PARIS 2024 OLYMPICS & PARALYMPICS
LEGACY SWIMMING SITES
32 SITES IDENTIFIED BY CITIES

Athletes at the 2024 Olympics in Paris will swim in the Seine, in the heart of Paris, for the triathlon and the 10-kilometer open-water race. This event will change the relationship between Paris and its waterways and open up prospects for future activities, including recreational, in a metropolitan area where visible water is rare and demand for swimming sites and nautical activities is strong. The survey of all legacy swimming sites across Greater Paris is summarized in this note. Swimming in the Seine was banned in 1923, but remained a common practice until the 1960s, when it disappeared due to deteriorated water quality. Hosting the Olympics has catalyzed efforts to reduce pollution, improve water quality so residents can swim in it, and take better care of the environment and biodiversity.

26 cities have suggested 32 prospective swimming sites. Some of them hope to quickly establish swimming sites to open every summer going forward. Others could, in the medium term, gradually develop the suggested sites by offering swimming only for specific events, or start with nautical activities.

Cities have identified prospective swimming sites in the Seine or the Marne
Bathing sites identified by cities

- Prospective site
- Existing site
- Existing event-based bathing site
- Bathing site for licensed sports activities

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To this end, the Prefect of the Île-de-France Region, the Prefect and Mayor of Paris, and the President of the Greater Paris Metropolitan Area have operated a Water Quality and Swimming Steering Committee since 2016. The purpose of this Committee is to monitor efforts to improve water quality in the Seine and the Marne and to prepare a major legacy from the Olympics and Paralympics: new swimming sites in both rivers. This has involved a wide array of work, such as bringing buildings’ poorly connected sewage systems into compliance, connecting vessels to the sewage system, reducing runoff into the Seine in rainy weather, including by building a large rainwater collection basin in Paris, and lowering rainwater volumes by making soils more permeable.

In September 2016, Apur provided the Steering Committee with the findings of its first survey of 49 prospective sites, which it conducted during the year. Then, the Prefect of the Île-de-France Region, the Prefect and Mayor of Paris, and the President of the Greater Paris Metropolitan Area sent the information to all elected officials in the region to keep them updated on efforts to prepare for 2024 and issue a call for expressions of interest in opening summertime swimming sites along the Seine and Marne rivers in their respective cities. A first document, issued in October 2018, presented the identified sites along with a collection of factsheets, outlining any dealbreakers or eligibility conditions for swimming (need to move sites, maximum facility size, development requirements). Following a Steering Committee meeting called “Preparing to Open Legacy Swimming Sites for the Olympic and Paralympic Games” held in July 2023, Apur updated the 2018 document by requesting information from candidate cities and including newly identified sites. This was an opportunity to take stock of ongoing studies. While some cities have conducted preliminary studies and are hoping to open their sites for swimming as early as summer 2025, others are still considering their decision. The study introduces all potential Seine and Marne sites identified by Île-de-France cities as possible post-Olympics swimming sites. Some of them are located close to each other. Each site is presented in a factsheet format discussing considerations such as navigation, environment, cultural heritage, riverbank and water occupation, and water quality.

Overall, 32 sites have been identified, of which 27 are located within the Greater Paris Metropolis. 26 cities, including 21 in the Greater Paris Metropolis, have submitted proposals. These swimming sites will be implemented progressively in the short and medium term, based on water quality improvements and the status of the studies required prior to opening. Open-water swimming, which is gaining in popularity, especially during heat waves, is soon to become a reality in Paris!