

THE 2026 WORLD CUP IN THE CITY OF BOSTON

City of Boston Research Division
August 2026

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Gillette Stadium in Foxborough hosted seven World Cup games in June and July 2026. Many of these fans also spent time in Boston and non-ticket holders also frequented Boston bars, restaurants, and FanFest or Community Watch Parties to watch World Cup games. This report analyzes the economic impact of the World Cup on the city of Boston in two ways: (1) estimating the economic impact of spending by participants in specific Boston World Cup events, and (2) comparing overall economic metrics in Boston for the peak World Cup season in late June 2026 with the equivalent days in 2025.

VISITS TO BOSTON WORLD CUP EVENTS

- Boston World Cup events include event trains between South Station and Gillette Stadium (~106,373 rides), FanFest on City Hall plaza, and community watch parties (~207,000 visits).
- These 313,000 visits to World Cup events in Boston generated an estimated \$165 million in consumer spending, increasing Suffolk County’s economic output by \$238 million and supporting an additional 1,121 jobs, compared to REMI’s baseline forecast.
- Spending associated with Boston World Cup events generated an estimated \$3.2 million in tax revenue for Boston.

EVALUATING THE NET IMPACT OF THE WORLD CUP ON BOSTON

Comparing the World Cup season in Boston (June 12-30, 2026) to late June 2025:

YEAR OVER YEAR AVERAGE DAILY CHANGE	BOSTON	GREATER DOWNTOWN ¹
Overall Visits	-0.15%	+31.8%
Orange Line Ridership for June ²	+48.9%	NA
Overseas Arrivals at Logan for June ³	+25%	NA
Overall Spending	+5%	+11%
Restaurant Spending	+2%	+15%
Bar/Restaurant Seated Reservations	+13%	NA
Bar Spending	+27%	+86%
Hotel Occupied Rooms	+2%	+4.1%
Hotel Revenue	+31%	+32%

Sources: CityData, MBTA, International Trade Administration I-94, MasterCard, Open Table, CoStar.

¹ Includes Downtown, Chinatown, Leather District, North End, West End, and Beacon Hill.

² Orange Line ridership only includes Gated Stations in Boston and an entry is measured as a successful smart card tap, credit card tap, or ticket insertion recorded at a faregate.

³ Overseas arrivals for the entire month of June.

PARTICIPATION IN WORLD CUP EVENTS IN BOSTON

Participants in Boston World Cup events are defined as those who attended FanFest or a Community Watch Party or who boarded a South Station stadium train. There may be some overlap between these groups - someone could go to FanFest one day and take the train to the stadium on another day. Therefore, these visit numbers should be interpreted as visit days of participation in a World Cup-related event, rather than unique visitors. In total, the data identified approximately 313,000 visits to World Cup events in Boston.



POINTS OF INTEREST

□ Greater Downtown

Ⓣ South Station

🍷 Social Districts

Viewing Points

🎪 Fan Fest

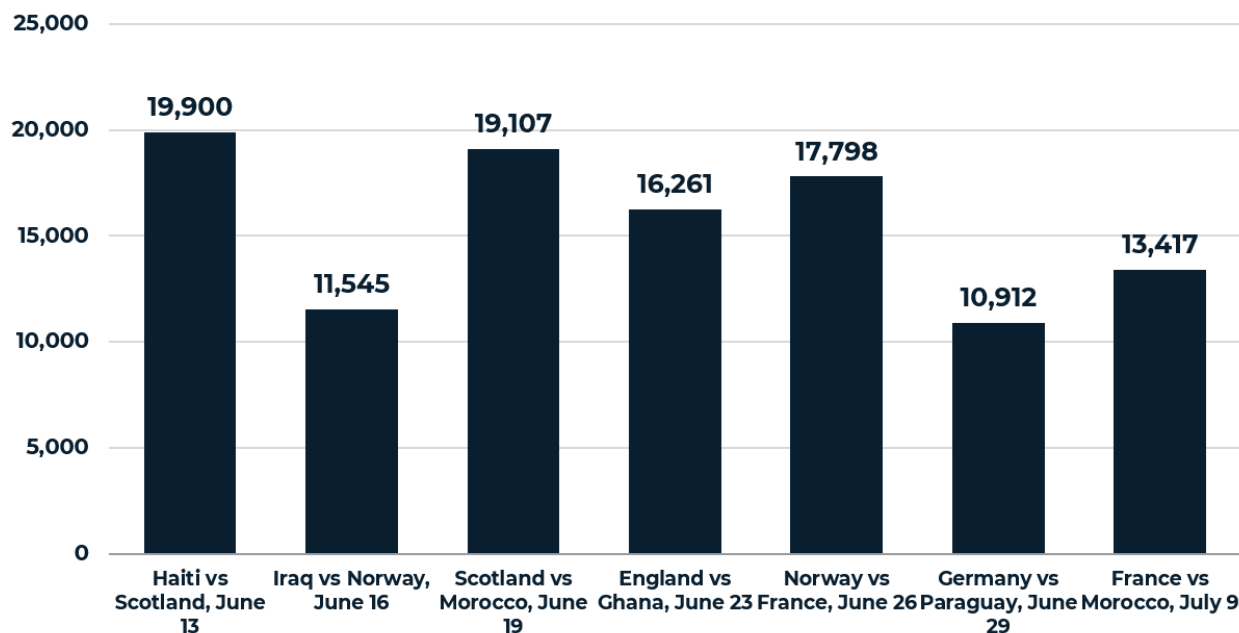
🎪 Parkman Bandstand

Source: City of Boston Research Division Analysis.

More than 108,000 train tickets from South Station to Gillette Stadium were sold for the seven World Cup matches in June/July 2026. Of the 106,373 actual scanned riders 76.8% were from outside the Boston area and 40.1% were international visitors.¹

EVENT TRAIN TICKETS SOLD FOR EACH WORLD CUP MATCH

Number of event train tickets sold for each World Cup match at Gillette Stadium



Source: MBTA, City of Boston Research Division Analysis.

158,334 fans attended FanFest on City Hall plaza during the 15 days of operation between June 12th and 26th.² Approximately 31.3% of these fans were from outside the Boston area and 15.4% were international visitors.

Approximately 48,000 fans attended one of the 18 community watch parties held in addition to FanFest.³ An estimated 23.8% of these fans were from outside the Boston area and 2.5% were international visitors.

¹ MBTA ridership data

² Scanned visitor data from World Cup Boston

³ CityData mobility data

VISITS TO BOSTON WORLD CUP EVENTS

	TOTAL VISITS	SHARE FROM OUTSIDE THE BOSTON AREA ⁴	SHARE INTERNATIONAL
Community Watch Parties	~48,000	23.8%	2.5%
FIFA Fan Fest	158,334	31.3%	15.4%
Event train boardings	106,373	76.8%	40.6%
TOTAL	~313,000	45.6%	22.0%

COMPARING THE WORLD CUP SEASON IN BOSTON TO LATE JUNE 2025

Unless otherwise noted, this analysis compares June 12-30th, 2026 with the same days of the week in June 13th-July 1st, 2025 to evaluate the potential net impact of the World Cup on Boston.

