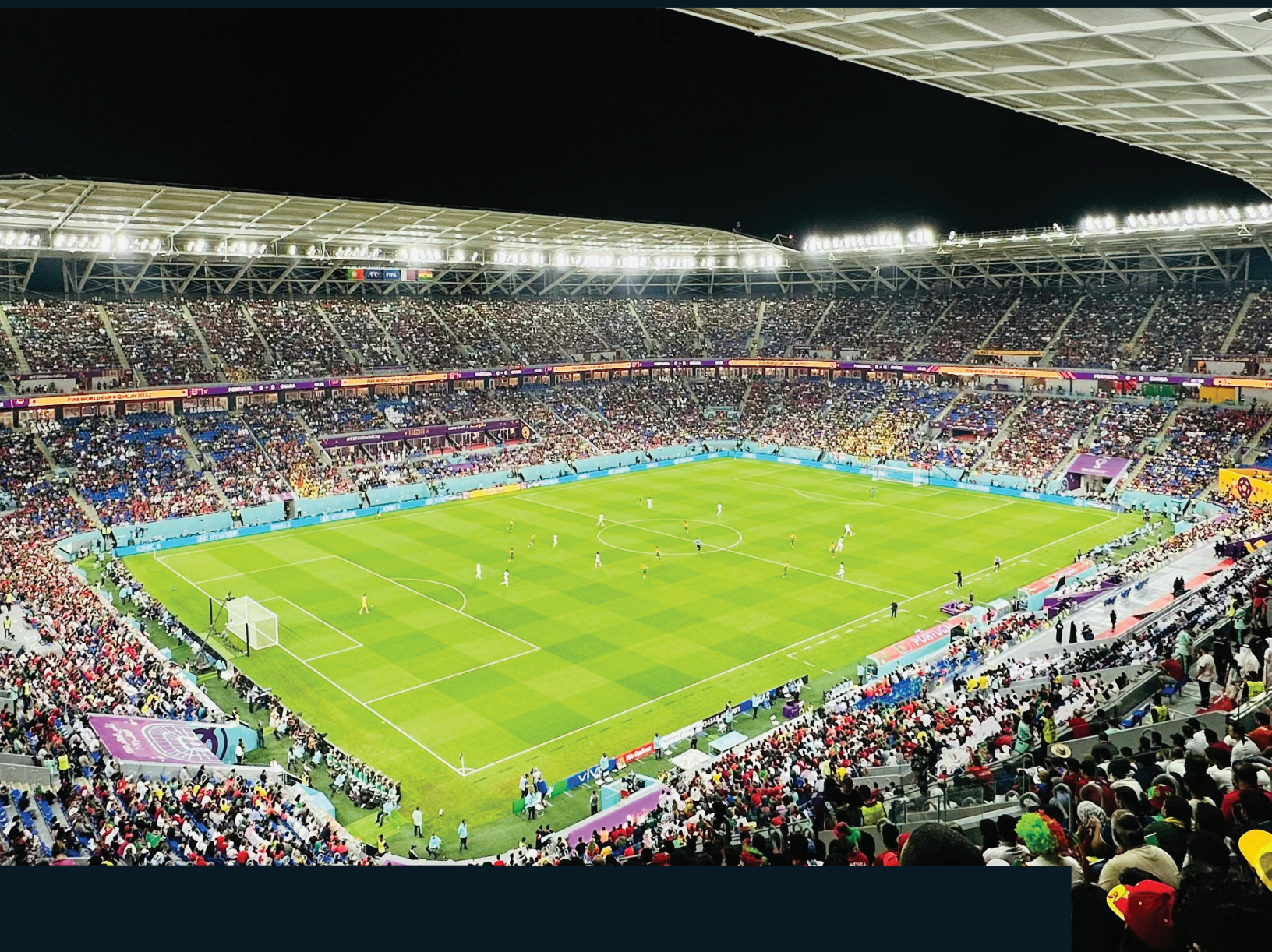


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FIFA World Cup 2026

Economic Impact and Legacy for Atlanta, Dallas/Fort Worth, Houston, and San Antonio

Introduction

The FIFA World Cup 2026, co-hosted by the United States, Canada, and Mexico, will be the largest in history, featuring 104 matches across 16 host cities. Four U.S. markets—Atlanta, Dallas/Fort Worth (DFW), Houston, and San Antonio—are poised to capitalize on this global event as host cities or training hubs. This report details the economic impacts, infrastructure investments, and long-term legacies for these regions, which are leveraging the tournament to enhance their profiles as global sports destinations and hubs for business expansion.



