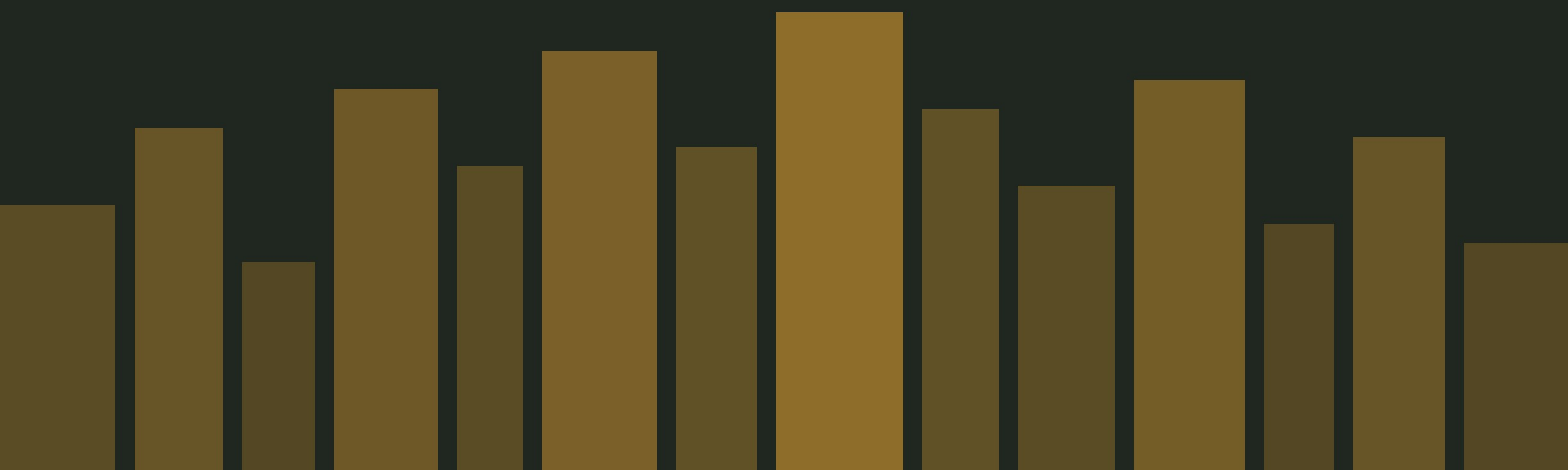




Hospitality Education and Research
Organization of Los Angeles

SEPTEMBER 2026



POST-WORLD CUP IMPACT: LA CITY HOTELS

What the 2026 FIFA World Cup Meant for LA Hotels—and the Road to the
2028 Olympics

Hospitality Education and Research Organization of Los Angeles (HERO LA),
a project of the Hotel Association of Los Angeles.



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

LA CITY HOTELS WERE READY FOR THE WORLD. ANTICIPATED WORLD CUP DEMAND NEVER ARRIVED.

Promoted as 104 Super Bowls in visitor demand—one for every match, 8 in Los Angeles alone—the World Cup instead delivered an ordinary, in many cases underperforming, summer for Los Angeles hotels, with weaker occupancy (the share of available hotel rooms that were sold) and reduced staffing across the city.¹ Nearly three-quarters of responding hotels said their property **significantly underperformed projections**.

56%

OF HOTELS WITH ROOM
BLOCKS (ROOMS HELD IN
ADVANCE) RELEASED AT
LEAST HALF

82%

CUT SEASONAL
STAFFING AS DEMAND
UNDERPERFORMED

48%

CALLED THE WORLD
CUP'S FINANCIAL IMPACT
"EXTREMELY NEGATIVE"

6 in 10

HOTELIERS EXPECT
OLYMPIC SHORT-TERM
RENTAL (STR) GROWTH
TO HURT BOOKINGS &
RATES



DEMAND FELL SHORT

Occupancy in the downtown Los Angeles (DTLA) Central Business District (CBD) reached just 66.4% in June—down nearly 6% from June 2024—and demand (room nights sold; one room night is one room for one night) fell 10% to 12% from 2024, trailing LA County and the Top 25 U.S. hotel markets.



RATES ROSE, REVENUE DIDN'T FOLLOW

Higher room rates couldn't offset weaker demand, limiting total hotel revenue—and the transient occupancy tax (TOT) collections the City could have expected from stronger performance.



WORLD CUP DELIVERED THE SMALLEST HOTEL DEMAND BOOST OF ANY RECENT MEGA EVENT

Major LA events since 2023 lifted occupancy 7% to 25%; the World Cup lifted it just 1%.



STAFFING AND HOURS DECLINED

Nearly three-quarters (74%) of hotels held staffing flat or cut it outright, and a hotel labor union representing 28,000 Southern California workers reported members losing hours.

“

“The expectation of visitors to LA did not materialize in hotels. The city and the country received great PR but people did not come and stay in hotels in Los Angeles.”

— LA CITY HOTELIER

Unless otherwise noted, hotel figures and quotes attributed to an “LA City Hotelier” come from the HERO Post-World Cup Hotel Survey (July 23–August 7, 2026). Numbered citations refer to the Bibliography. See the Appendix for methodology.

BY THE NUMBERS

WORLD CUP IMPACT SUMMARY

Compared with summer 2024—a more typical Los Angeles summer than 2025, when immigration enforcement raids and related unrest reduced tourism downtown—the World Cup tournament period was much weaker for 65% of responding hotels and somewhat weaker for one in five. The consequences reached demand, staffing, and revenue alike, while short-term rentals captured the upside hotels did not see.

