



County of Santa Cruz Board of Supervisors

Agenda Item Submittal

From: Board of Supervisors - Third District

Subject: 2026 Sporting Events and Associated Activities Coordination

Meeting Date: May 20, 2025

Formal Title: Direct County staff to work with the Third District office to coordinate efforts with local stakeholders to explore ways to accommodate increased visitation around the 2026 Super Bowl and the 2026 World Cup, and take related actions

Recommended Actions

1. Direct County staff to work with the Third District office to coordinate efforts with local stakeholders including but not limited to local jurisdictions, Visit Santa Cruz, businesses, the Bay Area Host Committee (BAHC) and others, to explore ways to accommodate increased visitation, while mitigating the potential negative impacts associated with increased visitation, around the 2026 Super Bowl and the 2026 World Cup; and
2. Direct County staff to work with the Third District office to coordinate various entities interested in participating in activities associated with these major sporting events in 2026.

Executive Summary

On February 8, 2026, the Super Bowl will be played at Levi Stadium, and from June 11th - July 19th, the FIFA World Cup will be hosted across the U.S., Canada, and Mexico, with matches taking place in the Bay Area at Levi's Stadium on June 13th, 16th, 19th, 22nd, 25th, and July 1st. With increased visitation to the Bay Area and Santa Cruz during these events, it is likely that our community will see a significant increase in visitors to Santa Cruz County. While these opportunities present potential economic benefits, the increased population can also create challenges as it relates to traffic and public safety among others. By proactively preparing for increased visitor traffic and in collaboration with local stakeholders, the County can maximize the economic and social benefits while minimizing any potential adverse impacts. The effort will ensure Santa Cruz is ready to accommodate an influx of visitors during the Super Bowl and the World Cup in 2026.

Discussion

Two major sporting events will be hosted in the Bay Area, likely to bring hundreds of thousands of visitors to the area and the potential for economic benefit for our local economy. Super Bowl 60 will be played at Levi Stadium, home of the San Francisco 49ers, on February 8, 2026. The 2026 World Cup, one of the most attended and most watched sporting events in the world, will be hosted across Canada, USA, and Mexico. The San Francisco Bay Area, specifically Levi Stadium, has been selected as a U.S. location to host some of the matches for the 2026 tournament. The World Cup will run from June 11th to July 19th, 2026, with matches in the Bay Area at Levi's Stadium on June 13th, 16th, 19th, 22nd, 25th, and July 1st.

The Bay Area Host Committee (BAHC), which includes representatives from every professional sports team in the Bay, aims to leverage the Super Bowl and World Cup for

regional economic growth and to foster unity through sport. Between the two events, it is estimated that we may see an additional 460,000 visitors coming to the greater Bay Area and the total Bay Area regional economic impact of these events is estimated to be between \$600 million and \$1 billion in generated revenue. With Santa Cruz being a globally known brand and destination, we anticipate that there will be an increase in visitation to our region. While this may provide an opportunity for our local hotels, restaurants, bars, wineries, beaches, and attractions to benefit from the influx of travelers, it needs to be coordinated in such a way that we minimize impacts to residents.

By organizing its efforts, the County can be positioned to accommodate visitors during these events. Supervisor Justin Cummings, who is the County representative on the Board of Visit Santa Cruz, is available and willing to work with the BAHC, local jurisdictions, other regional stakeholders, and County staff to ensure that the Super Bowl and World Cup experience in Santa Cruz County is well-organized, fostering community benefits from tourism and activities, while mitigating any challenges posed by the anticipated increase in visitors. In a time when we see the lowest consumer confidence since Covid and decreased domestic travel in the US due to economic volatility and uncertainty, the Super Bowl and World Cup presents a welcome opportunity to boost local businesses and generate revenue for Santa Cruz County and its local jurisdictions. It also requires that local jurisdictions take into account the increased volume of people and how to adequately mitigate the impacts on traffic and public safety.

This action by the Board would satisfy Section 3.3 of the Board of Supervisors Guidelines of Procedure adopted on December 17, 2024, requiring Board approval for projects in which County staff work may involve more than eight (8) hours.

Financial Impact

The fiscal impact associated with this item is confined to staff time that will be devoted to implementing the Board's direction. The Third District office anticipates that the staff hours devoted will not be substantial.

Strategic Initiatives

Operational Plan - Dynamic Economy

Submitted By:

Justin Cummings, Third District Supervisor

Recommended By:

Carlos J. Palacios, County Executive Officer

Artificial Intelligence Acknowledgment:

Artificial Intelligence (AI) did not significantly contribute to the development of this agenda item.