

City Report
FIFA World Cup 2026

San Francisco Bay Area



Issued
20th May 2026



San Francisco Bay Area (Santa Clara)

Overview

Country	United States of America
Host stadium	Levi's Stadium (FIFA tournament-time name: San Francisco Bay Area Stadium), Santa Clara, CA
Distance to Downtown	~45 miles (70 km) south of Downtown San Francisco and ~6 miles (10 km) north of Downtown San Jose
Stadium capacity	69,391
Roof / cover type	Open-air; no roof
Altitude	~5 m (16 ft)
Timezone (June-July 2026)	Pacific Daylight Time (UTC-7)
Official language(s)	English (significant Spanish, Mandarin, Vietnamese, Tagalog, Hindi, Punjabi and Tamil-speaking communities)
Match count & dates	6 matches: 5 Group Stage (13th–25th June), 1 Round of 32 (1st July)
Primary airport(s)	SFO (San Francisco) is the primary international gateway; SJC (San Jose Mineta) is closest to Levi's; OAK (Oakland) serves strong domestic routes
Population (metro)	~9.2 million combined statistical area

Risk ratings

Security	LOW
Travel Disruption	MODERATE
Medical Infrastructure	LOW
Natural Disasters	MODERATE
Storms/ Hurricanes	LOW
Heat	LOW

San Francisco is one of the host cities with the lowest risks, with travel disruption as the primary risk. The secondary issues concerning the tournament are wildfire smoke, earthquake risks, and vehicle theft. The Bay Area hosts six matches at

Levi's Stadium in Santa Clara between 13th June and 1st July 2026. Unlike most US host cities, the region will run a decentralised network of over 30 free community Fan Zones across San Francisco, Oakland and the South Bay.

Arrival, departure and transportation

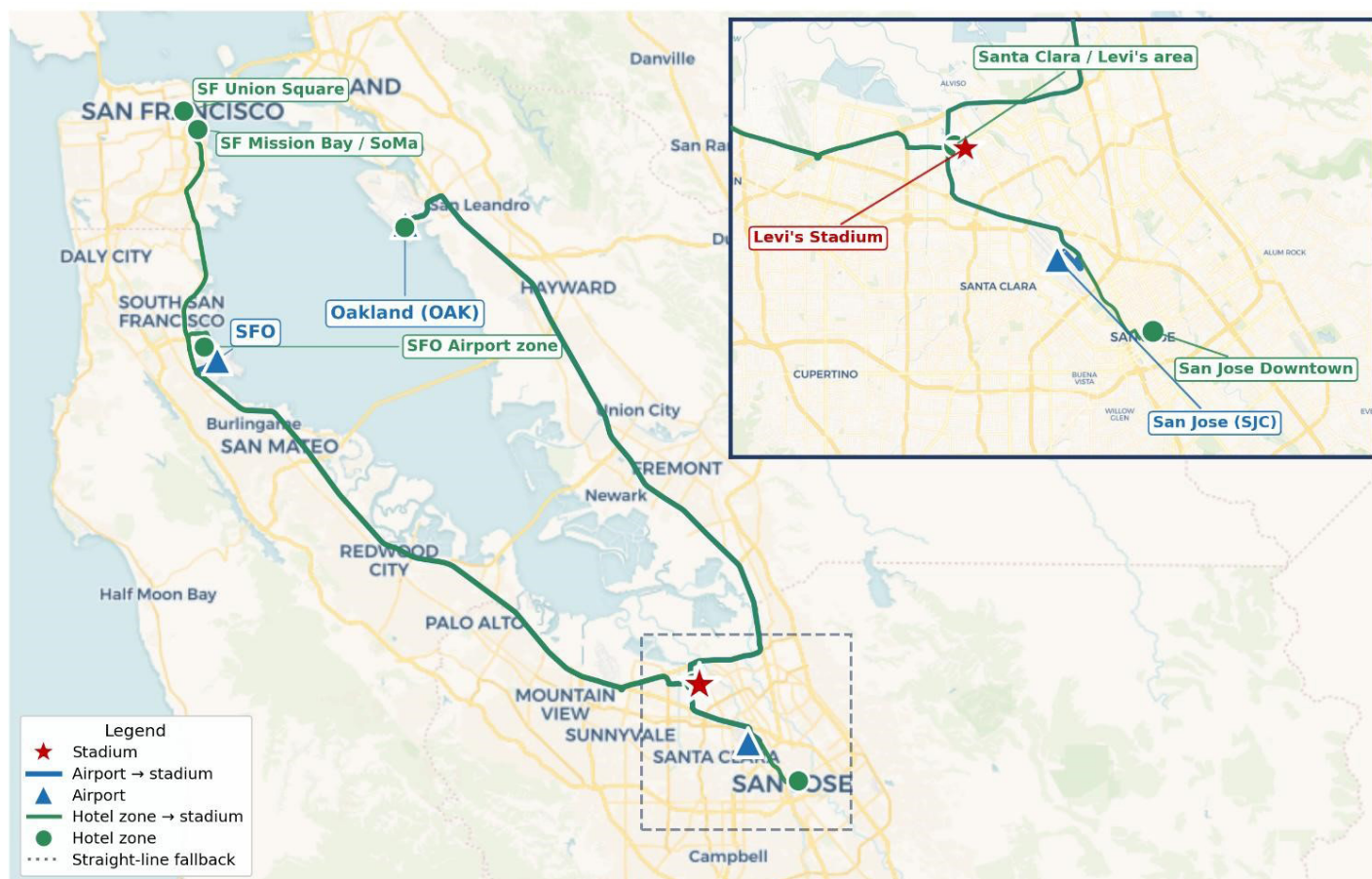
Airports and public transport

SFO (San Francisco International) is the largest airport, about 30 miles (50 km) north of Levi's Stadium. SJC (San Jose Mineta) is the closest airport to the venue, at roughly 4 miles (6 km), and is the recommended choice for visitors heading directly to the stadium. OAK (Oakland) sits across the Bay, about 37 miles (60 km) from the venue, with strong domestic service. Allow three hours for international departures from SFO during the tournament window.

