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Eva Kassens Noor

# Los Angeles and the Summer Olympic Games Planning Legacies



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Eva Kassens Noor

# Los Angeles and the Summer Olympic Games

Planning Legacies

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*To the city of dreams—you can still change  
your future*

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# Chapter 1

## The Los Angeles Olympic Games: Planning Legacies



**Abstract** The purpose of this book is to identify legacies arising from the bidding and planning process for Los Angeles' 2028 Summer Olympic Games. Providing a brief historical account of the bidding processes and legacies for the 1932 and 1984 Olympics, the book answers the question of why LA won the 2028 Olympic bid. LA's Olympic bidding process is the story of a city hosting the Games in which the process of bidding in an adversarial anti-Olympic bid climate was custom made for LA. The focus of the book lies on testing the premise whether and why the bid boosters' claim "we have done it before, we can do it again" may or may not hold for LA's 2028 legacies. Four elements challenge similar legacies from previous Games: the proposed dual opening and closing ceremony, the under-construction gigantic NFL stadium, and the vast planned transport expansion of LA challenge similar legacies from previous LA Games. No matter the legacy outcomes, the future two Olympic hosts including LA 2028 will determine the fate of the International Olympic Committee, the Olympics brand, and the Olympic Games.

**Keywords** Olympic Games · Los Angeles · Legacy · Planning

### 1.1 Introduction

*Goal of the section: overview of the book's main argument, content, and structure while introducing the reader to the basic concepts of Olympic planning and hosting.*

LA's 2028 Olympic mantra and bid premise "*We have done it before, we can do it again*" promises Angelenos beneficial Games' legacies. Legacies are tangible or intangible, positive or negative, short-or long-term impacts the Games have on Olympic host cities. The requirements the International Olympic Committee (IOC), the owner of the Olympic Games, sets on host cities makes the Games agents of change; thus, hosting the Games has economic, social, and environmental implications for urban development that local governments can harness or mitigate (Kassens-Noor 2012). I argue in this book that while LA's bid promises for staging the Olympics remained similar for the three Olympics, the global Olympic and local LA contexts have changed to the extent that for the 2028 Olympics, Los Angeles might receive different legacies than planned.

Although the LA Olympic Games offer many stories and anecdotes, this book focuses on three aspects that have made LA an exceptional Olympic host. LA2028, the Organizing Committee for the Olympic Games, plans to repeat these three legacies for the upcoming 2028 LA Olympics (LA24 2014): (1) *transforming the Olympic and Los Angeles brand*, (2) *creating an unparalleled athlete experience*, and (3) *making the Games fit Los Angeles by minimizing urban changes*.

This book first characterizes LA's Olympic planning processes and legacies given the city's history with the Olympics. Using existing scholarship, Sect. 1.2 introduces readers to the 1932 Olympics and Sect. 1.3 introduces readers to the 1984 Olympics. Section 1.4 describes the bidding process for LA's third and upcoming 2028 Olympics. This book compares the three LA Olympics in Sect. 1.5 and argues why LA won its bid (confirming LA's mantra) and why LA faces problematic legacies (challenging LA's mantra). Section 1.6 concludes with planning recommendations for legacies.

### ***1.1.1 The Summer Olympic Games and LA's Hosting History***

The Summer Olympic Games are a global sporting mega-event, attracting thousands of athletes, millions of visitors, and billions of spectators. The International Olympic Committee (IOC), founded by Pierre de Coubertin in 1894, elects a host city every four years that meets certain requirements to stage the Games. The IOC prefers a global rotation of the Games to enhance the Olympic movement. Bidding for the Olympic Games is usually a competitive process, in which interested cities make an attractive pitch to the IOC. Over two years, the IOC evaluates bid cities and awards the Games usually seven years ahead of time. Preceding the IOC selection, National Olympic Committees (NOCs), national stewards of the Olympic and Paralympic movement, usually stage their own selection process to put forward their contender for the Games, because the IOC only allows one city per country to compete at the IOC stage. The USA's NOC is called the United States Olympic Committee (USOC), which was founded in the same year as the IOC. USOC selects candidate cities for the IOC's bidding processes and trains and funds US teams for international competitions.

#### *Brief History of Olympic Hosting in the United States*

Since the start of the modern Olympic Games in 1896, American cities have bid 40 times for a Summer Olympic Games (SOG) and 19 times for the Winter Games. The 2028 Summer Olympic Games will be the 9th Games hosted in the USA, after St. Louis 1904, Lake Placid 1932, Los Angeles 1932, Squaw Valley 1960, Lake Placid 1980, Los Angeles 1984, Atlanta 1996, and Salt Lake City 2002.

One political condition makes American bids particularly challenging: US bidders typically have only one chance to mount a bid because they must bid with little to no public funding. Public funds are difficult to obtain from national and local sources, so bidding in the USA depends upon private funds. In contrast, recent

bidding history shows that aspiring Olympic hosts often need several bid attempts to succeed. Tokyo and Rio de Janeiro, for example, bid twice and Pyeongchang bid three times before winning their respective bids for the 2020, 2016, and 2018 Games; all of these bids received significant public funding.

The privately financed American Summer Games were based on the mega-event strategy that is consumption based (Burbank et al. 2001). Atlanta 1996 reportedly raised a surplus of US\$10M and had US\$1.8B of domestic commercial sponsorship. Salt Lake City 2002 generated 53 domestic sponsorships totalling more than US\$300M with a surplus of US\$56M. LA2028 pursues the same funding strategy. While American hosts also received intangible benefits (e.g., place brand value), urban development impacts were meagre (Andranovich and Burbank 2011).

### *Los Angeles as a Unique Olympic City*

Olympic cities are accustomed to mega-events with facilities and amenities that other cities do not have, such as large stadia and many hotels. Even among Olympic cities, Los Angeles (LA) is unique. First, with Hollywood and Disney, LA is the entertainment capital of the world. As the maker of telegenics, pageantry, and showmanship—all of which relate to the Olympics as a spectacle—the city is accustomed to remake itself through show business. Second, LA is frequently described as an athlete's Eden. Los Angeles offers not only superior local training conditions, but also has a myriad of professional sport teams that generate consistently big local audiences for sports. Third, LA has a successful history with the Olympic Games. Every Olympics, LA has maximized the use of existing venues and thus minimized the need for costly new infrastructure and avoided the risk of underused stadia. Every Games, LA has revived its imagery as an athlete powerhouse and tourism paradise. Every time, LA has commercialized the Games turning a profit for the IOC and the city. LA will have hosted the Olympic Games three times by the end of the coming decade, making it the first American city and the third global city after London and Paris to do so. Unlike the latter two Olympic hosts, LA intends to repeat its unique Olympic legacies despite the long list of new IOC requirements and the city's explosive population growth approaching 18 million residents in LA's metro area (2019).

It seems striking that local resistance to the upcoming LA Games has been marginal to nearly non-existent despite the current anti-Olympic climate. 13 cities since the 2020 Olympic bidding cycle have either withdrawn their bids due to local protest or negative referenda. Two LA traits may explain the weak resistance against LA's third Olympic bid. First, the Olympics have become an intrinsic part of Los Angeles. LA's unique sport-broadcasting blend, fostering of athletic excellence, and successful history with the Games created a popular acceptance of the mega-event. Second, the sociopolitical context of Los Angeles numbed the local Olympic-protest movement. Los Angeles residents are notorious for their disengagement in local politics that has earned LA the reputation as a bastion of voter apathy. For example, former LA Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa was reelected in 2009 with an 18% voter turnout for the mayoral race. Similarly disengaged, the massive urban problems like LA's notorious police brutality, housing crisis, and homelessness have caused

comparatively little public outrage. Urban planners are expected to solve these rapidly growing problems while planning the Olympics that tend to exacerbate rather than improve these urban conditions.

### ***1.1.2 Planning Olympic Legacies***

Planning cities in preparation for the Games entails many major tasks. First, Olympic venues have to be readied for world-class competitions. Second, the well-being of more than 10,000 athletes must be ensured in the stadia, in the Olympic Village(s), and across the city. All athletes, tens of thousands of volunteers, workforce, hundreds of thousands of spectators, and regular work commuters must be transported timely and reliably. Fourth, the Olympics must be staged in a manner that engages the world with LA watching the spectacle as if viewers were there. Olympic preparations are thus intrinsically linked to urban planning, because the requirements of the Olympics set forth constraints of how cities can develop during and after the Games.

Over the past decade, urban planners, geographers, sociologists, economists, political scientists, and many more have slowly unraveled urban implications of staging the Olympic Games. They concluded that when cities stage the Games, residents usually experience detrimental impacts. These impacts manifest in an unequal distribution of benefits, increased gentrification pressures, and many more disadvantages for the poor (Gaffney 2016; Horne 2018; Kassens-Noor and Ladd 2019; Zimbalist 2015). Understanding perceptions of the Olympics from LA planners, who have a history of experiencing the benefits the Olympics can bring, is thus, a critical component when predicting LA2028 Olympic legacies (more on that later in Sect. 1.4, in which LA's urban planners describe their perceptions about the upcoming LA Olympics).

Despite predictive negative impacts, the IOC continues to find cities willing to stage the Games but at a rapidly diminishing rate. LA 2028 and Paris 2024 will determine the future of the Olympics (Hiller 2020). The attractiveness of the Olympics lies in the idealism that sport should be in the service of all mankind; however, the Olympics have grown to such a massive scale that local impacts begin overshadowing the global idealism. While bid boosters continue to expect a profit from investments into the Games (and thus finance the bids) and the general perception of the Games remains positive on a global scale, local residents have started learning Olympic wisdom challenging the decision-making process of elites (Kassens-Noor et al. 2019). The goal for cities remains to receive valuable legacies, which are distinct and context-driven to the host city (Preuss 2015). Governments envision the Olympic Games as grande opportunities for local development projects that can quickly remove administrative hurdles (Kassens-Noor 2019). In essence, many governments still view the Games as a catalyst for urban change that removes political barriers and fast-tracks political decisions toward implementation (Essex and Chalkley 1998; Lenskyj 2008).



Three times, Los Angeles will have saved the Olympic brand and three times will Los Angeles have evolved as a renewed metropolis—or will it? The legacies this book predicts given current planning affairs are challenging LA’s successful history with Olympic legacies.

## 1.2 The Los Angeles Olympics 1932

*Goal of this section: briefly introduce the reader to 1932 Olympics with existing scholarship by focusing on the three aspects (shaper of brands, athlete Eden, and making the physical demands of the Games fit LA’s urban system) that made LA an exceptional host. Recommended readings:*

- *Los Angeles the Olympic City* (Zimmerman 1984).
- *Power without Authority: Los Angeles’ elites and the Construction of the Coliseum* (Riess 1981).
- *Los Angeles is the Olympic City: Legacies of the 1932 and 1984 Olympic Games* (Dyreson and Llewellyn 2008).

### 1.2.1 Contextualizing the Olympic Bidding Climate for the 1932 Games

Cities vying for the modern Olympics in the early 1900’s traditionally were European capitals. The first and only exception before LA began its bidding process was the award of the Games to St. Louis, USA. These 1904 Games were a dismal failure due to low participation (Riess 1981). American cities were remote and awarding the Olympics to them—such was the belief at the time LA considered bidding—would seriously inhibit athletes from participating in the Games because of the strenuous journeys and high travel costs (Zimmerman 1984). Los Angeles had bid twice for the Summer Olympics. After World War I, Los Angeles considered its third bid; this time for the 1932 Olympics.

LA’s wealthy power brokers, including publishers, sports leaders, and real estate tycoons, formed a coalition called the Community Development Association (CDA) to promote Los Angeles as a tourism destination (Riess 1981). In the CDA’s first meeting, boosters suggested Los Angeles to apply again to stage the Games, because “holding such a spectacle would direct a lot of attention to the city, improve its prestige, and bring a great deal of free publicity” (Riess 1981, p. 53). The 1932 bid boosters held tremendous power over local politics. Because of the power brokers’ vigorous pursuit of putting Los Angeles on the world map, Los Angeles submitted an Olympic bid despite the American IOC members’ discouragement and the perceived impossibility of getting the 1932 Games.

The International Olympic Committee awarded Los Angeles the 1932 Olympic Games in April 1923. At that time, Los Angeles won the bid as the only city bidding when many countries were struggling with the post-World War I economic slump. Awarding the Games to LA remained risky as the city was not known widely and its remote location posed serious participation challenges for athletes (SCCOG 2019; Zimmerman 1984). In fact, Los Angeles was still struggling to become a destination for Americans at the time.

What defined the city's preparations to host the Games the most was the effects of the Great Depression. Amid preparations for the Games, the US stock market collapsed in late October 1929, sparking the Great Depression. Los Angeles' Olympic organizers continued preparing the major international mega-event, but with less money and fewer resources as originally planned (Gold and Gold 2016). These circumstances specific to LA created legacies that LA (and other US cities) would inherit for future Olympic bids: *shaping the Olympic brand, branding its own image, creating an unparalleled athlete experience, and inaugurating urban changes as a sophisticated beautification process.*

Planning the LA Olympics focused on branding LA's and Southern California's imagery globally and drawing attention away from the Great Depression: Broadcasting the Olympic Games as a spectacle emulating a movie set with athletes as actors and spectacular views of Southern California as the idea and imagery of the Mediterranean paradise on the Pacific. Goldblatt (2016) brilliantly summarized the legacy of the 1932 LA Olympics in arguing that these LA Olympics were the Games commerce and money most directly shaped, setting a standard that would take the rest of the Olympic movement 50 years to catch up.

### ***1.2.2 Planning for the 1932 Games***

Olympic boosters had nine years to plan for the Olympic Games. William May Garland, a real estate tycoon and IOC member at the time, led a powerful network of movie stars, realtors, and oil company owners to fund, plan, and organize the Games. The federal government did not support the Games monetarily. Instead, the state of California ensured the Games through a 1927 US\$1M bond voters approved with 73% (LAO 2016). But, the bid boosters never ended up using the voter-approved bond (Xth Olympiad Committee 1933). The movie industry, led by Louis Mayer, was the Games strongest and most popular booster. To attract athletes to California, movie stars and film industry icons traveled across the world (Goldblatt 2016).

#### *Shape the Olympic and LA Brand*

The 1932 Summer Olympics were to promote LA's global reputation and change the city's, the state's, and the country's image. Two years before the Games, America had entered the Great Depression. California's demographics included many homeless and unemployed, thus creating necessary services like soup kitchens. This new poverty-stricken view of LA did not fit the "sunny Cali" imagery Los Angeles organizers were determined to broadcast (Barney 1996). In unity with California's

spirit, its Governor at the time advertised LA as the city and state of frictionless racial unity and guaranteed that everyone was welcome regardless of race, color, and creed (Dyreson and Llewellyn 2008). Olympic boosters thus saw the Olympics as a chance to brand the city and use it to catalyze construction of modern LA (Dyreson and Llewellyn 2008).

The talent of LA to stage a great spectacle boosted the Olympic brand significantly. Medal ceremonies were held after each event: athletes were honored on a three-tiered podium, the respective country flags were raised while the national anthem of the gold-medal athlete was played. Honoring the athletes became a celebration of human performance that branded the medal ceremonies for all future Games. The Los Angeles Games inaugurated many new TV-made ceremonies that were to shape future Olympic hosts. Three famous examples are listed below (please refer to the references for holistic overview):

- The 1932 LA Games started the Olympic movement on the path to becoming an attractive commodity in the international entertainment industry (Dyreson and Llewellyn 2008).
- The Olympic Village, housing male athletes together, exemplified Coubertin's Olympic vision by creating an atmosphere of friendship and sportsmanship (Barney 1996).
- The world press corps and Olympic organizers in LA agreed that for future Olympics the Olympic Village and the Olympic cauldron monumental flame, would become permanent fixtures of future Games (Dyreson and Llewellyn 2008).

#### *Create Athlete Experiences*

The LA and California Olympic Committees both intended to showcase California and LA as an athletic Eden and the center of American sports. At the same time, the Great Depression put athlete attendance in jeopardy as few countries could afford to pay for athlete travel and accommodations. As such, the plan arose to build the first-ever Olympic Village. Baldwin Hills in South Los Angeles was chosen to accommodate male athletes in 550 two-bedroom portable bungalows. In contrast, women were housed far away from the Olympic Village in the Chapman hotel in Wilshire when the International Olympic Committee finally decided in late April 1931 to not eliminate women from the event (Pieroth 1996). On 321 acres, the Olympic Village also was to feature a hospital for all athlete care, a fire department for emergencies, post and telegraph offices as communication centers, an amphitheater for entertainment, and a bank. The city covered the costs of constructing the Olympic Village and arranged discount fares for travel (Barney 1996). Above the Olympic Village, 36 flags representing equal opportunity and democratic unity among 36 countries represented LA's cosmopolitan lifestyle (Goldblatt 2016). The press compared Baldwin Hills with Mount Olympus to showcase LA's diversity and adaptability.

