



# Peer Exchange Report

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## Preparing for the FIFA World Cup 2026: Lessons from Atlanta and Host Cities

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# Executive Summary

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In August 2025, the National Operations Center of Excellence (NOCoE) convened a peer exchange in Atlanta, GA focused on operational preparedness for the FIFA World Cup 2026. The event brought together transportation, operations, and emergency management leaders from multiple host cities, alongside representatives from FIFA Mobility Operations.

Participants discussed how Transportation Systems Management and Operations (TSMO) principles can guide safe, reliable, and coordinated travel for millions of visitors. Through site tours, city presentations, and round-table discussions, agencies identified best practices, each essential for ensuring smooth mobility during one of the largest sporting events ever held in North America. These practices and learnings build upon the discussion at NOCoE's October 2024 WC26 Mobility Peer Exchange, held in East Rutherford, New Jersey.

# Key Learnings

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## Institutional Coordination & Governance

Early establishment of unified governance structures is critical.

*Example - Philadelphia: Richard Montañez (City of Philadelphia) described how the city integrates transportation, police, emergency services, and venue operations under one incident-command framework: “We treat every event as a planned special event, not an emergency.”*

**Recommended Practice:**

Embed TSMO and transit leads in unified command centers during planning and operations.

**Recommended Practice:**

Develop an interagency MOU and assign embedded liaisons across transportation, law enforcement, and emergency operations months before the event.

## Technology, Data & Infrastructure Modernization

Technology modernization improves real-time decision-making and safety.

*Example – New Jersey DOT: Presented on infrastructure upgrades at MetLife Stadium, including additional CCTV coverage, roadside units (RSUs), and fiber network expansion—lessons learned from COPA América 2024.*

*Example – Georgia DOT: Demonstrated its Kinetic Mobility platform integrating signals, DMS, and incident feeds into one dashboard.*

**Recommended Practice:**

Conduct a “technology readiness review” six months before the first match, ensuring cybersecurity protocols, redundancy, and inter-agency data access are established.

# Key Learnings

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## Mobility & Transit Demand Management (TDM)

Mode-shift planning and real-time flexibility will determine success.

*Example - Miami-Dade DOT (Lisa Colmenares): Highlighted the challenge of car dependency in South Florida and the opportunity to promote Brightline rail, bus, and shuttle services through the FIFA Fan App. FIFA's expectation according to Tania Mahan is the emphasis on multimodal coordination and sustainability as global priorities. She also stated that each host city must deliver a Mobility Plan V1 that balances transit access, accessibility, and environmental goals.*

### **Recommended Practice:**

Coordinate with FIFA Mobility Operations to embed local transit and parking data directly into fan-facing applications.

## Communication & Traveler Outreach

Clear, consistent public messaging across agencies prevents confusion.

*Example - Atlanta DOT & GDOT: Used dynamic message signs and social-media integration during major events to reinforce a single statewide message—"Arrive Early, Stay Put, Leave Late."*

### **Recommended Practice:**

Develop a joint communications plan with pre-approved templates for DMS, 511, and press releases.

### **Recommended Practice:**

Designate a communications liaison in each host city to synchronize real-time updates with FIFA communications channels.

# Key Learnings

## Safety, Crowd Management & Incident Response

Large-scale pedestrian surges require coordinated crowd-control and emergency response plans.

**Example - Philadelphia:** Outlined layered perimeters and designated “fan march” corridors guided by CCTV analytics. **Example - Atlanta Tour:** Centennial Olympic Park uses LiDAR and CCTV analytics to monitor crowd density and activate signal timing changes for pedestrian “scramble” crossings.

### Recommended Practice:

Develop heat-response and surge-management protocols integrated into the city’s incident-management dashboard.

## Performance Measurement & After-Action Review

Continuous evaluation ensures institutional learning beyond 2026.

**Example - FIFA:** Requires every host city to document mobility performance indicators and submit post-match after-action reports within 30 days.

### Recommended Practice:

Use dashboards that integrate probe data, transit ridership, and incident logs.

### Recommended Practice:

Create a shared “Performance Playbook” template for all host cities to capture comparable metrics (travel time reliability, clearance times, and modal splits).