Recommended accommodation zones

Downtown San Jose offers the closest in-city experience, located about 15 to 30 minutes from the stadium. Santa Clara, Sunnyvale, and Mountain View offer the closest suburban accommodation options, 5 to 15 minutes from the venue. Downtown San Francisco and Union Square have the highest concentration of international-standard hotels, but the multimodal commute via Caltrain + VTA Light Rail transfer at Mountain View runs

90–120 minutes off-peak, and Caltrain advises 2–2.5 hours on match days, with standing-room-only conditions expected on both Caltrain and BART lines. Oakland and Berkeley are lower-cost alternatives at 75–100 minutes from the venue.



Security and medical risks

Crime

The Bay Area's violent crime rate is moderate by US standards; Santa Clara, Mountain View, and Sunnyvale, specifically, are low-crime suburban communities. Property crime, particularly vehicle break-ins and shoplifting, is elevated across San Francisco. SoMa's 2025 incident rate was more than double that of every other San Francisco neighbourhood across all crime categories, with property crime up roughly 29% year-over-year and Mission Bay up 52%. The Tenderloin District, the Mission District and parts of West Oakland show similar concentration. Vehicle break-ins remain pervasive across the entire metro. Tourist zones, such as Union Square, Fisherman's Wharf, the Embarcadero, Palo Alto and downtown San Jose, are well-policed and low-risk. Travellers should ensure they do not leave valuables in parked vehicles.

Terrorism

The Bay Area maintains an elevated baseline counterterrorism posture. The Santa Clara Police Department is the publicly announced lead agency for Levi's Stadium venue security, working under a regional coordinating framework that includes FBI San Francisco, several local police departments and the South Bay Joint Terrorism Task Force (JTTF). Levi's Stadium has been publicly identified as a likely target for disruptive activism, including pitch invasions, blockades, and symbolic vandalism, given its global media audience. Visitors should expect visible security at SFO and SJC airports, the venue perimeter, the BART Milpitas / VTA Orange Line interchange, and the largest distributed Fanzones throughout the tournament window.

Unrest

The Bay Area has a higher risk of unrest relative to other host cities in the US. Common protest flashpoints include the UN Plaza in San Francisco, the federal building, and the campuses of UC Berkeley and Stanford. Tournament-window large-

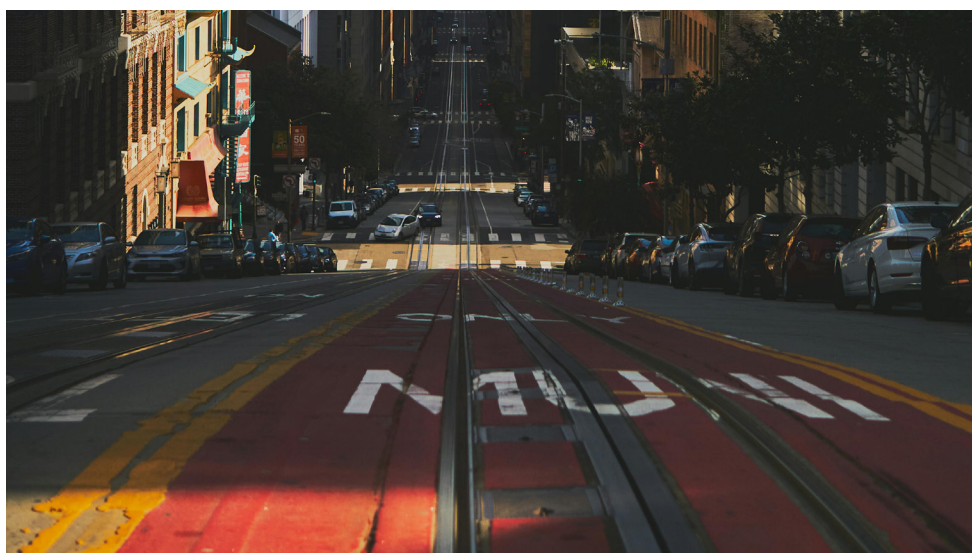
unrest risk is low. Tech-industry and immigration policy demonstrations may produce road closures with limited lead time. Unrest risks are lower in Santa Clara.

Natural disaster

The Bay Area is exposed to earthquakes, underscored by previous major earthquakes that have affected the region, as well as the latent risk of smoke from fires in inland California. Cal Fire's 2026 seasonal outlook, published in the spring, places Northern California at above-normal fire potential from May through July 2026, with associated wildfire smoke capable of impacting air quality in the San Francisco Bay Area. FIFA has confirmed it has no fixed air-quality threshold for match suspension.

