



Board Report

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SPECIAL BOARD MEETING SEPTEMBER 16, 2026

SUBJECT: 2026 FIFA WORLD CUP DEBRIEF

ACTION: RECEIVE AND FILE

RECOMMENDATION

RECEIVE AND FILE a report on the 2026 FIFA World Cup debrief.

ISSUE

LA County hosted eight matches as part of the 2026 FIFA World Cup. Metro, as the “Official Public Transit Provider” had a critical part in safely transporting fans around Southern California. To better understand the successes and where Metro can make improvements, Metro staff and a consultant team analyzed performance, customer surveys, and interviewed internal and external stakeholders and partners. This report covers the results.

BACKGROUND

Metro served as the “Official Public Transit Provider” and a “2026 Los Angeles World Cup Host City Supporter” charged with transporting fans during each of the eight tournament games. To achieve this without impacting existing riders, Metro developed and operated a coordinated World Cup Games Enhanced Transit Service (WCGETS) consisting of 300 buses operating on 15 routes originating from transit hubs and temporary park-and-ride locations.

The comprehensive effort was organized through three portfolios, Service, Access, and Experience, covering 16 cross-functional work streams addressing every stage of a fan’s journey experience. These teams managed everything from service planning, security, and station activations to fare payment, wayfinding, signage, accessibility, heat mitigation, and employee deployment.

Following the tournament, an after-action review combined operating data, workstream performance, customer survey results, stakeholder interviews, and internal feedback to assess successes and identify improvements for future mega-events. A total of 9,535 survey responses were received from QR codes at WCGETS hubs and on vehicles, social media ads, Metro App, and intercept surveys at SoFi Stadium and local events. Work stream data can be found in Attachment A.

DISCUSSION

Metro successfully delivered the World Cup transportation program while maintaining regular transit operations. The program demonstrated Metro's ability to coordinate at a regional scale, launching 15 WCGETS hubs in collaboration with 13 regional transportation partners (RTPs).

WCGETS recorded 212,865 passenger trips across the eight World Cup games held in Inglewood. On average, Metro transported approximately 20% of World Cup match attendees. Customer response was strong: 91% of WCGETS riders and 89% of Metro Bus/Rail riders were satisfied with their experience, and 93% of WCGETS riders said they would be likely to use a similar direct-service option for the 2028 Games.

Media perception was positive and noted Metro and regional transit as a driver of success and a key part of the fan experience. RTP feedback highlighted strong regional coordination, effective in-person tabletop exercises and dry runs, unified marketing and branding, and a well-designed customer experience.

Service Portfolio

The service portfolio focuses on the core transit operations and fleet performance. Operating outcomes were highly reliable, ensuring no trips were missed due to mechanical issues, and no passengers were left behind.

Service Portfolio Key Successes:

- Transported 31,536 riders on peak match day
- Zero missed trips or traffic incidents
- Zero safety incidents. 96% customer satisfaction with perceived safety
- 100% fleet availability
- 94% customer satisfaction with comfort of buses
- 91% customer satisfaction with WCGETS travel times
- 96% customer satisfaction with parking at WCGETS hubs

Service Portfolio Opportunities for Improvement

The following list of improvements for the Service portfolio is derived from customer surveys, interviews with Metro staff and regional partners, as well as from operational observations and analysis:

- Dedicated bus lanes
- Increased shuttle frequency
- Lower parking prices

Access Portfolio

The access portfolio covers the entire navigation and entry experience, from initial trip planning to fare collection. Systemwide deployments significantly improved overall ease of use for a global audience. Contactless payment, which allows customers to pay their fare by tapping a credit or debit card at validators, was successfully deployed system-wide on time, and the new Official Metro App, which improved trip-planning, was introduced in May ahead of the World Cup. Additionally,

awareness of Metro's World Cup service among non-riders reached 43%, significantly exceeding the 20% target.

Access Portfolio Key Successes:

- 95% customer satisfaction with customer service/support and support received during the World Cup
- 96% customer satisfaction with ease of fare payment for WCGETS trips
- 91% customer satisfaction with comfort while waiting for a WCGETS bus
- 94% customer satisfaction with ease of wayfinding from WCGETS drop-off to the game
- 96% customer satisfaction with ease of trip planning during the World Cup
- 2,500+ accessibility assistance interactions; 85% customer satisfaction with accessibility for riders with disabilities for the WCGETS service

Access Portfolio Opportunities for Improvement:

The following list of improvements for the Access portfolio is derived from customer surveys, interviews with Metro staff and regional partners, as well as from operational observations and analysis:

- Greater education around fare payment options
- Improve fare payment capabilities for groups
- Temporary seating in queue area for riders with accessibility needs

Experience Portfolio

The experience portfolio captures the human element of the program, centering on customer care, fan engagement, and staff presence. Thousands of frontline shifts ensured a comfortable and welcoming environment.

