



# Memorandum

**TO:** COMMUNITY AND  
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT  
COMMITTEE

**FROM:** Tommy O'Hare  
Jen Baker

**SUBJECT:** 2026 Major Events Status  
Report

**DATE:** April 14, 2026

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Approved

Date:

4/17/26

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**COUNCIL DISTRICT:** Citywide

## **RECOMMENDATION**

- a) Accept the post-event report of Super Bowl LX and the NCAA Men's Basketball West Regional Games, and the status report on planning updates and coordination efforts for the FIFA World Cup.
- b) Cross-reference this item to the May 12, 2026 City Council regular meeting.

## **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 the implementation of the SJ26 Strategic Plan. The status report includes updates from the collaborating City departments and partners.

## **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. With Super Bowl LX and March Madness NCAA Men's Basketball West Regional Games already having taken place and the FIFA World Cup less than two months away, this status report will provide the CED Committee and City Council with a recap of the two major sports events held and an update on the planned activities, including watch parties, for the FIFA World Cup.

The 2026 major sports events include:

1. **National Football League (NFL) Super Bowl LX** held on February 8, 2026, at Levi's Stadium;
2. **National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) Men's Basketball West Regional Games** (March Madness) held March 26 through 28, 2026 at the SAP Center and hosted by San José State University; and
3. **Federation Internationale de Football Association (FIFA) World Cup 26** to be held from June 11 through July 19, 2026.

In addition to the three major sports events, there are other sporting events yet to take place in 2026, as shown in Figure 1. These include the USA Table Tennis National Championships, CrossFit Games, and Slam José! 3x3 Hoops Festival.

**Figure 1: 2026 Sporting Events**



### **SJ26 Strategic Plan**

The SJ26 Strategic Plan, led by the 2026 Sports and Special Events Director and the San José Sports Authority, is centered on achieving two main objectives: 1) hosting a series of unique experiences that positions the City and Downtown as premier sports and entertainment destinations, and 2) maximizing local economic impact of tourism and event spending during the 2026 celebrations, while creating lasting value for the community. 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, 5) policy work, 6) public rights-of-way management, and 7) public safety/emergency operations.

Implementing the SJ26 Strategic Plan requires collaboration among City departments, partners, and stakeholders. Figure 2 outlines the City staff team and key collaborating partners. The 2026 Partners Coordination Group was established in February 2025 and continues to meet monthly to monitor plan implementation.

**Figure 2: City Staff Team and Collaborating Partners**

City Staff Team	Collaborating Partners
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• 2026 Sports &amp; Special Events Director, City Manager's Office</li><li>• City Manager's Office of Economic Development &amp; Cultural Affairs</li><li>• Office of Emergency Management</li><li>• Police Department</li><li>• Fire Department</li><li>• Airport Department</li><li>• Planning, Building, and Code Enforcement</li><li>• Public Works Department</li><li>• Department of Transportation</li><li>• Housing Department</li><li>• City Attorney's Office</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Bay Area Host Committee</li><li>• San José Earthquakes*</li><li>• San José Sharks*</li><li>• San José Sports Authority</li><li>• San José State University*</li><li>• San José Chamber of Commerce</li><li>• San José Downtown Association</li><li>• SAP Center</li><li>• SVCcreates</li><li>• Team San José</li><li>• Urban Vibrancy Institute</li></ul> <p><i>*Represented on the Bay Area Host Committee Board and Advisory Committee</i></p>

**ANALYSIS**

The following sections provide a summary of the events held, hotel performance, and initial economic impact of Super Bowl LX and NCAA Men's Basketball West Regional Games (March Madness).

## **Super Bowl LX**

Super Bowl LX set the tone for SJ26 and provided a dramatic increase in events, foot traffic, and economic impact for the City of San José, when compared to Super Bowl L in 2016.

On Sunday, February 1, 2026, the Seattle Seahawks and the New England Patriots arrived in the Bay Area via San José Mineta International Airport (Airport). The City and San José Sports Authority (Sports Authority) created a welcome event for the team arrivals, including local youth sports teams, media, and a special series of performances by San José Taiko. The Seattle Seahawks were then transported from the Airport to the downtown San José Marriott, where they stayed during Super Bowl week and practiced at San José State University (SJSU).

