

FIFA World Cup 2026 Toronto: Community Benefits Plan Update, Social Procurement and Workforce Development Status, Community Activation Plan, Marketing and Communications Overview, Support for Concurrent Special Events, Principles of Bidding on International Events, and Purchase Order Amendment

Date: June 2, 2025
To: FIFA World Cup 2026 Subcommittee
From: Executive Director, FIFA World Cup 2026 Toronto Secretariat
Wards: All

SUMMARY

The FIFA World Cup 2026 (FWC26) represents an unprecedented opportunity for the City of Toronto to showcase its global reputation as a diverse, inclusive, and vibrant city. As preparations advance, this report provides a comprehensive update on several key initiatives supporting Toronto's role as a Host City. It includes the latest progress on the Community Benefits Plan, Social Procurement and Workforce Development, the Community Activation Plan, and support for concurrent special events. In addition, this report outlines the foundational principles guiding the City's approach to bidding on large international events and provides an overview of marketing and communications efforts tied to FWC26.

Together, these updates reflect the City's commitment to ensuring that the benefits of hosting FWC26 are felt widely across communities, support local economic growth, enhance civic engagement, and strengthen Toronto's position as a world-class destination for major international events. This integrated approach ensures that equity, economic inclusion, and community vibrancy remain at the core of preparations and legacy planning for 2026 and beyond.

This report is a coordinated response, providing updates and addressing directives from City Council ([EX12.2](#), [CC.29.1](#)), led by the FWC26 Toronto Secretariat, in collaboration with Economic Development and Culture, Social Development, Parks and Recreation, Purchasing & Materials Management, and Financial Planning.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Executive Director, FWC26 Toronto Secretariat recommends that:

1. City Council amend the 2025-2034 Capital Budget and Plan for Exhibition Place with a project cost of \$23.0 million gross and cash flow funding of \$15.0 million in 2025 and future commitments of \$8.0 million in 2026 to create a new capital project, fully funded from third party funding received from the Maple Leaf Sports & Entertainment Ltd. (MLSE), for the purpose of completing capital improvements at BMO Field requested by MLSE.
2. City Council decrease the 2025 Operating Budget for the City Manager's Office by \$0.7 million gross and \$0 net to reflect a reduced provision for contingency requirements related to FWC26 hosting costs, currently funded from the Major Special Event Reserve Fund.
3. City Council increase the 2025-2034 Capital Budget and Plan for Exhibition Place by \$0.7 million gross, cash flowed in 2025, funded by the reallocation of funding from the Major Special Events Reserve Fund previously budgeted within the 2025 Operating Budget for the City Manager's Office, as noted in Recommendation 2 above, to reflect increased design costs as a result of scope changes under the Special Projects - FIFA 2026 (Stadium) project, to be delivered through the existing contract with Gensler Architecture and Design Canada.
4. City Council authorize the Executive Director, FIFA World Cup 2026 Toronto Secretariat and the Chief Procurement Officer to amend the non-competitive contract with Gensler Architecture and Design Canada Inc. for architectural services needed for the permanent and temporary upgrades at BMO Field for the FIFA World Cup 2026 Toronto (FWC26 Toronto) by an additional amount of \$664,234.55 excluding taxes (\$675,925.08 net of Harmonized Sales Tax recoveries), based on the existing contracted terms and conditions.
5. City Council authorize the Executive Director, FWC26 Toronto Secretariat, in consultation with the General Manager, Parks and Recreation, to negotiate and enter into ongoing community programming partnerships and other agreements as necessary, on terms and conditions satisfactory to the City Manager and the Executive Director, FIFA World Cup 2026 Toronto Secretariat, and in a form satisfactory to the City Solicitor, which shall:
 - a. Ensure access to safe, quality and inclusive soccer programming delivered by the City or local neighbourhood partners with a focus, where possible, on Neighbourhood Improvement Areas as well as Indigenous, Black and equity-deserving youth;
 - b. Support an inclusive, diverse and educated soccer coaching and referee community, starting with entry level training for coaches and officials;

- c. Enable a mix of Soccer for All and complimentary recreational programs to sustain inclusive and accessible use of infrastructure that is aligned with community needs.

FINANCIAL IMPACT

2025-2034 Capital Budget and Exhibition Place

It is recommended that amendments be made to the Exhibition Place 2025-2034 Capital Budget and Plan by \$23 million gross, \$0 debt, with cash flow funding of \$15 million in 2025 and \$8 million in 2026, for the purpose of creating a new capital project for MLSE requested capital improvements at the BMO Field. This project will be fully funded through third party contributions from MLSE with no impact to the \$380 million overall budget for the FWC26 as the capital expenditures are outside the scope required for hosting the FWC26.