Experience Portfolio Key Successes:

- 1,551 MVPs deployed across 3,960 shifts
- 97% customer satisfaction with Metro staff interactions
- 92% customer satisfaction with heat/sun protection
- 99% customer satisfaction with station experience on activation days
- 90% customer satisfaction with Fan Zone entertainment

Experience Portfolio Opportunities for Improvement

The following list of improvements for the Experience portfolio is derived from customer surveys, interviews with Metro staff and regional partners, as well as from operational observations and analysis:

- Improved staff education on fare payment and wayfinding around the location
- More shade structures in waiting areas

Lasting Impacts of the World Cup

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- The successful launch of contactless payments allowed 72% of WCGETS riders to pay directly via contactless credit or debit cards. This new system saw strong initial adoption and sustained post-event activity, with 1% of game-day credit/debit users and 15.6% of commemorative TAP cards remaining active by making 3 or more trips on Metro in the 45 days following the tournament. While this data reflects clear, ongoing account and card activity across the network, it tracks overall TAP card or contactless payment usage and does not distinguish between entirely new riders and pre-existing customers.

Key Lessons from the FIFA World Cup that can be applied for the 2028 Games

- The after-action review found that the overall World Cup operating model worked well. The primary objective for the 2028 Games is to institutionalize the successful practices that supported World Cup delivery while reducing the amount of extraordinary individual effort required. The key notes listed below are derived from internal staff and external partner interviews.
- Develop dedicated Olympic and Paralympic staffing models, contractor plans, volunteer programs, and workforce resiliency measures to support long-duration events without disrupting regular transit service.
- Retain high-level executive readiness reviews while sharpening the focus on decision-making and reducing duplicative reporting and meeting burdens.
- Broaden regional partner and frontline staff participation in tabletop exercises, simulations, dry runs, and field testing.
- Plan customer information, wayfinding, accessibility, fare payment, and real-time support as one integrated service-delivery system supporting both spectators and existing riders.
- Bring local and state partners, Regional Transit Providers (RTPs), venue operators, and public safety agencies into the program early to manage the Games through shared responsibilities and joint readiness validation.
- Expand Emergency Operations Center (EOC) staffing and training, venue-level coordination, video sharing, real-time dashboards, and integrated C4I capabilities.
- Establish long-lead procurement strategies, prequalified vendor pools, and fleet or facility readiness plans early enough to support mobilization and practice.
- Continue cross-department collaboration to ensure all Metro departments are working as one.
- Expand mega-event shuttle framework to accommodate the significantly larger audience and widespread venues of the Games.

The 2026 FIFA World Cup demonstrated that Metro can successfully deliver a complex mega-event transportation program through strong collaboration, regional partnership, field testing, customer-focused planning, and extraordinary employee commitment. The focus for the Games should be to preserve those strengths while improving the systems, governance, planning discipline, and resource model needed to make the approach repeatable and scalable.

EQUITY PLATFORM

Metro was committed to ensuring equitable access through universal design practices for the 2026

FIFA World Cup. Mega event planning and delivery focused on maintaining reliable access for Metro's existing customer base while introducing enhancements that could provide lasting benefits beyond the World Cup. As part of these efforts, Metro implemented mobility enhancements to ensure that every fan, regardless of ability, enjoyed a dignified, barrier-free journey, accommodating people with strollers and disabilities, as well as seniors.

These efforts included ADA drop-off areas, enhanced wayfinding and signage, heat mitigation, seamless fare payment methods, and expanded accessibility assistance. Metro introduced Waymap, an accessible wayfinding mobile app that provides personalized indoor and outdoor navigation and supports people who are blind or have low vision. Waymap was introduced at six (6) stations prior to the World Cup as a legacy accessibility tool, and will be rolled out system-wide as funding is secured.

Metro also advanced broader neuro-accessibility efforts, including the development of neuro-calming pods at key stations to provide quieter, more supportive spaces for neurodivergent customers and others who may experience sensory sensitivities.