Heat

Temperatures in the Bay Area vary significantly by location. The San Francisco coast usually has temperatures of 60 to 70°F (16 to 21°C) with frequent fog, while San Jose, Santa Clara, and Levi's Stadium typically experience temperatures of 75 to 85°F (24 to 29°C), with occasional heat waves reaching 95 to 100°F (35 to 38°C). During the 2021 Pacific Northwest heat dome, temperatures briefly reached 105°F (41°C) in the South Bay, and there is a remote chance of a repeat event during the tournament. Levi's open-air bowl can run hot during afternoon kickoffs, particularly on the south-facing side. Coastal fog can drop temperatures by 15 to 20°F (7 to 11°C) compared to inland areas.



Stadium and matchday

Match schedule

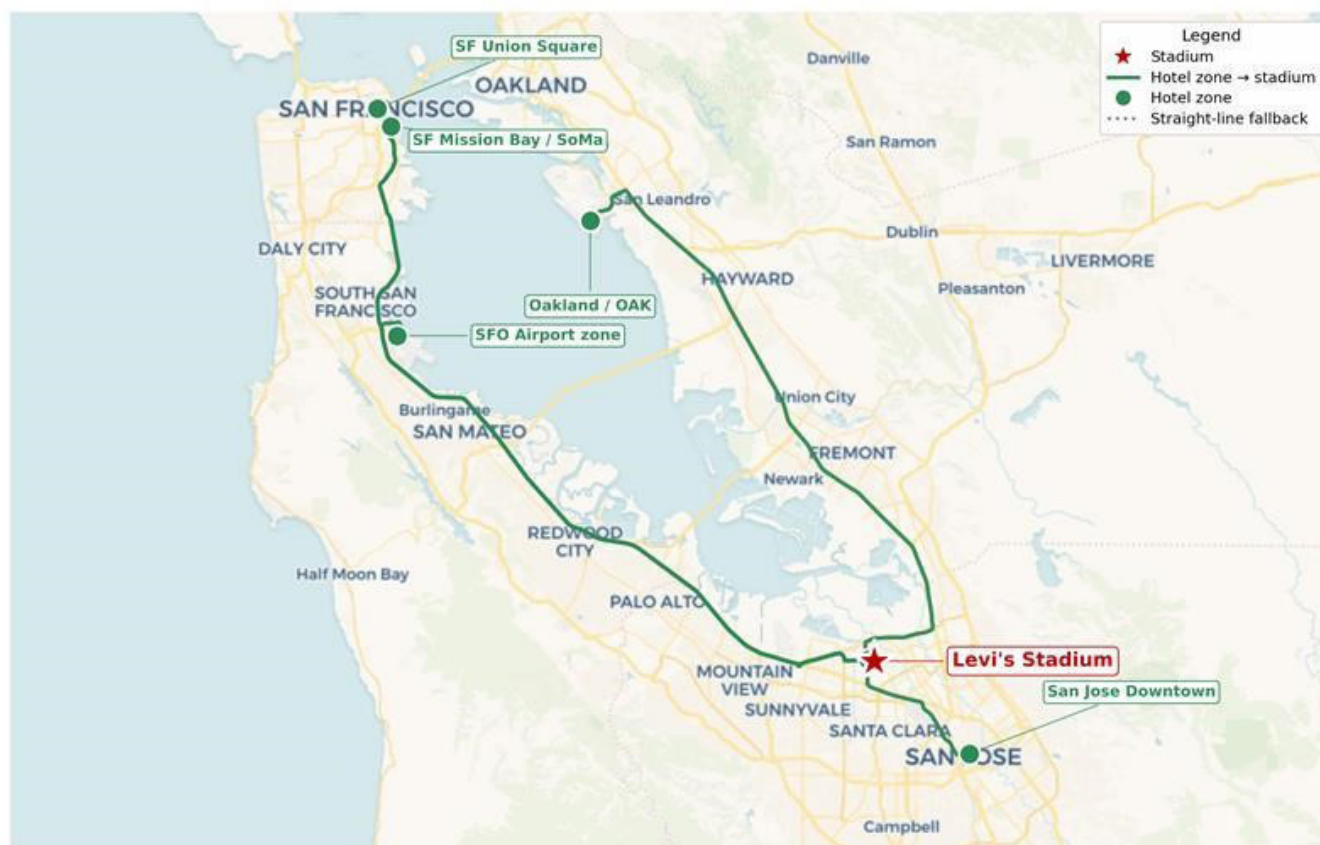
Date	Match	Stage	Kickoff (local)
13 th June	Qatar - Switzerland	Group B	12h00
16 th June	Austria - Jordan	Group J	21h00
19 th June	Turkey - Paraguay	Group D	21h00
22 nd June	Jordan - Algeria	Group J	20h00
25 th June	Paraguay - Australia	Group D	19h00
1 st July	Winner of Group D - 3rd B/E/F/I/J	Round of 32	17h00

Public transport and transportation to the stadium

Levi's Stadium sits in Santa Clara, about 45 miles (70 km) from downtown San Francisco and 6 miles (10 km) from downtown San Jose. Transit options for Bay Area-origin fans include the VTA Light Rail Orange and Green lines to Great

