



Memorandum

TO: COMMUNITY AND
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT
COMMITTEE

FROM: Tommy O'Hare
Jen Baker

SUBJECT: 2026 Major Events Status
Report

DATE: October 10, 2025

Approved

Date:

10/15/25

COUNCIL DISTRICT: Citywide

RECOMMENDATION

Accept the Major Events Status Report on planning, marketing, sponsorships, local special events, and other activities supporting 2026 destination sports events. Cross-reference the item for the City Council regular meeting on November 18, 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 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. The purpose of this status report is to provide the CED Committee and 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 **to** 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 sporting events that have taken place or are yet to happen in 2025, as shown in Figure 1. These include the Concacaf Gold Cup soccer event at Levi's Stadium and PayPal Park, the Official FIFA 2026 World Cup One Year to Go Community Countdown event for the Bay Area, the WNBA Golden State Valkyries first ever home playoff game at SAP Center, 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.

Figure 1: 2025 Sporting Events



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](#).

ANALYSIS

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 (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, SVCCreates, 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 Department • Fire Department • Airport Department • Planning, Building, and Code Enforcement • Public Works Department • Department of Transportation • Housing Department • 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 • SVCCreates • Team San José • Urban Vibrancy Institute <i>*Represented on the Bay Area Host Committee Board and Advisory Committee</i>

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. 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; projection mapping; wayfinding; premium sponsor hospitality; and a community engagement program.

Staff and the 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. A similar meeting is being planned for either November or December.

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. The American Football Conference team will stay in Santa Clara and practice at Stanford University; the National Football Conference team will stay at the downtown San José Marriott and practice at SJSU. NFL staff will stay at the Signia by Hilton and the downtown Hilton Hotel. To date, participating San José hotels include the Signia by Hilton, San José Marriott, Hilton, Hotel De Anza², and Residence Inn. To date, nearly 6,968 group room nights have been secured, with 1,597 tentative room nights.

During Super Bowl LX event dates, the City's goal is a revenue per available room increase of 750% when compared to the average year-over-year growth rate in the prior three months.

Both Super Bowl teams will arrive at San José Mineta International Airport (Airport) on Sunday, February 1, 2026. The City, Sports Authority, and NFL are working to create an event out of the team arrivals, to welcome the teams and feature San José on a national scale. Staff and Team San José continue to pursue Opening Day/Media Day on Monday,

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

February 2, 2026, at the San José McEnery Convention Center. 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. SJ26 organized concerts, watch parties, drone shows, and premium hospitality will take place on February 2, 6, 7, and 8, 2026.

Through the Bay Area Host Committee and the NFL, the Airport and Sports Authority are each pursuing a set of Super LX signs and a Lombardi Trophy for the City to showcase throughout San José. These Super Bowl features are designed to build excitement in San José for Super Bowl LX and create viral social media moments. The Lombardi Trophies will be painted by local artists, featuring San José's unique and diverse culture.

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

With San José State University (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.

SJ26 organized concerts, watch parties, drone shows, projection mapping, and premium hospitality will take place on March 26, 27, and 28 with the newly established Entertainment Zones at San Pedro Street and Sharks Way. A half-court basketball floor will also be installed for participatory games and skills challenges

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 13, 16, 19, 22, 25, and July 1, 2026. 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.

SJSU has submitted an application for a potential Base Camp site for one World Cup Team. It is anticipated that selections will be made by the end of 2025.

In a major win, San José was the only city in the Bay Area to host an Official FIFA 2026 World Cup one-year-out celebration. This event took place on June 14, 2025, featuring

local artists, soccer games, youth clinics, and a DJ competition between the DJs of the major Bay Area sports teams. San José Mineta International Airport served as the title sponsor of the event.

FIFA has requested group room blocks and short-term property lease opportunities for World Cup. Signia by Hilton will serve as the 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 42,590 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 13, 16, 19, 22, 25, and July 1.

On top of all the major events coming to San José in 2026, the Sports Authority is leading the creation of a Sports Merchandise Store and Visitors Center (Center) that will feature San José sports team-specific merchandise, a community meeting space, a cell phone charging station, and a podcasting booth. During each major 2026 sports event, the Center will turn into a superstore featuring an expansive offering of event-specific merchandise. The Center will officially open prior to Super Bowl XL

SJ26 Strategic Plan

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

The SJ26 Strategic Plan 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.

