

Update on Hosting FIFA World Cup 2026

Date: April 11, 2024
To: The Board of Governors of Exhibition Place
From: Don Boyle, Chief Executive Officer
Wards: All Wards

SUMMARY

In 2018, the 2026 World Cup was awarded to a joint bid by Canada, United States, and Mexico. The World Cup is the largest single sporting event held in the world and rivals the Summer Olympics as the largest overall. It is held every four years over six weeks. In 2026, the World Cup will be expanded to include 48 countries and 104 matches from the current 36 countries, playing 64 games. There will be 6 matches held at Exhibition Place - BMO Field.

The event is the world's most-watched sporting event, with a global viewership of four billion people for the entire competition and upwards of 200 million for each match. Overseen by the International Federation of Football Association (FIFA), the World Cup generates significant economic and cultural benefits for host cities. On June 16, 2022, the City of Toronto was announced as an official Host City.

As directed by City Council in 2022, the FIFA World Cup Toronto 2026 Staff Secretariat was established to support project planning, preparation, and execution of the event.

The Executive Director and Project Manager from the City Secretariat Office will attend the Board meeting on April 25, 2024, to present an update on the planning and progress to the Board Members.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Chief Executive Officer recommends that:

1. The Board receive this report for information.

FINANCIAL IMPACT

There are no financial implications associated with this report.

DECISION HISTORY

The Exhibition Place 2022-2026 Strategic Plan aims to solidify our position as a leading convention and event space. Specifically, we will engage with city partners to identify new ideas and opportunities to enhance the event experience.

At its meeting of July 19, 2022, City Council adopted Hosting FIFA World Cup 2026, which directed staff to enter into negotiations on funding agreements and stadium construction and to collaborate with other City Divisions on implementing the World Cup strategy, and report back on community benefit opportunities, budget impacts, intergovernmental negotiations, financial strategy, community engagement and activation of the Secretariat and working groups, community benefits opportunities, and intergovernmental negotiations.

<https://secure.toronto.ca/council/agenda-item.do?item=2022.EX34.8>

COMMENTS

The development and delivery of the 2026 World Cup requirements depend on cooperation, coordination, and communication between various partners and stakeholders, including Exhibition Place, our tenants (in particular MLSE), clients, and the surrounding community. Advancing critical planning and infrastructure deliverables will require Exhibition Place's involvement and contribution.

Further, Exhibition Place tenants can play a significant role in the event's success through their involvement. A meeting between tenants and the Secretariat was held on March 5, 2024. Several one-on-one meetings are planned with the tenants to determine operational issues and explore potential participation and cross marketing opportunities.

A plan for broader and local community engagement and consultation will follow.

The Executive Director and Project Manager from the Secretariat will attend the Board meeting on April 25, 2024, to present an update on the planning and progress to the Board Members.

CONTACT

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SIGNATURE

Don Boyle
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