DEMAND & OCCUPANCY	66.4% DTLA June occupancy, down ~6% vs. June 2024	-10 to -12% Demand vs. 2024 across DTLA & Airport Corridor	72% Of hotels said the World Cup hurt their 2026 financial picture
GROUP & ROOM BLOCKS	76% Saw minimal World Cup-related bookings	56% Of hotels with room blocks released at least half	<1/3 Replaced released blocks with comparable new bookings
WORKFORCE	82% Cut seasonal staffing	74% Reduced overtime hours	6 in 10 Reduced shifts, scheduled hours, or permanent staff
SHORT-TERM RENTALS	+10% LA City STR supply vs. 2025	+21% STR revenue growth while hotel performance lagged	6 in 10 Expect STR growth to hurt 2028 Olympic bookings & rates

BOTTOM LINE — WHAT THIS MEANS FOR 2028

Mega-event demand projections overstated the hotel benefit—and unchecked short-term rental growth compounds the shortfall. With STR revenue up 21% while hotel performance lagged, and 6 in 10 hoteliers already bracing for a repeat, Los Angeles should treat Olympic demand projections—and STR policy—with the same scrutiny before the far larger test of 2028.

Sources: HERO Post-World Cup Hotel Survey (July 23–August 7, 2026; 58 of 210 hotels responding); CoStar (hotel performance); AirDNA (short-term rentals).

FINDING 1

HOTEL DEMAND FELL SHORT OF EXPECTATIONS

The 2026 World Cup—hosted by Canada, Mexico, and the U.S. and organized by the Fédération Internationale de Football Association (FIFA)—was promoted as the ‘biggest show on Earth,’ expected to generate the equivalent of 104 Super Bowls across 104 matches.¹ FIFA’s own socioeconomic impact analysis projected 6.5 million attendees—including 40% international—and \$11.1 billion in event-related expenditures, supporting 185,000 full-time jobs in the U.S., nearly 32,000 of them in accommodation and food services alone.^{2,3}

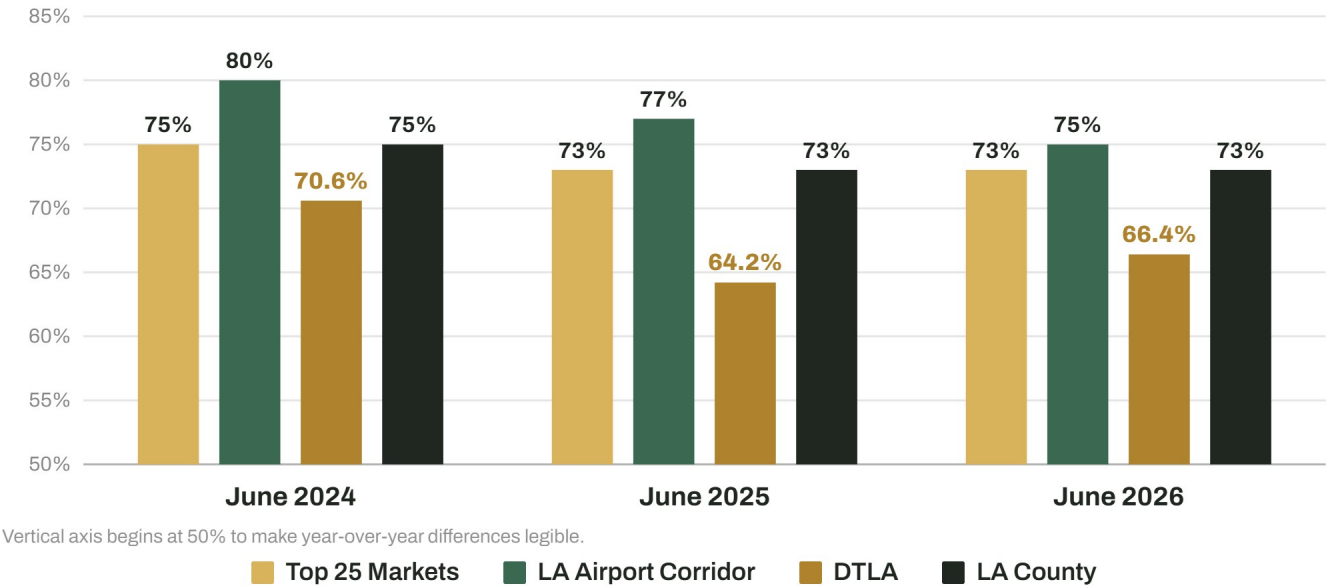
Instead, for many Los Angeles hotels, the World Cup looked less like a transformative mega-event and more like an ordinary summer. Across the City of Los Angeles, hotel occupancy and demand were not only below historical summer benchmarks such as 2024—they also underperformed LA County overall and the Top 25 U.S. hotel markets (see the Appendix for geography definitions).⁴

“Everyone was priced to demand that never materialized, from the games being so scattered. The market responded by racing to the bottom with rates. Other business also held off coming to LA to avoid inflated travel and lodging fees. There was extremely limited group demand. The watch parties took away from normal dinner demand in our sit-down restaurant...”

— LA CITY
HOTELIER

HOTEL OCCUPANCY BY MARKET — JUNE 2024–2026

June occupancy rate in each benchmark market^{5,6}



“World Cup made no difference to my business; it was slower than past summers.”

