# ST. LOUIS OLYMPIC LEGACY COMMITTEE

**Olympic City:** St. Louis  
**Country:** United States of America  
**Edition of the Games:**  
1904 Olympic Summer Games

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## HOW LEGACY GOVERNANCE STARTED IN ST. LOUIS

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<th>WHEN</th>
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<td>Since 2018</td>
<td>St. Louis &amp; St. Louis area</td>
<td><a href="http://www.stlouis1904legacy.org">www.stlouis1904legacy.org</a></td>
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As the city that hosted America’s First Olympic Games, the birthplace of the Olympic Gold Medal, and the city that debuted Olympic diving, freestyle wrestling, boxing, and the decathlon, among many other firsts, St. Louis has as a goal to ignite or re-ignite the passion and Olympic spirit throughout the...
As a Member of the World Union of Olympic Cities and St. Louis’ representative to the United States Olympic Committee and the International Olympic Committee, the St. Louis Sports Commission’s goal is to inspire awareness and pride in St. Louis’ Olympic affiliation, and to positively impact St. Louis through its opportunities as an Olympic City.

In February 2018, the St. Louis Sports Commission unveiled its plans to raise the profile and impact of its region’s involvement in the Olympic Movement. The plans include initiatives to visibly identify the venues that hosted Olympic events in 1904. Two Olympic “spectaculars” – sculptures of the Olympic rings – will be displayed at sites that are historically linked to the 1904 Games. The first one was unveiled in September 2018 at Washington University, home to the 1904 Olympic Stadium and birthplace of the Olympic gold medal. The spectacular is located on the northeast corner of Francis Field, the oldest modern-day Olympic Stadium in active use.

A site for the second spectacular will be chosen in a near future. To emphasize the historical significance of former Olympic places as well as to invite people to interact with and feel part of the Olympic Movement, interpretive signage will be installed featuring each venue’s role in the 1904 Games along with notable facts and stories. Each sign will include an IOC-approved stamp that incorporates the Olympic rings and has been specifically designed for St. Louis’ Olympic legacy programme. Complementing the spectaculars and signage initiatives will be grassroots programmes and educational platforms intended to engage the entire community, especially young people, in Olympism. A dedicated website has also been developed, that highlights the history, innovations and relevance of the 1904 Olympics, and provides information about the Olympic legacy project. Last but not least, by setting up a structured Olympic Legacy Committee, the St. Louis Sports Commission provides the necessary means and human resources as well as the sustainability and the time required for the project to achieve its objectives: to properly embrace and celebrate St. Louis’ Olympic Legacy, carry this torch for future generations and boost opportunities for the City and the region. Olympians and Paralympic athletes have been closely associated with the institution and the project and play a tremendous role in promoting the vision and the mission of the St. Louis Olympic Legacy Committee.

**VISION**

The project is clearly inscribed within the IOC Agenda 2020 vision and the affiliation of St. Louis with the World Union of Olympic Cities.

**Legacy is...**

“As host of the 1904 Games and as America’s first Olympic city, St. Louis is in exclusive company, forever having a place at an international table that includes the world’s greatest cities. Our region’s role in the Olympic Movement is something to celebrate, and we want to make a transformative difference in St. Louis through the opportunities we have as an Olympic city.” Frank Viverito, St. Louis Sports Commission President.

**What’s next?**

The objectives of the St. Louis Olympic Legacy Committee will be carried out through a multi-phase project that aims to ignite the
community’s imagination around the Olympic spirit. The first phase of the project – installation of the Olympic spectacular and interpretive signage – is currently being implemented. Other elements – hosting events, producing grassroots programming, developing educational platforms – will be ongoing.

OBJECTIVES

Celebrate Olympism and its values

Through visible signs displayed in the City as well as programmes dedicated to promoting the Olympic Spirit among the population, particularly its youth, St. Louis reconnects with its Olympic history and generates social cohesion and pride. Educational programmes are designed to engage the community in Olympism. Beyond embodying the Olympic Spirit, the Olympic rings are a timeless global symbol of unity and achievement. They will inspire the region to think more globally and thoughtfully about each other, and come together as a community to achieve great things. "Meet me at the rings" will surely become part of the region’s vocabulary! The participation of Olympians within the project is a lively testimony of the Olympic spirit being spread around. The St. Louis Olympic Legacy Committee hopes to use the spirit of innovation exhibited at the 1904 Games as a model to move its community ahead.

Promote the City by leveraging its affiliation with the Olympic Movement

The St. Louis Olympic Legacy Committee contributes to the promotion of the City and the region, not only by looking at the glorious Olympic past but also by using the status of Olympic City as a door-opener for the future! As being an Olympic City is an asset, the organisation aims to generate greater understanding of the value and relevance associated with the region’s place in Olympic history. The St. Louis Sports Commission and its Olympic Legacy Committee also are focused on pursuing future Olympic events that can have significant impact on the community. These include Olympic Trials, national governing body championships, torch relays and other special events, and connecting with the 2028 Olympics in Los Angeles. In April 2019, St. Louis was awarded the 2020 U.S. Olympic Team Trials – Gymnastics.
PRACTICAL INFORMATION

Internal & External Stakeholders

St. Louis Olympic Legacy Committee
St. Louis Sports Commission / St. Louis Sports Foundation

Washington University
Forest Park Forever
St. Louis County Parks
Missouri History Museum
Glen Echo Country Club

Municipalities and governmental entities, St. Louis metro area

Finance and Cost

100% private funds

The initiatives of the St. Louis Olympic legacy project are funded through private donations. Much of the funding needed to implement the project’s first phase was raised thanks to a lead gift from the Interco Charitable Trust.