Purchase Order Amendment

Due to an increase in project scope resulting from auditing of key stadium components in alignment with the Host City Agreement, staff are recommending an increase to the Gensler Architecture & Design Canada non-competitive procurement in the amount of \$664,234.55 excluding taxes (\$675,925.08 net of harmonized sales tax) to support the additional design work required. To support the purchase order amendment, it is recommended that the 2025 Capital Budget for Exhibition Place be increased by \$0.7 million in cash flow funding, fully offset by a corresponding decrease to budgeted contingencies in hosting costs included in the 2025 Operating Budget for the City Manager's Office, funded from the Major Special Events Reserve Fund. Contract details as follows:

Original contracted value: \$4,168,561.00

Amendment: \$664,234.55 (16% increase)

New contract value: \$4,832,795.55 (excluding HST)

Working within the unchanged \$380 million (gross) overall budget for the FWC26 and taking into account the new \$340 million temporary spending restriction adopted by City Council on May 22, 2025 ([EX23.17](#)), \$154.3 million is now allocated towards FWC26 capital requirements including \$123.7 million in estimated project cost related to the stadium within the Exhibition Place 10-Year Capital Budget and Plan. This does not include the value of any additional capital improvements MLSE is choosing to proceed with, that are not required for hosting the FWC26, as noted above.

Community Activation Plan Funding

With “The World in a City” Community Celebration Support Fund (CCSF) to be launched in summer 2025, support will take the form of small grants to local community organizations, such as Business Improvement Areas (BIAs) and local cultural organizations to support costs related to planning, promoting and delivering safe community celebrations in summer 2026. EDC has allocated \$1 million dollars for the program, with an intention to support up to fifty events across the city. Expenditures for the program will be reflected in 2025 operating spending for EDC.

The Chief Financial Officer and Treasurer has reviewed this report and agrees with the financial impact information identified in the Financial Impact Section.

DECISION HISTORY

On May 22, 2025, City Council adopted EX23.16, "FIFA World Cup 2026 Toronto: Procurement Plan Update", updating the procurement plan to procure the goods and services required for the delivery of the FIFA World Cup 2026 Toronto.

<https://secure.toronto.ca/council/agenda-item.do?item=2025.EX23.16>

On May 22, 2025, City Council adopted EX23.17, "Status update of funding from the Federal and Provincial Governments for FIFA World Cup 2026", providing details around negotiations with the provincial government related to service costs for hosting the FIFA World Cup 2026.

<https://secure.toronto.ca/council/agenda-item.do?item=2025.EX23.17>

On April 23, 2025, City Council adopted CC29.1, "Ensuring Toronto's local summer festivals benefit from the World Cup", reaffirming the expectation that existing festivals and special events will continue with special consideration including traffic operations, transit accessibility, and safety.

<https://secure.toronto.ca/council/agenda-item.do?item=2025.CC29.1>

On April 23, 2025, City Council adopted CC29.3, "Procurement to Support Activities Funded by the Soccer for All Legacy Fund", authorizing

<https://secure.toronto.ca/council/agenda-item.do?item=2025.CC29.3>

On February 5, 2025, City Council adopted EX20.19, "Authorization to Enter into Agreements to Deliver a Successful FIFA World Cup 2026", granting staff the ability to execute agreements with FIFA's exclusive vendors in a timely manner is essential to staying on track and delivering an event that meets both FIFA's standards and our city's expectations.

<https://secure.toronto.ca/council/agenda-item.do?item=2025.EX20.19>

On November 4, 2024, City Council adopted EX18.17, "FIFA World Cup 2026 Toronto: Revenue Opportunities to Support Hosting Obligations, Procurement Plan Revisions, and Social Procurement and Community Workforce Development Updates", which reflected changes to the procurement plan and goals for social procurement.

<https://secure.toronto.ca/council/agenda-item.do?item=2024.EX18.17>

On July 24, 2024, City Council adopted EX16.21, "Governance, Community Benefits Plan, Legacy and Program Advisory Framework, FIFA Fan Festival", which provided a general overview of planning, granted authority to enter in agreements with third party groups to receive funds, and accelerate RapidTO transit priorities, all associated with supporting the FIFA World Cup 2026 in Toronto.

<https://secure.toronto.ca/council/agenda-item.do?item=2024.EX16.21>

On July 24, 2024, City Council adopted EX16.32, "FIFA World Cup 2026: Toronto Host City Procurement Plan", which provided approval to proceed in accordance with the procurement plan to procure the goods and services required for the delivery of FIFA World Cup 2026 set out in Confidential Attachment 1.

<https://secure.toronto.ca/council/agenda-item.do?item=2024.EX16.32>

At its meeting on July 5, 2024, the FIFA World Cup 2026 Subcommittee considered Item FWC1.3 which directed the Executive Director, FIFA World Cup Hosting 2026 to conduct a line-by-line review of the City of Toronto's FIFA World Cup 2026 budget, in consultation with the FIFA Subcommittee Chair, City Divisions and Agencies engaged in delivering the games, and other relevant stakeholders, to identify opportunities to reduce the impact of the games on the City's property tax base and report back to the Subcommittee on the results of this review by October 2024.

<https://secure.toronto.ca/council/agenda-item.do?item=2024.FWC1.1>

On June 18, 2024, Executive Committee adopted EX15.13, "Amending FIFA World Cup 2026 Subcommittee Mandate", which renamed the subcommittee as "FIFA World Cup 2026 Subcommittee" to broaden its mandate to consider all FIFA related matters including the oversight of the budget, and further consider and make recommendations on procurement plans.

