

OLYMPIC LEVERAGE

Using the Olympics as a Catalyst for Urban Development in Detroit

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THESIS STATEMENT

The Olympic Games, on the surface, are seen as a spectacle for international competition that leave behind destruction in host cities that can never be recovered. Unusable stadiums and a debt that can never be repaid are a few common phrases that have represented the Olympic Games in recent times. The Olympic Games in Barcelona cost the city \$9 billion, left them \$6 billion in debt but has revamped the city into one of the most traveled cities in Europe because of the infrastructure improvements and developments brought on by the Olympic Games. This negative connotation does not capture the intent of the Olympic Games. It is therefore important to understand what is happening with the Olympic Games in current times, and how planning for the Olympics can lead to long term growth for host cities. The Olympic Games bring funding and deadlines for major projects that would not be possible without the Olympics. These projects can include updating old public transit or investing in new forms of public transit,

new development projects that will develop new hot spots in different parts of the city, changing the image of a particular part of the city or the city as a whole through the Olympic Games being in the city, and any other challenges that can arise from a host city, the Olympic Games can be a catalyst in solving those challenges. This thesis is intended to not only look at what the Olympics can do but is also a critique of what has been done in the past.

Using Detroit as a site, we can analyze a city that in recent years has started to see growth in development projects bringing in a new outlook on the city of Detroit. Detroit has many challenges including a lack of substantial public transportation with a lack of direct transit to the international airport, an over-dominant downtown district, vacant homes and lots, flooding and stormwater management, and an image from outsiders that portray Detroit as a dangerous and desolate city. The Olympic Games being held in Detroit can be a catalyst to

INTRODUCTION



Introduction

The Olympics are a spectacle unlike no other, bringing millions of people from around the world to one city to experience the very pinnacle of sports and entertainment. The Olympics are an amazing spectacle of entertainment but there has been a trend in Olympic city selection to favor Olympic bids that show extensive glamor to the event of the Olympics. Rather than selecting cities that are trying to show off, cities should be selected if they are leveraging the Olympics to better major challenges in their city. Many Olympics in recent years have been heavily criticized due to the lack of Olympic Legacy planning, the idea of what happened post-Olympics. How can a city plan a great Olympics along with leveraging the event to grow and benefit the city?

The Olympics have always been about the spectacle, the glory and the glamor. The International Olympic Committee(IOC) has been committed to making the Olympics more sustainable yet decides to choose host cities that showcase the greatest spectacle without regard to how the spectacle is created and how it will affect the host city and its citizens. This lack of Olympic Legacy planning has caused major issues regarding the Olympics questioning if the event is even worth it anymore.

Global Scale of the Olympics

The Olympics are an event of immense scale, bringing in over 10,000,000 spectators, 10,500 athletes from 206 countries. This does not take into account the billions of people who tune into the Olympics through televised broadcasts. The Olympics are the greatest example of international camaraderie that must be rethought to ensure the sustainability of the event keeps happening in the future.

Inside Detroit Venues

This thesis investigation will explore the idea of Olympic Legacy planning through the case study of Detroit. The goal of this thesis is to benefit the host city completely. Although many Olympics spread out past the boundaries of the host city, this thesis will stay within the boundaries of Detroit to solely benefit the city.

Intent of Reuse

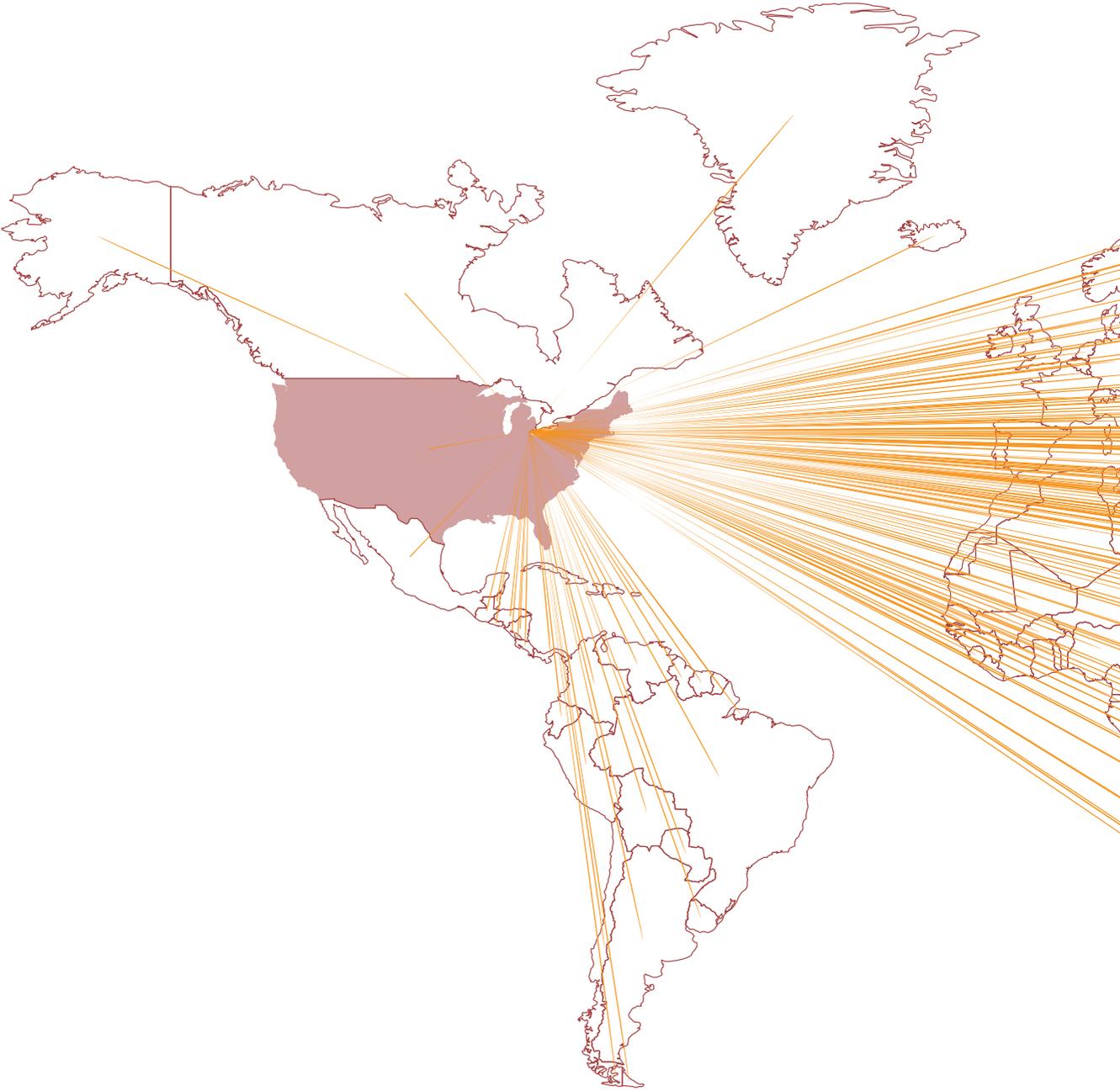
The goal of this thesis is to limit the amount of new construction needed to make the Olympics happen by utilizing existing infrastructure and adapting abandoned buildings to Olympic venues.



1.2 Tokyo Olympic Stadium, Credit: adapted from Olympics.com



1.3 Iconic Usain Bolt Post, Credit: adapted from Olympics.com





Research Questions

This thesis investigation is being guided by these three research questions.

How can the Olympics be leveraged to benefit Detroit?

Detroit has been slowly reviving itself after the crash of the automotive boom in the city and the city's bankruptcy in 2013. The Olympics can give the city an opportunity to solve major specific challenges in the city due to the money and deadlines that the Olympics bring.

How can an Olympics in Detroit utilize the Joe Louis Greenway to connect people around the proposed Olympics and promote a new method of travel in Detroit?

The Joe Louis Greenway is an innovative new form of pedestrian transit in Detroit that moves away from the preconceived vision of automotive public transit. To help promote the Joe Louis Greenway to citizens the proposed Olympics will seek to attach as many venues as possible to the greenway that can be adapted to useful community resources after the Olympics.

How can an Olympics be used to alleviate vacancies in Detroit?

There are a significant number of abandoned structures in Detroit but many of these are homes that will not have

any use for Olympic sporting venues. Although there are an extreme amount of abandoned homes there are several large abandoned buildings that have the capacity to host Olympic sporting venues. Alleviating these large vacancies are some of the hardest to renovate rather than demolish and the Olympics can be the catalyst for renovation.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

How can the Olympics be leveraged to benefit Detroit?

How can an Olympics in Detroit utilize the Joe Louis Greenway to connect people around the proposed Olympics and promote a new method of travel in Detroit?

How can an Olympics be used to alleviate vacancies in Detroit?

FRAMEWORK

visionary

OLYMPIC LEVERAGE

contextual

ASSUMPTIONS

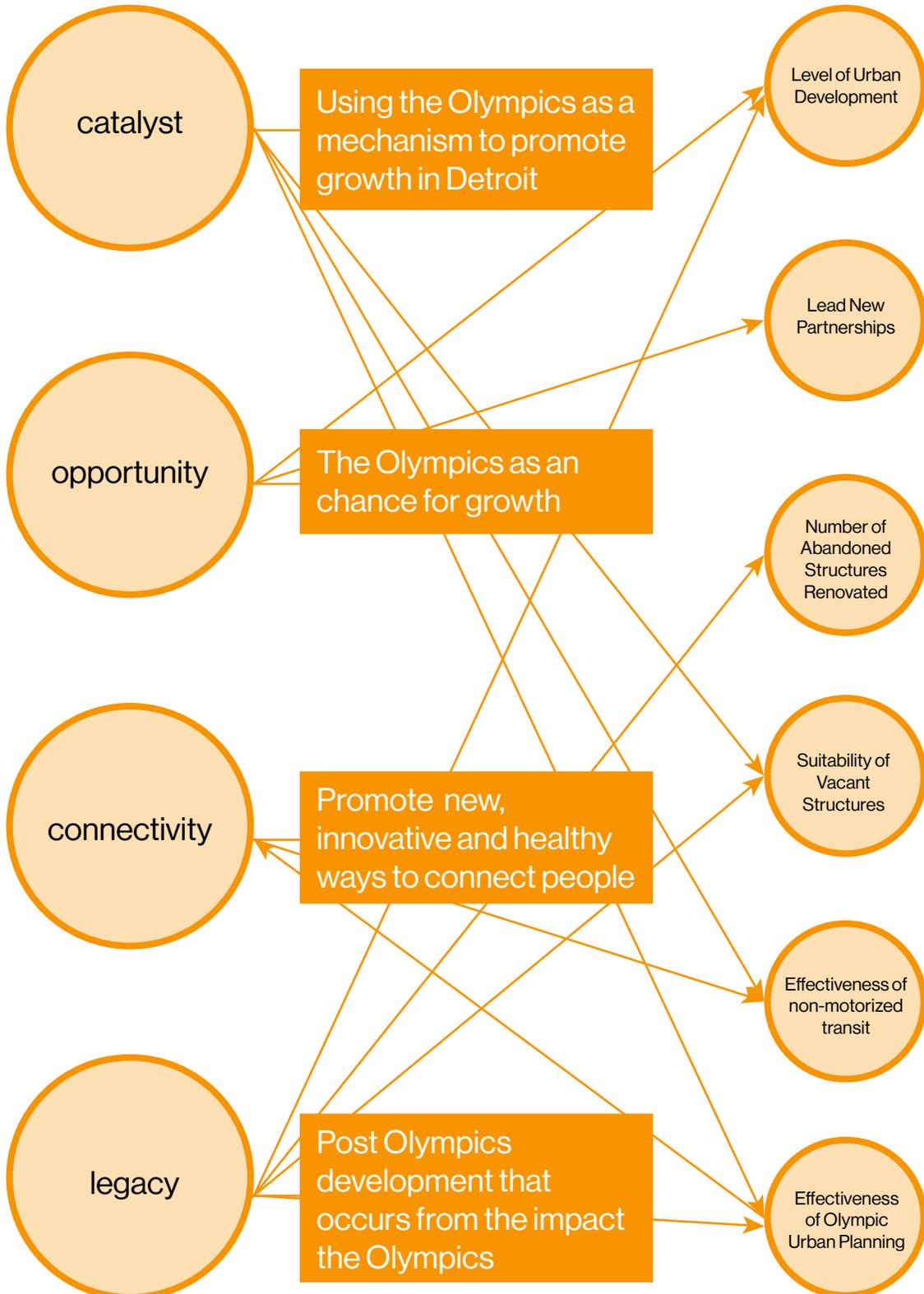
The Olympics can be a catalyst for city development

The Olympics can be leveraged to solve challenges in Detroit

The Olympics, utilizing the Joe Louis Greenway, can promote pedestrian travel in Detroit

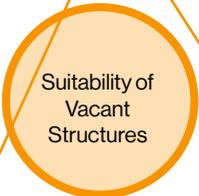
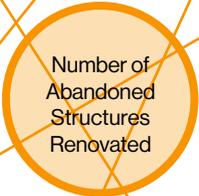
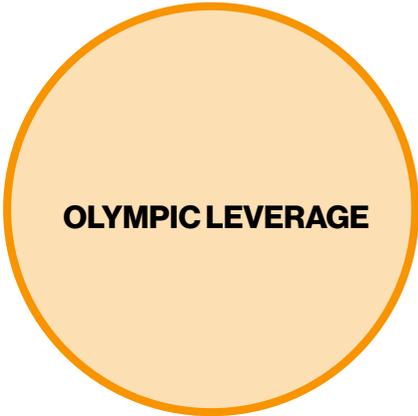
FRAMING CONCEPTS

CONSTRUCTS



RESEARCH QUESTIONS

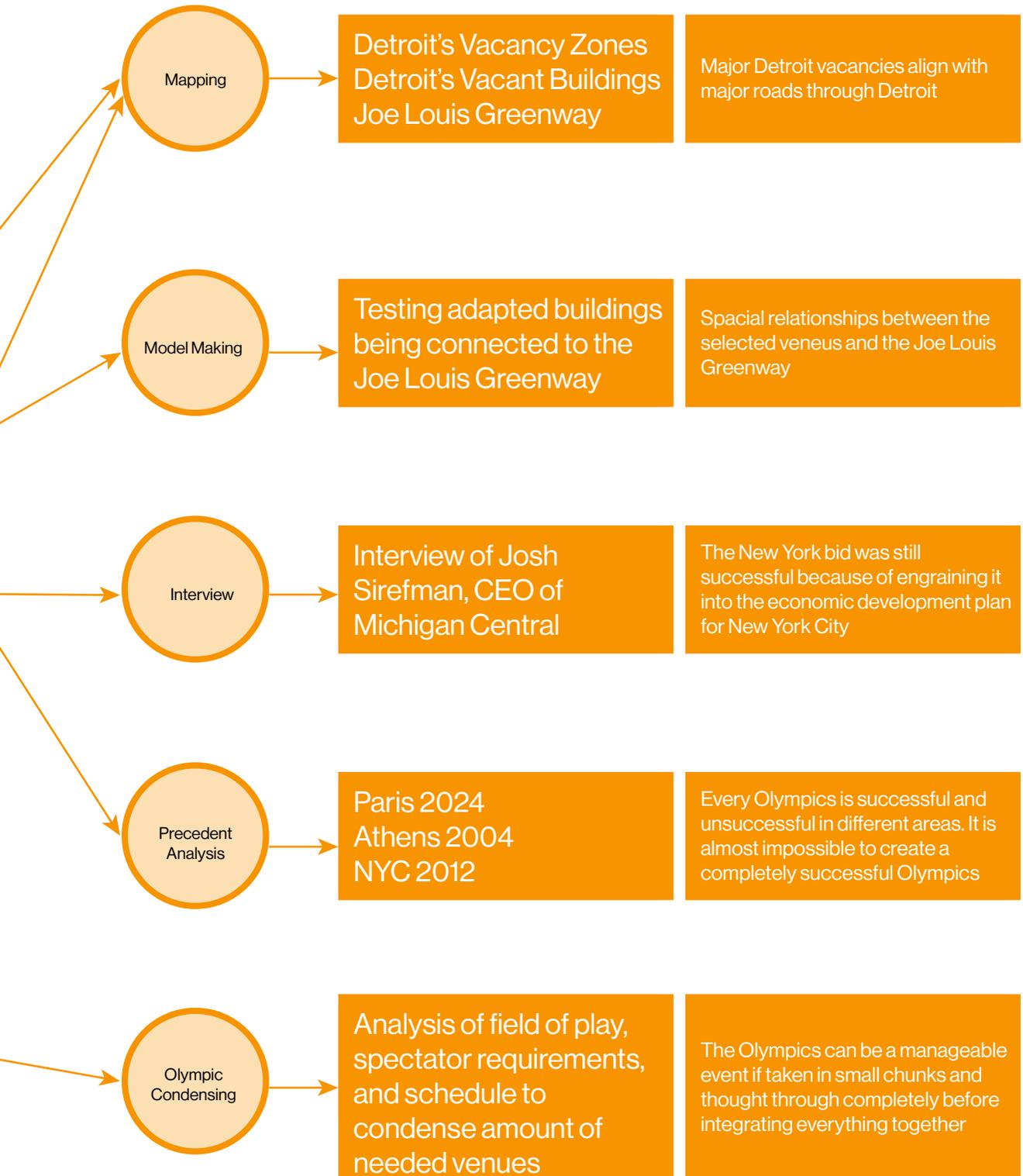
CONSTRUCTS



S

METHODS

RESULTS



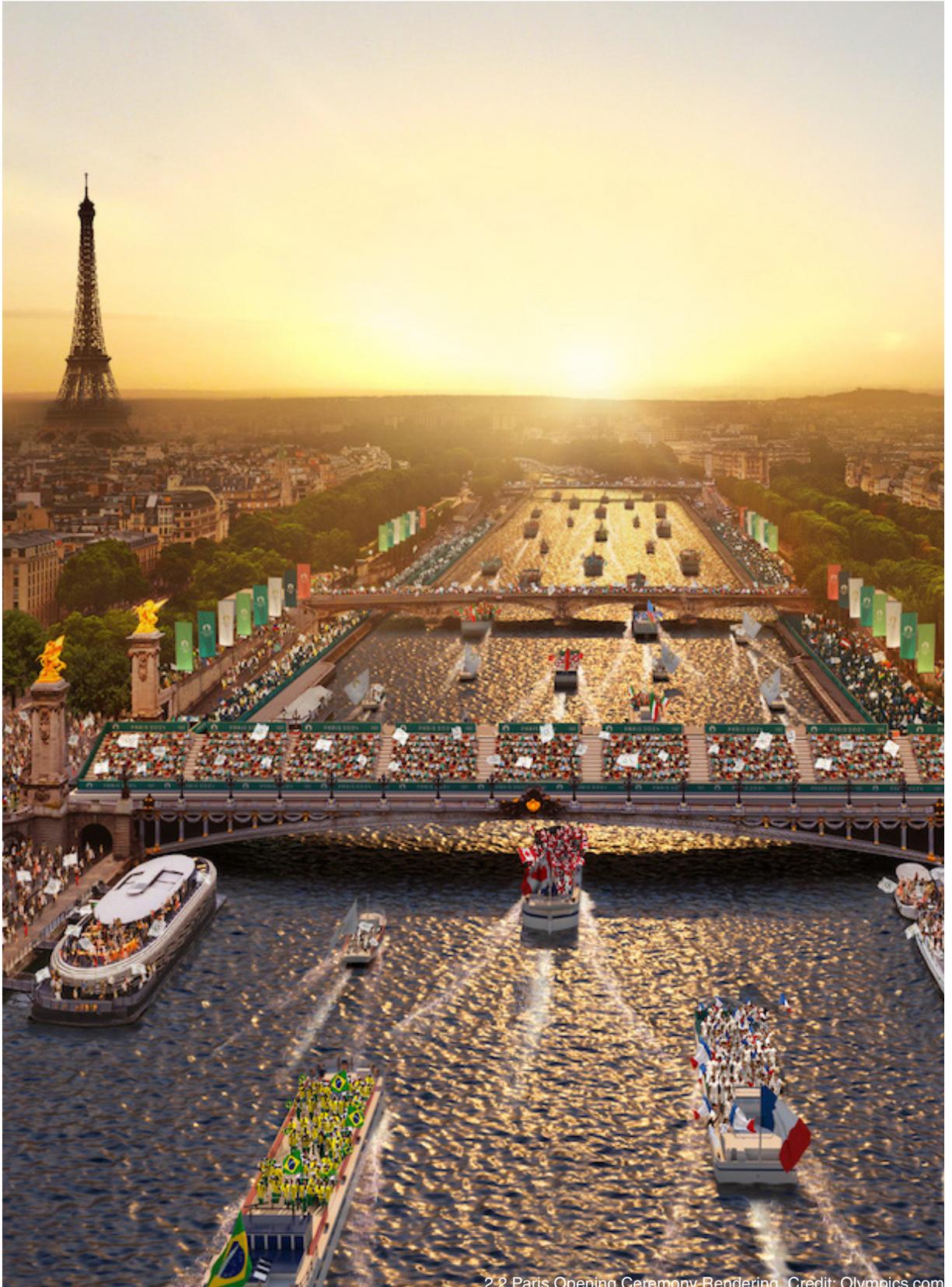
OLYMPIC BACKGROUND



Paris 2024

There is no more media you can receive as an Olympic host city than while you are up next to host the Olympics. All eyes are on the city providing mass amounts of information on a regular basis on what the city is doing to prepare for the Olympics including good and bad. Paris 2024 is taking a different approach to the Olympics by making the games more about benefiting the country than about the city. Paris 2024 has spread out events around France, even surfing taking place on an island in Tahiti owned by France called Teahupo'o, almost 10,000 miles from Paris. Although Paris is spreading out their Olympics around the country to distribute the needs of the Olympics they have done significant infrastructure developments within Paris to improve the city and leverage the Olympics to change the image of parts of Paris. Paris has spent \$1.5 billion on the Seine River to clean it up as it has not been swimmable for 100 years. The clean up has been successful with the 2023 World Triathlon Championships being hosted in Paris, in the Seine River. It is a great thing that Paris is doing by cleaning up their river but even though Paris is spending the money and time to clean up the river it does not mean that tourists and citizens will believe that they have truly cleaned the river after 100 years of being deemed unsafe. This is where the Olympics come

in, Paris is hosting multiple events in the Seine River to showcase their new river worldwide and prove that the river is safe enough for the Olympics. Along with hosting events in the Seine River, Paris is changing the narrative of the Olympics, every Olympics opening ceremony has taken place inside the main Olympic stadium but Paris has decided to change this and have the opening ceremony in the Seine River. Not only does this show off the newly redeveloped Seine River but showcase the entire city of Paris through international media.