#### *Implement Urban Changes (Stadia/Olympic Village/Transport)*

After two failed bids, Los Angeles approached bidding for the Olympic Games strategically. William Garland advocated for LA as the next Olympic host in-person,

networking among IOC members as early as 1920. He was advised that the IOC would only consider LA if the city was to feature a new Olympic stadium. Returning home, Garland advocated for a new stadium, which resulted in the development of the Los Angeles Memorial Coliseum (SCCOG 2019). The Coliseum, originally commissioned as a memorial to veterans of World War I in 1921, became possibly the most famous icon for LA's Olympics as the venue was slated to become the host of all three future Opening and Closing ceremonies (Gold and Gold 2016). Los Angeles architects John and Donald Parkinson designed the Coliseum. It was built in 1923 and refurbished five years later to seat Olympic visitors (Riess 1981). In preparation for the Olympics, the newly renovated Coliseum was renamed as the Los Angeles Olympic Stadium. The bid boosters running the Community Development Association (CDA) funded the US\$1M reconstruction of the Coliseum to expand it to 100,000 seats. LA's 1932 Olympic Organizing Committee ultimately became a CDA spin-off (SCCOG 2019; Wassong 2015).

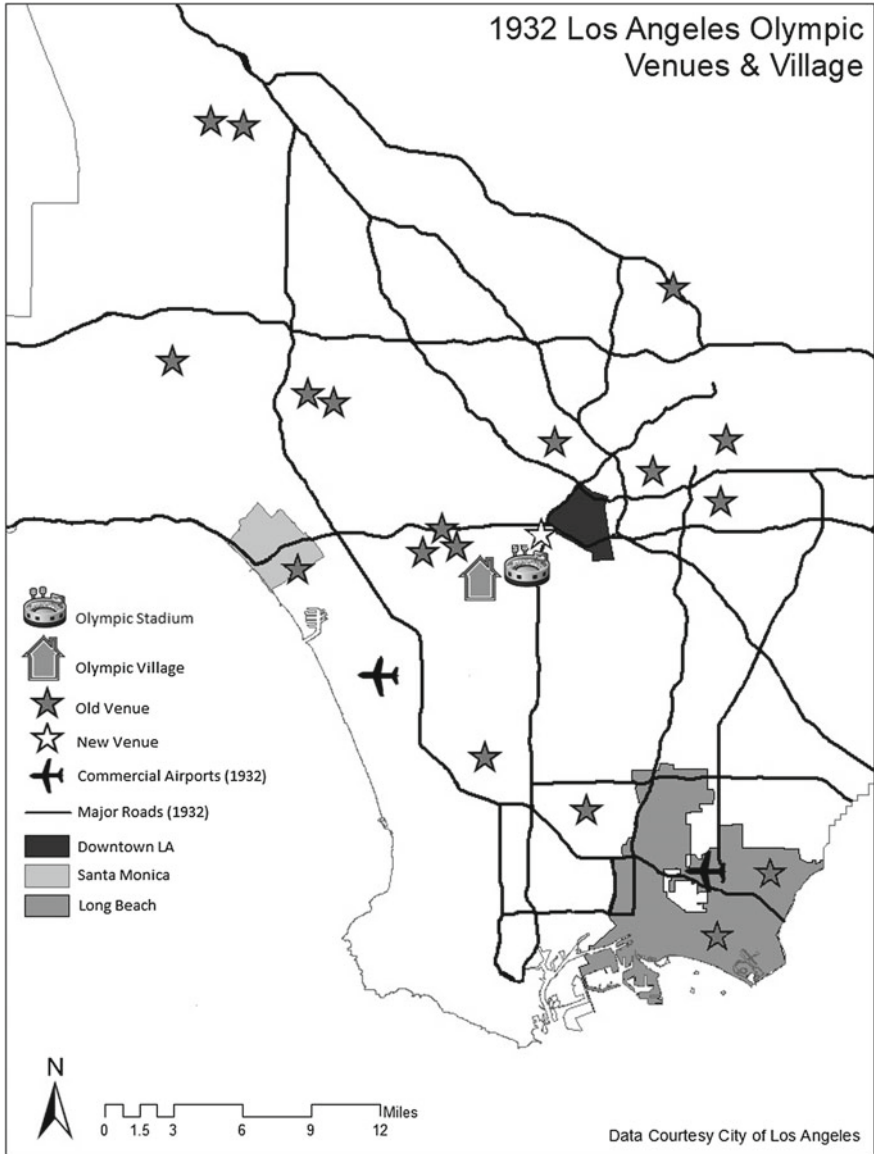
Map 1.1 provides an overview of Olympic-relevant location. As can be seen, the Olympic Village and the Coliseum in the heart of Los Angeles became the center for the global stage. The map also depicts all 1932 stadia to show that new venue construction was minimal and that the existing road infrastructure in LA was sufficient to transport athletes and visitors. Thus, no major transportation constructions took place, and multimodal transportation was advertised with low rates locally, nationally, and internationally (Wassong 2015). To prepare for visitors, LA reworked its standard urban marketing program to woo IOC members during the 1932 bidding process (Short 2004; Ferrand et al. 2012). The city was to emulate unity, prosperity, and beauty. In a Olympic-driven beautification process, 30,000 palm trees were planted along avenues to emulate a Mediterranean paradise on the Pacific for athletes and visitors. Olympic boosters persuaded the city to spend \$100,000 on these palms in 1932 (Dyreson and Llewellyn 2008).

### ***1.2.3 Legacies of the 1932 Games***

The Games of the X Olympiad took place from July 30 to August 14, 1932 with more than 1300 athletes. The 1932 Olympics featured 14 sports with 117 events. LA 32 Games motto "Sun, Sea, Sand, and Sport" represented the good life of Southern California (Goldblatt 2016). This laid-back attitude, Hollywood's capability to stage a great show, and USA's Great Depression, inaugurated LA 1932 legacies and determined how cities would host consecutive Games. The 1932 Games created many firsts, e.g., the medal ceremony on podiums and the Olympic Village.

#### *Shape the Olympic Brand and LA Brand*

The 1932 Games placed Los Angeles on the world map (Zimmerman 1984) at a time when Los Angeles was still trying to become a popular destination for Americans. The American movie industry used the Games to attract global attention, when Hollywood-based broadcasters delivered a global Olympic spectacle that made a



**Map 1.1** Main Olympic venues during the 1932 Games. *Source* Created by T. Decaminada adapted from Zimmerman (1984), NAD 1983 map projection

US\$1.5M profit (Keys 2006; Llewellyn et al. 2015). For example, Walt Disney featured Mickey Mouse at the Olympics and streamed the Barnyard Olympics in 1932. The media press box, located in the LA Memorial Coliseum, allowed prime access to cover the Games and news reporters could freely access other venues including the Olympic Village (Barney 1996). The Games boosters' goals to reshape LA's brand worked well (Dyreson and Llewellyn 2008; Wassong 2015). Staging the Games earned Los Angeles an international reputation as a hip, upcoming, and burgeoning city establishing itself firmly as the global center of sport, fashion, and show business. LA successfully marketed the American culture and showcased the city as one of commerce, industry, and high quality of life. Locally, the impressions as the Mediterranean paradise manifested themselves through the newly planted palm trees. They remained in LA and became a permanent reminder for Angelenos of the 1932 Games. For visitors, they are viewed as the iconic representations of Southern California (Dyreson and Llewellyn 2008).

### *Create Athlete Experiences*

1503 athletes participated in the Games in front of 1.25 million spectators globally. 102,000 spectators attended the opening ceremony in the newly refurbished Coliseum. The Games were remembered for their brilliant athletic performances when 16 world and 33 Olympic records were broken. In particular, LA athletes' performances were superior, as American athletes won 103 medals. To honor these accomplishments, LA organizers introduced elevated platforms for winners, photo-finish cameras, and the two-week format for celebrating the Games as a first in Olympic Games history (Barney 1996). At the same time, LA managed to showcase global sportsmanship and racial diversity to attract a global crowd to the stadia and to print the imagery of global Games. Japanese Americans and Japanese athletes were visibly present at the Games (Yamamoto 2000). Japanese athletes received strong support throughout the Games, and Japanese community organizations cheered, hosted the team, and held receptions (Yamamoto 2000). The press emphasized the meticulous nature of Japanese preparation and the strong national support in funding Japanese athletes received (Goldblatt 2016). The American press enabled the display of frictionless racial unity that California's governor had promised (Dyreson and Llewellyn 2008). Carefully navigating the imagery of African American athletes, the press compared them with traditional white male athletes as black streaks of lightning or black bolts when African American athletes broke several world records and won gold medals.

### *Implement Urban Changes (Stadia/Olympic Village/Transport)*

To stage the 1932 Olympics, Los Angeles prepared 15 venues. Repurposing many venues such as the Grand Olympic Auditorium and the Rose Bowl, erecting temporary structures like the Olympic Village with portable houses, and building anew only the aquatics stadium, the 1932 Games highlighted LA's innovative approach to temporarily transform a city to showcase athlete competitions (Gold and Gold 2016). Venues included public highways and streets—one of which, 10th Street as it was the Games of the Tenth Olympiad, was renamed Olympic Boulevard.

One of the lasting urban legacies from the LA Games in 1932 was the concept of an Olympic Village, which eased concerns that housing accommodations were too expensive. Los Angeles organizers established precedent for an Olympic Village to house the athletes, which the IOC adopted as a requirement for future Olympic Games (Zimmerman 1984). Housing the male athletes in close proximity no matter race, ethnicity, or origin created the feeling of Olympism (Barney 1996). Cowboys and rodeo riders on horseback patrolling the wire fence provided security for the Olympic Village (Goldblatt 2016).

Once the Olympic Games ended, the prefabricated bungalows were offered for sale. Two of them had been kept empty as showcases for journalists and prospective buyers during the Games (Goldblatt 2016).

*1932 Legacies that Enabled Winning the IOC Nomination to Host the 2028 Olympics* With the Olympics in 1932, the USA had laid claim to the leadership of the modern sporting movement (Dyreson and Llewellyn 2008). While American athletes staked this claim with their superior performances during the Games, LA's print, radio, and news media enabled it. Los Angeles Organizing Committee for the Olympic Games invented new press-worthy and attractive Olympic features and broadcasted these images through a massive public relations campaign to global audiences. Thus, the Hollywood-made Games created the recipe for an attractive media spectacle that enabled Coubertin's vision of a global Games.

At the same time, the bid boosters and power brokers of LA had put the City of Angels on the world map. Broadcasting images of a thriving Los Angeles in the midst of the Great Depression, producing the first profit in Olympic history, and drawing record number of spectators, provided proof of concept that the Games could become a globally attractive event spreading far from its European origins. Emulating the spirit of the Olympic movement, the physical setup of the city showcased that sport can unite by transcending from the athletes to the city, country, and the world, when spectacularly showcasing winning performances of different genders, races, and countries. With the success of the first LA Olympics, bid booster founded the Southern California Committee for the Olympic Games in 1939 as a non-profit organization (SCCOG 2019). To this day, SCCOG has been and likely will be involved in every single bid Los Angeles or other Californian cities propose. To this day, SCCOG's primary mission remains to promote the Olympic movement.

In summary, LA did not only save the 1932 Olympics as the only bidder at the time, but also through its legacies. Los Angeles made the Games attractive again for future bidders at a time when the global recession had diminished interest in the Games.

### 1.3 The Los Angeles Olympics 1984

*Goal of the section: briefly introduce the reader to 1984 Olympics with existing scholarship by focusing on the three aspects (shaper of brands, athlete Eden, and making the physical demands of the Games fit LA's urban system) that made LA an exceptional host. Recommended readings:*

- *The 1984 Los Angeles Olympic Games: Assessing the 30-Year Legacy* (Llewellyn et al. 2015).
- *Olympic dreams: the impact of mega-events on local politics* (Burbank et al. 2001).

### ***1.3.1 Contextualizing the Olympic Bidding Climate for the 1984 Games***

The Cold War, racial politics, and violent massacres set the pretext of bidding during the mid-1970s. The Olympic Games became a platform upon which two superpowers (USA & Russia) played out their geopolitical tension: this tension is visible through boycotts, athletes demonstrating opposition to decades of racial discrimination and anti-apartheid, and nations violently suppressing calls for democracy and independence. At the time Los Angeles considered a bid for the 1984 Olympics, the Games had lost their appeal to many cities as the three preceding Games had diminished the Olympic brand, reflecting the global discourse of world politics. In addition, the ban on professional athletes at a time when sports was becoming a career and a business, meant that the Olympics was not presenting the world's best to a rapidly growing television market.

The Mexico City Games in 1968 and the Munich Games in 1972 made history as the deadliest Olympics in history. Days before the Olympic opening ceremony in Mexico, government forces gunned down students whose peaceful protest opposed the authoritarian control of Mexico's government in the massacre at Tlatelolco. The students' bravery inaugurated Mexico's decades-long transition to democracy. Germany did not prevent a terrorist attack when a Palestinian terrorist group took hostage and eventually killed Israeli Olympic team members in a decades-old dispute rooted in Palestine's and Israel's claim over land.

Montreal in 1976 became the most debt-ridden Games in Olympic history. Initially budgeted at ~US\$125M, Montreal spent six billion dollars on the Games (Edwards 1984b). Leaving Montrealers with ~US\$1.6B in Olympic debt that was largely due to the construction cost of the Olympic stadium, known as the Big "Owe;" it took more than 30 years to payoff. The Montreal Games also saw the first anti-Apartheid boycott when 22 African nations refused to participate, because the IOC president Samaranch allowed New Zealand's All Blacks rugby team to participate, despite a recent tour of apartheid-ridden South Africa (Llewellyn 2015).

The Moscow 1980 Games cost nine billion dollars and were boycotted by 65 Western nations (Edwards 1984b). The US led the boycott over the Soviet Union's invasion of Afghanistan and Communist nations were expected to retaliate with a boycott of the Los Angeles Games. It so happened that nineteen nations declined the invitation to take part in the 1984 Games (Belam 2012).

Los Angeles was the only applicant for the Olympics of 1984, when Tehran withdrew its candidacy in 1977. Thus, the IOC lost its leveraging power (as had happened in 1932) once more, when the IOC declined Montreal's offer to host again



(Sarantakes 2009). At the time, the struggling IOC had 20 staff members, assets of US\$2M, and US\$200,000 in cash reserves. The IOC was hoping the financially prudent and inclusivity-focused Games would save the Olympic brand when it awarded the Games to Los Angeles in May 1978.

Similar to 1932, the USA entered the deepest post-World War II recession during the planning for the Olympic Games. In early 1980, a short recession signaled a sustained recession that lasted from July 1981 to November 1982. Unemployment rose continuously, peaking slightly above 10% nationwide (NOlympics LA 2019).

### ***1.3.2 Planning for the 1984 Games***

LA's submission to the USOC for the 1984 Games was its 8th consecutive bid for the Summer Olympic Games. The Southern California Committee for the Olympic Games (SCCOG 2019), a legacy from LA's 1932 Games, had institutionalized the Olympic bidding process. SCCOG describes bidding as a "Los Angeles civic ritual." As the only American bidder, SCCOG President John Argue secured LA's USOC nomination in 1977. The Los Angeles Olympic bid emphasized remedying the failures that had diminished the Olympic brand.

Local opposition to the Games' arose due to potential environmental damages, financial liabilities, and the disruption to everyday life. Only 35% of Angelenos were supportive of an Olympic bid if the taxpayers were to guarantee for financial deficits. LA's residents guaranteed to keep Olympic cost in check through denying Los Angeles a signature on the IOC's host city contract. Los Angeles voters consequently approved a measure, Proposition N, in 1978 prohibiting city capital expenditures for the Games. This resulted in an agreement between the city and the IOC in which the host committee was awarded the Games, and USOC served as the financial guarantor (Yaroslavsky et al. 2015). The Chairman of the 1984 Los Angeles Organising Committee (LAOOC), Peter Ueberroth, thus, had to come up with a plan for a viable private sector-funded Games.

#### *Shape the Olympic and LA Brand*

Peter Ueberroth's strategy to stage financially solvent Games relied on local wealth and LA's home to the movie industry. 25 donors emerged quickly eager to secure naming and television rights associated with the Olympic Games. Ueberroth calculated the Games would not only cost ~US\$500M but also turn a profit (Edwards 1984). The Games were made for TV and commercialized (Dyreson 2015), which Giovannini (1985), dubbed "television urbanism."

The Games also became a platform for anti-racist policies and for Western ideals of independence. For example, in the run-up to the 1984 Los Angeles Games, the US anti-apartheid movement emerged, opposing then-President Ronald Reagan's conciliatory foreign policy (Llewellyn 2015).

### *Create Athlete Experiences*

The focus on preparing for the Olympics lay on city rather than athlete experience. The athlete experience focused on ensuring their security, safety, and televisability. The LA84 Organizing Committee thus set significant funds aside for staffing and technology to protect the Games from terrorism (IOC 2019). Security around the UCLA campus remained very tight before and during the Games (UCLA 2017). The organizers enabled fair competitions and thus tested extensively for performance-enhancing drugs (Edwards 1984b). Similar to 1932, the IOC and local organizers granted the press access to the Olympic Villages to report on, televise, and ultimately idolize Olympic athletes. The all-present television crews brought the athletes closer to local and global spectators of the Games.

