COUNCIL AGENDA : 8/19/2025
FILE : 25-838
ITEM : 8.1

CITY OF SAN JOSE
CAPITAL OF SILICON VALLEY

Memorandum

TO: HONORABLE MAYOR AND CITY COUNCIL

FROM: Toni J. Taber, MMC
City Clerk

SUBJECT: **SEE BELOW**

DATE: August 5, 2025

SUBJECT: 2026 Major Events Status Report

Recommendation

As recommended by the Community and Economic Development Committee on June 16, 2025, accept the status report on planning to facilitate marketing, sponsorships, local special events, and other activities for the 2026 destination sports events.
CEQA: Not a Project, File No. PP17-009, Staff Reports, Assessments, Annual Reports, and Informational Memos that involve no approvals of any City action. (City Manager)
[Community and Economic Development Committee referral 6/16/2025 Item (d)2]
DEFERRED TO 8/26/2025 PER ADMINISTRATION

COMMITTEE AGENDA: 10/28/24
ITEM: (d)2

CITY OF SAN JOSE
CAPITAL OF SILICON VALLEY

Memorandum

TO: COMMUNITY AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

FROM: Tommy O'Hare

SUBJECT: **2026 Destination Sports Events Update**

DATE: June 4, 2025

Approved Rosalynn Hughey Date: 6/6/25

COUNCIL DISTRICT: Citywide

RECOMMENDATION

Accept the status report on planning to facilitate marketing, sponsorships, local special events, and other activities for the 2026 destination sports events and cross-reference the item for the City Council regular meeting on August 19, 2025.

SUMMARY AND OUTCOME

This status report on the planning for 2026 destination sports events will inform the Community and Economic Development (CED) Committee and City Council of specific events, dates, hotels, venues, activations, and estimated economic impact. The status report will include the collaborating City departments and partners. The SJ26 "Strategic Plan" will be described, along with the status of ongoing work and key next steps.

BACKGROUND

In 2026, three major destination sports events will be hosted at Levi's Stadium, the SAP Center, and PayPal Park, with sports teams practicing in local venues and staying in San José hotels. The purpose of this status report is to provide the CED Committee and full City Council information related to the City's activities regarding the planning and preparation for these 2026 destination sports events, which offer a significant opportunity for residents to celebrate community and culture and feature San José to the world as an inclusive, vibrant destination for visitors.

The 2026 major sports events include:

1. **National Football League (NFL) Super Bowl LX** on February 8, 2026, at Levi's Stadium with an estimated economic impact to the County of Santa Clara of $100 million to $160 million;[1]
2. **National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) Men's Basketball West Regional Games** to be held March 26 through 28, 2026 at the SAP Center with San José State University (SJSU) as a host with a conservative estimated impact of $7.1 million based on a comparable 2019 event; and
3. **Federation Internationale de Football Association (FIFA) World Cup 26** to be held from June 11 through July 19, 2026, with an estimated economic impact to the County of Santa Clara of $270 million to $360 million.

In addition to the events described above, there are multiple events happening in 2025 such as the Gold Cup soccer event at Levi's Stadium and Pay Pal Park, the Official FIFA 2026 World Cup 1 Year to Go Community Event for the Bay Area at Creekside, the 2025 National Women's Soccer League National Championship, the first Annual Slam José! 3x3 Hoops Festival, the Rock n Roll Half Marathon, the USA Table Tennis National Championships, and the USA Water Polo Junior National Championships.

ANALYSIS

Building Upon Proven Success

The City is building upon past destination sports event success through a multi-faceted role in supporting these efforts as a funder, a legislative organization with influence, and a partner with essential assets. The City is working closely with the San José Sports Authority to contract with key partners/stakeholders, fiscal/human resources, event producers and facilitators, and through interagency coordination. The City is leveraging the assets and the resources of its partners to play a role that "only the City can do" and invest resources in key strategic initiatives.

The strategic initiatives build upon the success and lessons learned from previous major sports events, including Super Bowl L, 2019 College Football Championships the 2024 World Cup and the Quakes vs Inter Miami Messi Game. In summer 2025, the Concacaf Gold Cup will feature three soccer tournament matches at Levi's Stadium and PayPal Park on June 15th, June 20th, and June 24th. Each major sports event enables the City to further hone and optimize its success leading to 2026 and gain momentum in attracting major destination sports events well into the future. The City is also bringing

[1] The Superbowl and FIFA World Cup economic impact data is courtesy of the Bay Area Host Committee. To learn more, visit www.bayareahostcommittee.com. The link to Super Bowl LX and FIFA World Cup estimated economic impact data can be found here.

forth the authentic art, music, food and spirit of San José's diverse community to celebrate the athletes and sports taking place in our community.