2.2 Paris Opening Ceremony-Rendering. Credit: Olympics.com



Arc



Eiff

de Triumph

er Tower

Notre Dame

Pantheon



Athens 1896/2004

There can't be a better place to start than the beginning, Athens 1896. Athens is the birthplace of the Olympics, the ancient games took place in Greece and when the games were brought into modern times there was no better place to host than the ancient city of Athens, Greece. The original Panathinaiko Stadium is still a major tourism spot today while visiting Athens. This is how the Olympics in Athens is remembered, as the birthplace, but it is not the full story. In 2004 the Olympics once again took place in Athens and was a completely different story. The lack of Olympic legacy planning led to many of the Olympic stadiums to be abandoned after the Olympics had left. Stadiums including Hellinikon Stadium, Canoe/Kayak Park, Olympic Aquatic Centre and multiple more are abandoned showing off the lack of planning that went into these Olympics. This precedent shows the risks that host city's take on when hosting the Olympics, even though it has been noted that Athens has taken an economic gain from the Olympics it still is not a successful image to have many brand new stadiums abandoned after the Olympics.



2.4 Abandoned Pool, Credit: CBS.com



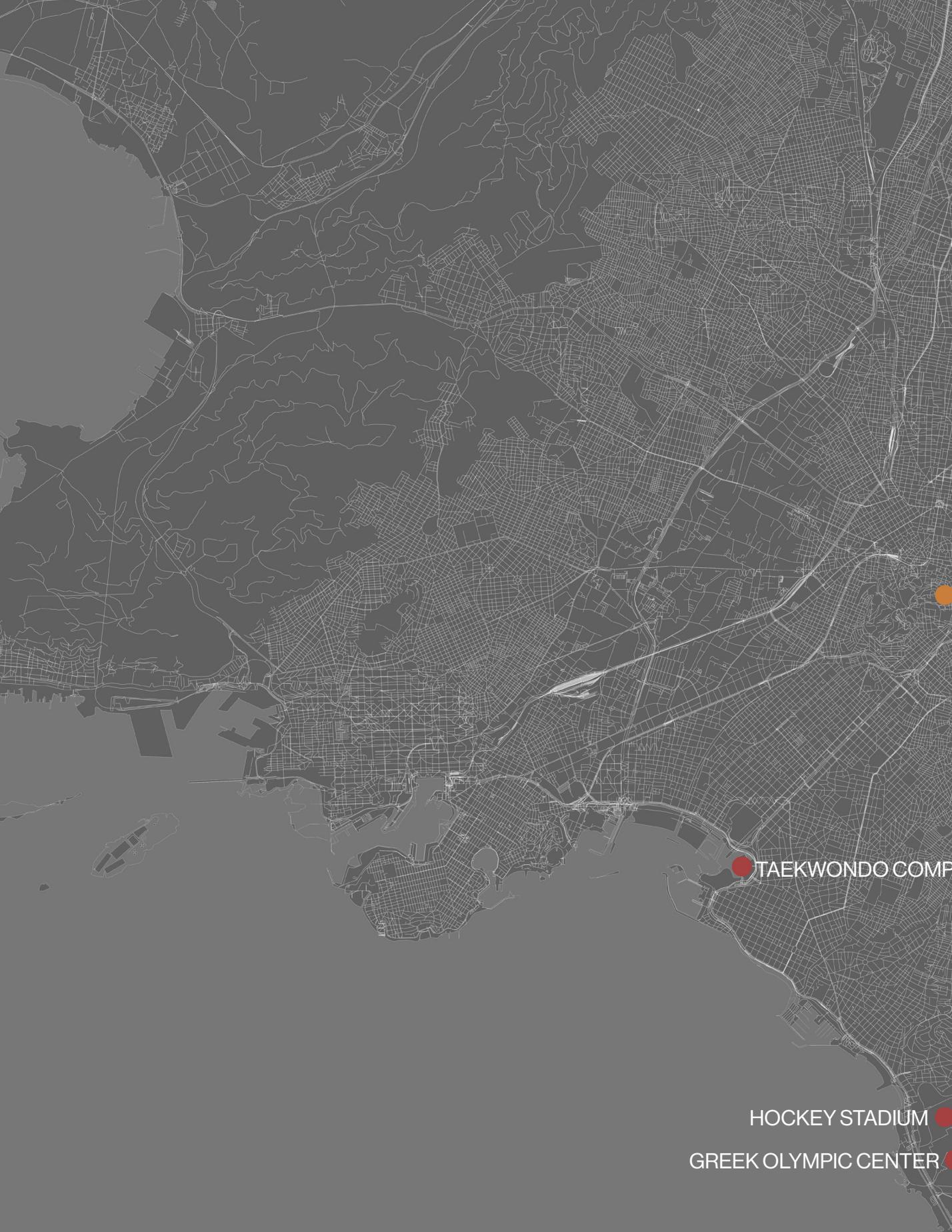
2.5 Abandoned Pool with Chair, Credit: CBS.com



2.6 Abandoned Olympic Sign, Credit: CBS.com



2.7 Abandoned Diving Pool, Credit: CBS.com



TAEKWONDO COMP

HOCKEY STADIUM

GREEK OLYMPIC CENTER

OLYMPIC VELODROME ●

● OLYMPIC TENNIS CENTRE

● OLYMPIC AQUATIC CENTRE

ACROPOLIS
● PANATHENAIC STADIUM

PLEX

● CANOE/KAYAK PARK
● HELLINIKON STADIUM

NYC 2012

New York City(NYC) has never hosted an Olympics but that does not mean that the Olympics have not had a major influence on the New York City that we know today. NYC's bid for the 2012 Olympics came very close to achieving the bid for the Olympics but a denial of the Olympic stadium in the upper west side of Manhattan brought the bid to its knees, giving the bid to London. Although NYC lost the bid for the 2012 Olympics the immense effort that went into planning for the Olympics was not lost. Talking with Josh Sirefman, the current CEO of Michigan Central in Detroit and the former Chief of Staff for the Deputy Mayor of Economic Development in New York City during Mayor Bloomberg's tenure, he speaks on the profound impact that the Olympic bid had on the development of NYC after the 9/11 terrorist attacks. From the interview Sirefman says "there was so much overlap between our broader economic development strategy and lots of components of the bid". The Olympic bid in NYC was developed alongside the NYC economic development plan, matching the goals and aspirations that plan had. This ensured that the Olympic bid plan was developed along the same guidelines and principles that the economic strategy was being developed under. Although the Olympic bid was a major part of the economic development

plan and was built alongside it, the development plan did not depend on the Olympic bid being won. NYC 2012 was developed with the mindset of legacy, what happens after the games. When the bid was officially lost, the economic development team pushed forward with implementing the Olympic ideas how they were envisioned post Olympics. These developments include the highline, an old train line turned pedestrian walkway, an extension of the no.7 subway line, Hudson Yards development, implementation of the east river ferry system, redeveloping of multiple neighborhoods in Brooklyn, rezoning the far west side of manhattan, and the creation of two new major league baseball stadiums.



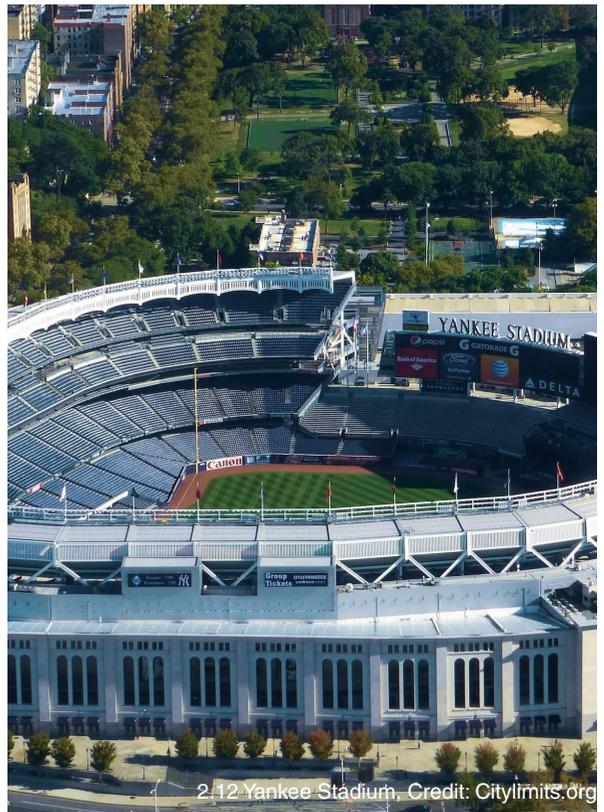
2.9 Highline, Credit: Citylimits.org



2.10 Hudson Yards, Credit: Citylimits.org



2.11 Subway Line No.7, Credit: Citylimits.org



2.12 Yankee Stadium, Credit: Citylimits.org



REZONING THE FAR WEST SIDE

HIGHLINE

HUDSON YARDS

HUNTERS POINT

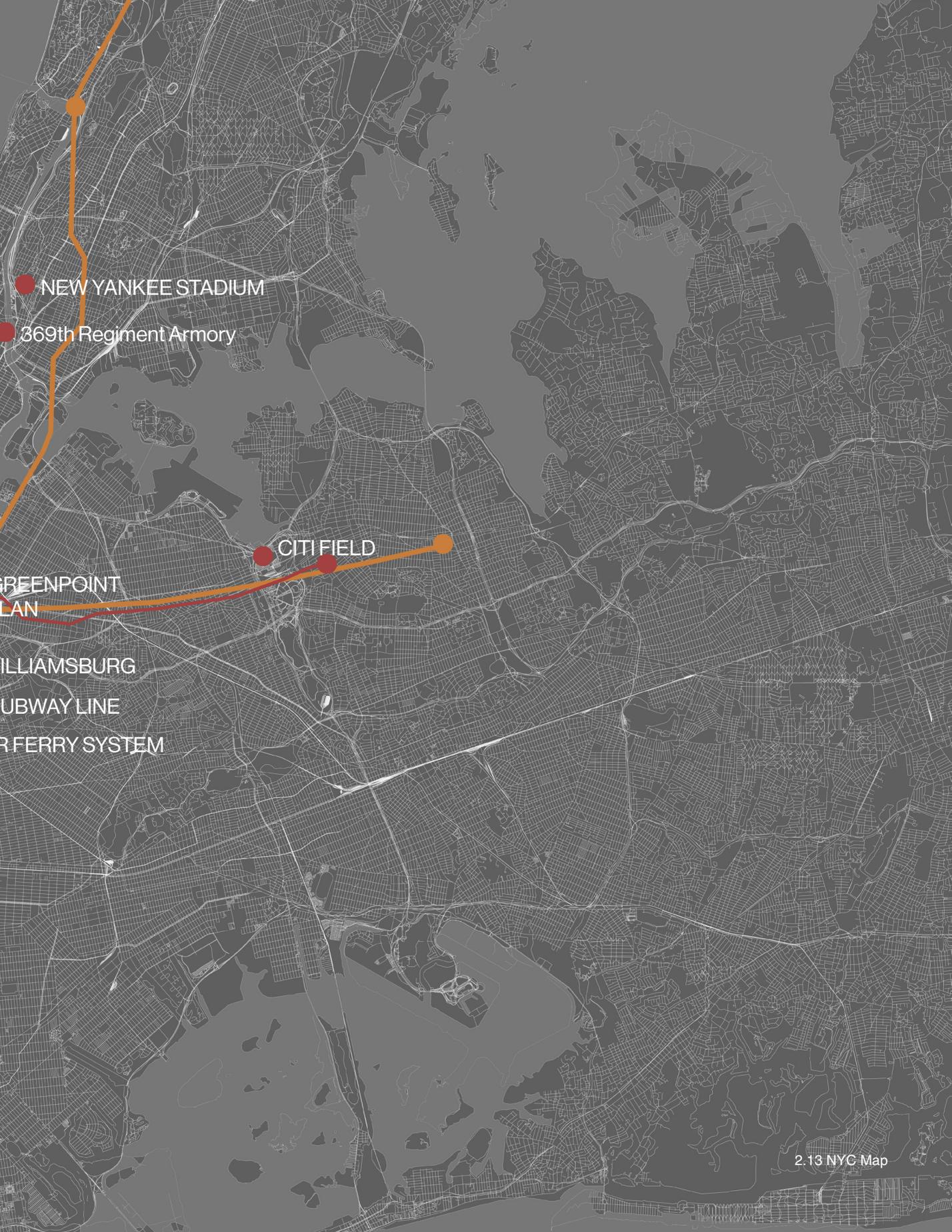
EAST RIVER

G...

X-P...

W...

#7 S...



NEW YANKEE STADIUM

369th Regiment Armory

CITIFIELD

GREENPOINT
LANE

WILLIAMSBURG

SUBWAY LINE

R FERRY SYSTEM

Guiding Principles

Through analyzing previous Olympics and the Josh Sirefman interview, a series of guiding principles were formulated which would guide the planning of the proposed Olympics. These guiding principles include alleviating vacancies, decentralizing the business district, promoting Detroit and promoting pedestrian travel.

Alleviating Vacancies

Alleviating Vacancies in Detroit have been a serious issue for decades with an estimated 50,000 vacant structures currently polluting Detroit. Many of these structures are large abandoned factories or other large municipal buildings that have the opportunity to be adapted into Olympic venues.

Decentralize the Business District

Since Detroit's filing for bankruptcy in 2013 the city has made a remarkable comeback. Many development projects have flooded Detroit's downtown and sparked a new light in the people who work, live and interact with the city. But, many parts of the city are still being neglected. Due to the many venues needed for the Olympics, it gives Detroit an opportunity to spread out around the city to allow for investment to happen in more areas.

Promote Detroit

Detroit can change, the people who live, work and interact with the city can see the change and grow with the city. People who only hear about Detroit from online are a lot harder to convince that Detroit is a blooming city that is safe and a great place to visit. The Olympics can be a way to showcase to the world the substantial change that has happened in Detroit or any city like Detroit that hosts the Olympics. In light of leveraging the Olympics to promote Detroit, this thesis has a strict rule of all Olympics venues needing to be placed within the extents of Detroit to ensure the benefit of the host city.

Promote Pedestrian Travel

Detroit is gaining a new valuable asset in the Joe Louis Greenway, a pedestrian transit loop around Detroit. To help promote the Joe Louis Greenway while making a Detroit Olympics more pedestrian friendly, the majority of the Olympic Venues will attach to this greenway to promote a more pedestrian friendly experience.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

ALLEVIATE
VACANCIES

DECENTRALIZE
BUSINESS
DISTRICT

PROMOTE
DETROIT

PROMOTE
PEDESTRIAN
TRAVEL

OLYMPIC COMPLEXITY

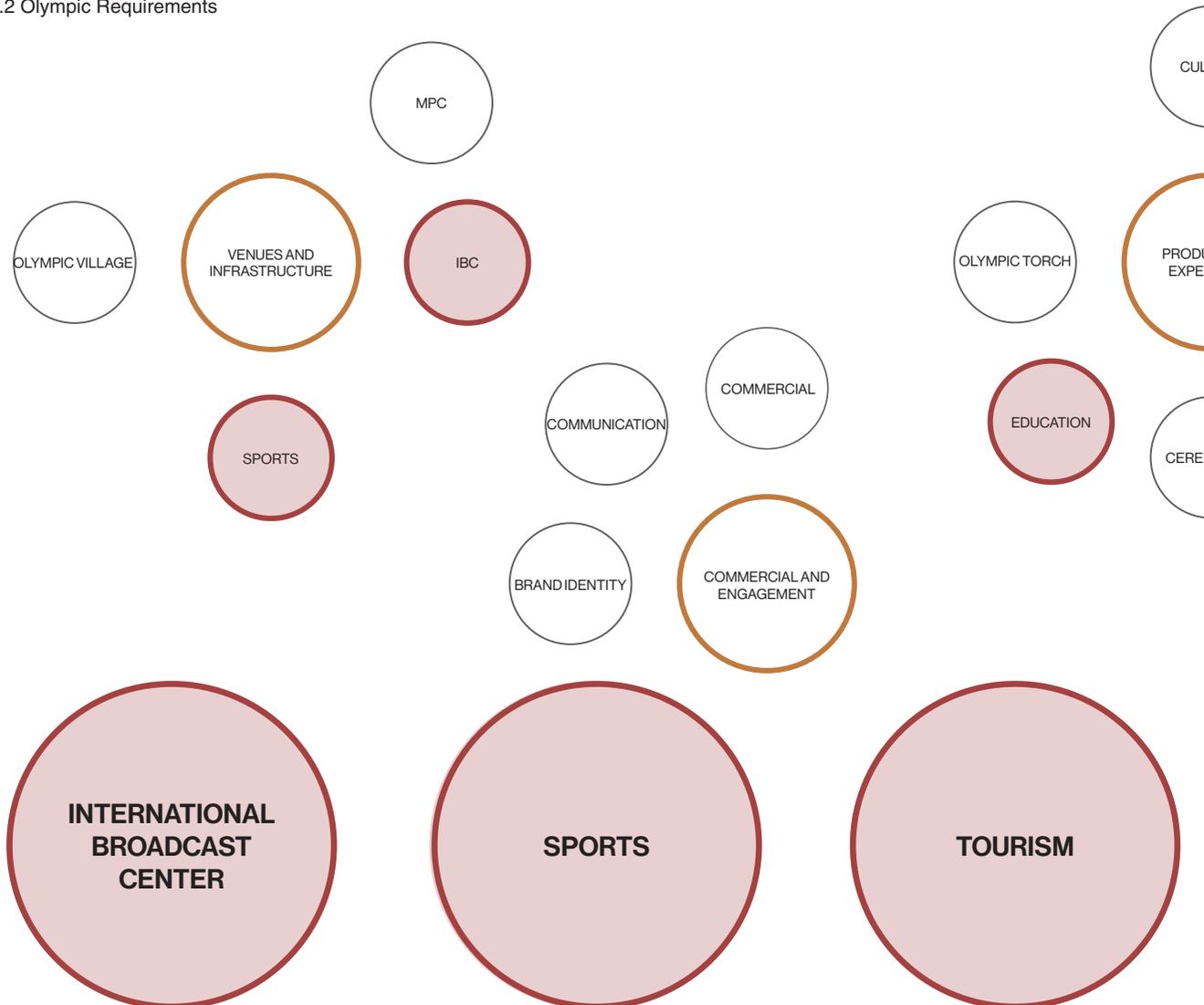


Olympics Requirements

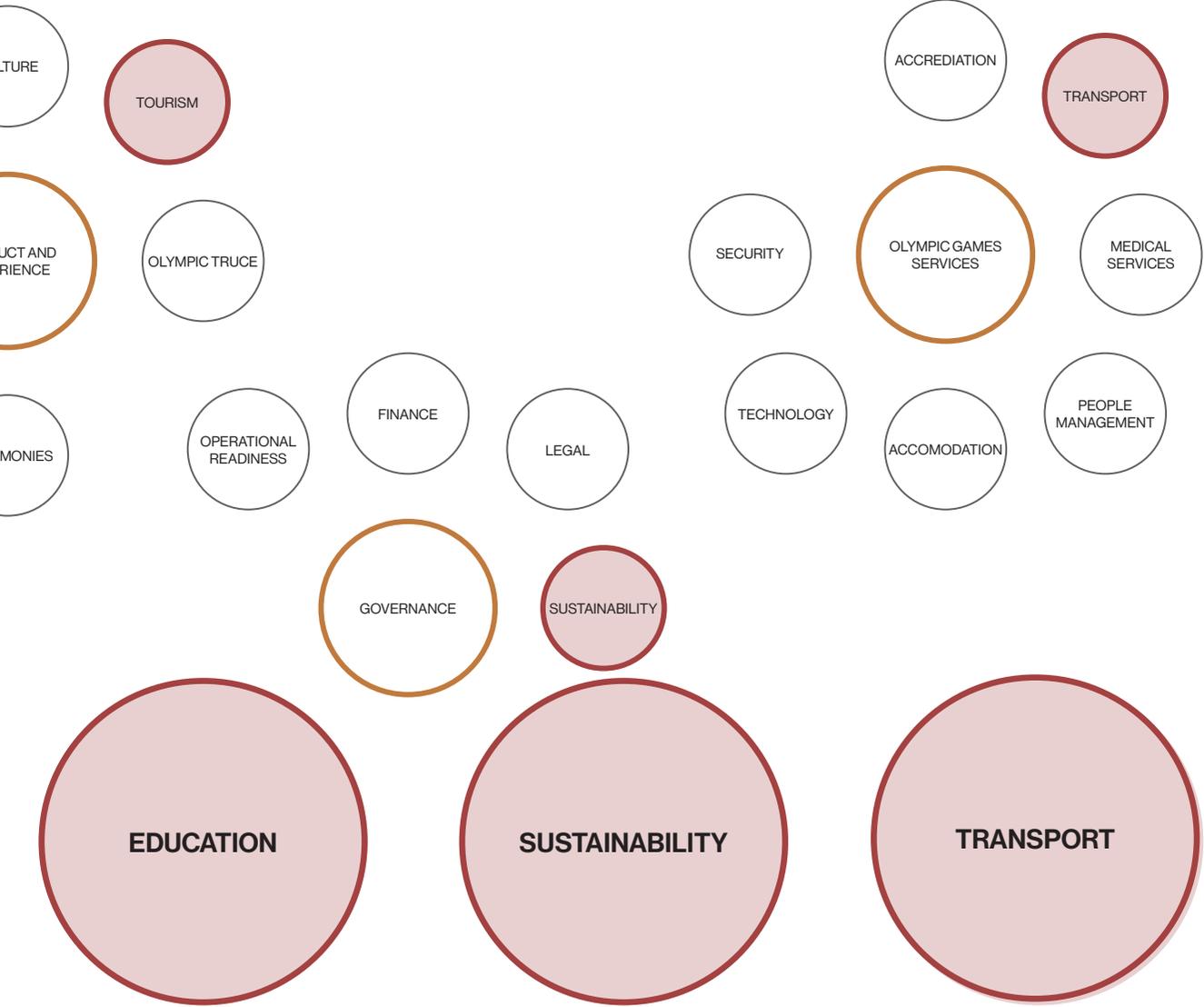
The Olympics, in essence, is a logistical nightmare. There are thousands of people with thousands of tasks involved in making the Olympics happen. Yet, everything can be broken down into five main categories including venues and infrastructure, commercial and engagement, product and experience, governance and Olympic Games services. Within these categories are many sub-categories

in which six were selected that were the focus of this thesis. The six sub-categories include sports, international broadcast center, tourism, education, sustainability and transport. Sports and the international broadcast center will be master planned in Detroit. Tourism will happen from the scale and reach that the Olympics have by bringing in millions of people to Detroit and by spreading

3.2 Olympic Requirements



out the Olympics around the city it will showcase many sporting venues. different parts of the city. Education and transport of Detroit residents with the Joe Louis Greenway by using the Olympics to promote it. Education to the world of how much Detroit is changing and is an exciting place to visit. And finally, sustainability by utilizing existing facilities and adapting abandoned structures to Olympic



Olympic Organization

The organizations involved in the Olympics are just as complex if not more than the Olympic requirements.

