

## **TCBN Letter on EX12.2 - Update on Hosting World Cup 2026**

February 28, 2024

Dear Members of Toronto Executive Committee,

The Toronto Community Benefits Network is calling on the City of Toronto Executive Committee to support a Community Benefits Agreement as part of the FIFA Men's 2026 World Cup games.

We are calling on the City to review its approach to FIFA Men's 2026 World Cup planning to ensure safeguards, accountable and transparent measures are in place to protect workers, ensure decent work opportunities for local residents and equity deserving groups and support pathways for small business and social enterprise participation through social procurement targets and supply chain diversity commitments.

At a time when the City continues to face significant financial challenges, new estimates this week outline operations and capital costs have increased to \$380 million, with the public on the hook for any cost overruns. While FIFA and big corporations stand to profit billions of dollars from the 2026 FIFA Men's World Cup, it remains unclear how Toronto's residents and businesses can share in this prosperity.

In 2022, when Toronto City Council was considering how it would participate and approach the planning of FIFA2026 games in Toronto, TCBN advocated for the inclusion of a Community Benefits Agreement. Toronto Executive Committee and City Council voted in support for a Community Benefits Plan that would include minimum targets for the equitable participation of Toronto residents in employment opportunities, small businesses participation through social procurement and supply chain diversity commitments.

Currently, the City does not have an overarching strategy or plan for how it intends to follow through on these commitments to benefit local residents and businesses during the FIFA2026 games, raising our concerns and a "yellow card". While we understand there are bureaucratic challenges and complications with the deal, Toronto community members, small businesses and social enterprises deserve to know how they can meaningfully participate in the opportunities and benefit from the games, and without a Community Benefits Agreement, public declaration or a public responsible contracting framework, this would not be possible.

As recently as the 2022 World Cup in Qatar, advocates have raised accusations of labour and human rights abuse during preparations of the World Cup. This is not the first time such allegations and incidents of human and labour rights violations as part of the FIFA World Cup have occurred. The City of Toronto should not expect FIFA, with this history to lead on human and labour rights, rather the City should take proactive steps in establishing standards to protect residents, workers and vulnerable communities in this City.

A Community Benefits Agreement can ensure alignment with a human rights approach to FIFA2026 and ensure provisions, measures and controls are in place to;

- Protect workers and labour rights in contracting and supply chain. All contractors must have anti racism plans and strategies in place
- Ensure decent work opportunities for local residents and equity deserving groups through a living wage standard
- Establish minimum targets for local hiring and equity hiring for apprenticeship hours, professional, administrative, technical and operations positions
- Develop an Employment and Labour Market plan that includes a plan for apprenticeship training pathways in construction and a plan for employment, training, co-op and internship opportunities in sectors such as hospitality, with a focus on local Neighbourhood Improvement Areas
- Support small business participation through social procurement targets and public listing of procurement, purchasing and vendor opportunities
- Develop a supply chain diversity strategy for each phase including planning, construction and operations for all procurement and purchasing related to FIFA 2026
- Ensure measures are in place to monitor, track and public reporting on outcomes quarterly, and establish a FIFA Community Benefits Working Group with TCBN for community oversight

The City of Toronto is making a significant public investment that must include accountable and transparent measures including meaningful community involvement and oversight to ensure equitable approaches to building community wealth and supporting small businesses in Toronto, both in the construction, operations and legacy of FIFA2026 are achieved whether it is through direct City contracting or other vendor and employment opportunities through MLSE and FIFA.

These recommendations align with many of the current City policies, initiatives and statements in taking action on Indigenous reconciliation, poverty reduction, gender equity, fair wage, economic development, equitable economic recovery, TransformTO and confronting anti-Black racism. With Toronto's FIFA2026 planning moving forward rapidly, the City risks leaving local residents, equity deserving communities and small businesses behind. We urge the City of Toronto Executive Committee to take action now, before it is too late.

### **About TCBN**

The Toronto Community Benefits Network (TCBN) is a community-labour coalition, membership based, Black-led organization of over 120 members with a majority of its Board and 12-member staff representing the cross-section of identities that Community Benefits Agreements are intended to benefit -access to skilled trades and apprenticeship for Black, Indigenous and racialized peoples, including women, youth and newcomers.



Founded in 2013 and incorporated on March 17, 2014, TCBN built on earlier economic justice work related to large capital infrastructure projects including the Pan American Games and the Rexdale Casino redevelopment. TCBN was founded on the principles of racial equity, economic inclusion, and a vision of resident advocacy and power-building especially with people who have been excluded from decision making tables.

The TCBN was very much a merger of social movements and groups from across the City in neighbourhoods like Mount Dennis, Rexdale, Regent Park, Jane Finch, and Scarborough that were realizing that the members of Black, Indigenous and People of Colour (BIPOC) communities obtained very few jobs both in the construction of new infrastructure and in their operations thereafter, and further that the local communities impacted by the infrastructure obtained few neighbourhood benefits despite enduring the negative impacts of large-scale construction.

Standing in solidarity with the community, union leaders recognized community benefits as an opportunity to build on their work for increased diversity and inclusion in the trades.

Since its inception, TCBN has centred itself at the forefront of the economic justice movement in Canada by negotiating Community Benefits Agreements (CBAs) into public infrastructure and urban development projects. These legacy projects, near completion, include the Eglinton Crosstown LRT (267 apprentices), Casino Woodbine expansion (234 apprentices), Finch West LRT (273 apprentices), Westpark (13 apprentices), and York University (15 apprentices).

### **Casino Woodbine Expansion - City of Toronto Community Benefits Agreement**

The Rexdale-Casino Woodbine Community Benefits Agreement was driven by community and labour coalition initially through Communities Organizing for Responsible Development (CORD) and later, RexdaleRising in efforts to mitigate the negative effects of expanded gaming and to leverage opportunities to benefit the Rexdale community and equity-deserving groups across Toronto through commitments to decent work, equitable local economic development and neighbourhood improvements. The Rexdale CBA requires One Toronto Gaming to achieve a range of social and economic outcomes, including local and social hiring for operations and construction-related employment, local and social procurement, responsible gambling measures, a childcare centre, and community access to the event venue.

To date, 48 percent (956 individuals) self-identified as a social hire and 10 percent (206 individuals) were local hires and over \$80M in purchasing from diverse suppliers and local businesses<sup>1</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup><https://www.toronto.ca/city-government/accountability-operations-customer-service/long-term-vision-plans-and-strategies/community-benefits-framework/community-benefits-agreements/>

### **About Vancouver Olympics CBA**

A community benefits agreement was negotiated between the City of Vancouver, Millennium Development and a community organization. This CBA led to a total of 120 jobs for targeted inner-city residents and \$42 million in procurement to inner-city businesses.<sup>2</sup>

### **Achieving Supply Chain Diversity - 2015 Pan Am Games**

As part of the TO2015 PanAm games, over \$9.9M in purchasing was achieved through supply chain diversity, totalling approximately 10% of total procurement and purchasing during the games. This included purchasing from indigenous-owned, women-owned, visible-minority owned, persons with disabilities-owned, LGBT-owned businesses. Outreach initiatives included 10 business outreach events like Winning in Business, Business Networking and RFP writing.

Sincerely,



Rosemarie Powell  
Executive Director  
Toronto Community Benefits Network

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<sup>2</sup> [https://theonn.ca/wp-content/uploads/2017/04/Community-Benefits-Policy-Framework\\_03-13-17.pdf](https://theonn.ca/wp-content/uploads/2017/04/Community-Benefits-Policy-Framework_03-13-17.pdf)

