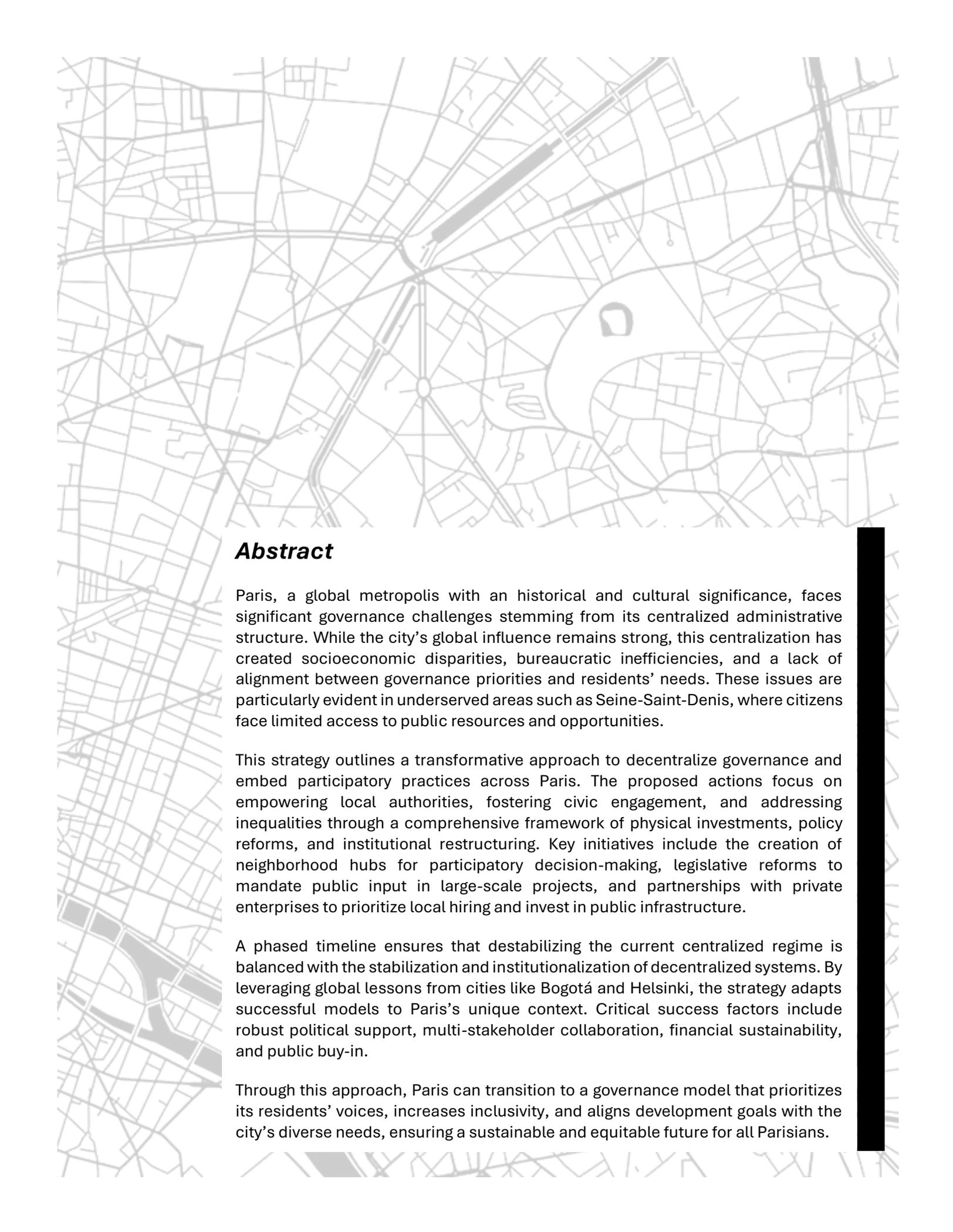


Power for Paris, Voice for the Parisian

*Urban Trends and Strategies | 7XX9M0
Assignment 2 | City Strategy*

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GROUP 7B: Paris



Abstract

Paris, a global metropolis with an historical and cultural significance, faces significant governance challenges stemming from its centralized administrative structure. While the city's global influence remains strong, this centralization has created socioeconomic disparities, bureaucratic inefficiencies, and a lack of alignment between governance priorities and residents' needs. These issues are particularly evident in underserved areas such as Seine-Saint-Denis, where citizens face limited access to public resources and opportunities.

This strategy outlines a transformative approach to decentralize governance and embed participatory practices across Paris. The proposed actions focus on empowering local authorities, fostering civic engagement, and addressing inequalities through a comprehensive framework of physical investments, policy reforms, and institutional restructuring. Key initiatives include the creation of neighborhood hubs for participatory decision-making, legislative reforms to mandate public input in large-scale projects, and partnerships with private enterprises to prioritize local hiring and invest in public infrastructure.

A phased timeline ensures that destabilizing the current centralized regime is balanced with the stabilization and institutionalization of decentralized systems. By leveraging global lessons from cities like Bogotá and Helsinki, the strategy adapts successful models to Paris's unique context. Critical success factors include robust political support, multi-stakeholder collaboration, financial sustainability, and public buy-in.

Through this approach, Paris can transition to a governance model that prioritizes its residents' voices, increases inclusivity, and aligns development goals with the city's diverse needs, ensuring a sustainable and equitable future for all Parisians.

Table of Contents

Chapter 1 Introduction	4
Chapter 2 The City of Paris	4
Chapter 3 The Context	5
3.1 Governance in Paris	5
3.2 Problem Statement	6
3.3 The Vision For Paris	6
3.4 Current Approach of Governance	7
3.5 Alternative Approach to Governance	8
3.6 Case Studies	9
3.6.1 Bogotá, Colombia Decentralized Governance	9
3.6.2 Helsinki, Finland Participatory Approach	10
3.7 The Conditions in Paris	10
Chapter 4 The Strategy	11
4.1 Key Transition Approach	11
4.1.1 Destabilizing the Current Centralization Regime and Giving Rise to a Participatory Niche (Years 1–3)	12
4.1.2 Stabilizing the Participatory Framework and Phasing Out Centralization (Years 4–10)	12
4.1.3 Institutionalizing Decentralized Governance (Years 11–15)	13
4.2 Action Programs	13
4.2.1 Physical Investments	14

4.2.2 Policy Instruments	16
	16
4.2.3 Institutional Changes	17
4.3 Conditions for Success	18
4.4 Monitoring Progress	18
<i>Chapter 5 Conclusion</i>	19
<i>Reference</i>	20

Chapter 1 | Introduction

Although Paris stands out for its global influence, culture, innovation, and history, it heavily masks a governance system struggling to balance the demands of international prominence with the needs of its local communities. Centralized decision-making has long been the hallmark of Parisian governance, a system designed to consolidate authority but often criticized for sidelining the voices of its residents, particularly in marginalized districts such as Seine-Saint-Denis. This misalignment has led to social inequalities, inefficiencies in resource distribution, and a growing disconnect between administrative actions and the lived experiences of Parisians (Le Galès & Artioli, 2023).