The thousands of hands that will touch the Olympics all have a profound impact on the planning, constructing and operation of the Olympics. The main organizations involved in the planning of the Olympics are listed to the right with a breakdown of the hierarchy of these organizations in the diagram.

OCOG

Organizing Committee for the Olympic Games

IOC

International Olympic Committee

NOC

National Olympic Committee

IF

International Sporting Federation

NGB/OLY

National Governing Body/Olympians

WADA

World Ant-Doping Agency

CAS

Court of Arbitration for Sport

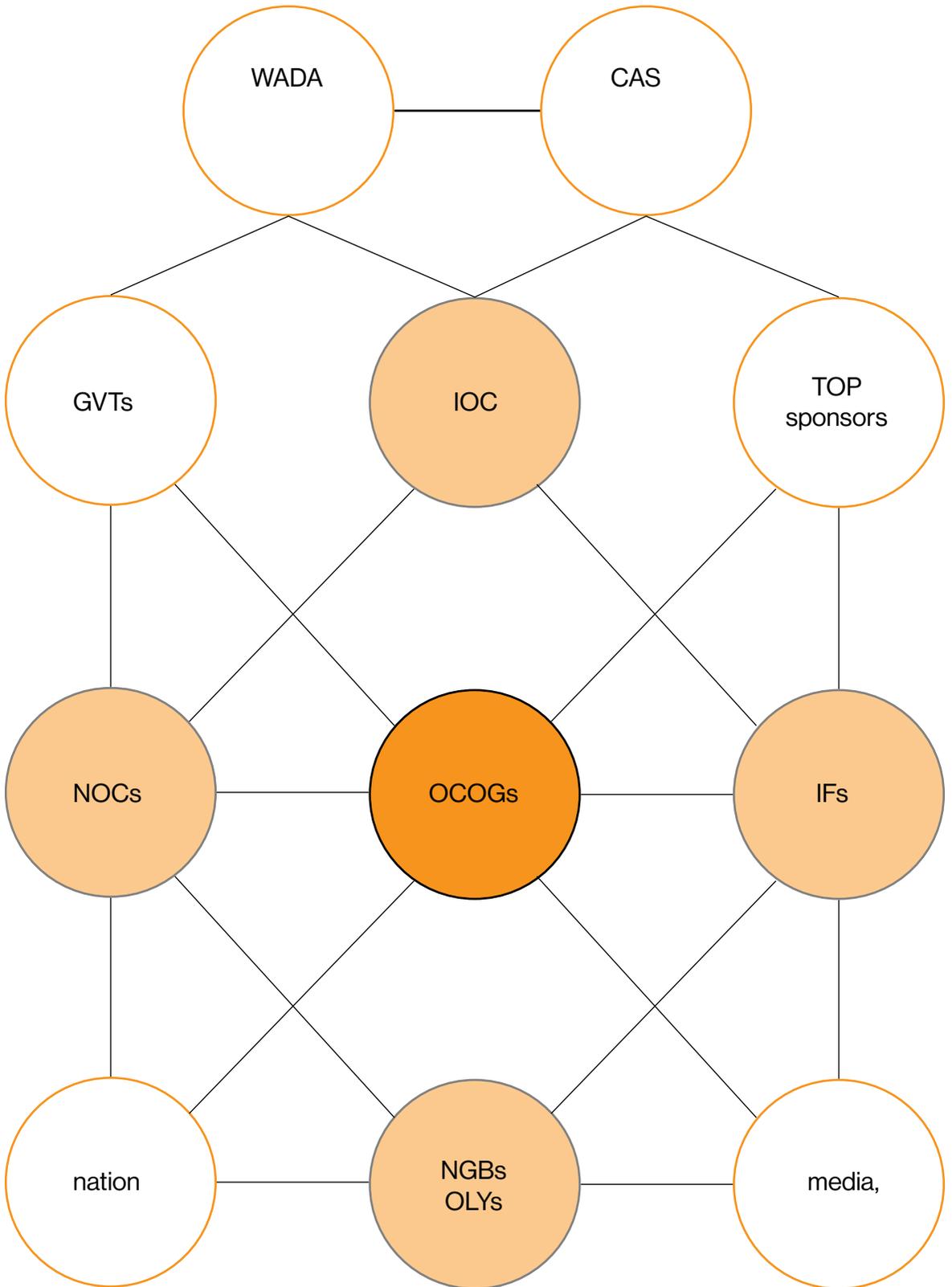
GVT

Local Government

TOP Sponsors

Nations

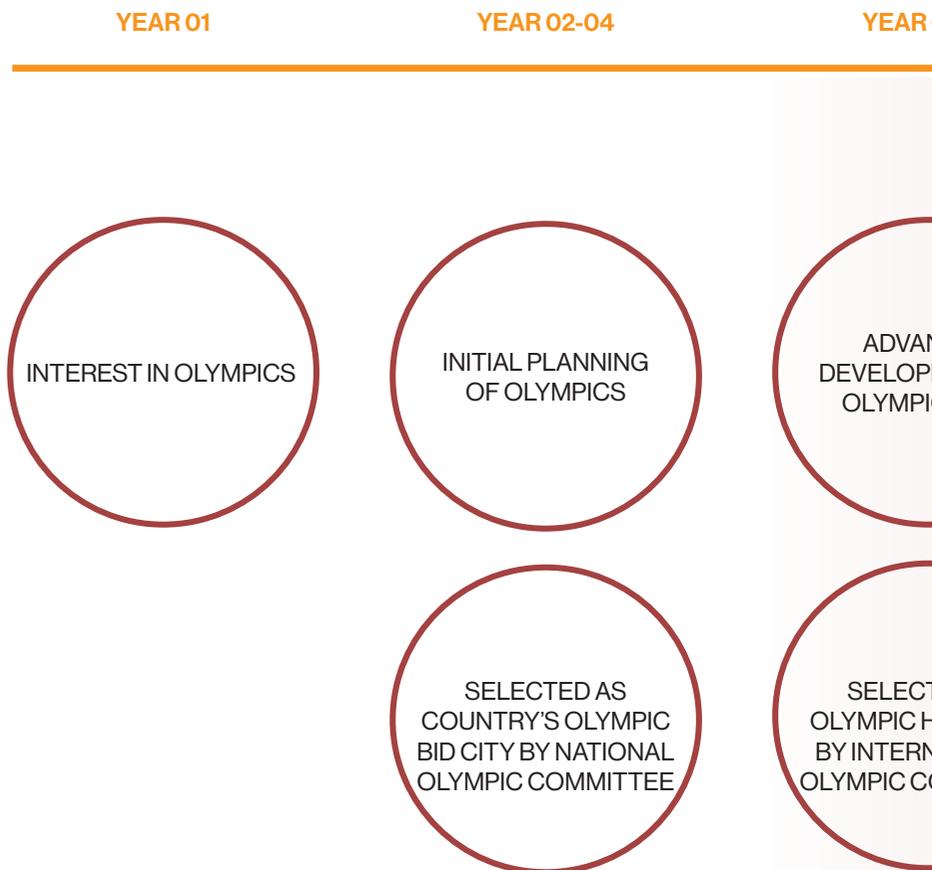
Media



Current Olympic Timeline

The average Olympic planning timeline lasts about 20 years. This is from initial conception to the completion of the Olympics. Year 1 starts with the inception of the idea, usually from an external group within a city that wants to host the Olympics. Year 2-4 consists of early master planning and getting accepted by their country's National Olympic Committee as the sole city for an Olympics. Year 5-10 involves a more advanced plan of the Olympics and around the 10 year mark getting accepted by the International Olympic Committee as the

host city. Year 11-19 is the final planning and construction of the Olympic. And year 20 is the actual Olympics. After the Olympics are over cities shift to try and clean up the Olympics and preserve what they had to construct for the Olympics.



05-10

YEAR 09-18

YEAR 18-20

YEAR 20+

ANNOUNCED
HOST CITY
COMMITTEE

CONSTRUCTION OF
OLYMPIC BID

OLYMPIC GAMES BEGIN

OLYMPIC LEGACY

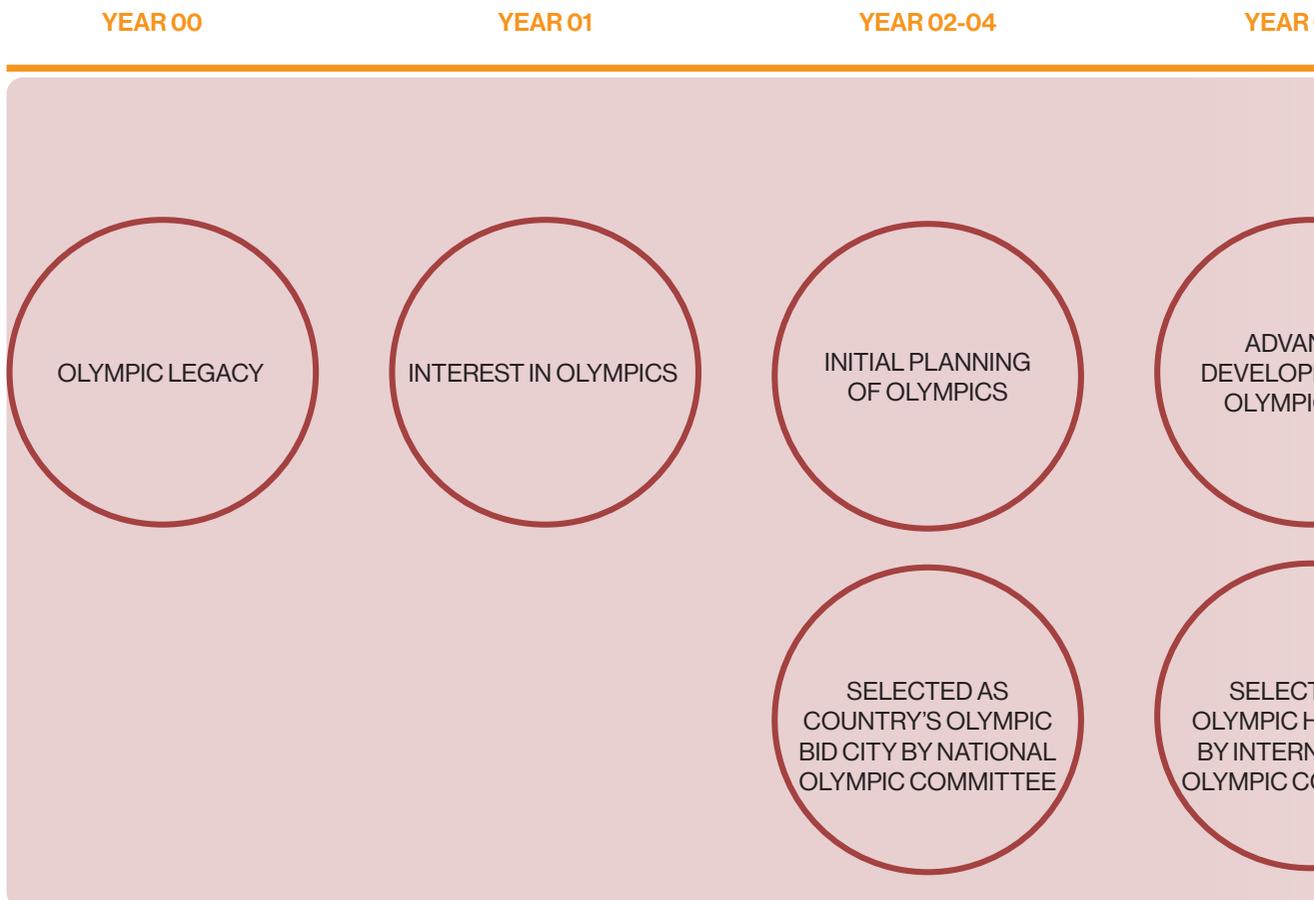
ANNOUNCED
HOST CITY
COMMITTEE

PARALYMPIC GAMES

Proposed Olympic Timeline

The current Olympic timeline has an extreme focus on the Olympics themselves, not on the host city. This proposed timeline brings forward the planning and thinking of Olympic legacy to the beginning of the Olympic timeline. The issue with the current Olympic timeline is that the focus on Olympic Legacy does not happen until after the Olympics are over. This thesis investigation is stating that its Olympic Legacy is more important to the host city and its citizens than the Olympics themselves. With this in mind, Olympic Legacy should be moved to the

beginning of the timeline to ensure a higher rate of success in Olympic Legacy.



05-10

YEAR 09-18

YEAR 18-20

YEAR 20+

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CONSTRUCTION OF
OLYMPIC BID

OLYMPIC GAMES BEGIN

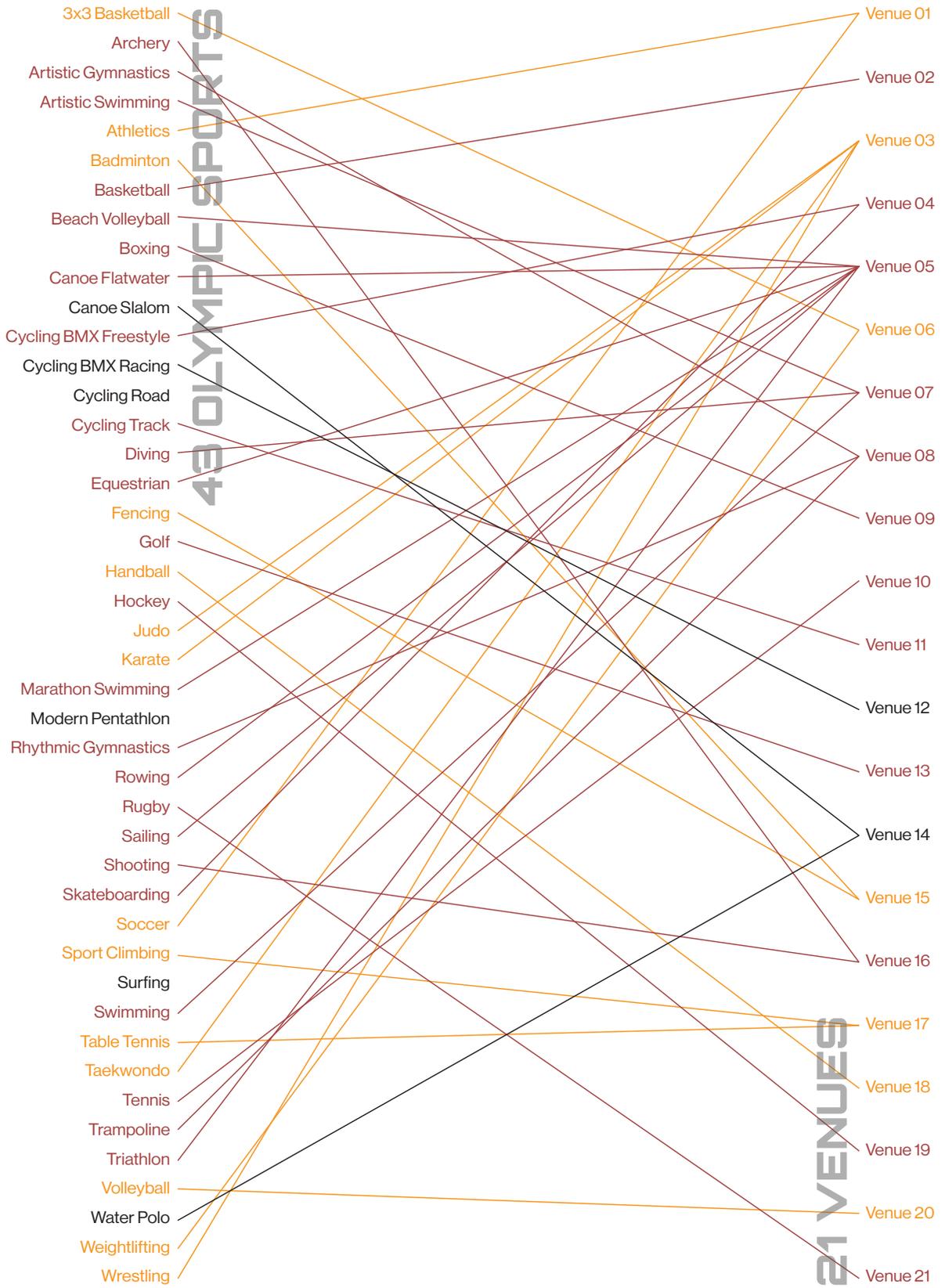
OLYMPIC LEGACY

TED AS
HOST CITY
NATIONAL
COMMITTEE

PARALYMPIC GAMES

Olympic Sport to Olympic Venue

At the time of this thesis there are 43 Olympic sports, this does not mean that a city needs 43 separate venues to host the sports. By comparing field of play size, spectator requirements and previous Olympic schedules, the number of Olympic venues can be condensed to 21. 21 venues is still a significant amount but reduces the requirement by over 50%. Every sport has a venue except for cycling road, modern pentathlon and surfing. Cycling road has no venue because it takes place on the road and will leave Detroit. The modern pentathlon does not have a specific venue because it will utilize other venues for the Olympics to complete the five events in the modern pentathlon. Surfing is the only sport that cannot take place in Detroit because the event cannot use artificial waves and there are no surfing spots in Detroit.



49 OLYMPIC SPORTS

21 VENUES

DETROIT



Detroit's Downfall

Detroit, once hailed as the shining example of American industrial might and the heart of the automotive industry, has sadly experienced a significant decline. This downturn serves as a stark lesson in the vulnerability of economic systems. The automotive industry, which was the lifeblood of Detroit's prosperity, began to struggle due to increased competition from abroad and the inability of domestic manufacturers to adapt to changing consumer preferences and global economic shifts. Consequently, as factories closed and jobs disappeared, the city's economic foundation crumbled, leaving behind a landscape dotted with abandoned buildings and vast stretches of urban blight.

Detroit's downfall was not solely due to economic factors but was also deeply intertwined with social and racial tensions. The city was rocked by one of the deadliest and most destructive riots in American history in 1967, commonly known as the Detroit Riot or the 12th Street Riot. Sparked by a police raid on an unlicensed bar in a predominantly African American neighborhood, the riot quickly escalated into widespread violence, looting, and arson. The unrest exposed long-standing grievances over systemic racism, police brutality, and economic inequality.

The scars of the 1967 riot lingered for decades,

exacerbating racial tensions and deepening divisions within the city. White flight accelerated as many residents fled to the suburbs, further draining Detroit's tax base and leaving behind predominantly African American communities grappling with unemployment, poverty, and inadequate public services. These racial and socioeconomic disparities fueled a cycle of disinvestment and decline, as resources became increasingly concentrated in affluent areas while marginalized neighborhoods were left to languish.