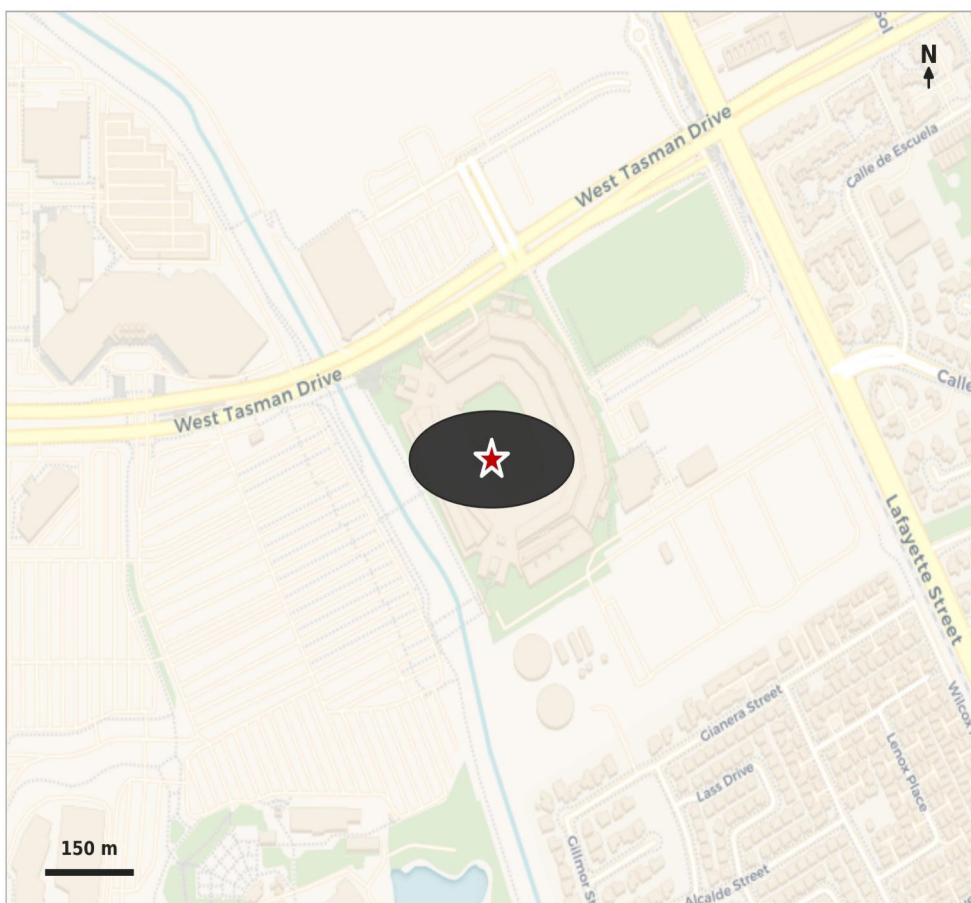
America; the Caltrain to Mountain View and VTA light-rail transfer to Great America; the BART to Milpitas with a VTA Orange Line transfer; and the ACE (Altamont Corridor Express) to Great America from the Central Valley. Match-day road closures are likely to saturate main routes such as I-280, US-101, and Great America Parkway approximately four hours

before kickoff; the US-101/Tasman interchange has been publicly identified as a likely target for protest blockades, and operators should plan alternates. Driving and parking remain available, but parking is constrained and surge-priced; travellers are advised to pre-purchase train tickets, or use rideshare services.



Entry/gates into the stadium

Per FIFA standard policy for the 2026 World Cup, Levi's Stadium gates are expected to open two hours before kickoff. The FIFA-standard clear-bag policy is enforced, including clear bags up to 12" x 6" x 12" (about 30 cm x 15 cm x 30 cm) or a one-gallon Ziploc, plus a small clutch up to 4.5" x 6.5" (≈11 cm x 17 cm); there is no bag check or storage on-site. Screening is by metal detector and manual bag inspection. Prohibited items include professional cameras with detachable or telephoto lenses, drones, oversized signs and banners (FIFA's typical size limit is ~2 m x 1.5 m), umbrellas and any flagpoles.



Fanzones

The Bay Area Host Committee announced on 7th April 2026 that the region will not host a centralised official FIFA Fan Festival. Instead, more than 30 free, community-run "Fan Zones" and watch-party sites are distributed across San Francisco, Oakland and the South Bay. All Fan Zones programme giant screens, live entertainment, international food and sponsor activations, with free general admission. Each official fan zone operates its own screening perimeter. Because the Fan Zones are decentralised, fan-flow concentrations differ from typical host-city patterns. Fans should anticipate San Francisco– Santa Clara fan migration on Caltrain and BART on every match day, not just for venue access, with other suburbs such as Oakland also likely to see transportation demand surges.



