



Staff Report for Budget Committee of the Whole Meeting

Date of Meeting: November 18, 2025

Report Number: SRCS.25.13

Department: Community Services
Division: Recreation and Culture Services

Subject: **SRCS.25.13 – 2026 FIFA World Cup Viewing Events**

Purpose:

To report back regarding the possibility of hosting public viewing events for the 2026 FIFA World Cup soccer championship.

Recommendation:

- a) That staff report SRCS.25.13, be received.
- b) That \$116,000 be added to the 2026 Operating Budget and that \$65,000 be added to the 2026 Capital Budget with funding from the Community Enhancement and Economic Vitality Reserve Fund.

Contact Persons:

- Dan DiRuscio, Manager of Cultural Services, extension 5513
- Donald Hearn, Director of Recreation and Culture, extension 2503
- Tracey Steele, Commissioner of Community Services, extension 2476

Report Approval:

All reports are electronically reviewed and/or approved by the Division Director, Treasurer (as required), City Solicitor (as required), Commissioner, and City Manager. Details of the reports approval are attached.

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Background:

Canada, alongside the United States and Mexico, will co-host the 2026 the International Federation of Association Football (“FIFA”) World Cup — a landmark event that will feature the first-ever men’s World Cup match played on Canadian soil, with Canada’s Men’s National Team participating. This global tournament presents a unique opportunity to foster community pride and engagement through inclusive, family-friendly celebrations in Richmond Hill.

The City has previously hosted successful public viewing events, including outdoor screenings at Richmond Green Park during the Toronto Raptors’ 2019 National Basketball Association (“NBA”) Championship run, which drew an estimated 500 attendees. In 2022, Canada’s Men’s National Team group stage matches during the FIFA World Cup were shown indoors at the Richmond Hill Centre for the Performing Arts, attracting approximately 200 community members. More recently, a Toronto Blue Jays viewing event was offered during the 2025 World Series outdoors at Richmond Green, attracting approximately 150 visitors.

At the Council Meeting held on July 5, 2025, a Member Motion was approved, directing staff to report back through the 2026 Operating Budget process regarding the possibility of hosting public viewing events for the 2026 FIFA World Cup.

Discussion:

Staff are recommending the City host four (4) free public viewing events in Richmond Hill during the 2026 FIFA World Cup, contingent upon securing a public viewing license from FIFA. These events would include three group stage matches featuring Canada’s Men’s National Team, as well as the tournament final. The recommendation to host 4 events was based on the total number of games in the tournament overall, the challenge of selecting which countries and matches to feature without a finalized schedule, uncertainty around Canada’s progression into the knockout rounds, and the need to manage overall costs.

A range of City facilities were assessed for suitability, considering factors such as geographic distribution, indoor/outdoor capabilities, contingency for inclement weather, existing permit schedules, parking availability, and general amenities. Based on this review, staff propose limiting the number of viewing locations to two (2), in order to manage operational demands and align with other City and community-led events scheduled for June and July 2026.

The recommended venues are Richmond Green Park and the Dave Barrow Civic Square site. Both sites offer ample outdoor space, accessible washrooms, parking, and transit connectivity. Each viewing event would feature a large high-definition digital screen (for daytime games, if applicable), amplified sound system, seating and picnic areas, food vendors if licensing allows, and pre-game activities.

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Staff have scoped the work involved to ensure each location has reliability, quality and availability of the broadcast feed crucial to the success of these events. The proposed sites currently have no wired connections to TV provider networks. Cellular (hotspot) connections and other wireless technologies are prone to congestion and interference and a surge in nearby users can cause bandwidth drops or complete disconnections. This poses a significant risk for an event where broadcast quality and bandwidth are critical to avoid video pauses, stuttering or buffering. As such, it is also recommended that a hard-wired connection for any live public viewing event be installed at each venue.

The group stage is scheduled to take place from June 11 to June 27, 2026. Canada is expected to play matches on June 12, June 18, and June 24. Should Canada's Men's National Team advance beyond the group stage, staff would not host viewing events for those games. The final match is set for July 19, 2026, which may be planned into Ribfest weekend programming, pending confirmation of game time and site logistics.

Staff have conducted preliminary benchmarking with neighbouring York Region municipalities including Markham, Vaughan, Aurora, and Newmarket. At this time, none have confirmed plans for public viewing events, though some have expressed interest in exploring the idea further.

Financial Implications:

Table 1 outlines the proposed 2026 operating and capital budget required to host these events. The estimated operating cost for four viewing events is \$116,000 and \$65,000 is required in capital cost for IT infrastructure. Staff will explore opportunities to offset these costs, subject to the terms of the FIFA-issued viewing license (e.g., through sponsorships, and community partnerships).

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Table 1: 2026 Operating Budget

Estimated budget (3 group stage games and 1 final game).

Description	Cost Estimate per Game	Total (4 Games)
Viewing Screen, Sound, and Tech Support	\$13,000	\$52,000
Licensing	\$1,000	\$4,000
Equipment Rentals	\$1,400	\$5,600
Transportation and Safety	\$600	\$2,400
Marketing and Promotion	\$500	\$2,000
Staff (casual wages and benefits)	\$9,200	\$36,800
Staff (overtime)	\$2,300	\$9,200
Contingency	\$1,000	\$4,000
Total	\$29,000	\$116,000

Table 2: 2026 Capital Budget

Description	Cost Estimate
Information Technology (cable line and service)	\$65,000
Total	\$65,000

Relationship to Strategic Plan 2024-2027:

These viewing events relate to Pillar 2, Focusing on People, specifically, Priority 2, Strong Sense of Belonging by bringing residents together to celebrate national identity and shared experiences.

Attachments:

The following attached documents may include scanned images of appendixes, maps and photographs. All attachments have been reviewed and made accessible. If you require an alternative format please call the contact person listed in this document.

N/A

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Report Approval Details

Document Title:	SRCS.25.13 - 2026 FIFA World Cup Viewing Events.docx
Attachments:	
Final Approval Date:	Nov 13, 2025

This report and all of its attachments were approved and signed as outlined below:

Tracey Steele - Nov 13, 2025 - 2:20 PM

Gigi Li - Nov 13, 2025 - 2:41 PM

Darlene Joslin - Nov 13, 2025 - 5:02 PM