



THE KANSAS CITY PLAYBOOK:

What It Takes To Welcome The World



Liberty Memorial Skyline, Kansas City, Missouri. Photo credit: Visit KC and Michael Edwards

It is June 16, 2026. The summer sun is shining overhead. Sports fans and cultural enthusiasts alike have turned their attention to Missouri. Inside Arrowhead Stadium, some of the greatest soccer players on the planet are taking the pitch, cheered on by a crowd that stretches far beyond the stands. Spectators around the world gather not just to watch the game, but to experience the moment.

Hosted every four years, the FIFA World Cup™ is the largest single sporting competition in the world. In 2022, an estimated 5 billion people (nearly 15 times the total U.S. population) engaged in World Cup™ festivities.

Joining Mexico and Canada for the first-ever jointly hosted FIFA World Cup™, the United States will welcome fans and spectators in 11 cities throughout the country, including Kansas City.

From its first match on June 16, 2026, to a quarterfinal match on July 11, Kansas City will host a total of six games. Kansas City's tourism organization, Visit KC, projects these matches and related events will draw approximately 650,000* unique visits to the Kansas City region, from fans, FIFA Officials, sponsors, media, dignitaries and more.

Bringing a spectacle of this scale to life is a generational undertaking. When the players take the pitch (the global

soccer term for the field of play), their sheer presence will represent years of planning, layers of coordination, and the full force of a region working together behind the scenes.

Kansas City – The Soccer Capital Of America®

Kansas City's journey to become a FIFA World Cup™ Host City has been years in the making. For more than a decade, the community has seen investments in the local soccer culture grow significantly. From Sporting Kansas City's transformation into a model Major League Soccer franchise—with a world-class home at Children's Mercy Park—to



CPKC Stadium, home of the Kansas City Current women's soccer team. Photo credit: Visit KC

"I'm proud of the hard work our team is doing, but none of our work is possible without support and engagement from nearly every corner of the region. We're working hand-in-hand with state and federal elected officials, multiple mayors, city councils, county commissions, chambers of commerce, economic development entities, neighborhood associations and many others. We're creating a playbook on what it means for a region to work together and win together," Kramer said.

the groundbreaking investment in the Kansas City Current and CPKC Stadium, the world's first purpose-built stadium for a professional women's sports team, Kansas City has established itself as a national leader in soccer. And with an eye toward the future, ever-expanding youth soccer programs are growing the game in communities across the region.

Add in the momentum of a new airport terminal, expanding ground transit options, access to Arrowhead Stadium and the widespread support of a community committed to delivering a world-class experience, Kansas City's bid to be a World Cup™ Host City became reality in June 2022.

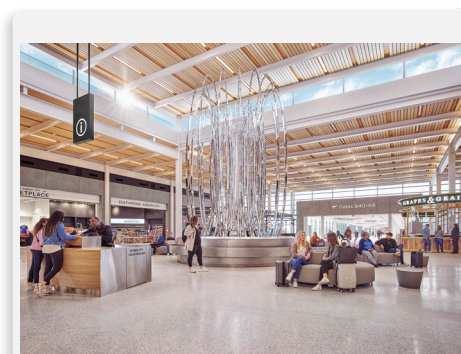
From Planning To The Pitch

As the global governing body of soccer, FIFA (Fédération Internationale de Football Association) sets the standards and oversees all competition aspects of the World Cup™ tournament. Execution and funding, however, lie squarely in the hands of each host city and its surrounding region.

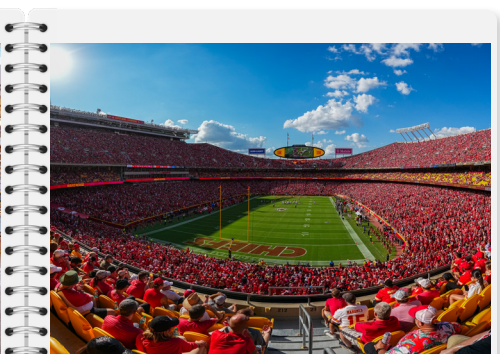
At the heart of these efforts is KC2026, the nonprofit entity responsible for coordinating the region's planning efforts. With infrastructure, public safety, hospitality, transportation and global branding requirements, KC2026 oversees all work related to the complex set of host city obligations—efforts that take years of planning, coordination and investment.

KC2026's work is directly enabled by extraordinary regional collaboration and major funding support from both public and private partners. The state of Missouri and the city of Kansas City, Missouri, have played especially pivotal roles, with significant support from the state of Kansas and municipalities across the Kansas City region—including key contributions from Johnson County, Kansas, and generous private funders.

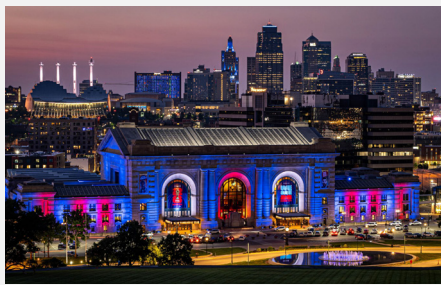
Leading KC2026 is Pam Kramer, a longtime leader in sports business. As CEO, Kramer oversees a small team that manages the major bodies of work related to host city obligations: safety and security, transportation, event management, marketing, partnership and community engagement and public affairs. Collaboration with regional planning partners, volunteers and stakeholders provides additional workforce and support for the organization.