Match risk rating

Match	Date and Kickoff (All Times Local)	Match Risk Rating
Qatar – Switzerland	13th June 12h00	MINIMAL
Austria – Jordan	16th June 21h00	MINIMAL
Turkey – Paraguay	19th June 20h00	LOW
<p>This match is rated as LOW risk due to the low but latent risk of fan violence. Turkey and Paraguay fans are likely to travel in high and moderate numbers, respectively, to the San Francisco Bay Area to attend the match. Clashes between the two fanbases are unlikely but cannot be ruled out due to the presence of ultras in the Turkish fanbase; disruption from fan gatherings remains a credible risk in Downtown San Francisco, San Jose, and the vicinity of Levi’s Stadium. Disruption is likely to be recorded on MD-1 and matchday due to fan presence in public areas of San Francisco, such as the Embarcadero and Union Square areas in Downtown. Matchday travel disruption is likely to be recorded on the San Francisco-San Jose Caltrain lines, the Orange and Green light rail lines in San Jose, and on the BART network. Travel delays are also likely to affect major North-South arterial routes such as I-280, I-880, Route 82 and Route 101. While Levi’s Stadium has relatively good transit connectivity, its distance from Downtown San Francisco means demand surges for taxis and rideshare services on matchdays pose a credible disruption risk to travellers in the Bay Area.</p>		
Jordan – Algeria	22nd June 20h00	LOW
<p>This match is rated as LOW risk due to the low but latent risk of fan violence. While neither fanbase is anticipated to have a high turnout, the presence of ultras within the Algerian fanbase informs the low but latent risk of fan violence in the San Francisco Bay Area during the match. Clashes between the two fanbases are highly unlikely given the small size of the Jordanian fanbase, though disruption from fan gatherings remains a credible risk in Downtown San Francisco, San Jose, and the vicinity of Levi’s Stadium. Disruption is likely to be recorded on MD-1 and matchday due to fan presence in public areas of San Francisco, such as the Embarcadero and Union Square areas in Downtown. Matchday travel disruption is likely to be recorded on the San Francisco-San Jose Caltrain lines, the Orange and Green light rail lines in San Jose, and on the BART network. Travel delays are also likely to affect major North-South arterial routes such as I-280, I-880, Route 82 and Route 101. While Levi’s Stadium has relatively good transit connectivity, its distance from Downtown San Francisco means demand surges for taxis and rideshare services on matchdays pose a credible disruption risk to travellers in the Bay Area.</p>		
Paraguay – Australia	25th June 19h00	MINIMAL
Round of 32	1st July 17h00	MODERATE
<p>This match is assessed as MODERATE risk due to elevated security and operational risks commensurate with the knockout stage. While the teams are not confirmed for this match, knockout stage matches are more likely to involve two teams with large fanbases, with a higher likelihood of disruption and fan unrest if it is a rivalry match or involves a fanbase with ultras presence. Disruption from fan gatherings remains a credible risk in Downtown San Francisco, San Jose, and the vicinity of Levi’s Stadium. Disruption is likely to be recorded on MD-1 and matchday due to fan presence in public areas of San Francisco, such as the Embarcadero and Union Square areas in Downtown. Matchday travel disruption is likely to be recorded on the San Francisco-San Jose Caltrain lines, the Orange and Green light rail lines in San Jose, and on the BART network. Travel delays are also likely to affect major North-South arterial routes such as I-280, I-880, Route 82 and Route 101. While Levi’s Stadium has relatively good transit connectivity, its distance from Downtown San Francisco means demand surges for taxis and rideshare services on matchdays pose a credible disruption risk to travellers in the Bay Area.</p>		

Business as usual operations

Demand surges around match days. North-South arterial routes are almost certain to face increased traffic around afternoon kickoffs; Caltrain runs match-day extra service, but VTA Light Rail crowding will be at peak. Hotel inventory in San Francisco, San Jose and Santa Clara is likely to be constrained by demand surges. The most affected sectors include tech, biotech, finance, and venture capital. San Francisco itself is largely insulated from venue-related disruption on matchdays.

Recommendations for businesses and organisations

- Consider implementing remote-work options for staff commuting through the San Francisco-San Jose corridor on match days. Levi's adjacent surface streets close four hours before kickoff, and US-101

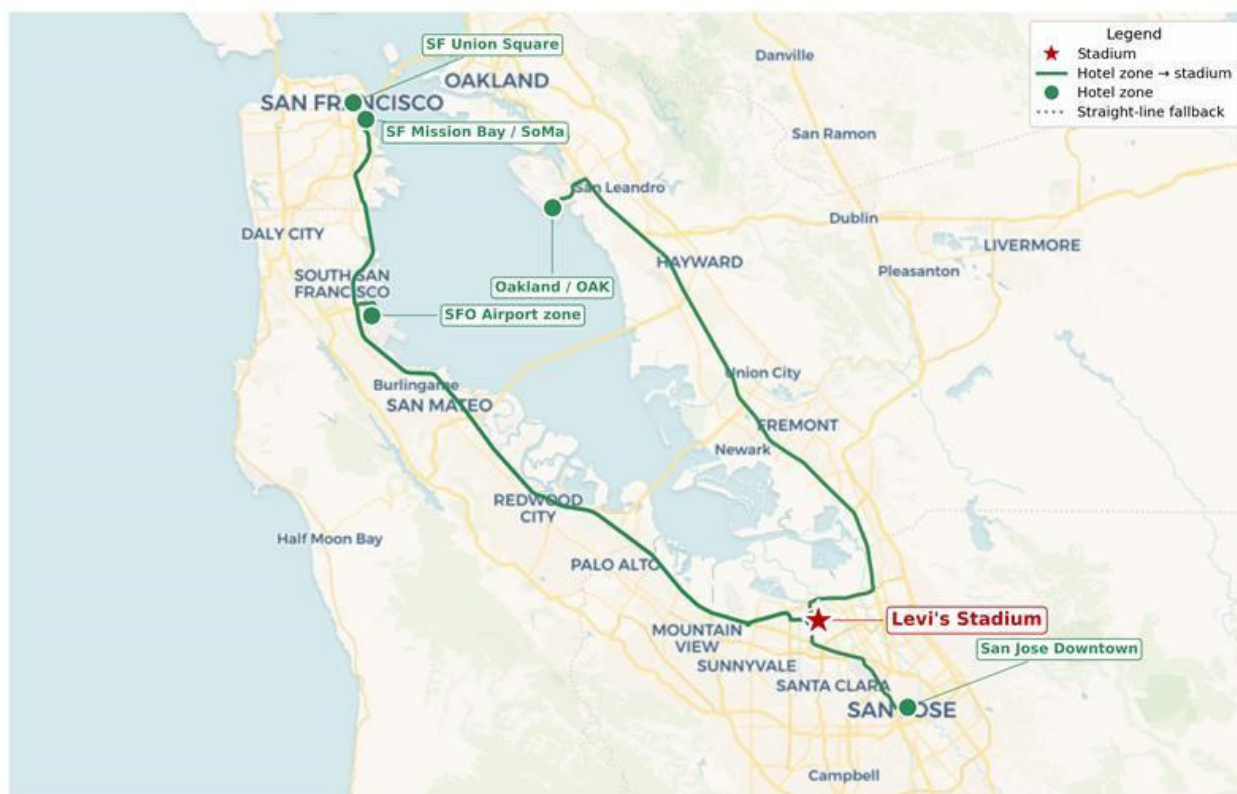
is likely to face travel delays north and south of the venue. VTA Light Rail to the Great America station is the recommended public transit option.

