

Memorandum



CITY OF DALLAS

DATE August 15, 2025

TO Honorable Mayor and Members of the City Council

SUBJECT **FIFA World Cup 2026 Update**

The following memorandum provides an update on planning efforts for FIFA World Cup 2026. This update builds upon the April 2, 2025, City Council briefing, and aims to offer a comprehensive overview of progress and next steps as the city and the Visit Dallas Sports Commission continue preparations for this major international event.

The FIFA World Cup 2026 is at a pivotal preparation stage, with the Dallas/Fort Worth (DFW) region positioned as one of the most significant host cities for the tournament. This will rank as the largest FIFA World Cup in history, featuring 48 national teams, 104 matches, and an unprecedented global television audience. The DFW region will host more matches than any other North American host city, including a semi-final match.

Additionally, DFW will serve as the operational hub of the tournament, housing the International Broadcast Center and Tournament Operations Center at the Kay Bailey Hutchison Convention Center Dallas (KBHCCD), and various official FIFA events and community activations. Included in those events is Fan Festival at Fair Park.

The City of Dallas is actively working with the Visit Dallas Sports Commission, FIFA, the North Texas FIFA World Cup 2026 Organizing Committee, and various regional, state, and national partners to plan for the event. The primary goal of this collective is to ensure a safe and memorable experience for visitors, residents, and participants — engendering a lasting, positive legacy for the city and region.

FIFA World Cup 2026 Dallas Overview

- **Match Venue:** AT&T Stadium in Arlington will host nine matches, including the Dallas Semi-Final
- **FIFA Fan Festival:** Fair Park will host the official Fan Festival, providing live match broadcasts, music, cultural programming, and sponsor activations
- **International Broadcast Center (IBC):** The Kay Bailey Hutchison Convention Center Dallas (KBHCCD) will be transformed into the global broadcast hub for the tournament, serving thousands of international media and transmitting coverage to billions of viewers. Additionally, the KBHCCD will serve as the host for the Tournament Operations Center – making it the nucleus of FIFA World Cup 2026.
- **Training Venues:** Confirmed facilities include Southern Methodist University and Cotton Bowl Stadium
- **Potential Team Base Camps:** Six locations have been identified in the region to serve as potential base camps for participating teams – the University of North

Texas, Texas Christian University, Toyota Stadium & Soccer Complex, the University of Dallas, and Mansfield Stadium

- **Fan Activations:** Additional citywide fan engagement locations are being explored to complement official FIFA programming

Tournament Schedule Highlights

- **August 11, 2025:** Volunteer registration opened
- **September 10, 2025:** Register for Tickets Online
- **December 2025:** FIFA Final Draw – teams assigned to host cities
- **March 2026:** “100 Days Out” celebrations; final confirmation of Team Base Camps
- **Tournament Period (June–July 2026):** Includes the Dallas Semi-Final, multiple matchdays, the Fan Festival at Fair Park, concert series including July 4 events, and closing celebrations

Planning Framework

The Dallas Host City planning framework is structured into multiple operational workstreams, each responsible for a core aspect of delivery:

City Services & Public Safety

- Integrated planning for emergency response, crowd management, and essential city services
- Coordination across police, fire, EMS, and emergency management to ensure readiness for high-capacity events
- Development of operational plans for matchdays, fan zones, the IBC, and special events

Transportation & Mobility

- Collaboration with Dallas Area Rapid Transit, the North Central Texas Council of Governments, other regional transit providers, and the Texas Department of Transportation
- Creation of multimodal transport plans including public transit, rideshare, park-and-ride, and active mobility routes
- Traffic and road closure strategies designed to keep the city functioning smoothly while accommodating large visitor flows

Fan Engagement & Cultural Programming

- FIFA Fan Festival at Fair Park as the central public celebration site
- Additional fan activation sites to highlight Dallas’ cultural vibrancy
- Opportunities for local artists, businesses, and community groups to participate

Sustainability

- Aligned with FIFA’s Climate Strategy, Dallas is pursuing seven core environmental goals with the following initiatives:
 - Tree planting and air quality monitoring

- Reduction of single-use plastics; food waste diversion and composting
- Volunteer clean-up events in parks, lakes, and nature areas
- Educational programming with local schools and universities
- Green Business certifications and sustainability campaigns

Legacy Programs

- Investment in community sports facilities and youth sports programs
- Engagement with local nonprofits to ensure resources and opportunities remain after the tournament

Human Rights

- Commitment to upholding FIFA's Human Rights Policy, ensuring that all tournament-related activities in Dallas align with principles of accessibility and respect
- Ongoing review of operations to safeguard against discrimination, exploitation, or rights violations in areas such as labor, accessibility, and community impact

Accommodations

- Collaboration with regional tourism and hospitality partners to ensure sufficient lodging capacity for teams, officials, media, and visitors
- Engagement with hotels, short-term rental operators, and event housing providers to manage room blocks, pricing strategies, and visitor experience standards
- Coordination with transportation and city services to connect accommodations to tournament venues, fan zones, and cultural attractions

Detailed Updates on Key Initiatives

International Broadcast Center (IBC)

The KBHCCD will serve as the FIFA World Cup 2026 IBC, the hub of television, radio, and digital coverage for the tournament. From January 14 to August 24, 2026, the venue will operate under FIFA's exclusive control, providing 24/7 access for thousands of international journalists and technical staff. In addition to broadcasting operations, the IBC will house the Tournament Operations Center, making Dallas the operational command center for the global event. The site will encompass exhibit halls, ballrooms, meeting rooms, and secure parking areas, all within a dedicated secure perimeter.