This report advocates for a strategic transition toward decentralized and participatory governance in Paris, aiming to empower local authorities, enhance citizen engagement, and address disparities in public services. Inspired by global case studies, such as Bogotá's decentralization efforts and Helsinki's participatory frameworks, the proposed strategy combines international best practices with localized solutions tailored to Paris's unique socio-political landscape (Belkind, 2013; Cour des Comptes, 2023).

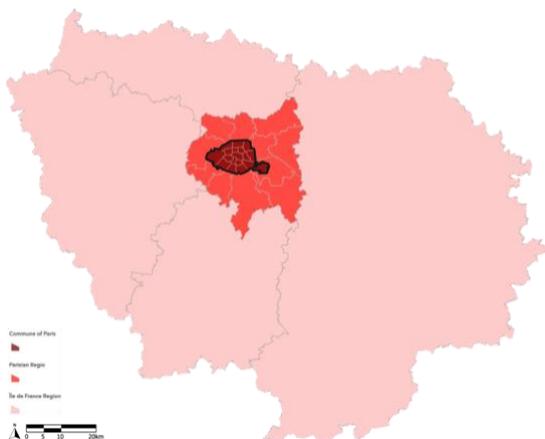


Figure 1 | Ile-de-France | APUR

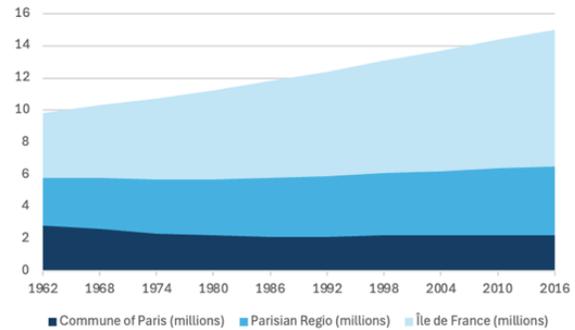


Figure 2 | Ile-de-France | Insee

The report is structured to provide a clear roadmap for this transition. It outlines steps to destabilize the existing centralized regime, stabilize participatory initiatives, and institutionalize decentralized governance through targeted physical investments, policy reforms, and institutional changes. By prioritizing inclusivity, resource equity, and civic engagement, this vision aims to transform Paris into a city that places its residents at the center of decision-making. The strategy presented here is not just a theoretical framework but a practical guide to creating a more inclusive and sustainable Parisian governance model.

Chapter 2 | The City of Paris

Paris, the capital of France, is the city of light, recognized for its cultural and historical significance, is one of the most visited cities in the world and home to iconic landmarks such as the Eiffel Tower and Arc de Triomphe. It is a fashion, luxury goods, technology, and international diplomacy hub. Home to a state-of-the-art, multimodal public transit system, and has an extensive stated committed to sustainable urban development. However, despite the image it projects to the world, Paris has a long history of inequalities across multiple dimensions, from economic to social and environmental, and access to housing, health, and mobility. The city's complex class dynamics are entangled with Paris's history. From Haussmann's 19th-century urban renovations to the Grand Paris Express and

the 2024 Paris Olympics, France has prioritized the city's prodigiousness, but at what cost (Euklidiadas, 2023)?

The city's pride can foster these inequalities and result in its leaders overlooking the needs of residents. Wealth, opportunities, and sustainable developments are centralized in the affluent arrondissements of the 1st to 7th. Meanwhile, the outer arrondissements face inadequate housing, higher unemployment rates, and underfunded, overcrowded public services. The housing market contributes to the inequality narrative with its high property values and ongoing gentrification, causing social and economic polarization (APUR, 2023). The quality of life in these lower-income communities is also impacted by the lack of access to quality education, green space, and poor air quality (Plan Biodiversité Métropolitain, n.d.). Even though the public transit system is extensive, the connectivity among the suburbs is relatively worse than in the central city (Société des Grands Projets, 2024).

As explored later in this report, the governance structure of Paris is characterized by its centralization, dual authority, complexity, and limited local autonomy (Kuhlmann & Wollmann, 2011). The structure limits citizens' involvement and creates bureaucratic inefficiencies. As a result, Paris is marked by its transformation and tension, and while each year has brought progress, it is often at the expense of the city's most vulnerable. Paris's inequalities are embedded through its financial and spatial environment

and exacerbated through its government structures, causing the city's challenges to be intertwined. And this is in light of the city's modern innovative development projects like the Grand Paris Express and its stated commitment to social housing (Euklidiadas, 2023). To understand Paris's structure based inequalities, one needs to examine Paris from a top-down approach, examining its local governance challenges in order to develop strategies to effectively and equitably address Paris' ongoing inequalities. As the city evolves, emphasis needs to be given to fully realizing France's national motto of "liberty, equality, and fraternity" (Darnton, 2019).

Chapter 3 | The Context

3.1 | Governance in Paris

Paris is the political capital of France, and with it comes a complex governance structure. Home to the country's most important national-level institutions, from the Élysée Palace and the National Assembly to the Constitutional Council, Sciences Po, and France's military headquarters. Like many capital cities, Paris serves dual purposes: one, being the symbolic heart of the nation, and two, being home to a diverse urban population. However, the city's government is noted for being complex and inefficient and creating disconnect with the local citizens, which is rooted in Paris's historical governance patterns.

