

Design and Construction Group Five Minute Briefing

TITLE	Changing the Game: 7 REASONS TO BID (and not worry about the result)
AUTHOR	Economist and analyst Andy Preece
BRIEFING	
<p>Bidding for major sporting events can catalyze regeneration and help cities figure out their long-term futures — even if their bids are unsuccessful.</p> <p>The experiences of Barcelona, Vancouver and, most recently, London, are proof that the Olympic Games can deliver positive long-term benefits for their host cities. As well as first-class sports venues, these cities can now boast better transport, more housing and boosted economies as a result of hosting the Games.</p> <p>In many cases, the bidding stage helped embed the idea of an enduring legacy into preparations. Masterplans and development strategies created during the bid can help set objectives and fast-track urban regeneration.</p> <p>Yet for all of those other candidate cities, the clever thinking and strategic planning wrapped up in their bid vanishes once the host is announced. It can be costly too. Tokyo reportedly spent US\$150 million on its 2020 Olympic bid. Boston has allocated a stated budget of approximately US\$75 million for its bid for the 2024 Games, which is currently in progress.</p> <p>Does it have to be like this? What if there was a way to deliver some of the benefits outlined in a bid, and gain some return on investment, whatever the outcome? The Mayor of Boston, Martin J. Walsh, recently said in relation to the city’s 2024 Olympic bid: “Whether you oppose or support the Games ... we can all agree that having a two-year, public conversation about the future of our great city is a good thing”.</p> <p>Seen this way, bidding for major sporting events is a way for candidate cities to clarify their vision for the future, whether they are awarded the Games or not. While ‘bidding to fail’ is unlikely to be a supportable policy, cities should think carefully how long-term legacy plans contained in their bids could be unlocked, should there be another name in the envelope on announcement day. Here are seven solid reasons why bidding for international sporting events is a good idea for applicant cities, regardless of whether they go on to host them.</p> <p>1. BIDDING RAISES YOUR INTERNATIONAL PROFILE</p> <p>Simply bidding for any global event immediately raises the international profile of a city. London’s bid for the 2012 Olympics positioned it as a global sporting leader with a long history of excellence well before it was announced as the winner. Other cities, especially those lesser known, can learn from what London achieved at the bid stage.</p> <p>2. IT ADDS FOCUS</p> <p>Formulating a bid forces candidate cities to identify their own goals for success. Even if a bid is not successful, these metrics are important milestones — a roadmap of sorts — for future development. There are rarely significant reasons to abandon this long-term vision just because the</p>	

city did not win. The cost of bidding for a major event can be a point of contention, especially with local people and communities. If they can see that there are benefits to the city even from a failed bid, it may even be easier to gain their support at an early stage.

3. IT IS A CATALYST FOR TRANSFORMATION

The 'catalytic' effect on urban transformation derived from hosting a global event starts from the earliest moments of bid formation. This is the reason that researchers from the University of California found that unsuccessful bids to host the Olympics had an impact on trade every bit as significant as the effect of actually hosting the Games.

4. IT BRINGS PEOPLE TOGETHER

Bidding for a global event means that city, regional and national authorities have to work together to create a cohesive urban development and event logistics plan. Doing this helps cement working relationships between tiers of government and improve management processes for complex, citywide schemes. All of this gives cities an invaluable head start in planning and delivering urban development programmes, helping to mobilize people, institutions and private-sector partners effectively.

5. IT LAYS THE FOUNDATIONS FOR REGENERATION

The scale of most international events means that venue development plans need to be drawn up well in advance. As well as the bid setting out budget projections and long-term usage, sites and land will be assembled and prepared before the outcome is known. With this hard work already done, candidate cities should consider how building these venues could stimulate participation and drive regeneration, even without a major event.

6. IT FAST-TRACKS CITY DEVELOPMENT PLANS

As well as improving collaboration, a bid can unblock development projects mired in bureaucracy and local infighting. The need to hit fixed bid deadlines helps the city achieve a disciplined and rapid progress that would not have been possible without this external pressure.

Athens' bid for the 2004 Olympics, for example, helped the city resolve deeply contentious issues around building regulations and improve air quality. These had been cited as reasons for a previous bid failing and the authorities knew that they had to resolve these problems before the International Olympic Committee would take another one seriously. This gave the Athenian authorities the courage and momentum they needed to follow through with their plans for reform.

7. IT SOWS THE SEEDS FOR FUTURE SUCCESS

Finally, bidding for but not winning an event can yield constructive criticism of a city's proposals that allow and encourage it to bid successfully another time. Pyeongchang in South Korea bid three times for the Winter Olympics before it finally won the right to host the event in 2018. Although success is never guaranteed, an initial bid may be used as a prerequisite to build experience and develop important relationships, giving future attempts a better chance of winning.

"Hosting the 1992 Olympic games 'totally transformed' Barcelona, according to the city's mayor, Xavier Trias."

"A bid can unlock projects mired in bureaucracy and local infighting, achieving progress that would not have been possible without that external pressure."