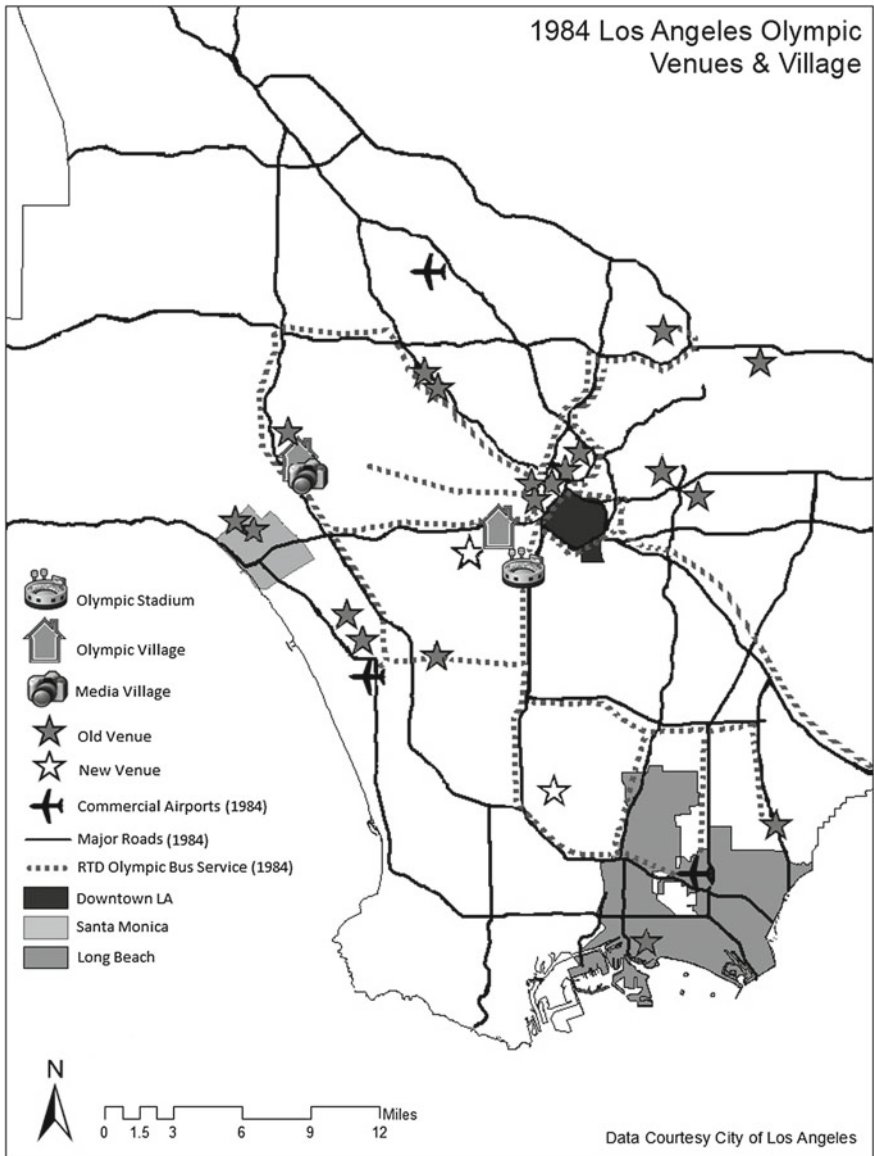
### *Implement Urban Changes (Stadia/Olympic Village/Transport)*

In 1984, Los Angeles repeated its skill of planning the Olympics with existing venues and few permanent urban changes. Thus, LA84 altered Los Angeles little. The organizers followed the mantra: use what you have and televise the experience. As a privately financed Games, LA84 maximized the use of existing facilities. The 1932 Olympic experience had provided valuable lessons and precedence in staging the Games on a low budget during a financial crisis. Instead of building anew, which had led Montreal to seriously overrun costs, the organizers used most and modernized close to 70% of the stadia used in the 1932 Games. Only three sports—swimming, shooting, and cycling—required new facilities (Wenn 2015).

Similar to the reuse of stadia, the Olympic Village became the existing student dormitories at the University of Southern California (USC), the University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA), and the University of California, Santa Barbara (UCSB) (Chalkley and Essex 1999; Wenn 2015). The IOC reluctantly had accepted LA84's Village concept succumbing to LA's leverage as the only bidder, even though IOC members had judged the student dormitories as inadequate for athlete housing and thought it unacceptable to have multiple villages instead of one (Luna 2016).

Given the athletes' accommodations and venues spread across a comparatively wide geographical area at the time, a reliable transportation system was necessary. Angelenos especially feared gridlock apocalypse because the most popular events—swimming, gymnastics, and track and field—were located in densely populated, heavily traveled areas (Edwards 1984a). Peter Ueberroth, who owned the second largest travel company in North America, was well suited to solve LA's transport challenge. Aligned with the mindset to use existing infrastructure, transportation relied on LA's expansive highway network. The challenge then was to entice spectators to use busses and prevent them from using their cars. To do so, the LA84 Organizing Committee placed a hefty price tag on limited event-site parking (Edwards 1984a).

Map 1.2 shows Olympic-relevant location. As can be seen, the Coliseum remained the center for the Olympic stage. In contrast to 1932, three (instead of one) Olympic Villages housed the athletes (due to scale Map 1.2 shows two). Similar to the 1932 urban structure as shown in Map 1.1, new venue construction was minimal and the existing road infrastructure in LA was sufficient to transport athletes and visitors.



**Map 1.2** Main Olympic venues during the 1984 Games. *Source* Created by T. Decaminada adapted from LA84 archives, NAD 1983 map projection

The extensive bus network transported athletes and visitors, and aggressive anti-car policies kept the general public from congesting LA's roads during Games time (Giuliano 1988).

### *1.3.3 Legacies from the 1984 Games*

The Los Angeles Games commercialized the Olympic brand, which Burbank et al. (2001) famously dubbed the “mega-event strategy:” one that relied on private investments to pursue, secure, and stage the Olympic Games. In discovering “the telegenic appeal of the Olympics, the Los Angeles Games altered the economic, political and cultural calculus of the Olympic movement” (Dyreson 2015, p. 174). Similar to how the 1932 Games produced SCCOG as a lasting legacy ensuring the ability to bid, the 1984 Games produced LA84 Foundation (2019) as a lasting legacy to produce top-tier athletes and remained living proof for LA28 organizers to point to a sustained positive legacy from the Games.

#### *Shape the Olympic Brand and LA Brand*

The Olympic Games refreshed Los Angeles imagery from the 1932 Games as a young, hip, and energetic city. The broadcasted festivities and visuals of the city were intended to attract future tourists to Los Angeles (Pyo et al. 1988). Broadcasting the look of the Games, each venue's field of play featured colorful graphics (SCCOG 2019). To tie the venues together, a city-wide imagery of festive federalism had to be created, which Giovannini (1985) labeled “television urbanism.” This city-wide imagery was the brainchild of a partnership between two private firms, the design firm Sussman/Prejza and the architectural firm Jerde. Deborah Sussman and Jon Jerde picked a muted color scheme without red, white, and blue to avoid the smacking display of nationalism. Focusing on aesthetics, the urban color scheme united the city and venues, allowing broadcasters to gloss over serious urban issues such as substandard housing. The urban beautification during the Games had been a tradition for previous Games, but LA84 took it beyond venue-only to a city-wide scheme. Finally, the palms that had gilded the 1932 Games were replanted for the 1984 Games to revitalize the appearance of LA as the Mediterranean paradise on the Pacific (Dyreson and Llewellyn 2008).

The run-up to the Games, however, also marked the beginning of an era of local injustice. Police brutality increased against the poor, people of color, and the homeless. Even though complaints arose, the Los Angeles Police Department (LAPD) stopped investigating and prosecuting their own officers. NOlympics LA (2019) and Zirin (2012) claim the Games enabled the 1992 Uprising of social unrest and violent riots.

The 1984 Los Angeles Olympics shaped the Olympic brand with at least three revolutionary concepts. First, the Olympic Games could be profitable, as the Games brought in an estimated US\$232.5M (Llewellyn et al. 2015). LA84 estimated the

economic impact of the Games to be US\$3.29B, while the value-added tourist expenditures accounted for US\$417M alone (Pyo et al. 1988). However, Olympic room occupancy remained well below expectations, while restaurants and other businesses reported a 20–40% drop in revenue (Pyo et al. 1988). Second, televising the Olympics allowed room for a new financial model (Dyreson 2015) that hinged upon selling television contracts, auctioning off naming rights for venues in lieu of construction costs, and scoring corporate sponsorship deals (Llewellyn et al. 2015). For example, ABC paid US\$225M to broadcast the Games (Essex and Chalkley 1998). Third, as the Games were broadcasted globally, they had important political implications: they slowly eroded the power of boycotts that had marked the staging of previous Games, because they could be watched in countries that had boycotted the Games (Dyreson 2015) and thus, could display the free life in Western societies (Brownell 2015; Llewellyn et al. 2015).

#### *Create Athlete Experiences*

Athlete experiences centered on medical support, heat management, and healthcare options—all of which Los Angeles organizers ensured. In contrast, the literature provides little indication about how athletes experienced the Olympic Village. One paper classified the hype of the event and the Olympic Village as a distraction that could potentially inhibit athletes' success (Orlick and Partington 1988, p. 123). Accounts from the time describe the buzz and festive atmosphere on UCLA's campus, one of the temporary homes for the 7800 athletes. The James West Alumni Center served as the entrance to the Olympic Village where visitors awaited the athletes' for autographs. ABC TV, owning the exclusive television rights for the 1984 Games, produced much of the Olympic experience on campus, while the Ackerman Student Union housed the press corps (UCLA 2017). 7 million spectators cheered the athletes to unprecedented world records (Zimmerman 1984). LA's relaxed lifestyle claimed two new Olympic sports: synchronized swimming and windsurfing (Dyreson 2015). Even with the addition of the women's marathon (and several other events), women made up only 1700 of the 7800 Olympians (Schultz 2015).

#### *Implement Urban Changes (Stadia/Olympic Village/Transport)*

The Los Angeles Games of 1984 inaugurated very limited physical development and made little to no contribution to local communities. The Games were about athletics. LA's sports infrastructure legacy included a new swim stadium at the University of Southern California (USC), a shooting range in San Bernardino County, and a velodrome at California State University, Dominguez Hills (CSUDH). The velodrome remained a poorly used legacy despite its conversion to a multipurpose site for entertainment. Noise complaints and public nuisances suites ensued upon every concert. Despite the velodrome's poor usage, Anshutz Entertainment Group (AEG) built a new velodrome just to the south of its old location in 2003. This new velodrome is the largest indoor velodrome, and the only one that meets international standards in the United States (Wilson 2015). The old velodrome was demolished to make room for a soccer-only stadium for the LA Galaxy, an American professional soccer team.

Given Olympic spectators would use the same highway network as Angelenos, LA84 implemented sophisticated transportation system management (TSM). Expecting 1.2 million people, each venue had access, circulation, and parking plans, including park and ride lots, shuttle services, and bus facilities (Giuliano 1988). The execution of the TSM went well, because 45% of Coliseum spectators took public transit to reach events; however, when the feared LA gridlock did not occur, Angelenos started to drive more (Giuliano 1988).

Sixty percent of LA84's operating surplus was invested in the United States Olympic Endowment that was set aside for USOC and national governing bodies. 40% of the surplus funded the predecessors of the LA84 foundation (Wilson 2015). Both still use the funds in service of the Olympic movement to develop elite athletes and support youth sports. Further, LA established a Sports Council in 1987 and 1988, whose mission it was and still is to promote economic development through sport. *1984 Legacies that Enabled Winning the IOC Nomination to Host the 2028 Olympics* With the Olympics in 1984, the Los Angeles Organizing Committee firmly established the image of Los Angeles as a global city. LA strengthened its position as *the* global entertainment and tourist hub showcasing and fostering the popular acceptance of the Olympics for decades to come. Broadcasting Los Angeles as a movie set and cutting the IOC out of sponsorship deals turned Los Angeles an unprecedented Olympic profit. LA1984 is widely considered a financial success story as these privately financed Games created a ~US\$232.5M surplus by selling television rights. This LA model, which became the blueprint to commercialize the Olympic Games successfully, emerged as the mega-event strategy, when local elites use large scale external events like the Olympic Games to pursue local growth (Burbank et al. 2001).

With the creation of the LA84 Foundation, bid boosters ensured a continuing legacy and proof of viability for the Olympic movement even until today. Since 1985, the LA84 Foundation manages Southern California's share of the 1984 profits, originally endowed with US\$93M. LA84 hosts a library, provides youth sports coaches' clinics, and serves more than 3 million young people and 1100 organizations in Southern California through its granting program (LA84 2019).

A legacy that now takes a stronghold in Olympic bidding and staging was the IOC's establishment of the Olympic partner program, called the TOP program, a year after LA84's closing ceremony. Just as the LA84 Organizing Committee had granted category-exclusive marketing rights, the IOC does the same through its TOP program with a small group of global well-known companies.

The LA Olympics also showed that local entrepreneurs willing to take risks hosting the Olympics can reap personal benefits and fame from the Games. For example, Peter Ueberroth was named *man of the year* for his work on the Olympics by Time magazine in 1984.

In summary, LA did not only save the 1984 Olympics as the only bidder at the time, but also through its legacies. The invention of a new funding model and proofing the model's viability immediately erased the fear over debt that the Montreal and Moscow Games had spiked. The possible financial gain for local governments renewed interest in the Games as a local economic and tourism booster from cities

around the globe. Transferring LA's funding model to the IOC also ensured a continuing cash flow to the organization that had been struggling with finances. Because of LA's minimalistic investment in urban infrastructure to stage the Olympics, the LA Games also dispersed worries over unused stadia post-Games. Staging the Games without any terrorism attacks further reduced fears that had built with the Games in Mexico City and Munich. Thus, the powerful legacies of the 1984 Games signaled to the IOC a second time, that LA can save the Olympics.

## 1.4 The Los Angeles Olympics 2028

*Goal of the section: describe the bidding process for the 2024/2028 Olympics focusing on legacy promises and perceptions of Los Angeles planners.*

### 1.4.1 Contextualizing the Olympic Bidding Climate for the 2024/2028 Games

Before the last decade, cities vied for the Games as the benefits of hosting were widely accepted (Andranovich et al. 2001; Cashman and Hughes 1999; Chalkley and Essex 1999). American bidders have historically been motivated by a “mega-event strategy” when local elites pursue a pro-growth, consumption-based urban agenda around tourism and local boosterism through the Olympic Games (Andranovich et al. 2001). The IOC, USOC, and Olympic boosters sell neoliberal dreams and utopian visions of economic growth, world-class imageries, and iconic infrastructures to governments and urban residents alike (Gaffney 2010; Kassens-Noor 2016).

The mega-event strategy has been widely criticized with respect to access, accountability, and transparency in the policy-making process (Boykoff 2014; Lenskyj 2008; Zimbalist 2015). Pursuing the Games has violated human rights (Horne 2018), provided the environment for corruption (Hover et al. 2016), and changed urban development priorities (Kassens-Noor 2012). Most notably, Müller (2015, p. 7) identifies a “mega-event syndrome”: a “set of symptoms that occur together...and have shared underlying causes”: overpromising benefits, underestimating costs, taking public risks, hijacking of public policy, suspending of laws temporarily, elite capturing of the plans, and over-reliance on temporary initiatives. These bidding symptoms have left cities with harsh realities:

- Underused stadia remain in cities as white elephant infrastructures and accrue high-maintenance costs after the Olympic Games are over; Athens stands out as the poster child for venue mismanagement.
- The Olympics cause (un)expected debts for local taxpayers; all Summer Olympics since 1960 have run over budget (Flyvbjerg and Stewart 2012; Zimbalist 2015). McBride (2016) lists the common causes of debt: (a) the IOC and National Olympic

Committees face considerable pressure to sell decision-makers and the public on the Games and thus “low ball the cost estimates with a bare-bones plan;” (b) the long duration of the competitive Olympic bid process increases pressure on bidders to develop “ever more elaborate and expensive plans;” (c) the long lag time between bidding and hosting the Games can inflate local costs; (d) the tendency of mega-projects to fall behind construction schedules, can lead to higher costs when decision-makers ensure mega-projects are finished prior to the event (McBride 2016).

- Host cities gain distorted global imageries when benefits accrue to the rich, while the burdens and financial risks are born by local taxpayers (Gaffney 2016; Kassens-Noor et al. 2018). In addition, long-term economic growth and tourism gains are negligible (Flyvbjerg and Stewart 2012; Zimbalist 2015) while the Olympic brand rather than cities reap the positive imagery impacts (Kassens-Noor et al. 2019).

