

Clean Indoor Air Toronto

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Toronto Accessibility Advisory Committee
Toronto City Hall
100 Queen Street West
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May 4, 2026

To the Toronto Accessibility Advisory Council (TAAC) and the City of Toronto;

Re: DI17.3 - FIFA World Cup 2026 Accessibility Update

As a local grassroots advocacy group dedicated to promoting the health and well-being of Toronto residents and visitors, Clean Indoor Air Toronto (CIATO) was eager to review the FIFA World Cup 2026 Accessibility Update presentation. We thank the TAAC for creating an opportunity for us to review this plan, which we understand has been prepared by the FIFA World Cup 2026 Secretariat.

While we are all affected by the quality of the air we breathe, some members of our society are more impacted by poor air quality than others. This group includes children, seniors, the immunocompromised, people with chronic health conditions, and people with disabilities.

We were hopeful that the City of Toronto, with its growing understanding around the importance of air quality, would incorporate into the FIFA World Cup 2026 Accessibility Plan meaningful actions that would result in participants having, at a minimum, improved access to air that we know is clean and safe to breathe. This approach would have resulted in this world-class event being more inclusive and accessible for thousands of Torontonians, and safer and healthier for all.

Unfortunately, based on the presentation associated with the referenced agenda item, it appears that air quality has not been factored in as an accessibility issue. This is truly unfortunate, given the situation ahead of Toronto.

The World Cup will see thousands of visitors from around the globe visiting our city. And while they will bring with them energy, enthusiasm and hopefully plenty of spending dollars, they may also bring with them contagious diseases that can be readily transmitted through the air. We are hardly alone in our concern around this topic: Toronto Public Health has also noted that the crowds attracted by World Cup events have the potential to spread infectious diseases.

With climate change, the incidence of extreme heat and wildfires has increased, along with their severity. By June, there will be a significant risk of hot weather and wildfires. As a result, outdoor air quality can be incredibly poor. This means that outside activities, which are generally considered “safer” than indoor ones when it comes to air quality concerns, may no longer be accessible during heat and poor air quality advisories.

Together, these factors create a World Cup event that cannot be safely and comfortably accessed by those conscious of these elevated risks, including some “healthy” people who are simply cautious when it comes to the air they breathe.

To remedy this, CIATO encourages the FIFA World Cup 2026 Secretariat to revise its plan for accessibility and incorporate actions related to both outdoor and indoor air quality. This would include implementing IAQ protective measures, such as using air filtration and mechanical ventilation best practices, and creating contingency plans for outdoor, City-sponsored events in case of a poor air quality advisory. It would also include tracking and publicly sharing existing outdoor air quality measurements, as well as monitoring and sharing indoor air quality measurements for key locations.

An essential aspect of this updated plan would be clear, consistent information for event goers, including steps they can take to protect themselves from air pollution and airborne diseases. There should also be training for event staff on how they can quickly improve IAQ with readily accessible tools, and how they can protect themselves from airborne hazards.

We recognize that we are mere weeks away from the World Cup. However, we strongly believe that the efforts a revision to the FIFA World Cup 2026 Accessibility Plan would require would pay off in healthier, more engaged attendees who require less medical attention and are better able to support both the celebrations and local businesses.

Again, thank you to the TAAC for creating this opportunity to allow us to express our concerns around this topic.

Yours Sincerely,

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