CHANGE IN VISITATION COMPARED TO 2025

Overall, Boston saw 0.15% fewer visits June 12-30th, 2026 compared to similar days in 2025, as measured by cell phones entering the city. Over the same time period, however, the Greater Downtown area and surrounding neighborhoods saw significantly higher levels of visitation.

	AVERAGE DAILY CHANGE IN VISITATION
Citywide	-0.15%
Downtown	+53.7%
Chinatown	+17.8%
West End	+16.0%
Fenway	+8.1%
Back Bay	+7.3%
Beacon Hill	+4.6%
South Boston Waterfront	+3.2%

Source: CityData, City of Boston Research Division Analysis.

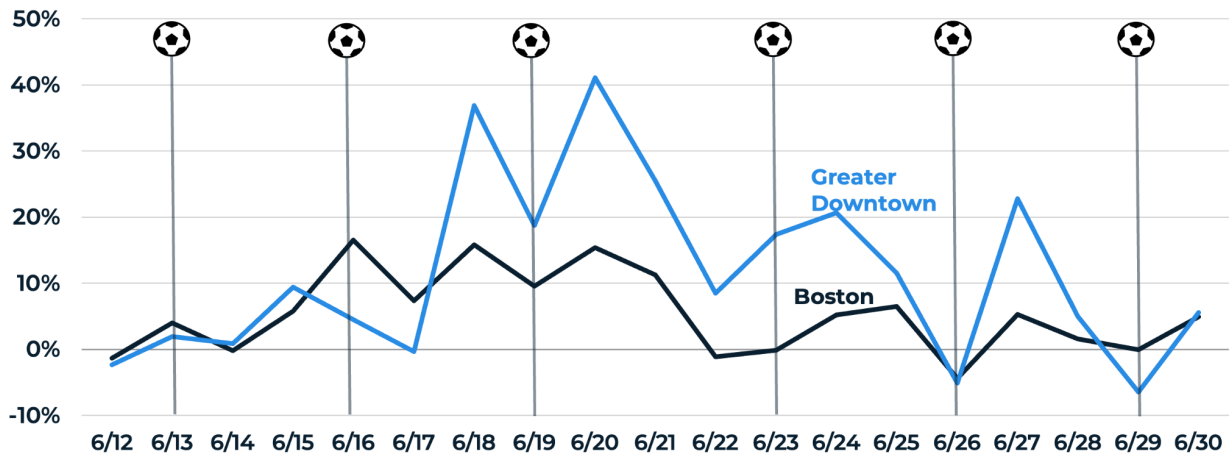
⁴ Defined as being within a 5 mile buffer of Boston city boundaries. See the **Determining Local, Day Trip, and Overnight Visitors** visualization in the appendix for the detailed geography.

CHANGE IN OVERALL CONSUMER SPENDING COMPARED TO 2025

Adjusted for inflation, overall in-person consumer spending in Boston was 5.1% higher June 12-30th 2026 compared to June 13-July 1st 2025. Spending in Greater Downtown was 11.1% higher.

CHANGE IN OVERALL CONSUMER SPENDING IN BOSTON & GREATER DOWNTOWN

Year over year change in daily total retail spending, June 12-30, 2026 (day of week adjusted)



Note: Vertical lines represent days with games held in Foxborough. Consumer spending is inflation-adjusted.

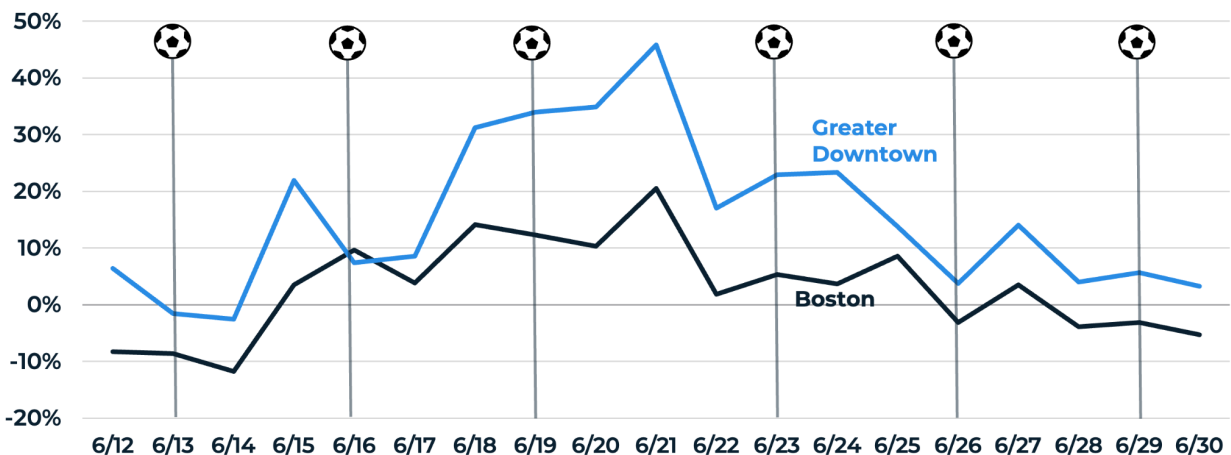
Source: Mastercard Geographic Insights, City of Boston Research Division Analysis

CHANGE IN BAR AND RESTAURANT SPENDING COMPARED TO 2025

Spending at eating places during the World Cup was up 2% citywide and 14.9% in Greater Downtown compared to 2025. The increase in restaurant spending peaked on Sunday June 21st at 20% above 2025 levels citywide and 46% higher in Greater Downtown.

CHANGE IN RESTAURANT SPENDING IN BOSTON & GREATER DOWNTOWN

Year over year change in daily eating places spending, June 12-30, 2026 (day of week adjusted)



Note: Vertical lines represent days with games held in Foxborough. Consumer spending is inflation-adjusted.

Source: Mastercard Geographic Insights, City of Boston Research Division Analysis

	AVERAGE DAILY CHANGE IN RESTAURANT SPENDING
Citywide	+2.8%
Fenway	+24.9%
West End	+24.3%
Beacon Hill	+15.1%
Downtown	+13.7%
Back Bay	+5.1%
South Boston Waterfront	-1.7%

Source: MasterCard Geographic Insights, City of Boston Research Division Analysis.

