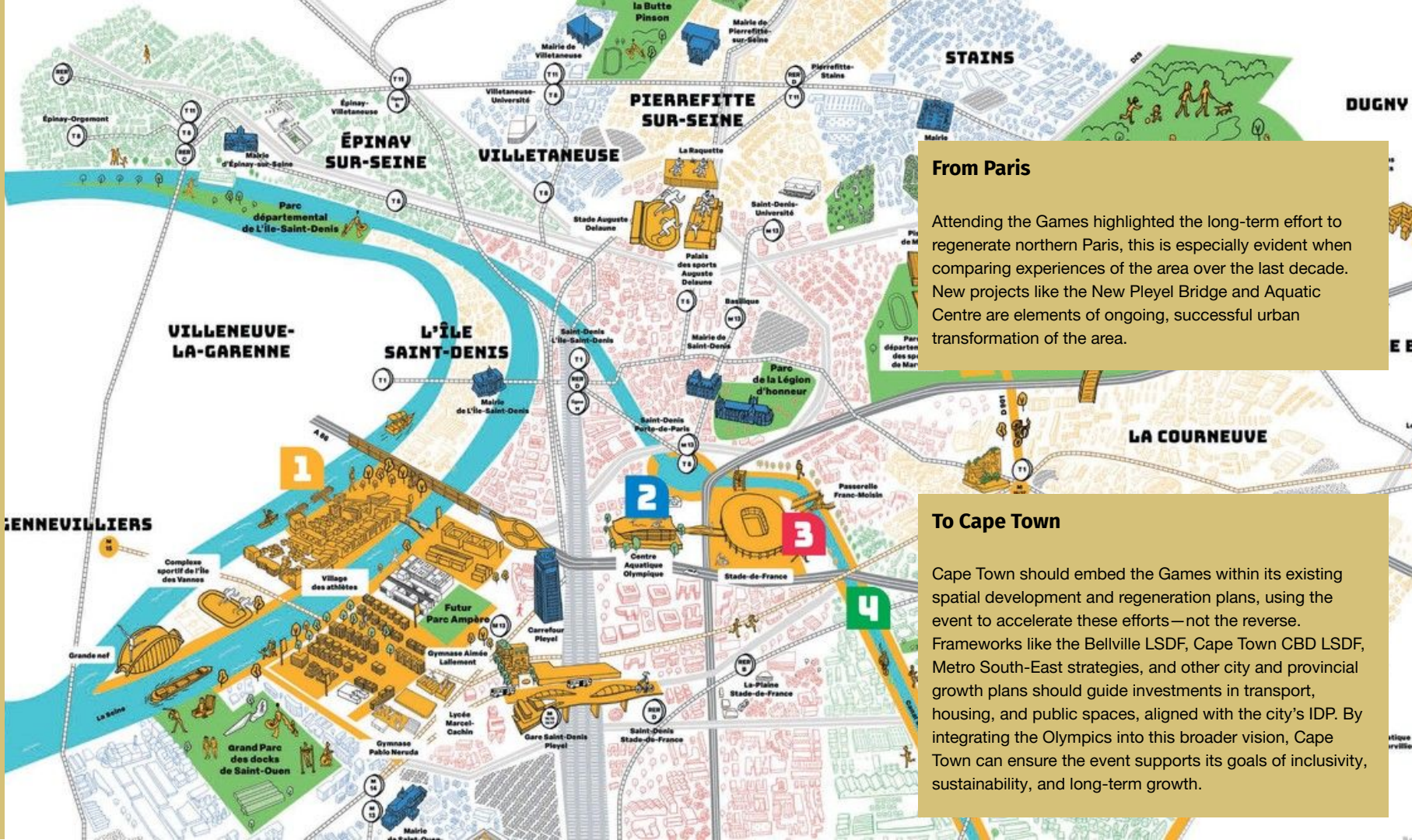
Cape Town should base its transport investments on residents' needs and existing city and region transport plans to 2040 e.g. the Comprehensive Integrated Transport Plan (CITP). Temporary services can supplement these during the Games. Along with housing, this could form the Games' key legacy, focusing on improving daily commutes and access to jobs.

TIE GAMES INTO LONG TERM DEVELOPMENT & REGENERATION PLANS

The Paris 2024 Olympics highlighted how the Games can complement and fit into pre-existing urban regeneration plans. In northern Paris, many major projects were completed, underway, or planned long before the bid was won. The Stade de France, built in 1998, anchored early investments in Seine-Saint-Denis, while efforts dating back to 1995 included light rail expansion, public spaces, housing, and infrastructure like the New Pleyel Bridge. These projects shaped the area's transformation independently of the Games.

Paris 2024 integrated seamlessly into this long-term framework, amplifying ongoing efforts rather than driving them, demonstrating how the Olympics can support broader urban goals already in motion





From Paris

Attending the Games highlighted the long-term effort to regenerate northern Paris, this is especially evident when comparing experiences of the area over the last decade. New projects like the New Pleyel Bridge and Aquatic Centre are elements of ongoing, successful urban transformation of the area.

