



La Défense skyline in Paris. EPA

BY ANNE HIDALGO

Paris didn't wait until the end of the 21st century to assert itself as the city of perpetual renewal. The city's dense history and never-ending capacity for change, its countless pioneers — architects, inventors, and scientists — have conferred the city with a key role in Europe and in the world. As Paris has grown increasingly prominent over the centuries, this role has been characterized by territorial ingenuity and urban innovation.

Today, Paris is an open-air laboratory, connected and flexible, populated by individuals who will determine its future and provide us with the means for getting there.

The city's primary strength lies in its awareness of the high stakes it faces. Global urban growth brings real challenges for urban planning, as well as our ecological footprint, connection with the countryside and quality

offering up new solutions for surmounting these challenges.

It is in this pragmatic state of mind that the Council of Paris chose to embrace the sharing economy. This will help guarantee healthy and balanced living conditions for our citizens, preserve the environment for our children, and support the emergence of a job-creating economy in both the short and long-term. In this spirit, we are preparing to make crucial decisions that will ensure Paris remains a smart and sustainable city for the long haul.

In its innovative approach to urban design, Paris has inspired cities around the world: its drainage system, Haussmanian architecture, electricity network, and metro have all served as models. Recent innovations like Vélib' and Autolib' have been met with worldwide acclaim. Seeking out, testing and exploring new possibilities is the only way to find fresh solutions and set examples

sites to help feed the city, as part of a larger project favoring short distribution circuits. This in turn will help us achieve another imperative: lightening urban logistics and reducing delivery vehicle traffic. We have also chosen to

tional 100,000 square meters of innovation infrastructure, mostly located along Paris' so-called "Innovation Arc." In 2015 and 2016, two giant start-up incubators will open in Paris, including the Halle Freyssinet, the largest such

data to be the motor of innovation and the catalyst of our collective intelligence. Everyone should be in a position to submit ideas for improving the way our city works.

For this vision to succeed, Parisians must get involved in the political life of their city. The citizen's voice is a critical element of political decision-making, and I have made consistent efforts to give Parisians a say in the strategic decisions affecting the future of our municipality. As such, I decided to earmark 5 percent of the annual investment budget — some €71 million per year — for projects that Parisians submit, select and vote on themselves. This approach is part of the largest-ever participative budget in the world.

Participative democracy will allow us to design the city's future as Parisians themselves imagine it. We have launched a call for projects, inviting all professionals to submit their ideas on redesigning 23 major sites across the capital. This proactive approach to urban innovation enriches our overall urban planning policy, as evidenced by the rebirth of the heart of Paris with its modernized Les Halles complex, the striking new Law Courts project going up in the Batignolles district, and the forthcoming transformation of some of Paris' most popular spots. Not only celebrating past glories, but daring to build those of the future: that is the choice we have made.

"If you have built castles in the air, one day, your work need not be lost; that is where they should be. Now put the foundations under them," Henry David Thoreau wrote. This is what we are doing in Paris, imagining and implementing new possibilities at the human level, laying the foundations for our dreams.

Parisian castles in the air

The French capital has become a testing ground for new technologies

scale up revegetation in Paris, which will hopefully reduce the city's temperature.

To continue our unrelenting fight against pollution, we will introduce even more collective, clean transport alternatives in order to reduce individual car ownership. Reducing the number of cars on our roads is part of a wider effort to reconquer the city for its citizens. The transformation of the Seine riverbanks, which will phase out traffic lanes in favor of pedestrian zones, is currently underway.

In addition to embracing the sharing economy, Paris is also building a "circular economy" of renewable and recyclable energy. Metropolises like Paris are brimming with untapped energy sources — in basements, sewers, tunnels, and data centers. It's up to us to harness this energy.

To propel Parisian innovation, we need to pursue an aggressive investment policy that will free up more space for start-up development in the city. Over 130,000 square meters of space for start-up incubators has been created in recent years. By 2020, we will have created an addi-

incubator in the world. And because innovation is best fostered by exchange and interaction, 30 percent of start-ups hosted in Parisian incubators will be of foreign origin by 2020.

In Paris, we are convinced that a smart, sustainable city is, first and foremost, a forum that allows its citizens, researchers and innovators to drive the decision-making process of urban projects from conception to roll-out. Consequently, I want open

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of life. With natural resources drying up, we've got to keep things in check.

The unprecedented pressure on our resources means we must find ways to consume less, and to consume more efficiently, while limiting our impact on the environment. Paris faces major challenges when it comes to energy, waste treatment, revegetation, provisioning, mobility, and logistics. At the same time, the spectacular boom in digital technologies is

worth imitating. We must relentlessly pursue promising developments regardless of the technical or political difficulties that may come up along the way.

Over the past few years, Paris has become a testing ground for new technologies in all sectors. Advances in urban agriculture, for example, have produced excellent yields, both in quantity and in quality. We will continue to open up more agricultural

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