

Topic of the Month: FIFA World Cup 2026

In less than two weeks, the FIFA World Cup will arrive at North Texas' doorstep, bringing the world's largest sporting event to the region. Arlington's tournament-high nine matches kick off June 14 and culminate with a semifinal match one month later, on July 14. Fans from across the globe will converge on North Texas to experience not only the excitement on the pitch, but also what our vibrant communities have to offer, from restaurants and entertainment to World Cup activities. In short: it's about to get crowded here, y'all.

For June's Topic of the Month, we delve into how transportation agencies, local governments and regional partners are preparing for an event unlike anything North Texas has hosted before.

How the World Cup is Different

Our region has welcomed many major sporting and entertainment events, from the Super Bowl and WrestleMania to sold-out concerts by Taylor Swift and Garth Brooks. But unlike those events, which lasted a weekend or even a single evening, the FIFA World Cup 2026 will unfold over several weeks, creating sustained demand on roadways, transit systems and regional infrastructure across North Texas.

The challenge extends far beyond getting fans to and from matches. Transportation systems will also need to support the daily travel needs of workers, residents and businesses that keep the region moving every day. Success will depend not only on moving visitors efficiently, but also on maintaining reliable mobility for the people who call North Texas home.

Meeting that challenge will require an unprecedented level of coordination among cities, transit agencies, transportation providers and public safety partners throughout the region.

That's where NCTCOG and its regional partners play a critical role. For years, NCTCOG has worked alongside local governments, transit agencies and event stakeholders to prepare transportation systems for major events and long-term growth. As North Texas prepares to welcome the world, those partnerships are helping ensure residents and visitors alike can travel reliably across the region, showcasing not only North Texas hospitality, but also the strength of regional collaboration and planning.

Rail for Visitors, Roads for Residents

Arlington's nine matches are expected to generate significant travel demand before and after kickoff, particularly along key corridors such as Interstate 30, State Highway 360 and the Trinity Railway Express (TRE). Regional partners are encouraging residents, commuters

and visitors alike to plan ahead for match days, when increased traffic and heavier transit ridership are expected near Arlington and surrounding areas.

Transit will serve as a key tool for moving guests efficiently throughout the region. TRE and DART rail systems, in particular, will help connect visitors to match venues, entertainment districts and World Cup attractions such as FIFA Fan Festival, while reducing the number of vehicles on already busy roadways. Public transportation options such as these can help ease congestion during busy travel times before and after matches, preserving roadways for everyday drivers and essential travel.

At the same time, roadways remain critical for residents, businesses, freight movement and emergency response. Maintaining reliable travel for North Texans during the tournament is just as important as accommodating visitors. To support that goal, NCTCOG and regional transportation partners are promoting transportation demand management strategies designed to reduce unnecessary vehicle trips and spread demand more evenly across the transportation system.

Residents and employers are encouraged to consider temporary travel adjustments on match days, including carpooling, using alternate routes, shifting commute times outside peak travel windows, working from home when possible and combining errands into fewer trips. These voluntary adjustments may seem small, but collectively they can make a meaningful difference.

NCTCOG Investments

Regional investments led by NCTCOG are playing a central role in preparing North Texas for the World Cup, strengthening transportation, safety, security and operations across the region. In total, NCTCOG has received more than \$61 million in federal funding to support these efforts. This includes a major \$51.5 million allocation administered through a Federal Emergency Management Agency grant program, which will be distributed across North Texas to bolster security preparations ahead of the tournament.

NCTCOG has been designated to manage and distribute these funds, ensuring coordinated regional readiness across multiple jurisdictions.

In addition, \$10.03 million in funding from the Federal Transit Administration is supporting transit improvements and enhanced public transportation services across the region. This investment is part of a broader \$100.3 million initiative by the Federal Transit Administration supporting public transit systems in U.S. host cities.

These resources are helping fund key mobility upgrades, including expanded TRE and DART service, pedestrian improvements such as new sidewalks in the Entertainment District,

infrastructure and operational enhancements at Lot H to improve access and circulation, and traffic signal upgrades in Arlington aimed at smarter traffic operations and improved flow.

After the Matches Have Ended

As North Texas gets ready to welcome the world, the FIFA World Cup is a chance to show what strong regional partnerships can accomplish. The work happening now will leave a lasting impact long after the tournament ends, with stronger transportation infrastructure, better coordination across agencies, and more mobility options for residents and visitors alike. Together, these investments are helping build a safer, more connected, and more accessible North Texas for the future.