**Toolkit Note:** These key learnings are directly mapped to new modules in the NOCoE Planned Special Event Toolkit.  
[transportationops.org/pse/toolkit](https://transportationops.org/pse/toolkit)



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2026 World Cup (WC26)

WC26 Toolkit  
WC26 NY/NY Exchange (Oct '24)

### Toolkit for 2026 World Cup Mobility Planning

Below is a collection of resources and tools to help transportation systems management and operations (TSMO) professionals plan for the 2026 World Cup. These resources come, in part, from a monthly call NOCoE hosts for the 11 U.S. cities hosting the 2026 World Cup, where the group shares resources and ideas for planning one of the worlds largest events.

Additional resource links, guidance, and information will be continuously added through the World Cup in 2026 and for future planned special events.

If you feel there is a resource that should be added or if you are looking for assistance with WC planning, please contact [Adam Hoops](#).

World Cup Related News

## Purpose and Context

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NOCoe's peer exchanges enable transportation practitioners to learn from one another and apply proven TSMO strategies to national-scale events. The Atlanta session, held August 27–28 2025, convened more than 40 participants from DOTs, transit agencies, emergency management offices, and FIFA's Mobility Operations team. The exchange built on lessons from COPA América 2024 and explored how host cities can coordinate operations centers, data systems, and public messaging across jurisdictions.

## Host City Tour & Site Observations

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Participants toured downtown Atlanta's multimodal infrastructure supporting the Georgia World Congress Center (GWCC), Mercedes-Benz Stadium, State Farm Arena, and Centennial Olympic Park. GDOT's Kinetic Mobility platform showcased real-time corridor monitoring, and LiDAR pedestrian sensors demonstrated crowd-density analytics. Discussions highlighted integrated security operations, fiber connectivity, and TMC coordination.

# Thematic Findings & Cross-City Practices

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## ***FIFA Mobility Framework (Tania Mahan)***

FIFA’s mobility operations framework centers on five pillars: multimodal coordination, safety, accessibility, sustainability, and data integration. Host cities must submit Mobility Plan V1 documents by October 2025, detailing infrastructure readiness, TDM strategies, and communications protocols. “Every city is different, but the expectations are consistent: fan experience depends on coordinated mobility.” – Tania Mahan, FIFA. FIFA will also lead joint tabletop exercises with host-city agencies in 2026.

## ***Philadelphia (Richard Montañez)***

Philadelphia outlined a mature multi-agency event-command model integrating police, fire, EMS, transit (SEPTA), and DOT staff under a unified RTMC. Their “Planned Special Event” framework ensures daily coordination calls, perimeter-control zones, and shared CCTV feeds.



## ***New Jersey DOT***

NJDOT focused on hardening its physical and digital infrastructure in preparation for high-capacity events at MetLife Stadium. ITS expansion, new cabinet cyber-locks, and redundant power supplies support reliability. Lessons from COPA América 2024 highlighted the value of pre-event scenario testing and cross-agency drills.

## ***Miami-Dade County (Lisa Colmenares)***

Miami emphasized the necessity of aligning event planning with long-term mobility improvements. The region’s multimodal strategy leverages Brightline rail, enhanced bus corridors, and rideshare-geofenced pickup zones near stadiums.

# Georgia DOT Presentation – State-Level Coordination for Major Events

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Georgia DOT presented its statewide approach to managing large-scale planned special events. Key focus areas included the integration of Kinetic Mobility across regional TMCs, coordination with local partners, and implementation of cybersecurity protocols for field devices. The presentation also showcased GDOT’s collaboration with Atlanta DOT and public safety agencies during events like the Super Bowl and SEC Championship as templates for World Cup coordination.

## Peer Exchange Breakout Summaries

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### **Coordination & Governance**

Participants emphasized early integration between local, state, and event organizers.

Overlapping jurisdictions near stadium security perimeters require unified planning.

Recommendation: establish Unified Event Operations Groups six months prior to kickoff, with recurring tabletop exercises.

**KEY INSIGHT**

**“Coordination isn’t reactive –it’s a standing structure.”**

**TECHNOLOGY LESSON**

**“Shared data is the only way to share awareness.”**

### **Technology & Data Integration**

Discussion centered on cybersecurity, redundancy, and interoperability.

GDOT’s Kinetic Mobility cited as model for real-time integration.

NJDOT and Miami-Dade requested standardized event data layers for lane closures and transit detours.