NFL Opening Night (formerly known as Media Day) was held at the San José McEnery Convention Center on February 2. Through SJ26's Game On youth initiative program, over 800 local youth were provided tickets, snacks, and transportation to Opening Night, which concluded with projection mapping on the Sobrato Building and a drone show at Discovery Meadow, attended by nearly 7,500 people.

On Super Bowl Friday, February 6, local hero and global superstar Kehlani played her first concert since winning two Grammy awards to a sold-out crowd of 12,000 fans at City Hall Plaza. The night ended with a drone show at Discovery Meadow with a crowd of over 3,500. On Saturday, February 7, DJ Dom Dolla played to another sold-out crowd of 15,000 at City Hall Plaza. Commissioned by the City Manager's Office of Economic Development and Cultural Affairs (OEDCA), SJSU Professor Esteban Garcia Bravo and his students complemented the concert experience at City Hall Plaza with two public art installations.

San Pedro Square Market served as the host for the SJ26 Superfest, featuring San José's first official Entertainment Zone activation, and from Super Bowl Friday to Sunday, it included a 100-yard astro turf field with games, photograph opportunities, music, and multicultural vendors. On Super Bowl Sunday, San Pedro Square was shoulder to shoulder with fans watching the Super Bowl. Attendance over the three-day Superfest was 48,000.

Additional Super Bowl-related events were held in San José, including a sports celebrity and autograph show at the San José Civic, the Fitz and Whit podcast filming at Creekside, Super Row Weekend at Santana Row, and a Big Game Party at The Plex.

SJ26 also partnered with the arts community by developing the Hometown Heroes art exhibition at City Hall, featuring sports-themed works from 34 local artists. The *Invisible Skies* event, created by artist Elizabeth Turk, was a large-scale participatory public art event held at City Hall Plaza, where thousands of participants used illuminated umbrellas to form a glowing, constellation-like display. The event transformed the Plaza

into a “living observatory,” turning community members into stars in a collective, light-based artwork.

The Sports Authority coordinated the SJ26 Hospitality House, the dedicated venue at Blanco Urban in San Pedro Square, where SJ26 sponsors could host private gatherings, client events, and business networking functions. The hospitality activities contributed to relationship-building, sponsor engagement, and showcasing San José as a leading destination for innovation and investment.

Also, spearheaded by the Sports Authority, the opening of The Locker Room has created a new visitor hub and sports-focused community space in downtown, transforming a vacant retail space at 93 E. San Carlos Street. The location is the centralized “one-stop” destination for visitors and residents. The center offers merchandise from local teams, as well as SJ26-branded merchandise, a free podcast studio for content creation, flexible event and meeting spaces for the community and nonprofits, and general amenities like charging stations, Wi-Fi, and information services.

While the Sports Authority will provide a full SJ26 economic impact report later this year, initial data suggest a strong economic boost from SJ26’s Super Bowl activities.

#### *Hotel Performance*

- Compared to Super Bowl L in 2016: 21% hotel occupancy increase and 45% increase in hotel revenue
- Year-over-Year: +30% occupancy and +107% revenue

#### *Restaurant and Retail Performance*

- Nuvo Hospitality Group reported 300% increase in sales compared to a typical weekend
- San Pedro Square Market vendors: single-day (Saturday, February 7) sales record exceeded by 30%
- Vendors reported selling out of food and beverages by the end of the Super Bowl

#### *Airport and Travel Activity*

- 130,000 passengers during the 12-day travel period, Jan. 30-Feb. 10
- Average ~10,800 passengers per day
- Busiest day: Feb. 9 with 20,600 passengers; 84% increase over same weekday last year
- 234 additional commercial flights
- 900+ private jet operations (Feb. 4–9)
- Hosted both Super Bowl teams and 8 charter flights for team friends and family

#### *Downtown Visitation*

- 459,200 unique visitors, January 31 to February 8. A 25% increase year-over-year

- Opening Night attendance: 7,220 with 40% of attendees traveling more than 250 miles
- 48,000 attendances over three days at San Pedro Superfest
- 25,000 attendees at City Hall Plaza concerts

## **NCAA Men's Basketball West Regional Games**

SJ26 continued the Super Bowl LX success into March Madness by hosting the NCAA Men's West Region Basketball Tournament. Similar to Super Bowl LX, NCAA teams flew into the City's Airport, stayed at San José hotels, and practiced and played at SAP Center.