Collaborating Departments and Partners

SJ26 requires collaboration among City partners, stakeholders, and departments. Critical to these efforts is the City's long-time partnership with the San José Sports Authority, the City of San José's official sports commission, with the mission of bringing world-class sporting events to Silicon Valley. Coordinating partners include: Bay Area Host Committee, San José Earthquakes, San José Sharks, San José State University, San José Chamber of Commerce, San José Downtown Association, SAP Center, SVCreates, Team San José, and Urban Vibrancy Institute.

Figure 1 outlines the City staff team and key collaborating partners. As the planning process evolves, other partners may be identified.

Figure 1: City Staff Team and Collaborating Partners

City Staff Team	Collaborating Partners
• 2026 Sports & Special Events Director, City Manager's Office • City Manager's Office of Economic Development & Cultural Affairs • Office of Emergency Management • Police • Fire • Airport Department • Planning, Building, and Code Enforcement • Public Works • Transportation • Housing • City Attorney's Office	• Bay Area Host Committee • San José Earthquakes* • San José Sharks* • San José Sports Authority • San José State University* • San José Chamber of Commerce • San José Downtown Association • SAP Center • SVCreates • Team San José • Urban Vibrancy Institute **Represented on the Bay Area Host Committee Board and Advisory Committee*

The 2026 Partners Coordination Group—comprised of the collaborating partners—was established in February 2025 and meets monthly to review and execute the SJ26 Strategic Plan.

2026 Destination Sports Events and the Impact in San José

For each of the 2026 major sports events, the City is partnering with local sports, tourism, hospitality, and creative industries to drive economic and cultural impact. San José will be a destination market for visiting fans; each event will include group hotel nights for visiting teams and host organizations. Furthermore, San José's athletic venues will be utilized as practice sites or for tournaments. With each major event, there will be planned community activations and curated official and unofficial events for fans and visitors that will showcase San José's unique public life and culture.

To best capitalize upon SJ26, the City is focusing on major events in downtown San José that will feature concerts with national headlining artists; public viewing watch parties of the Super Bowl, NCAA Tournament, and FIFA World Cup; drone shows; wayfinding, leveraging AI; premium sponsor hospitality; and a community engagement program.

Staff and the San José Sports Authority are also working with local arts and culture organizations to infuse all of SJ26 with local culture and as much as possible source products and services from local vendors. An arts and creative sector town hall meeting was held on June 4, 2025, to provide an overview of the 2026 sports events and share opportunities for local organizations to be involved.

Super Bowl LX: February 8, 2026

The NFL Super Bowl is the 10th largest internationally viewed sporting event. Beginning with its Opening Day/Media Day, Super Bowl LX starts on February 2, 2026, and culminates with the championship game at Levi's Stadium on February 8, 2026. One American Football Conference team and one National Football Conference team, will stay in Santa Clara and practice at Stanford University; the other team will stay at the downtown San José Marriott and practice at SJSU. NFL staff will stay at the Signia by Hilton and downtown Hilton Hotel. To date, participating San José hotels include the Signia by Hilton, San José Marriott, Hilton, Hotel De Anza[2], and Residence Inn. To date, nearly 6,000 group room nights have been secured, with 1,600 tentative room nights.

Both Super Bowl teams are arriving at San José Mineta International Airport on Sunday, February 1, 2026. The City, Airport, the Sports Authority and the National Football League are working to create an event out of the team arrivals, welcoming the teams and featuring San José on a national scale. Staff and Team San José are pursuing Opening Day/Media Day on Monday, February 2, 2026. If selected, the economic impact of hosting Opening Day/Media Day in San José is estimated at $760,000 in additional spending and $34,000 in incremental taxes. The Bay Area Host Committee is also potentially booking the San José McEnery Convention Center for Super Bowl LX

[2] According to Team San José, the De Anza Hotel will reopen by the end of 2024.

accreditation processing. SJ26 organized concerts, watch parties, drone shows, and premium hospitality will take place on February 6, 7, and 8, 2026.

National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) Men's Basketball West Regional Games: March 26 - 28, 2026

With SJSU as the local host, the NCAA Basketball West Regional Games will be held at the SAP Center from March 26 to March 28, 2026. SAP Center will serve as the practice and tournament site. Group room blocks for the competing teams have been reserved at the following hotels: Signia by Hilton, Marriott, Hilton, Doubletree, Hyatt Place, AC Marriott, De Anza, and the Hayes Mansion. To date, over 1,600 hotel group room nights have been booked.

Activations will be planned in the newly-established Entertainment Zones, such as San Pedro Street, as well as another downtown site for a "Hoop It Up" participatory community engagement event. SJ26 organized concerts, watch parties, drone shows, and premium hospitality will take place on March 26, 27, and 28, including the second annual Slam José! 3x3 Hoops Festival.

