

From: [Samantha Petherbridge](#)
To: [Clerk](#)
Subject: [External Sender] For distribution: Item - 2026.EX31.7 FIFA World Cup 2026 Toronto: Implementation of the Integrated Regional Paramedic Response Model
Date: May 19, 2026 7:47:48 PM
Attachments: [Item - 2026.EX31.7 FWC26 GBV IPV Trafficking.pdf](#)

Dear City Clerk,

Please submit this communication for distribution to the City Council meeting on May 20-22 2026

Item: **2026.EX31.7**

May is *Sexual Violence Awareness Month*. This is an appropriate moment to ask what this Council is doing **to protect women and children experiencing housing precarity, from the intersecting risks the FIFA World Cup (FWC26) will bring.**

Toronto is weeks away from welcoming more than 230,000 additional daily visitors for the FWC26, as this report confirms. Research consistently links major sporting events to spikes in gender-based violence (GBV), intimate partner violence (IPV), and a heightened risk of human and sex trafficking.

"We know the combination of adrenaline, testosterone and alcohol leads to increases in gender-based violence and we know that major sporting events increase all of those in a dangerous combination."

- Carly Kalish, CEO of *Victim Services Toronto*, said this in a recent interview with Global News.

Women are more likely to experience homelessness due to domestic violence and a lack of social support. For them, shelters are a means to escape *emotional or psychological abuse (89%); physical abuse (73%); financial abuse (51%); sexual abuse (33%); human trafficking (3%) and forced marriage (2%)*.

They are also more likely to be trafficked because of their vulnerability.

While *Toronto Shelter Support Services* is listed in this report, no plan accompanies their participation at the *Neighbourhood Table* for managing shelter demand during the FWC26, specifically for trafficking victims, women, children and GBV/IPV survivors.

We are kindly asking for that plan.

Thank you,

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[Citizen: Sam Petherbridge](#)





Dear Council,

May is Sexual Violence Awareness Month. It is an appropriate moment to ask what this city is doing to protect women and children experiencing housing precarity, from the intersecting risks the *FIFA World Cup* (FWC26) will bring.

Toronto is weeks away from welcoming more than 230,000 additional daily visitors for the FWC26, as this report before us confirms. **Research consistently links major sporting events to spikes in gender-based violence (GBV), intimate partner violence (IPV), and a heightened risk of human and sex trafficking.** *"We've seen it with FIFA, Super Bowls, we find that the impact of human trafficking around these major sporting events aren't just [in] the lead up to, but the fallout after," Our Place Peel's Dani Mills told CBC.*

Domestic violence reports in England rose 38% when their national team lost during FIFA World Cups (2002, 2006, and 2010), and 26% even when they won. **In Calgary, IPV calls to law enforcement increased 40% when the Stampeders appeared in the Grey Cup finals** (2012 and 2014).

"We know the combination of adrenaline, testosterone and alcohol leads to increases in gender-based violence and we know that major sporting events increase all of those in a dangerous combination." Carly Kalish, CEO of *Victim Services Toronto* said in a recent interview with *Global News*.

Toronto Police, Peel Region Police and organizations, *Victim Services Toronto*, and international groups have publicly stated they anticipate similar increases this summer.

Women make up over one-quarter of Canada's documented homeless population, **but many more are "hidden homeless"** who remain uncounted (especially those with children). **Women are more likely to experience homelessness due to domestic violence and a lack of social support.** For them, shelters are a means to escape *emotional or psychological abuse (89%); physical abuse (73%); financial abuse (51%); sexual abuse (33%); human trafficking (3%) and forced marriage (2%).* **They are also more likely to be trafficked because of their vulnerability.**

In 2022, **6,752 women called the Assaulted Women's Helpline** seeking a shelter bed in Toronto. **Only 10% secured one.** That prompted **Toronto City Council to declare GBV and IPV an epidemic in 2023.**



Critics have asked if the City plans to clear encampments in order to “beautify” Toronto for FIFA readiness. Milton Barrera, director of access and outreach with *Toronto Shelter & Support Services*, said:

*“the City continues to support people experiencing homelessness through a “people-first, human rights-based approach” focused on outreach and voluntary engagement. **The city will still help people move indoors** under its existing encampment protocol and **areas near FWC26 venues will be prioritized for outreach.**”*

According to *Amnesty International*, when the City’s warming centre at the CNE was closed early because the venue had been pre-booked for FIFA use, people were redirected to shelters already operating at capacity.

If encampment clearances near FIFA venues (and beyond) proceed this summer, **displacement will further strain a system that is already failing the women and children it is meant to serve.** And while *Toronto Shelter Support Services* is listed in this report, no plan accompanies their participation at the *Neighbourhood Table*.

Police and community group initiatives have already begun, including *The Ask for Angela* campaign. However, some of these programs also depend on shelter beds, for which it seems like there is no strategy?

As of May 10, 2026, the City’s Human Rights Action Plan for the tournament was still described as “being developed.”

The first match is June 12.

We ask Council:

1. What is the city’s plan to manage shelter demand during the FWC26, specifically for trafficking victims, women, children and GBV/IPV survivors?
2. If demand exceeds capacity, what prioritization framework will staff use?
3. Ensure the *Human Rights Action Plan* is finalized, made public, and includes protections for vulnerable people, including marginalized groups, trafficking victims, women, children and GBV/IPV survivors.

Thank you.