— LA CITY HOTELIER

Expectations vs. Reality: Demand and Rates Fell Short

June occupancy in DTLA reached 66.4%—up 3.4% from June 2025, when immigration enforcement raids suppressed visitor demand, but **down nearly 6% from June 2024's 70.6%**. Demand was also down 10% to 12% from 2024 levels, trailing both LA County overall and Top 25 U.S. markets across DTLA and the Airport Corridor (see Appendix).^{5,6} While DTLA hotels did achieve higher room rates than in 2024 and 2025, weaker demand limited total hotel revenue—and that shortfall carries directly into the TOT collections the City could have expected from stronger performance, since TOT is levied as a share of room revenue actually booked, not rooms available.

104

SUPER BOWLS' WORTH OF VISITOR DEMAND PROMISED BY FIFA'S FORECAST¹

ONLY 2%

OF HOTELS SAID THE EVENT MET PROJECTIONS

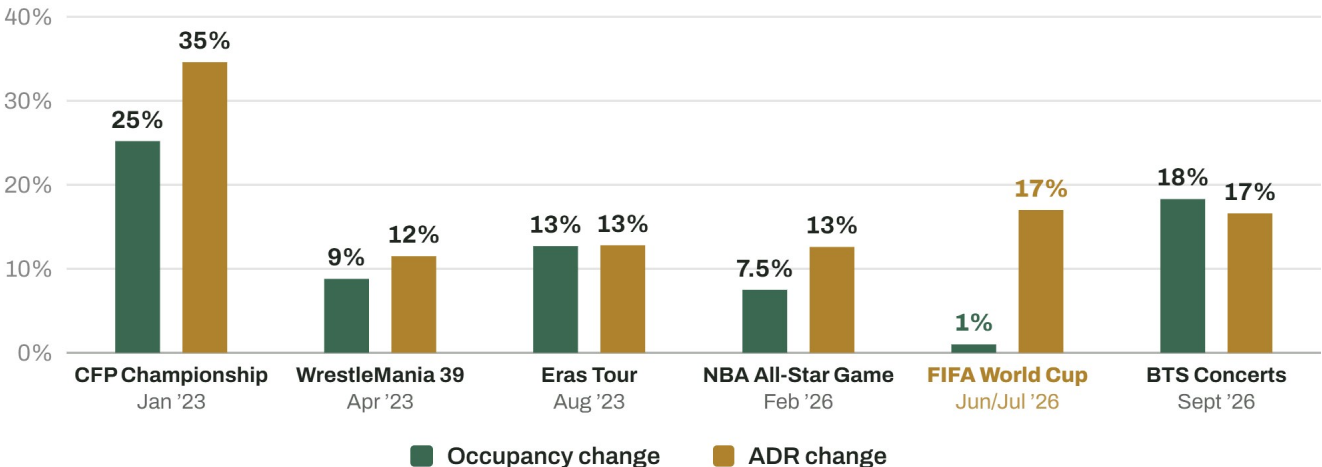
FINDING 2

RATES ROSE, BUT OCCUPANCY FAILED TO FOLLOW

Major sporting events, concerts, and conventions typically give hotels more pricing power than new demand, especially in large markets like Los Angeles, where hotel inventory is extensive and even major events may not meaningfully increase overall occupancy. That pattern appeared across World Cup host cities, where room rates rose more than occupancy or demand. But Los Angeles' recent mega-event history shows why the 2026 World Cup stands out: most citywide events over the past three years lifted both rates and occupancy by 7% to 25%.⁷ The FIFA World Cup was the exception—during the tournament period, City of Los Angeles occupancy increased only 1% on average from 2025 and remained roughly 5% below 2024 levels.⁸

MEGA EVENT OCCUPANCY & RATE LIFT — CITY OF LA

Year-over-year change in occupancy and average daily rate (ADR, the average price paid per occupied room) by event^{7,8}



CFP = College Football Playoff National Championship · NBA = National Basketball Association

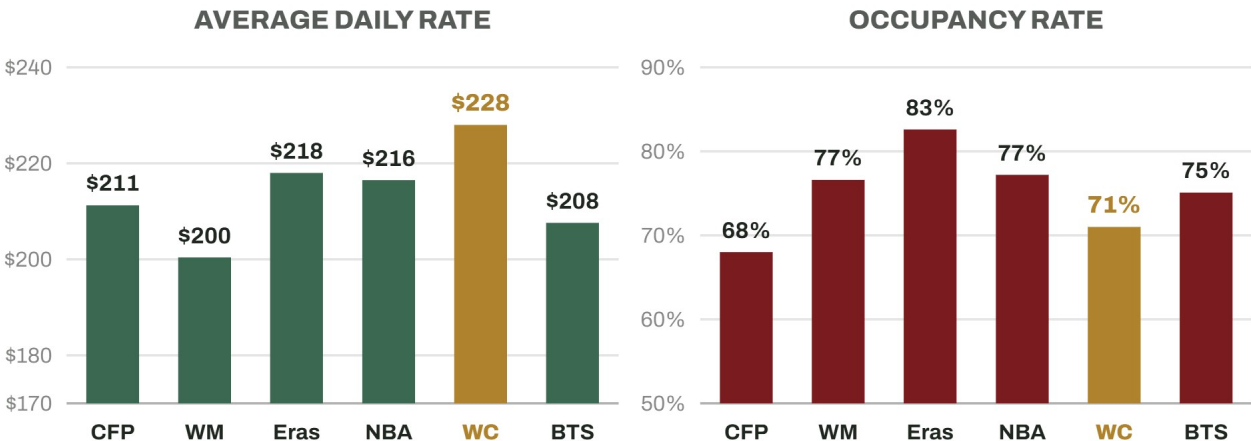
In other words, Los Angeles hotels achieved the rate increases typically associated with major events, but not the occupancy lift. Occupancy was roughly in line with June and July 2025 and below the more comparable Summer 2024 benchmark. Without the expected hotel demand, many properties had little reason to add workers, hours, or shifts to support additional visitors.