Branding

On August 28, 2025, the SJ26 logo and “look and feel” debuted at a press event at the Airport. A media kit was distributed for the City and non-profits to make use of the SJ26 brand (e.g., email signatures). For-profit companies will be allowed to use the SJ26 brand as part of their SJ26 sponsorship rights. In November 2025, the San José Sports Authority will add over 100 SJ26-branded street pole banners throughout downtown. It is estimating the cost of SJ26 supergraphics on City-owned and private buildings.

Additionally, Team San José will work with building owners throughout the City for common light branding during all of the major sports events.

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 have been completed or are underway:

- Visit San José has launched the paid media component of its "Stay and Play in San José" campaign, targeting digital channels and is 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. This in addition to the overall holistic marketing and communications strategy (campaign) across digital and out-of-home advertising comprised of owned, earned, and paid media channels within the City and from supporting community partners. The owned and earned campaigns are in development and will focus on local awareness and participation in SJ26 events.
- Visit San José updated its website with an SJ26 specific microsite, featuring the new SJ26 brand, an interactive calendar, and a specific feature that allows users to plan, save, and edit their own personalized SJ26 experiences.
- In partnership with Visit San Jose, the Office of Cultural Affairs launched the *Arts Will Play in 2026!* Cultural Tourism Marketing Opportunity. This digital marketing campaign will promote cultural tourism in 2026 through a diverse set of events and programs that uniquely reflect San José's culture. Selected through a competitive proposal process, organizations will receive \$10,000 in digital marketing ad buys plus a customized digital marketing strategy developed in partnership with Visit San Jose. The recipients of the *Arts Will Play in 2026!* Cultural Tourism Marketing Opportunities include: Contemporary Arts Theater Scene (CATS), Cinequest, Fountain Blues Festival Foundation, Friends of Levitt Pavilion, MACLA, Opera San Jose, San Jose Day, San José Museum of Art, San Jose Jazz, School of Arts & Culture at the Mexican Heritage Plaza, Symphony San Jose, and Vietnamese American Roundtable.

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, 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 for SJ26 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:

- Artist Elizabeth Turk's (ET Projects) *Invisible Skies* at City Hall Plaza on January 31, 2026 at dusk. The Office of Cultural Affairs is providing stipends for community engagement partners and local performers;
- WeCreate408, a city-wide online creativity challenge, will be curated in April 2026 to emphasize creativity, wellness, and athletics;
- Make Music Day, a city-wide event where anywhere can be venue and anyone can participate, on June 21, 2026, will feature genres of countries of teams playing in the World Cup. Recent years have included music events in every Council district in parks, community centers, libraries, cultural facilities like Mexican Heritage Plaza, and city-wide businesses;
- CityDance 2026 will feature genres curated based on competing teams in the World Cup;
- Engaging and interactive temporary public art and projection mapping featuring the work of leading and local artists, San José State University art faculty and their students;
- There will be City Hall exhibitions featuring sports-themed artwork by local artists from January-July 2026;
- Four large-scale murals by local artists will be featured in the City Hall wing gallery, with each artist receiving a \$5,000 commission to create the new work;
- At City Hall, there will be a digital rotating sports photography exhibition. This art was curated from an open call to local photographers for sports-themed photos was announced, from which 66 submissions were received. A committee will select up to 46 photos by the end of October, with \$250 to be awarded for each selection. Local professional sports teams will also be invited to donate photos for display;
- *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*.

Supporting Small Businesses and Neighborhood Engagement

Working with partners, including Community Strong Strategies, San José Downtown Association, San José Chamber of Commerce, and Team San Jose, staff is finalizing a strategy to support Council District offices and neighborhood business districts in delivering community-focused activations and celebrations. This work is being designed

to ensure that small businesses and residents throughout San José have meaningful opportunities to participate in and benefit from the major sporting events.

Key elements of this effort include:

- SJ26 Media Kit – A branded, customizable resource to help promote district-level events and align with citywide messaging;
- Small Business Toolkit – Practical guidance and promotional tools to help small businesses prepare for increased visitor traffic and event-related opportunities;
- Watch Parties and Activations for FIFA World Cup – With the County of Santa Clara funding and local sponsorships, Community Strong Strategies in partnership with Directors' Alliance San José is working with neighborhood business districts to design and deliver a variety of activations. These include watch parties, soccer clinics, and concert series featuring local artists; and
- Tickets to Super Bowl LX Opening Day/Media Day – Staff is exploring the opportunity to secure a limited number of tickets for Council Districts to invite local residents to attend Opening Night.

