



## City Council

Action on Introduction of a “Special Event Zone” Ordinance Regulating and Prohibiting Certain Activities within a Protected Area in Connection with the 2026 Major Events at Levi’s® Stadium

Elizabeth Klotz, Assistant City Manager  
Agenda Item #6, (RTC # 25-1671)  
December 9, 2025

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## Background

- The updated Special Event Zone ordinance is a simplified and more focused version of the proposal originally introduced at the November 18, 2025 meeting, incorporating direct feedback and concerns expressed by the City Council.
- Council requested clearer and less restrictive regulations, improved public understanding, and greater transparency regarding impacts to residents and local businesses.
- Staff has narrowed the scope to apply only to Super Bowl LX, allowing the City to revisit FIFA-related restrictions later when those operational plans are more developed.
- Additional refinements were made to improve clarity, reduce unnecessary regulations, and strengthen community education efforts.

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## Why a Special Event Ordinance?

- **Respond to Growing Event Demands:** Accommodate the increasing scale, complexity, and public-health impacts of major events to ensure the community's overall safety and welfare.
- **Ensure Consistent Public Safety Standards:** Establish predictable, uniform regulations that support public safety, health protections, and equitable treatment for all event organizers.
- **Promote Safe & Efficient Movement:** Support the safe and orderly movement of attendees, residents, vehicles, and staff to prevent congestion-related hazards and maintain overall welfare.
- **Protect Public Safety & Health:** Maintain emergency access, prevent unsafe crowding, reduce risks of injury or illness, and ensure that public spaces remain safe and accessible.
- **Enhance Operational Coordination:** Improve coordination of load-in/out, credentialing, security screening, media operations, and other logistics critical to protecting public safety and efficient emergency response.
- **Safeguard Consumers & Public Health:** Deter counterfeit goods, unpermitted vendors, and unsafe food sales to ensure consumer safety and protect community health.
- **Uphold Community Welfare & Aesthetic Standards:** Maintain the City's visual appearance, livability, and overall community experience during high-profile global events.

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## Updated Ordinance Structure

- The revised ordinance contains only six temporary regulations that apply during a defined Special Event Time Period and exclusively within the designated Special Event Zone.
- All other activities, including sidewalk vending outside the zone, signage rules, noise regulations, counterfeit goods enforcement, and special events permitting, remain governed by existing City Codes and State/Federal law.
- This approach avoids creating redundant or overlapping rules and ensures that residents and businesses can easily understand what is new and what remains unchanged.

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## Key Elements of the Revised Ordinance

- **Pause on Sidewalk Vending Permits:** Permits issued under Chapter 5.05 within the Zone are paused during activation; permits remain valid citywide outside the Zone.
- **Prohibition on Outdoor Food/Beverage Sales:** Prevents temporary or pop-up food/beverage vendors visible from public rights-of-way except where sales are part of a business's normal, properly permitted operations.
- **Prohibition on Outdoor Merchandise Sales:** Ensures only authorized and properly permitted businesses may sell merchandise outdoors, reducing counterfeit goods and unregulated activity.
- **Ban on Mobile-Unit Vending and Advertising:** Prohibits vending or advertising using vehicles, trailers, carts, or wheeled units not fixed to a foundation.
- **Restrictions on Product Sampling/Giveaways:** Limits promotional street activity that may attract crowds or create congestion, while allowing coupon distribution on private property by businesses located inside the building.
- **Temporary Structure Permits Required:** Any temporary structure on non-residential property, such as tents, canopies, or temporary membrane structures, must be tied to a City-issued Temporary Use Permit to ensure safety and compliance.

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## Restrictions Removed After Council Feedback

- The updated ordinance no longer requires special permits for parades, races, or events within the Zone, because Chapter 12.15 already provides sufficient regulatory authority for these activities.
- The proposed prohibition on outdoor commercial signs and advertising displays was removed because Santa Clara's existing sign regulations (Chapter 18.42) already cover these concerns with detailed restrictions and enforcement mechanisms.
- These removals streamline the ordinance, reduce unnecessary burden on local stakeholders, and reflect Council's direction to balance safety with flexibility

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## Special Event Zone Time Periods

- **Super Bowl LX:** Activation is proposed from February 1, 2026 at 8:00 AM through February 10, 2026 at 10:00 PM, covering all load-in, event-day, and load-out operations.
- **Additional Major Events** (including FIFA World Cup 2026): Future time periods will return to Council under separate resolutions once operational plans are finalized, ensuring accuracy and transparency.