## COMMUNICATIONS TAKEAWAY

**“Pre-cleared, multi-channel templates save time and confusion.”**

### ***Communications & Public Outreach***

Focus on ensuring a single voice for the traveler.

Philadelphia’s 511 and social media integration seen as best practice.

Agreed FIFA and host cities should pre-clear shared DMS and media templates.

### ***Evaluation & Continuous Improvement***

Emphasized after-action reviews and dashboard-based performance metrics.

Recommended development of a World Cup Mobility Dashboard for all cities.

Philadelphia and New Jersey offered to share COPA América debrief templates.

## METRICS NOTE

**“Measure it once, improve it forever.”**

## Identified Needs

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1. Standardized World Cup Mobility Plan templates for consistent reporting
2. Discuss potential for cross-city data-sharing agreements
3. Continue periodic peer exchanges and readiness tabletop exercises
4. Capture, document, and publish after-action findings following the World Cup

# Appendices

## Agenda



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**WC26 Mobility – Atlanta**  
August 27 and August 28, 2025  
Georgia World Congress Center, Room B 401

**AGENDA**

**Day 1: August 27, 2025 | 1pm – 5pm ET | Club World Cup Lessons Learned**

Topic	Time (ET)	Speakers
<b>Host and NOCoE Welcome</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Welcome from Commissioner</li> <li>Introduce Georgia DOT team and roles</li> <li>Discuss the "why we are having this peer exchange"</li> <li>Ground rules and agenda Approach</li> </ul>	1:00 – 1:30pm	Solomon Caviness, Commissioner Atlanta DOT  Nicholas Ramfos, NOCoE
<b>Atlanta CWC Debrief (GDOT)</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Atlanta Club World Cup debrief</li> <li>Atlanta WC Planning Efforts</li> </ul>	1:30 – 2:00pm	Justin Hatch, Georgia DOT Sam Hendow, Georgia DOT
<b>Club World Cup Debrief – Home Advantage</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(Inter) Miami</li> <li>Seattle (Sounders)</li> </ul>	2:00pm – 3:00 pm	Miami-Dade County Washington State DOT
<b>BREAK: 3:00 – 3:15pm</b>		
<b>Club World Cup Debrief – Big Names, Big Games</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Philadelphia</li> <li>New Jersey/New York</li> </ul>	3:15 – 4:15pm	Rich Montanez, City of Phil. Jack Longworth, NJDOT
<b>FIFA Recap of Club World Cup</b>	4:15 – 4:45pm	Tania Mahan, FIFA Mobility team
<b>Key Learnings from Day 1</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Capturing the best practices and lessons learned</li> <li>Plan for tomorrow</li> </ul>	4:45 – 5:00pm	Nicholas Ramfos, NOCoE
<b>Group Dinner: Suite, Food Lounge   375 Luckie Street NW, Atlanta, GA 30313</b>	6:00pm	20+ attendees

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**Day 2: August 28, 2025 | 8:30am – 4pm ET | Mobility and Operations Deployments**

Topic	Time (ET)	Speakers
<b>Coffee and Breakfast</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Re-introduce participants</li> <li>Recap day before</li> </ul>	8:00 – 8:30am	Nicholas Ramfos, NOCoE
<b>Tour of area around Atlanta stadium</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Road closures</li> <li>Pedestrian management</li> <li>VIP and FIFA set-up</li> </ul>	8:30 – 10:30am	Georgia DOT
<b>FIFA Mobility Team Updates</b>	10:30am – 12:00pm	Tania Mahan, FIFA Mobility Team
<b>WORKING LUNCH – FOOD SERVED at 12:00pm</b>		
<b>WC26 Venues: Planning Status &amp; Planning Gaps</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Each site will provide a 5-minute update on their mobility planning and their planning gaps</li> <li>Presentations are welcome but not needed</li> </ul>	12:30pm – 2:00pm	All attendees
<b>Identify Breakout Topics</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identify 4 key gap areas for group discussion</li> <li>Sort participants into groups</li> </ul>	2:00pm – 2:30pm	Nicholas Ramfos, NOCoE
<b>Breakouts:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>State the problem</li> <li>Identify solutions/alternatives</li> <li>Document timelines and next steps</li> </ul>	2:30pm – 2:45pm	All attendees
<b>Breakout Reports</b>	2:45 – 3:15pm	Breakout Captains
<b>Key Learnings from Day 2 and Follow-up</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Moderator remarks</li> </ul>	3:15 – 3:30pm	Nicholas Ramfos, NOCoE

