

Lopez, Donna

From: Saul Tannenbaum [saul@tannenbaum.org]
Sent: Thursday, December 04, 2014 10:44 AM
To: City Council
Cc: Lopez, Donna
Subject: Hosting the Olympics is a terrible idea; the Council should express its opposition
Attachments: Five Reason Why Hosting The Olympics Is A Terrible Idea Cambridge Community Television.pdf

To The Honorable The City Council,

Without any public discussion, Cambridge will play a role in what the Boston Globe describes as a likely successful bid to host the Olympics in 2024.

This is a terrible idea. The Olympics rarely ends well for the host city, offering benefits to the few at the cost of the many.

Attached, you can find my article highlighting five basic reasons why hosting the Olympics is a terrible idea. You may also find it online at NeighborMedia:
<https://www.cctvcambridge.org/NoOlympics> .

I call on the City Council to express its opposition to the Boston bid to host the Olympics or, if it chooses not to do so, request that Cambridge's discussions be made fully public, establishing a rare element of transparency in this closed, corrupt process.

A copy of this is cc'ed to the City Clerk for inclusion in the Council's record.

Sincerely,

Saul Tannenbaum
16 Cottage St.

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Five Reason Why Hosting The Olympics Is A Terrible Idea



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Olympic fever grips the Hub elite; Cambridge should resist

Posted by [stannenb](#) on Nov 26, 2014.

Two months from now, the United States Olympic Committee will decide which city will host the 2024 Olympic Games. Boston - and "Boston" means "Cambridge, too" - has, according to a [Boston Globe report](#), has nearly secured its place as a host city. If the Olympics come to Boston, Cambridge will be heavily involved. Athletic events, including archery and fencing, are expected to be hosted at MIT. Organizers are working to involve local educational institutions as part of the fabric of the Olympic bid. MIT's Executive Vice President, Israel Ruiz, [answering questions for the MIT News Office cites positively his experience as student, providing unpaid labor to Barcelona's 1992 Olympics](#). This is the strange boosterism of the Olympics, one where the impossibility to actually pay for all the labor required to hold the games becomes a benefit.

Hosting the Olympics is a terrible idea, one that will benefit a few at the cost of the many. Here are five reasons why.

1. The Olympic bid process is corrupt.

This process by which Boston is seeking the Olympics is corrupt. This is not bags-of-money-under-the-table corrupt, at least not yet, but corrupt in the sense that the real scandal is what's legal. The chair of [Boston Olympics 2024 Partnership](#) is John Fish, who is also [Chairman and CEO of Suffolk Construction](#), the

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region's largest construction company and this, will profit enormously should Boston host the Olympics. By all rights, this should end the discussion about Boston's bid for the Olympics and should make it radioactive for any politician.

2. The Olympic planning process is opaque and proceeding without any public input.

Despite promises from Fish to hold public hearings, none have happened. Even the Boston Globe, most of whose "reporting" is thinly veiled Olympics cheerleading, **has called for a real public process**. Should Boston host the Olympics, it will define public priorities for the next decade and crowd out any other effort to address problems in our region. Housing Olympic athletes will command more resources than efforts to attack our housing crisis. Cambridge activists like to point to any pro-development decision as lacking public input and not reflecting the will of the people. They should look at the Olympic process to see what that really means.

3. The Olympics never turn out well for the host city.

As Smith College economist Andrew Zimbalist <http://www.bostonglobe.com/opinion/2014/10/09/private-group-wants-olympics-boston-let-them-pay-for/Lhszp3SJirPrwAsrfpWz5J/story.html> wrote in the Boston Globe:

W *The independent scholarship on the return to hosting the Olympics suggests that it does not pay off economically. Beijing 2008 spent over \$40 billion; London 2012 spent close to \$20 billion; Rio de Janeiro 2016 is projected to spend over \$20 billion; and, Tokyo 2020, just having won the bid a year ago, is already facing political protests and reformulating its plan to reduce costs. The Summer Games bring in around \$5 billion to \$6 billion from television, sponsorships, ticket sales, licensing, and merchandise. Less than half of this sum goes to the host city. Beijing and London actually experienced a decrease in international tourism during their host month and year. This balance of revenues and expenses is not encouraging for a prospective host city.*

4. The supposed "benefits" are things taxpayers are going to pay for.

After touting infrastructure improvements that the Olympics

were said to bring, rhetoric from the organizing has started to change. Feeling the need to portray their proposal as "frugal", those improvements, largely to the transportation systems, are now described as things we'd be doing anyway with tax dollars. We'll have to do them faster to meet the Olympic schedule, something that will just increase the cost.

5. **Metro Boston will become a virtual police state.**

Unlike many purported national security threats, the Olympics is a genuine target and Boston has already experienced one mass sports event tragically disrupted. A source told David Zirin of The Nation "how the city was able to shut itself down after the Boston Marathon bombing" was why Boston is in top contention. For the Sochi Winter Olympics, Russia created a 60 mile-wide "ring of steel" in which everyone was "subjected to near total surveillance." Security will not be under the control of local authorities. The Olympics will be a designated **National Special Security Event** which will place the entire region under the jurisdiction of the Secret Service. Forget Cambridge's resistance to government surveillance cameras. They'll be installed, along with face recognition, biometrics, and whatever happens to be state-of-the-art in a decade. And they won't be uninstalled when the Olympics leaves town, they'll become the new normal.

The Cambridge City Council, which is prepared to opine on almost anything, has stood mute as the Olympic juggernaut moves forward. It's time for the City Council to speak to Cambridge values and declare its resistance to The Olympics.

No Boston Olympics, a citizens' group organizing to keep the Olympics out of Boston, can be found on the web at <http://www.nobostonolympics.org/>.

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