Strategic Importance and Long-Term Implications

The FIFA World Cup 2026 will be a transformative event for Atlanta, Dallas/Fort Worth, Houston, and San Antonio, delivering \$3–\$4 billion in combined economic impact while cementing their status as vibrant, competitive, and forward-looking cities. Beyond the immediate economic boost from matches and training camps, the tournament offers enduring benefits:

- » **Atlanta:** The \$1 billion economic surge from hosting eight matches, including a semifinal, and the establishment of the Arthur M. Blank U.S. Soccer National Training Center (NTC) will position Atlanta as the epicenter of American soccer. The NTC will drive long-term growth in player development, coaching, and sports innovation, while the city's enhanced global visibility will attract future conventions, sports tourism, and corporate expansions by firms like Microsoft and Google, which have added 10,000+ jobs since 2020.
- » **Dallas/Fort Worth:** Hosting nine matches, including a semifinal, will generate \$400–\$415 million in direct impact, but the region's upgraded venues and training facilities will establish DFW as a hub for MLS, youth soccer, and international friendlies. Infrastructure improvements, like the Cotton Belt trail and DART expansions, will enhance resident mobility and community sports programs, while the World Cup's global exposure will bolster

DFW's appeal for corporate relocations, with 5,000+ jobs added by firms like Goldman Sachs and Caterpillar since 2022.

- » **Houston:** The \$1.5 billion economic impact from seven matches and training camps will be amplified by the transformation of East Downtown (EaDo) into a permanent entertainment hub through a \$50 million Fan Festival district. Upgrades to Houston Sports Park will support local academies and MLS teams, while the city's global profile will drive business growth, with 3,000+ jobs from expansions by Hewlett Packard Enterprise and NRG Energy since 2021.
- » **San Antonio:** As a training hub generating \$10–\$30 million, San Antonio will benefit from soccer field upgrades and hospitality investments, positioning it for future international friendlies and regional tournaments. The event enhances the city's growing tech and cybersecurity sectors, with 2,000+ jobs from firms like Booz Allen Hamilton and Deloitte since 2023, while fostering community engagement through youth sports programs. The World Cup's global audience of 5 billion will showcase these cities' hospitality and infrastructure, driving tourism, corporate investment, and community benefits long after 2026, aligning with their broader economic diversification and global competitiveness goals.



Atlanta A Hub for Matches and National Training



Matches and Role

Atlanta's Mercedes-Benz Stadium will host eight matches, including seven group-stage games and one semifinal, establishing it as a premier World Cup venue (mysanantonio.com, wrdw.com). The city will also serve as a training hub, with the Arthur M. Blank U.S. Soccer National Training Center (NTC) near Trilith—set to open in April 2026—alongside base camps at Atlanta United's training facility and Kennesaw State University.

Economic Impact

- » **Direct Impact:** Atlanta is projected to generate over \$1 billion in economic activity from its eight matches, driven by more than 300,000 unique visitors (mysanantonio.com, wrdw.com). The NTC and additional training camps could add \$50–\$100 million, with each team contributing \$15–\$40 million in spending on lodging, dining, and services (inside.fifa.com, as.com).
- » **Job Creation:** The event is expected to create over 4,000 temporary and permanent jobs in hospitality, event management, security, and transportation, with the NTC supporting long-term employment in sports administration (theguardian.com).
- » **Visitor Spending:** Visitors are projected to spend an average of \$300–\$500 per day on hotels, restaurants, and attractions, boosting downtown

businesses and the Atlanta BeltLine corridor (partnerships.com).

- » **Historical Comparison:** Atlanta's 1996 Olympics generated \$5 billion in economic impact, suggesting the World Cup's concentrated visitor surge could approach similar per-match impacts (ussoccer.com).

