



## OLYMPIC ATHLETES AND INFRASTRUCTURE

Every four years, an exciting event brings the world's top athletes together for a few brief weeks: the Olympics. Many athletes train their whole lives for these international games, aching to represent their nation's best. Cities and countries vie for the opportunity to host the Olympics, seeking the chance to become an exciting part of history.

Over the years, the Olympics have grown in size, capacity and impact. Records also indicate that participation in the summer Olympics is higher on average than in the winter Olympics. While only 1423 athletes attended the 1988 Winter Olympics in Calgary, the 2002 winter games in Salt Lake City numbered nearly 2400 athletes. The numbers of athletes are also increasing with every summer games: in 1976 Montreal hosted 6084 athletes while the 2000 Olympics in Sydney saw over 10 500 athletes compete.

Hosting the Olympics does not simply require a hospitable attitude and an appropriate geography. Preparations for the influx of people, athletes and tourists require significant attention to, and maintenance of, key infrastructures and services such as athletic facilities, athlete's villages, transportation and environmental services. The infrastructures for such events need to be renewed, expanded or built. Such feats are neither simple to plan nor finance, and questions have been raised regarding the economic viability of hosting the Olympics.

Given the high costs associated with the provision of infrastructures and resources, preparations begin years in advance to ensure high quality sports infrastructures are in place for the Olympic athletes. Plans to ensure that use of these infrastructures reaches beyond the Olympics are important for deciding which infrastructures should be renewed or expanded, and which should be built.

A variety of uses for Olympic infrastructures have been developed. In Montreal, the athlete's village is now used for housing, and the Olympic Park is home to a variety of tourist attractions, including the Biodome. Canada Olympic Park, the site of the 1988 Calgary Olympics, was built in 1986 and is still used today. Top quality athletic infrastructures, such as the Bob Nevin Training Centre (BNTC) in Calgary, continue to offer training facilities for a wide variety of athletes. In preparation for the 2010 winter games in Vancouver, standards exist to ensure the use of existing infrastructures, such as the ski slopes at Whistler, and the use of the athlete's villages as affordable housing post-Olympics. Construction of a rapid transit link between Vancouver's airport and downtown will contribute to the Olympic transit network.

The increasing size and growing impacts of the Olympics require sustainable infrastructures that will meet the quality and standards of Olympic athletes and will also meet the needs and capacities of the hosting city. Ensuring these infrastructures can be used down the road is essential in the long term planning process that is needed when building or renewing infrastructures in preparation for the Olympics.

## **For More Information:**

### Websites

Canada Olympic Park <http://www.canadaolympicpark.ca/>

CBC News: Olympic News and Views [http://www.cbc.ca/cgi-bin/newsworld/viewer.cgi?FILE=NL20030626.html&TEMPLATE=newsreal\\_archive.ssi&SC=NL](http://www.cbc.ca/cgi-bin/newsworld/viewer.cgi?FILE=NL20030626.html&TEMPLATE=newsreal_archive.ssi&SC=NL)

Official Website of the Olympic Movement <http://www.olympic.org/>

Parc olympique <http://www.rio.gouv.qc.ca/>

The City of Calgary: 1988 Winter Olympics Photo Gallery  
<http://www.calgary.ca/cweb/gateway/gateway.asp?GID=395&CID=0&URL=http%3A%2F%2Fcontent%2Ecalgary%2Eca%2FCCA%2FCity%2BLiving%2FPeople%2BResource%2FHistorians%2F1988%2BWinter%2BOlympics%2BPhoto%2BGallery%2Findex%2Ehtm>

The Official Site of the Vancouver 2010 Olympic and Paralympic Winter Games  
<http://www.winter2010.com/>

### Publications

Hiller, H.H. (1989) "Impact and Image: The Convergence of Urban Factors in Preparing for the 1988 Calgary Winter Olympics," in G.J. Syme, B.J. Shaw, D.M. Fenton, and W.S. Mueller (eds.), *The Planning and Evaluation of Hallmark Events*, Avebury, Aldershot, pp. 119-131.

Jedras, Jeff. "Greening the Games: Green Procurement Key for 2010 Olympics"  
*Summit: Canada's Magazine on Public Sector Purchasing* June 2004: 6-8.  
[http://www.summitconnects.com/Articles\\_Columns/PDF\\_Documents/200406\\_01.pdf](http://www.summitconnects.com/Articles_Columns/PDF_Documents/200406_01.pdf).

"Make or Break" *The Economist* 14 September 2000.