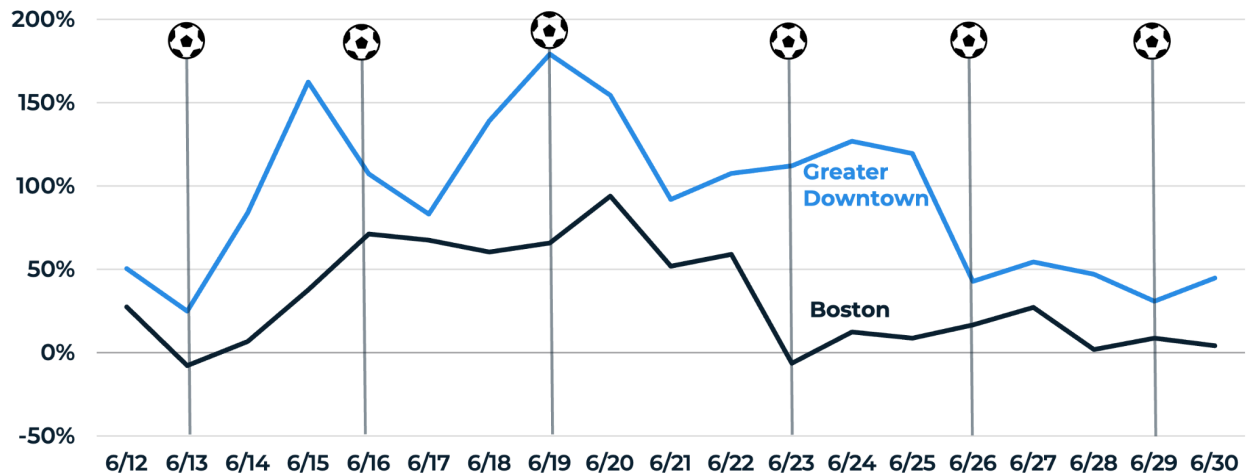
The increase in restaurant spending found in MasterCard data is corroborated by data published by OpenTable measuring the volume of seated diners from online reservations on a daily basis in 2026 vs. 2025.⁵ On average, seated diners in Boston were up 13% in June 12th-30th 2026 over the previous year. On June 21st, seated diners peaked at more than double 2025 levels.

Bars saw the largest increase in spending during the World Cup: 27.3% higher citywide and 85.9% higher in Greater Downtown compared to 2025. The increase in bar spending citywide peaked on Saturday June 20th at 66% above 2025 levels, but in Greater Downtown the increase in bar spending peaked on June 19th (Juneteenth), at 179% above 2025 levels. Friday June 19th saw the Scotland–Morocco game kicking off at Gillette at 6pm, but it was also the day of the USA–Australia match in Seattle, played at 3pm Eastern Time, demonstrating that World Cup games across the country had an economic impact in Boston.

⁵ <https://www.opentable.com/c/state-of-industry/#seated-diners-chart>

CHANGE IN BAR SPENDING IN BOSTON & GREATER DOWNTOWN

Year over year change in daily bar/tavern/nightclub spending, June 12-30, 2026 (day of week adjusted)



Note: Vertical lines represent days with games held in Foxborough. Consumer spending is inflation-adjusted.

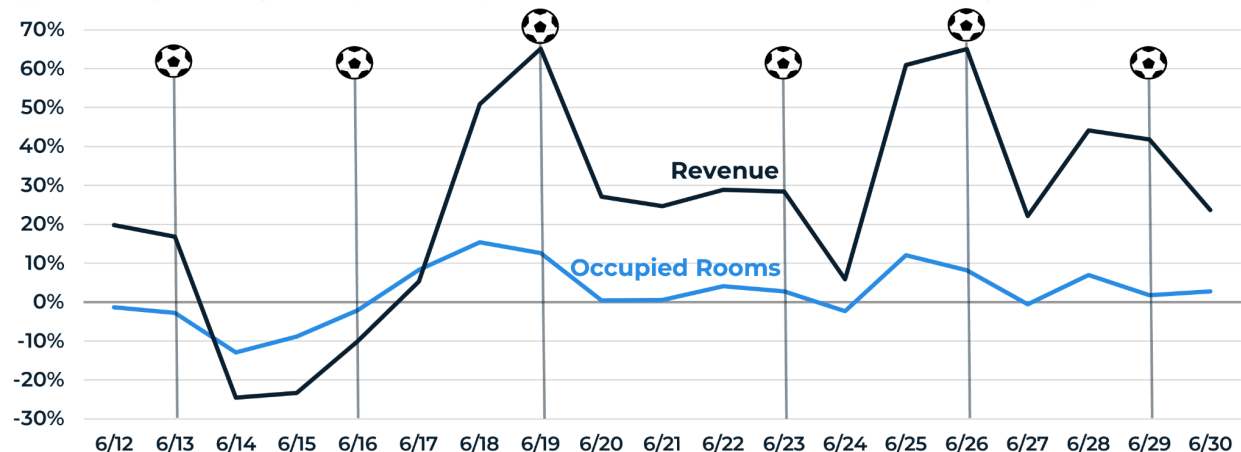
Source: Mastercard Geographic Insights, City of Boston Research Division Analysis

CHANGE IN HOTEL UTILIZATION AND RATES COMPARED TO 2025

In real terms, during the 2026 World Cup Boston hotels averaged 24.9% more in revenue and saw 2.4% higher demand for rooms daily than on similar days in 2025.⁶ This translates to ~400 more rooms occupied and ~\$1.3M more in revenues daily, or ~8,000 more rooms and ~\$25.9M more in revenue in aggregate for the two week period in June 2026 compared to 2025.

CHANGE IN BOSTON HOTEL OCCUPIED ROOMS AND REVENUE

Year over year change in daily total occupied rooms and revenue, June 12-30 2026 (day of week adjusted)



Note: Vertical lines represent days with games held in Foxborough.

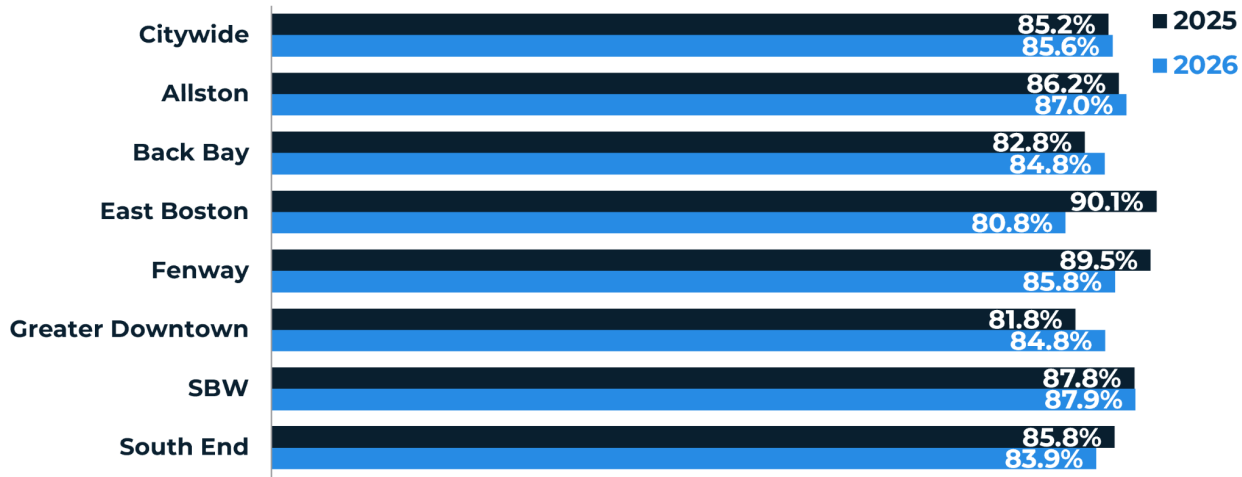
Source: CoStar Real Estate Analytics, accessed July 2026, City of Boston Research Division Analysis.