Public participation has historically been tokenistic, and only a handful of bids since 1980 have been subject to referenda (Oliver and Lauer mann 2017). Anti-Olympic movements are founded on the principle that hosting the Games should be a democratically accountable achievement. While there are historical examples of bid-stage opposition, anti-Olympic activists historically have mobilized later in the planning process after contracts have been signed and construction has begun (Boykoff 2014; Cottrell and Nelson 2011). Likewise, voters and local officials have tended to pay attention relatively late in the planning process, often after the bid has been awarded and the original sponsors have left public office. In contrast, bidders in recent years face serious political challenges in response to anti-Olympic campaigns, skeptical voters, and local officials (Lauer mann and Vogelpohl 2017). Knowledge about negative impacts of the Olympic Games has spread worldwide as social media has enabled the transfer of knowledge on negative Olympic legacies (Oliver and Lauer mann 2017). Before then, Olympic knowledge was largely constrained to the IOC’s very own Olympic knowledge program that fostered the transfer of positive lessons while ignoring many negative legacies (Kassens-Noor 2019b).

Mounting evidence that Olympic bidders regularly overpromise and underdeliver has scarred the Olympic brand. Applicant and candidate cities have been withdrawing their bids to host the Olympics since the 2002 Games (Kassens-Noor and Lauer mann 2018; Lauer mann 2019). To counteract the negative trend in bidding, the IOC enacted Agenda 2020 in December 2014 and added three initiatives in the New Norm four years later (IOC 2014, 2018). The former encouraged bidders to reduce the cost of bidding, achieve sustainable legacies, and view the bidding stage as an invitation for cities to explore the concept of bidding. The latter set explicit goals for a new candidature procedure (three submissions instead of one), proposed 100 measures to transform the organization and delivery of the Olympic and Paralympic Games, and enacted a new strategic legacy approach to enable positive legacies from the Games. Essentially all three initiatives were to change the Olympic value proposition for organizing (not hosting) the Games. Agenda 2020s mission, thus, was not simply to



trigger or reinvigorate the bidding process, but to reassert the values of the Olympic Movement (MacAloon 2016).

Los Angeles bid for the Olympic Games at a time when the Olympic Games had lost their appeal as successful remakers of cities, as boosters of the economy, as stimulators of tourism, and as chances to claim the world stage in a positive light. In particular, the Sochi 2014 Olympics with an estimated cost of US\$52B, Athens' empty stadia post-Games, and Rio's violence toward local resistance to suppress opposition to the Games became deterrents to bid. LA bid when even Agenda 2020's hopeful promise to reinvigorate the Games had largely diminished, because the IOC chose Beijing as the Olympic winter host (MacAloon 2016), and because Boston's resistance movements forced Boston's mayor to withdraw a bid that was widely considered the front runner for the 2024 Games (Dempsey and Zimbalist 2017; Kassens-Noor and Lauermaun 2018). The Games were at the brink of an abyss when the IOC was hard pressed to find cities willing to host the Games (Hiller 2020; Hiller and Wanner 2019). The Olympic bidding climate had significantly changed: decision-makers once were able to make an executive decision to host; locals now hold power over the decision to bid (Giesen and Hallmann 2018; Hiller 2020).

However, Los Angeles boosters did not win a battle over public opinion but won on the bid premise "We have done it before, we can do it again." As the previous sections summarized, bid boosters bid with a strong history of Olympic staging. The previous LA Games had saved the Olympic brand twice and had created local proof of long-term Olympic legacies with SCCOG and LA84 Foundation that are dedicated to the Olympic movement. As this section shows, LA's bid boosters aligned with global elites leveraging the wealth of local supporters at the right time, e.g., in 2014, NBC signed a US\$7.75B extension to retain US Olympic TV rights through 2032. Realizing concepts of Agenda 2020 and the New Norm much better than Boston did, LA's bid boosters promised minimalistic urban changes in their initial bid. They also found ways to make important concessions over the course of the bid to enable enough local support, while exploring legal loopholes that satisfied the IOC's mandate for a host city guarantee. Bid boosters benefited from LA's unique sociopolitical context of voter apathy manifested as cocoon citizenship, which Fulton (2001) describes as the mindset of inhabitants to view LA as 72 suburbs instead of one metropolis. LA's Olympic bidding process, as presented, is the story of a city hosting the Games in which the process of bidding in an adversarial anti-Olympic bid climate was custom made for LA.

### ***1.4.2 The Political Process of Bidding in Los Angeles***

Three reasons rooted in LA's Olympic past allowed political and business elites to secure USOC's nomination for the 2024 Olympic Games: (1) opacity in planning the Games, (2) the institutionalization of the bidding process, and (3) the powerful argument of having successfully staged two Olympic Games in the past. Combined, these three reasons efficiently enabled boosters to meet IOC deadlines under extremely

short notice and hindered opposition groups from building a grassroots movement strong enough to stop the bid in its tracks.

In 2012, when Los Angeles began to bid for the third time in its recent history, this time for the 2024 Olympics, LA bidders had two recent bids from which to learn: the bidding process from 1997 to 2002 for the 2012 Olympics and the bidding process from ~2002 to 2005 for the 2016 Olympics. Both times the Southern California Committee for the Olympic Games (SCCOG) had led early bid efforts modeling the 1984 Olympic Games with private financing and existing facilities (SCCOG 2013b). SCCOG became the embodiment of the institutionalization of the early bidding process, in which knowledge, networks, and experience stayed centralized at SCCOG. USOC similarly learned from both failed bids at the international level when first New York (2012) and then Chicago (2016) failed to bring the Games back to the USA.

The third bidding process from which LA learned was Boston's infamous 2024 bid failure in 2015. Watching Boston's bid go down in flames when Boston's bidding committee tried to remedy declining public support while handling public demands for transparency, taught LA's bid boosters and USOC to remain opaque about their decision-making process. Boston's lessons transferred quickly via highly skilled Games gypsies, such as the IOC consultant Doug Arnot, who traveled from city to city to support USOC's top contender in the bidding process. LA continued to plan its bid in secrecy to avoid issues that had made Boston's bid fail, such as public engagement. This secrecy led to the immediate removal of LA's initial bid from SCCOG's website, to the redaction of the legacy portion of LA's initial bid, and to the denial of public records requests by invoking Section 6255 California legislation. Questions related to legacy were quickly squashed with one powerful argument: We have done it before, we can do it again. Frequently, bid boosters pointed to the facts that (1) given LA's current venue infrastructure there would be no white elephants (empty or underused stadia post-Games) and (2) the LA84 foundation was an Olympic legacy that still benefits Angelenos.

LA's boosters greatly capitalized on their experience, offering a compelling story firmly rooted in its past, to secure the Olympic nomination for the 2028 Games. The mayor labeled that experience "DNA" and efficiently disabled counter-Olympic history arguments with those of LA's history in public meetings, which had become famous blindspots for bid boosters around the world. One LA24/28 bid committee member explains, "in many ways, it is a city built to host the Games." Los Angeles bid boosters believe that the Olympics are an important part of what makes up LA, and justifies the premise, "We have done it before, we can do it again," as the LA 2028s director of venues & infrastructure explains. Public officials, such as Councilman Gil Cedillo share this sentiment: "We are the only city that has two successful Olympics—that's what I look to. You can tell me other cities haven't been successful. That's not us" (Wharton 2017b). LA's political elites supported LA's Olympic bid because they were awaiting the Olympic catalytic effect, which removes implementation barriers for new legislation and public works projects. Bid supporters mentioned the analogy of "the perfect storm" in conversations and discussions. For example, an LA planner describes the advent of the Olympics as igniting "a fire under the city to

get things done that need to get done and the city had been dragging its feet on for decades.” Just like the 1984 Games were the catalyst for the construction of the *modern* LA (Dyreson and Llewellyn 2008), the third LA Games are envisioned to enable important legislations to solve LA’s housing crisis, to reduce LA’s homelessness, and to build new transport infrastructures supporting an ever-growing population.

At the same time, local planners reiterate that they have learned lessons from the 1984 Olympics that will *not* be repeated for the upcoming Olympics. Planners pointed in particular to policing tactics like street sweeps to remove the homeless. Bid boosters proactively disarmed this well known, frequently used argument from bid opposition, e.g., Mayor Eric Garcetti pledged to end veteran homelessness around the same time USOC chose LA as one of the four finalists for the nomination to become the next US candidate for the 2024 IOC Olympic bid.

Bid boosters essentially gained the right to stage the Games on the premise, we have done it before, we can do it again. Thus, the remainder of the section describes Los Angeles’ bidding process and bid content focusing on that premise, and concluding with expectations local planners have for the Olympic bid and their experiences in LA because of LA winning the bid. Table 1.1 summarizes the timeline of LA’s bidding process, which is marked by three waves of bidding activity: LA’s initial bid, LA’s bid for the USOC nomination, and LA’s bid for the IOC nomination. Over the course of five years (from 17 August 2012–13 September 2017), LA’s bid brought new ideas to the table, revived long-standing knowledge about Olympic staging, and displayed superiority as an American bidder through powerful networks.

### ***1.4.3 LA’s Initial Bid for the 2024 Olympic Games (August 17, 2012–January 8, 2015)***

The Los Angeles Olympic 2028 Olympics originally began with a bid for the 2024 Olympic Games on 17 August 2012. Members of LA’s City Council proposed a motion to task SCCOG (Southern California Committee for the Olympic Games) to examine the feasibility for the city to submit an Olympic bid. Among those proposing the motion were the then-President of the City Council and soon-to-be Mayor Eric Garcetti and Councilman of the 10th district and soon-to-be LA City Council President Herb J Wesson (LA City Council 2012). By the end of January 2013, SCCOG’s strategy team had assembled a powerful coalition of Los Angeles business, sport, and community elites who backed the bid. CEO’s of the entertainment business and private corporations (e.g., AEG), political leaders of LA’s Chamber of Commerce, LA’s Mayor, actors, and Olympians signed a letter to USOC expressing their “deep interest in bidding for and hosting the 2024 Olympic Games” (SCCOG 2013a). This letter arrived at USOC headquarters in Colorado Springs just three weeks before

**Table 1.1** Timeline of Los Angeles third Olympics

	Date	Event/incident
Initial bid	August 17, 2012	LA City Council tasks SCCOG to assess feasibility of 2024 Olympic bid
	February 19, 2013	USOC invites 35 US cities to bid for 2024 Olympics
	July 1, 2013	LA Mayor Eric Garcetti elected
	August 13, 2013	LA City Council affirms unanimously to USOC that LA should be the 2024 Candidate City
	January 12, 2014	LA24 submits initial bid to USOC
	June 13, 2014	USOC selects LA as one of four finalists to national nomination for bid
	January 8, 2015	USOC nominates Boston as the candidate for the 2024 Olympics
USOC nomination	July 27, 2015	Boston and USOC jointly withdraw from the 2024 Olympic Games
	August 31, 2015	LA24 submits modified initial bid to USOC
	September 1, 2015	Los Angeles City Council votes anonymously for Olympic 2024 bid Los Angeles 2024 and USOC sign bid city agreement and hold joint press conference announcing LA to represent the nation’s bid for the 2024 Olympics
	September 16, 2015	IOC announces five candidate cities for the 2024 Olympics, incl. Los Angeles
IOC candidature	September 16, 2015	IOC announces Candidature process for the 2024 Olympic Games
	October 6, 2015	LA24 and LA City sign first memorandum of understanding (MOU) to bid
	February 17, 2016	Stage 1 (vision, concept, strategy) due to IOC
	October 7, 2016	Stage 2 (governance, legal issues, venue funding) due to IOC
	February 3, 2017	Stage 3 (Games delivery, experience, venue legacy) due to IOC
	March 7, 2017	Mayor Garcetti reelected
IOC nomination	July 11, 2017	IOC votes to elect 2024 and 2028 host simultaneously
	July 31, 2017	Los Angeles announces its intention to be a candidate for the Olympic Games 2028 LA signs deal with IOC to be the sole bidder for 2028
	August 11, 2017	Los Angeles City council approved LA’s 2028 bid and founds LA28
	September 11, 2017	IOC evaluation commission approves LA

(continued)

**Table 1.1** (continued)

	Date	Event/incident
	September 13, 2017	IOC awards the 2028 Games to LA
	October 23, 2017	LA28 and LA City sign second memorandum of understanding (MOU) to bid
	September 13, 2018	LA28 transitions from Bidding to Organizing Committee of the Olympic Games
July 21, 2028–August 6, 2028 Los Angeles Summer Olympic Games		

Scott Blackmun, CEO of USOC, would officially invite 35 American cities<sup>1</sup> to vie for the 2024 Olympic bid (USOC 2013a).

USOC’s priorities in narrowing down the US candidate field can be grouped into three categories (USOC 2013a, b): (1) the city’s financial ability to host the Games, (2) the city’s infrastructure to stage the Games, and (3) the bid leaders’ political savvy to network locally and among USOC and IOC members.

(1) *LA’s initial budget for the Games*

USOC set several deadlines in the fall 2014 for US candidate cities to submit draft budgets. In the initial applicant city seminar, USOC provided host cities with estimates from previously successful bids, including London (host of the 2012 Games), Rio (host of the 2016 Games), Chicago (candidate of the 2016 Games), as well as Tokyo, Madrid, and Istanbul (candidates of the 2020 Games). USOC (and the IOC) distinguish between two types of budgets:

- The non-OCOG budget is for financing construction of venues and infrastructure required for the Olympic Games. USOC estimates the non-Organizing Committee expenses to be US\$3–5B depending on existing city and sport infrastructure, including permanent venues, athlete and media village, transport, and security (USOC 2013b). None of these budget items are supported by the IOC or USOC, as “all major capital investments related to hosting the Games must be covered by a budget outside the operations budget for the Games” (USOC 2013b, p. 9).
- The OCOG budget constitutes the operations budget for the organization of the Olympic Games. USOC estimates these project expenses of the Organizing Committee to be US\$3–4B). USOC historical games-financing data lists projected ticketing revenues of –\$US2–2.25B (USOC 2013b).

USOC’s focus throughout the bidding process was and remained on the OCOG budget, promising IOC contributions of US\$800M and TOP sponsorships of US\$400M; notably, US\$180M more than what USOC had promised Chicago and US\$100M more than what any other city had received in the past (PRR 2015). In the following months, several visits to applicant cities refined the budget estimates through

<sup>1</sup>Despite the few American cities that have the capability to bid, 60% of the contacted cities invested some type of resources or money to inquire about the feasibility of an Olympic bid based on USOC criteria.

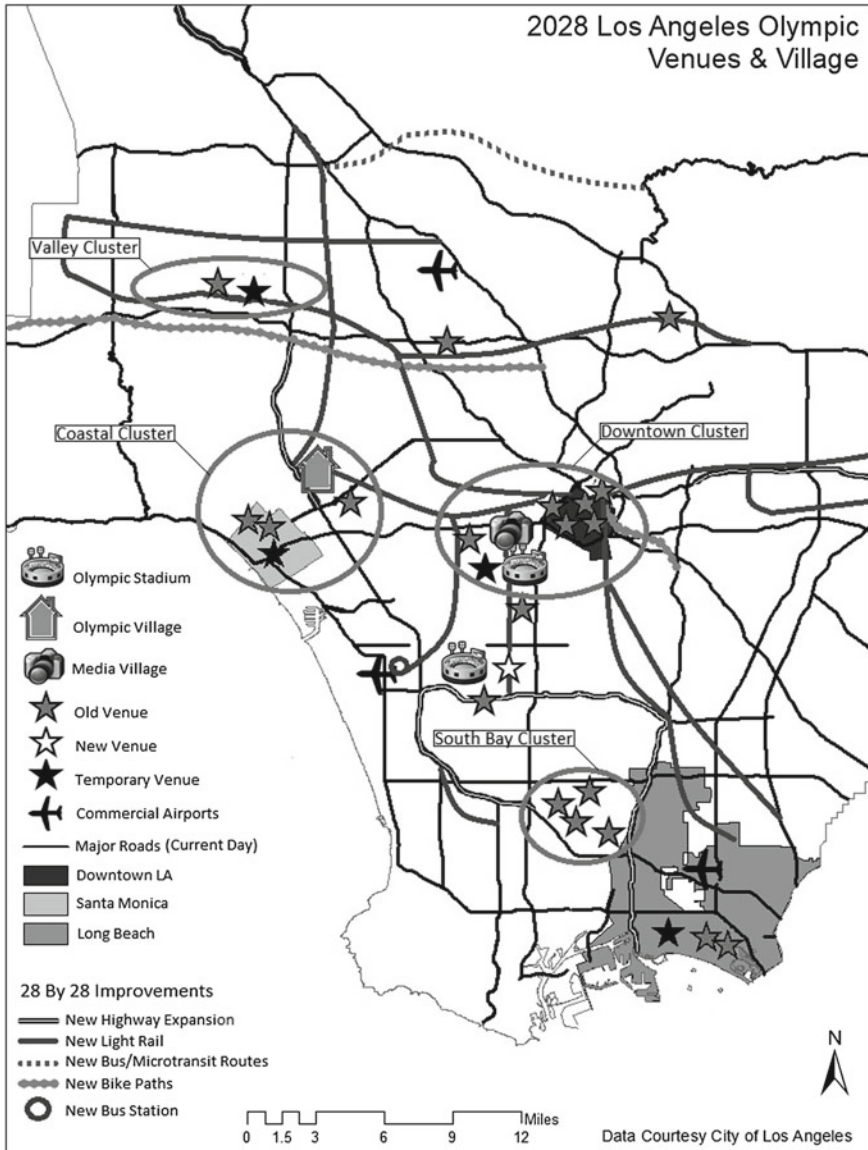
experienced USOC and IOC consultants like David Beery, Panos Protopsaltis, Chris Sullivan, and Doug Arnot. At the time, these consultants estimated LA would be able to raise close to US\$1.5B in domestic sponsorships. USOC advised to estimate ticketing revenues at US\$1.12B during fall 2014 (LA24 2014), a notable US\$1B drop-off from the originally listed discussion items (USOC 2013b). Support for LA came from one of Boston's most vocal bid opponents, Andrew Zimbalist, who validated LA's Olympic budget (Marshall 2017; Wharton 2017a): if all goes according to plan, LA could close the Games with an operating surplus of \$400–\$500 million.