<https://secure.toronto.ca/council/agenda-item.do?item=2024.EX15.13>

At its meeting on May 22, 2024, City Council approved the 2022 and 2023 Economic Development and Culture (EDC) grants allocation and delegated authority to General Manager, Economic Development and Culture to allocate directed grants up to a value of \$500,000.

<https://secure.toronto.ca/council/agenda-item.do?item=2024.EC12.3>

On March 20, 2024, City Council adopted EX12.2, "Update on Hosting FIFA World Cup 2026", which authorized staff to negotiate and enter into contribution agreements with the Governments of Canada and Ontario in support of FWC26 as well as agreements with the Greater Toronto Airport Authority and Ports Toronto (Billy Bishop Toronto City Airport) reflecting Host City Agreement obligations in support of Toronto's hosting of the FWC26. Through this report City Council also directed report backs on a number of items including revenue plans, children and youth soccer facilities and programs,

community benefits, human rights plans and climate strategy.
<https://secure.toronto.ca/council/agenda-item.do?item=2024.EX12.2>

COMMENTS

Soccer for All

The City of Toronto's Soccer for All Legacy Fund will enable youth access to safe spaces to play and support inclusive programming opportunities, particularly in underserved communities. Frequent participation in sport can positively improve health outcomes, support self-esteem, grow enduring friendships and provide a person with a meaningful passion for sport throughout their life.

In addition to the work already underway to deliver the mini pitches ([CC29.3](#)) staff are working in parallel to identify ways to ensure access to safe, quality and inclusive soccer programming with a focus, where possible, on Neighbourhood Improvement Areas as well as Indigenous, Black and equity-deserving youth. This could include community programming partnerships.

To support the excitement and interest in soccer generated by FWC26, growth will be required in the coaching and referee community. To meet this need, programs targeted at small sided and entry level match officials are being planned along with community capacity building programming focused on training to qualify individuals to coach children and youth of various age ranges.

To advance this work in a timely manner, authority to negotiate and enter into agreements necessary to deliver this programming is being requested. A more substantive report on Sport, Active Living, Health & Wellness initiatives will be provided in Fall 2025 as part of a comprehensive update on FWC26 legacy initiatives across all legacy themes, including the allocation of legacy funding.

Community Benefits Plan Updates

Community Workforce Development through FWC26 Procurement

Further to [2025.EX21.15](#), five procurements with workforce development requirements have been awarded. They include:

- The [Centennial Park Soccer Facilities Refresh](#), awarded to Mopal Construction Limited.
- The [Centennial Venue Specific Training Site Building for FIFA World Cup 2026](#), awarded to BDA Inc.
- The ["Soccer-for-All" Legacy Mini-Pitches Program](#), awarded to Govan Brown.
- [Construction Management Services at Toronto Stadium in Support of the FIFA World Cup 2026 Hosting](#), awarded to PCL Constructors Canada Inc.

- [Temporary Seating Expansion at Toronto Stadium in Support of the FIFA World Cup 2026 Hosting](#), awarded to Arena Event Services.

To date, across all contracts the following workforce development achievements have been reported:

- 3 (three) new non-construction related hires;
- 8 (eight) co-op student placements or mentorship opportunities;
- 4,579 Apprenticeship hours;
- 25,265 Journeyperson hours; and
- Participation in 7 (seven) networking sessions, learning forums or job fairs.

Three additional procurements will include workforce development requirements:

- The procurement for Temporary Hospitality Structures at the Toronto Stadium is currently being finalized. The solicitation included enhanced language requiring a workforce development plan.
- The procurement for event management services for the FIFA Fan Festival is currently in market.
- The procurement for security guard services is currently being developed by the FWC26 Toronto Secretariat. In addition to the enhanced workforce development requirements, staff will include advanced notice scheduling provisions. Advance notice scheduling provisions require suppliers to provide workers with a two-week schedule, two weeks in advance, so they know their schedule one month in advance.

As contracts are awarded, City staff work with the successful supplier to support the achievement of workforce development requirements.

Business Opportunities for Local and Diverse Suppliers through FWC26 Procurement

For solicitations valued under \$133,800, the Social Procurement Policy requires staff to include a quotation from a minimum of one Indigenous, Black or Diverse Supplier or Social Enterprise, where feasible. Award is to the supplier with the lowest quote meeting specifications. In addition to the requirements of the Social Procurement Policy, for FWC26 invitational solicitations, when three or more Indigenous, Black or Diverse Suppliers or Social Enterprises are identified, these solicitations are set aside and only those suppliers are invited to quote. If the second lowest quote meeting specifications is within 10% of the lowest quote and the supplier is an Indigenous, Black or Diverse Supplier or Social Enterprise, the award is made to the Indigenous, Black or Diverse Supplier or Social Enterprise.

For all open competitive procurements, staff identify Indigenous, Black and Diverse Suppliers and Social Enterprise that can be invited to bid.