As Detroit struggled to address these deep-rooted issues, political corruption and mismanagement further hampered efforts at revitalization. The combination of economic decline, racial tensions, and political turmoil created a perfect storm that ultimately led to the downfall of Detroit as once a vibrant symbol of American industrial power.

Detroit Sport History

Detroit and sports have a rich history deeply ingrained in the city's culture. From its early days in the late 1800s to the present, sports have been a source of pride and excitement for Detroiters. Today, Detroit is only one of four cities (Detroit, Chicago, Denver, Philadelphia) in which the four major US sports (Baseball, Football, Basketball, Hockey) teams reside within the city limits.

This is only enriched inside of Detroit with the four major teams all being within half a mile from each other. Even through the many rough patches of Detroit sports the city's fans have stayed loyal and true to the teams who call Detroit home. The atmosphere of sports in Detroit shows the care, hospitality, and thoughtfulness that the Olympics would have in the city of Detroit.

Detroit Sport Bank of Venues

Due to the rich sports culture in Detroit, there are many professional stadiums that can be utilized for the Olympics. In The District Detroit, a district being developed by Olympia Development, there are three large stadiums including Comerica Park(40,000 people), Little Caesars Arena(20,000 people) and Ford Field(60,000) with many other sport specific or small stadiums spread out around Detroit. This bank of venues can be utilized to reduce the amount of construction needed for the Olympics which has been one of the most criticized aspects of the games.

Detroit Olympic History

Detroit's history with Olympic bids is a tale of ambition, setbacks, and missed opportunities. The city first sought to host the Olympic Games in 1940, bidding for the Summer Olympics. However, these games were

eventually awarded to Tokyo, Japan, before being canceled altogether due to the outbreak of World War II.

In the following decades, Detroit continued to express interest in hosting the Olympics, particularly the Summer Games. The city made bids for the 1968, 1972, and 1976 Olympics but was unsuccessful each time, facing stiff competition from other cities around the world. Despite its status as a major American city with a rich sports tradition, Detroit struggled to overcome concerns about its infrastructure, urban decay, and harsh winter weather.

One of the most notable attempts came in 1963 when Detroit submitted a bid to host the 1968 Summer Olympics. The bid gained momentum and received support from various quarters, including the business community and political leaders. However, Detroit ultimately lost out to Mexico City in the International Olympic Committee's selection process.

Detroit made its final Olympic bid in 2005, this time vying for the 2016 Summer Olympics. The bid faced challenges from the outset, including skepticism about the city's ability to fund such a massive event and concerns about its urban blight and crime rate. Despite efforts to showcase Detroit's potential for revitalization and highlight its sports infrastructure, including venues like

Ford Field and the Detroit Belle Isle Grand Prix circuit, the bid ultimately faltered. The United States Olympic Committee chose Chicago as the American candidate city for the 2016 Olympics, but Chicago itself failed to win the bid, which went to Rio de Janeiro, Brazil.

Although Detroit's Olympic dreams have yet to materialize, the city's bids reflect its aspirations for renewal and recognition on the global stage, even as it continues to grapple with economic challenges and urban revitalization efforts.

Detroit Vacancies

The history of vacancies in Detroit is a reflection of the city's economic and demographic shifts over the past century. Detroit's population peaked in the 1950s, fueled by the booming automotive industry and a wave of migration from the South seeking employment in the factories. However, as the automotive industry declined and manufacturing jobs disappeared, Detroit experienced a steady decline in population.

The exodus of residents, commonly referred to as "white flight" and followed by middle-class African Americans moving to the suburbs, left behind vacant homes and abandoned buildings. These vacancies were exacerbated by economic downturns, racial tensions, and urban decay. Many once-thriving neighborhoods became blighted areas, characterized by dilapidated houses, overgrown lots, and neglected infrastructure.

The 1967 Detroit Riot further accelerated the flight of residents and businesses from the city, exacerbating the problem of vacancies. Decades of disinvestment, job loss, and population decline contributed to the proliferation of vacant properties across Detroit. The city struggled to maintain and repurpose these vacant buildings, leading to further deterioration and blight.

Efforts to address Detroit's vacancy problem have

been ongoing, with initiatives aimed at demolition, rehabilitation, and revitalization. The Detroit Land Bank Authority was established in 2008 to acquire and sell vacant properties, while organizations such as Detroit Future City and community development corporations have worked to repurpose vacant land for urban agriculture, parks, and other uses.

Despite these efforts, vacancies remain a significant challenge for Detroit, with tens of thousands of abandoned properties scattered throughout the city. The issue of vacancies is deeply intertwined with broader issues of economic inequality, racial segregation, and urban decline, making it a complex and multifaceted problem that requires sustained attention and investment to address effectively.

Addressing Vacancies

This thesis investigation seeks to address the challenges of vacancies in Detroit by alleviating large vacancies into Olympic sporting venues. Detroit currently has around 50,000 vacancies in the city yet most of them are homes which are too small for use in Olympic sporting events. Using Regrid, a program which stores nationwide land parcel data, the criteria was able to be filtered out to only show vacant structures that have the capability of hosting

Olympic venues. These 2,800 remaining structures included large abandoned institutional, government and industrial buildings. These structures are ones that may have the capability of hosting Olympic sporting venues.

2800 POSSIBLE STRUCTURES



Joe Louis Greenway

The Joe Louis Greenway is a transformative project aimed at revitalizing Detroit's urban landscape and enhancing recreational opportunities for residents. Named after the legendary boxer Joe Louis, who hailed from Detroit, the greenway is envisioned as a 27.5-mile non-motorized pathway that will traverse the city, connecting neighborhoods, parks, cultural sites, and commercial corridors.

The greenway project seeks to repurpose underutilized and vacant land, including former railway corridors and industrial sites, into vibrant green spaces that promote active living, community engagement, and economic development. The pathway will accommodate walking, jogging, cycling, and other non-motorized forms of transportation, providing residents with safe and accessible routes to navigate the city.

The development of the Joe Louis Greenway is a collaborative effort involving various stakeholders, including local government, community organizations, philanthropic foundations, and residents. Through partnerships and community engagement initiatives, the project seeks to empower neighborhoods and build capacity for long-term stewardship and programming along the greenway.

Overall, the Joe Louis Greenway represents a bold vision for the future of Detroit, reimagining the city's landscape and fostering connections between people, nature, and culture. As the project continues to evolve, it holds the potential to catalyze positive change, enhance quality of life, and create lasting legacies for generations to come.

Addressing Vacancies through the Joe Louis Greenway

The Joe Louis Greenway will again filter out the amount of possible vacant structures which can be chosen for the proposed Olympics because of the guiding principle of making a more pedestrian friendly Olympics. All venues in this thesis investigation will attempt to be in close proximity or attach directly to the Joe Louis Greenway to promote healthy pedestrian travel.

4.3 Detroit Riverfront Before, Credit: Detroitriverfrontconservancy

4.4 Detroit Riverfront After, Credit: Detroitriverfrontconservancy

4.5 Joe Louis Greenway Rendering 01, Credit: Detroitgreenways

4.6 Joe Louis Greenway Photo 01, Credit: Detroitgreenways

4.7 Joe Louis Greenway Photo 02, Credit: Detroitgreenways

4.8 Joe Louis Greenway Rendering 02, Credit: Detroitgreenways



27-MILE RECREATIONAL GREENWAY

PROPOSED OLYMPICS



REPORT A PROBLEM OR UNWELL FAN
TEXT "LIONS" TO SPACE
ISSUE & LOCATION
TO 690511

FORD
LIONS
LIVE
BUD LIGHT



Confidence
Oakwood

pepsi

10

10

10

10

10

DETROIT

88

88

88

88

88

88

88

88

88

Venue Placement Criteria

Based on the accumulation of research on the Olympics and Detroit there are six criteria determined to aid in the placement of Olympic sporting venues in Detroit. The venue does not need to meet all of the requirements but must have a reason to disregard the criteria. The six criteria are to utilize existing facilities, adapt abandoned venues, prominent abandoned venues, attach to the Joe Louis Greenway, field of play sizes and spectator requirements. Utilizing existing facilities takes advantage of Detroit's stadium bank and using them to host Olympic venues. Adapt abandoned venues will aid in alleviating vacancies in Detroit. Prominent abandoned structures should be sought after to help alleviate major vacancies. Attached to the Joe Louis Greenway to promote a healthier form of travel and make a walkable Olympics. And finally the field of play size and spectator requirements ensure the venue is large enough to host the Olympic event.

facilities, nine are adapting abandoned venues and three are completely new construction.

Olympic Venue Locations

The map on the next page shows the locations of all 21 Olympic sporting venues and the international broadcast center. With the placement of these venues, the longest walk to any venue off of the Joe Louis Greenway or Q-Line is 15 minutes. This utilization of new transit routes makes the Olympics more walkable for more people. Out of the 21 venues nine are utilizing existing

VENUE PLACEMENT CRITERIA

UTILIZE EXISTING
FACILITIES

ADAPT
ABANDONED
BUILDINGS

ATTACH TO THE
JOE LOUIS
GREENWAY

PROMINENT
ABANDONED
STRUCTURES

FIELD OF PLAY
SIZES

SPECTATOR
REQUIREMENTS

24 Affected Detroit Neighborhoods:

- Barton McFarland
- Littlefield
- Hope Village
- Martin Park
- Detroit Golf
- Delray
- Mexicantown
- West Side Industrial
- Corktown
- Downtown
- Cass Corridor
- Brush Park
- Midtown
- New Center
- Milwaukee Junction
- North End
- Kettering
- Poletown East
- University District
- Palmer Park
- Grixdale Farms
- Grixdale
- Island View
- Rivertown



Post-Olympic Venue Uses:

- Education Center
- Grocery Store
- Community Center
- Healthcare Facilities
- Job Training Centers
- Affordable Housing

Legend:

- OO Venues Alleviating Vacancies
- OO Venues Utilizing Existing Facilities
- OO Venues Completely New Construction
- Joe Louis Greenway
- - - Joe Louis Greenway Extension
- Q-Line
- IBC International Broadcast Center
- ▨ Detroit Neighborhoods

15min LONGEST WALK TO ANY VENUE

off of Joe Louis Greenway or Q-Line



9 Venues Alleviating Vacancies
9 Venues Utilizing Existing Facilities
3 Venues Completely New Construction

Affected Detroit Neighborhoods

Due to the placement of the Olympic venues, 24 Detroit neighborhoods will be affected for this Olympics. Each neighborhood has different needs but can exploit the Olympic venue as a way to receive investment into the neighborhood.

Possible Post Olympic Uses

There are nine venues that are alleviating vacancies in Detroit. Out of the nine, eight will be adapted into final uses after the Olympics are over. Some of the possible uses for after the Olympics include, affordable houses, education centers, healthcare facilities, job training centers, community centers and grocery stores. There will need to be a more in depth study done for each neighborhood affected to determine the correct programming that should be placed in these renovated buildings.



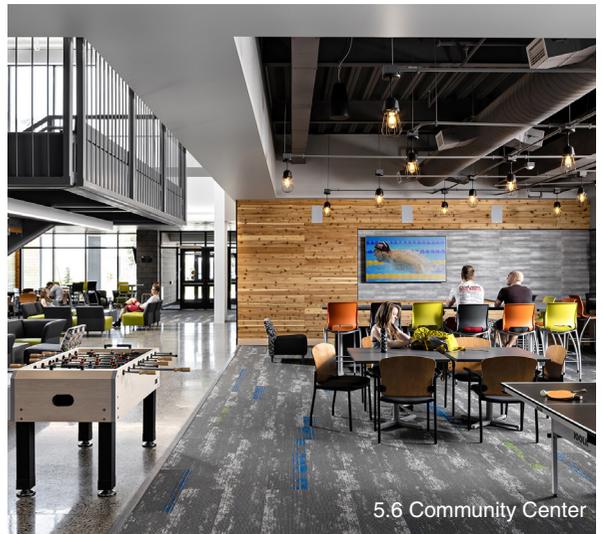
5.3 Education Facility



5.4 Grocery Store



5.5 Affordable Housing



5.6 Community Center



5.7 Healthcare Facility



5.8 Job Training Center

Venue 01 - Packard Automotive Plant

Located at 1580E Grand Boulevard in the neighborhood of Kettering, the Packard Automotive Plant(Packard) is one of the most significant buildings in Detroit's history. Packard is an image of Detroit's automotive dominance in the early to mid 1900's but since its closing in 1956 has shifted to showcasing Detroit's decline and destruction. In this thesis investigation, Packard serves the proposed Olympics as the Olympic Stadium which is different from any other Olympic venue. The field of play is massive, requires the most spectators out of any Olympic venue, and hosts other major Olympic events including the opening and closing ceremonies. The sports taking place inside of this venue are Athletics and Soccer which most commonly take place inside the Olympic Stadium as they are a part of the most viewed Olympic sports. Also, Packard will be one of three venues that will be designed as permanent stadiums rather than the intention of shifting uses after the Olympics. Packard is also one of two venues that were designed within this thesis.



5.9 Packard Automotive Plant

Why Packard

Packard is the site of the Olympic Stadium, the largest sporting venue needed for the Olympics. Packard is also far away from connecting the Joe Louis Greenway or the Q-Line. This does not follow the venue placement criteria of attaching to the Joe Louis Greenway but it does follow the criteria of alleviating a prominent abandoned building. This thesis also proposes an extension to the Joe Louis Greenway that will connect a loop around the Packard site to allow for pedestrian travel.

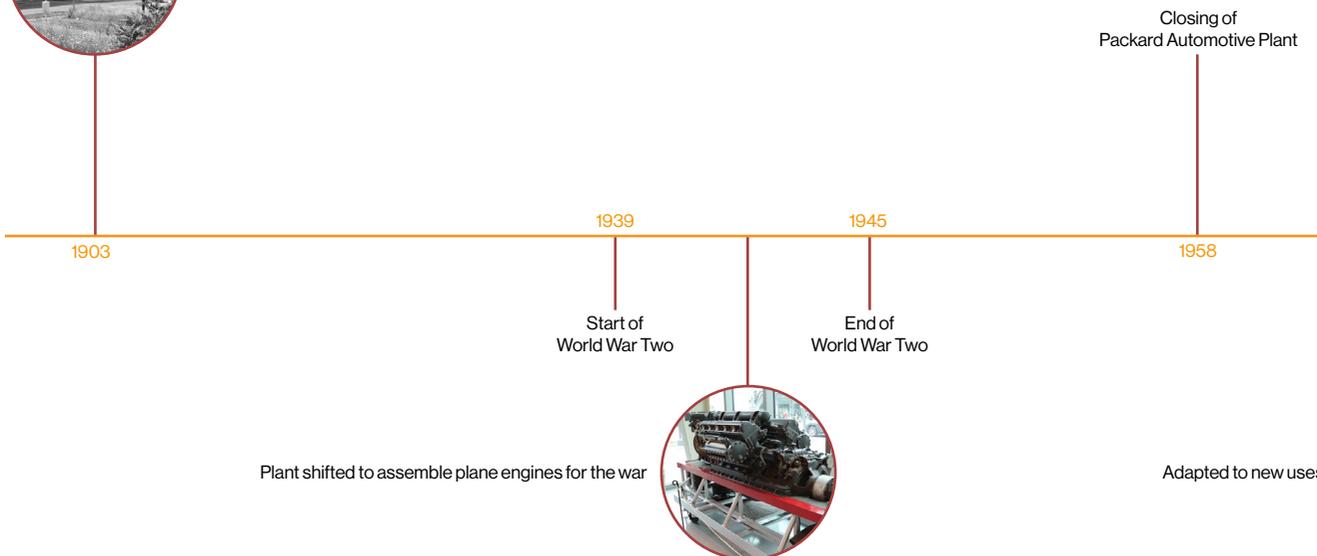
Packard Timeline

The Packard Automotive plant has been a significant part of Detroit's history. The building was designed by Albert

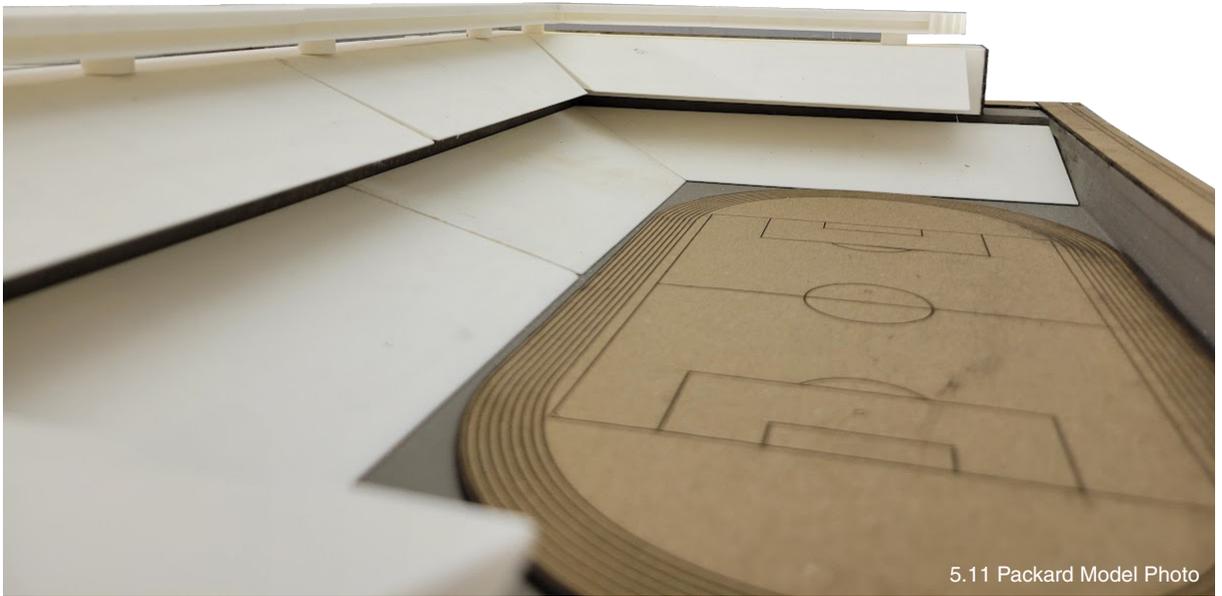
Kahn and built in 1903. The building immediately started rolling out automobiles until the start of World War Two where the factory was adapted to build engines for planes to support the war. After the war the factory went back to producing automobiles until 1956 when the factory was closed. Small retail and grocery stores too over for a short while before the building became abandoned. Even though the building was abandoned it was not forgotten, it became home to underground music raves. This led to the complete abandonment of the building and over the years a number of developers have expressed interest in renovating the building but due to costs nothing has happened. The building is now in final demolition.



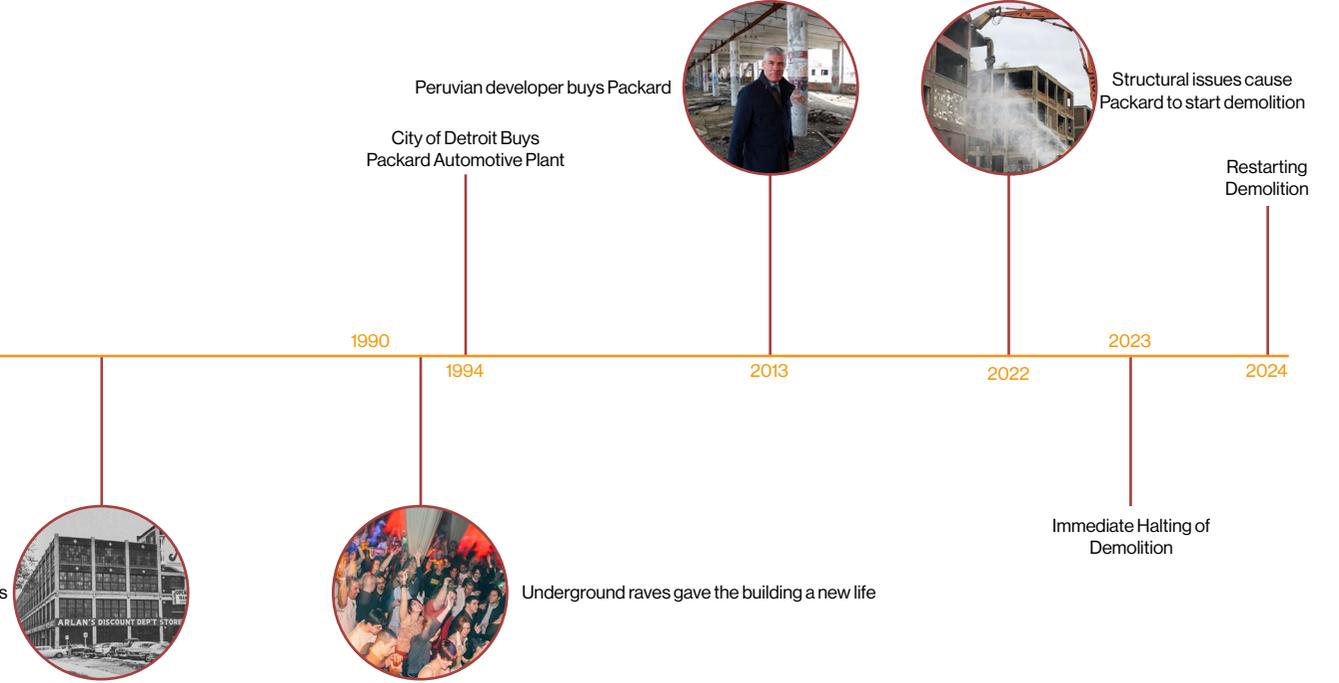
Design of Packard Automotive Plant done by Albert Kahn



Filming at Packard Automotive Plant: Transformers, The Grand Tour, Low Winter Sun



5.11 Packard Model Photo



5.10 Packard Timeline

Sites of Opportunity

Renovating the Packard site will be a major investment in a neighborhood that does not receive a lot of investment funding. Having a stadium in this neighborhood allows for many sites of opportunity to arise that can aid in support for the stadium and develop new buildings that can be an asset to the community. These programs that can benefit the community are things like job training centers, healthcare facilities, affordable housing, grocery stores, community centers and educational buildings. There can also be an asset for the people who live in the community, people can sell parking spots on their lawns that can bring in up to \$10,000 per year for each home. In a city where the average income is \$35,000 this can be a significant increase in income for a community.