FINDING 2, CONTINUED

World Cup Rates Kept Pace With the Best—Occupancy Didn't

AVERAGE DAILY RATE & OCCUPANCY BY MAJOR LA EVENT

Absolute levels achieved during each event, not year-over-year change^{7,8}



CFP = College Football Playoff National Championship (Jan. 2023) · WM = WrestleMania 39 (Apr. 2023) · Eras = Taylor Swift: The Eras Tour (Aug. 2023) · NBA = NBA All-Star Game (Feb. 2026) · WC = FIFA World Cup (June–July 2026) · BTS = BTS concerts (Sept. 2026)

The World Cup's \$228 ADR was the highest of any comparable LA mega event over the past three years, yet its 71% occupancy was the second-lowest in the group—ahead of only the CFP National Championship. Hotels captured the pricing power a marquee event typically brings, but not the demand: a pattern consistent with a tournament whose visitors skewed local and price-sensitive rather than the long-distance, high-spending travelers FIFA had projected.

FINDING 3

WORLD CUP ACTIVITY WAS MORE LOCAL THAN EXPECTED

FIFA forecasts anticipated strong demand from long-distance, high-spending international travelers booking extended multi-night stays.⁹ Instead, record-high ticket prices, elevated travel costs, visa constraints, and other logistical hurdles¹⁰ appear to have shifted more activity toward regional and domestic drive markets—visitors who arrive by car and are less likely to generate overnight hotel demand. Despite projections of record out-of-town and international visitation, the vast majority of LA City hotels (76%) reported minimal World Cup-related booking activity.

“

“No long-term and international travel materialized. Weaker demand from all segments not related to World Cup and less demand than normal time period.”

— LA CITY HOTELIER

100K+

FAN ZONE AND FAN FESTIVAL VISITORS—MUCH OF IT LOCAL, WITHOUT OVERNIGHT HOTEL STAYS¹¹

FINDING 3, CONTINUED

Year-to-date through July, overseas arrivals to Los Angeles were down 5% from 2025 and remained 33% below 2019 levels. Los Angeles welcomed 700,000 international arrivals in June and July 2026—still roughly 80,000 visitors, or 10%, below 2024 levels for the same period.^{12,13} U.S. Travel reports that overseas visitors spend \$4,000 per trip on average—eight times more than domestic travelers—a meaningful contributor to the visitor economy that Los Angeles largely did not capture.¹⁴

Los Angeles created 10 regional Fan Zones and a Memorial Coliseum Fan Festival for fans without match tickets, welcoming more than 100,000 people.¹¹ But much of that activity originated from local or regional visitors who did not stay overnight in hotels. Bank of America credit and debit card data indicate that restaurants and bars saw the strongest spending gains from the added foot traffic tied to Fan Zones and watch parties across the region. Hotels did not benefit from the same pattern, because much of that activity did not translate into overnight stays.¹⁵



FINDING 4

WORLD CUP TRAVELERS DISPLACED HIGHER-VALUE HOTEL DEMAND

Business travel firms and meeting-industry analysts anticipated significant displacement of corporate meetings and events from FIFA World Cup host cities during June and July 2026, due to hotel capacity constraints, elevated rates, and access challenges. Industry publications specifically identified non-host cities and secondary markets as beneficiaries of redirected group demand (blocks of rooms booked together for meetings, conferences, and events).¹⁶ As a result, many meeting and event planners avoided booking large conferences in Los Angeles, both during the tournament and in the weeks leading up to it.

Chicago provides one example of displaced demand benefiting a major U.S. metro not hosting World Cup matches: despite smaller rate gains, group occupancy was up approximately 5% in June and July, while Los Angeles and other Top 25 markets saw flat to 2% group occupancy gains over 2025.¹⁷ In Texas, Fort Worth—next door to host cities Dallas and Arlington—kept its usual event calendar running, including a Future Farmers of America convention with more than 16,000 attendees the week before the games.¹⁸

“

...World Cup demand was much softer than anticipated, not driving any group or event volume, and there was minimal FIFA related transient [individual, non-group] business...We also froze all new hiring, and cut shifts and labor due to the increased cost of the minimum wage increases and health benefit allowance.”