- Pre-book hotel blocks for visiting staff in Santa Clara or San Jose for match-day proximity, or in San Francisco for standard business travel.
- Maintain a wildfire-smoke contingency throughout the tournament, as late June through July marks the start of California fire season, and AQI can climb above 150 with limited warning.
- Brief marketing and legal teams on FIFA-marks restrictions: Apple, Google, Meta and the major South Bay tech firms are non-FIFA sponsors. Ambush-marketing

enforcement is highly likely around the 30+ distributed Fan Zones across San Francisco, Oakland, San Jose and the Alameda County Fair.

Recommendations for residents

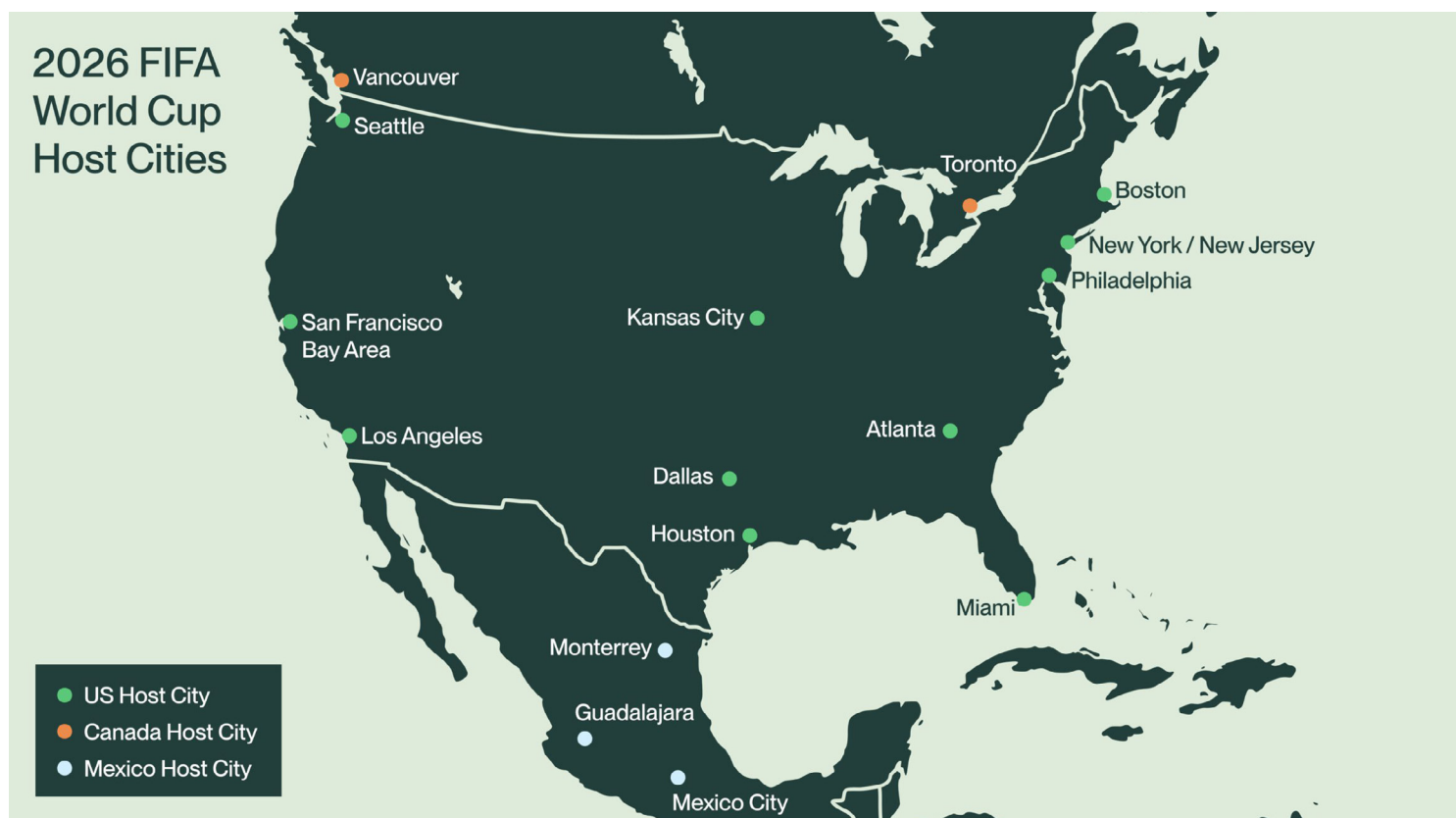
- Plan errands and medical appointments away from match-day afternoons, especially the Round of 32 on 1st July.
- Refresh earthquake-preparedness kits and drop, cover and hold on protocol in case one hits.
- Sign up for AlertSCC (Santa Clara County) and AlertSF for official emergency notifications, and stock N95 masks for wildfire-smoke episodes during the tournament.