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## Participant List

WC26 Site or Partner	Attendee	Agency
Atlanta	Justin Hatch	Georgia DOT
Atlanta	John Hibbard	Georgia DOT
Atlanta	Sam Hendow	Georgia DOT
Atlanta	Jon Gordon	MARTA
Atlanta	Joseph Hacker	ARC
Atlanta	Solomon Caviness	Atlanta DOT
Atlanta	Lenor Bromberg	Atlanta DOT
Atlanta	Micah Miller	FTA Atlanta
Atlanta	Aaron Williams	FHWA Atlanta
Atlanta	Sarah Lamothe	FHWA Atlanta

WC26 Site or Partner	Attendee	Agency
Atlanta	Sabrina David	FHWA Atlanta
Boston	Amy Getchell	MassDOT
Boston	Sam Sylvain	FWC Boston
Boston	Natalie Bettger	NCTCOG
Dallas	Daniel Burnham	City of Arlington
Houston	Joshua Shideler	Houston TranStar
Houston	Bernard Mendoza	Houston Sports Authority
Kansas City	Jason Sims	Kansas Sporting Commission
Kansas City	Marcus Slaughter	Missouri DOT
Kansas City	Michael Kodama	United Soccer Coaches
Los Angeles	Moniek Pointer	LA Metro
Miami	Omar Meitin	Florida DOT
Miami	Irene Cabral	Florida DOT
Miami	John Easterling	Florida DOT
Miami	Doug Prager	Florida's Turnpike - Jacobs Engineering
Miami	Dr. Lisa Colmenaras	Miami-Dade County
New Jersey	Rob Limoges	NYS DOT
New Jersey	Rebecca Gibson-Scott	NYSDOT
New Jersey	Jack Longworth	NJ DOT
Philadelphia	Steven Levine	TRANSCOM
Philadelphia	Dave Adams	PennDOT
Philadelphia	Richard Montanez	City of Philadelphia
San Francisco	Krute Singa	Bay Area Metro

# Atlanta Tour Brochure

## TOUR MAP GWCC/MBS SPECIAL EVENTS

### Key

- # Tour Stops
- FIFA Event Locations
- P MARTA Station
- P Police Presence
- Green Carpet
- >>> Contraflow

### Additional Highlights:

- GDOT Transportation Management Center (TMC)
- Atlanta JOC
- MARTA Transit Stations



#### 1. Georgia World Congress Center - EOC

Inside the Emergency Operations Center (EOC) GWCC police officers, transportation engineers, emergency response dispatch, MARTA, and other agencies work together. The collaboration among stakeholders has helped build a strong foundation of trust and communication, enabling us to prepare for the increased activity, minimize impacts on the general population, and create a great experience for all attendees.

#### 2. Centennial Olympic Park/ FIFA Fan Festival ®

FIFA Fan Festival ® will be hosted in Centennial Olympic Park, a 22-acre greenspace. Centennial Olympic Park is located less than 1/2 a mile from Mercedes-Benz (Atlanta) Stadium.

#### 3. Centennial Olympic Park Dr/MARTA Streetcar

The MARTA Streetcar operates two light rail vehicles operating approximately every 15 minutes. The route includes a stop located 0.3 miles from the State Farm Arena and 0.6 miles from Mercedes-Benz (Atlanta) Stadium. The streetcar utilizes transit signal priority to maintain 15 minute headways.



#### 4. Marietta St at Centennial Olympic Park Dr

Centennial Olympic Park Dr is the major roadway for those attending events in the downtown area. It connects the core of downtown to the hotel district and provides access to multiple parking lots and MARTA transit stations. During events, the intersection of Marietta St and Centennial Olympic Park Dr experiences high pedestrian and vehicle volumes. A pedestrian scramble is used in coordination with blankout signs and police officers to safely move large groups of pedestrians across the intersection while separating them from moving vehicles.



#### 5. Centennial Olympic Park Dr at State Farm Arena

During events Centennial Olympic Park Dr is contraflowed to provide additional capacity and reduce delay for vehicles turning into parking decks, rideshare drop-off, and pedestrians accessing the stadiums.