Staff have also identified Indigenous, Black and Diverse Suppliers and Social Enterprises for potential subcontracting opportunities and will continue to work with

suppliers to help support the advancement of supply chain diversity as part of the workforce development process.

To date 19 bids have been received from certified Indigenous, Black and Diverse Suppliers and Social Enterprises through both the invitational procurement process and the open, competitive procurement process. From the 19 bids received, 4 (four) procurements have been awarded to Indigenous, Black and Diverse Suppliers and Social Enterprises for a combined spend to date of \$186,900, with an additional 5 (five) bids currently being reviewed.

Going Beyond FWC26 Procurement to achieve Community Workforce Development, Skills Training and Employment Readiness

The Community Workforce Development Program remains a key pillar of the City's FWC26 Community Benefits Plan and is designed to contribute to the City's goal to deliver targeted employment and training pathways for youth. The Community Workforce Development Program connects Indigenous, Black and equity-deserving youth to meaningful training and employment opportunities across key FWC26-related sectors including, but not limited to, sports, hospitality, tourism, and event operations.

Recent program milestones indicate growing momentum, particularly in the engagement of potential Employer Champions. Immediate priorities include developing a roster of Employer Champions, conducting labour forecasting activities, and planning for training pathways in the lead up to starting employment. The program will proceed through three key phases which include employer onboarding, youth intake, and job placements. To support program delivery and coordination, this program is leveraging existing City of Toronto youth employment programs, particularly Toronto Youth Job Corps (TYJC).

In addition, the Social Development division, in collaboration with Toronto Employment & Social Services (TESS), are collaborating on a funded initiative intended to support 60 youth in receipt of Ontario Works with tailored wraparound supports and exposure to networking and professional opportunities and workforce development pathways.

To position the Community Workforce Development Program as an inclusive workforce legacy program for Toronto youth during the tournament and beyond, Community Benefits staff are in discussions with WCG Services (Employment Ontario - Toronto Service System Manager) to develop a collaboration agreement. This collaboration will create streamlined connections between community benefits hiring opportunities and Employment Ontario service providers.

Overall, the Community Workforce Development Program is intended to reinforce a coordinated approach of aligning youth job seekers and employment service providers with Employer Champions. To maximize impact, the Community Workforce Development Program is also engaging with a wide range of employment service providers, including those that are Employment Ontario-funded.

Community Benefits Employer Champions

Community Benefits Employer Champions will play a key role in the success of the Program. Employer Champions have the opportunity to build their capacity and profile

as community-connected employers and corporate leaders in equity, diversity and inclusion.

The Community Workforce Development Program is working with the FWC26 Toronto Secretariat and the Host City Commercial Sales team to engage with Host City Supporters and seek their participation as Community Benefits Employer Champions. This collaborative approach reflects a strategic effort to leverage existing partnerships and align on shared commitments of advancing inclusive economic development opportunities for youth. As a first key partner, FIFA Canada has confirmed their involvement in the program. In May 2025, as their first initiative as an Employer Champion, FIFA Canada shared a dedicated application link for the first intake of their Future Leaders Internship Program to facilitate outreach to Indigenous, Black and equity-deserving youth candidates.

A monitoring and evaluation framework is under development to assess impact on employer engagement, youth outcomes, and system coordination. Program reporting tools are also being prepared to support this framework through data collection and analysis with Employer Champions, community organizations and participating youth.

Utilizing the City of Toronto's Community Benefits Workforce Intermediary model, staff are actively building relationships and coordinating alignment between employers, employment service providers, Indigenous, Black, 2SLGBTQ+ youth-serving organizations, and youth job seekers as the City continues to advance this legacy initiative. This approach provides targeted support to youth job seekers while aligning them with employment and training opportunities that meet real-time demand of employers.

Community Activation Plan

As part of the City's broader planning and delivery efforts, a comprehensive Community Activation Plan is being developed to engage residents and local businesses, support cultural expression, promote equity and inclusion, and enhance Toronto's reputation as a global destination.

As a first phase of community involvement, staff have engaged organizations through the six legacy Program Advisory Bodies:

- Sport, Physical Activity, Health and Wellness
- Arts and Culture
- Tourism and Economic Development
- Environmental Sustainability
- Human Rights, Equity, Diversity, Inclusion and Anti-Racism
- Community Benefits and Social Procurement

In addition, staff have been attending and speaking at a range of events hosted by community partners to share information about the tournament. To date, these events include:

<i>November 26</i>	<i>Exhibition Place Tenant Liaison Meeting</i>
<i>November 27</i>	<i>Exhibition Place Community Liaison Meeting</i>
<i>December 5</i>	<i>Toronto Community Benefits Network Community Roundtable</i>
<i>January 30</i>	<i>Liberty Village BIA Board Meeting</i>
<i>March 2</i>	<i>Ontario Soccer Summit</i>
<i>March 4</i>	<i>TABIA (standing monthly meeting)</i>
<i>April 23</i>	<i>Sponsorship Marketing Council of Canada</i>
<i>May 1</i>	<i>Festival and Events Network Meeting</i>
<i>May 4</i>	<i>Inclusion in Canadian Sport Network, Diversity in Sport Conference</i>
<i>May 21</i>	<i>Downtown West BIA, Community Safety & Well-Being Session</i>
<i>May 28</i>	<i>Toronto Attractions Council</i>
<i>June 2</i>	<i>Play for Dignity, Inspiring the World Cup Legacy Event</i>

These opportunities, which have been supplemented by numerous follow-up conversations with interested organizations are helping to inform plans for community activation as well as longer term development of legacy initiatives across all legacy themes.