Multi city travel

San Francisco sits in FIFA's Western cluster with Los Angeles, Seattle, Vancouver and Guadalajara. Los Angeles is a one-hour flight, Seattle is about two hours, and Vancouver is about two and a half hours with border processing. Travellers entering Canada need a passport; visa-exempt nationals flying in need a

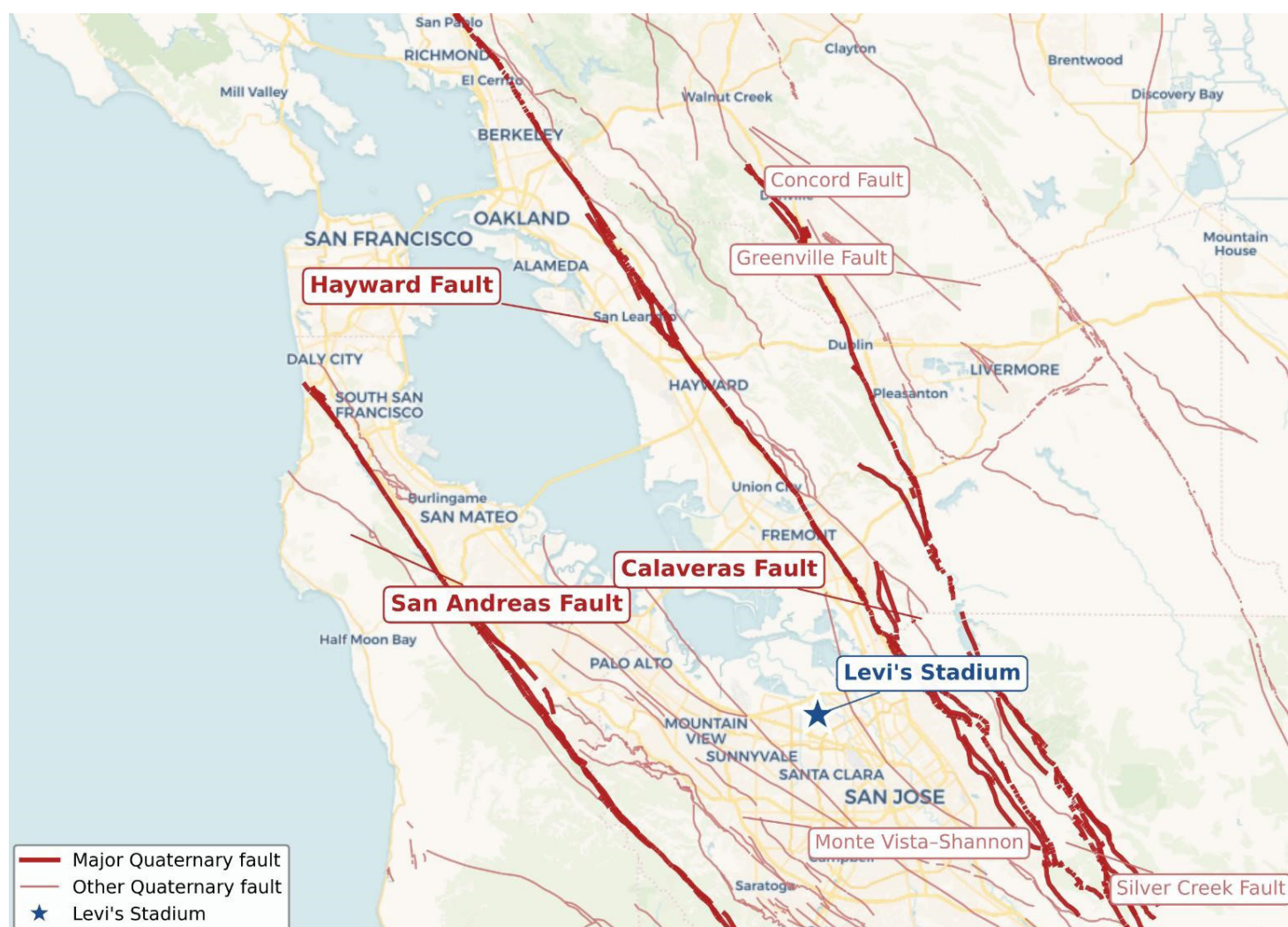
Canadian eTA before boarding, while visa-required nationals need a visitor visa unless they qualify for an eTA exception. Travellers to Mexico require a visa unless they are from Canada, the USA, the EU, the UK, Japan, or select other countries. See the Special Advisory for routing guidance.



City-specific risks

The Bay Area's defining natural-disaster exposure is earthquakes, underscored by several major earthquakes recorded in the area in the last 150 years. While earthquakes have a minimal chance of occurring during the tournament, a major earthquake would almost certainly cause significant damage and disrupt critical infrastructure in the Bay Area. Levi's Stadium is built to modern seismic codes, but visitors should know the standard drop-cover-hold-

on protocol and pre-identify the nearest exit before kickoff. Wildfire smoke from inland can drift into the Bay basin, degrading air quality during the tournament window, particularly given the Cal Fire 2026 outlook, which calls for above-normal fire potential across Northern California from May to July 2026. The tertiary risk is BART and Caltrain operational disruption, as incidents can cascade across the system during peak times on matchdays.



