

LIVING CITIES LAUNCHES CAPITAL + CULTURE PLATFORM TO EXAMINE WHO BENEFITS WHEN OPPORTUNITY ARRIVES

New National Initiative Begins with FIFA World Cup Host Markets and Demonstrates How The World Cup Should Not Become a Global Windfall and a Local Extraction

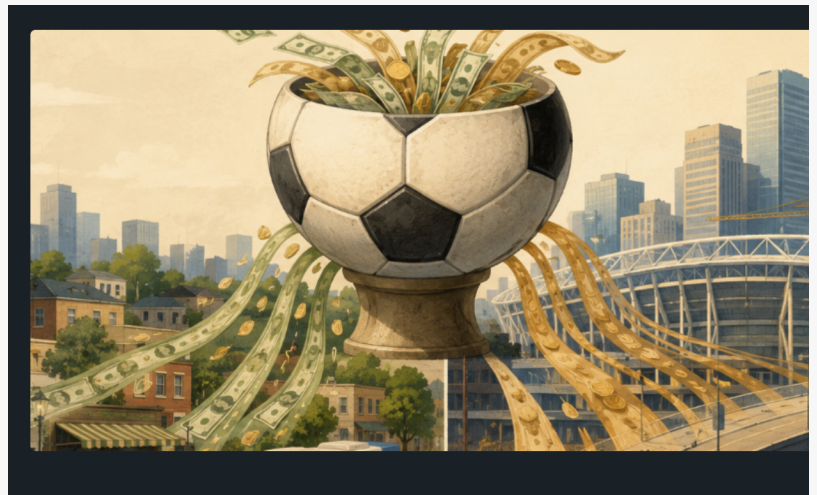
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As cities across North America prepare to host matches, visitors, investment, and global attention during the 2026 FIFA World Cup, Living Cities today announced the launch of Capital + Culture, a national platform designed to explore one of the defining economic questions facing American cities:

When opportunity arrives, who benefits?

Over the next several weeks, the FIFA World Cup will generate billions of dollars in spending, tourism, infrastructure activity, sponsorships, contracts, and economic activity across host cities.

The headlines will tell us how many visitors arrived. The reports will tell us how much money was spent. The celebrations will tell us who won on the field. But none of those answers tells us who won because of it.



Did local businesses gain access to new customers? Did entrepreneurs secure contracts? Did neighborhoods experience investment? Did ownership expand? Did wealth grow? Or did another global event generate extraordinary value that largely flowed elsewhere?

Living Cities launched Capital + Culture to examine one of the most consequential questions in economic development: When a place creates value, who captures it?

“For too long, we’ve confused economic activity with economic participation,” said Joe Scantlebury, President and CEO of Living Cities. “A city can host a global event and still leave local people on the sidelines. The question isn’t whether money shows up. The question is whether opportunity does.”

The platform challenges one of the most widely accepted assumptions in economic development: that growth automatically translates into opportunity. History suggests otherwise.

Major events often generate substantial economic activity. Yet too often, local businesses struggle to access procurement opportunities. Entrepreneurs remain disconnected from new markets. Residents see construction but not ownership. Communities experience visibility without lasting benefit.

Neighborhoods absorb disruption without sharing fully in the gains. While cities celebrate economic growth, too many families remain disconnected from the wealth, contracts, and opportunities those moments create.

In short, growth happens. Opportunity does not always follow. In many ways, that is the question at the heart of Capital + Culture. The Cup Runneth Over. The question is whether communities share in the harvest.

The true measure of success is not whether billions of dollars move through a city. It is whether the people, businesses, entrepreneurs, and neighborhoods that help make a place thrive have the opportunity to participate in the value being created.

Living Cities believes cities must begin asking a different set of questions.

Not simply: How many people attended? How many hotel rooms were booked? How much tourism revenue was generated?

But also: Who received contracts? Who gained customers? Who built wealth? Who expanded ownership? Who participated in the opportunity created?

What remains after the event is over?

“The World Cup presents a once-in-a-generation opportunity,” said Scantlebury. “But opportunity is not the same thing as access or impact. If local businesses cannot participate, if entrepreneurs

cannot compete, if communities cannot build wealth, then we have to ask who this economy is actually working for.”

LAUNCHING CAPITAL + CULTURE

Through a series of city-focused analyses, Living Cities will examine how host communities can convert moments of visibility into opportunities for lasting prosperity.

Capital + Culture will explore local procurement, entrepreneurship, workforce participation, neighborhood investment, ownership pathways, and community wealth creation across World Cup host markets.

The initiative also signals a broader shift in how Living Cities approaches economic development. The World Cup is the first chapter. Not the story.

The same questions apply to infrastructure investments, tourism economies, entertainment districts, cultural corridors, major conventions, sporting events, and public-private development projects across the country.

Whenever capital, culture, and investment converge in a place, communities deserve to know whether the benefits are broadly shared or narrowly concentrated.

Because the most important measure of success may not be how much money is earned. It is whether more people had the opportunity to participate in it. Whether more people benefited from it. Whether more businesses gained access. Whether more entrepreneurs gained contracts. Whether more families gained wealth. Whether more communities gained ownership.

The World Cup will leave a score behind.

The more important question is whether it leaves behind ownership. Whether it leaves behind wealth. Whether it leaves behind opportunity.

Because when opportunity arrives, every city should be able to answer one fundamental question: Who benefited?

If the answer cannot be found in local businesses, local entrepreneurs, local workers, local communities, and local families, then cities must ask whether growth truly delivered on its promise.

The Cup will runneth over.

The question is whether prosperity will.

ABOUT LIVING CITIES

Living Cities is an Action Engine for Equitable Cities—a member collaborative of leading

philanthropic foundations and financial institutions committed to closing income and wealth gaps in the United States and building an economy that works for everyone.

For 35 years, Living Cities has collaboratively advanced policy and systems changes nationwide, promoting profitable and inclusive wealth-building. Living Cities addresses barriers to capital investment through knowledge sharing and collective action among its members, partners, and an extensive network of city leaders around the country. Learn more at <https://bit.ly/LivingCitiesCapital-Culture>

Tashion Macon
strut AGENCY
+1 818-749-8786
[email us here](#)

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