Additional accessibility initiatives included courtesy wheelchair transportation at key stations, dedicated accessibility assistance teams, as well as a collaboration with Access Services to provide specialized transportation for individuals with disabilities. These initiatives reflect Metro's dedication to inclusivity and equitable transportation solutions.

VEHICLE MILES TRAVELED OUTCOME

VMT and VMT per capita in Los Angeles County are lower than national averages, the lowest in the SCAG region, and on the lower end of VMT per capita statewide, with these declining VMT trends due in part to Metro's significant investment in rail and bus transit.* Metro's Board-adopted VMT reduction targets align with California's statewide climate goals, including achieving carbon neutrality by 2045. To ensure continued progress, all Board items are assessed for their potential impact on VMT.

Metro's World Cup contributed to further reductions in VMT. This item supported Metro's systemwide strategy to reduce VMT through planning and operational activities that will benefit and further encourage transit ridership, ridesharing, and active transportation. Metro's work to support the World Cup matches in Los Angeles focused on getting spectators to and from events using transit rather than driving alone. Metro's Board-adopted VMT reduction targets were designed to build on the success of existing investments, and this item aligns with those objectives.

*Based on population estimates from the United States Census and VMT estimates from Caltrans' Highway Performance Monitoring System (HPMS) data between 2001-2019.

IMPLEMENTATION OF STRATEGIC PLAN GOALS

The recommendation supports strategic plan goals:

Goal #1: Provide high-quality mobility options that enable people to spend less time traveling. Metro's

WCGETS service provided high-quality bus service to transport fans directly from 15 locations in Los Angeles and Orange Counties to SoFi Stadium. This service will serve as a model for future mega-events in the Los Angeles region.

Goal #4: Transform LA County through regional collaboration and national leadership
The WCGETS service was delivered in partnership with 12 Regional Transportation Providers (RTPs), bridging municipal boundaries to provide seamless regional connectivity for the World Cup. Pooling vehicles and staff across municipal borders, built trust, deepened inter-agency relationships, and established a collaborative foundation to support future mega-events in the Los Angeles region.

NEXT STEPS

Metro will take the best practices and lessons learned from the FIFA World Cup and apply them to transportation planning for future mega-events. The agency is actively planning for Super Bowl LXI (2027) and the Olympic and Paralympic Games (2028), which will build on established RTP partnerships and scale up the mega-event service model used successfully for the World Cup to meet the larger venue and audience demands.

ATTACHMENT

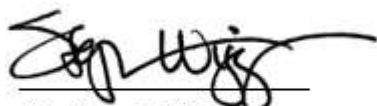
Attachment A - FIFA World Cup 2026: Work Stream Success Summary

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FIFA World Cup 2026: Work Stream Success Summary

The following highlights the most significant successful outcomes from each World Cup workstream, using key performance indicators, customer survey results, and interviews with internal and external stakeholders and partners to demonstrate what Metro and regional partners achieved together.

Service Portfolio

1. World Cup Games Enhanced Transit Service (WCGETS) Service Planning

- a. WCGETS carried between 18,541 and 31,536 passenger trips per match day, with inbound and outbound travel combined, and Metro carried approximately 20% of match attendees on average.
- b. Customer response was strong, with 91% of WCGETS riders satisfied with the overall experience and 93% likely to use a similar direct-service fan bus for an Olympic event in 2028.
- c. Less than 2% cancellation rate systemwide for regular service.

2. WCGETS Operations & Technology

- a. Operations successfully delivered safe, reliable WCGETS service while maintaining normal Metro operations, with zero missed trips, no passengers left behind due to an unfulfilled trip, and zero traffic collisions.
- b. 91% of WCGETS riders were satisfied with both wait duration and comfort while waiting, while strong regional coordination, simulations, and the Spare platform supported effective event-day operations.

3. WCGETS Fleet Enhancements

- a. Fleet availability reached 100%, including occasions when additional buses were requested beyond the original plan.
- b. No WCGETS trips were missed because of mechanical issues, and road-call response remained well below the 30-minute maximum.

4. Temporary Park & Ride Facilities

- a. Metro and its partners provided 6,612 parking spaces per match across 11 locations, creating a broad network of access points to WCGETS service.
- b. Customers who used the parking experience responded very positively, with 96% of surveyed WCGETS riders satisfied with parking at pick-up locations.

The SpotHero reservation platform also maintained 100% availability throughout the tournament.