— LA CITY HOTELIER

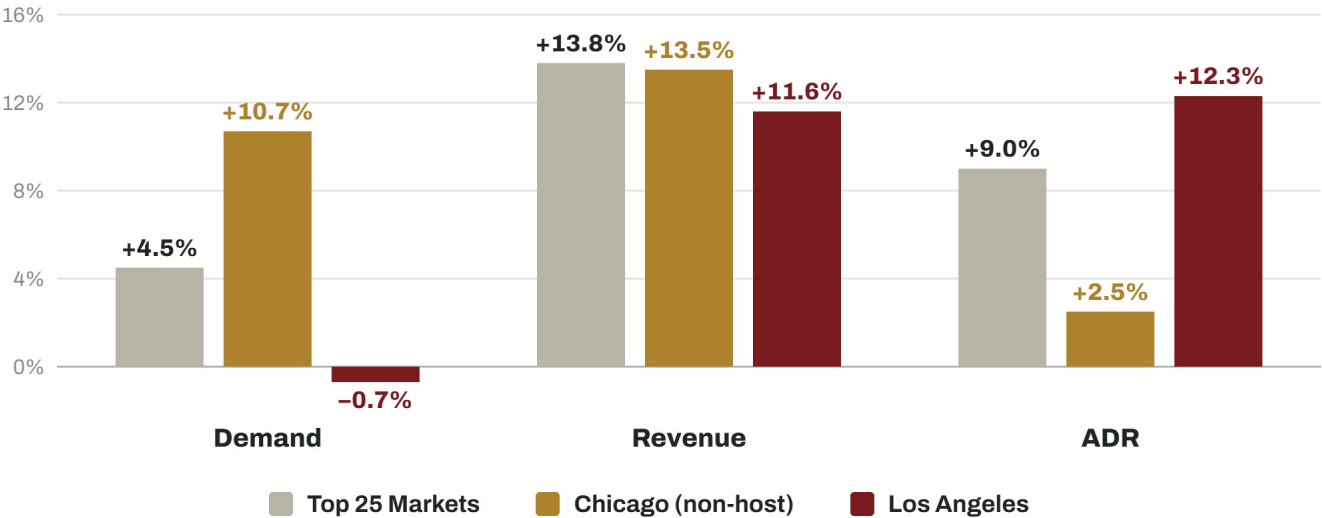
FINDING 4, CONTINUED

Group Demand Didn't Disappear—It Moved to Non-Host Markets

CoStar data show U.S. markets hosting World Cup matches saw the strongest average daily rate growth in June, but flat demand and declining occupancy—while non-host markets drove all of the nation's net hotel demand increase.¹⁹

JUNE + JULY 2026 GROUP HOTEL PERFORMANCE

Year-over-year change in group demand, revenue, and average daily rate¹⁷



Chicago's group demand rose nearly 11% while Los Angeles' slipped slightly—even as LA posted the largest rate gain of the three. LA hotels charged more per group room, but hosted fewer groups.

12 of 14

TOP JUNE OCCUPANCY-GROWTH MARKETS WERE NOT HOSTING WORLD CUP MATCHES²⁰

— Brian Berry, Chief Commercial Officer, Pyramid Global Hospitality

“

“...Groups that may otherwise have held events in cities like Boston or Philadelphia chose Chicago this summer to avoid World Cup traffic. The bottom line is that this summer's World Cup didn't prevent organizations and companies from holding events—it simply moved that demand to other places.”

— JAN FREITAG, NATIONAL DIRECTOR OF HOSPITALITY ANALYTICS, COSTAR²¹

FINDING 5

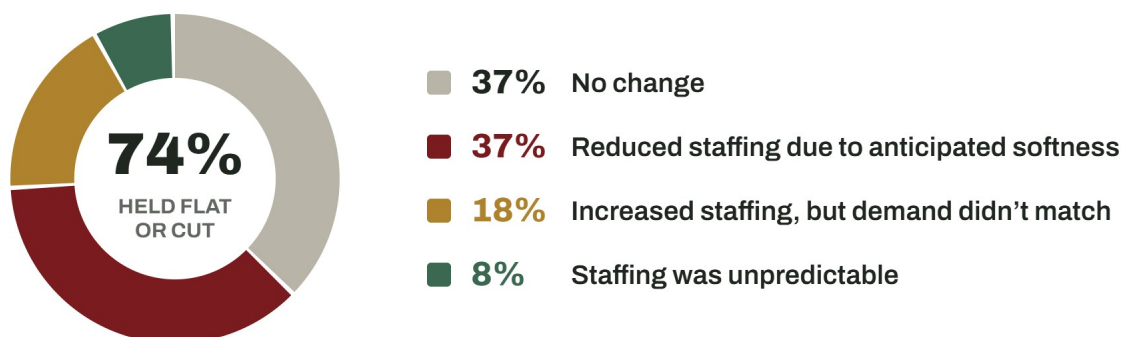
DISAPPOINTING DEMAND HAD REAL CONSEQUENCES FOR HOSPITALITY WORKERS

Expectations of unprecedented tourism demand and revenue in the City of Los Angeles were used to support assumptions that hotels could absorb higher labor costs and expand payrolls. Weaker-than-expected World Cup demand translated directly into labor consequences for Los Angeles hotels instead.

At a time when the broader U.S. economy was already pressuring employers through inflation, higher operating costs, elevated interest rates, and softer consumer demand, hotels had little confidence to add staff or extend hours.²² Even during a year packed with major tourism milestones—America’s 250th birthday celebrations, 11 U.S. cities hosting FIFA World Cup matches, and the 100th anniversary of Route 66—leisure and hospitality employment nationally contracted in June and remained essentially flat in July 2026, the height of the summer travel season.²³ For Los Angeles, the World Cup did not ease those labor pressures; it reinforced them.

STAFFING HEADING INTO THE WORLD CUP

Share of responding LA City hotels · Source: HERO Post-World Cup Hotel Survey, July 23–August 7, 2026



Recent labor-cost and training-requirement increases further limited hotels’ ability to adjust staffing, pricing, and services in response to changing demand—contributing to a negative full-year 2026 outlook.

