



Memorandum

Date: 10/7/2025
Meeting of: City Council

File No. AM No. 25-149
Type: Staff Report

TO: Members of the City Council
FROM: Mayor Angela Birney
DEPARTMENT DIRECTOR CONTACT(S):

Planning and Community Development	Carol Helland	425-556-2107
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DEPARTMENT STAFF:

Planning and Community Development	Seraphie Allen	Deputy Director
Planning and Community Development	Philly Marsh	Economic Development Manager
Planning and Community Development	Kristen Raftis	World Cup Planning Program Manager
Executive	Kelly Schutz	Communications Manager
Parks	Zach Houvener	Deputy Director
Police	Brian Coats	Deputy Chief
Fire	Ameé Quiriconi	Deputy Chief

TITLE:
World Cup Planning Update

OVERVIEW STATEMENT:
This staff report will provide an update on planning efforts in preparation for the 2026 World Cup.

☐ **Additional Background Information/Description of Proposal Attached**

REQUESTED ACTION:

☒ **Receive Information** ☐ **Provide Direction** ☐ **Approve**

REQUEST RATIONALE:

- **Relevant Plans/Policies:**
 - Redmond 2050 Comprehensive Plan
 - 2024 Economic Development Strategic Plan
 - 2024 Tourism Development Strategic Plan
 - 2023 Comprehensive Emergency Management Plan
- **Required:**
N/A

- **Council Request:**

N/A

- **Other Key Facts:**

Seattle was selected to host six matches from the FIFA World Cup 26, including USA's second group fixture and two knockout games. These matches take place from June 15-July 6. Hosting the event is anticipated to leverage more than \$100 million in economic activity. A projected 750,000 visitors will be in the Seattle region to soak up the event atmosphere with the over 4 billion global viewers who watch the World Cup. With a new transformational transportation system, Redmond should be ready to leverage this opportunity to welcome the World and highlight the City through visitation and global broadcast.

In March, the City of Redmond welcomed Kristen Raftis as our World Cup Planning Program Manager. Kris leads the organization of cross-departmental core and sub-groups to prepare and manage the World Cup implementations in Redmond.

The following planning subgroups have been formed and started planning and implementing applicable programming.

- Watch Parties and Activations - Lead: Economic Development

This group will focus on watch party grants and logistics, Fútbol for All Speaker Series, and business activations.

- Communications - Lead: Communications

This group will focus on communications plan and strategy, internal and external communications, branding, and Mayor liaison.

- Emergency Preparedness - Lead: Fire Department

This group will focus on pre-planning for local and regional response, continuity of government, and coordinated communications.

- Public Safety and Response - Lead: Police Department

This group will focus on local and regional response, human trafficking awareness training, threat assessments, and coordinated communications.

- Operations and Logistics - Lead: Parks Department

This group will focus on the transportation corridor, maps, sidewalks, traffic flow, cable internet, and other critical operational functions.

- Finance - Lead: Finance Department

This group will review the World Cup budget, track, and report expenses.

- Internal City of Redmond - Lead: Planning and Community Development

The group activates City of Redmond employees who are interested in leading and supporting staff activities during and leading up to the World Cup. They can also volunteer at city-sponsored events.

OUTCOMES:

The World Cup provides the opportunity for an unforgettable experience for visitors, athletes, and residents by showcasing Redmond's connectivity to the region, celebrating our diverse culture, and fostering an atmosphere of excitement and hospitality. Objectives and outcomes include:

- Brand and Promote Redmond as a Destination
- Attract Visitation and Spending for Economic Impact
- Legacy Coalition Building for District Development and Branding
- Foster Community Pride and Connection
- Safe and Enjoyable Experience for the Redmond Community

To date, activations have included:

Business and Community Meetings

In the open session for small businesses held in early June, nearly 50 small business owners and community members gathered at City Hall to learn more about next year's tournament and resources available to assist businesses. Sounders legend Brad Evans joined as a special guest to share about the unifying power of soccer and the excitement expected over the course of the year, followed by presentations from SeattleFWC26 Local Organizing Committee member Dylan Ordoñez and City of Redmond Small Business Assistance Program Manager Domonique Meeks, highlighting activation and assistance opportunities. Finally, a panel of four local small business owners shared more about their feelings surrounding the upcoming games.

