

FIFA Agrees 'In Principle' to Luzhniki Stadium Plans

By [The Moscow Times](#)

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FIFA authorities have agreed "in principle" to let the Luzhniki stadium host the 2018 Soccer World Cup final without making large-scale changes to its seating capacity.

The stadium has 78,360 seats, which is 10,640 seats short of the 89,000 required by FIFA for the opening ceremony and the cup's final. Moscow City Hall said earlier this month that the stadium may have to be demolished and rebuilt, unless FIFA changed its position.

The seating area in the stadium will, however, undergo a transformation since some of the stands don't meet FIFA requirements, but the unpopular demolition plans have been ruled out.

"We officially presented our new concept of 80,000 seats," Acting Deputy Mayor Khusnullin said. "FIFA passed on the comments of their general secretary that they have no objections to this plan, in principle."

The base, walls and canopy of the Luzhniki stadium will stay the same after the reconstruction, but the sporting venue will get a new batch of 4,500 VIP seats, 5,500 seats for the press and at least 300 seats for people with limited mobility.

Reconstruction of the main stadium will be completed by 2017, the city's construction department announced this week and three reconstruction options will be presented to FIFA.

The first option involves extending the stadium canopy by several meters. The second option proposes deepening the level of the field by three to four meters, while the third involves deepening it by seven to eight meters.

Khusnullin said that the city would prefer not to deepen the field as it would risk getting too close to the ground water and complex work to prevent this would be required.

"However, it's up to FIFA to make the choice between the three options," Khusnullin said.

The number of parking spaces at the stadium will also be increased, according to an announcement Moscow's architecture committee published on Tuesday.

The grounds currently have no more than 500 ground parking spaces, but under the new plan, it will get 2,384 underground parking spots and another 1,988 spots located under the Third Ring Road overpass and nearby territories.

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