FIFA World Cup 26: June 11 – July 19, 2026

FIFA is the international self-regulatory governing body of association soccer (globally known as "football"). The FIFA World Cup is the most highly watched international sporting event. The 2026 FIFA World Cup will be the first to feature 48 teams competing in 104 games in three host countries: Canada, Mexico, and the United States. Sixteen cities will host matches, eleven of which are in the United States. Six games will be held at Levi's Stadium on June 13th, 16th, 19th, 22nd, 25th, and July 1st. PayPal Park and SJSU will be practice venues three days prior to each match. Teams competing in the matches at Levi's Stadium will be announced by December 2025.

In a major win for San José, it will be the official and only city in the Bay Area to host the Official FIFA 2026 World Cup One Year Out Celebration. This event, scheduled for June 14, will feature local artists, soccer games, youth clinics, and a DJ competition amongst the DJs of the major Bay Area sports teams. San José Mineta International Airport is serving as the title sponsor of the event.

FIFA has requested group room blocks and short-term property lease opportunities. Signia by Hilton will serve as FIFA headquarters. Teams will stay in the downtown Marriott and Hilton hotels. Hotel Valencia will serve as the "VIP" hotel. To date, for all the events, there are 58,600 group nights booked for FIFA events, with 42,950 considered tentative. In addition to room blocks, FIFA is working with the City and key partners to identify a 10-month office space in the downtown beginning October 2025 through July 1, 2026. FIFA also seeks to open a downtown box office from April through July 2026. SJ26 organized concerts, Watch Parties, Drone Shows and Premium Hospitality will take place on June 12, 13, 16, 19, 22. 25, and July 1.

SJ26 Strategic Plan

Building from staff's initial Road to 2026 Strategic Initiatives Work Plan, the 2026 Sports and Special Events Director has developed the SJ26 Strategic Plan. This is a dynamic document that is accompanied by a cloud-based project management tool with daily updating, pro forma budget, and a fundraising pipeline.

The SJ26 Strategic Plan is centered in achieving three main objectives: 1) build strong civic pride, 2) maximize local economic impact while creating lasting community value, and 3) position the City as a premier destination for large-scale national and international events. To realize key results of the objectives, the SJ 26 Strategic Plan includes several work streams: 1) branding, 2) marketing, 3) sponsorship, 4) events/programming, 4) policy work, 5) public rights-of-way management, and 6) public safety/emergency operations.

Branding

Airport staff, in coordination with Team San José, San José Sports Authority, and other City staff has led an initiative with Populous—a global architecture and design firm specializing in creating innovative sports, entertainment, and public assembly venues that foster memorable experiences—to create a brand and "look and feel." A series of design workshops have been conducted to develop a brand. A draft brand design is under review with completion anticipated by July.

Marketing

Team San José, doing business as Visit San José, is leading San José's destination marketing efforts and a new multi-partner collaborative group to market San José to both destination and regional visitors. A sub-group of partners has been developed to specifically focus on marketing for the 2026 sports events. The following activities are underway:

- Visit San José and Airport staff are developing a holistic "Stay and Play in San José" marketing and communications strategy (campaign) across digital and out-of-home (OOH) advertising comprised of owned, earned, and paid media channels within the City and from supporting community partners. The campaign will launch in October 2025 and will target digital channels focused on driving visitors from more than 50 miles away from San José to fly into San José Mineta International Airport, stay in San José hotels, and visit local businesses and attractions.
- The owned and earned campaigns are in development and will focus on local awareness and participation in SJ26 events.
- Visit San José is also updating its microsite which will feature the new SJ26 brand, include an interactive calendar, and have a specific feature that allows users to plan, save, and edit their own personalized SJ26 experiences.

- Arts and culture marketing opportunities have been designed for the City's arts, culture, and creative organizations, including an arts grant for "The Art of Play" coop marketing buys via Visit San José. Ten to 15 grants in the amount of $10,000 to $15,000 will be provided to local organizations. Grant guidelines are under development, and the program will launch in summer 2025. Additionally, local organizations will be able to pitch their events to promote their own events and programming via www.sanjose.org/industry.

Sponsorship

The San José Sports Authority is leading a fundraising effort for SJ26 through corporate sponsors and donors. The program is targeting five to 10 major donors for rights to use the SJ26 logo; branding at SJ26 concerts, drone shows, SJ26 house; and inclusion in all SJ26 marketing (e.g., supergraphics). The initial outreach has been well received with early funding commitments already received and significant progress on securing additional funding.