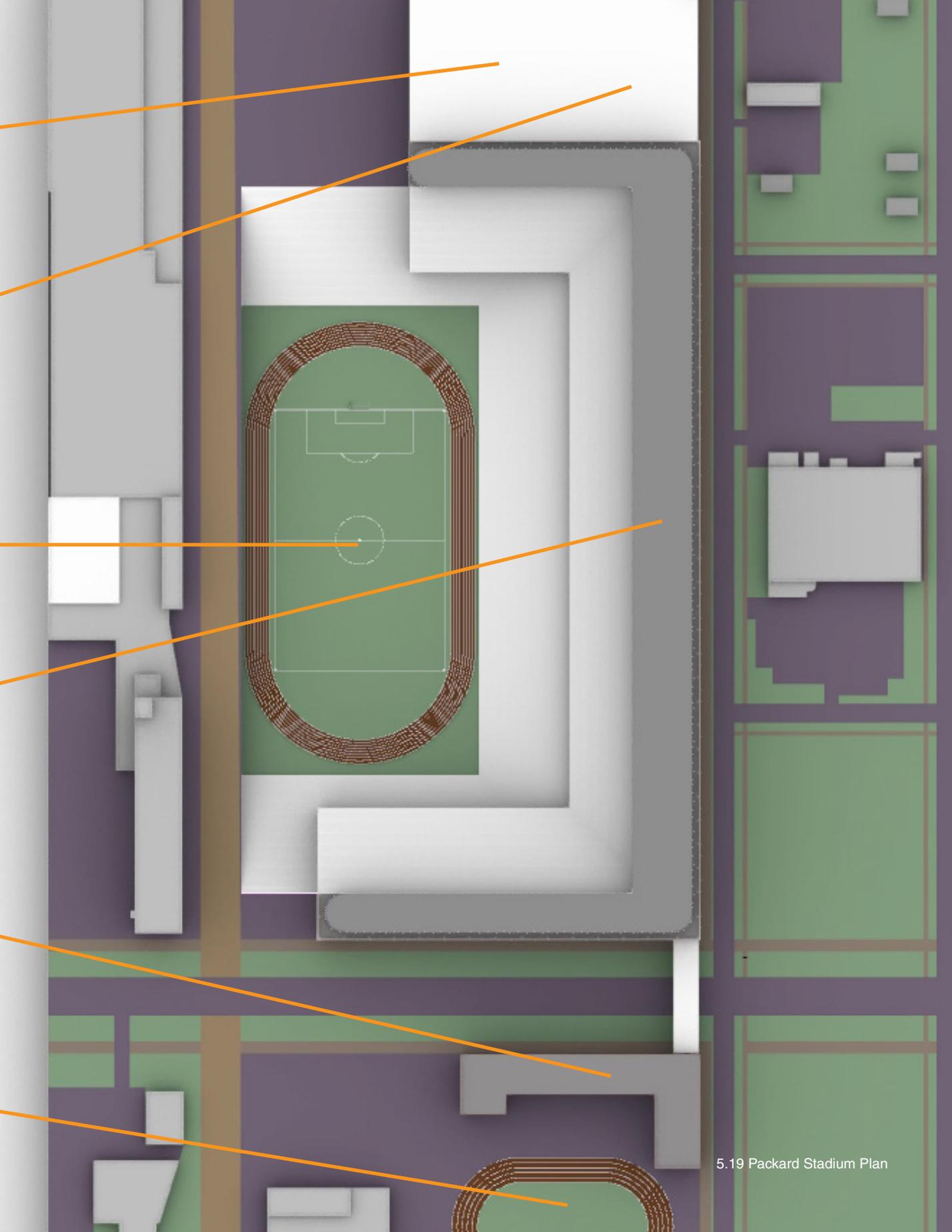


5.12 Sites of opportunity

Programming

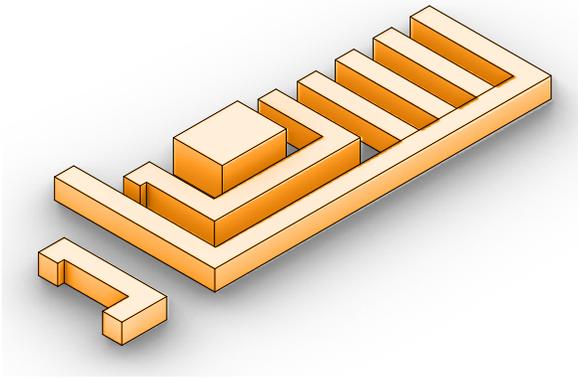
As this is one of the venues that will remain a functional stadium after the Olympics it is important to program the site past the idea of only being a stadium. After the Olympics are over this stadium will become the home to a new MLS professional soccer team for Detroit and host international track and field events. Along with the new sports, there will be team offices placed across the newly renovated bridge along with athlete housing to allow world class athletes to come and train at the Packard facilities. With world class athletes coming and training it made sense to place a human and performance research center in the stadium to research peak human performance and push the boundaries of mobility. Inside the stadium there will be a museum dedicated to Detroit's automotive history to call back to the former use of the building.



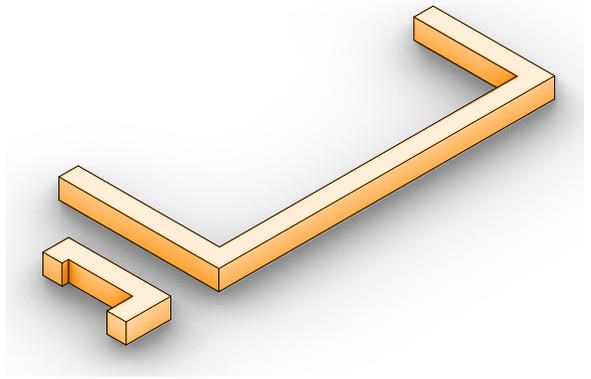


Packard Design Massing

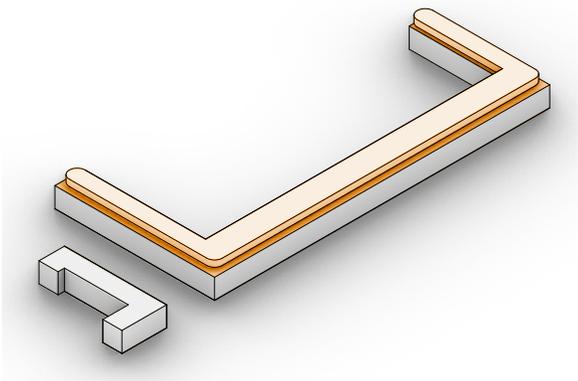
The Packard site consists of many buildings, due to the large field of play size many of these buildings will need to be removed to accommodate the stadium requirements. After the removal of these buildings an addition will be added to the top of the stadium surrounding the exterior of the building which will hold the suite level of the building. Sinking the field of play will allow for more people to watch the sporting events and create an excellent spectator experience on the back side of the stadium with people walking above the field of play. And finally, the additions of the entertainment district and research center, along with the recreation of the Packard bridge will connect the site and make it a more engaging atmosphere.