Next meeting on October 8, 2025

The Economic Development Division is leading a convening on Wednesday, Oct. 8, at Redmond City Hall for an exciting World Cup Info and Strategy Session! Networking starts at 9:30 a.m. followed by a live presentation at 10:00 a.m. This free event is designed to help local businesses tap into the energy of international soccer and learn about resources that are available all year long. Enjoy light refreshments while you hear from City of Redmond staff and a Seattle Sounder legend! Learn more at [Redmond's Ready for the World | Redmond, WA <https://www.redmond.gov/2312/Redmonds-Ready-for-the-World>](https://www.redmond.gov/2312/Redmonds-Ready-for-the-World)

Club World Cup Redmond Soccer Watch Party

In partnership with Amazon and Redmond Town Center, the City's Redmond Soccer Watch Party provided a gathering space to watch Sounders FC face Paris Saint-Germain on a giant outdoor screen. Over 250 community members attended, enjoying the great weather, exciting game, and a variety of family-friendly activities, including a youth play area presented by Arena Sports, VR soccer experiences, a Pride Across the Bridge selfie station, and City booths. Mayor Birney and Sounders legend Jhon Kennedy Hurtado joined the fun, addressing the crowd before the match about all the excitement to come in 2026! This provided a great learning experience as staff plans for activations in 2026.

Upcoming activities will be shared in detail during the staff report but include the launch of a soccer speaker series, launch of soccer stories, a match draw event and more.

Upcoming Programs and Activities include:

Community Event Grants

These grants are for community organizations, nonprofits and businesses who would like to host a Watch Party during the World Cup next year. Applications are being accepted October 1, 2025, through January 15, 2026. A staff committee will review applications in mid-November and again after the grants close.

[Redmond World Cup Watch Party Grant Program | Redmond, WA <https://www.redmond.gov/2369/Redmond-World-Cup-Watch-Party-Grant-Prog>](https://www.redmond.gov/2369/Redmond-World-Cup-Watch-Party-Grant-Prog)

Fútbol for All Speaker Series launches with Soccer 101

Over the next few months, leading up to the World Cup, the City of Redmond will be hosting a series of Speaker events to educate and build excitement for the World Cup. Our Series kick-off will be a Soccer 101 class with Sounders legend James Riley and friends on Monday, October 27. This class is for adults with an interest in better understanding basic soccer and will include a classroom-style lecture, breakout sessions, Q&A, and autographs and photos.

Match Draw Party

We will host a Match Draw Party on Friday, December 5, 2025, at the Archer Hotel. Together, we will watch as teams are drawn for the group stage. Food and beverages will be available, along with a visit from a Sounders legend.

Soccer Stories

Soccer Stories invites Redmond residents and community members to submit their own personal accounts about how soccer and Redmond have shaped them. Stories will be shared in written format on redmond.gov, with select stories shared via the City's social accounts.

COMMUNITY/STAKEHOLDER OUTREACH AND INVOLVEMENT:

- **Timeline (previous or planned):**
May 2025-July 2026
- **Outreach Methods and Results:**
Meetings, questionnaire and individual stakeholder outreach
- **Feedback Summary:**
Redmond residents and businesses who have completed the questionnaire are very excited for the World Cup and activities that will be planned in Redmond.

BUDGET IMPACT:

Total Cost:
\$2,000,000.00

Approved in current biennial budget: ☒ Yes ☐ No ☐ N/A

Budget Offer Number:
0000311

Budget Priority:
Vibrant and Connected

Other budget impacts or additional costs: ☐ Yes ☒ No ☐ N/A

If yes, explain:
N/A

Funding source(s):
General Fund

Budget/Funding Constraints:
N/A

☐ Additional budget details attached

COUNCIL REVIEW:

Previous Contact(s)

Date	Meeting	Requested Action
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N/A	Item has not been presented to Council	N/A
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Proposed Upcoming Contact(s)

Date	Meeting	Requested Action
N/A	None proposed at this time	N/A

Time Constraints:

N/A

ANTICIPATED RESULT IF NOT APPROVED:

N/A

ATTACHMENTS:

Attachment A: Presentation