

Thursday, 13 February 2020

**Inauguration at the Pavillon de l’Arsenal of a participative and civic exhibition to  
“Rekindle the Magic of the Champs-Élysées”**

The *Champs-Élysées: history and prospects* exhibition opens on 14 February 2020 at the Pavillon de l’Arsenal museum of architecture and urban planning, introducing a novel form of participative, civic exhibition.

**This exhibition is the concrete expression of a project initiated in the summer of 2018 by the Comité Champs-Élysées**, an association that brings together the cultural and economic stakeholders of the Avenue (museums, theatres, cinemas, building owners, retail chains and independent businesses).

**The Committee took up the challenge of *Rekindling the magic of the Champs-Élysées*. All agree: the mythical avenue has lost some of its splendour over the past three decades.** It has gradually been abandoned by Parisians: of the 100,000 visitors who walk the avenue every day, only 5% are Parisians on a stroll. Its huge but neglected 37-acre gardens receive 40 times fewer visitors than Parc Monceau, less than a kilometre away.

In the summer of 2018, seeking a brighter future, the Comité Champs-Élysées asked **architect Philippe Chiambaretta and his agency PCA-STREAM** to give the matter some thought. Drawing a parallel between the local condition of an emblematic Parisian avenue and the overall condition of the planet, Philippe Chiambaretta proposed to turn the Champs-Élysées into a collective territory for experimentation by 2030, to develop a sustainable, appealing and inclusive city, based on four strategic priorities: reduce traffic-related inconveniences, rethink nature as an ecosystem, invent new uses of public space and use data to measure and regulate actions.

To complete the task, **Philippe Chiambaretta called upon some fifty leading personalities** – artists, scientists, Michelin-starred chefs, landscape designers, engineers, historians, designers – who agreed to contribute to this collective planning initiative, a first in France.

**It is the product of this work that is presented at the free public exhibition at the Pavillon de l’Arsenal in Paris.**

This “Vision 2030” **includes the complete redevelopment of the Avenue and its squares (Étoile, Concorde) by 2030, as well as the creation of a large 70-acre Central Park** linking the gardens of the Champs-Élysées and the Cours-la-Reine promenade along the Seine, with easy access to the Tuileries gardens and the Esplanade des Invalides.

A project intended to become the Parisians' own...

**A first in France, visitors of the exhibition will be invited to comment on the project**, voting for their favourite ideas and submitting their own proposals, thanks to a scheme available through the **citizens' consultation platform Make.org**.

The consultation will also be accessible online, with the ambition of making "Rekindle the Magic of the Champs-Élysées" a genuine grassroots project that will actively involve (through a visit to the exhibition or online participation) more than **100,000 people in the Paris region**.

**The results of the consultation will be made public in May 2020**. They will also be presented to the public authorities (State, City of Paris), with the clearly stated objective that public decision-makers will use them to carry out an ambitious renovation of the avenue.

The main proposals of the "Rekindle the Magic of the Champs-Élysées" exhibition

**1/ Recreate one of the world's most beautiful promenades**

For centuries, the Champs-Élysées were a daily destination for Parisians to take a stroll and enjoy themselves. But the Avenue has become one of the French capital's last urban motorways: at once one of the busiest (64,000 vehicles per day), most polluted (with air pollution higher than the *périphérique* ring road's 130 days a year), and noisiest (above 75 decibels on average). Place de la Concorde and Place de l'Etoile have become obstacles that are difficult for pedestrians to cross.

The survey proposes to:

- **Reduce the road surface to give back space to pedestrians**
  - o Reduce by 52% the surface area reserved for motorised vehicles, switching from eight lanes to four, and an increase the space dedicated to pedestrians (+23%) and soft mobility (+67%).
  - o Put the roadway level with the pavement, doing away with the existing 30 cm curb, and double the areas for pedestrian crossings.
  - o Install a new silent road surface to replace the existing cobble stones, significantly reducing noise pollution.
  - o Triple the sitting capacity (from 458 to 1540) to invite breaks.
  - o Make avenue Winston Churchill pedestrian between the Petit and Grand Palais, offering visitors the spectacular view across the Seine to the Invalides.

- **Reintroduce nature**
  - o Increase in the surface area of open, permeable ground (+53%) to reduce artificial cover and allow rainwater absorption, creating islands of coolness and improving the water cycle.
  - o Plant 1,132 additional trees.
  - o At the higher end of the avenue, create a canopy thanks to a double row of trees that will shade and protect the promenade.
  - o Triple the planted surface area overall (Avenue and squares), from 32,000 to 95,000 m<sup>2</sup>.
- **Redevelop the Place de l’Etoile**
  - o Reduce the number of lanes from 11 to 7.
  - o Create “urban lounges” around the square, with a doubling of the sitting capacity (benches, etc.) and the creation of landscaped areas (increasing sixfold the surface of open ground).
- **Redevelop Place de la Concorde**
  - o Create very large pedestrian crossing areas, to facilitate the movement of the 16 million annual visitors to the Tuileries gardens.
  - o Develop the centre of the square and double the pedestrian surface area.
  - o Plant 360 trees and create 15,000 m<sup>2</sup> of green space.

## 2/ Create a “Central Park” for Parisian families, dedicated to culture, gastronomy and sports.

Until the middle of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the gardens of the Champs-Élysées were among the most beautiful in Paris, attracting families with their puppet shows and horse-drawn carriages, as well as night-time audiences headed for the theatres. Today, these gardens have been deserted by Parisians due to a lack of public facilities and entertainment programmes, even though the neighbouring Grand Palais and Petit Palais welcome more than two million visitors every year.

The project proposes to:

- Create a large, 70-acre Central Park by connecting the Gardens of the Champs-Élysées with the Cours-la-Reine riverside promenade and the Champs-Élysées Port. This Park would also be seamlessly connected to the Tuileries gardens (thanks to the redevelopment of the Place de la Concorde described above) and to the Esplanade des Invalides (thanks to the pedestrianisation of the Alexandre III Bridge). This would create a 192-acre “green lung” in downtown Paris and on the banks of the Seine.

- Landscape this Park to make it a favourite destination for children and families, by:
  - o increasing fivefold the surface area devoted to playgrounds, with the stated ambition of creating some of the most inventive and spectacular play areas in Paris.
  - o doubling the surface of picnic areas and tripling the number of water fountains.
  - o creating 2,600 square meters of sports facilities (jogging tracks, exercise stations)
- Offer affordable food & refreshments, involving great names of French gastronomy, by designing 26 attractive kiosks that will offer meals at a deliberately low price of €12 on average.
- With the Avenue's major cultural players (theatres, cinemas, Grand Palais and Petit Palais, Palais de la Découverte) create an offbeat and popular annual programme. The gardens of the Champs-Élysées would become a natural extension of the museums through the installation of permanent or temporary works, the hosting of the "FIAC Hors les Murs" outdoor contemporary art fair, a summer venue for open-air musical and theatrical performances, as well as a site for exceptional events of global ambition.

### About

#### **Comité Champs-Élysées**

Comité Champs-Élysées is a non-profit organisation for the promotion of the eponymous avenue and its neighbourhood. It brings together 180 retailers, cultural venues and building owners. It organises major events, including the Avenue's famous Christmas Lights.

#### **PCA-STREAM**

The PCA-STREAM agency brings together 90 architects, urban planners, designers and engineers, able to respond to the complex challenges of the contemporary world. PCA is the architecture and urban planning arm, while STREAM is a unique transdisciplinary research programme to which more than 150 researchers from all over the world contribute; its work is widely distributed and applied in PCA's large-scale projects.

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