

REPORT

Community Services

To: Mayor Johnstone and Members of Council
Date: June 24, 2024

From: Blair Fryer, Acting Director, Community Services
File: 2493484

Item #: 2024-368

Subject: Response to Council Motion: 2026 FIFA World Cup

RECOMMENDATION

THAT Council direct staff to include enhancements in the 2025 budgeting process to operationalize a city-wide 2026 FIFA World Cup celebration.

PURPOSE

To provide Council with a summary of a draft workplan to assess feasibility of a FIFA 2026 community celebration.

SUMMARY

This report outlines preliminary findings and a possible path to implement a citywide 2026 FIFA World Cup celebration including staffing implications and some capital considerations.

BACKGROUND

In a Regular meeting of Council on April 22, 2024, Council carried a motion directing staff to report back to Council:

... with opportunities to activate public spaces across New Westminster, to apply for external funding, and engage local cultural, youth, sports, and business organizations for free and low-barrier public gathering, public viewing, and community celebration to coincide with the 2026 FIFA World Cup.

Since then, staff have been working to assess preliminary resource requirements and a recommended path forward to carry out the direction as noted in the motion. This report

is the preliminary findings and resources that have been identified to accomplish the motion.

DISCUSSION

Staffing Requirement:

Staff have conducted preliminary analysis on how to fulfill the April 22 motion to activate public spaces, apply for external funding, and engage local groups and business organizations for free and low-barrier public gathering, public viewing, and community celebration to coincide with the 2026 FIFA World Cup. It should be noted that, at present, staff capacity does not exist to fulfill the required tasks. A temporary fulltime program coordinator would be required starting in 2025 and continuing until after the 2026 FIFA World Cup (a period of approximately 18 months).

The City has engaged this model in the past. It was employed to organize and present the 2018 and 2019 Innovation Weeks, where an auxiliary employee worked approximately 15 hours per week during the planning stage with hours increased to full time as the events approached. Due to the complexity of a hosting potential 2026 FIFA World Cup celebrations across the city, involving numerous interest holders, potential partners, types of activations, and locations, it is recommended that a temporary full time program coordinator be retained who has subject matter expertise in grant writing, event planning and implementation, along with interest holder engagement and management.

Partnerships would be an important part of any city-wide FIFA World Cup 2026 celebration. Working with local community groups and organizations such as Metro Vancouver, TransLink, other levels of government, and private business would be essential to develop meaningful plans. Additionally, there may be value in New Westminster approaching other municipalities for a more coordinated approach, shared resources, and/or application for grants. Community sports groups would also play an important role and early engagement would be essential to minimize impacts on usual programming and bookings. As sports groups are typically required to provide booking information to Parks and Recreation by January for spring and summer dates; early communication would provide the required time to explore alternate ideas or ways to work together.

LED Screen(s):

Drawing from learnings from the recent Vancouver Canucks Stanley Cup playoff run, as well as discussions with staff across multiple departments, staff recommend that the purchase of one indoor LED screen and two outdoor LED screens be considered, along with staff training to operate the equipment. Cost estimates to purchase an LED screen are \$20,000 to \$65,000 depending upon the size and quality. During planning for potential outdoor viewing of the 2024 Stanley Cup Playoffs, several possible locations were considered by staff. For a variety of reasons such as previous bookings or filming

activity, many were discounted. However, with enough advance notice, several spaces have been identified that could be utilized, including Queen's Park, Ryall Park, Mercer Stadium, Sapperton Park, Moody Park, Hume Park, and others.

Considering recommendations in the reports commissioned by the City of Vancouver following event riots that Vancouver experienced, staff recommend spreading out possible viewers over more than one location to support increased safety and security. As a result, staff recommend consideration of the purchase of two screens for outdoor viewing opportunities. A storage solution (on or off site) would also need to be secured for the outdoor screens which may come with a budget implication. These screens would be usable at other City events and gatherings for the long term.

Consideration could also be given to the purchase and installation of a permanent indoor LED screen in Queen's Park Arena, which could have long-lasting positive implications for programming and bookings. However, due to the configuration and structure in Queen's Park Arena, the only viable option would be to replace the score clock with a four-sided LED unit, at an estimated cost of \$1M.

Stadium and Portable Seating:

Budget would also need to be allocated portable seating rental for any outdoor events. Any required seating should be secured far in advance to ensure available inventory as several communities in the region are likely to be planning similar events. Currently, New Westminster sports fields and venues are designed for small groups and amateur sports associations. Many venues have limited seating and it would need to be augmented for any larger scale gatherings.

Another consideration is the status of the seating at Queen's Park Stadium. In 2023, Council was provided a preliminary assessment consultant report with recommendations for the future of Queen's Park Stadium. Currently, there is approximately \$2.1M in the five year capital plan to design (2025) and then demolish and construct improvements (2026-2027). However, the plan does not include an increase in the number of seats which is 500 and is sized appropriately for community uses, and focuses on improvements to storage spaces, change rooms and washrooms. There is no capacity to accelerate this capital timeline within current budget allocations.

NEXT STEPS

Staff recommend the following next steps:

- Q3 & Q4 2024 and Q1 2025: Incorporate the recommendations of this report into the 2025 budgeting process to ensure enhancements for a temporary full time coordinator and initial LED screen purchase orders.
- Q1 & Q2 2025: Develop posting and retain temporary full time coordinator.
- Q2 2025: Hire and onboard coordinator to develop a work plan, begin community partner outreach, and initiate procurement of LED screens

By the end of Q3 2025, staff would return to Council with more comprehensive planning and report back with anticipated 2026 budget enhancements related to this work.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The financial implications would begin in Q2 2025 and continue until Q3 2026. The table below outlines the estimated implications for 2025. Staff note that the program coordinator would likely identify additional expenses required for the 2026 budget year including program supplies, event rentals, etc. and Council will need to commit to 2025 and 2026 budget enhancements. Some deposits for event rentals may be required in 2025, and a small budget has been estimated for this expense.

Staffing (Program Coordinator TFT for 9 months) (estimate)	\$45,000
Outdoor LED screens (purchasing, training and storage plan)	\$100,000 - \$150,000
Miscellaneous supplies, deposits, etc.	\$15,000
Total estimated financial implication for 2025	\$160,000 - \$210,000

INTERDEPARTMENTAL LIAISON

Staff from Community Services, Finance, and Parks & Recreation departments worked together to develop this preliminary report. An interdepartmental working group will be required if Council elects to move forward with a city wide 2026 FIFA World Cup celebration.

OPTIONS

There are two options for Council’s consideration:

1. **THAT** Council direct staff to include enhancements in the 2025 budgeting process to operationalize a city-wide 2026 FIFA World Cup celebration.
2. **THAT** Council provide other direction.

Staff recommend option 1.

CONCLUSION

A coordinated approach to planning a city-wide 2026 FIFA World Cup celebration is required, and enhancements must be secured well in advance to ensure success.

APPROVALS

This report was prepared by:
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