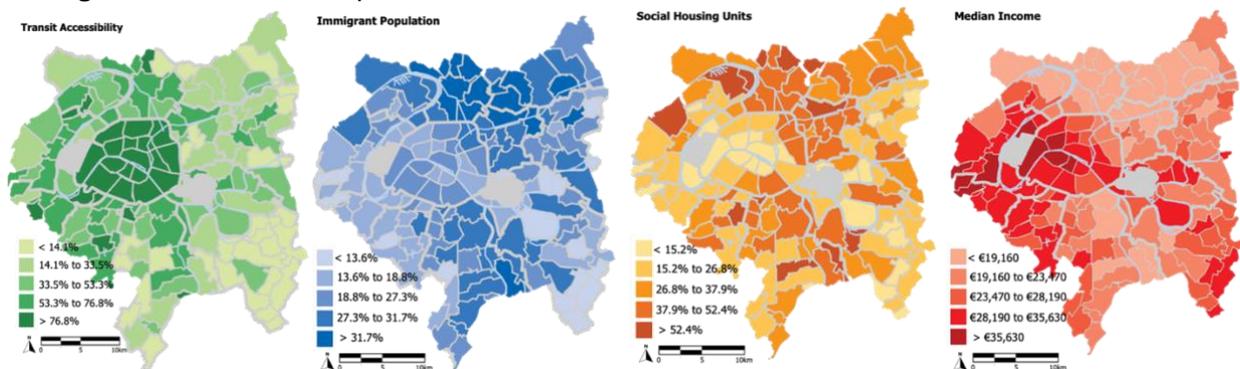


Figure 3 - 6 | Transit Accessibility | Immigrant Population | Social Housing | Median Income | APUR

The French government is recognized as the “most centralized of the six biggest EU countries,” according to the OECD and is reflected in Paris’s government, which is subject to national control (Carvalho, 2012; Sapir, 2019). The centralization limits the city's capacity for independent governance, local autonomy, and citizen participation. This situation persists despite efforts since the 19th century to decentralize; under the 1958 Constitution, the French government established “two tiers of local government,” which were “the Departments (départements) and the Municipalities (communes).” However, the constitution also created a strong executive power (Division of Powers, 2024) (Britannica, 2024). In 1972, “Regions (régions)” were added into law, and in 1982 and 1983, the Defferre Acts were passed to “initiate the decentralization process” (Division of Powers, 2024). However, Paris still has far less autonomy than other major French cities (Cole & Jones, 2005).

Regarding dual authority, Paris works as both a département and a commune with one council that serves both roles, which the duality is rooted in medieval times, with power dynamics between the “royal provost” and the “provost of merchants” (Paris, 2019) (Ouellet, n.d.). Today, it complicates decision-making and increases bureaucratic inefficiency. At the same time, Paris has limited autonomy, with the national government exercising significant influence over the city. For example, according to the Sustainable Governance Indicators, “government coordination is tightly managed” to ensure “coherence in communication,” and “local governments in France have limited resources” because the “state-region contracts are used to set goals and performance indicators” (SGI, 2024). The system is meant to extend the centralized government and limit local autonomy with any actions to overcome these constraints, like Paris’s “digital governance,” needing approval from the national government (Open

Government Partnership, 2024). Furthermore, even the Council of Europe recognizes these challenges and “has called for France” to “clarify the division of powers between the state and subnational authorities” (Strasbourg, 2024). Despite this, the national government perpetuates tensions with local governments, reducing their ability to represent the interests of local populations.

There is, however, an urgent need to decentralize authority and enhance participatory urbanism to improve efficiency, enhance public trust, and reflect the voice of the local Parisians. Given its foundational influence, this must take priority over addressing narrower development challenges. Without structural reform, attempts to address entrenched inequalities are futile. The current system prioritizes those with the time and financial resources necessary to navigate the city’s multi-level complexity.

3.2 | Problem Statement

Paris's centralized government structure restricts the local autonomy and ability for citizen participation, thus exacerbating the historical social, economic, and environmental inequalities throughout the city.

3.3 | The Vision For Paris

Power for Paris, Voice for the Parisian. Paris will transform into a city with a decentralized, participatory, and efficient government system, who is aimed to empower the local Parisians and prioritize the needs of city residents. From transparent decision-making to being accessible and inclusive for all, a reimagined government model would enable a 21st-century urban democracy where inequalities are a thing of the past. Challenges would be more effectively addressed, and local driven solutions would coherently serve the needs of residents across the city and the broader metropolitan area. Characterized by

streamlined efficiency, local autonomy, innovative and digital solutions, prioritization of its citizen participation, and a clear and transparent distinction between levels of government, Paris would be a leader in urban governance driven by a mission to improve the lives of all Parisians.

3.4 | Current Approach of Governance

Despite efforts to create civic engagement, Paris’s legacy as a commune and a département remains detrimental to progress, confusing how authority is divided across the metropolitan, city, and arrondissement levels.

Métropole du Grand Paris (MGP). Established in 2016, the MGP is a new metropolitan-level governance entity designed to enhance regional planning and coordination (Berra-Sandín, 2022). MCP addresses economic, social, cultural, and environmental issues that cross municipal boundaries (Métropole du Grand Paris, 2024). It serves 7.2 million inhabitants and covers 814 square kilometers and is comprised of 12 municipal territories, a council of 208 metropolitan councilors, and 131 municipalities (Métropole du Grand Paris, 2024). The MGP scale challenges effective decision-making and offers few avenues for citizen engagement (Apur, 2018; Cour des Comptes, 2023; Berra-Sandín, 2022). As an organization which often, it is "marked by fragmentation, conflicts, and bureaucratic vicious circles" (Le Galès & Artioli, 2023, p. 8).



Conseil de Paris. Below the MGP sits the *Conseil de Paris*. This city council serves dual roles, representing the commune and a département, meaning it serves as both the municipal council and the departmental council within the administration of Paris (City of Paris, 2019). Although a new *Ville de Paris* administration merged the commune and département in 2019, it retains this dual function (Marois, 2019). The council comprises 163 councilors from the arrondissements, elected every six years, with the population determining representation (City of Paris, 2019; City of Paris, 2024; Edwards & Hupe, n.d.). Furthermore, it oversees the city's policies, projects, and budgets (City of Paris, 2019; City of Paris, 2024). And despite being part of the Open Government Partnership, which promotes "participatory budgeting, transparency, ... open data, ecological and inclusive transition, [and] democratic innovation," the council has many challenges in balancing the interests of the arrondissements, the city, and the MGP (Open Government Partnership, 2024).

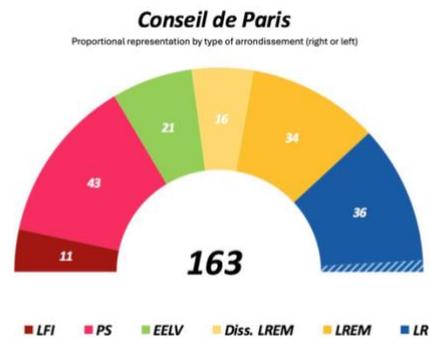


Figure 8 | *Conseil de Paris* | X.com

Arrondissements Councils. There are some parts of Paris’s governance structure that are more directly focused on local issues. Paris’s 20 arrondissements and districts have their own council, mayor, and town hall, further fragmenting the governance structure of Paris (FRANCE 24, 2016). The 1st to 4th arrondissements have been combined into one due to their low combined population. These arrondissement mayors and councils have limited decision-making power; instead,

their role is as an intermediary between citizens and the city government. Nez argues that the councils play a critical role in "consultative democracy," however weak (Nez, 2011). Thus, the system "fluctuates [s] between a strong vision of participatory democracy that is limited to small-scale development" and "consultative democracy that is weaker, but able to include large-scale projects" (Nez, 2011).