⁶ CoStar. Please note revenues are inflation-adjusted.

The overall Boston hotel occupancy rate rose from 85.2% in late June 2025 to 85.6% in late June 2026. However, the change in occupancy rates during the World Cup were not the same across neighborhoods. Greater Downtown, Back Bay, and Allston saw the largest increases in occupancy rates, while East Boston, Fenway, and the South End saw declines in hotel occupancy rates.

HOTEL OCCUPANCY BY NEIGHBORHOOD BY YEAR

Average daily hotel occupancy rate for **June 13–July 1st 2025** vs. **June 12th–30th 2026**

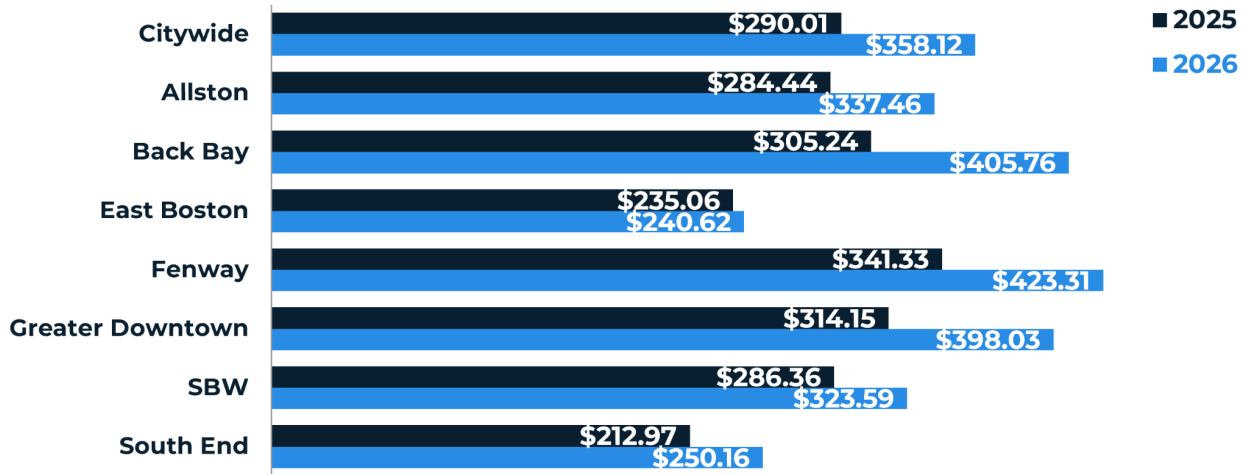


Source: CoStar Real Estate Analytics, accessed July 2026, City of Boston Research Division Analysis.

Many hotels in Boston raised their rates: RevPAR (revenue per available room) citywide rose from \$290 in late June 2025 to \$358 during the World Cup. All neighborhoods saw significant increases in RevPAR except for East Boston. Fenway and Back Bay revenues per available room exceeded \$400.

HOTEL REVENUE PER AVAILABLE ROOM BY NEIGHBORHOOD BY YEAR

Average daily hotel revenue per available room for **June 13–July 1st 2025** vs. **June 12th–30th 2026**



Source: CoStar Real Estate Analytics, accessed July 2026, City of Boston Research Division Analysis.

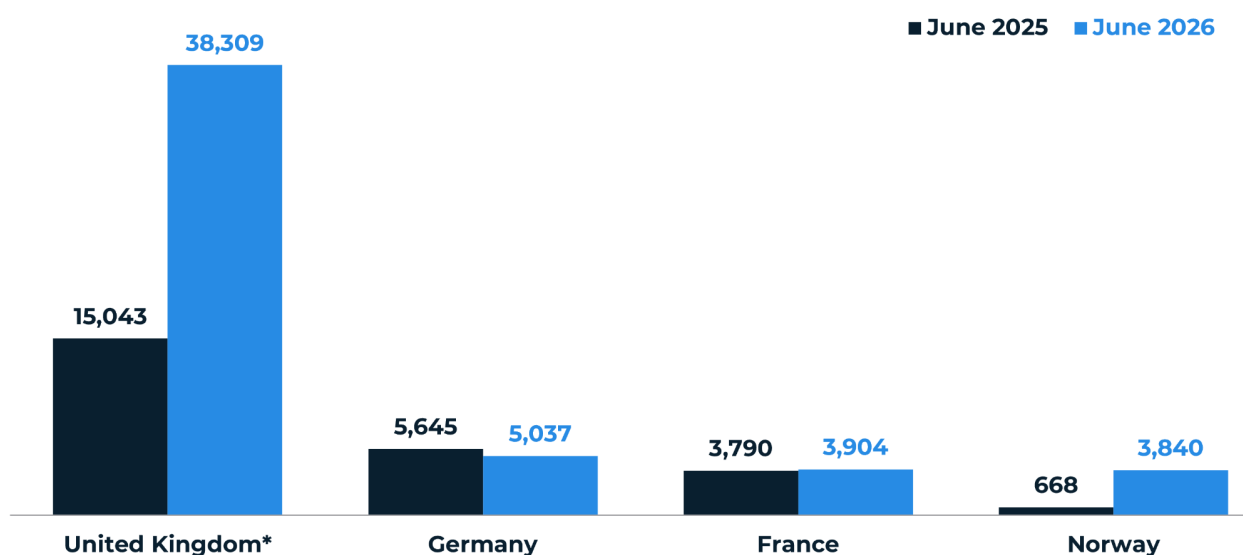
Demand for short-term rentals also increased - during the World Cup Group Stage booked short-term rentals were up 12% year over year in the Greater Boston area.⁷ Some Boston neighborhoods saw much larger increases in short-term rentals: Downtown, Chinatown, Charlestown, East Boston, and Dorchester saw greater than 30% increases in short-term rentals despite significantly higher booked rates.⁸

CHANGE IN INTERNATIONAL VISITORS COMPARED TO 2025

In June 2026, Logan airport saw 23,667 more overseas arrivals than in June 2025, a 24.7% increase. Logan airport saw 23,266 international arrivals from the United Kingdom, a 154.7% increase over June 2025 and 3,172 Norwegian arrivals, a 474.9% increase over 2025⁹ - likely attracted by World Cup games involving the Scottish, English, and Norwegian teams.