LA's initial budget for the Games proposed revenues of US\$4.67B, including a US\$153.8M surplus. Revenues came from US\$1.487B in domestic sponsorships, US\$1.12B from sports ticketing revenue, US\$850M from IOC contributions and broadcast fees, and US\$488M from TOP sponsorships. To note here is that the latter two revenue streams had increased nearly US\$150M by August 2015, when LA24 had to submit its bid to USOC after Boston withdrew. In contrast, the original bid book expenses (December 2014) were listed as US\$4.5B (LA24 2014). The LA Exploratory Committee estimated venue costs at US\$1.23B in the OCOG budget. Notably, transportation—an aspect that USOC had honed in on in preparation for the Games, is not listed as a budget item under key services. Technology is US\$412M, Games services including sport US\$326.3M, workforce US\$426M, and support services US\$702M on city operations. The non-OCOG budget, the only time this budget would ever appear in official bid books, totalled merely US\$1.7B. In later budgets, the exclusion of the non-OCOG budget was justified with the deletion of the new Olympic Village idea.

## (2) *LA's infrastructure to stage the Games*

USOC laid out the scope of the Olympic and Paralympic Games through email conversations and working sessions in LA and Colorado Springs, providing detailed technical requirements on accommodation and transportation needs, venue sizes, broadcasting and media centers, and workforce training and qualifications.

The earliest indication of how LA was planning to stage the Olympic Games came from Mayor Garcetti in a letter to USOC on 25 July 2014, promising that LA would deliver “the most successful, sustainable, and technological Olympic and Paralympic Games in history” (PRR 2015). SCCOG (2019) developed the very first version of how Los Angeles should plan to host the 2024 Olympic and Paralympic Games. However, Mayor Garcetti enlisted Casey Wasserman, CEO of a leading sports and entertainment agency, to spearhead the bid and instructed SCCOG to remove its bid book from its website the very same day (Andranovich 2017). The official initial bid book proposed five Olympic areas, including all venues, of which 80% would be new since 1984 (LA24 2014, p. 173): the Downtown Cluster (50% of all venues), the Hollywood Cluster (was removed in following bid version due to single venue), the Valley Cluster, the Coastal Cluster, and the South Bay Cluster (Map 1.3). Notable are the extensive transport projects that will span Los Angeles and its adjacent counties by 2028. Comparing Map 1.3 thus with Map 1.1 (1932 Games) and Map 1.2 (1984 Games) visualizes the similar local spread of venues across LA's famous locations,



**Map 1.3** Main Olympic venues during the 2028 Games. *Source* Created by T. Decaminada adapted from LA28, NAD 1983 map projection

but also shows the stark contrast between the limited transport expansions necessary for the two previous LA Games and LA's grand opportunity plans for 2028.

In selling LA's case to USOC, first and foremost stood the athlete experience with two features. First, "every athlete will have a home field advantage" given LA's internationality, diversity, and love for sports. Second, a new, purpose-built Olympic athletes' Village on the locally known Union Pacific's "Piggyback Yard." Located adjacent to the Los Angeles River and close to downtown, the Olympic Village would be developed on a 125-acre rail yard, cost US\$1B (US\$925M city cost and US\$75M LA24 cost), and minimize travel times. However, "the development cost, including acquisition, remediation, and construction, may significantly exceed the projected US\$1B. Relocation and remediation costs alone may account for over 55% of the estimated project costs" and no plans for reuse existed at the time (Santana and Tso 2015, p. 3). Post-Olympics, this site promised to be a major legacy of the Games remaining as a residential neighborhood for Angelenos. The Village essentially was to serve as a catalyst for the "revitalization of Downtown and restoration of the LA River." The mayor's letter further detailed LA24's plans for the city's Olympic legacy by promising to build more parks with playing fields, to develop individual youth sports, and to promote active lifestyle for adults and seniors to combat obesity and other diseases (PRR 2015). However, the initial bid book withheld any legacy promises from the public (LA24 2014, p. 28).

As the global leader in storytelling and capturing people's imagination, LA24 leveraged its media advantage. Mayor Garcetti advertised that his city "can create the buzz unlike any other place and tell the story of a new Olympics in a new Los Angeles" (PRR 2015), hinting toward LA's ability to rebrand the Olympics once again; for example, beach volleyball at Santa Monica Pier, where the sport was conceived, biking in front of the Hollywood sign, and marathoning on the Walk of Fame. In the spectacle, a "reimagined" Los Angeles Memorial Coliseum would host the Opening and Closing Ceremonies for the third time through over US\$500M University of Southern California investment in the Coliseum. Also, the bid promised to turn a 2.4 km stretch of Figueroa Street, from Exposition Park north to Downtown's LA Live, into the new "Olympic Way."

Last but not least, the LA bid sold its newness through the extensive construction program stating LA was already heavily "investing in the future with the biggest public works project in the country" (LA24 2014, p. 8). LA24 especially emphasized investments of US\$88B over the next 10 years in its transit system, given USOC emphasized that "Transportation is always one of the most difficult challenges for the Games" (PRR 2015). Notably though, LA's initial OCOG budget was completely silent on the issue of transportation with no budget line item to accommodate Olympic transport, e.g., athletes and other Olympic transport groups (Kassens-Noor 2012; Odoni et al. 2009). Instead, the bid detailed the planned expansion of the regional mass transit network through investment in subway, light rail, commuter rail, bus rapid transit (BRT) and HOV/Express lanes connecting venue clusters, the modernized LA airport (LAX), Downtown and every corner of the city (LA24 2014, p. 25). Los Angeles County had long planned to fund these infrastructure improvements through temporary and permanent incremental tax increases, locally known as Measure R and



Measure M. The Olympic Games would catalyze these projects and bring benefits to the community earlier, the bid boosters argued.

“We have done it before, we can do it again.” The powerful slogan echoes throughout LA28 bid books that promise to revitalize the Olympic brand, to deliver the ultimate experience for athletes, to use almost exclusively existing and temporary stadia, and to tell inspiring stories about the Games to refresh the Olympic brand. The first bid book essentially sold the LA narrative of diversity and inclusion, newness (highlighting planned construction projects), and historic/famous/iconic moments LA wanted to share worldwide.

### (3) *Bid leaders political savvy*

USOC’s main interest, so the bid guidelines state, is finding a partner to “enhance the Olympic and Paralympic movement globally and within the USA” (PRR 2015). The then-new Los Angeles Mayor Eric Garcetti immediately set the tone for a productive partnership. He took office on 1 July 2013 and wrote the USOC the very same day (Garcetti 2013). In support for the city’s bid, he confirmed his enthusiastic interest in bidding for the 2024 Olympic and Paralympic Games that his predecessor Villaraigosa (2013) had enthusiastically expressed less than a month after receiving USOC’s invitation letter, stating Los Angeles’ intention to bid with the SCCOG on 4 March 2013. In the following months and years, three essential objectives emerged in LA’s process, bid leaders had to master: (a) ensuring the host city contract would be signed and backed by governmental guarantees, (b) garnering overwhelming public support, and (c) ensuring the staging of the Games if they were awarded. Though these tasks are not necessarily new, they came at a time when the IOC with Agenda 2020 and the New Norm intended to remedy global perceptions of decision-making opaqueness and dwindling public interest in hosting the Games. LA’s bid boosters excelled in these three political challenges.

#### (a) *Securing governmental guarantees to enable the mayor to sign the host city contract.*

In preparation for the first meeting in LA in fall 2013, USOC sent the host city contracts for 2010 and 2012. In the enclosed letter, USOC emphasized that the mayor must sign a similar host city contract. A bid made in the USA needs powerful elites in politics and in business to navigate the political minefield and ensure the financial viability of the bid. Mayor Eric Garcetti and the executive Casey Wasserman, who was to become the Chairman of LA24 Exploratory Committee<sup>2</sup> and CEO of LA’s Olympic Organizing Committee co-led LA’s bid. Herb Wesson, the president of Los Angeles City Council, supported the duo. Notably, all of them held fond memories of the previous LA Olympics, while their ancestors had participated in planning, organizing, or staging them. In preparation of USOC’s first visit to Los Angeles, Herb Wesson lead the City Council in reaffirming the city’s support to USOC’s and

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<sup>2</sup>The State of California incorporated Los Angeles 2024 Exploratory Committee on 12 August 2014. LA24 was set up as a non-profit public benefit corporation with the purpose to enhance the quality of life of residents of Los Angeles and California through the promotion and sponsorship of Los Angeles as the site of the 2024 Olympic and Paralympic Games.

emphasizing that LA should be chosen as the USA's candidate city; the vote was unanimous (15-0) on 13 August 2013 (LA24 2014). Experience for bidding came from SCCOG, who had prepared bids over the past two decades (bids for 2012 and 2016). Combining political savvy, business pull, and experience, the LA team was well-equipped to bid.

In the meetings in early 2014, USOC focused on getting to know LA's bid leaders. These meetings ensured leaders had an executive presence to communicate with IOC members, political skills to assemble city assets and galvanize city support, and a "huge commitment of time" to devote to the bid (PRR 2015). To test the viability of these skills, bid leaders had to prove they could mount the US\$75M for the bid and ensure financial support from state and city if LA was to host the Games. LA's bid leaders and those of three other US cities successfully convinced USOC to narrow the list of US applicants to four (San Francisco, Washington DC, Los Angeles, and Boston) in early June 2014. USOC convened them on 25 July 2014 for USOC's applicant city workshop to detail bid requirements, especially those related to financing, budgeting, and transportation.

Budgets remained at the forefront and of utter importance for the remainder of 2014. In early August, LA and San Francisco bid leaders strategized on how to best work with California's legislature and the governor's office to secure a financial guarantee in case either city was chosen to host the Games. They emphasized that then-California Governor Gray Davis had signed a similar guarantee in 2002 and again in 2012 (PRR 2015). Early on, California's Governor Jerry Brown conveyed his support to Mayor Garcetti and USOC, fondly recalling memories and his efforts in helping secure LA's 1984 Olympics. He saw little concern in passing successfully a State financial guarantee to support the 2024 Games given similar ones had passed in 2002 and 2007 (LA24 2014, p. 158). In the last months of 2014, Governor Brown officially promised the bid "will have the full support of the entire state." Further, elected legislative leaders of the California state senate and the California state assembly promised LA24 to introduce legislation ensuring the financial and political support and assured to USOC that they were "thrilled at the prospect of welcoming the best athletes" (PRR 2015).

In a similar manner, LA24 secured support letters across LA's metropolitan region for venues, owned by municipalities and universities in preparation for submission of its initial bid. Many of these letters had been sent to LA's bidding committees several times over the previous two decades. LA24 was asking in a "business as usual" way to reissue those (PRR, 2015). As the bid neared USOC's submission due date in December 2014, LA24 had checked all boxes for a successful political process. The City Council and Board of Supervisors unanimously voted to support Los Angeles' Bid. All municipalities and governmental entities had committed their venues for the Games. California's legislature was in support of a financial guarantee for the Games (LA24 2014, p. 155). What happened in LA to this point was an institutionalization of the bidding process that centered around political savvy. "It's politics, right? And the mayor is unbelievably talented at it," says LA24 bid chief Casey Wasserman (quoted in Ford and Drehs 2017).

(b) *Securing governmental guarantees to enable the mayor to sign the host city contract.*

From the very beginning, USOC communicated its modus operandi during the bidding process and instructed that “cities must not comment publicly on the USOC’s evaluation process and must, instead, direct all questions regarding the process to the USOC communications division” (USOC 2013b, p. 2). Following suit, the Los Angeles bid developed in secrecy, budget details and the bid in general are unknown, and in response to standard public records requests withholding materials from public view is allowable. According to Government Statute Section 6255 (in effect since January 2001) and the relevant case law, LA’s city government is allowed discretion over “records for which the public interest served by withholding the records clearly outweighs the public interest served by disclosure and thus may be withheld including draft, notes, and inter/intra agency memoranda.” Numerous calls and emails to the Mayor’s Office remained unanswered. Even SCCOG has capped its news stream since 1 September 2015 (SCCOG 2019), deleting comments to previous LA bids, and disabling the wayback machine for insights into the initial 2024 Olympic bid. The general argument of boosters to withhold information about the bid is either that disclosure would jeopardize the chances of a city winning the bid (before the bid argument) or that disclosure would hinder negotiations for land and venues as it would increase costs for the bidding committee (after the bid). LA24’s opaqueness was never challenged during its initial bid. The opposition groups were waiting on whether LA was to win the initial bid, while most Angelenos were unaware LA was bidding (NOlympics LA 2019) and if they were, they viewed the bid as business as usual.

(c) *Proving the city’s ability to stage the Games if they were awarded by ensuring public support and disabling any arising resistance against the Olympics.*

USOC’s instructions stipulated “strong public support by public opinion poll” was necessary to be considered a viable candidate (USOC 2013b). Hart Research Associated showed through a phone poll that Angelenos strongly supported hosting the Olympic and Paralympic Games (77–83%), an even stronger indication of people willing to attend the Games (85%), and a solid indication that LA could raise enough volunteers to support operations of the Games (LA24 2014, p. 160; Yang and Millman 2014). The director of venues and operations says he believes the LA84 legacy was essential in securing public support: “Most people in LA have fond memories of those Games and it has helped in gaining public support for our bid.”

In December 2014, four cities including Los Angeles, Boston, San Francisco, and Washington, DC each submitted an initial bid to the USOC. A month later, USOC chose Boston over Los Angeles as the US candidate for the 2024 Olympic Games on 8 January 2015. USOC members believed that “the IOC would prefer something new. LA invoked the feeling of been there, done that,” explained an IOC consultant.

#### ***1.4.4 LA's USOC Nomination (July 27, 2015–September 15, 2015)***

For Los Angeles, Bid 2.0 started well before Boston's bid failed. One LA24/28 bid committee member explains, "Casey [Wasserman] and the Mayor got a phone call asking whether LA would still be interested in bidding" when public support for Boston's bid plummeted as details about Boston's bid were released. At the end of March 2015, the news was spreading to Boston when Boston's bidding committee for the Olympic Games heard rumors that LA24 was the runner-up if Boston's bid was to fail (Kassens-Noor and Lauermaun 2017). The USOC conducted independent polling in Boston after public support had dropped and spoke with San Francisco and Los Angeles about the possibility of reviving their bids (Futterman 2015). Zimbalist (cited in Gurley 2015), a long-time critic of Olympic cost overruns, endorsed Los Angeles over any city in the USA: "If Boston pulls out, the USOC is left empty handed unless they go to Los Angeles. Frankly, it would have to be Los Angeles, because Los Angeles is the one that could step in at the last minute." As LA24 watched Boston's bid go up in flames over declining public support, calls for referenda, cost overruns, and changes in leadership, LA24 and USOC developed a new strategy, which was assuring to the IOC, that what happened in Boston could never happen in Los Angeles.

##### *Ensuring the Viability of the Bid*

Officially, LA24's efforts to secure the bid started on 27 July 2015, when Boston withdrew its candidature for the 2024 Olympics due to local resistance and anti-bid activist activity, which forced USOC to reconsider the three rejected bids (Axon 2015). In the last week of August, the LA City Council hastily reconfirmed its commitment to bid and authorized Mayor Garcetti and LA City Council President to approve a "Joinder Agreement" as a condition of selecting Los Angeles as the bid city for the 2024 Olympic Games (PRR 2019). This joinder agreement explicitly disabled public referenda relating to the Games. On 27 August 2015, the city administrative officer, Miguel Santana, and the chief legislative analyst, Sharon Tso, raised serious concerns from which it is evident that no communication had taken place between the City Council and LA24: "Our Offices cannot verify, validate, or further explain the budget beyond what is presented in the [initial] LA24 Bid" (Santana and Tso 2015, p. 3). Despite the concerns, only few clauses were added to the joinder agreement that allowed them to keep informed, but the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) ultimately signed between LA24 and the City Council after the bid's submission in October 2015 that promised to keep city officials informed and engage the public was non-binding (PRR 2019). Notably, in the short time horizon that remained between Boston's withdrawal and the IOC's due date, there was neither time, but more so "no necessity" from the bid booster perspective, to discuss the bid, which had changed since the initial bid submission in January 2015.