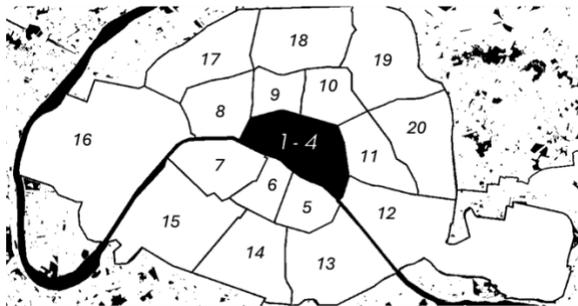


Figure 9 | Arrondissements Councils | Hipp, P. A.

From a budget perspective, the Paris' Participatory Budget supports projects proposed by residents (Legendre, n.d.). This enhances local decision-making by allowing people to have a say in the allocation of resources. Other efforts in participatory democracy include the formation of 123 neighborhood councils "composed of residents, community organizers, and elected officials." Also set up in 2002 was a permanent Paris Citizens' Assembly, which includes a range of thematic councils from youth to nightlife (Legendre, n.d.; Maaoui & Ray, 2022). The Paris government has also embraced digital tools and platforms enabling citizen engagement, debate, action, and voting (Legendre, n.d.).

Given all this, Paris is moving, at least on paper, toward prioritizing local governance and local participation. However, because of the overlapping and conflicting governance structure, these new initiatives sometimes only cause more confusion. The central challenge remains that of moving away from the traditional centralized system with its

allocation of substantial power and authority to the MGP and the Conseil de Paris.

3.5 | *Alternative Approach to Governance*

A decentralized government foundationed in participation would empower the people of Paris and serve as a model for other cities. To accomplish this, the complex, hierarchical, centralized framework of the MGP and Conseil de Paris needs to be dismantled to create room for effective, localized decision-making structures. Through the empowerment of the arrondissement councils, it would simplify the government structure and promote citizen engagement. While the role of the MGP and Conseil de Paris should not be entirely dismantled, the organization and decision-making processes must be reimagined (Cour des Comptes, 2023).

There are lessons from the history of how the usable past can help address current challenges. For example, Aristotle believed in an "organized system to help people achieve 'eudaimonia,' i.e., their full potential" (Aristotle, 1944). Aristotle emphasized the need for balance in government and advocated for polity governance, a mix between "oligarchic and democratic rule" (Aristotle, 1944). In advocating these views, he used counter-examples of extreme inequality, such as that between the "master and slave," which creates social unrest as a result of "one class [being] envious and another contemptuous of their fellows" (Aristotle, 1944, s. 1295b). As with Paris's governance structure, over-centralization undermines the interests of the people it serves. Creating a modern-day polity requires decentralization and reallocation of power. Conversely, elites with their support for neoliberal "market-centric 'politics'" often rationalize large-scale urban projects, such as the staging of the Paris Olympics, more for their economic benefits than for their ability to overcome local

inequalities. (Mudge, 2008). Given this bias, participatory governance can be a powerful challenger to the prevailing elite perspectives.

Before the existing regime can be dismantled, the seeds of the new governance system must be in place. This is already happening at some level, given the increased attention to addressing citizens' growing frustration with unresponsive central authorities, which disrupts the governance landscape, creating openings for new decentralized governance and citizen participation niches. These new openings include the participatory budget, thematic councils, and digital platforms that serve as experimental governance models. By scaling the niches, disruption to the existing regime can occur. These can include the arrondissement councils assuming more power and taking greater local control over the city budget allocation. By acquiring authority over the budget, it could lead to more localized projects and enable citizens to participate. Moreover, involving the arrondissement councils in the city and MGP councils would improve bottom-up communication and alignment on urban strategies. Furthermore, simplifying the complex MGP governance framework is also important; the redistribution of power would decrease the metropolitan authorities' dominance and create space for local autonomy. Increasing the capability and use of digital platforms would enable transparency and feedback. Such a creation of a single system is used across the levels of governance, thus streamlining the flow of information. The system must create clear guidelines and proportional allocations tied to population and socioeconomic needs as those arrondissements suffering now have disproportionately need of more help to combat generational inequalities.

This process could unfold over decades or happen quickly due to a significant shock to the system, such as another pandemic or war. Realistically and most likely, the process will

take time, from allocating power to the arrondissements to refining citizen engagement, but because of time, it would also ensure that lessons can be learned and shared across the city. By reimagining Paris's government structures, the city can achieve a better power balance, promoting more local responsiveness and equitable outcomes.

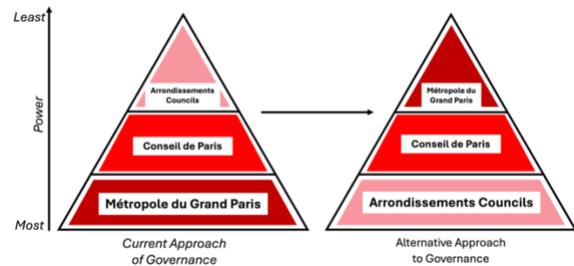


Figure 10 | Power Dynamics of Government

3.6 | Case Studies

3.6.1 | Bogotá, Colombia Decentralized Governance

Bogotá, a city of more than seven million, is an example of a capital city with a successful decentralized local governance structure. In 1991, the Colombian constitution designated Bogotá as the Capital District, which "was granted an organic statute," enabling it to have "political, fiscal, and administrative autonomy" (Fedelino, 2010). In other words, it gave the city a level of freedom which is more than that of other Colombian municipalities. Moreover, in 2001, Bogotá received even more resources and "fiscal control", including "oversight of tax rates" and the "gasoline tax", thus increasing the city's revenue base (Fedelino, 2010). On the administrative side, the Bogotá reforms merged multiple organizations to improve efficiency, eliminate ineffective organizations, reduce administrative staff, and improve social services and infrastructure. In addition, the city "expanded opportunities for private participation," which led to improvements across multiple sectors, including public utilities, education, health, and transport

(Fedelino, 2010). Key factors that enabled Bogotá's decentralization include the timeline of how decentralization occurred and the "popular election of the mayor" (Fedelino, 2010).

