

Living Cities' Capital + Culture Series: Turning Global Attention Into Wealth in Kansas City

*Living Cities' Capital + Culture Series
Examines Whether One of the FIFA World
Cup's Biggest Success Stories Can Become
a Lasting Model for Local Wealth*

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During the FIFA World Cup, the world
discovered Kansas City.

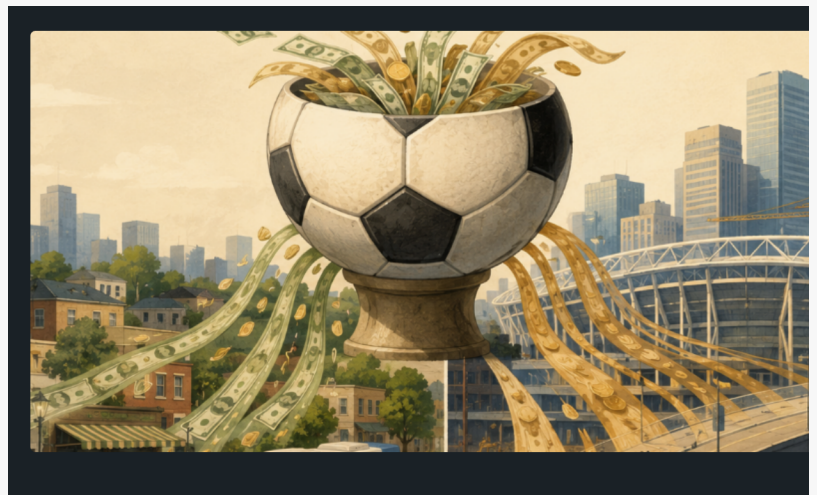
More than 310,000 visitors
representing over 150 countries
gathered at the city's FIFA Fan Festival.
Stadiums filled. Hotels reached
capacity. Restaurants, neighborhood
businesses, and entertainment districts
welcomed a global audience. Local
television audiences led every U.S.
World Cup market, reflecting a city that
embraced the tournament with
unmistakable pride.

For several weeks, Kansas City became
far more than one of the tournament's
smallest host cities.

It became one of its defining stories.

Yet as the world's attention begins to
shift elsewhere, another question remains. What happens after the final whistle?

For Living Cities, that question extends beyond tourism, attendance, or visitor spending. The more important measure is whether the unprecedented visibility generated by the World Cup



creates lasting opportunity for the people, businesses, and neighborhoods that define Kansas City every day.

Because attention alone does not create prosperity. Economic activity does not automatically create ownership. And global visibility does not guarantee local wealth.

Through its Capital + Culture national thought leadership series, Living Cities explores how major sporting and cultural events can become catalysts for long-term economic mobility rather than temporary economic activity. Kansas City now offers one of the country's most compelling opportunities to examine what happens when global attention meets local ambition.

"The question is no longer whether the World Cup brought people to Kansas City," said Joe Scantlebury, President and CEO of Living Cities. "The question is whether local entrepreneurs, neighborhood businesses, workers, and residents are positioned to build from that momentum long after visitors return home."

Kansas City has already demonstrated that culture can unite communities.

The city's internationally recognized hospitality, passionate sports culture, vibrant neighborhoods, thriving small businesses, and welcoming civic identity transformed the tournament into something larger than a series of matches. Across restaurants, local bars, entertainment districts, fan festivals, and public gathering spaces, residents and visitors created an atmosphere that became part of the global World Cup experience itself.

That cultural success now presents an economic opportunity.

The city has invested intentionally in expanding opportunities for local entrepreneurs through supplier marketplaces, small-business initiatives, and community partnerships connected to the tournament. Those efforts recognize that a lasting legacy is shaped not only by what occurs inside stadiums but by who participates in the broader economy surrounding them.

For Living Cities, the next phase of Kansas City's story is not measured by attendance. It is measured by outcomes.

Which local businesses gained new customers? Which entrepreneurs secured contracts that continue beyond the tournament? Which neighborhood businesses expanded because of new visibility? Which workers developed new career pathways? Which communities attracted new investment? Which relationships created during the World Cup become future economic partnerships? And ultimately: Who moved from exposure to ownership?

"Kansas City has an opportunity to demonstrate what happens when culture becomes an engine for economic mobility," said Scantlebury. "A successful legacy is measured not simply by visitor spending, but by whether more entrepreneurs become investable, more businesses become scalable, more neighborhoods capture value, and more residents build lasting wealth."

Kansas City's World Cup story also reflects something larger happening across America.

Increasingly, cities are discovering that their greatest competitive advantage is not simply infrastructure or incentives. It is identity.

Culture has become economic infrastructure.

The places that successfully convert local authenticity into long-term investment, entrepreneurship, innovation, and ownership will be better positioned to compete for talent, capital, and opportunity long after major events conclude.

That is the question Capital + Culture seeks to explore, not only in Kansas City, but in host cities across the country preparing for future moments on the global stage.

The matches eventually end. Visitors return home. Headlines move on.

The real legacy begins afterward.

ABOUT LIVING CITIES

For 35 years, Living Cities has worked at the intersection of capital, policy, and systems change to help close income and wealth gaps in communities across the United States.

As an Action Engine for Equitable Cities, Living Cities brings together leading philanthropic foundations, financial institutions, and public-sector partners to remove barriers to capital investment, accelerate inclusive economic growth, and strengthen pathways to wealth creation.

Through collaborative action, research, and national partnerships, Living Cities helps cities build economies that create opportunity for more people, not just during moments of growth, but long after the spotlight has moved on. Readers interested in how cities can transform moments of global attention into long-term economic mobility are encouraged to explore the Living Cities Center for Wealth Equity's groundbreaking white paper, Event-Driven Capital Absorption, which introduces a practical framework for converting major events into lasting local investment, entrepreneurship, and wealth creation.

Learn more at <https://bit.ly/LivingCitiesCapitalAbsorption>

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