A Worker’s Expectation

A decline in international tourists, combined with vacation cutbacks by Americans, had already reduced demand for rooms at the downtown Los Angeles hotel where one union worker cleans the main kitchen. Yet Los Angeles was one of 11 U.S. cities hosting World Cup games—and he was confident he’d get more work. Soccer fans visiting for matches would surely pack his hotel, he hoped, finally covering his family’s rising costs. **That didn’t happen.**²⁴

FINDING 5, CONTINUED

Hours and Shifts Absorbed Most of the Impact

The lackluster World Cup hotel demand negatively affected employee hours and shifts most of all. At least three-quarters of responding hotels reported reducing seasonal staff, general hiring, and overtime. More than six in 10 reported reducing employee shifts, scheduled hours, or permanent staff.

REDUCING THE HOTEL WORKFORCE

Share of responding LA City hotels that reduced each area · Source: HERO Post-World Cup Hotel Survey



As recently as July, a hotel labor union representing 28,000 workers in Southern California reported that nearly 20% of its workers in Los Angeles had seen their hours cut over the past year because of declines in tourism.²⁵ Kurt Petersen, co-president of UNITE HERE Local 11, told LAist that mega-events usually create a surge of employment—but this time, workers are seeing fewer opportunities, especially in downtown LA hotels.²⁶

The reality is that World Cup-related labor impacts were limited and temporary. With little new infrastructure built, job gains were largely tied to single-day events and had marginal, short-lived effects on employment growth. In host cities such as Los Angeles, where tourism activity is already significant and international travel plays an important role, any incremental job gains were unlikely to be sustained.

“The hope was that FIFA would bring work to all our members. That has not come to pass yet,” He said having fewer shifts during the World Cup means that workers may need to make “tough choices. It’s difficult to live in Los Angeles [...] having less work means making harder choices about how to make your dollar go further,”

— KURT PETERSEN, CO-PRESIDENT, UNITE HERE LOCAL 11

Source: LAist, June 11, 2026²⁶

FINDING 6

DEMAND VOLATILITY CREATED OPERATIONAL WHIPLASH

Several pressures converged in the weeks leading up to the World Cup, including broader city policy challenges, softer-than-expected demand, and more complex hotel operating conditions. Together, those factors contributed to FIFA's cancellation of thousands of downtown Los Angeles room nights shortly before the matches began.

Those late room-block releases disrupted hotel planning in three ways:

- 1 Revenue forecasts became unreliable, because hotels had built projections around blocks secured months in advance.
- 2 Staffing plans became harder to manage as expected demand failed to materialize.
- 3 Operational investments became riskier, because some hotels had already planned renovations, service levels, and labor needs around anticipated World Cup volume.

With demand falling short, Los Angeles City hotels had to pivot quickly. Many cut rates, dropped minimum-stay requirements, and marketed aggressively to backfill canceled block demand with lower-rated, last-minute leisure bookings—a scramble that traded planning stability for occupancy, and profitability along with it.

ROOM BLOCKS RELEASED



<1/3

WERE ABLE TO REPLACE RELEASED BLOCKS WITH COMPARABLE NEW BOOKINGS

“

*We released all FIFA blocks in April. We were able to replace most of it with transient [individual, non-group] guests, however at much lower rates, so much less profitable. Group room revenue suffered greatly (we lost **\$1.6 million** in group revenue), but we were able to gain some of it with transient guests (about 70%).”*

— LA CITY HOTELIER

FINDING 7

SHORT-TERM RENTALS BENEFITTED MORE THAN HOTELS

Airbnb—the Official Fan Accommodation of the FIFA World Cup 2026™—launched its largest host incentive to date, offering \$750 to new hosts who listed their entire home across the 16 host cities during the tournament.²⁷ A Deloitte report released earlier this year cited an 80% increase in searches for stays in host cities and estimated hosts could earn \$3,000 on average during the tournament, with Los Angeles–area hosts potentially earning up to \$5,100.²⁸