To Cape Town

Cape Town should embed the Games within its existing spatial development and regeneration plans, using the event to accelerate these efforts—not the reverse. Frameworks like the Bellville LSDF, Cape Town CBD LSDF, Metro South-East strategies, and other city and provincial growth plans should guide investments in transport, housing, and public spaces, aligned with the city's IDP. By integrating the Olympics into this broader vision, Cape Town can ensure the event supports its goals of inclusivity, sustainability, and long-term growth.

PEOPLE ARE AT THE HEART OF MAKING GAMES A SUCCESS

The Paris 2024 Olympics demonstrated that people are the foundation of any successful global event. Over 45,000 volunteers, including 30,000 directly supporting the Games, were pivotal in operations. More than 20,000 media professionals brought the spectacle to the world. Around 35,000 security personnel ensured safety, while 5,000 transportation staff managed logistics. Thousands of service workers—caterers, cleaners, and medical teams—kept the event running smoothly.



From Paris

We observed amazing volunteers assisting with transport, guiding visitors in and around venues, and creating a welcoming atmosphere. Behind the scenes, countless individuals from OCOG and other authorities and agencies worked tirelessly to ensure that the Games were memorable and comfortable.

To Cape Town

Building on the Paris 2024 model, Cape Town should prioritise a people-centric approach by mobilising volunteers from across the country and continent. South Africa's renowned hospitality and spirit can shine through local engagement, offering a warm, inclusive experience for athletes and visitors alike.



USE THE GAMES AS AN OPPORTUNITY FOR MEANINGFUL AND CREATIVE PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Paris 2024 prioritised public engagement through participatory workshops, consultations, and innovative tools. SOLIDEO incorporated local input into Olympic Village and venue designs, while Plaine Commune hosted public meetings and used QR codes, for example, on construction hoardings to provide information updates. Terre de Jeux 2024 involved over 2,800 municipalities, and the Olympiade Culturelle activated public spaces with cultural events blending art and sport. These initiatives provided residents with physical, digital, and cultural platforms for involvement, embedding public feedback into urban design and demonstrating how large-scale projects can reflect local aspirations while fostering a participatory legacy.





From Paris

During our 2022 visit to the Olympic Village project office and again during the Games, we observed efforts to engage locals and visitors. The Olympic Village information center offered site tours, while QR codes on construction hoardings at the Pleyel Bridge provided residents with construction updates. Branding from Terre de Jeux was visible in schools and playgrounds, extending the Games' presence into neighborhoods. These strategies promoted transparency and encouraged community involvement.

To Cape Town

As a young democracy, Cape Town can enhance inclusion by engaging communities, especially youth, in the planning and design of infrastructure and sites for the Games. By leveraging technology and digital platforms, the city can develop tools for younger generations, promote knowledge-sharing, and enable co-design.

USE THE GAMES TO CREATE JOBS FOR SOCIAL IMPACT

From Paris

Paris 2024 innovated procurement by partnering with 460 social enterprises and awarding 75% of contracts to SMMEs, totaling €300 million. Collaborating with Muhammad Yunus, the Games emphasized youth employment, inclusion, and social impact, creating 181,000 jobs. This approach demonstrated how mega-events can drive local business growth and promote equality through inclusive and capacity-building strategies.

To Cape Town

In South Africa, where SMMEs constitute 91% of businesses and youth unemployment remains a critical challenge, a future Cape Town Games could build on this model. The host OCOG should prioritise local procurement from SMMEs and social enterprises, ensuring young people are at the forefront of job creation, skills development, and opportunities, driving lasting economic and social impact.

Closing Remarks by Guy Briggs

The publication of this concise summary report on lessons from the Paris 2024 Olympic and Paralympic Games marks the culmination of an eventful year for the CT2040 team. Appropriately for an Olympic year, 2024 saw the publication of our analysis of Cape Town's capacity to host the Games; our hosting of France's Ambassador for Sport, Samuel Ducroquet, and the French Consul General, Sophie Bel, at a discussion in Cape Town on a vision for a future Cape Town Games; and the formal expression of interest with the IOC by our Minister for Sports, Arts and Culture of South Africa's interest in hosting the Games.

In the midst of all this was of course the staging of the 2024 Olympic and Paralympic Games in Paris, and what better opportunity to gain vital insights into the operations and dynamics of hosting, than to attend as a spectator. The insights in this report are the result of two weeks spent embracing all that the Olympics has to offer, viewing the events and their staging with a critical eye, and engagement with members of the Olympic community for behind the scenes inputs. In particular, this report considers a number of strategic issues, such as how to align Olympic investments with long term renewal and development programmes, how to ensure that the Games is inclusive and community driven, and how to develop an approach to branding to integrate the Games into the culture of the city.

As we embark on the next stage in motivating and exploring the potential for Cape Town to host the Olympic and Paralympic Games in the not-too-distant future, the insights, ideas and lessons set out in this report start to frame how we might approach this prospect.



Guy Briggs, Partner and Executive Director of dhk and Co-Lead of Cape Town 2040

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