



# Memorandum

**TO:** HONORABLE MAYOR AND  
MEMBERS OF THE CITY  
COUNCIL

**FROM:** Councilmember Kamei  
Councilmember Ortiz

**SUBJECT:** 2026 Major Events  
Status Report

**DATE:** November 14, 2025

Approved:

Handwritten signature of Rosemary Trammie in cursive.

Handwritten signature of Councilmember Kamei in cursive.

## **RECOMMENDATION**

1. Accept the Major Events Status Report on planning, marketing, sponsorships, local special events, and other activities supporting 2026 destination sports events.
2. Direct the City Manager to align existing and new outreach effort to inform residents, small business owners, workers, and visitors about their rights and available City resources related to immigration public safety during 2026 Major Events.
3. Direct staff to incorporate a summary of outreach efforts to date and community feedback into the next 2026 Major Events Status Report scheduled for the April 27, 2026, Community and Economic Development Committee meeting.
4. Explore opportunities to partner with Santa Clara County on immigration public safety outreach and coordination efforts for the 2026 Major Events.

## **BACKGROUND**

In 2026, the City of San José will serve as a key destination for three major international sporting events: Super Bowl LX, the NCAA Men's Basketball West Regional Games, and the FIFA World Cup. Together, these events are expected to attract hundreds of thousands of visitors to the Bay Area and generate significant economic activity for San José's hotels, restaurants, and small businesses.

Public statements and federal actions by the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) and Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) have raised concerns about potential activity during these events. While coordination between local, regional, and federal agencies is standard

for events of this scale, the perceived threat has generated widespread anxiety among residents, workers, business owners, and visitors in San José.<sup>1</sup>

This concern is especially significant given that immigrants comprise approximately 41% of San José's total population, playing a central role in shaping the city's workforce, small business sector, and cultural identity. A climate of fear or uncertainty could undermine community participation in public celebrations and diminish the economic benefits these global events are designed to deliver.

Small business owners have expressed that heightened fears of immigration enforcement could deter residents and visitors from attending community events, frequenting local establishments, or hosting watch parties and fan activations. A loss of participation or reluctance to host event-related activities would have substantial economic consequences for the local economy.

In addition, major sporting events naturally bring large crowds and high energy levels, which can increase the risk of confusion or conflict if actions are perceived as aggressive or discriminatory. These events are just as much of a hazard as they are an opportunity, and these risks are likely to be amplified by community fears. Local hospitals, such as O'Connor Hospital, have already begun mass-casualty and emergency response drills in anticipation of these events, underscoring the importance of coordinated and transparent public safety communication.<sup>2</sup>

## **ANALYSIS**

The SJ26 Strategic Plan establishes a robust foundation for hosting world-class sporting events that highlight San José's culture, creativity, and economic vitality. However, recent federal developments necessitate complementary strategies that emphasize safety, inclusion, and community trust. Ensuring that all residents and visitors feel welcome and secure—particularly

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<sup>1</sup> In July 2025, global recording artist Bad Bunny announced he would headline the Super Bowl LX halftime show at Levi's Stadium, marking the first fully Spanish-language performance in Super Bowl history. Following his Super Bowl announcement, Department of Homeland Security (DHS) official Corey Lewandowski stated in an October 2025 interview that ICE would conduct immigration enforcement, asserting that "There is nowhere that you can provide safe haven to people who are in the country illegally, not the Super Bowl not anywhere else." These comments, alongside a 123% increase in ICE arrests in the Bay Area between January and July 2025 have heightened local concerns about potential enforcement activity during major regional events. (See *ABC7 News San Francisco* <https://abc7news.com/post/ice-super-bowl-lx-bad-bunny-levis-stadium-santa-clara-nfl-donald-trump/17920453/>; See also *Los Angeles Times* <https://www.latimes.com/delos/story/2025-09-30/bad-bunny-super-bowl-lx-halftime-show-2026-ice-safety-essay>)

<sup>2</sup> On September 30, 2025, O'Connor Hospital conducted a three-hour mass casualty drill simulating a chemical bomb detonation at Levi's Stadium, part of a broader regional effort to prepare for the 2026 Super Bowl and FIFA World Cup. The exercise, modeled after Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) protocols, involved hospital staff, student nurses, and emergency responders practicing decontamination, triage, and patient care procedures in a simulated high-stress environment. Santa Clara Valley Healthcare officials noted the training is one in a series of preparedness exercises designed to equip more than 450 hospital employees for potential incidents such as active shooter events, terrorist attacks, or natural disasters. See <https://sanjosespotlight.com/silicon-valley-hospital-workers-train-for-super-bowl-threats/>

during events of global visibility—is essential to maintaining San José’s reputation as a vibrant and inclusive city.<sup>3</sup>

While public safety coordination among local, regional, and federal agencies will remain critical, the City must also prioritize proactive, transparent, and multilingual outreach that addresses public concerns. This includes clear communication on the City’s role, legal limitations, and available support resources for residents, small businesses, workers, event organizers, and visitors.

A continued targeted and interdepartmental approach with reports out to Council would help the City address several key priorities:

1. Community Confidence and Safety: Proactive messaging mitigates misinformation and reduce anxiety among immigrant communities, ensuring that all residents feel safe accessing City services, attending events, and engaging in civic life.
2. Economic Stability and Participation: Outreach to small businesses, particularly those in high-traffic areas, business improvement districts, business associations, and hospitality sectors, including “Know Your Rights” information to help owners and employees understand how to respond if they encounter immigration enforcement activity. Providing clear guidance on their rights, existing City ordinances, and available support resources empowers business owners to make informed decisions and reduce fear or confusion.
3. Public Transparency and Coordination: Aligning communication among City departments public safety partners will promote consistency and help prevent confusion or panic in the event of any visible or perceived threats to the immigrant community.

By continuing to integrate these outreach and coordination efforts into the City’s SJ26 planning framework, San José can ensure that residents, small businesses, workers, and visitors feel safe, supported, and informed. This proactive approach not only protects the well-being of the local community but also maximizes the economic opportunity presented by these high-profile events, encouraging visitors to attend, explore, and engage with the city. In doing so, San José can preserve its economic vitality, foster trust across diverse communities, and reinforce its reputation as a welcoming, world-class host city capable of delivering memorable and secure experiences for both residents and guests.

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<sup>3</sup> The 2014 Sochi Winter Olympics illustrate how international sporting events, while offering opportunities to showcase culture and economic vitality, can also expose vulnerabilities that affect a host’s reputation. The Russian government invested heavily in the Sochi Games as a project of national prestige, but reports of corruption, environmental damage, labor abuses, and the suppression of civil society and LGBTQ+ rights overshadowed the event’s successes. Critics argue that these controversies undermined Russia’s global image and highlighted the risks that high-profile events can pose when broader political or enforcement-related concerns generate public scrutiny and anxiety. See <https://apnews.com/article/russia-sochi-olympics-anniversary-putin-ukraine-451c65399bcb468ec3a22035451aa519>