Between January 2015 and August 2015, the bid budget between LA's initial bid and the one LA's Exploratory committee submitted to USOC as part of LA's official

bid in fall 2015 changed slightly, increasing the estimated revenues to US\$4.83B and the non-OCOG costs to US\$4.67B. The surplus expected from the Games was raised to ~US\$161M, an increase of US\$7.3M from the initial budget. The revenue increased by US\$157.3M, 97% of which stems from increases of the IOC contribution and TOP sponsorship now totalling US\$1.5B. The costs simultaneously increased between the initial and submitted bid as an insurance premium of US\$150M was added (LA24 2014, 2016a).

The bid focused now more on reusability, in which 85% of the venues already were in place or planned anyways in short travel distance from the Olympic Village: 31 venues and locations, organized in five clusters around the region, would be used for all sporting events. However, the athlete experience firmly stood in the center of the bid, promising a home atmosphere, excellent competitions environment, and beautiful scenery in a new LA.

Unanswered calls for transparency, unanswered questions, and unanswered euphoria for LA's bid from various council members and the public were the trademark, when LA announced its intention to bid again on the mostly empty steps of LA's City hall. In the hastily modified initial bid books, LA24 (2016a, p. 159) showed LA's viability of the bid in:

- that there was no opposition to the bid locally as “there is no public campaign, nominal or organized, to oppose Los Angeles’ efforts to Bid for the 2024 Games,”
- that if opposition was to arise, it could be extinguished, “as the deadlines for any opponents of the Games to place an initiative on the ballot for these elections have elapsed” and, “The City of Los Angeles is not required by law to carry out any referendum to bid, organize, or host the 2024 Games,”
- that LA24 would enjoy continuous support from the Mayor and the City Council in a stable political climate as, “There is no possibility that any upcoming election before December 2015 could result in any restrictions on Los Angeles’ ability to bid, organize, or host the Games.”

On 1 September 2015, the Los Angeles City Council voted unanimously for LA's Olympic 2024 bid. At this meeting, the council “debated” the bid for only 20 min. In practice the democratic and predominantly male council members realized a long-standing dream of SCCOG and LA's Olympics boosters they had talked about for years: if there is ever a glitch, LA can host the Games on short notice. Exemplarily, LA24 and USOC signed the bid agreement only within the hour before the official press conference in Santa Monica was held announcing LA's bid. The legacies of LA's two previous Summer Games buoyed enthusiasm across LA's government leaders to play host once again. Fond of his childhood memories, Mayor Garcetti (cited in KPCC 2015) announced that “the Olympics is in our DNA. The Olympics loves L.A. and L.A. loves the Olympics. We hope to return those Games back home.” Casey Wasserman, echoed that sentiment: “Olympism is deeply rooted in the culture here and it is part of our DNA” (cited in USOC & LA 2024 2015), stepping into the footsteps of his grandfather Lew Wasserman, who was one of LA's power brokers during the previous Games.

Los Angeles was selected because there was no due process to seek permissions, no public engagement, and effective overriding of city laws, when the public, city government were asked to comprehend in a manner of five days what LA24 had prepared over years. Olympic-opposed city officials were strong-armed into succumbing their checks-and-balances on the bidding process. As one planner (#15) comments, “The lack of public input and disregard for public concern has been staggering and sets a truly terrifying tone for the future of Los Angeles.” The next stage of bidding was to become even more opaque: in the joinder agreement, the City of Los Angeles signed off on USOC’s demands that no further communication be shared with the public related to any and all USOC materials (USOC 2015).

Two weeks later, the IOC announced Los Angeles, Paris, Rome, Budapest, and Hamburg as the five candidate cities for the 2024 Games. The latter three would withdraw their candidature due to local resistance to the Olympic bids.

#### ***1.4.5 LA’s Candidature for the 2024 Olympics (September 16, 2015–September 13, 2017)***

The IOC announcement to select LA as one of five candidates for the Olympic Games, stipulated that LA24 must meet three IOC-imposed deadlines over the next two years (IOC 2015):

- Stage 1 (17 February 2016): LA24 developed the vision, concept, and strategy for the Olympic Games. Among other requirements, Stage 1 tasked candidate cities to conduct an opinion poll by an independent marketing company. LA24 hired Loyola Marymount University in January and February 2016 to conduct a telephone poll of 2,425 Angelenos (1,225 LA and LA County 1,200 residents). 88.3% supported LA hosting the 2024 Summer Olympics (LA24 2016a, p. 14).
- Stage 2 (7 October 2016): LA24 clarified the bids’ governance, legal issues, and venue funding to the IOC. When LA24 released their bid books to the public, however, they withheld any budgetary information from the bid to “protect LA24 proprietary information.” LA24 instead promised that information from this section would be part of the Games budget submitted with Candidature File Part 3 in February 2017” (LA24 2016a, p. 15).
- Stage 3 (3 February 2017): LA24 explains plan implementations for staging the Games, the Games experience, promises to leave a positive sustainable legacy (LA24 2017).

Over the course of the LA24 candidature, the bid evolved to align more with Agenda 2020 (IOC 2014) and the IOC’s new candidature procedure (IOC 2015). One LA24 bid committee member explains LA’s IOC pitch: “We were able to show that hosting the Games did not alter the city’s path to transformation into a modern metropolis that is focused on sustainability and not necessarily dominated by cars. The strength of our narrative focused on those three components; nothing new; no homes or businesses being moved or relocated, and funding already committed to public infrastructure

improvements.” While LA24 implemented a variety of changes over the course of its bidding process, many could warrant discussion as they relate to planning legacies in comparison to the 1932 and 1984 Olympic Games. Exemplifying three changes, it is important to examine implications to LA’s expected Olympic legacies on the backdrop of the current Olympic climate.

#### *Changes to LA24’s Bid Budget 2017*

By the end of 2016 (Taylor 2016; LA24 2016b), LA’s original bid budget was balanced and had increased to US\$5.3B. Shortly before submission to the IOC, LA24 added another US\$50M for athlete innovation (LA24 2017). Comparing line items of the budgets between 2015 and 2017 is difficult as the budget’s line items have been aligned with opaque IOC demands, e.g. “other costs” exceeded US\$800M (LA24 2017). Expected domestic sponsorship (now estimated close to US\$1.93B) and ticketing revenue (above US\$1.5B)<sup>3</sup> have significantly increased while the IOC and TOP sponsor contributions to revenue have decreased by close to US\$400M. The insurance premium has been folded into the contingency line item, which in the summer of 2017 was US\$488M. This contingency fund is covered with US\$250M from Los Angeles and Senate Bill 1465 authorizing a state guarantee to cover Games shortfalls up to US\$250M (Taylor 2017).

#### *Changes to Games’ Operations*

LA24 proposed a new concept for the Olympic Games’ Opening and Closing Ceremonies. Instead of celebrating in one stadium, keeping the LA32 and LA84 tradition in the heritage Memorial Coliseum, the ceremonies would be staged in two stadia: the Coliseum and the new Los Angeles Stadium at Hollywood Park in Inglewood, locally known as the “SoFi Stadium.” The Inglewood City Council approved planning for the site surrounding the NFL SoFi Stadium in 2009, which was to open in 2019 (deferred to August 2020 as of September 2019 due to heavy rainfall). The privately financed stadium, owned by the Los Angeles Rams’ owner Stan Kroenke, will remain in LA as the new home for two American football teams—the Los Angeles Rams and San Diego Chargers (City Council Inglewood 2015). The new stadium is expected to cost US\$4.96B instead of the originally estimated US\$2.6B (Brinson 2018), with the capacity to accommodate temporarily 100,000 people instead of originally planned 80,000 seats (Schrotenboer 2019). Stan Kroenke has sought significant tax breaks from the city of Inglewood to recoup some of his investment. The SoFi Stadium will host the “new” Opening Ceremony while the LA Memorial Coliseum will host a Hollywood-produced celebration showcasing the history of the Olympic Games. The Coliseum and SoFi Stadium will reverse roles during the Closing Ceremony (Taylor 2017). LA24 justified changes to their plans in the Opening and Closing Ceremonies based upon athlete feedback. However, celebrating in two stadia makes for great television and additional prime marketing opportunities.

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<sup>3</sup>Estimates were based on 97% of available seats being sold (KPMG 2016, p. 5).

### *Changes to Infrastructure*

On 25 January 2016, LA24 relocated the Olympic Village (initially planned along the LA River) to the campus of the University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA). This change in plans for the Olympic Villages reduced significantly the bid's financial risk. Thus, the non-OCOG budget disappeared from the bid books, most notably the \$US1B line item for the new Olympic Village along LA's river (Taylor 2016). The University of Southern California (USC) residential facilities would host the Media Village. Both ideas were recycled from the LA 2012 bid in which Olympic Village sites were proposed as residence halls in local universities.

The Games will further catalyze 9 out of 28 transport infrastructure projects. Mayor Garcetti titled the Olympic accelerated initiative Twenty-eight by '28 (Metro 2017) while Los Angeles would invest up to US\$300B in its transport infrastructure projects over 30 years as a result of local initiatives, Measure M and Measure R (IOC 2017b).

Shortly after LA24 submitted its final bid book, Mayor Garcetti was reelected on 7 March 2017 with 81% of the vote. However, the bid books and Olympic boosters remained silent on the fact that voter turnout was the second lowest ever in a mayoral race, at 20%. The strong support for the Mayor was paralleled with Angelenos support for the Olympic Games, as the director of venue and infrastructure planning elaborates: "With this level of support, I think there was just a sense that you don't have to complicate the process." At the same time, an IOC-appointed evaluation commission working group evaluated—and the IOC Executive board subsequently confirmed—that LA could continue its bid, concluding that LA24 and the City of Los Angeles had "proven their ability to host exceptional Olympic Games." The Committee (IOC 2017a) characterized LA's bid as "forward-looking", "innovative, vibrant," "cool," "dynamic," and "futuristic" and lauded LA's ability with storytelling skills, creative energy, and cutting-edge technologies.

### *Opposing the LA Olympic Bid*

NOlympics LA launched its opposition campaign on 16 May 2017, roughly three months after LA had submitted its final bid book. Led by the Democratic Socialists of America Los Angeles section, which assembled a coalition of 25 community organizations, NOlympics LA advocated for the betterment of life of all Angelenos and warned of police brutality, extortion of the poor in favor of benefits to the rich, and the diversion of resources for the Games away from day-to-day operations. The essence of Olympic opposition is based on an utilitarian argument (the very uneven nature of financing the Games) and a human rights argument (the whitewashing of LA in the name of the Olympics). Planner (#12) echoes the root cause of Olympic opposition, stating there exists a "High, likely risk of having to 'bail out' the IOC when our city barely has the resources for affordable housing, education, social services, and additional, much-needed priorities that serve vulnerable Angelenos." The grassroots movement started comparatively late in LA's bidding process and published its own poll showing that 13% of LA County residents strongly supported, 24% were neutral, and 45% of LA County residents oppose the city's Olympic bid



after LA had secured the IOC's nomination as the 2028 Olympic host (NOlympics LA 2019). Ignoring these damning results, the IOC instead praised the July 2017 poll from Loyola Marymount University showing as it did in early 2016 strong support (83.1%) from Angelenos for the 2028 Olympics in Los Angeles (Guerra et al. 2017). The strong disparity between the polling results suggests that perhaps additional polling ought to be conducted.

To fathom why LA's bid continued despite the political resistance elsewhere may be explained with the perceived success of the two previous Games, the opaqueness of the bid, and the stop & go bidding process. But, this explanation wouldn't be comprehensive without mentioning LA's sociopolitical contexts that effectively disabled a local public outcry against the Olympic bid. LA has a long history of politicians who traded political and financial gains over livability. This has resulted in LA being what it is today: a vast urban region on the brink of disaster (Fulton 2001; Sloane 2017). The sprawling megalopolis has created "72 suburbs in search of a city" as Dorothy Parker described; this LA phenomenon that persists today creates a confusing patchwork of place names in which many Angelenos lack a sense of community and civic culture (Davis 2006). Thus, LA firmly holds the reputation as a bastion of voter apathy. Endemic to the city is a disengagement with local affairs, demonstrated by the residents' persistently low voter turnout, e.g., Mayor Eric Garcetti won his reelection with 20%, the former Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa with 18% of the votes (Finnegan 2017). Mayor Garcetti, further, had set a very different political tone in LA's City Hall that made him popular (he won his election with 81%). His new open-door policy, the care for the environment, and new tax initiatives to tackle LA's biggest problems had Angelenos trust the new Mayor in his decision-making capability. Combined, LA's sociopolitical environment may have prevented the virulent Olympic resistance against the bid that was so common in other cities around the globe.

#### ***1.4.6 LA's IOC Nomination for the 2028 Olympic Games (July 11, 2017–September 13, 2017)***

LA's IOC nomination was to go down in the Olympic history books as the first time the IOC awarded two Games simultaneously: Paris 2024 and LA 2028. At the end of 2016, IOC president Thomas Bach floated the idea of a dual award, summarizing that there were "too many losers" in the Olympic bidding process (Wharton 2016). Over the next several months, the IOC met with both candidate cities to discuss the terms if two cities were to be selected. The IOC Executive Board endorsed a dual bid award vote of the full IOC membership, which it granted on 11 June after hearing the two bid presentations in Lausanne, Switzerland (Ford and Drehs 2017). Six weeks later (31 July 2017), the IOC announced Los Angeles as the sole candidate for the 2028 Games. The dual award avoided the risk of disinterest in the 2028 Games and was a quick fix for the bad publicity the IOC had endured over the past five years

during which 15 cities either withdrew from consideration or had referenda in which the Olympics lost to local concerns (Calgary 2026, Graubunden 2022, Graubunden 2026, Graz 2026, Hamburg 2024, Krakow 2022, Innsbruck 2026, Munich 2022, Sion 2026; local protests but no referendum: Boston 2024, Budapest 2024, Rome 2020, Rome 2024; withdrawn for other reasons: Oslo 2022, Stockholm 2022). LA 2028 and Paris 2024 were awarded in a manner to “buy time” for the IOC to figure out how to reinvigorate the bidding process.

The Los Angeles City Council approved LA 2028’s bid unanimously on 11 August 2017 (PRR 2019; Wharton 2017b), despite some vocal protest from NOlympics LA and citizens. Elitist decision-makers dominated the hastily called hearing to allow residents to speak, in which Councilman Joe Buscaino aired his anger: “I’m tired of hearing these people coming to us and questioning our decision-making.” The resident called back: “It’s called democracy.” Planners believe LA won the bid because of business and political elites who pursue neoliberal fame and wealth. For example, planner (#12) said, “The conception of L.A.’s Olympic bid is rooted in deaf-tone politicians and wealthy stakeholders’ pursuit of having this feather in their proverbial hat.” Protesters critiqued the opaqueness of the bidding process, inadequate priorities, and financial risks Angelenos would be taking without their consent. The hastily drawn-up Memorandum of Understanding between the Triparti (LA, Paris, and the IOC) that was to safeguard LA from cost overruns, specifies the financial responsibility (PRR 2019, p. 9):

None of the City, the State of California, the IOC, the International Paralympic Committee, the USOC or any of their respective representatives, nor any representative of the [OCOG] (all of the foregoing, collectively, “Unrelated Parties”) shall incur any financial responsibility or liability of any kind or nature whatsoever in connection with or arising out of this [Venue Agreement] or any subsequent agreement between the parties relating to the subject matter hereof.

The wordiness of the legal jargon essentially leaves the option open for LA’s Organizing Committee (LA28) to bear financial responsibility. However, this entity will be dissolved right after the Closing Ceremony of the 2028 Games. In signing the host city contract, the City Council thereby guaranteed, similar to all other Olympic Cities before, that it would cover any and all cost overruns (IOC 2017b).

In the 11 days between the 2028 candidacy and the IOC’s due date, there was neither time, but more so no necessity to revise the budget from the bid boosters’ perspective given “the fact that there are no changes to the Games plan presented for 2024” (IOC 2017b, p. 10; Wharton 2017b). The budget was not updated for the 2028 bid, but instead LA promised to provide “an updated 2028 Games Budget and the KPMG report ... to the City by the end of the first quarter of 2019 as part of the OCOG’s annual report covering activities of the OCOG in 2018” (PRR 2019). Despite the fact that the bid incurred four additional years of operational costs, the risks of inflation loomed, or any further changes that may be in reports, the print media reported that the IOC would waive tens of million in fees, provide a US\$180M advance, and surrender its 20% share of any surplus generated by the Games (Wharton 2017c). The LA28 bid was sold publicly as a great deal as the IOC agreed to increase its contribution to the Games “to as much as \$2 billion” (IOC

2017c). News coverage frequently refers back to the 1984 Olympic, when Olympic organizers turned a profit and were able to keep any surplus from the Games (Wharton 2017b). The LA city council endorsed the bid without updated financial numbers (these numbers were based on LA's 2024 bid), and left many issues unresolved in favor of meeting the 18 August deadline the IOC had set.

