

Executive Committee
Toronto City Council
City Hall, 100 Queen Street West
Toronto, ON M5H 2N2
By email: exc@toronto.ca

July 15, 2024

Re: EX16.21 - Governance, Community Benefits Plan, Legacy and Program Advisory Framework, FIFA Fan Festival

Dear Mayor, Deputy Mayors and members of the Executive Committee,

The Toronto Environmental Alliance has been advocating for a greener, more equitable city for more than 35 years. **We urge you to follow through on your commitments to environmental and social goals in our city's hosting of the FIFA Men's World Cup games in 2026.** This international event will bring worldwide attention to showcase our city. This energy can help advance many local environmental and social goals and create a lasting legacy of benefits.

We see a particular opportunity in advancing the City's goals to achieve zero waste and a circular economy - including the City's own Single-Use reduction Strategy - by fulfilling Toronto's FIFA-related sustainability goals brought forward in this and previous reports. With more than 45,000 fans per game at the stadium, thousands more at fan zones and beyond, and more than 300,000 visitors to the City expected, there will be a significant amount of food and drinks served. This event could either create mountains of waste, or it could alternatively demonstrate leading, world-class reuse and collection systems to kickstart a growing circular economy in Toronto.

We support the efforts to accelerate and prioritize transit options like RapidTO bus lanes and ensuring there are multiple modes to get to the games, fan zone and other events around the city. It's an opportunity to get not just visitors, but also Toronto residents and locals trying new ways of getting around. We are also pleased to see commitments to specific timelines and budgets on transit-related FIFA commitments.

However, we would like to see more specifics as the City moves into deeper implementation on how the commitments made in the City's Circular Economy Strategy and Single-use Reduction Strategy will apply to FIFA events, and how the City will apply circularity principles from the start in procurement, ensuring that the public and participant experience doesn't result in piles of waste and litter.

In summary, we urge City Council to:

- **Choose reuse over single-use:**
 - **Adopt reusable cups and foodware to drastically reduce waste for all FIFA venues and events including those in public spaces.**
- **Streamline and harmonize waste management systems:**
 - **Ensure that all FIFA locations have the same access to clear, well-signed and effective recycling and organics collection.**

We have the following detailed suggestions to help guide deeper FIFA planning decisions related to waste:

1) Choose Reuse over Single-Use Foodware

Instead of wasteful single-use plastic cups or other disposable dishes, let's adopt reusable, returnable cups and dishes that get washed and used again for all major venues, public fan zones and events.

Studies show that when you look at the full life cycle, even with washing and transportation, reusable dishes use less resources, water and energy compared to single-use plastics or any single-use option.

Around the world, major venues and events have made the shift to reusable cups and dishes at events, and are proving that it's not only possible, but strongly supported by fans. The [Paris Olympics](#) in just a few weeks for example has only reusable cups and dishes at all venues and the athlete's village. A number of stadiums across the US, including FIFA host cities, have launched reusable cup programs, and the [Green Sports Alliance released a guide](#) just last month on how to shift to reuse at sporting events.

Even more exciting, when we look beyond stadiums to potential fan zones and public events, we have great examples of reusable cups at events here in Toronto. Just a few weeks ago at Toronto's [Pride Festival](#), two of the concert stages had only reusable cups serving thousands of drinks without waste. Last week, reusable cups and dishes were used in one area at the [Taste of Lawrence](#) street festival in Scarborough.

Choosing reusable returnable foodware services for these games can not only boost local economic inputs, but can support independent businesses to adopt zero waste practices and help our city shift towards a circular economy.

2) Streamline recycling and organics collection for all venues and public space

Use the opportunity to review and harmonize access to recycling and organics collection for major events, including in public spaces to improve waste diversion.

Making it easy to properly sort and recycle their waste is a challenge at big events, especially when many are visitors who may not know local sorting rules. It requires ensuring there are enough recycling, organics and garbage bins with very clear signs and information on how to sort. Adding to this challenge is different waste requirements even within Toronto: for example, for a permitted event on public *streets*, City green bins and recycling are provided; however, a permitted event in a public *park* is not allowed to use City green bins or recycling, and must hire a private company to remove organics.

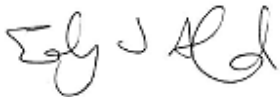
With hundreds of thousands of visitors, the FIFA events will be held at a number of venues and locations, some on City property, and each of these may have its own sorting rules, signs and waste system. We urge you to use this opportunity to streamline waste management as much as possible, to ensure all venues and events have access to recycling and organics collection.

Eliminating disposable foodware and providing consistent, clear access to recycling and organics collections at FIFA events will not only reduce waste and improve diversion, but it will help Toronto take major steps forward on reducing climate impacts and achieving circular economy goals for future events. We also urge you to use these opportunities to pursue circular procurement principles and consider opportunities to support local businesses.

TEA has been part of a larger network of community non-profits, labour organizations and advocates who are working together to contribute community perspectives to hosting an equitable, green and transparent FIFA World Cup tournament in our city in 2026. We have endorsed a joint letter from this group asking for the City to enhance transparency, accountability, and access to decision-making for communities to ensure a positive legacy for all. We look forward to this lens also being applied to environmental efforts, to ensure the benefits of the games outlast 2026.

We hope to see Council move quickly on this strategy and maintain this momentum.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Emily Alfred". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Emily Alfred, Waste Campaigner, Toronto Environmental Alliance