Events/Programming

Events and programming are focused downtown with opportunity for additional activations in neighborhoods, including the Mexican Heritage Plaza. As described earlier in this memorandum, events include concerts, watch parties, and drone shows. Layered onto these large events will be smaller scale activations, including:

- Elizabeth Turk Projects' *Invisible Skies* at City Hall Plaza on January 31, 2026. The Office of Cultural Affairs is providing stipends for community engagement partners;
- WeCreate408 will be curated in April 2026 to emphasize creativity and sports;
- Make Music Day on June 21, 2026 will feature genres of countries of teams playing in the World Cup;
- CityDance 2026 will feature genres curated based on competing teams in World Cup;
- Temporary public art and project mapping;
- City Hall exhibit featuring sports-themed artwork by local artists, January-July 2026;
- Sonic Runway performances with music genres and themes curated to teams in World Cup; and
- Themed performing arts, such as Symphony San José's *Symphonic World Cup*.

Leading up to the three major sports events in 2026, there are several sports-related events that have occurred and are scheduled for 2025—depicted in the graphic below, including the first Annual Slam José! 3x3 Hoops Festival on June 21 and 22. This hoopsfest style tournament includes two days of competition at Plaza de Cesar Chavez.

Policy Work

Previous major sports events—Super Bowl L, 2019 College Football Championships, and 2024 World Cup games—taught staff that certain policy work, done in advance of the events, will support events with greater impact. Specifically, staff has completed and currently finalizing the following items:

- Supergraphics Ordinance Amendment – City Council approval on May 20, 2025
  - Increases display duration, removes minimum building height, increases the number of signs per building, allows supergraphic installations on building roofs, adds a provision to not obstruct aerial access as required by California Fire Code, and maintains streamlined review process. Pursuant to City Council direction, staff is developing a sponsorship program for supergraphics on City-owned property;
- Entertainment Zone Ordinance – City Council approval on May 20, 2025
  - Areas where people can buy to-go alcoholic beverages from bars and restaurants to enjoy outside in public spaces like plazas, sidewalks, and streets during a permitted special event
  - Zone locations: Alum Rock Avenue, Fountain Alley, Paseo de San Antonio, Post Street, St. John Street ("Little Italy Way" and "Sharks Way"), San Pedro Street, and South of First Street (SoFA);
- Major Event Zone Ordinance – City Council action on June 17, 2025
  - Prohibits certain activities, like peddling, on public property and facilitates the optimum use of these areas in conjunction with the 2026 major sports events; and

- Wayfinding
  - Static wayfinding signage has been installed in downtown directing residents and visitors to key venues and landmarks; and
  - Digital wayfinding signage – staff is exploring the City of San Deigo model whereby the City collaborated with the Downtown San Diego Partnership and issued a request for proposals for a third party to conduct and fund the CEQA analysis and write the amendment to the City's sign code.

Public Rights-of-Way Management

- Staff has established an inter-departmental working group to effectively manage public rights-of-way while properly managing impacts of unsheltered homelessness. A mapping exercise is underway, and Field Assessments Teams will soon be created.

Public Safety/Emergency Operations

As with all major public gatherings, emergency operations are central to event planning. The City's Emergency Operation Center (EOC) team and public safety departments are coordinating critical internal and interagency emergency operations coordination and staff training to ensure a safe experience in San José. EOC efforts include:

- Sports and Special Events Training Courses beginning September 2024 through August 2025, already underway;
- Interagency coordination, already underway;
- EOC Planning and Activation, already underway;
- Preparation with SJPD, SJFD, and OEM already underway;
- Fiscal Year 2025-2026 budget proposal for enhanced public safety measures specifically related to 2026 destination sporting events; and the
- City, County of Santa Clara, and City of Santa Clara secured funding through the Bay Area Urban Areas Security Initiative to conduct training which is underway.

EVALUATION AND FOLLOW-UP

The Administration will provide semi-annual updates to the CED Committee. As policy amendments and frameworks are developed, the Administration will bring recommended policy proposals to the City Council for consideration.

COORDINATION

This memorandum has been coordinated with the City Attorney's Office.

PUBLIC OUTREACH

This memorandum will be posted on the City's website for the June 16, 2025, CED Committee meeting and the August 19, 2025, City Council meeting.

COMMISSION RECOMMENDATION AND INPUT

No commission recommendation or input is associated with this action.

CEQA

Not a Project; File No. PP17-009; Staff Reports, Assessments, Annual Reports, and Informational Memos that involve no approvals of City action.

/s/
Tommy O'Hare
2026 Sports and Special Events Director

For questions, please contact Tommy O'Hare, 2026 Sports and Special Events Director, at tommy.ohare@sanjoseca.gov, or Kerry Adams Hapner, Director of Cultural Affairs, City Manager's Office of Economic Development and Cultural Affairs, at kerry.adams-hapner@sanJoséca.gov.