

March 15th, 2024

Re: [EX12.2 - Update on Hosting FIFA World Cup 2026](#)

Dear Mayor and City Councillors,

Toronto's FIFA World Cup games - while representing an enormous financial burden for Toronto - also have the potential to bring benefits to people who live here. We are counting on Council to make sure that the economic and social benefits of the games go beyond simply generating big profits for big corporations, and flow to residents across Toronto.

Lasting benefits for the people of Toronto will only be realized if Council takes a stronger hand in **protecting workers and building a positive legacy**. New information is coming to light about FIFA's attempts to avoid labour laws, taxes, and other critical elements necessary for ensuring the games benefit residents instead of just big corporations. It is clear that **Council must act quickly to build a positive legacy** and avoid escalating the potentially negative impacts on communities...

To do this, we are asking Council to **prioritize building a Community Benefits Plan** to ensure decent work opportunities for local residents and equity-owned groups, to put in place reliable and frequent transit options, make greener public spaces and buildings which will outlast the games, and to follow the lead of other cities with zero-waste events. All of these actions will boost our local economy and bring lasting benefits to Toronto residents, who are ultimately shouldering the significant financial burden to make these six games happen.

Advancing your Commitment to a Community Benefits Plan

In [a 2022 motion](#), City Council voted for a report on a Community Benefits Plan connected with the 2026 World Cup that would include minimum targets for the equitable participation of Toronto residents in employment opportunities, small business' participation through social procurement and supply chain diversity commitments.

The undersigned organizations, including (name organizations), support Toronto Community Benefits Network (TCBN)'s call to better follow through on this promise to **include minimum targets for the equitable participation of Toronto residents** in employment opportunities and apprenticeship hours, small businesses participation through social procurement and supply chain diversity commitments. We also call on you to work with other levels of government to **protect existing local labour laws as a bare minimum** standard for the games.

This is critical to making sure that it's the people of Toronto who benefit from these games, instead of big corporations who don't have a good track record of fair wages, respecting labour rights, or local, equitable hiring, or strong environmental practices. With the help of a solid community benefits framework and sustainability lens, we could use the games to bring good local jobs, boost local economies, and build infrastructure and community improvements which can be enjoyed for decades to come.

Advancing Transit, TransformTO and Building a Green Legacy

Environmental sustainability is listed as a top legacy theme for planning and delivery of the games. City staff have also explained that they are developing 'Best in class sustainability event

management practices.' The initial sustainability steps listed in the report are promising, and we strongly support complying with Toronto's Green Standard for all training sites, using low carbon materials, and working with TRCA to re-naturalize spaces. Exhibition Place has also signed a net zero events pledge which we applaud, and hope will be respected for these games.

However, sustainability is about more than just the physical spaces where the games are played. **Integrating TransformTO and other environmental goals** will mean thinking about how spectators will get to and from these games. Will there be good transit options to get them there quickly and efficiently? Or will participants all be taking separate Ubers, clogging up our streets and driving up pollution? The City must consider how to use this opportunity to accelerate effective and durable transit solutions.

Part of the direction from Council in the 2022 motion asked for:

e. direction to the City Manager, in collaboration with the Toronto Transit Commission and Metrolinx, to report back in 2023 on how the City's World Cup hosting budget and plan will advance the goals of the TransformTO Net Zero Climate Strategy, which may include supporting the 2030 transportation targets through actions such as expanding dedicated transit lanes with frequent service, providing discounted or free integrated transit options for travel to the games from outside the downtown core, and developing new active transportation infrastructure outside and inside the core.

We don't have this update yet, but it highlights the opportunities to build better transit for Toronto residents at the same time as helping the climate plan get back on track. A key rationale for building the Union Pearson Express was to serve the influx of tourists at the 2015 Pan Am Games, and transit improvements including HOV lanes and earlier subway opening were introduced during the Games. The World Cup could be a great chance to make sure the Dufferin RapidTO bus lanes (and hopefully many others) are operating to shuttle people quickly and efficiently to Exhibition Place, and/or offer more free transit options. But without proper **advance planning that prioritizes sustainable transportation**, the games could simply add to our already increasing greenhouse gas emissions, traffic and air pollution.

We also have an opportunity to model best 'zero waste' event practices like effective organics collection, and using reusable cups at games. This is already being done in many big stadiums in North America. For example, stadiums in L.A and Seattle have programs to gather reusable drink cups in bins at the end of the night, wash them, and use them again the next night. Toronto's World Cup games could be a great chance to deliver a circular system that will outlive the games and help launch new systems to significantly reduce the single-use plastic waste which is increasingly piling up in our litter bins, our streets, our ravines, rivers, and lakes, and even our bodies. This also brings a great opportunity to align Toronto's Single-Use Reduction Strategy goals with a world-class event.

Green Job Creation Opportunities

These sustainability practices can also create far more jobs than the status quo alternatives. For example, reuse and composting creates 10 times more jobs than regular waste disposal. Reuse jobs are local jobs - collecting, washing and distributing reusable containers has to be done locally, in contrast to importing and exporting disposables. One conservative estimate from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency notes that reusing 10,000 tonnes of waste can create nearly 300 jobs, while disposing of the same amount in landfill creates only 6 jobs. Locally, one

can imagine that a program to wash and reuse cups in stadiums creates far more local jobs than throwing them into our landfills and purchasing new disposable cups for every game.

Greening buildings is also a known job creator. According to the City of Toronto's Net Zero Existing Buildings Strategy, implementing this strategy is expected to increase local building retrofit economic activity by an impressive 87%, generating hundreds of billions of dollars in economic activity over the next 30 years. This means direct, full-time jobs in local construction, energy services, and supportive work to plan and retrofit low carbon buildings.

The City's commitment to meet ambitious Toronto Green Standards and using low carbon building materials for all World Cup training sites is an opportunity to build pathways to good green jobs for local Toronto residents. With a strong Community Benefits Plan and sustainability lens to lead the way, these green jobs can provide many lasting benefits to Torontonians.

Conclusion

It is clear that a thoughtful and principled strategy is needed to protect and support workers, residents and local businesses, and create new pathways to employment and participation in these games. To advance all of these opportunities, Toronto will need a strong Community Benefits Plan - informed by appropriate community consultation - as requested by Council in 2022, as well as more details on sustainable transportation options and zero-waste opportunities as part of the games.

The undersigned organizations endorse this letter and call on Toronto City Council to move forward with a Community Benefits Plan and all requested reports from the 2022 motion, which are critical in planning a FIFA World Cup for everyone.

Sincerely,

Toronto Environmental Alliance
Toronto Community Benefits Network
TTCriders
Progress Toronto
Social Planning Toronto