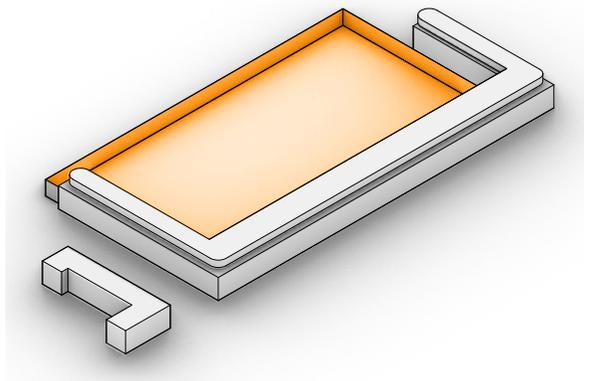
5.20 Packard Site



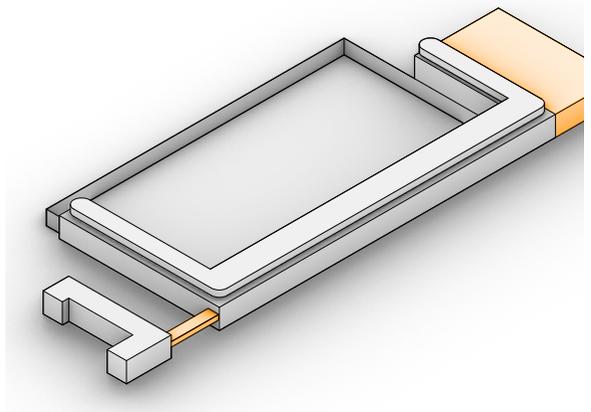
5.21 Removal of Buildings



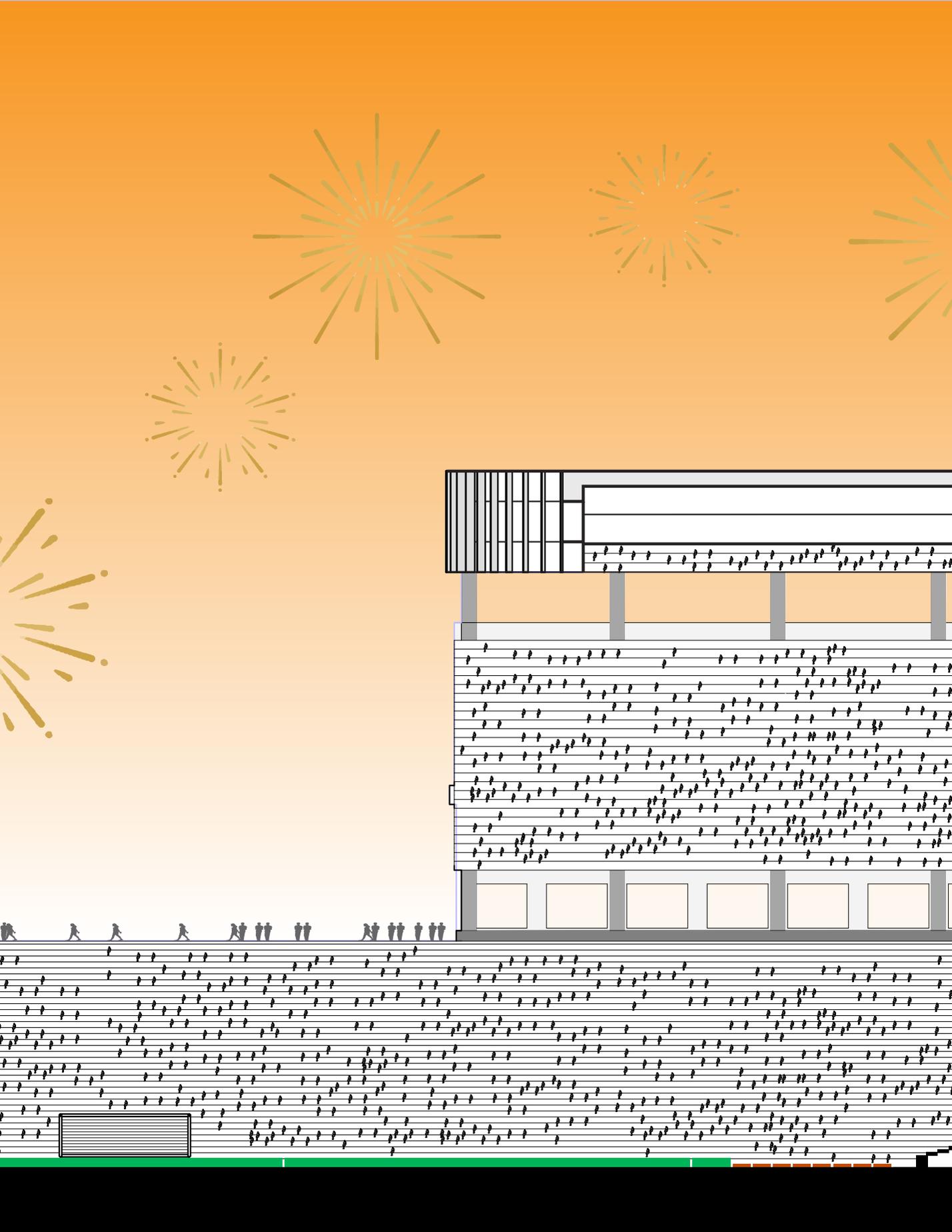
5.22 Addition of Level

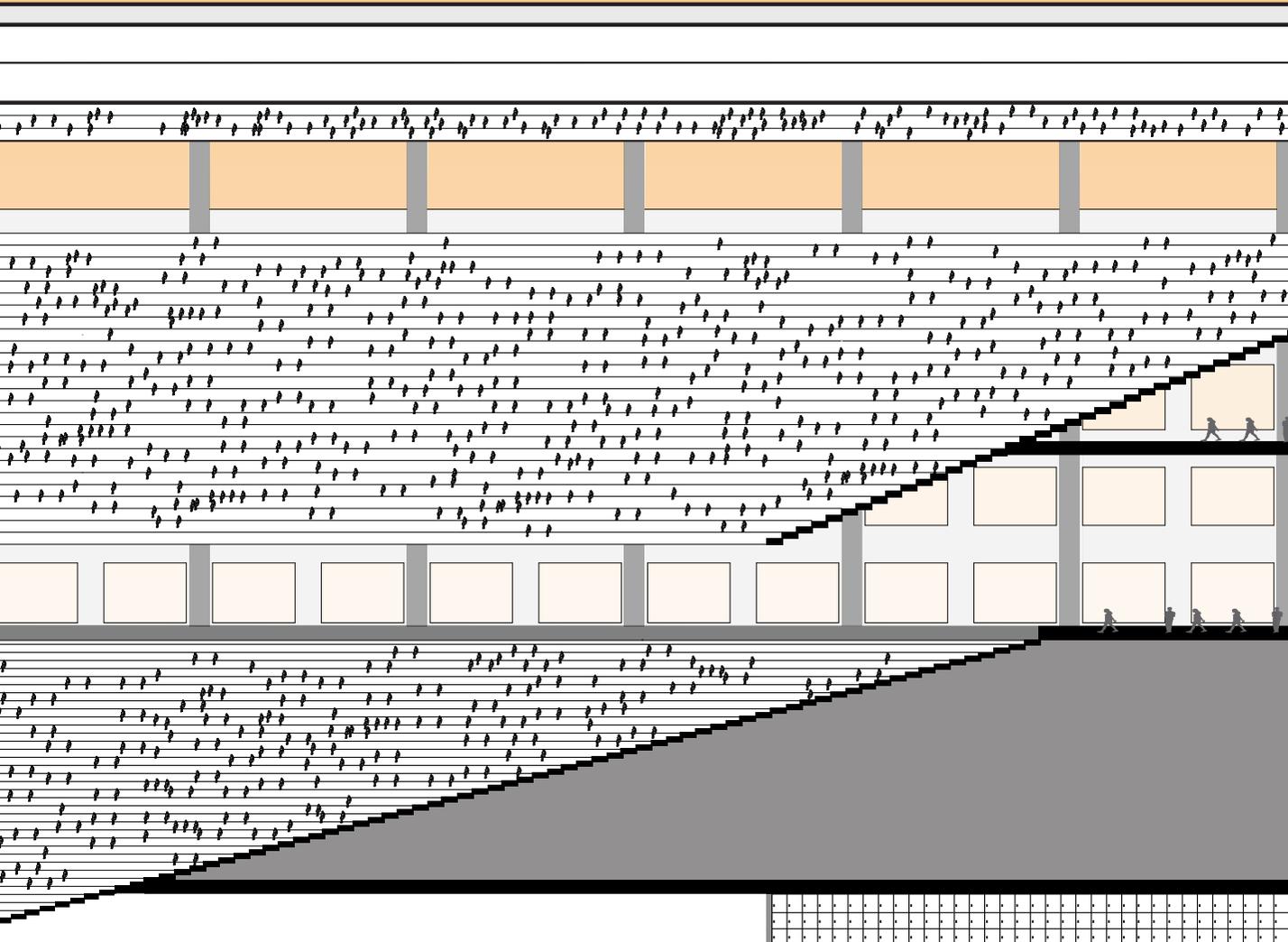


5.23 Sunken Field of Play

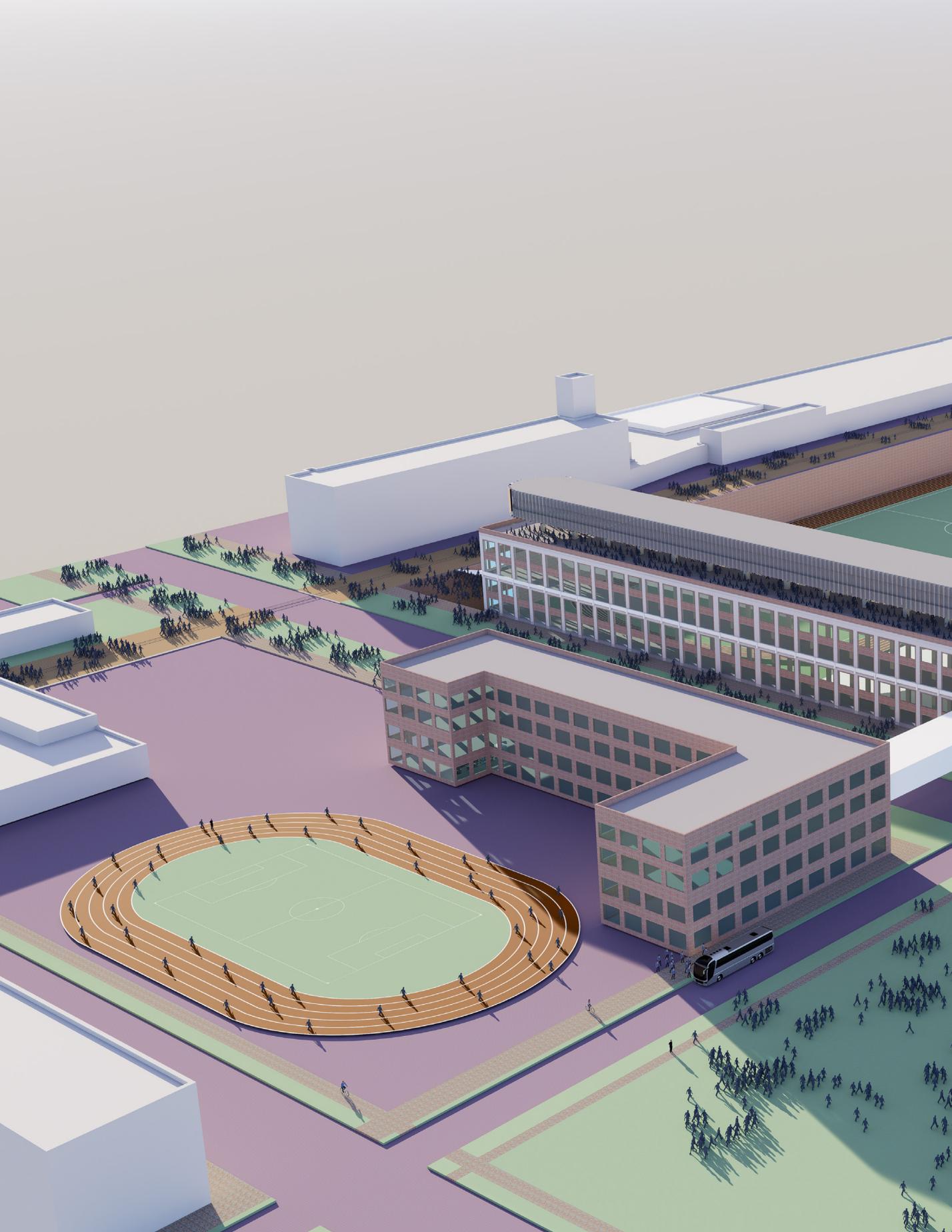


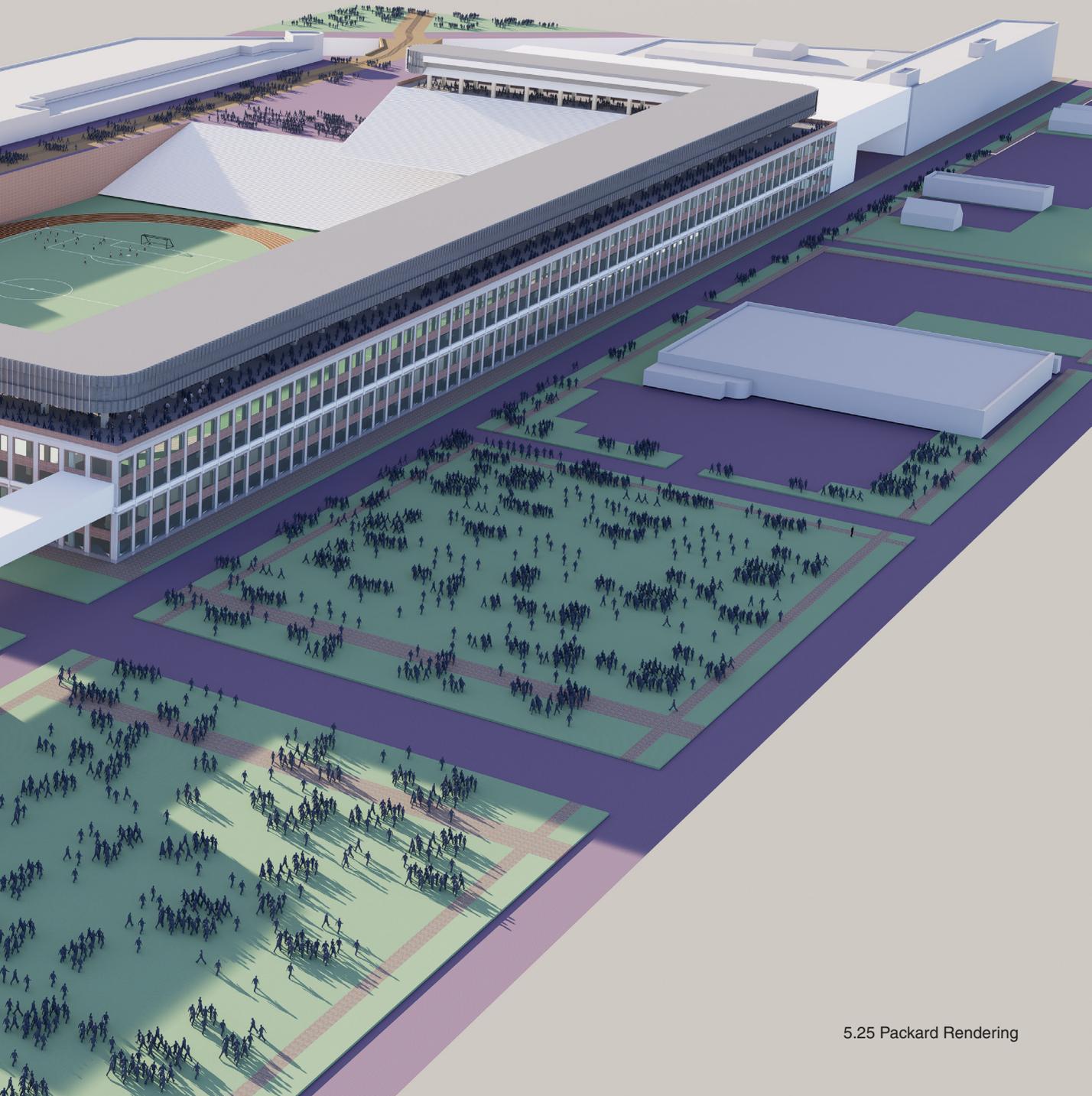
5.24 Stadium Additions





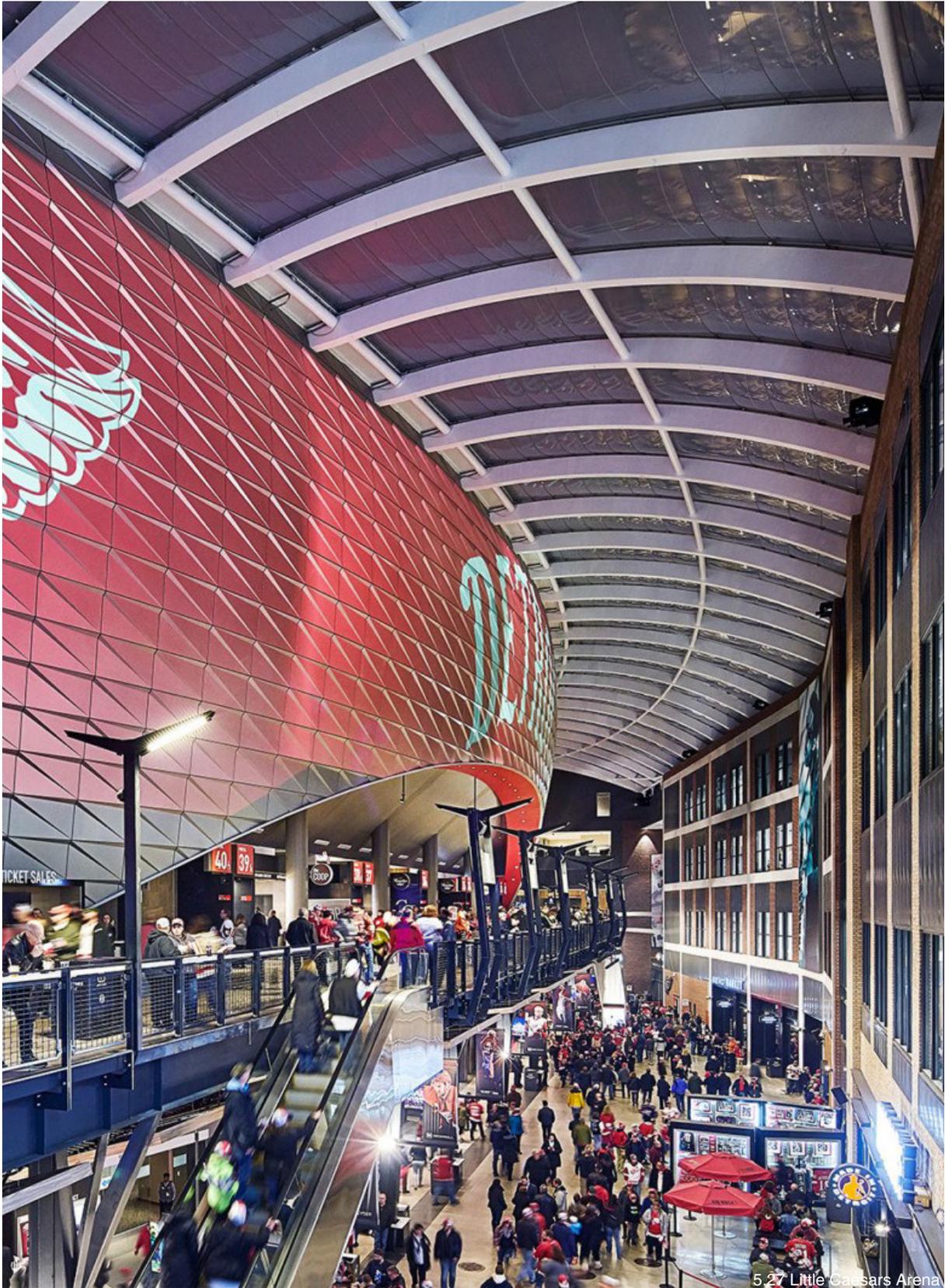
5.25 Packard Section





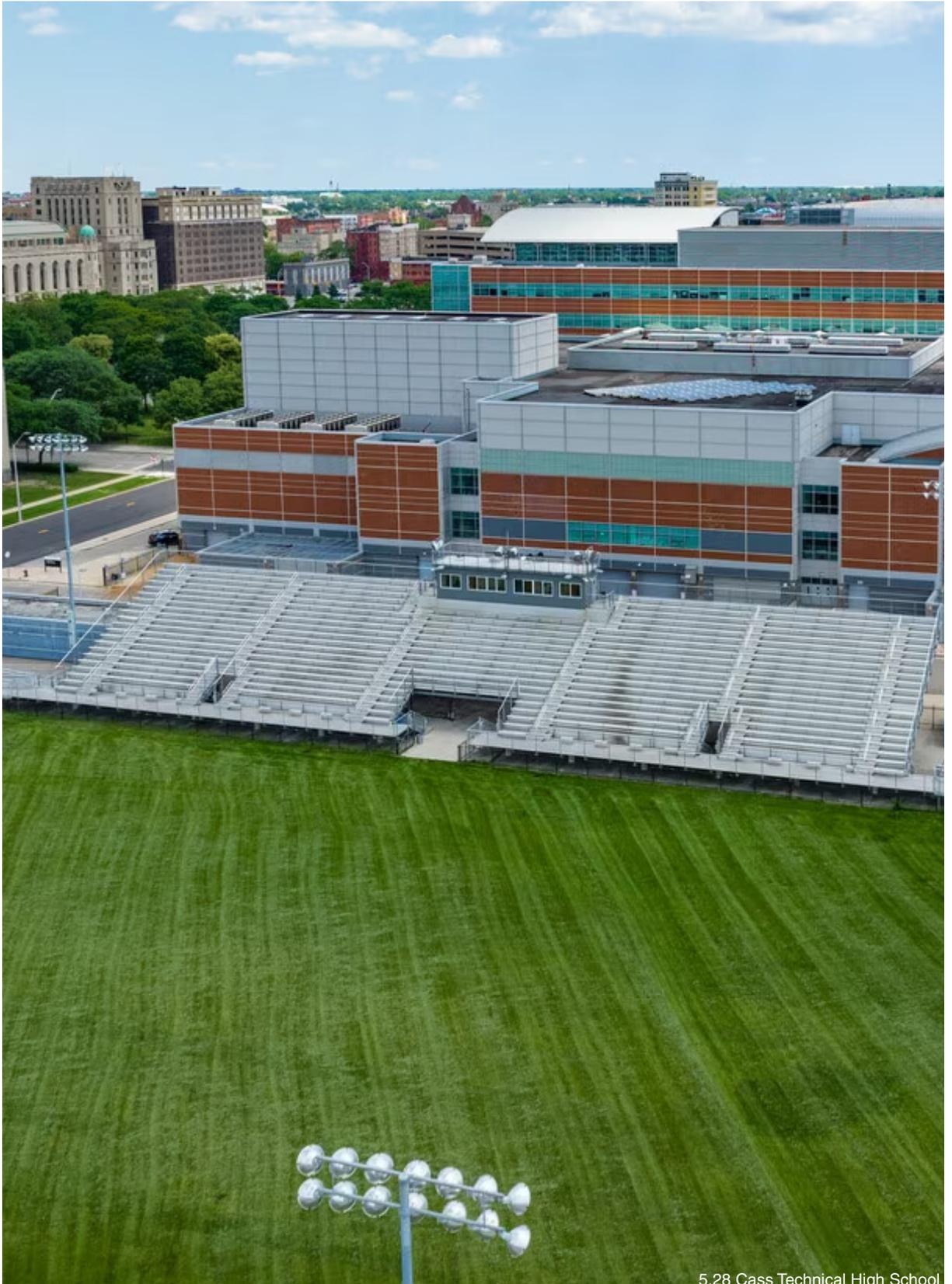
Venue 02 - Little Caesars Arena

Little Caesars Arena(LCA) is located at 2645 Woodward Ave and is home to the Detroit Pistons basketball professional basketball team and Detroit Red Wings professional hockey team. LCA has a seating capacity of 20,000 people. For this thesis investigation, LCA will be used for basketball because of the current use of the stadium hosting professional basketball and the stadium will need no renovation due to the seating capacity of 20,000 matching the Olympic spectator requirement for basketball. Although LCA does not connect to the Joe Louis Greenway, it is located in downtown Detroit which is very walkable and has a direct stop along the Q-Line.



Venue 03 - Cass Technical High School

Cass Technical High School(Cass Tech) is located at 2501 2nd Ave. The high school stadium has a current seating capacity of 4,000 but has the space to fill in temporary stands to meet the Olympic requirements. For this thesis investigation, Cass Tech will host Rugby. Cass Tech is in close proximity to the Q-Line.



5.28 Cass Technical High School

Venue 04 - Riverside Park Skatepark

Riverside Park Skatepark is located at 3085 W Jefferson Ave is a newly renovated park that hosts a very popular skatepark. Riverside will host skateboarding and cycling BMX freestyle. Although there is no seating for the skatepark there is plenty of space from the surrounding Riverside Park to place temporary stands for use during the Olympics. Riverside Park has a close connection to the Joe Louis Greenway.



5.29 Riverside Park Skatepark

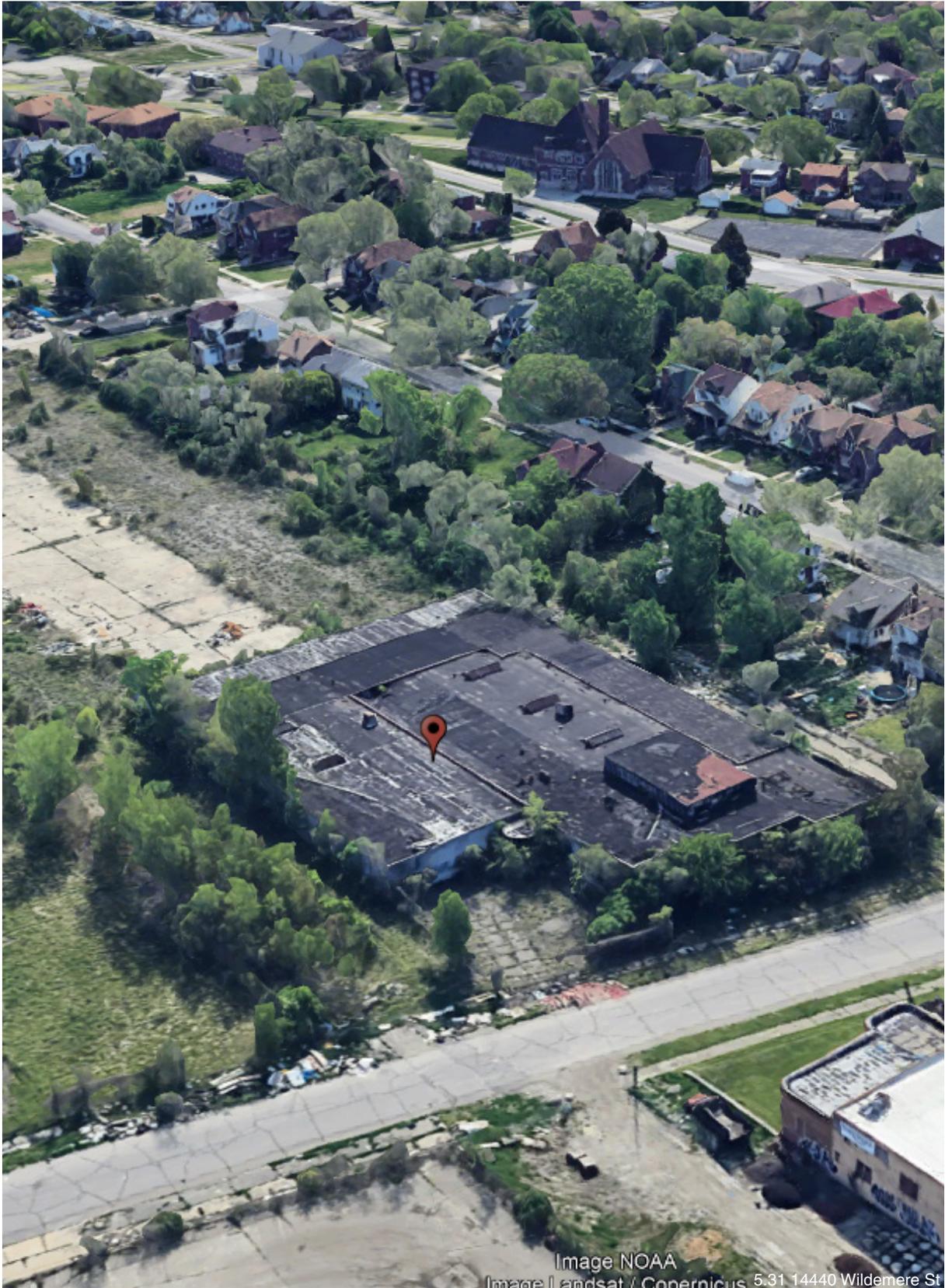
Venue 05 - Belle Isle

Belle Isle will be one of the most exciting venues proposed for this Olympics. Located on the Detroit River on the eastside of Detroit, Belle Isle will host seven sports including beach volleyball, canoe flatwater, equestrian, marathon swimming, rowing, sailing, and the triathlon. Marathon swimming, rowing, sailing, and the triathlon require no major infrastructure as they will take place in the water and around the island. Canoe flatwater and rowing will require some temporary infrastructure on the Detroit side of Belle Isle to accommodate and protect these events. Belle Isle also has a large rowing community and yacht club that can support the efforts of rowing and canoe flatwater. Equestrian will be a large temporary venue placed on a large field which currently has no direct programming. And finally beach volleyball, this thesis investigation proposes that beach volleyball is used to extend Belle Isle beach and leave behind beach volleyball courts to promote programming and bring people to Belle Isle beach. Belle Isle is connected by the Joe Louis Greenway and the island itself is considered a part of the Joe Louis Greenway.



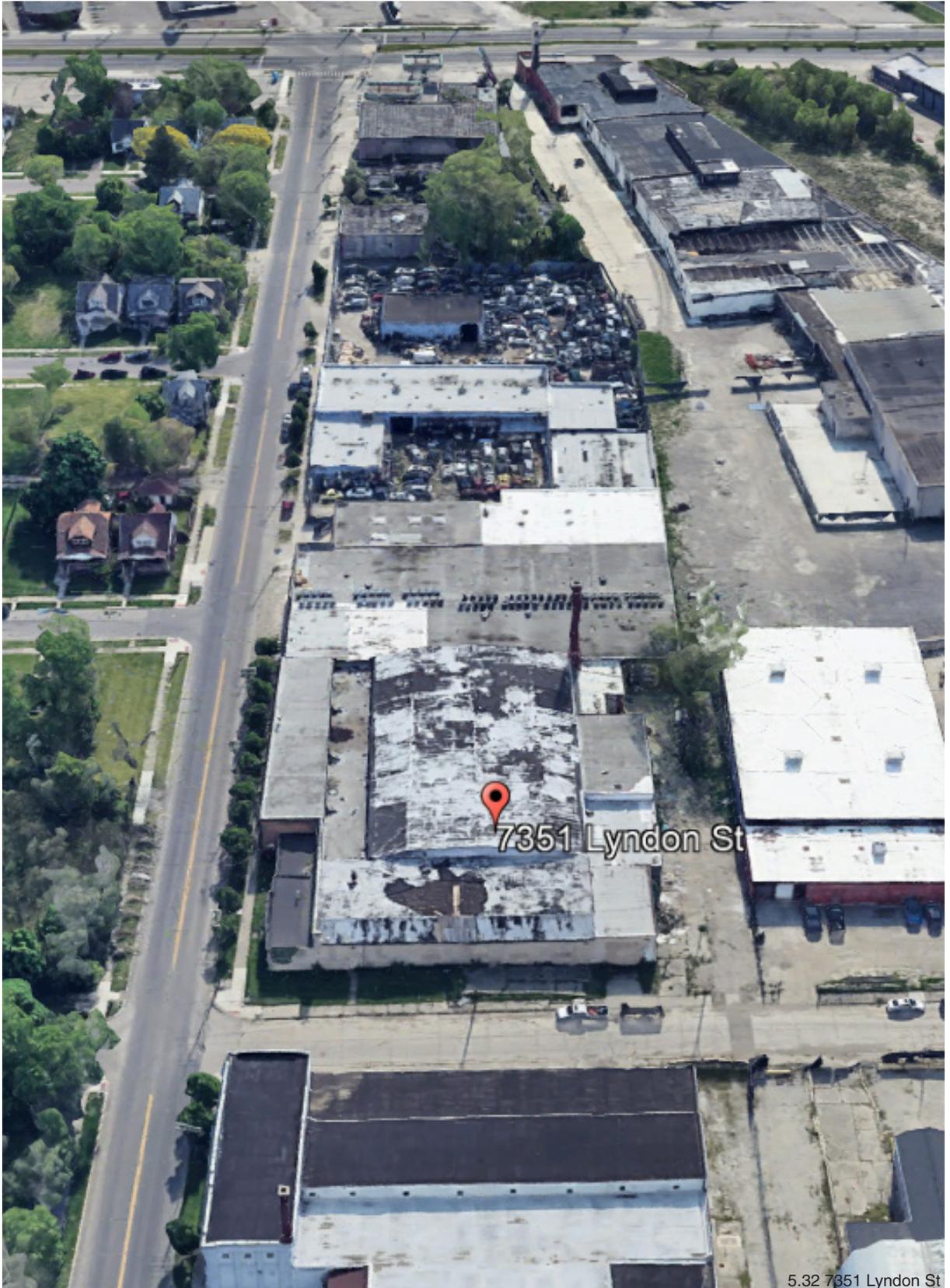
Venue 06 - 14440 Wildemere St

1440 Wildemere st was used as light manufacturing before it was abandoned. This venue will use the Olympics to adapt the building to a temporary stadium that will host 3x3 basketball and weightlifting. This venue has close connection to the Joe Louis Greenway.



Venue 07 - 7351 Lyndon St

7351 Lyndon st was used as industrial manufacturing before it was abandoned. This venue will use the Olympics to adapt the building to a temporary stadium that will host artistic swimming, diving and swimming. This venue has close connection to the Joe Louis Greenway.



Venue 08 - 5425 W Jefferson Ave

5425 W Jefferson ave was used as a power station before it was abandoned. This venue will use the Olympics to adapt the building to a temporary stadium that will host artistic gymnastics, rhythmic gymnastics and trampoline. This venue has close connection to the Joe Louis Greenway.