SJ26 March Madness featured a free concert featuring DJ Diesel (also known as Shaquille "Shaq" O'Neal) with over 3,700 in attendance. The San Pedro Superfest was held March 26 through March 28, including an Entertainment Zone activation.

On March 26, the City and SJSU celebrated the intersection of art, technology, and sports with the launch of *Free Throw*, a dynamic projection mapping and interactive installation created by Professor and artist G. Craig Hobbs with students from the SJSU CADRE Lab and Digital Media Program. Created for the 2026 major sports events, *Trophy*, a dynamic illuminated sculpture by SJSU Professor Bravo and his students, debuted at Arena Green West. Both projects, commissioned in partnership between the City, Sports Authority, SJSU, and the San José Sharks, were enthusiastically experienced by fans and downtown visitors.

While the City awaits the full economic impact report, early data on hotel performance include:

- 79.6% occupancy, 12.3% increase vs. same time last year (STLY)
- \$200.31 Average Daily Rate, 21.6% increase vs. STLY
- \$159.38 Revenue per Available Room, 36.6% increase vs. STLY

## **FIFA World Cup**

San José is preparing to welcome the world to the South Bay for the 2026 FIFA World Cup at a level that matches the enthusiasm and success of past World Cups.

### World Cup Match Schedule

World Cup matches will be played at Levi's Stadium. Figure 3 outlines the match schedule. Teams are first divided into "groups" labeled with letters (such as Group A, B, C, etc.), with each group consisting of a small set of national teams. During the group stage, each team plays the others in its group to earn points, and the highest-ranked teams advance to the knockout rounds. The group letter simply identifies which set of teams is competing against each other in this opening phase of the tournament.

**Figure 3: FIFA World Cup Match Schedule**

Day	Date	Time	Teams	Group
Saturday	June 13	12:00 pm	Qatar vs. Switzerland	B
Tuesday	June 16	9:00 pm	Austria vs. Jordan	J
Friday	June 19	9:00 pm	Turkey vs. Paraguay	D
Monday	June 22	8:00 pm	Jordan vs. Algeria	J
Thursday	June 25	7:00 pm	Paraguay vs. Australia	D
Wednesday	July 1	5:00 pm	Round of 32 match: Group D winner and 3 <sup>rd</sup> place team from Group B, E, F, I, or J	

Team Accommodations

Teams competing at the World Cup will stay at the downtown San José Marriott, Hilton and Signia hotels. Team will also practice at PayPal Park. There is also the possibility that San José State will serve as a basecamp for one team during the World Cup.

Citywide Watch Parties and Activations

SJ26’s World Cup activations will be the largest in the Bay Area and will bring World Cup celebrations to all of San José through funding of World Cup Watch Parties in all Council Districts. A Superfest will take place in San Pedro Square Market in partnership with the San José Earthquakes, featuring watch parties for all 104 Matches and free family fun activities for all ages, concerts at Discovery Meadow, and a July 4<sup>th</sup> celebration at Lake Cunningham.

The Sports Authority is working to secure a FIFA Watch Party license that can be used as part of World Cup activations in all Council Districts for authorized watch parties. The Sports Authority will provide grants to entities in each Council District that meet certain qualifications for World Cup activations. Additionally, SJ26 is working with Council District offices, business improvement districts, business associations, and community associations to facilitate World Cup activations throughout the City.

Figure 4 provides information on initial World Cup activations that have been proposed by various organizations to date. Plans are preliminary and will be finalized in the coming weeks.

