

FIFA World Cup 2026 Toronto: By-law exemptions to facilitate planning and delivery of the FIFA World Cup 2026 events at Fort York and the Bentway, and at Nathan Phillips Square

Date: March 26, 2026
To: FIFA World Cup 2026 Subcommittee
From: Executive Director, FIFA World Cup 2026 Toronto Secretariat and General Manager, Economic Development and Culture
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 seeks delegated authorities and/or exemptions to specific by-laws to facilitate the planning and delivery of several initiatives supporting Toronto's role as a Host City.

This report is a coordinated response, led by the FIFA World Cup 2026 Toronto Secretariat (FWC26 Secretariat), in collaboration with Solid Waste Management Services, Economic Development and Culture, Corporate Real Estate Management, and Parks and Recreation.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Executive Director, FIFA World Cup 2026 Toronto Secretariat and General Manager Economic Development and Culture recommend that:

1. City Council authorize an exemption with respect to the sale and distribution of plastic bottled water to support expected large audiences and potentially unmet hydration needs, in addition to providing multiple hydration options, including HTO To Go water trailers, for the duration of the FIFA Fan Festival™ to be held at Fort York and the Bentway from June 10 to July 19, 2026, inclusive, and at the events set out in Attachment 1 to this report to be held at Nathan Phillips Square from May 18 to July 20, 2026, inclusive.

2. City Council authorize the use of special effects pyrotechnics as part of events to be held at Fort York and the Bentway from June 10 to July 19, 2026, inclusive, and at events set out in Attachment 1 to this report to be held at Nathan Phillips Square, from May 18 to July 20, 2026, inclusive, with all permissions contingent upon securing a permit from Toronto Fire Services to discharge fireworks under [Toronto Municipal Code Chapter 466, Fireworks](#), and providing sufficient protective measures for Fort York to the satisfaction of the Senior Manager, Heritage Planning.

3. City Council authorize the operation of a beer and wine Vintners Quality Alliance (VQA) garden and the sale and distribution of alcohol as part of events set out in Attachment 1 to be held at Nathan Phillips Square from May 18 to July 20, 2026, inclusive, contingent upon the following conditions:

- a. Approval from the Alcohol and Gaming Commission of Ontario;
- b. Approval of the Medical Officer of Health;
- c. Compliance with the City of Toronto's Municipal Alcohol Policy; and
- d. Receipt of all the necessary permits associated with the production of the event, including building permits, and a noise by-law extension permit.

4. City Council authorize the use of sound amplification from May 18 to July 20, 2026, inclusive, between the hours of 08:00 to 23:00, which is beyond the accepted Nathan Phillips Square's amplification schedule policy hours, contingent upon securing a Noise Bylaw Exemption permit through the Municipal Licensing and Standards Division and adhering to the [Toronto Municipal Code, Chapter 591, Noise](#), along with mandatory sound monitoring by the City's preferred audio company, Production Service Industries, throughout the event to ensure compliance with schedules.

5. City Council authorize sports demonstrations at Nathan Phillips Square as part of events set out in Attachment 1 to this report from May 18 to July 20, 2026, inclusive.

6. City Council authorize the placement of objects, including a mini-soccer pitch, in the reflecting pool at Nathan Phillips Square for the purposes of providing free access to the public and community organizations, and associated event activation and programming, as part of events set out in Attachment 1 to this report to be held at Nathan Phillips Square from May 18 to July 20, 2026, inclusive.

7. City Council grant permission to the FIFA World Cup 2026 Toronto Secretariat with respect to the installation of banners, decals, and other pageantry elements on the City Hall building and on Nathan Phillips Square structures, including windows, walkways and other surfaces deemed suitable through review with Heritage Planning and Corporate Real Estate Management from May 4 to July 23, 2026, inclusive.

FINANCIAL IMPACT

There are no current or known future-year financial impacts arising from the recommendations contained in this report.

The Chief Financial Officer and Treasurer has reviewed this report and agrees with the information as presented in the Financial Impact Section.

DECISION HISTORY

On February 10, 2026, City Council adopted CC38.1, providing City staff with budget and procurement-related delegated authorities to facilitate planning and delivery of the FIFA World Cup 2026.

<https://secure.toronto.ca/council/agenda-item.do?item=2026.CC38.1>

On February 4, 2026, City Council adopted CC36.3, authorizing the installation of FIFA World Cup 2026 banners on bridge structures not included in the list of preapproved bridges and for a duration exceeding the 14-day permitted period.

<https://secure.toronto.ca/council/agenda-item.do?item=2026.CC36.3>

At its meeting of December 1, 2, and 3, 2008, City Council, through PW20.1, 17 (b), (c), adopted a motion prohibiting the sale and distribution of plastic bottled water at all City facilities.

<http://www.toronto.ca/legdocs/mmis/2008/cc/decisions/2008-12-01-cc27-dd.pdf>

COMMENTS

FIFA Fan Festival™

Sale and distribution of bottled water

As part of the FIFA World Cup 2026, the City of Toronto is hosting a public FIFA Fan Festival™ at Fort York and the Bentway, both of which are City facilities, from June 10 to July 19, 2026. In December 2008, through Agenda Item [PW20.1, 17](#), City Council adopted a motion prohibiting the sale and distribution of plastic bottled water at all City facilities. As a part of the FIFA Fan Festival™ event, due to potentially high summer temperatures and expected large attendance numbers, the sale and distribution of bottled water is requested to help ensure anticipated demand can be met and provide multiple hydration options on site.