The next phase of the plan will enable residents and communities across all wards to participate in FWC26-related celebrations, with a strong focus on youth engagement, grassroots sport, local business development, arts and culture, and civic pride.

The Community Activation Plan is a combination of efforts to engage communities before, during and after the tournament. Key elements include a Community Activation Toolkit with programs, resources and information that will help communities to join in the celebration.

Community Activation Toolkit

The Community Activation Toolkit is in development and will be available in summer 2025. It will include resources, information and guidance to support businesses and organizations in creating FWC26 excitement in their communities. Aligning with FIFA criteria and guidelines, content of the toolkit will focus on criteria for the Community Celebration Support Fund and 'Here to Cheer' designation, the do's and don'ts for adhering to FIFA community event and brand guidelines, how to access FIFA approved pageantry elements to dress-up main streets and neighbourhoods, and tips and tools for promoting FWC26 and activating community pride. Two of the major programs that are in development are described below.

“The World in a City”: Community Celebration Support Fund (CCSF)

FWC26 represents an opportunity for host cities to boost tourism, promote local businesses, and strengthen community ties. To maximize such benefits, the City of Toronto will support community organizations in organizing local celebrations for

residents and visitors alike to join in neighbourhood-scale events to celebrate this historic tournament.

With “The World in a City” Community Celebration Support Fund (CCSF) launching in summer 2025, support will take the form of small grants to local community organizations, such as Business Improvement Areas (BIAs) and local cultural organizations to assist with costs related to planning, promoting and delivering safe community celebrations in summer 2026.

While the priorities for local celebrations may vary from neighbourhood to neighbourhood, the rationale for a City-led community celebration program is consistent and compelling. The objectives of the program are to:

- Increase the type, quantity and geographic distribution of FWC26-related benefits for residents and businesses outside the city core to complement and diversify the benefits associated with the tournament to take place the downtown core;
- Increase public awareness of, engagement with, and support for Toronto’s hosting of the FWC26;
- Enhance Toronto’s hosting of the FWC26 strengthening Toronto’s international brand and reputation and its ability to attract future events; and
- Leverage additional funding from sponsors and other public, private and community-based organizations, and strengthen partnership opportunities with such entities.

These objectives align with several Council-endorsed priorities, including economic development, tourism, resident engagement and cultural access and participation. In keeping with Culture Connects, the City’s ten-year culture plan adopted by Council in November 2024, the Community Celebration Support Fund (CCSF) proposed here will enable community-led events to take place outside the city core and create opportunities for residents to join in celebrations close to where they live.

Beyond the benefits in cultural access and participation, with the ability to promote various neighbourhoods and strengthen ties between residents, the CCSF will help more broadly distribute the branding, employment and local economic development benefits of Toronto’s participation in FWC26.

EDC will launch, in late June 2025, “The World in a City” CCSF and accept funding proposals from eligible community not-for-profit organizations such as BIAs, local cultural organizations and community organizations to support defined eligible costs related to planning, hosting and promoting community celebrations to take place in neighbourhoods across Toronto during the tournament period of June 11 to July 19, 2026. Funding can be allocated for new events or augmentations to existing events that are free to the public, reflect the local community and tie into Toronto’s larger hosting opportunity. The program will be a time-limited fund operating through 2025 and then closed. The CCSF funding process will be consistent with the City’s Community Grants Policy. Funding will be provided under Council authority provided through

[2024.EC12.3](#) to the GM EDC to allocate grants up to a value of \$500,000 each to eligible businesses, festivals, non-profit corporations, educational institutions, and registered charities for activities under the EDC mandate for economic and cultural development.

While the FIFA Fan Festival at Fort York and The Bentway will be the central FWC26 celebration and gathering place for residents and visitors, this program is intended to complement the FIFA Fan Festival and support community, business and cultural organizations in organizing grass-roots neighbourhood celebrations during Toronto's FWC26 hosting period to ensure that all Torontonians, no matter where they live, have the opportunity to celebrate this significant event.

One time funding will be issued via a transparent and competitive application process designed to deliver at least one event per municipal ward, supporting event costs to a maximum of 50% of eligible costs. Eligible applicants will be incorporated not-for-profits with a track record of delivering free public events, like BIAs and community cultural organizations, and able to demonstrate strong planning and fund-raising. Eligible expenditures will include event logistical costs, public safety measures, programming costs, and marketing costs.