5. Safety & Security

- a. There were no reported World Cup-specific public safety incidents impacting Metro operations.
- b. Customer perception of safety was particularly strong on WCGETS, with 96% of WCGETS riders satisfied with safety from crime.

6. Speed & Reliability

- a. The Regional Decision Support System (DSS) achieved 100% operational uptime, providing reliable access to regional transportation information during event operations.
- b. Customers responded positively to travel times, with 91% of GETS riders and 89% of Metro Bus/Rail riders satisfied, exceeding the 85% target.

Access Portfolio

7. Fare Payment / TAP

- a. Contactless payment was deployed systemwide in time for the World Cup, establishing an important customer convenience and legacy capability for future mega-events.
- b. Fare-payment satisfaction was exceptionally high, with 94% of Metro Bus/Rail riders and 96% of WCGETS riders satisfied with ease of payment.

8. Infrastructure

- a. Infrastructure achieved 100% event-day readiness, with all equipment installed before customers and staff arrived, and completed 100% of planned major facility improvements by the March 31 deadline, more than two months before the first match.
- b. Portable restroom service was successfully provided at 100% of planned Metro and partner WCGETS locations, with Infrastructure adjusting restroom placement and capacity during operations to respond to actual customer and staff needs. Customer response to the overall waiting environment was also strong, with 91% of WCGETS riders satisfied with comfort while waiting.

9. Finance & Budget

- a. Finance secured \$5.9 million in received revenue to support World Cup operations, including \$4.46 million in state funding and \$670,000 in sponsorship support, with an additional \$11.9 million in estimated Federal/FEMA reimbursements being pursued.
- b. Non-labor spending remained within the currently identified non-labor budget, with final invoices still being processed.

10. Customer Information, Signage & Wayfinding

- a. Wayfinding deployment was successfully managed across all eight match days, with 114 of 124 field observations closed, 10 appropriately canceled, and no observations left open by the end of the tournament; systemwide information consistency reached 95%.
- b. Customer navigation results were exceptionally strong: 93% of Metro Bus/Rail riders and 94% of WCGETS riders were satisfied with finding the correct vehicle or boarding location, while 94% and 95%, respectively, were satisfied with finding their way from Metro to the event.

11. Marketing & Communications

- a. Awareness substantially exceeded targets: 49% of riders and 43% of non-riders knew Metro provided World Cup transportation, compared with targets of 39% and 20%.
- b. Marketing performance exceeded expectations across multiple channels, including 131 million paid-media impressions against an 89 million target, 100% priority-message carry-through in earned media, 100% positive or neutral earned-media sentiment, and an 854% increase in organic search traffic over baseline.

12. Accessibility & Universal Mobility

- a. The neuro-calming pods provided a meaningful sensory-support resource, recording 734 visits across five locations and 10 deployment dates, with 205 sensory bags distributed.
- b. The workstream provided more than 2,500 instances of customer assistance for people with disabilities, while WCGETS accessibility satisfaction reached 85%.

Experience Portfolio

13. Surprise & Delight

- a. Surprise & Delight activations created memorable customer-facing experiences through branded vehicles, live entertainment, and special performances, helping extend Metro's role beyond transportation and into the broader World Cup experience.
- b. The activations generated additional positive brand exposure and earned-media opportunities, including coverage and partnership interest tied to high-profile elements such as the World Cup buses and surprise performances.

14. Station Events & Activations

- a. The Heart of the City Fan Zone at Union Station attracted approximately 49,500 attendees, while overall Union Station traffic increased substantially during the four-day activation.
- b. Station activations produced a measurable customer-experience benefit: 99% of surveyed riders on activated days were satisfied with their station experience, compared with 96% on non-activated days, and the share who were very satisfied increased from 50% to 72%.

15. Metro Volunteer Program (MVP)

- a. 1,551 employees completed 3,960 MVP shifts during World Cup operations, with 98.9% completing both qualifier and in-person training and 96.4% completing required mandatory training.
- b. Customers responded extremely positively to Metro staff, with 95% of Metro Bus/Rail riders and 97% of WCGETS riders who interacted with staff satisfied with those interactions.

16. Heat Mitigation

- a. Heat mitigation delivered extensive customer support, including approximately 96,200 17-ounce servings of water, more than 10,000 cooling towels, 7,500 sunscreen bottles, 20 misting fans and approximately 99% shade coverage after the first two matches.
- b. Customer and safety outcomes were strong: 92% of WCGETS riders were satisfied with protection from heat and sun, and there were no heat-related fatalities or major heat emergencies.