Use of the Olympic Brand

Sustainably featuring the Olympic Rings is part of the whole project of the St. Louis Olympic Legacy Committee. The IOC has granted permission to display two major spectacles of the Olympic Rings at the venues where the 1904 Summer Games took place.

Human Resources and Time

The St. Louis Olympic Legacy Project is managed and implemented by the staff of the St. Louis Sports Commission and through its volunteer St. Louis Olympic Legacy Committee. The initiative is a priority of the Sports Commission, and therefore receives significant staff time and attention. Likewise, engaged volunteer participation is critical. The time, talent, resources and relationships shared by its volunteer committee has propelled the project forward.

EVALUATION

The management structure has been set up in 2018. It is already a success in itself to be able to mobilise so many people and partners around this project, including Olympians. The approval of the project by the IOC in terms of use of the Olympic properties or brand for non-commercial purposes is also an evidence of success.

Going forward, a key measurement of the initiative’s success will be the level of community engagement and awareness. The Sports Commission aims to achieve greater regional, national and international understanding of St. Louis’ role in the Olympic Movement – as well as the ways the St. Louis Games changed the Olympics for the better. Active participation numbers will also be indicators of success, particularly for grassroots events and activities. For instance, it is the Sports Commission’s goal to eventually have 1,904 young people from the region run the 1904 Olympic stadium track with Jackie Joyner-Kersee and other area Olympians every Olympic Day. An ultimate measure of success will be to what extent the Olympic
legacy initiative can unite and inspire St. Louisans, and encourage them to strive for the Olympic ideals.

KEY CHALLENGES

The most distant legacy

Of all Olympic cities, St. Louis actually has the most distant Olympic legacy. That’s because even though St. Louis was the III Olympiad, the previous host cities – Athens and Paris – hosted another Summer Games since 1904. The St. Louis Games predated the introduction of the famous five Olympic Rings. The emblem that represents the 1904 Games is the logo of the World’s Fair, which coincided with the Olympics in St. Louis. So because its Games were so long ago, St. Louis lacks the marks, commemoration spaces and organizational infrastructure retained by most other Olympic cities. From a historical standpoint, there are many misconceptions about the St. Louis Games. Among the St. Louis Olympic Legacy Committee’s goals is to separate fact from fiction and highlight the ways the St. Louis Games changed the Olympics for the better.

Negotiating the use of the Olympic Brand with the IOC

Because the 1904 Olympics predated the existence of the rings, St. Louis previously did not have the ability to use the symbol.

Collaborating with the IOC, with support from the WUOC and guided by Agenda 2020, the Sports Commission obtained permission to include a stamp incorporating the rings and “Site of the Olympic Games” on approved historical signage and markers. This permission was the culmination of several years working collaboratively with the IOC and WUOC to share St. Louis’ vision and proposed initiatives, and to determine acceptable steps that could be taken. On September 28, 2018, St. Louis’ first Olympic Spectacular was unveiled at Washington University, site of the Olympic Games, as part of a special ceremony featuring area Olympians and 1968 Decathlon gold medallist Bill Toomey.

Focusing on the future; not living in the past

In St. Louis, people sometimes lament that the community is too tied to its history and not forward-thinking enough. So the Olympic Legacy Project needs to overcome a potential perception that it plays into the region “living in the past.” Much effort has been undertaken to present the initiative as forward-focused. It is still critical that St. Louis embraces and celebrates its history – especially as it relates to the Olympics, something so unique and significant. And the venues, history and stories surrounding the 1904 Games need to be promoted and celebrated in a much more visible way. But to make the initiative even more impactful, the Sports Commission emphasizes that St. Louis should be recognized as an Olympic city (once an Olympic city, always an Olympic city!). It also highlights the idea that St. Louis’ Olympic legacy can be a catalyst to pursue and attract future opportunities connected to the Olympic Movement. Taken together, this all can have an enduring impact, enhancing the region’s quality of life and generating economic and social benefit.
KEY LEARNINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Create a long-lasting structure dedicated to managing legacy
The presence of high-level volunteers who have a passion for the Olympics and their community plus strong civic relationships can make a tremendous difference in the ability to be successful.

Mobilise Olympians and Paralympic athletes
Athletes are the lively evidence of what can be achieved through sport. The St. Louis Sports Commission managed to involve local athletes who have a national and international dimension. Athletes are best positioned to talk to the youth, teach the sense of effort, transmit Olympic values and play as role models. The celebration of the 2018 Olympic Day is a great example of the mobilisation of Olympians and Paralympic athletes at the service of the community.

Link the past and the future
Activating legacy goes far beyond looking backwards and talk about old times. Stories are used to build new memories, create local cohesion and mobilise people.

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