#### 6. Centennial Olympic Park Dr at Andrew Young International Blvd

This intersection is located directly next to multiple stadium entrance points and access points to parking decks. Traffic signal timing tools such as pedestrian scrambles, pedestrian holds, and pedestrian pulse plans are utilized to safely and efficiently move pedestrians through the intersection.

# Atlanta Tour Brochure (cont.)

## 7. SR 3/Northside Dr at MLK Jr Dr/AMB

SR 3/Northside Dr is a major corridor for events at Mercedes-Benz (Atlanta) Stadium, with access to parking lots and MARTA stations. To safely cross pedestrians across the high-volume corridor, pedestrian scrambles are programmed at all intersections from Mitchell St to Thurmond St. Additional technology such as LIDAR has been installed to provide real-time information to transportation engineers managing events. The intersection of SR 3/Northside Dr at MLK Jr Dr/AMB is one of the major access points for sports teams, event personnel, and emergency vehicles. During FIFA Club World Cup, fans gathered at the intersection to show support for their teams before and after the matches.



TOUR MAP GWCC/MBS SPECIAL EVENTS



## 8. SR 3/Northside Dr at Carter St

This pedestrian bridge was built over SR 3/Northside Dr to provide direct access from the Vine City MARTA Station to the Mercedes-Benz (Atlanta) Stadium, separating vehicles and pedestrians.



## 9. The Home Depot Backyard

The Home Depot Backyard has been used for tailgating events and promotional events connected to events ongoing at Mercedes-Benz (Atlanta) Stadium. The space has also been used for additional parking.

## GDOT Transportation Management Center (TMC)

The TMC was built for the 1996 Olympics and has grown into the major hub for fiber optic networks managed by GDOT. The GDOT TMC serves as the primary base of operations for transportation management during major planned special events. This is the central location for transportation management of freeway and arterial operations throughout Metro Atlanta, including operations along City owned roadways and traffic signals. Staff at the GDOT TMC can monitor traffic conditions through CCTV camera surveillance and on-street probe data, and make freeway messaging and signal timing adjustments in real-time to alleviate congestion.



## Green Carpet

The "green carpet" concept involves clearing traffic ahead of escorted movements, reducing the need for vehicles to pull over or for escorts to travel on the wrong side of the roadway, and quickly return traffic signal operations to their normal state. This not only minimizes delays but also ensures safer and more reliable operation for both pedestrians and vehicles. Successfully implementing a "green carpet" requires ongoing coordination between transportation engineers and officers.



## Atlanta JOC

The Atlanta Joint Operations Center (JOC) serves as a primary base of operations for public safety and local decision makers during major planned and unplanned events. During major planned events the Atlanta JOC, GWCC EOC, and GDOT TMC include representatives from each of major stakeholders as well as direct open lines of communication to enable seamless sharing of information.

## MARTA Transit Stations

Distance from Mercedes-Benz (Atlanta) Stadium

- GWCC/CNN – ¼ mile
- Vine City – ¼ mile
- Five Points – ½ mile
- Peachtree Center – 1 mile

# WC26 Resources


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**2026 World Cup (WC26)**

- [WC26 Toolkit](#)
- [WC26 N/INY Exchange \(Oct '24\)](#)
- [WC26 CTE Workshop \(June '24\)](#)
- [WC26 Overview \(Feb '24\)](#)

**Solar Eclipse Resources**

- [2024 Solar Eclipse](#)
- [2017 Solar Eclipse](#)
- [Solar Eclipse Peer Exchange](#)

**Other PSE Resources**

- [Labor Day Mackinac Bridge Walk](#)
- [Cinder Road 1/11 \(Atlanta 2017\)](#)

### 2026 World Cup Resources

NOCoE is collecting and sharing resources in preparation for the 2026 World Cup (WC26) taking place in the United States, Mexico, and Canada.

NOCoE will continue to add resources through 2026 by working with the 11 U.S. locations. Please contact [Adam Hoppes](#) with any questions or to share resources.

Current resources:

- [WC26 Toolkit](#)
- [WC26 - N/INY Exchange \(Oct '24\)](#)
- [WC26 - CTE Workshop \(June '24\)](#)
- [WC26 - Overview \(Feb '24\)](#)
- [Planned Special Events Resources](#)



View resources at: <https://transportationops.org/pse/wc26>