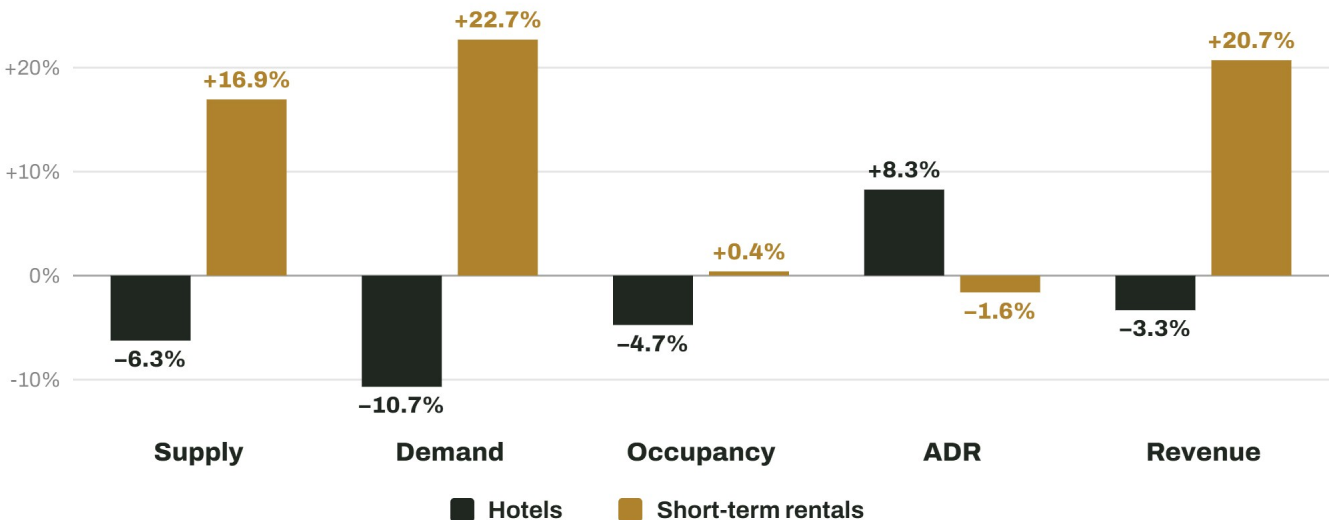
FINDING 7, CONTINUED

These incentives contributed to a 10% increase in short-term rental supply (the number of available listings) in the City of Los Angeles during the World Cup period compared with 2025,²⁹ and demand rose 12% over the same period.³⁰ With supply rising, occupancy was nearly flat (+1.4%), while rates increased 14% to an average of \$230. Unlike hotels, short-term rentals could respond flexibly to market demand and pricing because they were not required to commit to blocks or rates months in advance.

While hotel performance across the City of Los Angeles was largely weaker than the more typical July 2024 benchmark, short-term rentals—bolstered by nearly 2,400 more available listings—reported a 23% increase in demand and a 21% increase in revenue over the same period.³⁰ Lodging Analytics Research & Consulting (LARC) reported that short-term rentals accounted for a greater share of overall accommodations revenue in Los Angeles during the second quarter of 2026 (6.4%) than in the U.S. overall (4.5%), driven primarily by supply expansion rather than occupancy or rate growth.³¹

CITY OF LA GROWTH: HOTELS VS. SHORT-TERM RENTALS

Year-over-year change, July 2026 vs. July 2024 · Sources: CoStar (hotels); AirDNA (short-term rentals)



49%

OF LA CITY HOTELS SAID SHORT-TERM RENTAL DEMAND HURT THEIR WORLD CUP BOOKINGS

“

“World Cup didn’t bring any business. In fact, we saw reduced revenue compared to prior years. We had a horrible summer influx of tourists.”

— LA CITY HOTELIER

CONCLUSION

WHAT THIS MEANS FOR THE ROAD TO 2028

“Wish they didn’t hold World Cup in LA; it gave us false hope to recover from a negative year. I also feel [the] same thing will probably happen for [the] Super Bowl and Olympics.”

— LA CITY HOTELIER

72% OF HOTELS SAID THE WORLD CUP HURT THEIR 2026 FINANCIAL PICTURE

6 in 10 HOTELIERS EXPECT AN OLYMPIC SHORT-TERM RENTAL SURGE TO SIGNIFICANTLY HURT BOOKINGS AND RATES

The World Cup was promoted as 104 Super Bowls, 8 of them in Los Angeles. For LA City hotels, it was an ordinary summer at best, with fewer hours for workers, and a warning that headline attendance is not the same as overnight demand. Three lessons should shape 2028:

- 1 The World Cup was the outlier, not the rule.**
Every other major LA event since 2023 lifted hotel occupancy 7% to 25%. The World Cup lifted it just 1%.
- 2 Mega-events can push out the business that sustains hotels.**
Groups and conventions moved to non-host cities like Chicago, where group demand rose nearly 11%. In LA, 56% of hotels with room blocks saw at least half released, and fewer than one-third could replace them.
- 3 Who visits, and where they stay, determines the impact.**
Local fans filled Fan Zones but not hotel rooms. International visitors, who spend eight times as much as domestic travelers, fell short, while short-term rental revenue grew 21%.

With 74% of hotels holding staffing flat or cutting it this summer, getting demand assumptions right is also how hotels protect workers’ hours. Los Angeles has two years to attract the visitors most likely to stay overnight, protect baseline business, and make 2028 a **win** for the Los Angeles tourism industry.