The City Council and city leadership have committed to capital improvements in the KBHCCD, including roof repairs, drainage enhancements, climate control upgrades, and infrastructure modifications to meet FIFA's technical and operational requirements—an investment capped at \$15 million. The city is working closely with FIFA, OVG360 (KBHCCD's venue operator), and the city's KBHCCD Master Plan project partners to complete these capital improvements. A working group meets monthly with FIFA representatives to monitor progress.

FIFA Fan Festival

Fair Park will be transformed into a multi-day celebration of soccer culture, music, food, and community during the FIFA World Cup 2026. Over 39 event days, the Fan Festival is expected to draw more than 1 million visitors - averaging 35,000+ attendees per day - making it one of the largest free public events in Dallas history. The footprint will include the Dos Equis Pavilion and the adjacent parking lots.

The event will feature live match broadcasts on giant screens, headline music performances, interactive sponsor activations, youth programming, and cultural showcases highlighting Dallas' vibrancy. Food and beverage offerings will spotlight local and international flavors. Planning incorporates crowd-flow management, robust accessibility measures, and sustainability initiatives such as waste reduction, recycling, and water conservation.

Programming will extend beyond match days to include themed celebrations such as Independence Day concerts, creating a festival atmosphere that lasts throughout the tournament. Partnerships with local artists, cultural organizations, and food vendors will ensure the event reflects Dallas' character while welcoming international visitors.

Business Connect Program

Dallas' participation in the North Texas Business Connect Program will help local businesses gain access to World Cup contracting opportunities. City staff has submitted a list of local business organizations to FIFA so they can conduct direct outreach regarding upcoming opportunities. Interested businesses can learn more and register for the program through the official North Texas Business Connect website: <https://www.dallasfwc26.com/north-texas-business-connect-program/>.

Volunteers

Volunteer engagement is a cornerstone of the tournament's operational and community success. Recruitment for the FIFA World Cup 26™ Volunteer Program officially launched on August 11, 2025, as part of what will become the largest volunteer program in FIFA history. Approximately 65,000 volunteers will be enlisted across the 16 Host Cities, representing a diverse cross-section of communities and backgrounds. Dallas' goal is to recruit thousands of local volunteers to showcase the city's hospitality, culture, and pride to the world. Dallas is expected to have 6,000 volunteers.

Volunteers will assist in 23 functional areas at both official and unofficial sites, including stadiums, training locations, airports, hotels, fan zones, and cultural activation areas. The roles will vary and include event operations, hospitality, media support, language services, wayfinding, and visitor assistance. No previous volunteer experience is necessary; however, enthusiasm, reliability, and a passion for representing Dallas on the global stage are essential.

Applicants must be at least 18 years old at the time of application and eligible to volunteer in the United States, with proficiency in English (additional languages are a plus). Interested individuals can learn more and apply at fifaworldcup.com/volunteers.

Locally, the City's Office of Communications & Customer Experience/311 is promoting the opportunity across all official channels - including social media, blogs, and the City website - to maximize reach. **City Council Members are encouraged to share this opportunity through their own communication channels, using the attached promotional materials to effectively inform their constituents.**

Applicants whose submissions are successful will be invited to attend Volunteer Team Tryouts beginning in October 2025, followed by comprehensive training in March 2026. This preparation will ensure volunteers are ready to serve as enthusiastic ambassadors for Dallas, providing visitors with a welcoming, knowledgeable, and memorable experience.

Economic & Community Benefits

The FIFA World Cup is projected to generate substantial direct spending in the Dallas region through tourism, hospitality, retail, and related sectors, with an estimated economic impact of \$1.5 – \$2.1 billion to the region. The global exposure from hosting matches, the IBC, and the Fan Festival is expected to strengthen Dallas' international profile for years to come. Beyond economics, the event presents an opportunity to unite residents in celebration, showcase our cultural vibrancy, and foster civic pride.

Ticket Access

Fans interested in attending FIFA World Cup 26 matches can register now at www.fifa.com/tickets to create a FIFA ID, which is required to participate in ticket sales. The first ticket application phase will open on September 10, 2025, with additional phases leading up to the tournament. Ticket options will include individual matches, team-specific packages, and venue series.

In addition to general admission seating, premium options such as suites are currently available, offering hospitality services, food and beverage, and prime views of the action. Suites and hospitality packages are available to purchase from all nine matches down to one match through the North Texas FWC Organizing Committee.

Next Steps

Over the next 10 months, priorities include:

- Finalizing operational and contingency plans for all venues and events
- Completing transportation and mobility strategies

- Preparing to host the International Broadcast Center and Fan Fest, including associated infrastructure investments
- Launching volunteer registration in August 2025
- Coordinating final security, hospitality, and sustainability measures in the lead-up to June 2026
- Human Rights and Human Trafficking Training

Staff will continue to report on progress and seek City Council approvals for actions as FIFA World Cup 2026 planning advances. For questions or more information, contact Rosa Fleming, Director of Convention and Event Services at rosa.fleming@dallas.gov and Brett Wilkinson, Public Affairs Specialist at Convention and Event Services at brett.wilkinson@dallas.gov.

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Robin Bentley
Assistant City Manager

c: Kimberly Bizzor Tolbert, City Manager
Tammy Palomino, City Attorney
Mark Swann, City Auditor
Biliera Johnson, City Secretary
Preston Robinson, Administrative Judge
Dominique Artis, Chief of Public Safety
Dev Rastogi, Assistant City Manager

M. Elizabeth (Liz) Cedillo-Pereira, Assistant City Manager
Alina Ciocan, Assistant City Manager
Donzell Gipson, Assistant City Manager
Jack Ireland, Chief Financial Officer
Ahmad Goree, Chief of Staff to the City Manager
Directors and Assistant Directors