3.6.2 | Helsinki, Finland Participatory Approach

Helsinki, the capital of Finland, is noted for its local government's commitment to civic engagement. In 2017, the City of Helsinki introduced an expansive "new participation and interaction model" made "in collaboration with [its] citizens" designed to take actions based on its own residents' "knowledge and know-how" to develop "the city, its services, and areas," which the new "principles of participation" were applied to the entire City of Helsinki (U.N., 2017). Beyond the principles, Helsinki's participatory budgeting system, OmaStadi, is the result of a "2018 initiative" meant to improve opportunities to "brainstorm and decide how the City will spend more than 13 million euros" and resulted in "119 projects across the city" (Sustainable Helsinki, n.d.). It used a digital platform and other tools to generate active citizen participation. It was further reformed in 2022 based on feedback to make it easier for residents to participate and speed up the implementation of projects. Beyond this, Helsinki also uses the Decidim platform "to run several e-participation services," created a so-called "Mayor's idea competition," and promotes government use of platforms to encourage participatory urbanism (U.N., 2017). On a regional level, "borough liaisons" have the power to influence local affairs to support civic engagement through community workshops and events to facilitate discussion and use digital tools such as "Ahjo Explorer" to promote transparency and provide "easy access to political decisions" (Sustainable Helsinki, n.d.)(ODIP, n.d.). In 2023, the city created an NGO Advisory Board to provide a structure for interactions between NGOs, the government, and Helsinki citizens

(Sustainable Helsinki, n.d.). Helsinki seeks to expand its participation and decision-making methods and demonstrate how prioritizing citizens can lead to effective citizen-centric urban development.

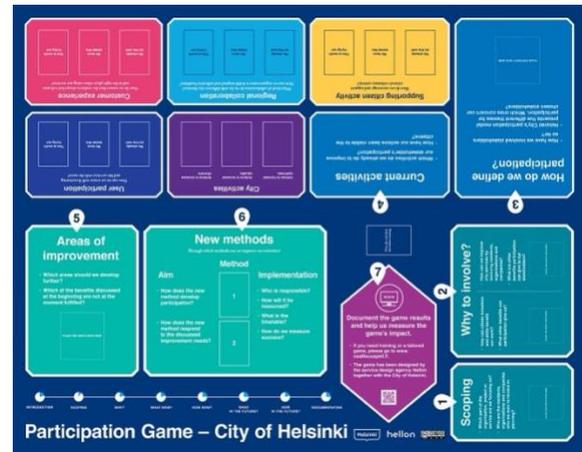


Figure 11 | Participation Game | Bloomberg Cities

3.7 | The Conditions in Paris

Physical. Paris is one of Europe's most densely populated cities, thus influencing its government structure. The metropolitan region has 7.2 million inhabitants, which creates challenges for allocating funds and enabling decision-making for local government (Métropole du Grand Paris, 2024; Insee, 2024). The city's legacy also causes challenges when it comes to modernizing the city while preserving its history and with its consideration of its natural components of the city, from its green spaces and the Seine (Sitan, 2023) (Mairie de Paris, 2018). Likewise, its large transit network crosses the city's outlying boundaries, complicating planning efforts (Bonjour RATP, 2024).

Social. Paris's social conditions are also critical. Paris is a diverse, multicultural city with a large immigrant population (Region, n.d.). The socioeconomic divides in Paris are massive, particularly between the central city and the surrounding suburbs, often following the arrondissement borders. Furthermore,

when empowering the arrondissements, awareness of the economic conditions, resource allocation, and impacts on decision-making are critical (Nussupbekova, 2024). Paris also has a tradition for civic activism and protest, as Vienne notes, "taking to the streets to express one's disagreement with government policies was—and still is—the sacred civic duty of French citizens" (Vienne, 2018).

Economical. From an economic perspective, budgets and funding are critical for the city's ambitions. The city is a service-based economy and is the most visited tourist destination in the world, meaning that the needs of the tourism industry heavily influence urban planning priorities. The high cost of living also shapes the city's demographics and socioeconomic polarization. Because of the city's multi-level government structure, the financial effects are significant, take the example of the MGP in 2024 had a total operating budget of 193 million euros (Métropole du Grand Paris, 2024). The Conseil de Paris budget totaled 9.8 billion euros (City of Paris, 2024). While individual arrondissement budgets are unavailable, they would certainly need to grow at the expense of central authorities, as power is decentralized. Finally, the new governance approach must also strategically use public-private partnerships in its development projects to increase the leverage of public funding (Bergere, 2016).

Political. Political conditions will also substantially impact any effort to reform the Paris government. This begins at the top with French President Emmanuel Macron, whose Renaissance liberal and Centrist political party holds just 163 seats in the National Assembly as compared to 180 seats for the left-wing party New Popular Front and 143 seats held by the far-right National Rally and has resulted in a growing ideological polarization and fragmentation (Ellyatt, 2024; Cohen & Breeden, 2024). At the MGP level, the

"left-wing parties" have support in Paris. In contrast, the center and right-wing parties have more substantial support in the suburbs, leading to "long-standing ideological cleavages that produce divergent visions of the goals of metropolitan life and growth" (Geoffroy, 2019, p. 23). On a city level, the Conseil de Paris is majority left-leaning with the Socialists, Greens, and Communists parties and the city's socialist mayor, Anne Hidalgo (Vock, 2021). Under Hidalgo, the council's agenda has emphasized "social-democratic economic policies with a strong focus on urban environmentalism" (Vock, 2021). At the arrondissements level, political leanings vary, with western arrondissements leaning right while those in the east lean left (Kraut, 2008; 56 Paris, 2015).

Transitioning toward the vision of 'Power for Paris, Voice for the Parisian' also will inevitably have risks. Fully accounting for Paris's physical, social, economic, and political conditions is essential to transitioning to a more effective governance system capable of solving tomorrow's complex challenges while resolving the glaring inequalities of the past.

Chapter 4 | The Strategy

4.1 | Key Transition Approach

Figure 12 outlines and frames the transition strategy within the X-curve, reflecting three interconnected phases: destabilizing the current centralized regime, stabilizing emerging participatory initiatives, and institutionalizing decentralized governance. This approach ensures that reforms are gradual, inclusive, and sustainable (EIT Climate-KIC, 2021).

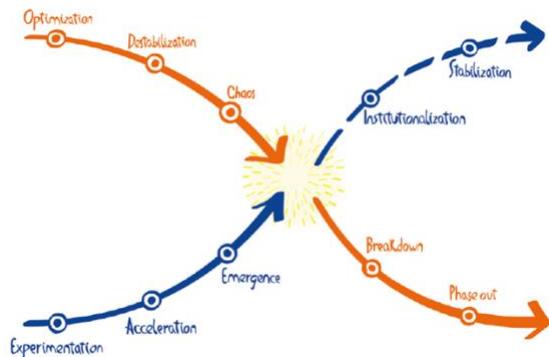


Figure 12 | X-Curve | Climate-KIC

4.1.1 | Destabilizing the Current

Centralization Regime and Giving Rise to a Participatory Niche (Years 1–3)

The first phase focuses on exposing the inefficiencies of centralized governance and introducing participatory practices as viable alternatives. For instance, delays in resource allocation and limited representation in peripheral districts like Seine-Saint-Denis demonstrate the limitations of the current system (Cour des Comptes, 2023). Public campaigns will highlight these issues and present decentralization as a solution. Media outreach, demonstrations, and targeted advertising will mobilize public demand for change (Le Galès & Artioli, 2023). Furthermore, putting the media outreach not only on a national and local level but also to the rest of Europe, the global image will be damaged, pressing the national government to push towards balancing toward a more local inclusive perspective on Paris and giving power out of central hands (Bodansky, 2016).