APPENDIX

METHODOLOGY & GEOGRAPHY

DEFINITIONS

Survey Methodology

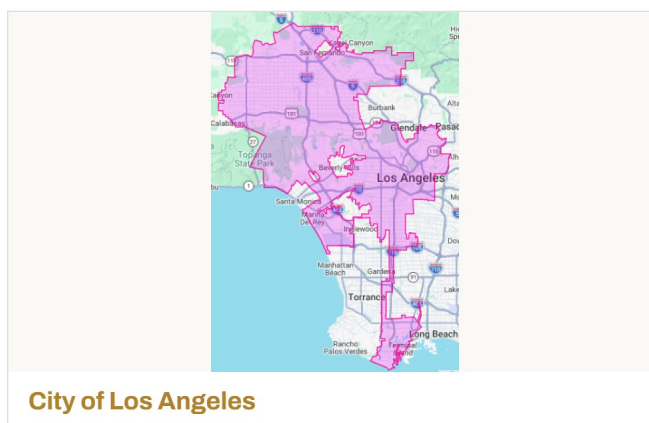
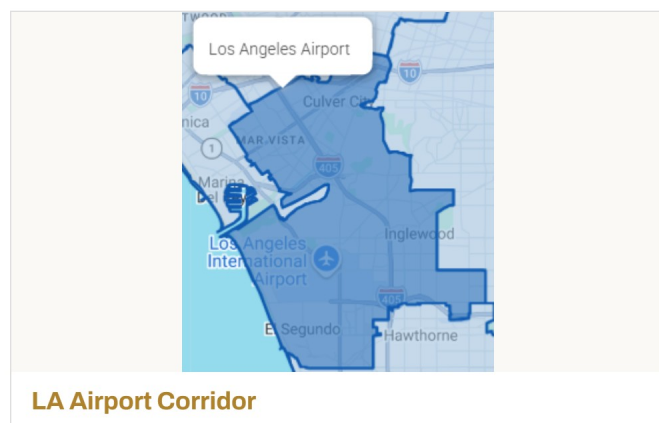
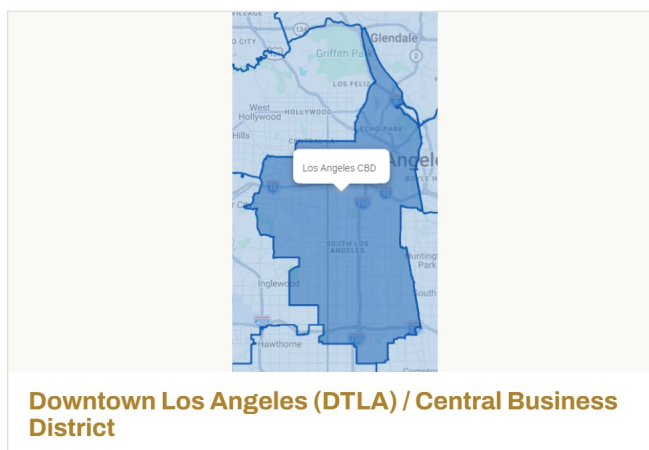
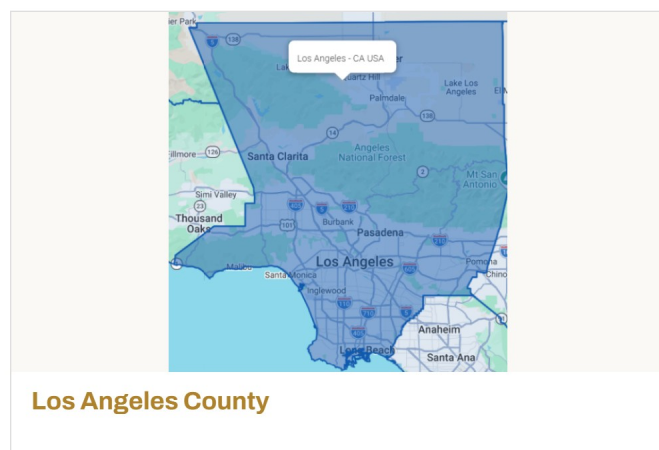
The HERO Post-World Cup Hotel Survey was sent to 210 hoteliers within the City of Los Angeles between July 23 and August 7, 2026. Fifty-eight hotels responded to at least one question, with 47 completing the entire survey—an approximately 22% response rate. Percentages are based on the hotels that answered each question, so the number of responses varies by question. Responses were anonymized and are reported only in aggregate. Quotes attributed to an “LA City Hotelier” are verbatim answers to the survey’s open-ended questions; words in [brackets] were added for clarity.

Other Data Sources

Hotel performance data (occupancy, demand, average daily rate, and revenue) are from CoStar. Short-term rental data are from AirDNA, and short-term rentals’ share of accommodations revenue is from Lodging Analytics Research & Consulting (LARC). All other figures come from published reports and news coverage, each cited by number in the text and listed in full in the Bibliography.

Benchmark year. Summer 2024 was used as the benchmark for a typical summer whenever possible throughout this report. In summer 2025, federal immigration enforcement raids, National Guard deployment, and related civil unrest reduced foot traffic and tourism in downtown Los Angeles.

Geography Definitions



ABOUT THIS REPORT

HERO & THE RESEARCH TEAM

What Is Project HERO?

To address gaps in market-specific data, the Hotel Association of Los Angeles established Project HERO (Hospitality Education and Research Organization) to evaluate the workforce and operational impacts of major events and policy changes on Los Angeles hotels. Rove, led by Jamie Mageau, was engaged to compile relevant data, manage this study, and develop this Post-World Cup impact report, including a survey of affected hotels and a synthesis of relevant industry and secondary data.



Jamie Mageau
Head of Advisory Services, Rove

Jamie is an experienced problem solver, strategic thinker, and data storyteller, with over 20 years of expertise delivering meaningful insights to senior stakeholders across various industries.

Currently, she is Head of Advisory Services at Rove, a software-as-a-service (SaaS) business intelligence platform specializing in tourism industry solutions that enable clients to manage, centralize, and utilize their data more effectively.

In this capacity, she acts as a client advocate, guiding travel industry partners through adoption and optimization of the platform to help them derive greater value. Additionally, she provides consultative support by interpreting data trends and delivering actionable recommendations tailored to their strategic objectives.

Prior to Rove, she spent over a decade as Research Director at the U.S. Travel Association, where she developed deep industry expertise in executing, translating, and presenting strategic research initiatives to enhance member value, support advocacy, and provide thought leadership. Her experience includes managing the association's research agenda, collaborating cross-functionally to improve research accessibility, communicating the industry's significance to a variety of stakeholders, and delivering insights designed to drive value and revenue.

She also worked as a program analyst at the U.S. Census Bureau, designing outreach campaigns to millions of U.S. businesses about the Economic Census, and as a research account manager, developing customer satisfaction and loyalty research for Fortune 500 companies.

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