The program will be administered under EDC's delegated authority from City Council in community grant making. City Councillors will be consulted on the final determination of recipients in their respective wards. EDC has allocated \$1 million dollars for the time-limited fund, with an intention to support up to fifty events across the city. Expenditures for the time-limited fund will be reflected in 2025 operating spending for EDC with successful recipients and reported to Council in EDC's annual summary of funding recipients.

Program timelines will include a launch in summer 2025, with intake concluded by fall 2025, and funding decisions made prior to the end of 2025 to enable community organizations adequate time to plan and market events. The program will ensure all events abide by FIFA event and brand guidelines as well as looking to maximize the impact of non-commercial event viewing rights, ultimately distributed by FIFA and its broadcast partners.

Details and eligibility criteria of the CCSF application are still in development to ensure compliance with FWC26 Host City contractual obligations and will be announced in late June 2025 with the program guidelines and application.

Here to Cheer

The program, modeled on the successful Ignite program created for the Toronto 2015 Pan Am/Parapan Am Games, will provide an opportunity for non-commercial projects to be officially recognized as part of the celebrations supporting FWC26.

The idea behind Here to Cheer is simple: those with a passion for promoting sport, physical activity, recreation, healthy living and/or art and culture, will be invited to create their own special soccer-themed initiative or put a "The World in a City" twist on an

existing initiative. It could be a community youth soccer league, a Caribbean cultural festival or even an innovative off-the-wall art project. The only prerequisite is the initiatives must help promote the spirit of sport and culture embodied by FWC26.

Approved events, projects and programs that embrace this challenge are awarded the special Here to Cheer designation to showcase their commitment to creating meaningful legacies from hosting this once-in-a-lifetime global event. Details for the Here to Cheer program will be outlined in the Community Activation Toolkit available in summer 2025.

FIFA Fan Festival

On May 7, 2025, the City of Toronto confirmed Fort York National Historic Site and The Bentway as the official venues for FIFA Fan Festival™ Toronto, marking a milestone in the city's preparations to welcome the FWC26.

The FIFA Fan Festival™ is a global celebration of soccer, culture and community, designed for fans to enjoy free live broadcasts of FWC26 matches while experiencing the excitement of an official FIFA World Cup™ atmosphere.

The FIFA Fan Festival™ will run between Thursday, June 11 and Sunday, July 19, 2026, and will feature live match broadcasts on large screens, diverse cultural performances, interactive installations and a variety of local food experiences. Specific operating days and hours will be available at a later date. This celebration will highlight Toronto's unmatched diversity, talent and global appeal, reinforcing the city's reputation as being "The World in a City."

The City is committed to keeping the community including residents, businesses and Indigenous groups well-informed and actively engaged throughout the planning process for the FIFA Fan Festival™. The City will continue collaborating closely with these groups to ensure meaningful participation and dialogue. An information session for area residents and businesses is planned in the coming months.

The City released a Request for Proposal for Event Management Services for the FIFA Fan Festival, closing June 9, 2025.

Public Viewing Events

Public viewing has become a firm fixture of the fan culture of FIFA events, providing fans with a unique and exciting opportunity to experience all the action and atmosphere of one of the world's greatest sports spectacles outside the stadiums.

Managed by FIFA, the FIFA Public Viewing Platform will launch Q4 2025. This platform will streamline the process for requesting public viewing licenses for the FIFA World Cup 26.

In the meantime, inquiries regarding public viewing license requests can be directed to publicviewing@fifa.org.

Support for Concurrent Festivals and Special Events Impacted by FWC26

As part of the City of Toronto Host City Agreement for the FWC26, host cities must ensure no major special events conflict with the tournament operations. The FWC26 Toronto Secretariat has been working closely with FIFA to mitigate potential impacts on local special events while adhering to contractual obligations.

While the City will not be cancelling any major festivals or events, it is anticipated that 2026 will be a challenging year for some local special event organizers. Factors beyond the City's contractual obligations to FIFA are highly likely to impact local festivals and events in 2026. These include:

- The availability and cost of emergency and essential services to festivals and major events due to the resource demands of the FWC26.
- Event organizers may face escalating costs and skilled event labour scarcity due to the presence of the FWC26.

To accurately assess impacts on planning for specific special events in 2026, the City of Toronto, through the FWC26 Toronto Secretariat and the Economic Development and Culture Division (EDC), identified and engaged more than 20 special events organizers most likely to be impacted due to their location and/or timing within the FWC26 dates. Discussions with all organizations took place during the week of April 22-24, 2025, to discuss impacts, potential challenges and mitigation strategies.

Further, the bi-annual meeting of the Festival and Events Network (FEN) was convened on May 1, 2025, by EDC to discuss several topics including a presentation by the FWC26 Toronto Secretariat on games time operations and potential impacts to annual special events between June 11 and July 2, 2026, Toronto's peak tournament time frame.