Infrastructure Investments

- » **Mercedes-Benz Stadium:** Built in 2017, the stadium requires minimal upgrades due to its state-of-the-art design, saving costs while ensuring FIFA compliance (wrdw.com).
- » **National Training Center:** The \$50 million NTC, spanning over 200 acres, includes 12+ outdoor pitches, indoor courts, and high-performance facilities, funded partly by a \$50 million donation from Arthur M. Blank (the-sun.com, theguardian.com).
- » **City-Wide Improvements:** Atlanta is investing \$120 million in infrastructure bonds for street resurfacing, new streetlights, and walkability enhancements in downtown areas (wrdw.com). The \$1.2 billion Atlanta BeltLine and MARTA expansion projects will improve connectivity to venues and tourist sites, with 22 miles of transit and trails completed by 2026 (partnerships.com).

Dallas/Fort Worth A Premier Host City



Matches and Role

DFW's AT&T Stadium in Arlington will host nine matches, including five group-stage games, two Round of 32 matches, one Round of 16 match, and a semifinal, making it one of the tournament's most significant venues (nypost.com, en.wikipedia.org). The region is also a key training hub, with FIFA-approved base camps at Dallas Baptist University (DBU), Toyota Stadium (Frisco), University of Dallas, TCU, UNT, and Mansfield Multipurpose Stadium.

Economic Impact

- » **Direct Impact:** The DFW region is expected to see \$400–\$415 million from matches at AT&T Stadium, with the semifinal contributing significantly due to global media exposure (dallascityhall.com, luxciordallas.com). Training camps are projected to add \$50–\$100 million, with each team generating \$15–\$40 million in local spending (dallasnews.com, theworldcupguide.com).
- » **Job Creation:** Approximately 3,000 jobs will be created in hospitality, security, transportation, and event staffing, with ripple effects across Arlington, Dallas, and Frisco (dallascityhall.com).
- » **Visitor Spending:** An estimated 300,000–400,000 visitors will drive spending, with Arlington's

entertainment district and Frisco's retail hubs seeing \$100–\$150 million in direct expenditures (luxciordallas.com).

- » **Multiplier Effect:** Each dollar spent by visitors is estimated to generate \$2.50 in indirect economic activity, amplifying the regional impact to \$1 billion when including training camps (dallascitynews.net).

Infrastructure Investments

- » **AT&T Stadium Renovations:** A \$295 million upgrade includes field widening, turf replacement, and temporary rebranding to "Dallas Stadium" for FIFA compliance. These enhancements ensure the venue's suitability for international events.
- » **Regional Mobility:** The Cotton Belt multiuse trail (\$150 million) and transit enhancements, including DART expansions, will improve fan access to venues and hotels (spartnerships.com). Park upgrades in Arlington and Frisco will support fan festivals and public events.
- » **Training Facilities:** Investments in DBU's Patriot Field and Toyota Stadium will enhance their capacity for MLS and youth tournaments (dbupatriots.com).

Houston A Powerhouse of Matches and Training



Matches and Role

Houston's NRG Stadium will host seven matches, including group-stage games and one Round of 16 match. The city is also a designated training hub, with Houston Sports Park and the Omni Houston Hotel approved to host up to two national teams during the group stage.

Economic Impact

- » **Direct Impact:** Houston is projected to generate over \$1.5 billion in economic activity from its seven matches, driven by an estimated 500,000 visitors (houstonchronicle.com, chron.com). Training camps are expected to add \$40–\$80 million, with each team contributing \$20–\$40 million (theworldcupguide.com, inside.fifa.com).
- » **Historical Comparison:** The \$1.5 billion projection exceeds the \$347 million generated by Super Bowl LI in 2017, reflecting the World Cup's larger scale and global audience (houstonchronicle.com).
- » **Job Creation:** Over 5,000 jobs are anticipated in hospitality, transportation, retail, and event

operations, with hotels and restaurants in EaDo and downtown seeing significant gains (communityimpact.com).

- » **Tourism Surge:** Visitors are expected to spend \$200–\$400 per day, contributing \$100–\$200 million to local businesses, particularly in the hospitality sector (houstonchronicle.com).