Simultaneously, participatory budgeting pilots will be launched in marginalized neighborhoods. These pilots will empower residents to allocate municipal funds to local projects, such as improving public spaces or expanding childcare facilities, and will function as experimental showcases (Belkind,

2013). To gain political momentum, lobbying efforts will identify and support key figures within the municipality of Paris and the national government who champion this vision. By strategically positioning these individuals during elections, their influence can drive reforms at both municipal, departmental, regional and national levels, and close cooperation between these levels can foster this reform (Kuhlmann et al., 2011).

4.1.2 | Stabilizing the Participatory

Framework and Phasing Out

Centralization (Years 4–10)

As participatory governance gains traction, the second phase focuses on scaling these practices across all 20 arrondissements. Neighborhood hubs will be established as physical centers for citizen engagement. These hubs, located in underutilized spaces like community centers, will host public forums, workshops, and participatory activities (MacMillan, 2019). For example, a hub in the 18th arrondissement could focus on improving public transportation access in underserved areas (Cour des Comptes, 2023). Furthermore, economic practices, like the spacing of companies within Paris, will be required to prioritize local hiring, offering positions to residents in exchange for their vested operations in Paris (Cole & Jones, 2005).

To ensure equitable resource distribution, financial allocations will be aligned with decentralized responsibilities. For instance, local councils managing housing projects will receive targeted funding proportional to their jurisdiction's needs. The creation of a Participatory Governance Council (PPGC), a better version of the current practices, will oversee these initiatives, providing a centralized platform for coordination and evaluation (Le Galès, 2020). The PPGC will consist of representatives from each

arrondissement and include academic experts to ensure evidence-based policymaking.

4.1.3 | Institutionalizing Decentralized Governance (Years 11–15)

The final phase aims to embed participatory governance into Paris’s legal and political framework. Legislative reforms will formalize practices like participatory budgeting and municipal autonomy in urban planning (Gildea, 2002). Training programs, hosted by a newly established municipal academy, will equip government staff and citizen representatives with skills in conflict resolution and participatory governance. For example, arrondissement council members will be trained to facilitate public discussions and mediate stakeholder conflicts (Jones, 2004).

Partnerships with academic institutions will support ongoing research and monitoring of these reforms. Collaborative studies will evaluate the impact of participatory governance on key metrics such as public satisfaction and resource equity. Findings will inform adaptive strategies, ensuring the governance model remains dynamic and responsive to citizen needs (Le Galès & Artioli, 2023).

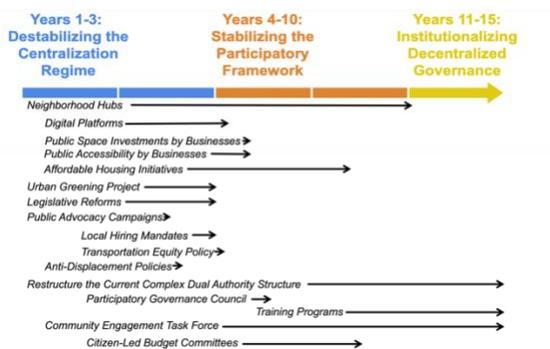


Figure 13 | Phased Transition to Decentralization

4.2 | Action Programs

The action program for Paris details the activities outlined in the timeline, specifying who will implement them, what they entail, how they will be executed, when they will occur, and why they are necessary. The program is structured around three thematic categories: physical investments, policy instruments, and institutional changes. Cost indications are fictitious and estimations based on the annual reports of the municipality and the case studies described earlier. To provide context, several foundational remarks are necessary to frame the proposed actions up ahead and are therefore given below.

As identified in the root causes of Paris’s governance challenges, a central requirement for achieving decentralized and participatory governance is addressing the trilemma of economic growth (economic dimension), social inclusivity (social dimension), and public space utilization (environmental dimension) (Munasinghe, 2011). This trilemma is particularly evident in Paris’s role as a global economic hub. The city attracts businesses that benefit from its international reputation, but these enterprises often neglect their responsibility to contribute to the local social fabric. To address this imbalance, the strategy includes policies that incentivize businesses to prioritize local hiring and contribute to the development of sustainable public spaces (OECD, 2023). Such policies and physical projects aim to ensure that the benefits of economic growth are equitably distributed among Parisians. Also, physical investments in the action plan are outlined on municipal level to ensure that the housing and coordination of the green areas is in line with the social well being dimension of the Parisian.

Other initiatives in the program target the centralization issue directly. Destabilizing the current regime will involve public awareness campaigns designed to highlight the inefficiencies of centralized governance.

These campaigns will aim to damage Paris’s image as an administrative hub that prioritizes national and global interests over local needs. By raising awareness on a global scale, these campaigns will pressure the national government to relinquish more control to local authorities (Le Galès & Artioli, 2023). Pushing forward the right person in the right position once momentum is created is crucial to make this action plan work. Actions on how to restructure the current governance are also included.

Simultaneously, efforts will focus on stabilizing the participatory framework by lobbying for greater representation of participatory advocates within governmental institutions. This will be complemented by physical pilot activities, such as the creation of neighborhood hubs for participatory engagement, particularly in marginalized areas like Seine-Saint-Denis (Cour des Comptes, 2023). To ensure the success of these initiatives, financial allocations for participatory projects must be legalized, and government institutions will need to undergo restructuring to support the decentralized framework. Additionally, training programs will be essential for municipal staff to develop the skills required to implement participatory governance effectively (Kuhlmann et al., 2011).

Finally, to stabilize the participatory framework, a new institution will be established to oversee and coordinate these efforts. This body will provide control and oversight, ensuring that the participatory model is consistently applied and refined over time (Belkind, 2013). By addressing these interconnected challenges, the action program sets the foundation for a governance model that prioritizes the needs of Parisians and fosters a more inclusive, equitable, and sustainable city.



Figure 14 | Three Pillars of Sustainability | Munasinghe

4.2.1 | Physical Investments

Neighborhood Hubs: Convert municipal spaces into participatory hubs prioritizing underserved districts like Seine-Saint-Denis.