INTERNATIONAL VISITORS ENTERING THE U.S. THROUGH BOSTON

Increase from June in 2025 to June in 2026 by country of residence



Source: International Trade Administration, I-94 Monthly Summary & Analysis Reports, June 2025 & June 2026, City of Boston Research Division Analysis.
 Note: Not all countries are tracked in the I-94 monthly releases. The France, Germany, and England national football teams played their first matches in New York New Jersey Stadium, Houston Stadium, and Dallas Stadium respectively. The Scotland and Norway national football teams played their first matches in Boston Stadium. *Includes Scotland and England.

The increased number of international visitors in Boston during the World Cup was evident not just by the sight of soccer jerseys from around the world, but also in the origins of credit card spending during the last two weeks of July. For example, in the City Hall area which included both FanFest and one of the two social districts, the

⁷ <https://www.airdna.co/world-cup-short-term-rental-data#dashboard>

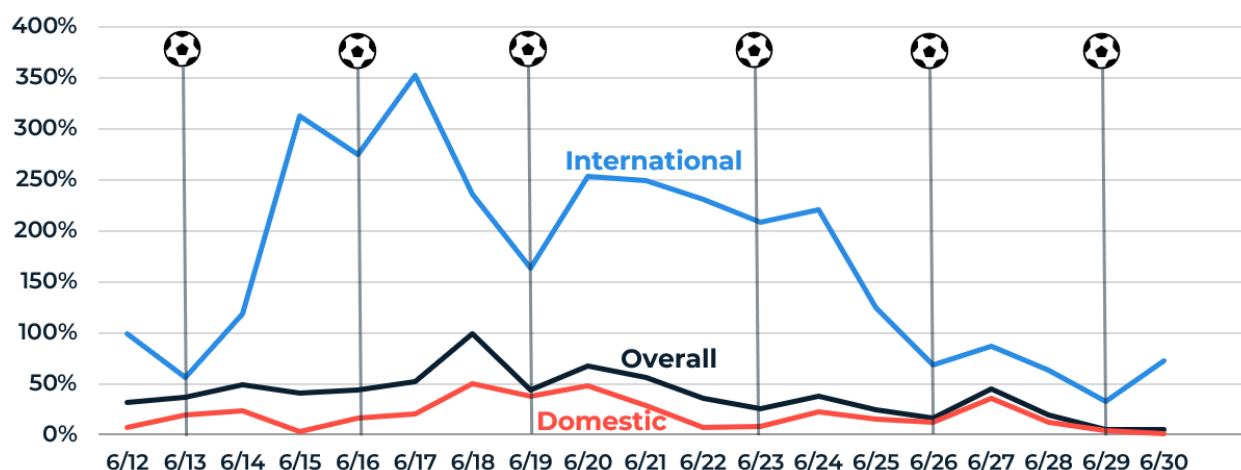
⁸ Neighborhood boundaries here are those used by AirDNA and may differ from those used elsewhere in the report.

⁹ International Trade Administration, I-94 Monthly Summary & Analysis Reports, June 2025 to June 2026.

number of international credit cards used was up by an average of 170% during World Cup days in June, peaking at 350% higher than 2025 levels on June 17th. Over this time period, domestic MasterCard credit card accounts were up an average of 19.6% for the second half of June 2026 compared to 2025.

CHANGE IN UNIQUE ACCOUNTS SPENDING IN CITY HALL AREA*

Year over year account count change by card account type, June 12-30 2026



Note: Vertical lines represent days with games held in Foxborough. *2010 Census block group 250250303003. Please see map in appendix.
Source: Mastercard Geographic Insights, City of Boston Planning Department Research Division Analysis

SOCIAL DISTRICTS COMPARED TO 2025

The City of Boston established two outdoor social districts beginning during the World Cup. The Social Districts were located at Union and Marshall Streets—in Downtown’s Blackstone Block Historic District—and on Temple Place in Downtown Crossing. Visitors were permitted to purchase alcohol beverages from participating bars and restaurants for consumption within the social district.

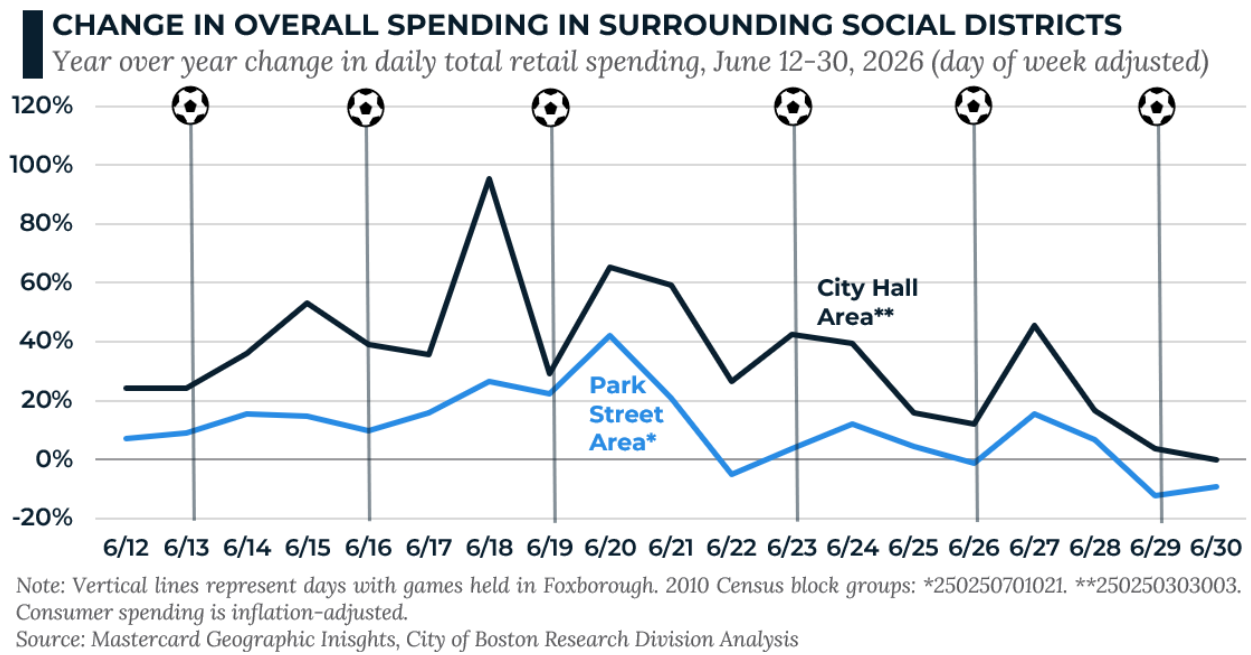
These social districts were highly popular. Visits to the area around the Union and Marshall Street social district¹⁰ averaged 60% higher than the same period last year. Visits to the area around Temple Place average 40% higher than 2025.