Infrastructure Investments

- » **EaDo Fan Festival:** East Downtown's \$50 million redevelopment includes streetscaping, public art, and beautification to host a vibrant Fan Festival, enhancing walkability and tourism appeal.
- » **NRG Park Logistics Campus:** A \$75 million logistics hub will integrate hospitality zones, volunteer centers, and youth soccer amenities, ensuring seamless operations (youtube.com, houstonchronicle.com).
- » **Transit Upgrades:** Investments in METRO services (\$100 million) will improve connectivity between NRG Stadium, downtown, and training sites, supporting fan and team mobility (houstonchronicle.com).

San Antonio A Strategic Training Hub



Matches and Role

San Antonio is not hosting matches but is an official FIFA training hub, with a base camp pairing San Antonio Stadium (likely Toyota Field or Alamodome) and the Kimpton Santo Hotel.

Economic Impact

- » **Direct Impact:** Each training camp is projected to generate \$5–\$15 million, with a potential total of \$10–\$30 million if multiple teams are hosted ([houstonchronicle.com](#), [indyeleven.com](#)). This includes spending on lodging, dining, transportation, and local services.
- » **Tourism Overflow:** San Antonio will benefit from 50,000–100,000 visitors from nearby Dallas and Houston, boosting attractions like the River Walk and Alamo with \$20–\$50 million in additional spending ([businessfacilities.com](#)).
- » **Regional Context:** As part of the Texas triangle, San Antonio’s economic gains complement the

\$1.5 billion and \$400–\$415 million impacts in Houston and DFW, respectively ([mysanantonio.com](#)).

Infrastructure Investments

- » **Training Facilities:** Community-level soccer field improvements (\$10–\$20 million) are planned to support training operations and youth programs ([businessfacilities.com](#)).
- » **Downtown Enhancements:** Investments in hospitality infrastructure, including \$30 million for hotel upgrades and public spaces, will accommodate teams and visitors ([axios.com](#)).
- » **Transit Improvements:** San Antonio’s VIA Metropolitan Transit is expanding bus routes (\$15 million) to improve connectivity to training sites and tourist areas ([houstonchronicle.com](#)).

National Context and Strategic Value

Macro Economic Projections

FIFA projects the 2026 tournament will generate \$40.9 billion in GDP across North America, with U.S. host cities seeing \$160–\$620 million in incremental economic activity per city (dallascitynews.net, ussoccer.com). The four markets are expected to collectively contribute \$3–\$4 billion to this total, driven by matches, training camps, and tourism.

Tourism and Legacy Investments

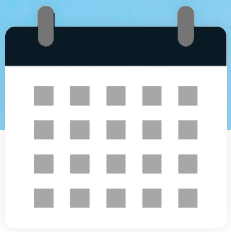
- » **Infrastructure Spending:** The four cities are investing over \$2 billion in stadium upgrades, transit, and public spaces, ensuring long-term benefits for residents and visitors.
- » **Fan Engagement:** Fan festivals in Atlanta, Dallas, and Houston, along with training camps in all four cities, will drive community involvement and elevate soccer’s cultural footprint.
- » **Global Visibility:** Hosting World Cup activities will showcase these cities to a global audience of 5 billion, enhancing their appeal for tourism and investment (wfaa.com).

Business Attraction and Market Visibility

The World Cup aligns with broader trends in corporate relocations and foreign direct investment:

- » **Atlanta:** Attracts tech giants like Microsoft and Google, with 15,000+ tech jobs added since 2020 (bizjournals.com).
- » **DFW:** Leads U.S. metros for HQ relocations, with 20+ Fortune 500 companies, including recent moves by Goldman Sachs and Caterpillar (bizjournals.com).
- » **Houston:** Bolsters its energy and medical sectors, with 5,000+ jobs from expansions by Hewlett Packard Enterprise and Chevron since 2021 (bizjournals.com).
- » **San Antonio:** Emerges as a tech and cybersecurity hub, with 3,000+ jobs from firms like Booz Allen Hamilton and Deloitte (bizjournals.com).