5425 W Jefferson Ave

Venue 09 - Calihan Hall

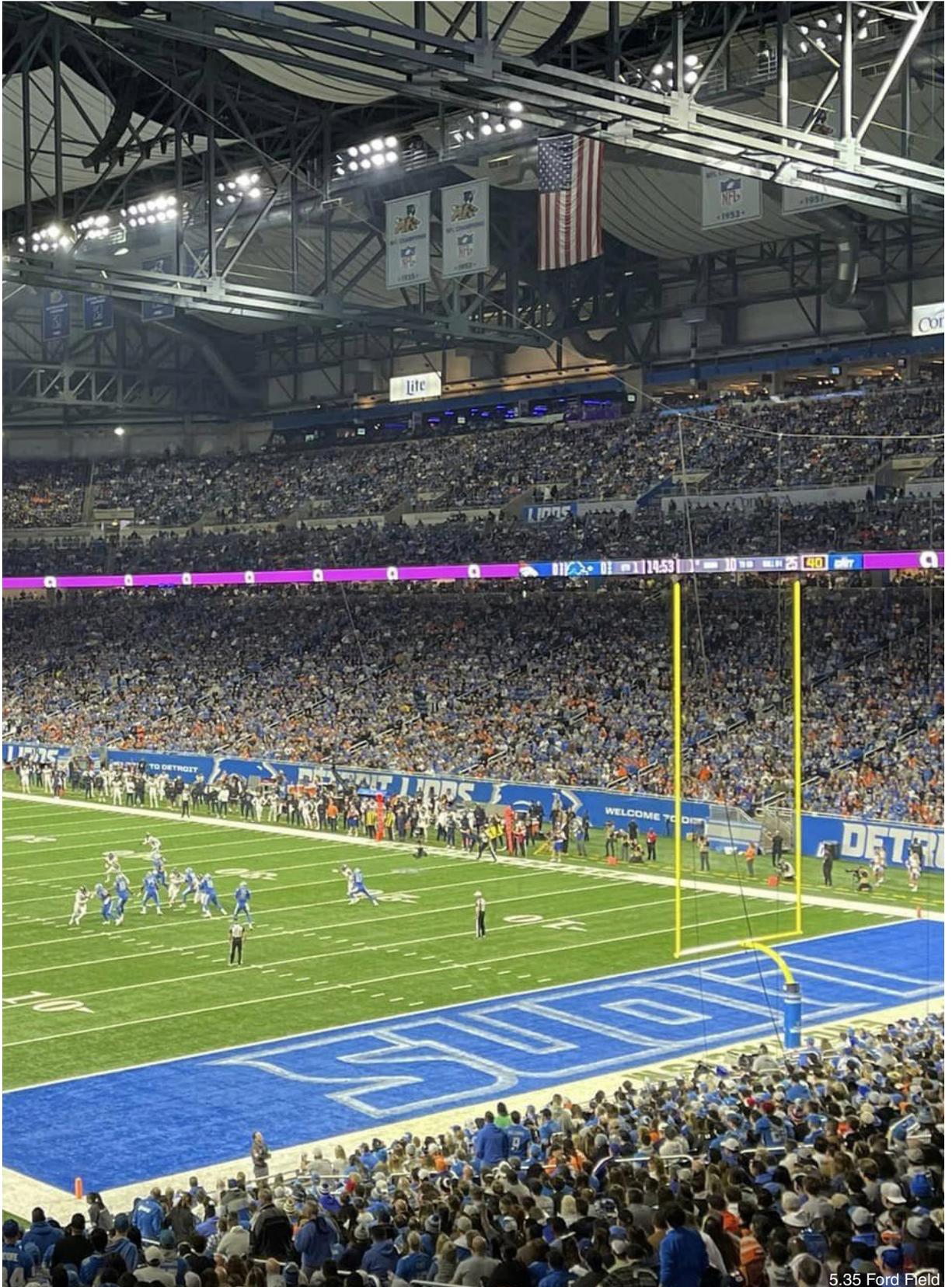
Calihan Hall is located at 4001 W McNichols Rd and is an athletic building on the McNichols campus of the University of Detroit Mercy. Currently the building is used by all Detroit Mercy athletics along with having a 10,000 seat basketball stadium. For this thesis investigation, Calihan Hall will host boxing because the stadium's capacity has the same requirements for spectators for Olympic boxing. Calihan Hall will connect to a proposed extension of the Joe Louis Greenway along with the extension along Livernois.



5.34 Calihan Hall

Venue 10 - Ford Field

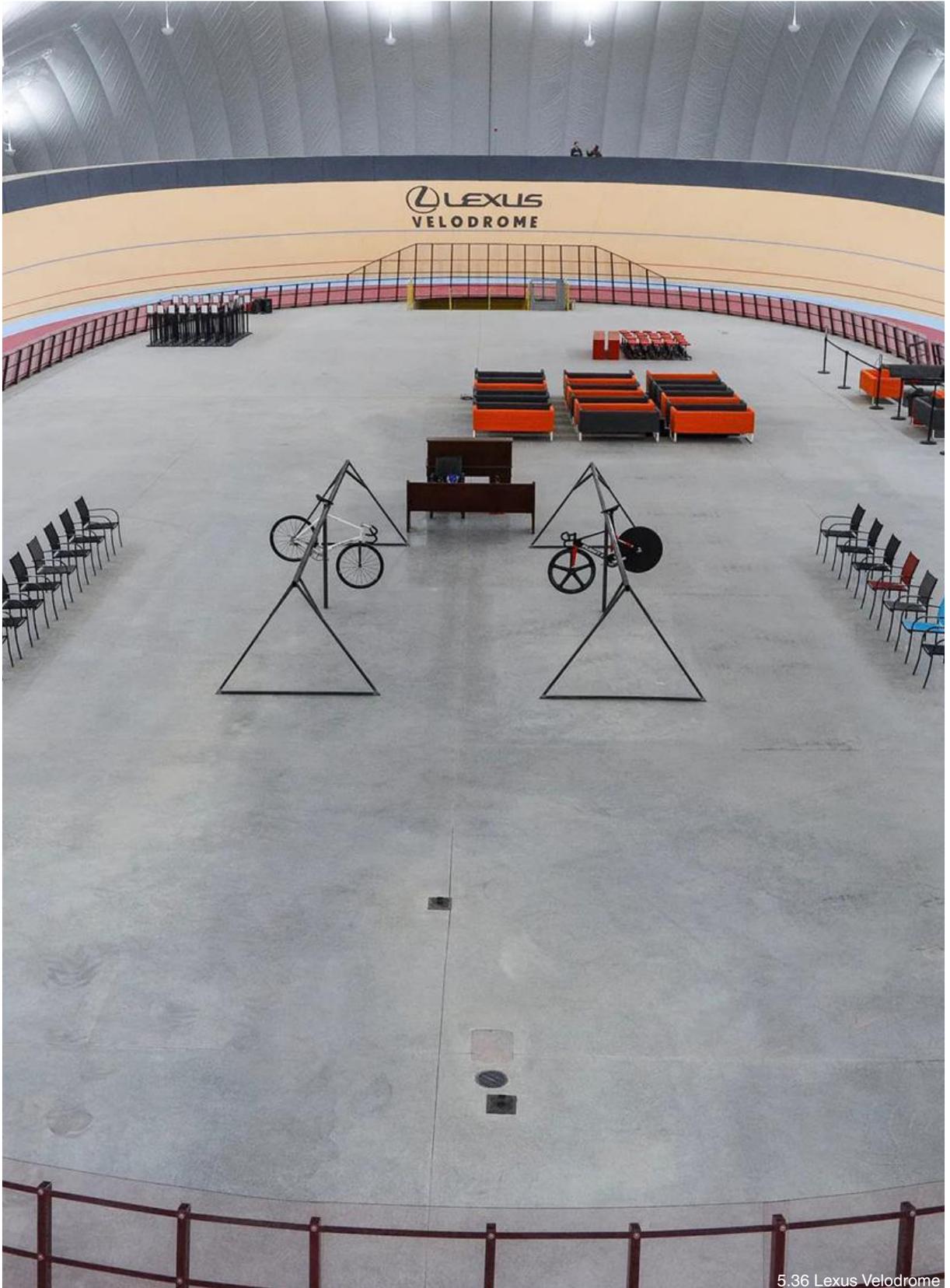
Ford Field is located at 2000 Brush St and is currently the largest stadium in Detroit at a capacity of 65,000. Ford Field is home to the Detroit Lions professional football team. For this thesis investigation, Ford Field will host tennis. Ford Field can be adapted to host tennis along with having an extra tennis field or two for practice. Ford Field is located in downtown Detroit and has close connection to the Q-Line.



5.35 Ford Field

Venue 11 - Lexus Velodrome

The Lexus Velodrome is located at 601 Mack Ave. in this thesis investigation, the Lexus Velodrome will host cycling track because of the cycling track located inside the Lexus Velodrome. Although there is no permanent seating, the velodrome is inside a blowup dome that can be removed for temporary seating to be implemented for the Olympics. This venue is one of the farthest venues from public transit of the Joe Louis Greenway and Q-Line being a 15 minute walk from the nearest Q-Line stop.



Venue 12 - 6044 W Fort St

6044 W Fort st is currently a brownfield located next to I-94 highway. This site will be one of three sites that are completely new construction and one of three sites that will remain a sporting venue post Olympics. This thesis investigation proposes cycling BMX racing be placed on the site. The spectator requirements for the venue are low allowing for this site to turn into public use of the BMX track after the Olympics. This venue has close connection to the Joe Louis Greenway.



6044 W Fort St

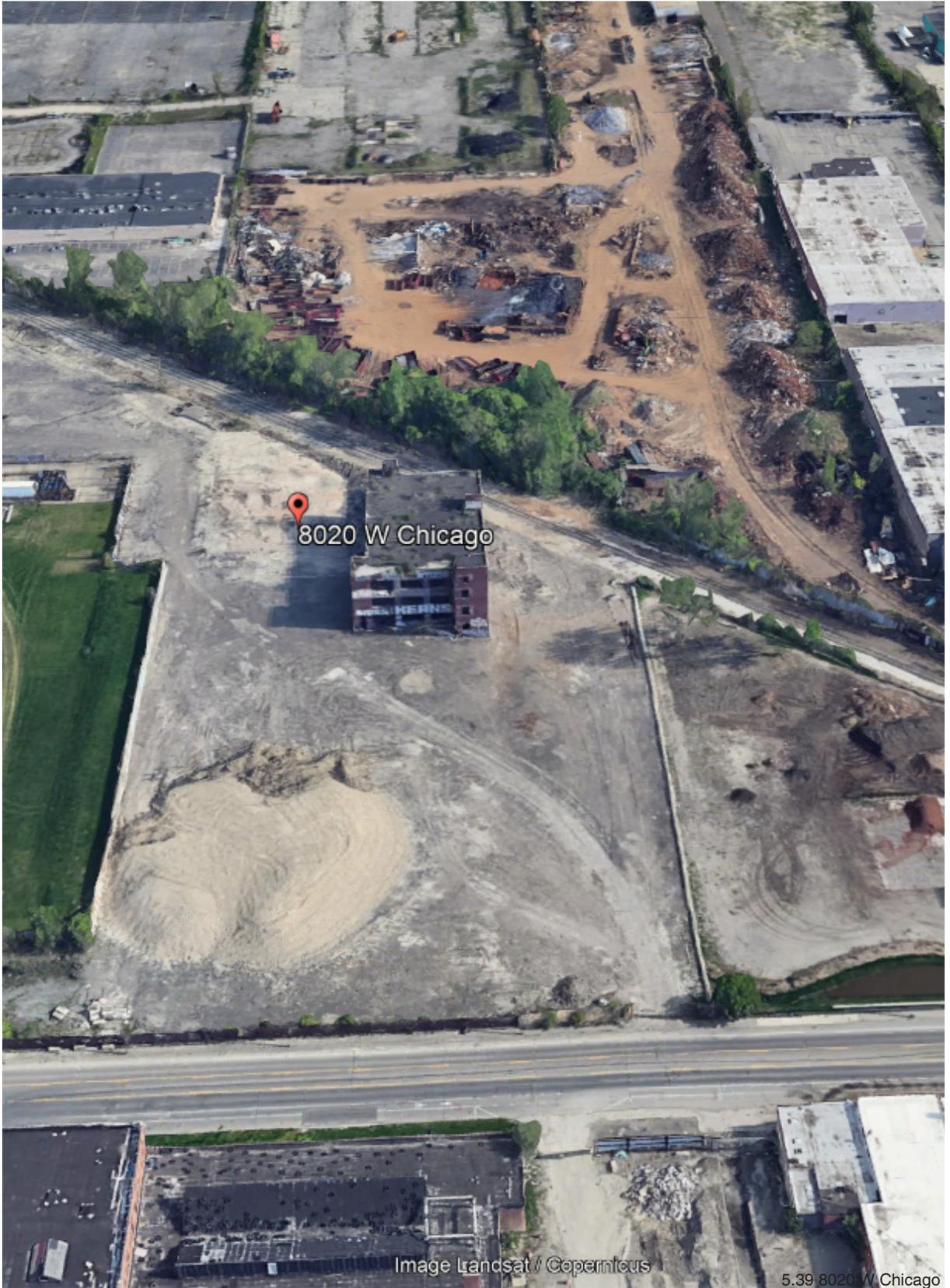
Venue 13 - Detroit Golf Club

The Detroit Golf Club is located at 17911 Hamilton Rd and hosts an 18 hole golf course which is a part of the PGA tour giving it a status as a premier golf course. The Detroit Golf Club will host golf in this thesis investigation because of its experience of hosting professional golf events. Golf has no seating requirements as spectators constantly move around following different golfers on the course. The Detroit Golf Club will connect to a proposed extension of the Joe Louis Greenway.



Venue 14 - 8020 W Chicago

8020 W Chicago is currently a brownfield near I-96 highway. This site will be one of three sites that are completely new construction and one of three sites that will remain a sporting venue post Olympics. This thesis investigation proposes water polo and canoe slalom be placed on the site. These sports can be easily adaptable into a public swimming pool and water installation after the Olympics. This venue has close connection to the Joe Louis Greenway.



8020 W Chicago

Venue 15 - 10503 Northlawn St

10503 Northlawn st is a large abandoned building. This venue will use the Olympics to adapt the building to a temporary stadium that will host fencing and badminton.

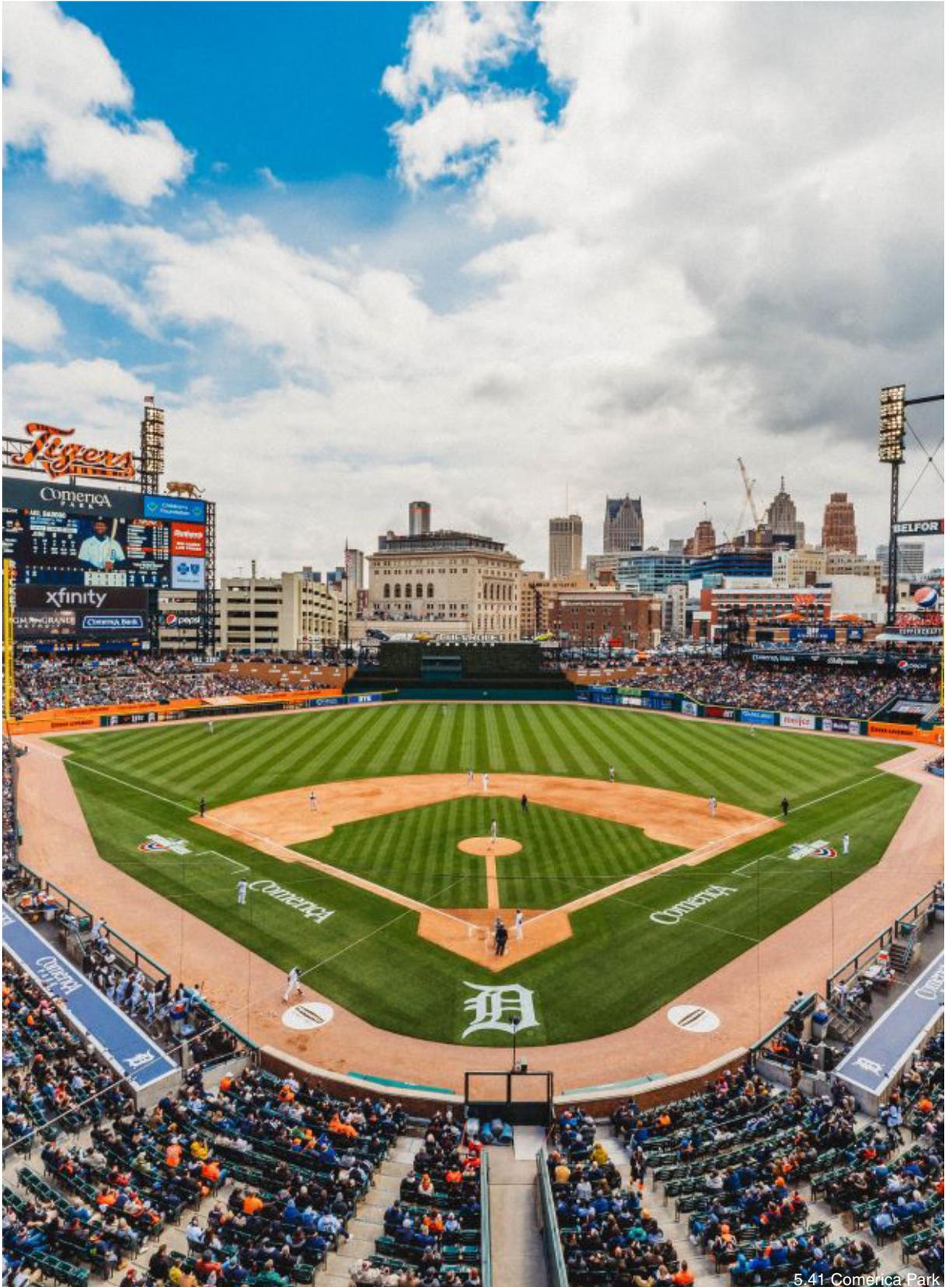
This venue has a close connection to the Joe Louis Greenway.



10503 Northlawn St

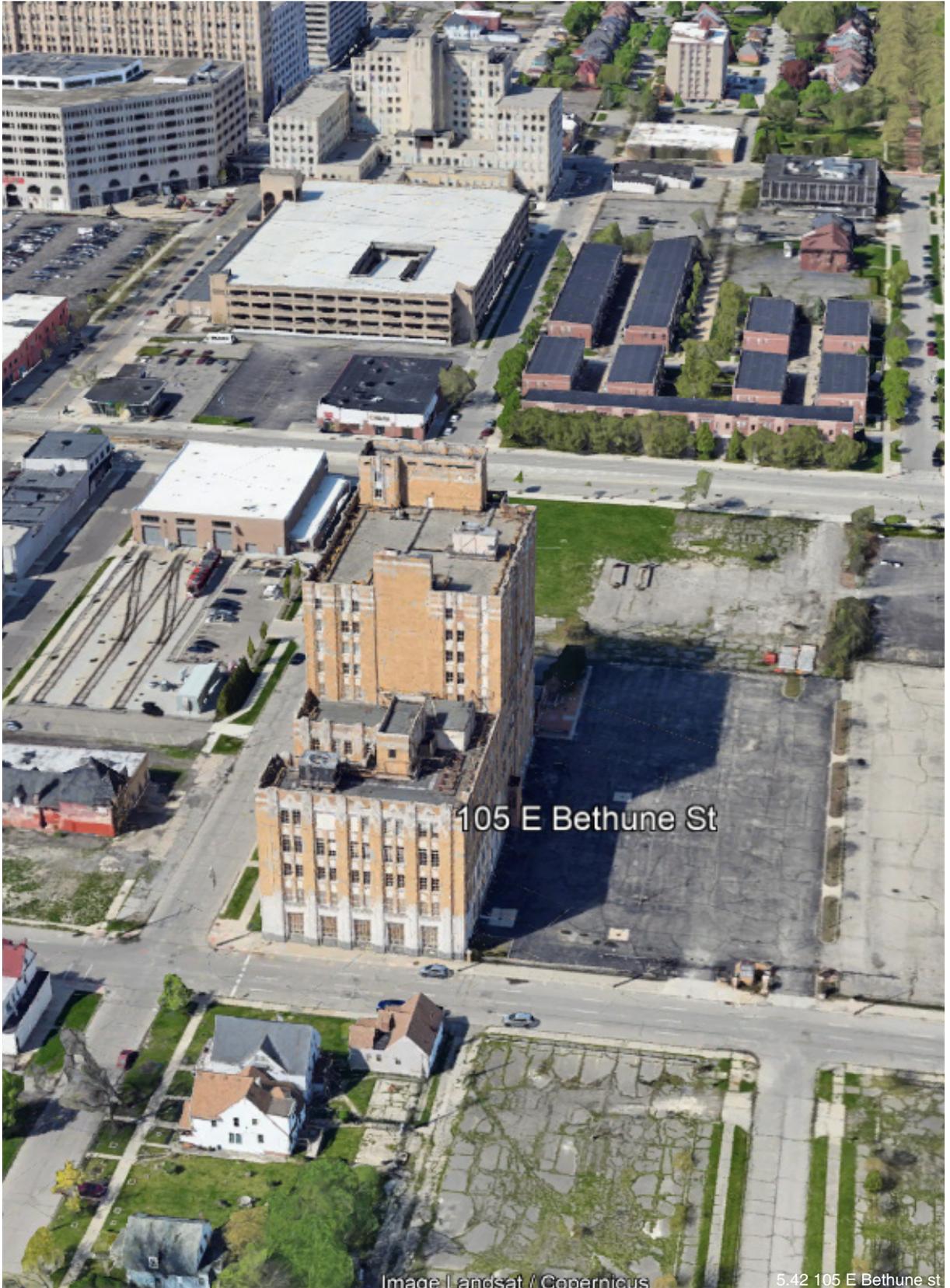
Venue 16 - Comerica Park

Comerica Park is located at 2100 Woodward Ave and currently is home to the Detroit Tigers professional baseball team. The stadium has a capacity of 41,000, the second largest stadium in Detroit. Comerica Park will host archery and shooting because of the large flat field that is needed for archery and shooting. The stadium will require no added seating and is in downtown Detroit with close connection to the Q-Line.