Overall in-person credit card spending in the City Hall area¹¹ which included the Union and Marshall Street Social District was up an average of 34.9% over the last two

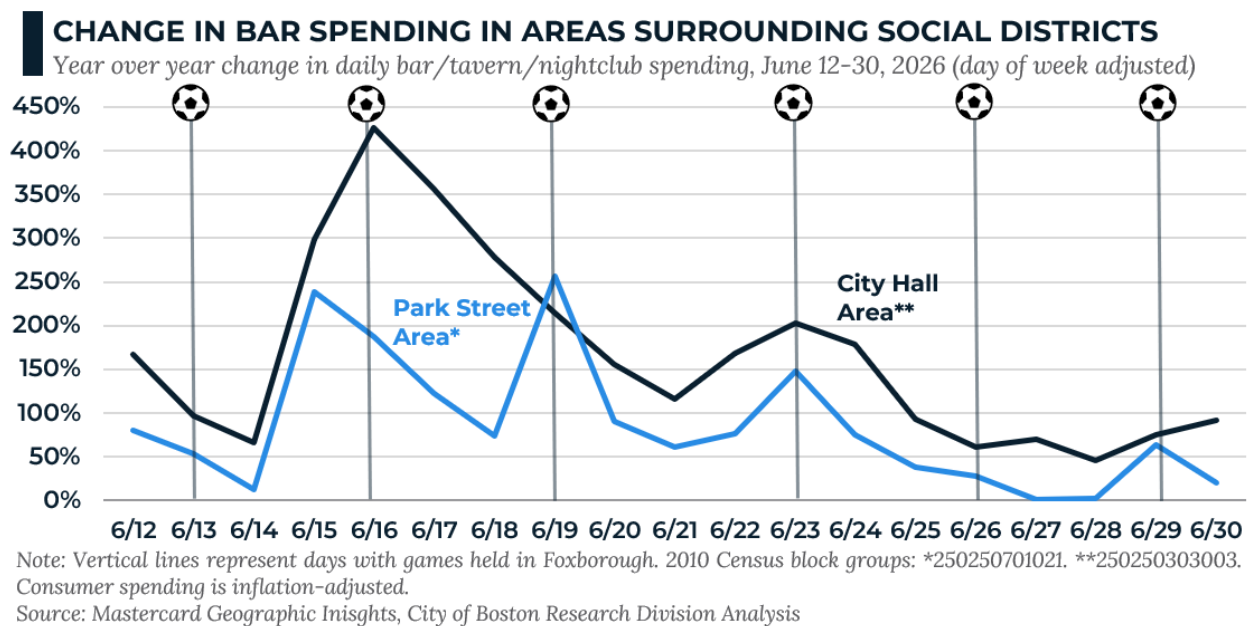
¹⁰ Due to data limitations, mobility data is for the larger 2020 Census block groups in which the Social Districts are located. The block group including Union and Marshall Streets includes City Hall Plaza and FanFest. See map in **Appendix**.

¹¹ Due to data limitations, spending data is for the larger 2010 Census block groups in which the Social Districts are located. The block group including Union and Marshall Streets includes City Hall Plaza and FanFest. See map in **Appendix**.

weeks of June 2026 compared to 2025. The increase in spending peaked on Thursday June 18th which saw twice as much spending as the equivalent day in 2025. The Temple Place/Park Street area saw an average 10.4% increase in in-person spending over the two weeks.



Bar spending in the City Hall area which included the Union and Marshall Street Social District was up an average of 166.3% over the last two weeks of June 2026 compared to 2025. The increase in spending peaked on Tuesday June 16th which saw more than 400% more spending as the equivalent day in 2025. Bar spending in the Temple Place/Park Street area increased an average of 85.7%.

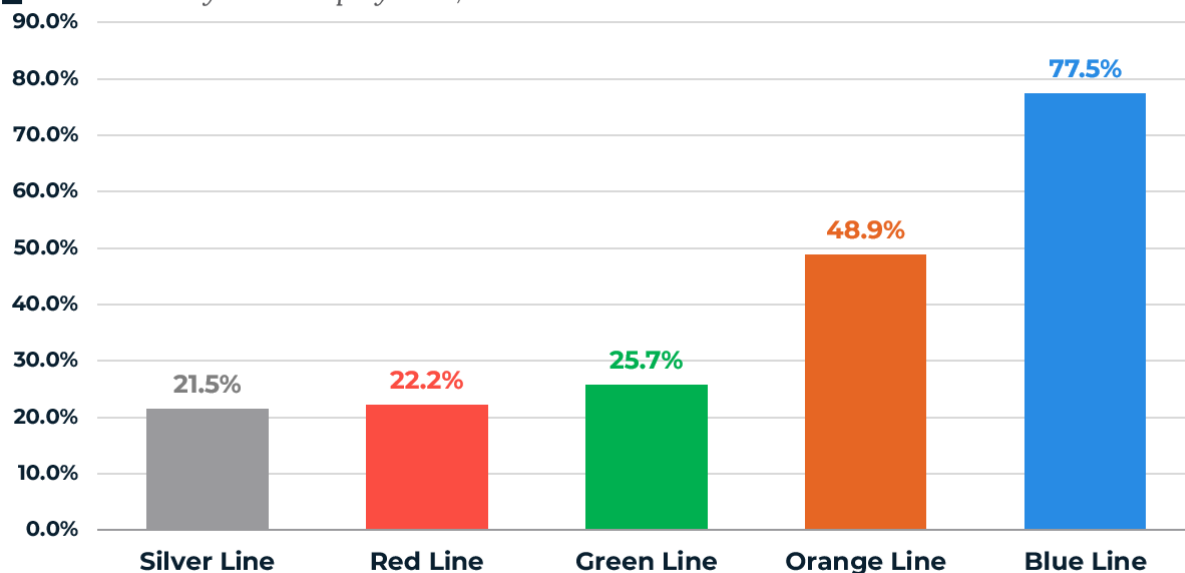


CHANGE IN TRANSPORTATION USAGE COMPARED TO 2025

Overall MBTA ridership in all gated stations in Boston was 1,821,420 (37.6%) higher in June 2026 compared to June 2025. Over the same time period, the Blue Line saw the largest year-over-year increase, with 383,768 more passenger trips (+77.5%), partly due to lower ridership during the June 7-15, 2025 service shutdown between Bowdoin and Orient Heights.