General advice

- **During major events, plan journeys avoiding common protest flashpoints.** UN Plaza, the federal building, UC Berkeley and Stanford campuses are likely locations for organised demonstrations.
- **Pedestrian travel is advisable across most tourist zones before nightfall, including Union Square, Fisherman’s Wharf, the Embarcadero, Palo Alto, and downtown San Jose, as long as basic security precautions are followed.** Exercise increased caution in the Tenderloin and parts of the Mission and SoMa in San Francisco, and parts of West Oakland.
- **Vehicle break-ins are pervasive across the Bay Area; ensure all valuables are removed from parked vehicles, including in lower-risk areas like downtown San Jose and Santa Clara.** Ensure passports are stored separately from other valuables.
- **Allow for additional travel time when conducting ground moves, as traffic congestion is commonplace.** Self-driving is permissive for travellers throughout the Bay Area owing to high-quality infrastructure. Travellers self-transferring in the area should note, however, that San Francisco is famously hilly and foggy, which can be hazardous to ground moves.
- **Anticipate potential travel delays and plan itineraries accordingly, particularly during rush hour in areas such as SoMa and Financial districts, as well as on the bay’s bridges.** If riding public transport, the SFMTA website and official mobile apps (MuniMobile, BART official) provide transit alerts and service changes.
- **Familiarise yourself with basic earthquake safety measures, such as “drop, cover, and hold on”.** Follow all guidance from local authorities and emergency services in the case of an earthquake.



Appendix: methodology

Risk ratings

MINIMAL	LOW	MODERATE	HIGH	EXTREME
Locations in this category are likely to be affected by small-scale, peaceful, protests that occur sporadically and represent no security risk but may cause temporary localised travel disruption.	Locations in this category are likely to be affected by small-scale protests and low-level clashes, resulting in a heightened police presence in the affected areas. Multiple arrests are reported, resulting in travel and operational disruption.	Locations in this category are likely to be affected by medium to large-scale protests and multiple low-level clashes. Local businesses are at a heightened risk of being damaged and looted, resulting in operational disruption.	Locations in this category are likely to be affected by large-scale protests and clashes taking place resulting in the deployment of National Guard units to contain the unrest. Movement restrictions are implemented to contain unrest, resulting in significant operational disruption.	Locations in this category are likely to be affected by significant civil unrest resulting in the temporary absence of law and order. Strict movement restrictions are imposed and a significant deployment of National Guard units leads to severe operational disruption.

Incident impact ratings

MINIMAL	LOW	MODERATE	SIGNIFICANT	CRITICAL
Incidents in this category are routine within the risk environment and do not pose a threat to life. Incidents rarely impact beyond the immediate vicinity and / or there is negligible implication associated with the risk factor.	Incidents in this category are routine within the risk environment but rarely pose a threat to life and / or the casualty impact is incidental and highly localised. Incidents rarely impact beyond the immediate vicinity or the implications are incidental.	Incidents in this category are fairly common for the risk environment and may pose a threat to life, occasionally resulting in mass casualties. The impact is typically restricted to the immediate vicinity and / or is incidental.	Incidents in this category occasionally occur in the risk environment and typically pose a credible and imminent threat to life, occasionally resulting in mass casualties. The impact may spread beyond the immediate vicinity.	Incidents in this category are highly out of the ordinary for the risk environment, pose a significant and imminent threat to life and will likely result in significant mass casualties. The impact is likely to have wider-reaching implications.

Risk trends

RAPIDLY IMPROVING	IMPROVING	STABLE	DETERIORATING	RAPIDLY DETERIORATING
The situation is improving in the short term, with the potential for an event to cause a sudden and unexpected improvement.	The situation is improving in the medium term, at a steady and predictable rate.	The situation is unlikely to see a significant improvement or deterioration over the medium term.	The situation is worsening in the medium term, at a steady and predictable rate.	The situation is worsening in the short term, with the potential for a sudden and unexpected deterioration.

Source evaluation criteria

CANNOT BE JUDGED	UNRELIABLE	RARELY RELIABLE	FAIRLY RELIABLE	USUALLY RELIABLE	RELIABLE
No basis exists for evaluating the reliability of the source.	Lacking in authenticity, trustworthiness, or competency. Frequent history of misinformation or inaccuracy.	Significant doubt about authenticity, trustworthiness or competency. Some history of misinformation or inaccuracy.	Doubt about authenticity, trustworthiness, or competency. History of some valid information.	Some doubt about authenticity, trustworthiness, or competency. History of valid information most of the time.	No doubt of authenticity, trustworthiness, or competency. History of being reliable almost all of the time.

Information validity

CANNOT BE JUDGED	CONFIRMED FALSE	LIKELY FALSE	POSSIBLY TRUE	PROBABLY TRUE	CONFIRMED TRUE
No basis exists for evaluating the validity of the information.	Confirmed as false by reputable independent sources.	Not confirmed. Possible but not logical. No other information on the subject or information is contradictory.	Not confirmed but reasonably logical. Limited other information on subject.	Not confirmed but logical in itself and consistent with most other information on subject.	Confirmed by reputable independent sources and logical in itself.

Forecasting

REMOTE CHANCE	HIGHLY UNLIKELY	UNLIKELY	EVEN CHANCE	LIKELY	HIGHLY LIKELY	ALMOST CERTAIN
<5%	10% - 20%	25% - 35%	40%-50%	55%-75%	80%-90%	>95%

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