Annual special events were advised that there are three categories/groups of consideration:

- Group 1: Special Events that occur outside the dates of June 11 to July 2, 2026, for which operations will be unaffected by FWC26 and organizers should plan events as they normally would moving forward.
- Group 2: Special Events that occur between the dates of June 11 to July 2, 2026, with event site operations outside the downtown core, for which organizers will need to consult with the City and implicated authorities to confirm resources are available to support their needs (e.g. Police, EMS, etc.)
- Group 3: Special Events that occur between the dates of June 11 to July 2, 2026, with an event site in the downtown core, for which the City will need to work with organizers to assess possible need to relocate, reschedule and/or augment elements that overlap with FWC26 activities. These organizations have been consulted as described above.

Given the significant demands on City of Toronto services in hosting the FIFA World Cup in 2026, local event organizers have also been asked to consider potentially relocating their events off roadways/transportation right of ways to lessen the need for policing and City resources and reduce overall impacts on traffic congestion during the summer of 2026. This tactic will also reduce the costs and risks likely to be borne by event organizers in summer 2026 as a result of executing concurrently.

Festivals and events contacted indicated no significant concerns with adjusting their dates or schedules in response to potential impacts because of FWC26. In many cases, there was expressed interest in organizing a viewing event during the tournament period at which point organizers were informed of the FIFA Public Viewing Portal.

The FWC26 Toronto Secretariat and EDC will continue to engage with impacted event organizers to advise and support any changes to their on-going operations.

Volunteering

Volunteering for the FWC26 in Toronto is a unique opportunity to be part of this historic global event and demonstrate civic pride.

The official FIFA volunteer registration portal is not yet open, however people interested in volunteering can sign up to receive updates and information about volunteer opportunities at volunteer.fifa.com/register. Those who have signed up will be among the first to know when applications become available. The FWC26 Secretariat is working with FIFA Canada on strategies to support recruitment through intentional community engagement and volunteer application workshops to provide information and assistance to those interested in pursuing a volunteer role.

Further announcements and information regarding volunteer registration and related events will be posted on the official FWC26 Toronto website, torontofwc26.ca.

Marketing and Communications Plan Overview

The City of Toronto's marketing and communications strategy for FWC26 is designed to share Toronto stories while amplifying key milestones, in alignment with City priorities and "The World in a City" narrative. The plan maximizes impact by leveraging community and media partnerships, as well as City-owned and partner-owned spaces, to promote inclusive, meaningful, and city-wide engagement.

Key focus areas include creating a legacy-building impact that prioritizes economic, social, and cultural benefits for equity-deserving youth, and ensuring inclusive communications through multilingual promotions in English, French, and key languages that reflect Toronto's diversity. This will be delivered through a multi-phased, multi-channel approach from June 2025 through July 2026, including advertising campaigns, media relations, digital and social content (paid and organic), experiential marketing and community activations, and commercial partner integration. Together, these efforts aim to build momentum, foster city pride, and ensure broad access and participation as Toronto prepares to welcome the world.

A "One Team" delivery model includes the City of Toronto, FIFA, Destination Toronto and Maple Leaf Sports & Entertainment. This will allow the City to maximize partnership opportunities and leverage internal and external subject matter expertise.

Soccer Day in Toronto celebration

On June 12, the City of Toronto celebrates One Year to Kick-Off at Nathan Phillips Square. The family-friendly public event marks exactly one year until Toronto hosts its first FIFA World Cup™ match and includes the unveiling of the official FIFA World Cup 26™ Toronto Countdown Clock, soccer demonstrations, music and soccer-themed activities. Mayor Olivia Chow will proclaim June 12 as Soccer Day in Toronto and all Torontonians are encouraged to show their team spirit by wearing their favourite soccer jersey, or red and white for Canada's National Team.

Marketing and Communications Strategy - Phased Approach

Phase 1: Get Ready (June 2025 - September 2025)

- Boosting awareness of Toronto as a proud and diverse Host City with a passionate soccer fanbase ready to welcome the world, generating excitement and providing opportunities for Torontonians and visitors to participate, engage and celebrate.
- Leverage One Year To Kick-Off celebrations to build sustained momentum throughout the summer and into the tournament in 2026.

Phase 2: Build Momentum (October 2025 - March 2026)

- Amplifying FIFA and Toronto milestones, including the Match Draw, to link to the city's diversity through fandom. This phase culminates in the 100 Days to Go countdown in March.

Phase 3: Know Before You Go / Kick-Off (April 2026 - July 2026)

- Always-on strategy of activities and media relations that engage residents, visitors, and the eyes of the world with critical event information they need right before and during the tournament.

Phase 4: Legacy Impact (July 2026 & beyond)

- Measuring the impact of the FWC26 benefits and legacy, including city success stories.

Communications and Marketing Channels Include:

- Paid and in-kind advertising: digital ads, billboards, transit shelter ads, subway and bus placements, posters, paid social media.
- Social media: Using @fwc26toronto channels, amplified by City of Toronto corporate channels, to create engaging and timely content, including photo and video content, and ambassador takeovers.
- Website: Provide key information and tell city stories on the FWC26 Toronto website.