The sale and distribution of bottled water will be minimized by the inclusion of an HTO To Go water trailer at the site, supported by FWC26 legacy funding ([EX27.10](#)), to reduce plastic use. Delivered by Toronto Water, the HTO To Go Water Trailer Program is primarily mandated to support emergency responses, including both operational and public health needs. When not required for emergency purposes, City-owned water

trailers may be scheduled for use at public events that meet the program's established criteria.

Further, the City is also focused on the responsible collection and disposal of single-use items, including plastics, through active waste management programs planned for the festival. As considered by the Executive Committee in March 2026 ([EX29.9](#)), the following three legacy initiatives will be implemented at the FIFA Fan Festival:

- Reusable Cups and Food-ware at FIFA Fan Festival™: A reusable cup and food-ware program will be implemented at the FIFA Fan Festival™ to reduce single-use waste and support a more sustainable fan experience. By replacing disposable cups, plates, and food containers where possible with durable, reusable alternatives, the program will minimize waste generation and reduce overall reliance on landfill and recycling systems.
- Zero Food Waste – Food Rescue: A pilot project to reduce food waste, with results used to inform the potential development of a City-wide policy for major events. This would include mandatory food rescue planning and onsite food rescue services, meaning requirements for vendors and event operators to identify, collect, and redistribute surplus edible food that would otherwise be discarded—supported by vendor standards, digital redistribution tools, and onsite recovery services.
- Tri-Sort Stream Stations: A consistent tri-sort stream station approach will be implemented to support three-stream waste collection - landfill, recycling, and organics - with the explicit goal of improving diversion rates at FIFA Fan Festival™ and road-closed areas for match days by reducing contamination and maximizing recovery of recyclable and organic materials. Following the Games, a portion of the tri-sort stream stations will be retained by the Corporate Real Estate Management Division (CREM) and will be redeployed across various City facilities and CREM-managed locations to support ongoing waste diversion efforts.

Use of special effects pyrotechnics

Planning for FIFA Fan Festival™ is well underway with a number of events and celebrations to be held at Fort York and the Bentway between June 10 and July 19, 2026, inclusive. It is anticipated that some of these events would potentially involve the use of special effects pyrotechnics. This report recommends the use of these special effects pyrotechnics to support the visitor experience at FIFA Fan Festival™, contingent upon securing a permit from Toronto Fire Services to discharge fireworks under [Toronto Municipal Code Chapter 466, Fireworks](#), and providing sufficient protective measures for Fort York to the satisfaction of the Senior Manager, Heritage Planning.

Nathan Phillips Square

Toronto Municipal Code Chapter 636, Public Squares and former City of Toronto Municipal Code Chapter 237, Nathan Phillips Square prohibit the solicitation of donations, the sale of alcohol, placing objects in the reflecting pool, use of open flame and special effects pyrotechnics, amplification of sound outside of Nathan Phillips Square amplification schedule policy, “gated or ticketed” events and engagement in sports demonstrations without the approval of Council.

Further, through Agenda Item [PW20.1, 17](#), City Council adopted a motion prohibiting the sale and distribution of plastic bottled water at all City facilities, including Nathan Phillips Square.

To enable activations at Nathan Phillips Square with respect to a number of events planned for the lead up to and over the duration of the FIFA World Cup 2026, as outlined in Attachment 1 to this report, exemptions from the above-mentioned by-laws are being sought.

CONTACT

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SIGNATURE

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ATTACHMENTS

Attachment 1: Dates for Events and Permissions Requested at Nathan Phillips Square

Attachment 1: Dates for Events and Permissions Requested at Nathan Phillips Square (NPS)

Date	Event	Exemptions Request
May 4 - July 23	Pageantry at Nathan Phillips Square & City Hall	Permission to cover the City Hall Windows, walkways and other surfaces deemed suitable through review with Heritage Planning and Corporate Real Estate Management.
May 18 - July 19	Pitch in the Pool at Nathan Phillips Square	Sale and distribution of single-use water bottles Engage in sports demonstrations Objects in the pool Provide free access to the public and community organizations Amplify sound outside of the NPS amplification schedule policy
May 19	Pitch in the Pool Ribbon Cutting at Nathan Phillips Square	Sale and distribution of single-use water bottles Engage in sports demonstrations Operate a beer and wine Vintners Quality Alliance (VQA) garden and serve alcohol Amplify sound outside of the NPS amplification schedule policy
May 25 - 26	FIFA Trophy on the Square	Sale and distribution of single-use water bottles Engage in sports demonstrations Operate a beer and wine Vintners Quality Alliance (VQA) garden and serve alcohol Special effects pyrotechnics Amplify sound outside of the NPS amplification schedule policy
May 27	Visa Employee Event at Nathan Phillips Square	Sale and distribution of single-use water bottles Engage in sports demonstrations Operate a beer and wine Vintners Quality Alliance (VQA) garden and serve alcohol Amplify sound outside of the NPS amplification schedule policy
June 11 - 12	Soccer Day at Nathan Phillips Square	Sale and distribution of single-use water bottles Engage in sports demonstrations Operate a beer and wine Vintners Quality Alliance (VQA) garden and serve alcohol Special effects pyrotechnics

Date	Event	Exemptions Request
		Amplify sound outside of the NPS amplification schedule policy
June 11 - July 19	Viewing Party at Nathan Phillips Square	Sale and distribution of single-use water bottles Engage in sports demonstrations Operate a beer and wine Vintners Quality Alliance (VQA) garden and serve alcohol Amplify sound outside of the NPS amplification schedule policy
June 15, 16, 22, and July 7	Fan Zone at Nathan Phillips Square	Sale and distribution of single-use water bottles Engage in sports demonstrations Operate a beer and wine Vintners Quality Alliance (VQA) garden and serve alcohol Special effects pyrotechnics Amplify sound outside of the NPS amplification schedule policy