CHANGE IN TOTAL MBTA RIDERSHIP BY LINE IN BOSTON

Total Monthly Ridership by Line, June 2026 vs June 2025



Source: MBTA, City of Boston Research Division Analysis.

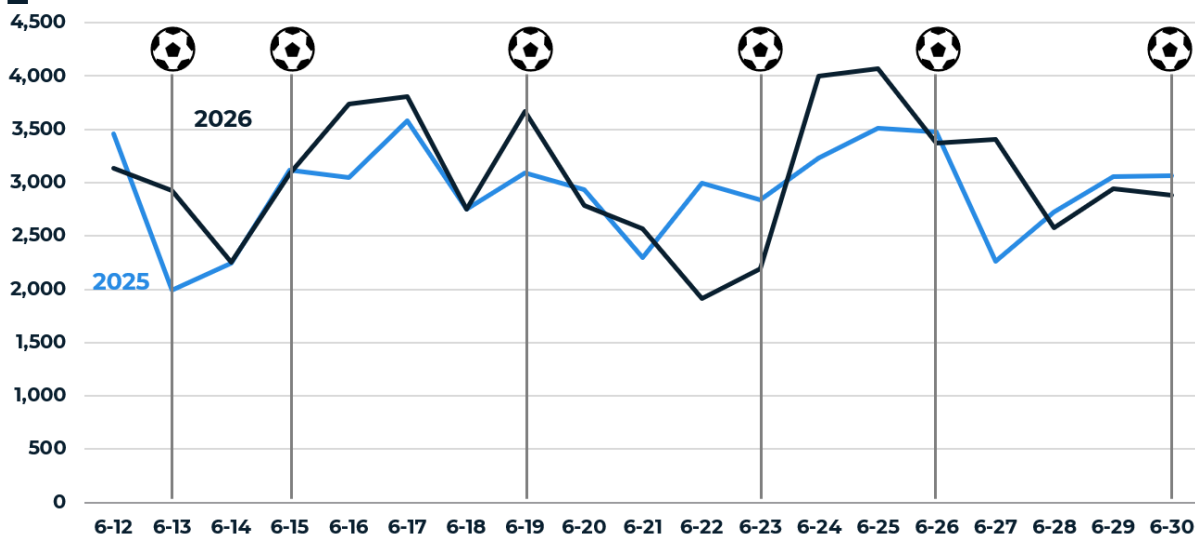
Note: Ridership only includes gated stations in Boston and an entry is measured as a successful smart card tap, credit card tap, or ticket insertion recorded at a faregate. MBTA operated extended late-night service until 4:00 AM on June 13 and until 2:00 AM on all other match days.

Total passengers on domestic flights arriving at Logan airport were down by 5,425 (0.2%) in June 2026 compared to June 2025; however, passengers on international flights were up 51,520 (5.3%).

BlueBike rides that started or ended in stations near Downtown increased by 4.3% during June 12–30, 2026, compared to June 13–July 1, 2025, despite only a 0.6% increase in average temperature over the same time period.

TOTAL BLUEBIKE RIDERSHIP

Total daily blue bike ridership in 2025 & 2026, June 12 - June 30 (day of the week adjusted)



Note: Vertical lines represent days with games held in Foxborough. June 12-30, 2026 are compared to the same days of the week June 13-July 1, 2025.

Source: BlueBike & Weather Underground, City of Boston Research Division Analysis.

CONCLUSION

The World Cup is an unusual event whose impacts are difficult to measure since it takes place over multiple days in multiple locations and spectators have many options from viewing on TV from home, going to a bar or restaurant to watch, attending a FanFest or watch party, or actually attending a live game in a stadium.

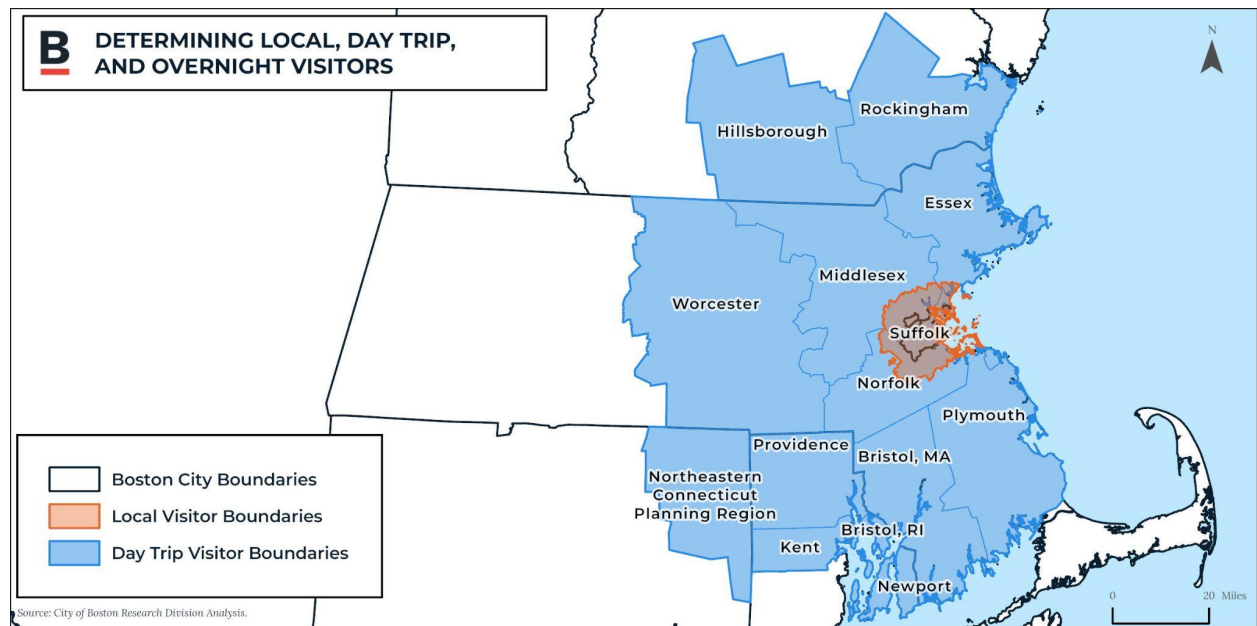
The Research Division looked first at visits to specific World Cup-related events in Boston: FanFest, Community Watch Parties and special stadium trains from South Station. The 313,000 visits to these events generated an estimated \$165 million in consumer spending in the second half of June and early July 2026, increasing Suffolk County's annual economic output by \$238 million, supporting 1,121 jobs, and generating an estimated \$3.2 million in tax revenue for Boston.

The second analysis looked at the second half of June 2026 compared to the same period in 2025. Late June 2026 was a period of increased economic activity in Boston, especially in the Greater Downtown area, which can likely be largely attributed to the World Cup. Boston saw 25% more overseas arrivals at Logan airport and 31% more hotel revenue. Overall consumer spending was up by 5%, and spending at bars and taverns was up by 27%.