- Who: Municipality (strategic level; funding and oversight), district councils and NGO’s (tactical level; co-design and allocation), community (operational level; participation in activities).
- How: Allocate 10% of the municipal budget over five years; engage local NGOs to co-design and manage programs.
- When: Pilots in years 1–3; scale by year 10.
- Effect: Enhance inclusivity and civic engagement (Urban Institute, 2022). A good starting area is Seine-Saint-Denis.

Digital Platforms: Collaborate with technology firms to further develop tools for online participation and feedback mechanisms for the Parisian.

- Who: Private sector (operational level; technical expertise and development) and Municipality (tactical level; funding and integration with existing systems).
- How: Invest €100 million to develop tools for online participation, integrating them with neighborhood hubs. Include features like public voting and real-time feedback.

- When: Initiate design in year 2; launch in year 4.
- Effect: Expand accessibility for those unable to attend in-person events and make the participation threshold lower. More inclusive feedback and engagement is the end result (People Powered, 2022).

Public Space Investments by Businesses:
Companies must co-fund public space improvements near their locations, such as parks, plazas, and cycling infrastructure, creating multi-functional spaces that benefit both employees and residents.

- Who: Private sector (operational level), Municipality (tactical level), and Civil Society (residents to represent the needs).
- How: Implement public-private partnership agreements tied to business licenses and tax relief incentives. This enforcement will lead companies to co-fund public space projects. Estimated €200 million over five years.
- When: Begin in year 2 with pilot projects, scaling by year 6.
- Effect: Improve urban quality of life while fostering business-community ties (OECD, 2023).

Public Accessibility by Businesses:
Companies must co-fund public transport near their locations if they are of a certain scale to be more accessible for every Parisian as a potential employee.

- Who: Private sector (operational level), Municipality (tactical level), and Civil Society (local representatives from all over Paris to represent the needs).
- How: Implement public-private partnership agreements tied to business licenses and tax relief incentives.
- When: Begin in year 2 with pilot projects, scaling by year 6.
- Effect: Improve urban quality of life while fostering business-community ties (OECD, 2023).

Affordable Housing Initiatives:

- Who: Municipality (strategic level) and private developers (operational level).
- How: Implement partnerships with housing developers to reserve a percentage of units for low-income families. Use incentives like tax breaks to encourage participation. On an estimation: Reserve 30% of units for low-income families in new developments through tax incentives worth €50 million annually.
- When: Pilots in year 2; scale by year 8.
- Effect: Combat gentrification and ensure equitable urban development.

Urban Greening Projects:

- Who: Municipality and districts councils (strategic and tactical level), local NGOs, and community groups (tactical level and operational level; design and maintenance).
- How: Convert unused lots into parks and green spaces, prioritizing high-density areas like Seine-Saint-Denis. An annual budget of €30 million is required.
- When: Begin in year 1 with high-priority zones; expand by year 5.
- Effect: Mitigate urban heat islands and improve public well-being.

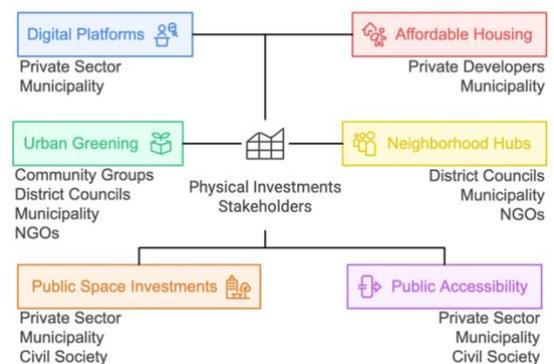


Figure 15 | Physical Investments Stakeholders

4.2.2 | Policy Instruments

Legislative Reforms: Mandate public input for large-scale projects and shift police oversight to municipal control:

- Who: Paris Council (strategic level), national policymakers (tactical level).
- How: Push through advocacy coalitions and public pressure. Draft laws mandating public input for projects exceeding €10 million and transferring police oversight to municipal control. Advocacy campaigns and legislative drafting estimated at €10 million.
- When: Years 1–5.
- Effect: Improve transparency and local autonomy (NCSL, n.d.).

Public Advocacy Campaigns: Build momentum for decentralization through civic engagement:

- Who: Civil society organizations (strategic level) and media outlets (tactical level).
- How: Organize petitions, rallies, and targeted outreach campaigns. Launch campaigns with €5 million annual funding for petitions, rallies, and outreach.
- When: Years 1–3.
- Effect: Increase public demand for reform, building momentum (Power Coalition, 2018).

Local Hiring Mandates: Businesses headquartered in Paris must allocate a percentage of their job openings to residents of the surrounding arrondissements, particularly those from socio-economically disadvantaged areas such as Seine-Saint-Denis. This measure addresses social inequities while reducing reliance on long commutes, thereby easing public transportation congestion (PolicyLink, n.d.)

- Who: Municipality (strategic level) with private sector collaboration (tactical level).

- How: Enforce hiring mandates through tax incentives and contracts that reward compliance.
- When: Introduce mandates in Year 3, with full implementation by year 5.
- Effect: Foster social inclusion, reduce unemployment, and alleviate strain on transport systems (PolicyLink, n.d.).

Transportation Equity Policy:

- Who: Paris Council (strategic level) and private transport providers (tactical level).
- How: Enact legislation that requires transport providers to prioritize underserved districts in expanding service coverage. €50 million annual subsidies for expansion projects.
- When: Begin legislative drafting in year 3; implement by year 6.
- Effect: Reduce travel inequalities and improve access to economic opportunities.

Anti-Displacement Policies:

- Who: Municipality (strategic level), national policymakers (tactical level).
- How: Introduce tenant protection laws to prevent evictions caused by urban renewal projects. Establish rent stabilization programs. €20 million for administrative costs annually.
- When: Draft legislation in year 2; enact by year 4.
- Effect: Protect vulnerable populations from the adverse effects of urban development.

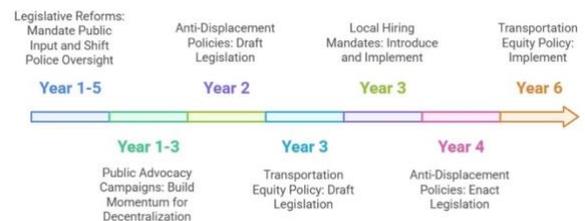


Figure 16 | Policy Instruments Timeline

4.2.3 | Institutional Changes

Restructure the Current Complex Dual Authority Structure: Transition authority from the national government to municipal control, while harmonizing governance between the city council and arrondissement councils. Grant greater autonomy to arrondissement councils to address local needs while maintaining strong coordination with the Participatory Governance Council (PPGC).