One month after the LA City Council meeting, the IOC evaluation commission judged LA to be a suitable 2028 Olympic host: "the Commission equally concludes that the many opportunities presented by an Olympic Games 2028 in Los Angeles would far outweigh any potential risks of awarding the Games 11 years in advance instead of 7 years" (IOC 2017b, p. 13). Two days later, the IOC officially confirmed the selection announcing LA as the 2028 Olympic host (13 September 2017).

### ***1.4.7 LA Perceptions: Results from a 2017 Bid Survey to Planners in Los Angeles***

Polls measuring Angelenos support of a third Olympic Games differed greatly, as the previous section has shown. To get a sense of whether the city would change for the better as boosters have reiterated or more toward the worse as opponents expect, planners in the City of Los Angeles were surveyed at the end of 2017, the year LA won the bid. The LA Section of the American Planning Association administered the survey, which contained questions about experiences planners have had in and with their communities, thoughts they have about the upcoming Olympic Games, and perceived impacts the Olympic bid had on Angelenos and themselves. The survey covered several major issues important for planners, such as housing, transport, public space, health, environment, community development, and so forth. 74 planners responded to the survey, but 42 planners provided valid responses as they filled out the survey completely. NVIVO Plus, a qualitative research software tool, detected a coding pattern. Every sentence was then verified based upon its code, an emergent coding pattern was developed, and the sentences were manually recoded if necessary.

#### *Planners' Positive or Negative Feeling Toward LA2028*

Planners perceive the upcoming Olympics more negatively than positively. Out of the 42 planners who relayed their feelings about LA's 2028 Olympics only seven (#1, 2, 5, 9, 11, 13, 49) expect the Games to have a positive impact. And those who primarily relayed positive sentiments referred to the positive impacts the 1984 Olympics had on Los Angeles. For example, one planner (#13) wrote his enthusiasm: "It's a great thing! The '84 Olympics were *great for the city*: It's been a long time and looking forward to another opportunity to be a host city." This personal statement endorses Olympic booster's catalyzing argument in a sense that planners would support the Olympics if they saw it as a way to use public interest to do things not otherwise possible.

In order to test whether the planners’ demographics influence whether they perceive the Games positively or negatively, the Fisher’s exact test was applied. The Fisher’s exact test can identify relationships for low sample sizes and is similar to the chi-square test of association. When the Fisher’s exact test showed no significance, the Cramer’s test was used to examine whether the sample size was too small to provide valid results.

The age group of respondents was the only time the Fisher’s exact test was significant: the older the populations, the more people supported the Olympic Games. Notably, the fond experiences and memories of the 1984 Games also played a major role in Mayor Garcetti’s and Casey Wasserman’s motivation to bring the Games back to Los Angeles. The age group 55–65—those who were young adults during the 1984 Games—were very supportive of the bid. For employment and household income, the Fisher’s exact test showed no relationship, but the Cramer’s test suggested the planners with more income support the upcoming LA2028 Games more than those with lower incomes. Cramer’s test also suggested that if planners have a job, they are more likely to support the Games. Results did not indicate a relationship of people supporting or opposing the Games based on gender or race.

*Planners Impact Assessment of LA2028 on Los Angeles*

Planners’ primary concerns were the exacerbation of inequality among Angelenos (Fig. 1.1). In particular, planners expect violence against minorities to increase and housing affordability to decrease. As Planner (#68) describes the impact on Los Angeles, “The 2028 Olympics will be a disaster for LA, exacerbating its already horrific housing crisis and further empowering the most murderous police department in the country under the aegis of national security.” Among increasing rents, they listed new platforms, such as Airbnb to allow price hikes during the Olympics, and eviction of long-term, low-income tenants.

Many planners further feared the deviation of resources from local priorities in favor of the Olympic agenda. For example, Planner (#19) believes the Games, “will

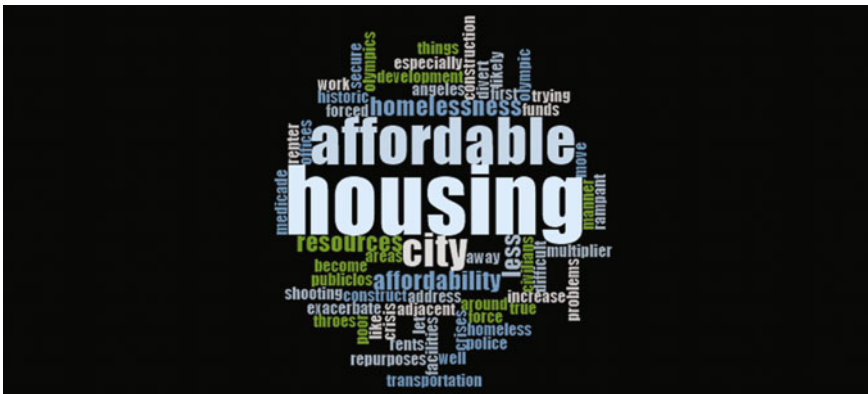


Fig. 1.1 Word cloud of planners impressions of the Los Angeles 2028 Olympic Games

divert resources from all manner of city offices away from where the true crises are: affordable housing, homelessness, police shooting civilians.” These resources, they believe, will land in the hands of rich investors, while taxpayers bear the risk of cost overruns. For example, Planner (#71) comments, “it will be a massive giveaway of public money to already rich investors, while offering crappy temp jobs.” And Planner (#24) adds, “We agreed to cover millions of dollars in cost overages, and those are highly likely. The trickle-down economic benefits for Angelenos will be of an extremely limited nature.”

### *Survey Results*

Planners were asked to rate their perceptions of their working environment (using a scale ranging from very good/good/OK/bad/very bad) during the course of 2017 based on their community, sport, housing, transportation, cultural, and public space experiences. They were subsequently asked whether they believe that impact was due to Los Angeles winning the bid for the 2028 Olympic Games. If responses were not normally distributed or observed responses were not up to five categories, the *Mann-Whitney U test* was used to decide whether the difference in responses between those who responded YES to the evaluation and those who responded NO was significant. If the test showed statistical significance, the raw data were analyzed to decide whether the difference was more or less positive. The median of the YES group was used to determine whether the experiences were better or worse. For the responses that had up to five categories and were normally distributed, the *Levene’s Test for Equality of Variances* was applied to decide whether the variance in the group who responded YES to the evaluation of their experiences differed significantly than the group who responded NO to the evaluation of their experiences. Second, the ordinary t-test or Welch *t-test* of the equality of means (depending on the result of the Levene’s test) was used to decide whether the difference between the two groups was significant. If the tests showed statistical significance, the raw data were compared to decide whether the difference was more or less positive. The mean of the YES group determined whether the experiences were better or worse (Table 1.2).

What remains among planners is the skepticism about what the Olympics would bring to LA. While they observe the bid’s development, they have “yet to be convinced of any benefits that the Olympics would bring to a city like LA. Out of the stated goals, only one of them spoke of any real benefit to the city and its residents.” When cities win bids, news outlets globally broadcast crowds cheering joyfully across the home nation and especially in the soon-to-be host city; however, if this mini survey on experts in planning LA is any indication, this enthusiasm might fade over time. Simply securing the bid immediately launched changes for the future hosting city LA that are perceived poorly.

**Table 1.2** Assessment of the LA28 bid impact on Los Angeles Communities

Category	Subcategory	# Yes/No	Test	Significance
Community experience	Engagement with community	19/13	T-test	Not significant
	Participation	21/11	T-test	Not significant
	Cost of living	23/8	Mann-Whitney U	Not significant
	Social networks	10/14	T-test	Not significant
	Resources availability	16/10	Mann-Whitney U	Significant, worse
Sport experience	Sport facilities	4/14	T-test	Not significant
	Athlete experience	0/12	N/A	N/A
	Interaction sport communities	2/15	Mann-Whitney U	Significant, worse
Public space experience	Cleanliness	6/19	Mann-Whitney U	Significant, worse
	Availability	13/12	Mann-Whitney U	Significant, worse
	Cost of living	19/6	Mann-Whitney U	Not significant
Housing	Value of property	12/11	T-test	Significant, worse
	Availability of housing options	20/7	Mann-Whitney U	Significant, worse
	Quality of housing	14/10	T-test	Significant, worse
	Cost of rent	22/5	Mann-Whitney U	Not significant
Cultural experiences	Cultural opportunities	3/21	Mann-Whitney U	Not significant
	Museums	3/21	Mann-Whitney U	Not significant
	Exhibits	3/20	Mann-Whitney U	Not significant
	Tourism attractions	3/20	Mann-Whitney U	Significant, worse
	Music concerts	2/19	Mann-Whitney U	Not significant
	Art show	3/19	Mann-Whitney U	Significant, worse
Transportation experiences	Access to transport	11/15	T-test	Not significant
	Ease of getting around LA	12/15	Mann-Whitney U	Not significant
Quality of ... infrastructure	General infrastructure	9/16	Mann-Whitney U	Significant, worse
	Metro	10/17	T-test	Not significant
	Light rail/tram	5/17	T-test	Significant, worse
	Heavy rail	6/16	T-test	Significant, worse
	Roads	6/20	Mann-Whitney U	Significant, worse

(continued)

**Table 1.2** (continued)

Category	Subcategory	# Yes/No	Test	Significance
Quality of ... Services	General service	7/19	Mann-Whitney U	Significant, worse
	Bus	6/17	Mann-Whitney U	Significant, worse
	Metro	9/18	Mann-Whitney U	Significant, worse
	Light rail/tram	6/18	Mann-Whitney U	Significant, worse
	Heavy rail	4/20	Mann-Whitney U	Significant, worse

### 1.4.8 LA’s Games Plan as of June 2019

In 2017, one LA24/28 bid committee member had explained in an interview: “over the next couple of years you will see an evolution and transformation of the bid that will make it much stronger.” A budget for the 2028 Olympic bid was to be released on 31 March 2019 along with the 2028 Games Foundation Plan. Both were stipulated in LA28’s Memorandum of Understanding with the City of Los Angeles and with the International Olympic Committee.

#### *Changes to Operations, Infrastructure, and Legacy*

The IOC, however, withdrew the requirement for the 2028 Games Foundation Plan, as a representative of the IOC explained: “after checking with my colleagues of the Olympic Games department, please note that the ‘OG Foundation Plan’ does not exist anymore” (29 April 2019). Instead of a several-hundred page Games Foundation plan—as had been customary for previous Games—the City of Los Angeles received LA28’s annual report for 2019, which is little over three pages in length (excluding appendices). This annual report explains that LA28 completed its transition from a Bidding to an Organizing Committee in 2018, highlights the OCOG’s US\$9M operating budget based on the IOC’s quarterly payments, and the development of a youth sports program (PRR 2019). Casey Wasserman, chair of LA28’s board of directors, argues there is no need for an updated Games concept, as it has remained the same since the 2024 bid submission (Wharton 2019).

The legacy for Angelenos remains in the making, as it has yet to be developed. LA28’s Olympic channels describe Los Angeles as a “blank canvas,” ignoring its rich and complicated history. In the KPMG (2019) report, consultants trained in financial auditing advise: “*Hosting the Games has provided the City with an opportunity to develop its vision to complement the broader public policy objectives that the City has established and capture the benefits it would like to realize for its residents. The vision could leverage how the City wishes to align and promote the City’s Olympic-related activities with broader public policy goals such as tourism and economic development, and realize benefits through legacy related initiatives. KPMG recommends the City, in concert with LA28, fully develop its vision for hosting of the 2028 Games to allow for appropriate resource planning. This will help ensure the City’s vision is complementary to that of LA28 and the visions of the City and LA28 are mutually supportive*” (KPMG 2019, p. 13). KPMG’s advice is to pursue an LA vision

that is “complementary” to the Games and to orchestrate that vision with a private bidding corporation post-bid, all of which many urban mega-event scholars have cautioned against (Kassens-Noor 2012; Müller 2015). Further, KPMG’s suggestions to pursue tourism goals and economic development, also are two Olympic myths scholars have proven to have little to no long-term effect on host cities (Zimbalist 2015). As of 2019, the LA Olympics are an elite-driven Games that will reshape the city through strong neoliberal forces over the next nine years.

#### *LA28’s Final Budget as of April 2019*

KPMG (2019) validated LA28’s balanced US\$6.9B real (2028) dollar budget, which stipulates a perceived increase of US\$1.6B even though most of the changes (86%) in the budget are due to inflation adjustment and the budget’s representation in 2028 (instead of 2016) US\$. KPMG judged the 2028 Games budget to be “reasonable” and “complete” (KPMG 2019, p. 3) while the Games’ venue plan has not changed.

The net-expenses increase of US\$219M includes the costs of the youth sports and sustainability programs, as well as secondary ceremonies. A major change KPMG further noted was the increase in costs for people management due to the four years of additional bidding, which stemmed from the award for the 2028 instead of the 2024 Olympics.

The net-revenues increased by US\$455M due to ticketing and hospitality, which is estimated at US\$2B (KPMG 2019); the revenue increase stems from operational concept novelties, such as the dual opening and closing ceremonies in the LA Memorial Coliseum and the new SoFi Stadium. LA28 also is counting on a 25% increase in domestic sponsorship and donations due to a 2-year additional marketing program.

LA28’s 2019 annual report demonstrates the outsourcing of bidding and planning for the Games from the local to the global. For example, much of the budget is spent on international elite consulting companies, such as Teneo: a top executive strategy advisory firm; John Tibbs Associates: an international relations and communications in sport consultancy; Laundry Service: a digital and social media consultancy; 72nd and Sunny: a global marketing, advertising, and design company, and AECOM, an engineering and infrastructure firm. Notably, AECOM was paid US\$2M in 2018 for the development of the Games master plan, the legacy strategy as well as technical appraisals and inventory projects (PRR 2019). Even though the latter two companies are LA-based, they all constitute global company giants.

As demanded by the IOC, the budget has focused on LA28’s operating expenses; however, many questions on city expenses that are not included in the OCOG budget remain, such as expenses incurred due to accelerated infrastructure investments, and operational and security provisions necessary to run the Games, e.g., equipment and maintenance costs. To summarize the preceding narrative, between 2014 and 2019, the bid books have changed. Table 1.1 highlights these key changes that will have an impact on LA’s legacies. Specifically, the dual ceremony and the Twenty-eight by 28 initiative will have a fundamental impact on the Olympics and on LA. The fact that there still is no official statement on legacies indicates the uncertainty over legacy outcomes.



Table 1.3 summarizes how the LA bid for the 2028 Olympic changed over its bid history. Notably, the budget has increased, no legacies have been defined, Olympic specific investments have been minimized, major transportation initiatives have been tied to the Olympics, and a dual Olympic opening ceremony has been introduced. There are still eight more years left during which changes to the bid will shape LA's legacy after the Summer Olympic Games (Games of the XXXIV Olympiad) to be held from 21 July to 6 August 2028.

## 1.5 Discussion on Planning and Legacies of LA's 2028 Olympics

*Goal: discussion on implications of the LA planning and staging the 2028 Olympics.*

LA28's premise "we have done it before, we can do it again" has been a powerful slogan to secure the bid, but may create challenging legacies for Angelenos. The first part briefly compares the 1932, 1984, and 2028 Olympic Games to provide an overview of the previous three sections and background for the following discussion on planning and legacies of LA's 2028 Olympics. Then, four reasons are discussed that allowed LA28 to win the bidding process of the 2028 Games in the current anti-bid Olympic climate: history has value, LA's bidding process is institutionalized, global elites lead bidding, and LA28 learned from recent bid failures. Finally, the discussion concludes by addressing why Los Angeles might face challenging legacies. It outlines LA28's legacy promises that the two former organizing committees had realized: transformation of the Olympic and Los Angeles brand, creation of unparalleled athlete experiences, and minimization of urban changes.

### 1.5.1 Comparing the Three Los Angeles Olympics

For every Olympic bid Los Angeles has ever won, the city was the sole bidder for the Summer Games that Olympiad. Each time LA won, the bid boosters wielded power over the decision-making process. In 1923, Los Angeles was an unknown remote city in the eyes of the IOC. Local elites without a legitimate political stance secured the Games on the premise they would put LA on the world's map, increase tourism, and establish the city as the headquarters of American sports (Riess 1981). In 1978, Los Angeles was the only city that dared propose to host the Olympic Games after the financial disaster of the Montreal Games that left US\$1.6B debt to local taxpayers. In 2017, the IOC's desperate need to find bidders awarded simultaneously two cities the right to host the Games as bidding cities dropped their bids due to local opposition and declining public opinion. Table 1.4 provides an overview of the similarities and differences between the three LA Olympics.