Kansas City International Airport's newly completed airport terminal.



GEHA Field at Arrowhead Stadium. Photo credit: Visit KC



Union Station, Kansas City in KC2026 FIFA World Cup™ 26 branding. Photo credit: Kent Auf Der Heide



KC2026 FIFA World Cup™ 26, WE ARE KC, streetcar branding. Photo credit: KC2026

Global Expectations, Local Responsibilities

Successfully delivering on host city obligations requires meaningful partnerships, engagement from all levels of government, support from business and civic organizations and the participation of thousands of local resident volunteers. A dose of the classic Midwestern work ethic and determination helps, too.

As the big event approaches, organizers maintain a keen eye on all host city obligations. There are legal and regulatory requirements that impact hiring, marketing and other operations. There is the coordination of extensive public safety requirements that require an immense amount of collaboration between local, state and federal law enforcement, event organizers and others. And because FIFA does not fund host city preparations, KC2026 actively leads all fundraising and sponsorship efforts, ensuring the financial sustainability of the region's planning and operations.

While transportation may not be the flashiest part of the World Cup™ experience, it is among the most important. Moving tens of thousands of fans safely and efficiently across the region involves careful coordination, infrastructure considerations and thoughtful planning. From enhanced regional connectivity and shuttle services, along with robust public safety strategies, organizers want every fan—from across town or across the world—to safely and seamlessly enjoy the experience.

Midwestern hospitality, iconic in its own right, will be tested in new ways as the first match day approaches. Host cities are required to provide access to a large number of hotel rooms across a variety of price points. Local organizers have identified the availability of more than 55,000 hotel rooms within 2.5 hours of the event. While many visitors will stay in the immediate Kansas City metro area, **visitors are likely to secure lodging across the region—Springfield, St. Louis, Columbia, Wichita, Des Moines and others.**

With a place to stay, visitors will also be looking for things to do. Creating an unforgettable fan experience is one of the most visible and essential responsibilities of a World Cup™ Host City.

Outside the games themselves, Kansas City's pinnacle fan experience will take place at the FIFA Fan Festival™, hosted at The National WWI Museum and Memorial, located in the heart of Kansas City, Missouri. The FIFA Fan Festival™ serves as the official public viewing and celebration venue for Kansas City. It will feature live match broadcasts, music and entertainment, local vendors, interactive programming, food and beverage stations, sponsor activations, and of course, soccer and other sports.

As the location of all six regional matches, Arrowhead Stadium is also positioned to be a centerpiece of Kansas City's World Cup™ festivities. Preparing the stadium and field is a highly coordinated process in which FIFA maintains direct oversight of stadium readiness, field conditions and fan experience. Other work around



KC2026 FIFA World Cup™ 26 Countdown Clock. Photo Credit: KC2026

the stadium includes planning for hospitality zones, media and broadcast infrastructure, as well as FIFA and sponsor branding zones.

An All-In Approach

Enveloping the organized experiences will be the Kansas City community, culture and character—the elements that will give local and global fans a distinctly Kansas City experience. From neighborhood restaurants to pop-up vendors and small businesses, the local economy will play an essential role next summer.

While KC2026 is focused on the work of meeting all host city obligations, the organization also considers itself a conduit for the rest of the community. Organizers are working intentionally to equip regional vendors and businesses with information and insights to help them navigate cultural expectations, international visibility and the economic opportunities that will arise. KC2026's goals go beyond meeting FIFA standards—they are committed to engaging with stakeholders across state, county and city lines to showcase the region's culture and welcoming character, and to generate sustained and long-term impacts.

“Through the KC Game Plan and strong partnerships with economic development leaders, we're helping small businesses prepare for immediate opportunities while also engaging global executives attending the tournament. These efforts position the bi-state region for a successful World Cup—and for economic dividends that will extend well into the future,” noted Tracy Whelpley, KC2026 director of Regional Impact.

KC2026 is committed to connecting the local business communities to opportunities to support official host city events and regional activities. Community members are encouraged to stay engaged in World Cup updates through regular newsletters and updates posted on kansascityfwc26.com.

A Legacy In The Making

Next June, the players will take the pitch, the crowds will rise, and the global spotlight will shine—but the true victory



Union Station, Kansas City in KC2026 FIFA World Cup™ 26 branding.
Photo credit: Kent Auf Der Heide

will belong to the community that made it all possible. The groundwork will have been laid not just in blueprints and budgets, but in partnerships, persistence and pride. This is more than a moment. It is a milestone. And for Kansas City, it is a once-in-a-generation chance to show the world what a united region can do. ⚽

**Source: VisitKC, “estimates 650,000 unique visits based on total visitor days during the duration of the event in the KC area.”*

For more information about all things World Cup 2026, visit the website: <https://kansascityfwc26.com/>

An advertisement for Missouri 811. It features a smiling man in a blue polo shirt and an orange hard hat with his arms crossed. In the background, there are several excavators at a construction site. The text is overlaid on the image.

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EVERY TIME.**

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