FIFA World Cup 2026:

Key Dates Overview

The FIFA World Cup 2026 will run from **June 11 to July 19, 2026**, featuring 104 matches across 16 host cities in the United States, Canada, and Mexico. This is the first tournament with 48 teams and three host nations. The group stage (72 matches) spans June 11 - July 1, followed by knockout rounds: Round of 32 (July 1–5), Round of 16 (July 5–10), quarterfinals (July 10–15), semifinals (July 14–15), third-place match (July 18), and final (July 19).

The full schedule, including exact matchups, was released in February 2024, but group assignments will be determined after the draw on **December 5, 2025**, in Washington, D.C. Qualification wraps up with intercontinental playoffs in **March 2026**. Below are key dates for Atlanta, Dallas/Fort Worth (DFW), Houston, and San Antonio, based on confirmed venues and roles. All times are local; matches are TBD until the draw.

Atlanta Mercedes-Benz Stadium

Atlanta hosts **8 matches**, including 5 group-stage games, 2 Round of 32, and 1 semifinal. It's also a major training hub with the Arthur M. Blank U.S. Soccer National Training Center opening in **April 2026** for team preparations (group stage: June 18–July 1).

» Date	» Match Stage	» Notes
June 18	Group Stage	1 of 5 group matches.
June 20	Group Stage	2 of 5 group matches.
June 23	Group Stage	3 of 5 group matches.
June 27	Group Stage	4 of 5 group matches.
July 1	Group Stage / Round of 32	Final group match; potential Round of 32 crossover.
July 3	Round of 32	Match 95: Winners of earlier matches.
July 5	Round of 16	Match 86: Group winners vs. third-placers.
July 15	Semifinal	Match 102: Semifinal 2 (one of two; opponent TBD).

Dallas/Fort Worth AT&T Stadium, Arlington

DFW hosts the **most matches** (9 total): 5 group-stage, 2 Round of 32, 1 Round of 16, and 1 semifinal. It's a key training hub with multiple base camps (e.g., Dallas Baptist University, Toyota Stadium in Frisco) available from **late May 2026** onward for team arrivals.

» Date	» Match Stage	» Notes
June 15	Group Stage	1 of 5 group matches.
June 19	Group Stage	2 of 5 group matches.
June 22	Group Stage	3 of 5 group matches.
June 26	Group Stage	4 of 5 group matches.
June 29	Group Stage	Final group match.
July 2	Round of 32	Match 93: Winners of earlier matches.
July 4	Round of 32	Match 84: Additional Round of 32.
July 7	Round of 16	Match 78: Runners-up vs. runners-up.
July 14	Semifinal	Match 101: Semifinal 1 (one of two; opponent TBD).

Houston **NRG Stadium**

Houston hosts **7 matches**: 5 group-stage and 2 Round of 32. As a training hub, Houston Sports Park will host up to 2 national teams during the group stage (June 18–July 1), with base camps operational from **late May 2026**.

» Date	» Match Stage	» Notes
June 16	Group Stage	1 of 5 group matches.
June 21	Group Stage	2 of 5 group matches.
June 24	Group Stage	3 of 5 group matches.
June 28	Group Stage	4 of 5 group matches.
July 1	Group Stage	Final group match; potential.
July 3	Round of 32	Match 75: Winners of earlier matches.
July 5	Round of 32	Match 76: Additional Round of 32.

San Antonio **No Matches; Training Hub Only**

San Antonio is a designated **training hub** (base camp: San Antonio Stadium paired with Kimpton Santo Hotel), potentially hosting 1–2 teams during the group stage. No competitive matches, but expect activity from **June 15–July 1, 2026**, with overflow visitors from DFW/Houston matches. Infrastructure upgrades (e.g., soccer fields) complete by **Q1 2026**.

» Date	» Event	» Notes
Late May–June 15	Team Arrivals/Setup	Base camp preparation for selected teams.
June 15–July 1	Group Stage Training	Potential hosting of 1–2 teams; daily sessions, media events.
July 2–July 19	Knockout Support	Overflow tourism; possible extended stays for advancing teams.

These dates position the cities for peak activity in June–July 2026, with Atlanta and DFW as semifinal highlights.



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