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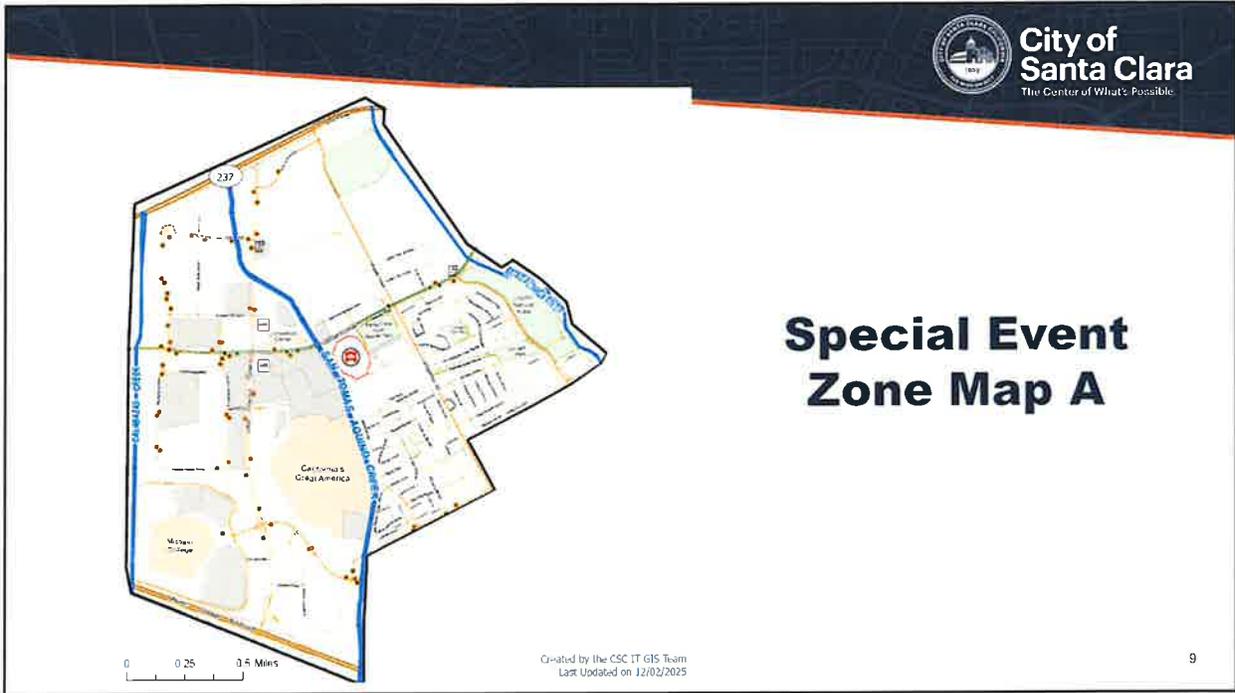