- Who: Municipality and National Government (strategic level), arrondissement councils (tactical level).
- How: Gradually transfer authority over urban governance from the state to municipal control.
 - Conduct a comprehensive review of the current governance structure by Years 1–2 to identify inefficiencies and overlapping roles.
 - Draft and pass legislation between Years 3–4 to reassign decision-making authority to arrondissement councils in areas such as urban planning, public housing, and local infrastructure.
 - Pilot decentralization initiatives in selected arrondissement councils by Year 5 to evaluate and refine processes.
 - Roll out citywide decentralization by Year 9, incorporating lessons learned from pilot phases.
 - Adapt the Bogotá decentralization model to fit Paris’s specific dual authority context and ensure a smooth transition.
- When: Launch in Year 4, following elections, and implement over five years to achieve full roll-out by Year 9.
- Effect: Streamline decision-making, enhance municipal efficiency, and provide greater clarity for local Parisians on whom to contact for local governance matters. Coordination with the PPGC (see next action) will ensure oversight,

accountability, and alignment across governance levels.

Participatory Governance Council (PPGC): Create a body to oversee and refine participatory governance.

- Who: Municipality (strategic level), civil society (tactical level).
- How: Establish the PPGC with €10 million initial funding. Involve representatives from all 20 arrondissements. Define structure and roles in consultation with stakeholders.
- When: Launch in year 4.
- Effect: Ensure accountability, adaptability and oversight of participatory initiatives (WHO, n.d.).

Training Programs: Establish a municipal academy for skill development.

- Who: Municipality (strategic level), academic institutions (tactical level).
- How: Establish a municipal academy with €5 million annually for courses on participatory methods and conflict resolution.
- When: Begin in Year 5.
- Effect: Build capacity for sustainable governance (Municipal Solutions, n.d.).

Community Engagement Task Force:

- Who: Municipality (strategic level), civil society organizations (tactical level).
- How: Form a dedicated task force to monitor and enhance citizen participation in governance. Host quarterly public consultations. This is based on the Helsinki Case study.
- When: Establish in year 2; ongoing reviews every year.
- Effect: Strengthen public trust and accountability in governance.

Citizen-Led Budget Committees:

- Who: Municipality (strategic level) and local citizen groups (operational level).
- How: Empower residents to allocate discretionary funds. Estimated €2 million annual administrative costs. This is based on the Helsinki Case study.
- When: Begin pilots in Year 3; expand citywide by year 7.
- Effect: Enhance direct citizen control over local projects.



Figure 17 | Institutional Change Restructure

4.3 | Conditions for Success

For the decentralization and participatory governance strategy in Paris to succeed, several conditions must be met. A key requirement is strong political support. Identifying and empowering leading agents within both municipal and national governance structures is essential. These individuals must advocate for decentralization and drive its implementation at strategic and tactical levels. Political lobbying will be vital in securing their placement in influential roles, ensuring that they can champion reform effectively (Le Galès & Artioli, 2023).

Financial sustainability is another cornerstone of success. A multi-stakeholder funding model should be established, pooling resources from municipal budgets, private-sector contributions, and international grants. For instance, leveraging partnerships with organizations like the OECD or the European Union could provide crucial funding for large-scale participatory initiatives (OECD, 2023). Additionally, tax incentives and co-funding agreements with private businesses will encourage investments in public infrastructure and participatory programs.

Societal backing is indispensable. Effective communication campaigns, both locally and internationally, will highlight the tangible benefits of participatory governance, such as increased inclusivity and transparency. Drawing from the Bogota case, phased implementation will help manage resistance from entrenched interests, while sustained media outreach can counteract misinformation and build public momentum (Belkind, 2013). Clear demonstration of early successes in pilot projects, such as participatory budgeting in underserved neighborhoods, will further enhance societal trust and engagement.



Figure 18 | The Three Pillars for Success

4.4 | Monitoring Progress

Monitoring progress will involve tracking key indicators across physical investments, policy implementation, citizen engagement, and institutional outcomes. The Participatory Governance Council (PPGC) will oversee these efforts, ensuring that data collection and evaluation are systematic and transparent.

Physical Investments: Key metrics include the number of neighborhood hubs established, rates of digital platform usage, and improvements in public transport coverage. For example, tracking whether underserved districts like Seine-Saint-Denis experience increased access to participatory tools and services will be crucial (Urban Institute, 2022).

Policy Implementation: Metrics include the percentage of large-scale projects requiring public input, the extent of police oversight transferred to municipal control, and the number of residents benefiting from local hiring mandates (NCSL, n.d.).

Citizen Engagement: Indicators include diversity and participation rates in public forums, usage of neighborhood hubs, and the proportion of residents employed by companies participating in the initiative (PolicyLink, n.d.).

Institutional Outcomes: Annual evaluations by the PPGC, satisfaction surveys, and feedback mechanisms will gauge the effectiveness of participatory governance. A complaints and suggestions system will provide a direct feedback loop, ensuring continuous improvement.

The monitoring timeline will follow the phases of the strategy. Early pilots will provide baseline data, while mid-term evaluations (Years 4–10) will assess scalability. By Year 15, longitudinal studies should evaluate long-term impacts on inclusivity, governance efficiency, and urban equity.

Chapter 5 | Conclusion

This report underscores the pressing need for decentralized and participatory governance in Paris to address the inefficiencies and inequalities rooted in its centralized administrative structure. As a city celebrated for its global stature, Paris faces the dual challenge of maintaining its international relevance while addressing the disparities experienced by its local communities. The current governance model, which prioritizes national and global interests, has left many residents, particularly in marginalized districts like Seine-Saint-Denis, disconnected from decision-making processes and underserved in terms of public resources.

The proposed strategy provides a roadmap for transformation, combining destabilization of the existing centralized regime with stabilization and institutionalization of participatory frameworks. Key recommendations include establishing neighborhood hubs for civic engagement, implementing legislative reforms to enhance local decision-making, and increasing public-private partnerships to ensure equitable economic development. A phased timeline and targeted actions offer a structured pathway to achieve these objectives.

For successful implementation, further research is recommended on mechanisms to secure robust political support and multi-stakeholder collaboration. Additionally, detailed analyses of financial models to sustain decentralized initiatives and participatory governance practices would strengthen the strategy's foundation. The next steps should focus on piloting key interventions, such as participatory budgeting and urban greening projects, while continuously monitoring outcomes to refine and adapt the approach. Also, an even more exact allocation of which department of the municipality needs to deal with which policy or intervention would help strengthen the strategy.

By embracing this vision, Paris can evolve into a more inclusive, resilient, and citizen-centric city that effectively balances its global aspirations with local needs.

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