- Media outreach: Proactive media outreach, including news releases, media events and briefings, and story pitches.
- Newsletters: Leveraging City-owned and partner newsletters to promote key milestones and stories.
- Community events/festivals: FWC26 Toronto Street Team to visit Toronto festivals and events, soccer tournaments and tourist attractions creating excitement across the city.
- Youth soccer program outreach: Collaborations with Ontario Soccer, community organization and City-run programs to engage and inspire youth.
- FWC26 Toronto Ambassador Program: Host City Ambassadors/Boosters from sports, arts, music and fashion scenes will drive excitement by posting branded content on social media and make appearances at key events across the city.
- Community Activation Toolkit: Will contain event and brand guidelines along with ways to create buzz and excitement with community-based activations.
- Commercial partner activations: In-person and digital activations by official Host City Supporters and FIFA commercial partners will help to amplify city messaging.

Principles for Bidding on Large International Events

The Economic Development and Culture Division (EDC) leads City of Toronto efforts in the bidding and hosting of major events. This included incubating the City's bidding and hosting effort for the FWC26.

In response to [EX12.2.17](#), City Council in March 2024 directed the City Manager to report back to the Executive Committee in the second quarter of 2025 with a set of principles for bidding on large international events. Subsequently, in November 2024 upon adoption of the City's new economic development plan, City Council directed EDC as follows: "Council direct the General Manager, Economic Development and Culture, to develop a major event bidding and hosting strategy in partnership with Destination Toronto, other orders of government, stakeholders from the private sector and the hospitality industry and report back to the Economic and Community Development Committee by the fourth quarter of 2027." This direction sought to benefit from the City's experience in hosting FWC26 to inform bidding and hosting principles. Work is underway in EDC to deliver upon Council's direction for an updated strategy.

In the interim, the City continues to draw guidance from its existing [Bidding and Hosting Strategy](#). This policy, approved by Council in 2016, was deeply informed by an important report subsequent to Toronto's hosting of the Pan-Am Games in 2015. [Bringing the World to Toronto: A Report from the Mayor's Advisory Panel on International Hosting Opportunities](#) was a landmark report, identifying principles that the City should apply in pursuing major international event hosting opportunities. The accompanying staff report offered concise 'hosting principles,' that despite significant geopolitical and economic changes in the interim, remain very relevant and continue to guide City efforts in bidding and hosting. These principles are:

- Hosting international events needs to align with the city's long-term aspirations and priorities.
- Hosting needs to be done in a responsible, accountable and cost-effective way.

- The City must be able to support event hosting without negatively impacting the other services it provides.
- The community wants to be engaged from the earliest stages of event planning.
- International events should tell the story of who we are as a city and region.
- International events need to be built on a forward-looking vision of the city.

The report further recommended that “The City identify dedicated resources for the planning and evaluation of international events.” However, resourcing levels of the bidding and hosting function in Toronto, including seed funding available to bidding organizations as well as that for host organizations delivering events, remains lower than that of other competing jurisdictions, such as Montreal or Vancouver, creating challenges to securing and hosting major events.

Purchase Order Amendment - Gensler Architecture & Design Canada

Since the beginning of the Toronto Stadium capital project design phase, and since contracting Gensler Architecture & Design Canada, there have been several additional scope elements added to the project as a result of an audit of key stadium components assessing alignment with the Host City Agreement. This includes elements such as replacement of the field of play, replacement of the field of play lighting and public address systems, as well as elements requiring redesign due to unforeseen site conditions (north end foundations, mechanical, electrical, plumbing systems). Further, there is additional coordination required with the temporary seating vendor that is covered as part of this additional service request that was not anticipated in the initial procurement of Gensler’s services.

As a result, the current contract with Gensler has reached the point where all of the design services and design allowances have been committed. The increase to the contract will facilitate continued contract administration throughout this current phase, the next phase commencing in January 2026, and any contract administration required post tournament to restore the stadium.

This amendment ensures adequate coverage for the duration of the construction phase allowing the architect to service the project and ensure the project stays on schedule.

CONCLUSION

As Toronto prepares to host the FIFA World Cup 2026, the City is focused on delivering more than a successful tournament—it is committed to creating a legacy of inclusive economic opportunity, community pride, and cultural celebration. The combined efforts around community benefits and community activation planning reflect a city-wide strategy that places equity and local impact at the core of event delivery.

Through intentional procurement practices, the City is embedding community benefits into large-scale contracts that will generate jobs, mentorships, training hours, and subcontracting opportunities for Indigenous, Black, and diverse suppliers. These efforts ensure that the economic opportunities tied to hosting FWC26 support a more inclusive local economy.

At the same time, the development of the Community Activation Plan, including the Community Celebration Support Fund, will bring the excitement of the FWC26 into neighbourhoods across Toronto. With a focus on grassroots celebrations, youth engagement, arts and culture, and civic pride, this plan ensures that all residents—regardless of where they live—can share in the experience. These locally driven celebrations will strengthen community ties, amplify Toronto’s cultural diversity, and expand the benefits of hosting beyond the downtown core.

Together, these initiatives reflect a multifaceted approach to hosting: one that uplifts local communities, invests in people, and builds a foundation for long-term social and economic resilience.

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