**Figure 4: Proposed World Cup Activations**

<b>Tentative Date(s)</b>	<b>Business District/Neighborhood</b>	<b>Council District</b>
June 11	Tully Road/Eastridge	7,8
June 11-12	Almaden Lake Park	10
June 11-12	Alum Rock Business Village	5
June 11-12	Calle Willow	3
June 11-12	De Anza Park	9
June 11-12	East Village	5
June 11-12	Lincoln Avenue	6
June 18 & 24	Mexican Heritage Plaza	5
June 20-21	Alum Rock Business Village	5
June 24-25	Japantown	3
June 25-26	Japantown	3
June 27	Arena Green East	6
July 2	Ramac Park	2
July 3-4	Monterey Road/The Plant	7
July 3-5	Alviso	4
July 14-15 OR July 18-19	Story Road/Little Saigon	7
July/August	The Alameda	6
TBD	Winchester Row	1

Diplomatic and Business Events

Team San José is the point of contact for countries inquiring to host community/diaspora events at the Convention Center and arts and theater venues. Additionally, City staff are working with the Silicon Valley Office of Protocol, international governments, and marketing agencies to integrate international business and cultural celebrations into the SJ26 World Cup activations.

OEDCA’s Business Development team intends to leverage the unique occasion of being a World Cup host region and capitalize on the opportunity to drive foreign investment in San José by hosting an international business symposium one day during the last two weeks of June.

Specifically, but not exclusively, focusing on the business community from the countries that will play at Levi’s Stadium, the event will convene corporate executives, entrepreneurs and investors and intends to showcase San José as a premier destination for investment; facilitate cross-border partnerships in key industry sections

such as artificial intelligence, clean energy, semiconductors and advanced manufacturing; and enhance the City's position as a global innovation hub.

A curated citywide tour of opportunity sites, sector-focused panels and business to business networking will highlight San José's innovation ecosystems. The symposium is a strategic tool to position San José as a global gateway for innovation, trade, and investment, hopefully converting a once-in-a-generation sporting moment into durable economic growth.

### Cultural Programming and Partnerships

Complimenting the World Cup matches, OEDCA will present a series of cultural events and activations that include:

- CityDance series, a participatory multi-cultural dance and music event series presented the evening before each FIFA match at Parque de los Pobladores with the first event featuring the WEPA Puerto Rican celebration presented in partnership with MACLA and San José Jazz;
- Make Music San José, a city-wide participatory music event on Sunday, June 21<sup>st</sup>, where anywhere can be a venue and anyone can participate with an emphasis on international music genres; and
- Interactive public art and technology installations, including *Gaiascope* at the Circle of Palms and *Bucky Ball* by SJSU Professor Bravo and his students.

### Supporting Small Businesses

To support local businesses in preparation for upcoming major events and conventions, Team San José will host its next Bi-Annual Summit for Hospitality (BASH) on June 4, 2026 at 4 p.m. at the convention center. Similar to Super Bowl LX, City partners—including the Directors Alliance, San José Downtown Association, business improvement districts, and business associations—will conduct business outreach to prepare small businesses, especially restaurants and bars for the influx of visitors and patrons.

### Public Safety/Emergency Operations

The City hosted a major sports events training exercise in fall 2025 in preparation for Super Bowl LX and will host another exercise prior to FIFA World Cup. Coordination continues among local, state and federal partners to understand potential risks, threats, and security concerns—including human trafficking—along with assessing capabilities and required resources.

For Super Bowl LX, the City's Emergency Operations Center (EOC) was activated on February 2, 6, 7, and 8. In addition to City staff, over 50 agencies joined the EOC with a focus on intelligence, including the Federal Bureau of Investigation's Regional Coordination Center, U.S. Secret Service, National Weather Service, Pacific Gas and

Electric, and various law enforcement agencies from the region. Communications between field operations and the EOC ran smoothly, and the use of City traffic cameras provided additional intelligence on the events and activities, particularly with the large crowds attending the concerts and drone shows.

### **EVALUATION AND FOLLOW-UP**

Staff will continue to implement the SJ26 Strategic Plan. Staff anticipates providing a final status report by the end of the calendar year that will include an economic impact report commissioned by the Sports Authority.

### **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 April 27, 2026, Community and Economic Development Committee meeting and cross-referenced to the May 12, 2026, City Council meeting.

### **BOARD, COMMISSION, COMMITTEE 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/

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/s/

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COMMUNITY AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

April 14, 2026

**Subject: 2026 Major Events Status Report**

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