APPENDIX: METHODOLOGY

CATEGORIZING EVENT VISITORS

Participants in Boston World Cup events are defined as those who attended FanFest/Community Watch Party or who boarded a South Station stadium train. Local visitors are defined as those living within the 5 mile buffer of City of Boston boundaries; day trip visitors live approximately 5-50 miles from Boston, live 5-50 miles from Boston and overnight trip visitors live more than 50 miles from Boston as approximated by county boundaries.¹²



Visitors were estimated using Citydata mobility data. Citydata calculated visitor counts to World Cup FanFest, Community Watch Parties, and South Station Stadium Trains by locating cellphone pings in these locations. Citydata distinguishes between event visitors and non-event visitors. Devices appearing in the area regularly are coded as non-event visitors and are aggregated to reflect the area's typical visitation patterns. Event visitors are determined based on relative spikes compared to this baseline. Regular visitors to the location are excluded from the event visitor count.

VISITOR SPENDING ESTIMATES METHODOLOGY

The Research Division used Massachusetts tourism spending estimates reported by the Massachusetts Office of Travel and Tourism (MOTT) to estimate tourism expenditures.¹³ The Research Division expanded the report's estimates to distinguish

¹² Defined by county boundaries. If roughly 50% of the county falls within 50 miles of city boundaries, then it is considered a day trip county. Note: Visitors from the Provincetown area were considered overnight visitors even though they fall within the 50-mile radius.

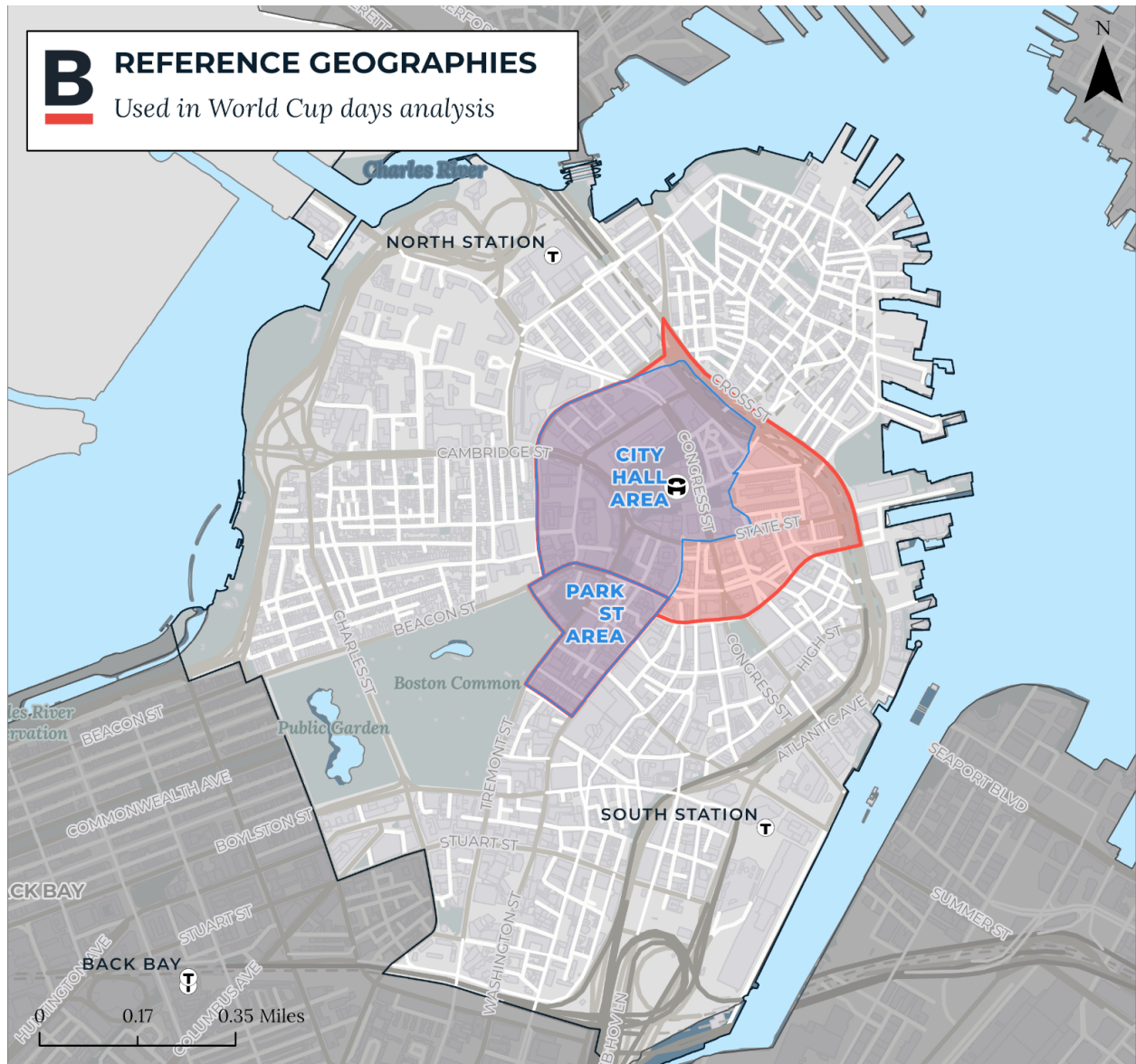
¹³ <https://www.visitma.com/media-industry-portal/2024-economic-impact-report/>

between local visitors (within 5 miles of Boston), day trip visitors (between 5 and 50 miles of Boston), and overnight visitors (over 50 miles of Boston). The table below indicates the estimated average spending per visitor per day by spending category, rounded to the nearest dollar.

ESTIMATED PER DIEM SPEND BY VISITOR TYPE

VISITOR TYPE	TOTAL	Hotel	Restaurants	Retail	Transportation	Entertainment
<i>Local</i>	\$54	\$0	\$17	\$20	\$9	\$9
<i>Day Trip</i>	\$126	\$0	\$34	\$39	\$35	\$18
<i>Overnight</i>	\$366	\$115	\$58	\$68	\$93	\$31

Total World Cup-related spending can then be calculated using the projected per diem expenditures of each visitor type. Overnight World Cup visitors living in the United States were assigned two visit days, while international World Cup visitors were assigned four visit days. For stadium train riders, the \$80/ticket cost was added to their spending estimate.



GEOGRAPHIES USED

- Greater Downtown Commercial Hub
- Mastercard Social Districts Definition (2010 Block Groups)
- Citydata Social Districts Definition (2020 Block Groups)
- Fan Fest

Source: U.S. Census Bureau 2010, 2020; City of Boston Research Division Analysis.