**Table 1.3** Exemplary differences between Los Angeles’ bids for 2024/2028 Olympics

	Initial bid (2015)	IOC nomination (2017)	Awarded bid (as of Oct 2019)
Budget	US\$4.52B (December 2014), US\$4.67B (August 2015)	No total budget given (Stage 2) US\$5.3B (December 2016) US\$5.325B (2017, Stage 3)	US\$6.9B (2028 dollars)
Legacy	Withheld	LA: alignment to existing plans long-term economic, social, environmental, and sporting benefits Olympic movement: new imagery	No official statement on legacy released
Goals/Promises	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Reinvent the experience for the Olympic family</li> <li>Create the most successful, modern, and sustainable games</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Deliver the ultimate experience for athletes</li> <li>Refresh the Olympic brand</li> <li>Use almost exclusively existing and temporary stadia</li> <li>Tell inspiring stories about the games</li> </ul>	Host a new Games for a new era that benefit our communities and connect the Olympic and Paralympic movements to a new era
Venues	31	31	Id
% existing venues	85%	97%	Id
% newly built	15%	3%	Id
Clusters	Downtown; Valley; Coastal; South Bay; <i>Hollywood</i>	Downtown; Valley; Coastal; South Bay	Id
Opening Closing Ceremonies	Coliseum (US\$500M renovation)	Two stadia: SoFi Stadium & Coliseum (US\$270M renovation)	Id
Media Village & Main Press Center	New studio and office facilities on NBC Universal’s Studio Lot	Id	Id
Transport investments	US\$88.4B in transport infrastructure	US\$300B in transport infrastructure, Twenty-eight by 28 initiative	Id
Olympic village	Newly built (downtown)	UCLA campus, existing dormitories	Id

*Note* Comparisons according to bid books and updates to LA28 website and LA28 annual report (2019)

**Table 1.4** Overview of Los Angeles planning approaches and legacies

	1932	1984	2028
Bids prior to winning	1924, 1928	1948, 1952 and 1956 (IOC), 1960, 1964, 1968, 1972, 1976, 1980 (USOC)	2012, 2016, 2024
Competition	Only bid city	Only bid city	Only bid city
Bid planning	9 years	6 years	11 years
Games schedule	30 July–14 August	28 July–12 August	21 July–6 August
Scope and scale of the games	117 events, ~1300 athletes 14 sports, 15 venues	221 events, ~6,800 athletes 21 sports, 28 venues (8 not modernized)	302 events, ~10,500 athletes 28 sports, 31 venues
Shaping LA & Olympic brand	LA on the World map. Olympics as movie set	Commercialization, Games as a business	Sustainable LA, Refresh Olympic brand
Games budget	~US1M	~US\$400 M	US\$6.9B (2019)
Profit	~\$US1.5 M	~\$US232.5 M	\$US500M expected
Public referendum	California voters approved \$US1M bond	Voters prohibited any capital expenditures for Games (1978)	public opinion polls; Opaqueness: no referendum, no votes,
Host City contract	Not existent	Not signed	Signed
Financial liability	California	USOC	LA28
Athlete experience	Attract athletes to LA	Television urbanism	Ultimate athlete experience
Viewership	1.25 million spectators	7 million tickets sold	3.6 billion globally
Legacies	SCCOG	LA84	TBD
Urban changes	minimal	minimal	New public transit system
Olympic village (athlete housing)	Baldwin Hills (new/temp)	3 villages (UCLA, UCSD, USC)	UCLA
Media village	N/A	UCLA	USC

(continued)

**Table 1.4** (continued)

	1932	1984	2028
New stadia	Swimming pool, rowing facility, cycling track	Olympic swim stadium (USC), Olympic velodrome (CSUDH)	Temporary
Transport infrastructure needed	Cars/shuttles	Bus stations/busses	US\$,300B public transit (already planned)

*Sources* See previous sections

### 1.5.2 Why LA is Hosting the 2028 Olympic Games

Four reasons allowed Los Angeles to win its third Olympic bid.

*History matters: The “we have done it before, we can do it again” Premise.*

Los Angeles' history with the Olympics was a quintessential factor in securing the Games for Los Angeles a third time. The premise “we have done it before, we can do it again” enabled bid boosters to convince the IOC that LA was capable of rejuvenating the Olympic brand once again. One LA24/28 bid committee member explains, “L.A. was very successful in 1984 and the IOC remembers that fondly.” Both in 1932 and 1984, Los Angeles saved the Olympics when the city, who had dared to bid for the Games at a time when no one else would, set unprecedented benchmarks in rejuvenating the Olympic brand as a profitable enterprise, as the premier global event, and as a desirable local endeavor.

LA2028's slogan “we have done it before we can do it again” effectively disabled local skepticism over the Olympic Games that had effectively ended 13 Olympic bids of other aspiring host cities over the past five years. Los Angeles was able to sell the Olympic idea to locals, because cost overruns, the most frequent counter-Olympic argument, had never happened in LA. LA's opposition further was effectively disabled due to the stop & go for bidding (when LA emerged as the nominee after Boston's bid failure) and awarding of the Games (when the IOC awarded the 24/28 Games simultaneously). Endorsement for LA's bid from Boston's vivid anti-bid activists sealed the deal. The chances for any referenda were further disabled as bid boosters used the Mayor's popularity to overrule any IOC concerns over the Games and counted on LA's infamous reputation of political apathy. Thus, boosters did not engage in the battle for public opinion that had made other bid cities fail (Hiller and Wanner 2019).

*Los Angeles' Institutionalization of the Bidding Process*

Los Angeles was able to develop its bid and pass legislation with an unprecedented speed because bidding in LA has been institutionalized. Even though Mayor Garcetti and sports and marketing executive Casey Wasserman ran the bidding effort, SCCOG holds and has held experience in how to develop a bid for decades. Thus, asking for financial proof, political support, and venue commitments is an institutionalized process enabled through extensive global and local networks, existing Olympic knowledge, business-as-usual attitude, and common practice over the years. While all other US cities assemble the required documents from scratch, in LA these documents are readily available and, ensuring they get signed on time, just a phone call away. Bidding reflected boosters' ability to ask officials with the phrase: *they* have done it previously, can *you* just do it again; thus, securing financial guarantees in vastly different financial times presented minor hurdles in LA's most recent bid. Similarly, securing council votes on a whim without proper review of changed circumstances, e.g., four-year extension, was possible as city leaders felt they had done it before and were successful in doing so.

### *Global Elites Bid*

Los Angeles has become a platform for global elites to bid and organize the Olympic Games. International private-sector tycoons lead the bidding committee in support of LA winning the Games. For example, Bill Hanway, Executive Vice President & Global Sports Leader at AECOM, served as the Director of Venues and Infrastructure during the bid. Global elites also lead the planning of the Games. For example, Gene Sykes, who was the Global Co-head of Mergers and Acquisitions and Chairman of Global Technology, Media & Telecommunications and Investment Banking for Goldman Sachs, serves as LA24/LA28 CEO since 2017. Similarly, Carla Callans, who worked for AEG for over a decade, is now Director of Operations at LA 2028. The trend of global elites to dictate the Olympic Games arguably started with the IOC's establishment of its TOP sponsorship program in 1985. These global elites boast extensive experience and involvement in previous Games such as Lenny Abbey, the current director of LA 2028, who had worked in Rio and London.

Global elites sell well-known Olympic practices to locals as unique. For example, the head of metro proudly said a novelty of the Games would be that Olympic spectators would use only public transport to attend the Games, when in fact, this has been an implemented practice since the Sydney 2000 Games. Global elites also used their expertise to blindside local decision-makers. For example, LA28—the only possible organization that could become liable for cost overruns as per the MOU (PRR 2017)—will simply cease to exist the moment the Games end.

In contrast, the previous Los Angeles Games were firmly in the hands of local elites. Los Angeles 1932 was financed and driven by the 8-man Community Development Association that wielded tremendous power through their wealth and had control over the Olympic narrative through their newspaper ownership (Riess 1981). The 1984 Games became known as the model for boosters to pursue a pro-growth, consumption-based local agenda (Burbank et al. 2001).

### *Learning from Bid Failure in Current Global Political Climate of Bidding*

Los Angeles had the distinct advantage of being able to learn from Boston 2024's bid failure. As anti-Olympic movements challenged Boston's Olympic bid, three main reasons why locals opposed the bid emerged: opaqueness in decision-making process, no specific local legacies, and budgets likely to lead to cost overruns. Boston shifted its planning approach to involve stakeholders, identify specific legacies, and provide accurate cost details as a response to opposition (Kassens-Noor and Lauermaun 2017). While many scholars (Hiller 2020; Müller 2015) have argued that transparency is key in democratic countries to allow for bidding, LA and USOC approached bidding in the opposite manner. Boston's lead USOC consultant worked with LA's bidding committee, even before Boston's bid failed. What LA's bid boosters saw was a Boston bid that locals were able to destroy once bid details became transparent. LA28 approached bidding with secrecy: the bid remained an elite-driven process; the bid did not make any claims about legacies by withholding that section from public view; LA24/28 waited to release budgets as long as possible; and the IOC canceled the 2028 Games Foundation plan (original release date on 31 March 2019). Concerns

are fended off with LA32 & LA84 arguments, “we have done it before, we can do it again.” Bid boosters emphasized the city’s experience in bidding, LA politicians who had high approval ratings, the LA84 Foundation as proof of a viable, living legacy, and two previous Games that had turned a surplus. Responding to inquiries into the Games’ plans, LA28 insisted that the Games’ concept has not changed despite the most recent (2019) budget increase of ~US\$500M.

### ***1.5.3 Why LA Might Face Problematic Legacies***

While the previous section provided arguments that enabled Los Angeles to win the bid, the following section questions the premise “we have done it before we can do it again” in the context of legacies given the changes in the Olympic hosting context. The idea that the Olympic Games are a vehicle to drive existing strategies and catalyze local priorities seems appealing, yet might come with hidden and unanticipated costs to Angelenos and future hosts.

#### *Shaping the Olympic & LA Brand*

The IOC is hoping that the LA Games will reignite Olympic passion and stimulate more bids for the Olympic Games in the future; however, this expected legacy may be problematic, because LA did not improve the bidding process that had made bids in democratic countries fail (Kassens-Noor and Laueremann 2018; Laueremann and Vogelpohl 2017; Oliver and Laueremann 2017). Instead, LA’s 2028 stop & go process made bidding extremely opaque, while future bidders have yet to learn and understand how to engage meaningfully with the public to propose bids that carry democratic legitimacy. Los Angeles is essentially the right place to bid and has won bids at the right time in its history to emerge as the savior of the Olympic brand. Los Angeles has the infrastructure, the expertise, huge private-sector resources, and proof of viable legacies. Very few—if any—cities in the world can claim to have the same. While LA has saved the Olympic brand in the past, this time it may save the International Olympic Committee by allowing it years of breathing room to rethink its strategy and expectations for the Olympic Games.

#### *Create Athlete Experience*

The long Olympic bidding period allowed LA to develop novel plans, which the competitive Olympic award process encourages (McBride 2016). Arguing for an improved athlete experience between the initial bid and the submitted bid books, LA28 proposed two (instead of one) venues to host the Olympic Opening and Closing Ceremonies. This change requires two venues with 80,000+ seating capacities, according to IOC requirements. While the Coliseum has no chance of turning into a white elephant as it has been consistently used since 1923, the new SoFi Stadium that is now planned as the second venue to host both ceremonies has all the makings of a humongous white elephant. Legacy-wise, the new SoFi Stadium already is slated to be the most expensive stadium in US history. In moving the Olympic timeline from

2024 to 2028, technology installed today likely will have to be upgraded. The stadium's size and its rapid cost-escalation have the makings of white elephant legacies. Even though two NFL-teams have claimed the arena as their new home, the risk of the Rams relocating persists, "LA didn't seem to care that much when it didn't have an NFL team for 21 years before the Rams returned in 2016" (Schrotenboer 2019).

The Olympic stadium has in many host cities turned into a white elephant after the Games were over, most notably the Bird's Nest of Beijing. The idea to link the new privately owned SoFi Stadium to the Olympics is opposite from what the 1932 and 1984 venues did: these were purpose built or updated for local colleges. In contrast, the SoFi Stadium is supposed to be an economic stimulator for the city of Inglewood; however, many times in Olympic history this strategy failed. For example, Atlanta lost its main tenant of its Centennial Olympic Stadium to the suburbs when the city would not provide the upgrades the baseball team demanded. Further, adding the stadium to LA28's operational plans constitutes the danger of an operational legacy that future Olympic bidders may attempt to repeat.

Technology will remain LA's Olympic wild card, as the technology budget may not suffice to cover technology costs. Innovations will be a driving factor as LA's Metro's director explains: "Now that we have this extra time, there may be all these other innovations that are going to happen that we need to be accountable for." Tokyo's Olympic technology will be the most innovative in Olympic history (Kassens-Noor and Fukushima 2018). Providing similar operating conditions for the technology will be very cost intensive for LA given the necessary infrastructure to accommodate arising technological inventions like autonomous cars.

### *Implement Urban Changes (Stadia/Transport)*

With the use of existing and temporary venues, LA28's main argument centered on *not* leaving any white elephants. While concerns linger over the SoFi Stadium, LA's plan to link the Olympics with an accelerated transportation construction program through the Twenty-eight by 28 initiative causes risks. LA32 and LA84 worked off of a bare-bones plan with existing infrastructure (highways) and solved the Olympic transport challenge with sophisticated transport management (Giuliano 1988), requiring little to no capital expenditure on infrastructure projects. In contrast, LA28's bid boasts the US\$300B LA initiative to build its new public transportation system. The mega-project transport literature has extensively warned of cost overruns, especially those accelerated through mega-events as the pressure to finish on time comes at the expense of costs and sometimes even safety (Dimitriou et al. 2013; Kassens-Noor et al. 2018; McBride 2016). Thus, LA might burn through its tax dollars raised through Measure M and R faster than anticipated. The exclusion of the non-OGOC budget will prevent tracking these hidden expenses.

Implementing urban changes with the allocated budget carries a continued risk of additional inflation. This adds to the complication that the long lag time between bidding and hosting the Games can inflate local costs (McBride 2016).



## 1.6 Conclusion

*Goal: planning recommendations to remedy potentially negative legacies.*

Los Angeles is a unique Olympic city. The 1932 Olympics introduced Los Angeles and the Games to worldwide audiences. The 1984 Los Angeles Olympic Games stands as the most profitable in history when LA revitalized the flagging Olympic Movement to keep the Olympics relevant in the twenty-first century. Perhaps for these reasons, the 1984 Games were arguably the most important event in the history of the modern Olympic Movement (Llewellyn et al. 2015). LA28 attempts to repeat its 1932 and 1984 history through the commercialization of the Games, introducing novel concepts to increase revenue from global broadcasts and marketing in an attempt to cover the ever-increasing expenses.

In doing so, however, Los Angeles is slated to go into the neoliberal “state of exception” to enable Olympic preparations and staging (Gaffney 2010; Müller 2015). As currently planned, the 2028 Olympic will whitewash Los Angeles over the next eight years. This neoliberal Olympic concept is problematic, as anti-Olympic opposition has arisen exactly because of the nature of funding and unequal distribution of Olympic benefits. As such, the Los Angeles Games will not change the current bidding climate as the challenge does not lie in convincing political elites to globalize (as was the case in 1932) or pursue the Games for profit (as was the case in 1984), but in convincing the local populations to support Olympic bids on the merits of their legacies. Thus, LA may not be capable of serving as an example for future Olympics that other cities can emulate, but rather as one that drew from its unique circumstances.

Only if and when the Olympic Games create desirable, long-lasting Games’ legacies for Angelenos, can the Olympic brand be saved. Thus, LA’s mantra “we have done it before, we can do it again” was ideal for make-believe bidding, but will be insufficient to secure a lasting positive legacy either for LA or for the IOC. The current model of bidding and staging is built upon an utopian vision, which proposes that physical changes to the Olympics will lead to social change. This 18/19<sup>th</sup> century way of utopian thinking is well known in the urban planning profession to miserably fail.

To change the current path of LA28 Olympic legacy planning, LA’s government and LA28 must prove to the world that the Games can alleviate or even remedy a city’s greatest struggles. Both should provide funds now and continuously over the next eight years—similar to those set aside for youth sports—to create legacies for the most vulnerable Angelenos. Funds should be dedicated to support the homeless, ease the housing crisis, and ensure just and fair policing. The Olympics thus far have never been (and could not be) a silver bullet to remedy local concerns. Yet, they must to survive the anti-Olympic climate. If LA finds a way to use the Olympics to solve its urban social problems, it will not only save the Olympic brand, but also become a role model for other cities to use similar strategies. With the impending climate crisis that triggers mass migration and unprecedented poverty, cities must find solutions

to take care of its most vulnerable residents. Why not make the Olympics a tool and LA a poster child for solving urban crises?

LA's city government, LA28, and the IOC in unison can make the Games solve urban social problems if basic assumptions and rules get overturned, e.g., money should not be spent exclusively on sports, but in the spirit of the Olympic movement reaching beyond sports to enable its broader mission of placing "sports at the service of humankind." This spirit has to become the pretext for any and all Olympic-related decisions. For example, instead of arguing for more hotels to solve the looming shortage for Olympic visitors, the Olympic spirit argument is to find all Angelenos a permanent place to live before the Olympics. The Olympics have been a game for the rich and powerful. They still are but need to transform to survive by setting a precedent for the redistribution of wealth with new political and personal morals that improve local liveability instead of global fame.

The legacy of LA28 will be that the Olympics fundamentally altered the narrative of the city of reinvention, Los Angeles. The *how* can still be changed.

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