



Memorandum

TO: HONORABLE MAYOR
AND CITY COUNCIL

FROM: Lee Wilcox

SUBJECT: 2026 Major Event Zone
Ordinance

DATE: June 3, 2025

Approved

Date:

6/3/25

COUNCIL DISTRICT: 3

RECOMMENDATION

Approve an uncoded ordinance of the City of San José to designate specified areas of the City of San José as a “Major Event Zone” to prohibit certain activities on public property to facilitate the optimum use of these areas in conjunction with the Major Event related activities during the 2026 Major Sports Events – National Football League Super Bowl LX, National Collegiate Athletic Association Men’s Basketball West Regional Games, Federation Internationale de Football Association World Cup 26, and a potential national technology conference.

SUMMARY AND OUTCOME

Approval of the recommended ordinance will temporarily prohibit certain activities within the Major Event Zone to protect and promote the safety, public health, mobility, and general welfare of the participants and the general public during the 2026 Major Events.

BACKGROUND

In anticipation of multiple high-profile events taking place in 2026 including Super Bowl LX-related programming, the NCAA Men’s Basketball West Regional Finals, FIFA World Cup matches, and a major technology developer conference, the City Administration is identifying and implementing policy tools to support safe, efficient, and well-coordinated major event operations in San José.

The City Council provided direction to develop a Major Event Zone ordinance during the Fiscal Year 2024-2025 budget process as part of the “Road to 2026” initiative. The City Manager’s Office of Economic Development and Cultural Affairs (OEDCA) leads this work in coordination with other departments and stakeholders.

The City previously adopted temporary Special Event Zone ordinances to support public safety and operations during major events, including Super Bowl 50 in 2016 and the 2018 College Football Playoff National Championship. These ordinances established restrictions on certain activities such as vending, signage, and distribution of materials in designated areas of Downtown San José during event periods. Both ordinances were uncoded and tailored to individual events.

Establishing a flexible, uncoded temporary framework will enhance the City's ability to manage safety, reduce congestion, and support a well-organized and welcoming experience for attendees and the broader community.

ANALYSIS

The proposed Major Event Zone Ordinance establishes a temporary framework to promote public safety, operational coordination, and economic opportunity during high-attendance, high-impact 2026 events. It enables the City to activate a designated area for a limited time around major events, ensuring consistent and efficient implementation of temporary restrictions in the public right-of-way.

By restricting certain commercial activities such as vending and the distribution of promotional materials, the ordinance is designed to reduce congestion, support emergency access, and protect the public and event attendees. These temporary restrictions do not apply to private property or permitted activations and are only in effect within defined boundaries and for limited timeframes approved by City Council. Unauthorized and unpermitted activities, such as the sale of counterfeit merchandise, will continue to be restricted under existing City regulations.

There are existing permitting processes for peddler permits and temporary outdoor special events on public and private property. Under City regulations, peddler permits are issued by the Police Department Permits Unit in accordance with San José Municipal Code Chapter 6.54 (Peddler Permit Ordinance). During designated Downtown Special Events, Chapter 6.55 (Downtown Special Events) authorizes the City to temporarily suspend these permits to ensure public safety and event coordination. OEDCA oversees permitting outdoor special events on both public and private property, under certain conditions, as outlined in Chapter 13.14 (Community Special Events) and Chapter 20.80 Part 16 (Temporary Outdoor Uses of Private Property).

While permitted vending activities are suspended in the Major Event Zone during the activation period, local vendors and small businesses will be encouraged to participate through permitted special events. This ensures an equitable pathway for inclusion while supporting the coordination necessary for high-profile event operations.

The boundary for the Major Event Zone aligns with the Downtown Growth Area as defined in Envision San José 2040 General Plan. It includes key corridors such as Interstate 280, CA State Route 87, South 6th Street, East San Salvador Street, East

San Fernando Street, East St. James Street, West Julian Street, Stockton Avenue, Park Avenue, and Delmas Avenue. The area encompasses San José's urban core and primary public gathering spaces to support large-scale events without requiring case-by-case geographic designations.

The Major Event Zone will be activated for major events anticipated in 2026, including:

- Super Bowl LX – February 8, 2026 (January 23, 2026 to February 10, 2026);
- NCAA Men's Basketball West Regional (March 13, 2026 through March 31, 2026);
- Potential National Technology Conference (March 13, 2026 through March 31, 2026); and
- FIFA World Cup 26 (June 5, 2026 through July 21, 2026).

Establishing a City Council-approved framework in advance allows the City to maintain flexibility while ensuring clarity for event organizers, vendors, businesses, and the public.

The proposed ordinance supports the City's ability to safeguard public health, safety, and welfare while positioning San José to host high-profile events more effectively. It provides a reliable tool for proactive planning, interdepartmental coordination, and smooth execution of complex, citywide efforts.

EVALUATION AND FOLLOW-UP

Staff will monitor the implementation of the temporary Major Event Zone ordinance as part of the City's standard event coordination and permitting processes. During activations, staff will observe operations on-site, conduct regular inspections, and document any issues related to public safety, congestion, or unauthorized commercial activity.

Following each activation, staff will collect feedback from event organizers, City departments, and community stakeholders to help identify successes, address challenges, and inform adjustments to future event planning efforts.

COORDINATION

This memorandum has been prepared in coordination with the City Attorney's Office, the City Manager's Budget Office, the Fire Department, the Parks, Recreation and Neighborhood Services Department, the Planning, Building and Code Enforcement Department, and the Police Department to support the implementation of the Major Event Zone Ordinance through their respective regulatory processes.

PUBLIC OUTREACH

This memorandum will be posted on the City's Council Agenda website for the June 17, 2025 City Council meeting.

City staff have coordinated with stakeholders of major events identified in this ordinance in advance of the development of this policy. This includes the Bay Area Host Committee, Team San José, and the San José Sports Authority. Staff will conduct targeted outreach to ensure businesses and affected stakeholders are informed about the proposed Major Event Zone and its potential implications. The outreach plan will include:

- A community meeting to preview anticipated visitor impacts, economic opportunities, and potential restrictions associated with the 2026 Major Destination Sports Events; and
- On-the-ground engagement with mobile vendors during the 2025 Christmas in the Park season, to reach stakeholders likely to operate within the public right-of-way.

These efforts are intended to provide ample notice, facilitate coordination, and ensure community input is considered during the implementation of the Major Event Zone Ordinance.

COMMISSION RECOMMENDATION AND INPUT

No commission recommendation or input is associated with this action.

CEQA

Not a Project, File No. PP17-011, Temporary special events resulting in no changes to the physical environment.

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PUBLIC SUBSIDY REPORTING

This item does not include a public subsidy as defined in section 53083 or 53083.1 of the California Government Code or the City's Open Government Resolution.



Lee Wilcox
Assistant City Manager
Acting Director, City Manager's Office of
Economic Development and Cultural Affairs

For questions, please contact Kerry Adams Hapner, OEDCA Director of Cultural Affairs, at kerry.adams-hapner@sanjoseca.gov or Melina Iglesias, OEDCA Special Events Director, at melina.iglesias@sanjoseca.gov.