Additionally, the Bay Area Host Committee and Team San Jose are hosting the following programs to further support engagement and business readiness:

- FIFA World Cup 2026™ Small Business Opportunity Workshop: San José (October 21) – Sponsored by Verizon, this workshop will provide tools, strategies, and insights to help local businesses prepare for and capitalize on the economic opportunities like the FIFA World Cup 2026™ will bring to the Bay Area; and
- Team San Jose's BASH (November 13): A bi-annual summit for the hospitality industry. This edition will focus on SJ26, providing valuable updates and networking opportunities for industry stakeholders.

Policy Work

Previous major sports events—Super Bowl L, 2019 College Football Championships, and 2024 World Cup games—illuminated the opportunity for policy changes to facilitate greater economic impact. Specifically, staff have completed, and City Council has approved the Supergraphics Ordinance amendment, Entertainment Zone ordinance, and Major Event Zone ordinance. Staff are developing the guidelines for the seven new Entertainment Zones as well as toolkit for event organizers.

Over the past year, staff have advanced the downtown analog wayfinding improvements, with 61 pedestrian and 31 bicycle signs installed. Rather than pointing the way to a given spot, the signs encourage people to explore and enjoy downtown with messages that feel personal and engaging—such as suggesting visitors to “Relax in a Café in SoFA” and “Grab a Bite in Little Italy.” Walk times show how close a destination is, encouraging people to walk. Additionally, QR codes located on signs lead to the SJ26 website.

Public Rights-of-Way Management

Staff established an inter-departmental Working Group to effectively manage public rights-of-way and event venues, while properly managing impacts of unsheltered homelessness. The Working Group mapped and detailed the priority event areas of the downtown and the adjacent City neighborhoods and is conducting advance assessments to identify current and anticipated conditions in 2026. Plans are under development to ensure that the City, the public rights-of-way, and event venues are in good condition to facilitate safe and convenient access by the community and event attendees, while facilitating services, and shelter where needed and feasible, to the unsheltered and those in encampments. Through the remainder of 2025 and in January 2026, final advance planning, and corrective and proactive work will be undertaken to address infrastructure, right-of-way, and encampment needs to effectively position the City for 2026 major sports events beginning in February.

Public Safety/Emergency Operations

As with all major public gatherings, emergency operations are central to event planning. The City's Emergency Operation Center 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. This includes FY 2025-2026 budgeted funding for public safety measures related to 2026 events. Emergency Operation Center efforts include:

- Federal, state, county, local government, and private company representatives participated in monthly Super Bowl and World Cup Public Safety planning and coordination meetings led by Santa Clara County up until September 22, 2025. These meetings increased to every other week leading up to the Super Bowl LX, and will resume on monthly basis until FIFA World Cup;
- The Santa Clara County District Attorney's Office and the San José Police Department each manage Human Trafficking Task Forces that will continue to coordinate training and enforcement leading up to and during Super Bowl LX and the FIFA World Cup. Recent training sessions have and will focus on identifying trafficking and improving interagency response. The San José Police Department and the District Attorney's Office are conducting targeted undercover operations, monitoring online activity, and coordinating with advocates to support survivors, as demonstrated by recent human trafficking arrests. Additional enforcement, outreach, and preparedness briefings will continue through early 2026 to ensure readiness for major events. The Airport is also enhancing awareness by training all staff and vendors on identifying and reporting human trafficking, with victim assistance information posted throughout airport facilities;
- The Office of Emergency Management, San José Police Department, and San José Fire Department have been actively involved with representatives from the Federal Bureau of Investigations, NFL, and FIFA World Cup to understand

potential risks, threats, and security concerns along with assessing capabilities and required resources;

- The Urban Area Security Initiative (UASI) funded an extended series of trainings and exercises focused on developing public safety plans for Large Scale Events. The City, County of Santa Clara, City of Santa Clara, and emergency response partners, such as the Valley Transit Agency, attended these sessions. Several training and exercise opportunities are planned leading up to 2026 events. Efforts to date have engaged various City departments for over 1,200 combined hours of training. The training has focused on enhancing the ability of responding departments to develop threat and risk matrices, concepts of operations before, during and after an event, and allowed for the development of response plans that remain under development. The City of San José will host a major sports events training exercise on October 30, 2025. Another exercise will take place prior to the FIFA World Cup.

EVALUATION AND FOLLOW-UP

Staff will continue to implement the SJ26 Strategic Plan. The next status report is currently scheduled at the April 27, 2026, Community and Economic Development Committee meeting.

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 October 27, 2025, Community and Economic Development Committee meeting and cross referenced to the November 18, 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.

COMMUNITY AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

October 10, 2025

Subject: 2026 Major Events Status Report

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/s/

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2026 Sports and Special Event
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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@sanJoseca.gov.