



metrolinktrains.com/meeting

ITEM ID: 2026-299-0

TRANSMITTAL DATE: September 18, 2026

MEETING DATE: September 25, 2026

TO: Board of Directors

FROM: Paul Hubler, Chief Strategy Officer

SUBJECT: 2026 FIFA World Cup Recap

Issue

Staff will provide a recap of Metrolink's operations in support of the 2026 FIFA World Cup.

Recommendation

Receive and file.

Strategic Commitment

This report aligns with the Strategic Business Plan commitments of:

- **Customers are Our Business:** We respect and value our customers, putting them at the heart of all we do, and work hard to attract and retain new customers by understanding their needs and finding new and innovative ways to delight them. Metrolink helped to fulfill critical regional transportation needs for both existing and new customers during the 2026 FIFA World Cup.
- **Connecting and Leveraging Partnerships:** We will forge new and enhanced relationships with our public and private partners to integrate and coordinate connecting services, providing residents throughout Southern California with better, seamless, sustainable alternatives to driving. Building strong partnerships with transportation providers in the region, as well as the FIFA World Cup host committee, were key to providing a reliable, seamless transportation experience during the 2026 FIFA World Cup.

Background

The 2026 FIFA World Cup took place in 16 host cities across North America between June 11 and July 19, 2026. Los Angeles (SoFi) stadium in Inglewood, California, hosted eight of the 104 matches. In addition to the ticketed matches at SoFi stadium, multiple fan fests and watch parties were also hosted throughout the region and attracted a significant number of spectators, including a four-day fan zone at Los Angeles Union Station (LAUS). To accommodate the increased regional travel demand during the World Cup, Metrolink utilized a combination of existing and special event trains, along with enhanced customer service and security staffing.

Discussion

Metrolink's World Cup service plan utilized existing trains as well as 48 special trains that operated over a 10-day period to coordinate with World Cup event schedules. This service plan allowed Metrolink passengers to travel to and from all eight World Cup matches as well as official FIFA fan zones at LAUS, the Coliseum, Pomona Fairplex and downtown Burbank. Special trains operated on the Antelope Valley, Orange County, San Bernardino, Ventura County and 91/Perris Valley lines to fill gaps in existing schedules, primarily on weekends and later in the evening on weekdays, with outbound special trains departing Union Station as late as midnight.

Metrolink developed its World Cup service plan in close coordination with the Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority (Metro) to ensure connectivity with Metro's World Cup Enhanced Service to SoFi stadium. Metrolink passengers were able to transfer to Metro's World Cup Enhanced Service for free at both LAUS and the Anaheim Regional Transportation Intermodal Center (ARTIC). Metro carried a total of 36,768 passengers from LAUS and 18,310 from ARTIC to and from SoFi stadium.

Metrolink's special World Cup service was promoted via a dedicated landing page on the Metrolink website, email marketing, digital advertising, organic and paid social media posts, station posters and earned media to drive awareness, engagement and ridership. To support the World Cup campaign, Metrolink also designed custom soccer-themed jerseys for more than 50 employee volunteers who were posted at key stations to support riders. The distinctive uniforms made staff easily identifiable, helping riders quickly locate help for directions, trip information and customer assistance throughout the event.

Metrolink's operational performance during the 39-day World Cup period was strong, with notable growth in ridership and ticket sales. Highlights include:

- Systemwide boardings increased 12 percent year-over-year despite a nearly 20 percent reduction in baseline weekday service from the prior year.
- Weekend ridership increased 26 percent compared to the six prior weekends.
- The event drove a significant increase in new Metrolink mobile accounts, with 25,000 new accounts generated during the World Cup period, a 22 percent increase over the prior six-week period, indicating a significant number of new riders utilizing the Metrolink system.
- Weekend ticket sales increased by 12 percent, outperforming overall growth and demonstrating strong demand for event-related travel.

Metrolink enhanced its law enforcement and private security presence during the World Cup with a 300 percent increase in Los Angeles County Sheriff's staffing on event days, as well as additional private security officers onboard trains and at LAUS. The additional staffing was funded through Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) grants. Metrolink also coordinated with local law enforcement agencies in station cities to increase patrol checks around stations and along the railroad right-of-way. Member agencies and station cities also provided enhanced security staffing at select outlying stations.

Metrolink safety and security staff were positioned at the joint Emergency Security Operations Center hosted by Metro to ensure seamless interagency coordination in the event of an incident; however, Metrolink experienced no significant World Cup-related safety or security incidents during the tournament.

Metrolink also deployed additional customer service staff at LAUS, as well as employee volunteers at outlying stations to assist passengers with ticket purchases and wayfinding, which was well received by both new and existing riders.

Next Steps

The World Cup provided valuable insights and lessons learned that will be applied to future large-scale events, including the 2028 Olympic and Paralympic Games, where Metrolink will again play a central role in supporting regional mobility. Key lessons learned include the importance of early operational planning, interagency coordination, expanded volunteer ambassador programs, enhanced digital communications and wayfinding, and scalable security deployments.

Prepared by: Michael Litschi, Director of Special Projects

Approved by: Paul Hubler, Chief Strategy Officer

Attachment(s)

[Presentation - World Cup 2026 Recap](#)