Venue 17 - 105 E Bethune St

105 E Bethune st was an office building that is now abandoned. This venue will use the Olympics to adapt the building to a temporary stadium that will host sport climbing and table tennis. This venue has a close connection to the Joe Louis Greenway.



105 E Bethune St

Venue 18 - Fisher Body Plant 21

Fisher Body Plant 21 is an historic building in Detroit that is located at 6051 Hastings St. There are currently plans to renovate this venue into a permanent residential complex.

The Olympics can aid in the cost of this renovation and host a temporary Olympic event before being permanently renovated into the residential complex.

The proposed Olympic sport being placed in this venue is handball due to the amount of spectators needed for the sport.



Venue 19 - Keyworth Stadium

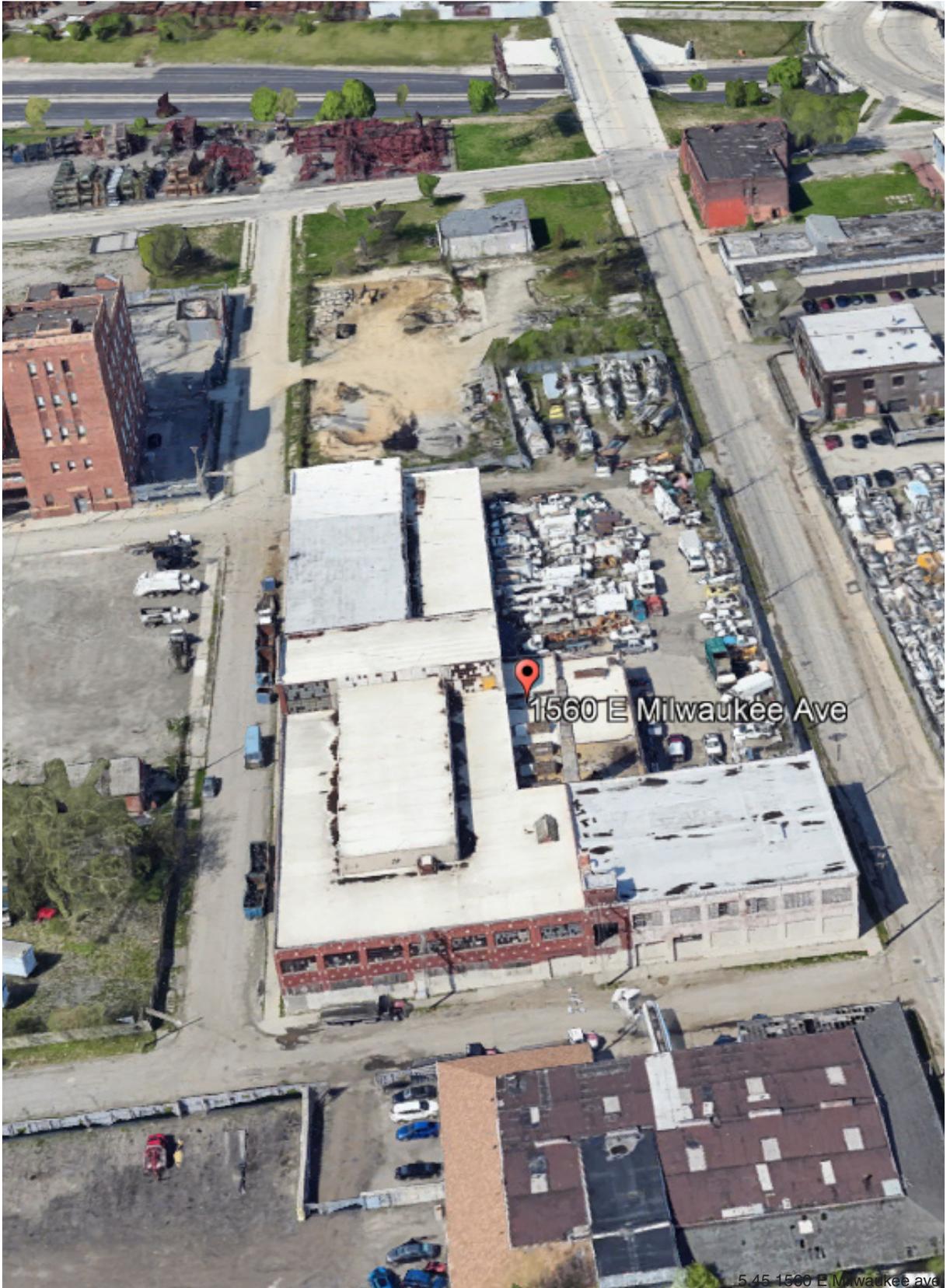
Keyworth stadium is located at 3201 Roosevelt St and is home to Detroit City Football Club, a professional soccer team. The stadium has a capacity of 8,000 with space to introduce temporary seating needed for the Olympics. Keyworth Stadium will host field hockey. This venue has close connection to the Joe Louis Greenway.



5.44 Keyworth Stadium

Venue 20 - 1560 E Milwaukee Ave

1560E Milwaukee Ave was a warehouse that is now abandoned. This venue will use the Olympics to adapt the building to a temporary stadium that will host volleyball. This venue has close connection to the Joe Louis Greenway.



Venue 21 - Clark Park YMCA

The Clark Park YMCA is located at 1601 Clark Ave and is abandoned but used to be home to a YMCA. This venue will use the Olympics to adapt the building to a temporary stadium that will host judo, karate, taekwondo and wrestling. This venue is one of two that has been designed for post Olympic uses. The use of this venue after the Olympic will be a support school that will focus on teaching architecture, engineering and skilled trades. The surrounding schools in the area do not have enough money to develop these programs individually but together they can create a shared space for students to learn important skills. This programming came from a client that worked with a studio during the 2021 fall semester at the University of Detroit Mercy School of Architecture and Community Development. This venue has close connection to the Joe Louis Greenway through Clark Park.

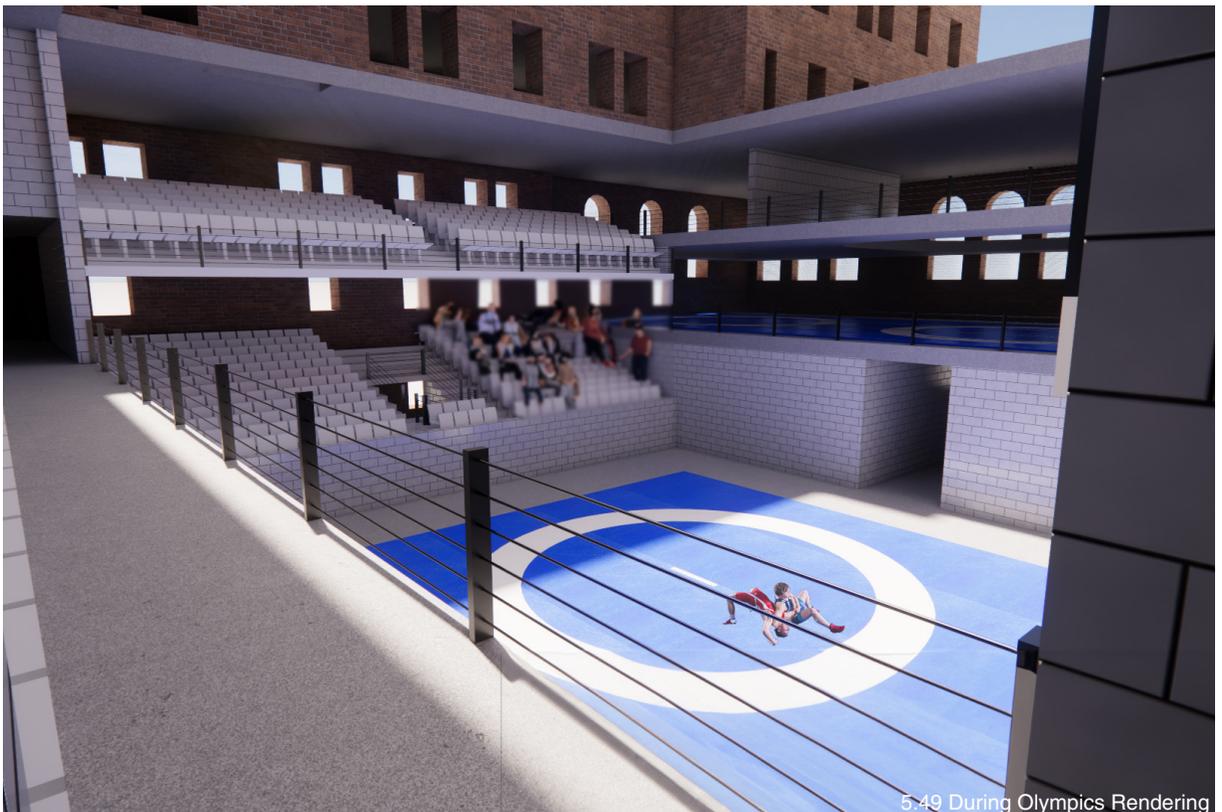
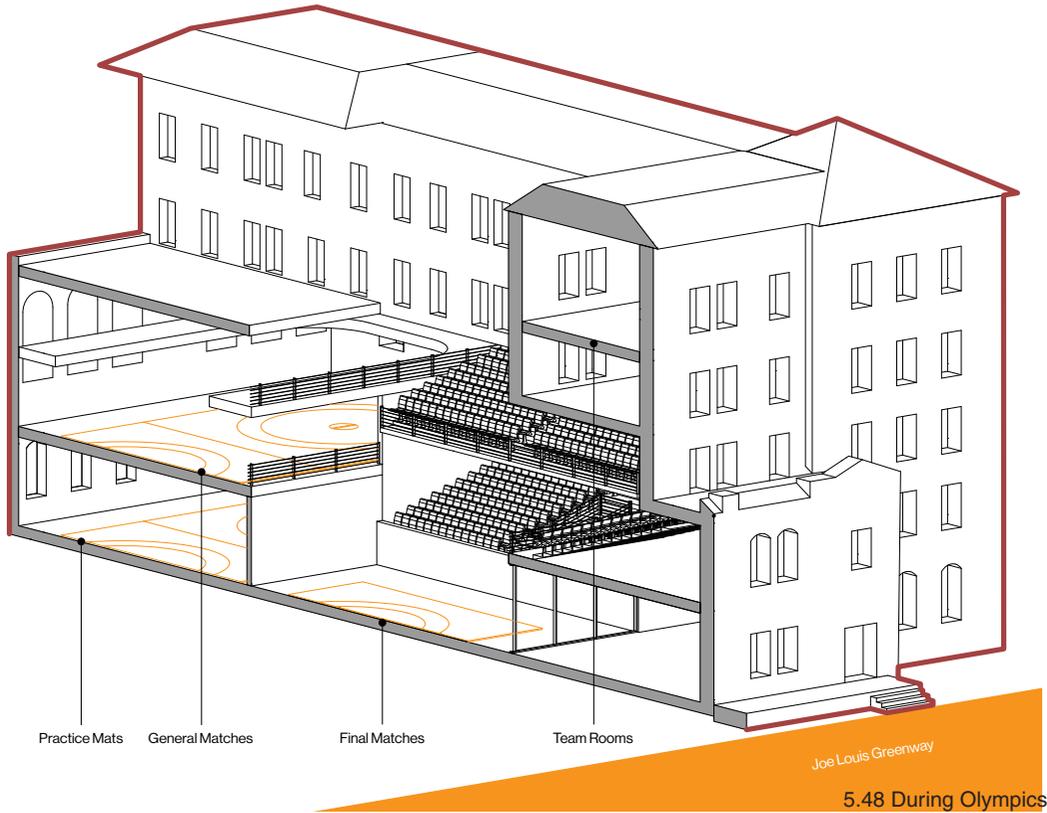


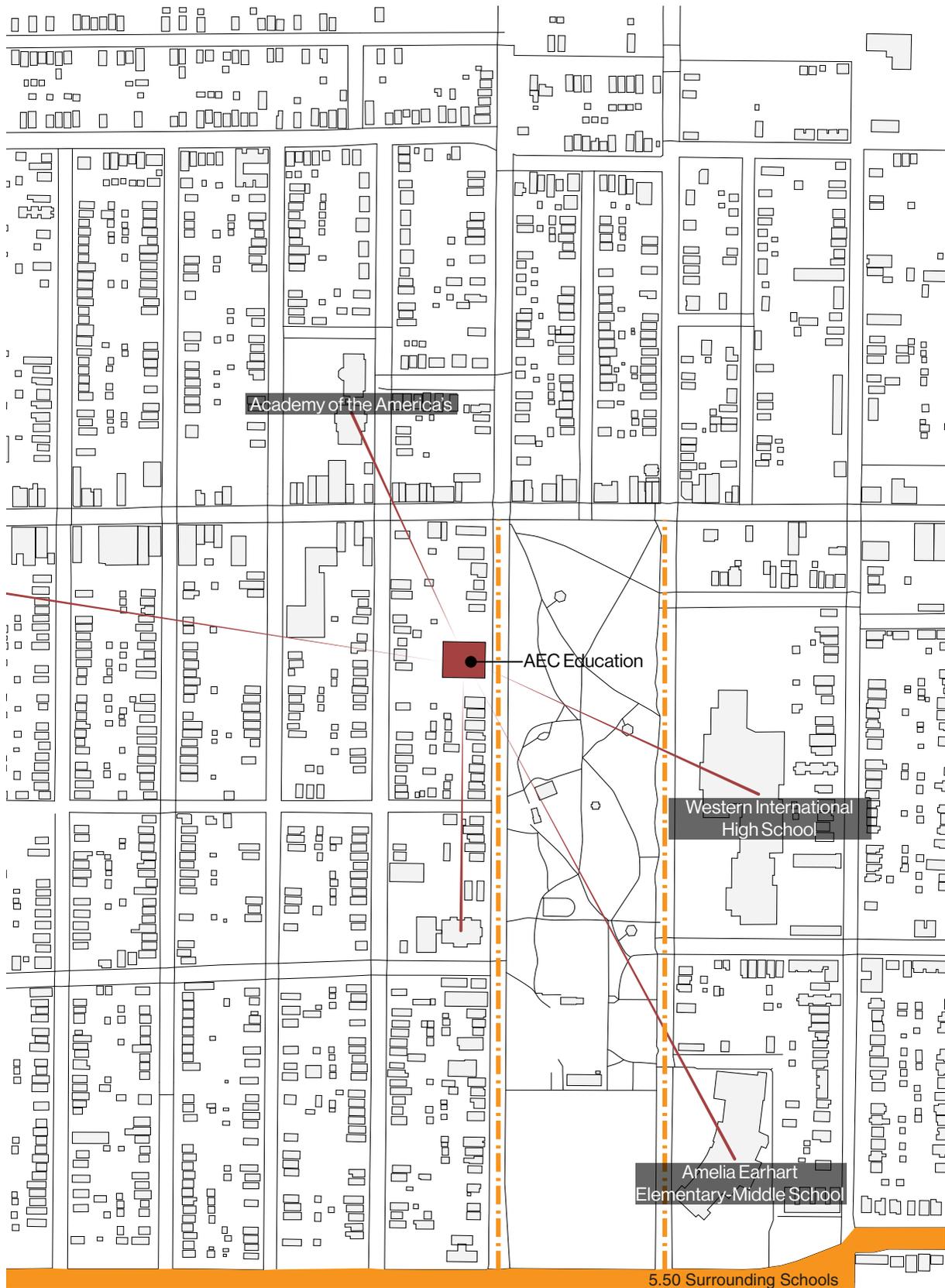
Olympic Renovation

This abandoned YMCA has large open spaces and a courtyard that can be expanded to hold the Olympics fighting events. After the Olympics the building will be adapted into a school for architecture, engineering and construction education being used by several surrounding schools.

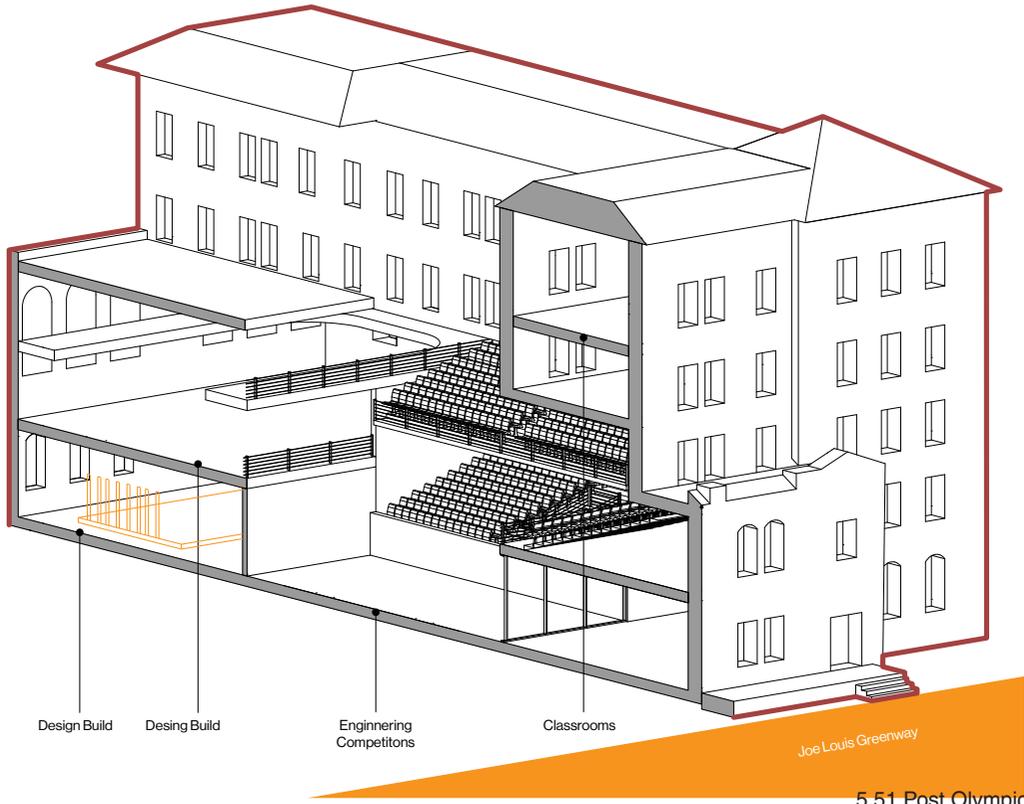


5.47 Clark Park Model





5.50 Surrounding Schools



5.51 Post Olympics Section



5.52 Post Olympics Rendering

CONCLUSION



Discussion

This thesis investigation sought to reimagine urban planning through the lens of the Olympics. Why should we wait decades or centuries for progress to be shown when an event like the Olympics can push the boundaries of urban planning. Not only was this thesis a new way of looking at urban planning but it is a critique of the current Olympic planning process. The Olympics are an incredible event but due to cities going for glamor rather than legacy the Olympics leave behind destruction. This more thoughtful way of looking at Olympic planning can be used in every Olympics, not just Detroit.

the sporting venues would cost. Based on previous US Olympics, they have been majority privately funded, putting little risk to the city or its citizens for the amount of debt the city will face.

Limitations

This thesis investigation is filled with limitations. The Olympics are an incredibly complex event that an architect cannot solve alone. There are thousands of people who get involved in the planning process for the Olympics. The placement of the sporting venue is only a small sliver of what the Olympics actually entails but the sporting venues are the most heavily criticized about the Olympics. Another large limitation is the economics of the Olympics. It costs an extreme amount of money to operate the Olympics but it is an impossible task to make an accurate estimate to the amount of money even

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Detroitgreenways.org

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Detroitgreenways.org

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Detroitgreenways.org

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5.16 Packard Assembly Line

5.17 New York Yankees Team Offices

5.18 Turkish Athlete Training Facility

5.19 Packard Stadium Plan

5.20 Packard Site

5.21 Removal of Buildings

5.22 Addition of Level

5.23 Sunken Field of Play

5.24 Stadium Additions

5.25 Packard Section

5.26 Packard Rendering

5.27 Little Caesars Arena

5.28 Cass Technical High School

5.29 Riverside Park Skatepark

5.47 Clark Park Model

5.30 Belle Isle

5.48 During Olympics Section

5.31 14440 Wildemere st

5.49 During Olympics Rendering

5.32 7351 Lyndon st

5.50 Surrounding Schools

5.33 5425 W Jefferson ave

5.51 Post Olympics Section

5.34 Calihan Hall

5.52 Post Olympics Rendering

5.35 Ford Field

5.36 Lexus Velodrome

5.37 6044 W Fort st

5.38 Detroit Golf Club

5.39 8020 W Chicago

5.40 10503 Northlawn st

5.41 Comerica Park

5.42 105 E Bethune st

5.43 Fisher Body Plant 21

5.44 Keyworth Stadium

5.45 1560 E Milwaukee ave

5.46 Clark Park YMCA