## Special Event Zone Map Options

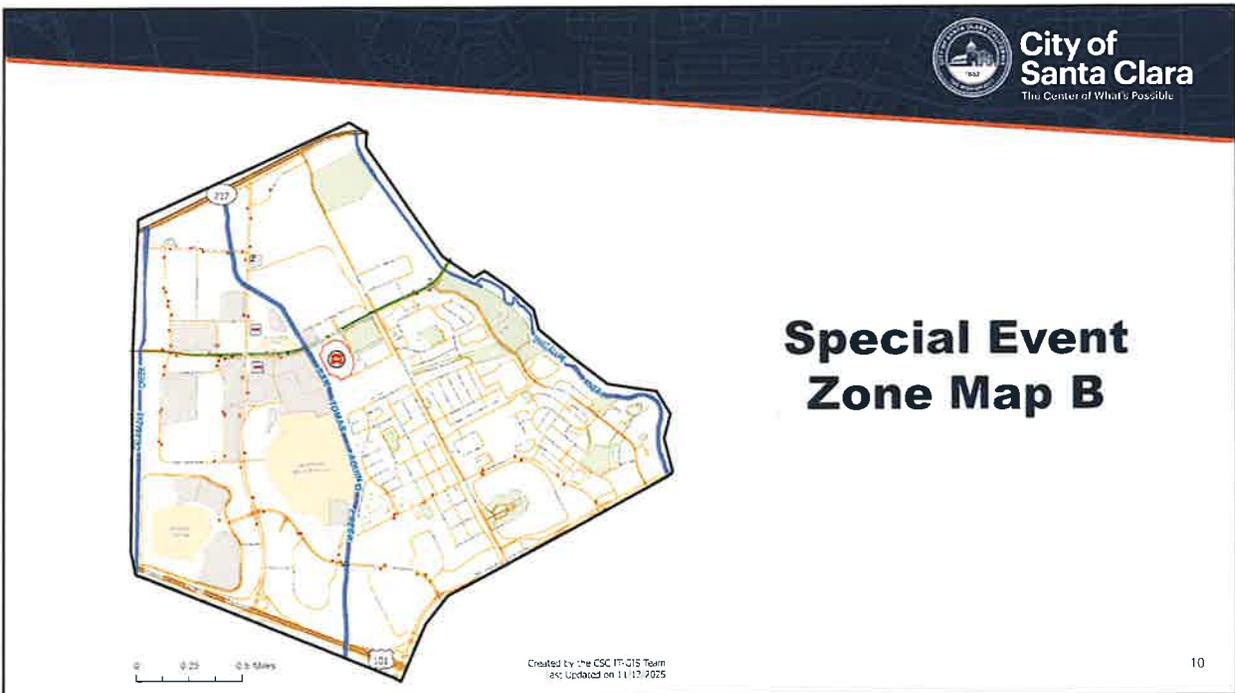
- Two boundary maps, Map A and Map B, are presented in response to Council input about geographic scope and the desire to limit impacts on residential areas and businesses.
- Map A provides a reduced, tightly drawn zone focusing on only the most essential operational and safety areas.
- Map B, the original map, reflects the full anticipated operational footprint for Super Bowl LX, including circulation corridors, staging areas, and adjacent properties.
- Staff recommends Map B because it most closely aligns with expected mobility, safety, and event management needs.

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## Enforcement Approach

- Enforcement will follow a coordinated and tiered system led primarily by Code Enforcement, with support from the Police Department, and event security partners.
- Violations involving mobile vending fall under Chapter 5.05, while all other violations use administrative penalty authority under §1.10.
- Immediate abatement and seizure may occur for violations that pose safety risks or involve prohibited items.
- Staff will lead an education-first approach before activation, including multilingual outreach and on-site engagement with small businesses and permitted vendors.

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## Community and Business Outreach

- The City has launched a Special Event Zone webpage with Maps, FAQs, timelines, and support resources.
- Outreach tools include City email newsletters, social media updates, and direct coordination with business associations and business lists.
- Staff will be collaborating with residential HOAs and the Stadium Relations Ad Hoc Committee to ensure clear communication with affected neighborhoods.
- Direct emails were sent to all businesses in the originally proposed zone and to every permitted mobile vendor citywide to ensure broad awareness and opportunities for feedback.

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## League Event Agreement Considerations

- While the City is not required to adopt a Special Event Zone, both the FIFA Agreement and LEA anticipate that the City Council will consider one.
- Under the LEA, failure to initiate approval of an ordinance by December 9, 2025 triggers a mandatory meet-and-confer process with StadCo to identify alternative protections.
- If no agreement is reached by January 8, 2026, StadCo may elect to terminate the LEA, although such a scenario appears unlikely.
- Termination would revert operations to the original Stadium Lease terms, which involve additional legal and financial uncertainty and may require arbitration to resolve.
- Adopting an ordinance provides clarity and aligns with operational expectations for hosting the Super Bowl.

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## Recommendation

Introduce an uncodified ordinance entitled “An Ordinance of the City of Santa Clara, California, Regulating Certain Activities within a Protected Area in Connection with Major Events and Related Activities in the City of Santa Clara,” with Map B, waive first reading, and direct staff to return for final adoption at the next regular meeting, with authority for the City Attorney to make non-substantive edits.

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**Existing Sign Regulations Already Apply**

- Santa Clara City Code Chapter 18.42 (Sign Regulations) governs all permanent and temporary signs, including definitions, placement standards, and enforcement.
- Section 18.42.080 broadly prohibits a wide range of sign types across the entire City unless explicitly allowed elsewhere, including:
  - Animated or moving signs
  - Inflatable signs
  - Portable or mobile signs (for example A-Frames)
  - Rooftop signs
  - Natural-feature-mounted signs
  - Nonconforming or unauthorized illuminated signs
  - Billboards and off-site advertising



## Examples of Prohibited Signs 18.42.080

