



Economic Benefits of Special Events and Sports Tourism in Plano

Travel and tourism play an important role in Plano, and its parks, recreational facilities, programming, and special events help attract local visitors and overnight tourists.

TPL estimated the economic impact of the leagues and tournaments hosted in Plano in 2023, which attracts teams, parents, and spectators from all over to participate in tryouts, competitions, and championships in best-in-class recreational facilities and fields.

Adult and Youth Sports Leagues and Tournaments

To estimate the value of Plano sports leagues and tournaments, TPL worked with city staff and their partners to estimate the number of attendees at league games and tournaments and their annual economic benefit. Plano hosts these events on their sports fields and in their recreational facilities, providing opportunities for thousands of athletes to compete each year.

Sports Leagues: Plano hosts adults and youth league games for soccer, softball, lacrosse, cricket, football, baseball, kickball, and rugby year-round, including those for the Plano Sports Authority, Plano International Soccer League, and

Plano Youth Sports Association. There were 3,629 youth league teams that participated across all sports, with 367,172 participants, and an additional 59,356 participants in adult leagues (for a total of 426,528 participants in league games). Adding in the spectators at league games, the estimated attendance numbers for the leagues in 2023 was 903,808.

Most league events are played by teams from Plano and surrounding communities. While players, parents, coaches, and other spectators who live within driving distance may not require a hotel stay, day trip visitors often still spend money on food and other activities.

Tournaments: There were 58 athletic tournaments in 2023 across all Plano facilities, hosting 3,978 teams with 64,955 participants (including athletes, referees, and coaches). These events included tryouts, competitions, and championships. With the estimated number of parents and spectators at these events, Plano hosted 580,781 total attendees across all tournaments in 2023. TPL conservatively assumed 60% of those visitors would travel to Plano to participate in these tournaments, consistent with the 2017 study.

The Plano Parks and Recreation Department collaborates with Visit Plano on some of the larger-scale tournaments hosted in the city. Out of the 58 tournaments in Plano in 2023, 36 (62%) were hosted with support from Visit Plano, which collects data on the attendance and hotel bookings associated with these events

Economic Impact: To estimate the economic benefits of these league games and tournaments, TPL first estimated the daily spending of attendees. TPL used the General Services Administration (GSA) rate to estimate daily spending on food and activities (\$64/day). Local participants and attendees were conservatively estimated to spend about half of that, or \$32/day. (For example, local athletes likely spent less on transportation.)

In 2023, the league games generated an estimated \$30.8 million in direct spending while the tournaments generated an estimated \$73.1 million in direct spending.

Second, TPL estimated the economic impact of hotel stays due to tournaments in Plano. (For this analysis, TPL conservatively assumed that only tournaments would require overnight stays.) Visit Plano collects data on the tournaments they help to host, including number of visitors and hotel bookings. **In 2023, attendees booked 10,731 hotel nights**, and the average room rate for sports-related stays in Plano was \$134.45 per night. Visitors generated a total hotel economic impact of \$1.4 million for these 36 tournaments in 2023.

For the remaining 22 tournaments in Plano, TPL estimated the average number of attendees per room based on the known data from Visit Plano. Additionally, TPL assumed that 60% of tournament attendees were nonlocal, consistent with the 2017 study. Using the same average room rate, TPL estimated that the remaining 22 tournaments in Plano generated an additional \$2.3 million in hotel spending.

The economic impact of all leagues and tournaments hosted by Plano was \$107.7 million in 2023. The following table summarizes the results of the sports tourism analysis below.

Sports-Related Tourism Impacts in Plano, Texas	
Category	2023
Number of tournaments hosted in the City of Plano's parks and recreation facilities	58
Number of participants	64,955
Number of spectators	515,826
Total attendance, tournaments	580,781
Number of league events hosted in the City of Plano's parks and recreation facilities	15,185
Number of participants	426,528
Number of spectators	477,280
Total attendance, league events	903,808
Average daily spending by nonlocal attendees	\$64
Average hotel room rate	\$134.45
Economic impact resulting from daily spending	\$103.9 million
Economic impact resulting from hotel nights	\$3.8 million
Total Direct Spending due to Tournaments and Leagues	\$107.7 million

In the 2017 study, TPL focused its analysis on economic impact of visitors at tournaments. If we compare the 2023 economic benefits of the tournaments with the 2017 results (after adjusting for inflation), this represents a \$25.6 million increase in direct economic benefits from sports tournaments (or 50.1%) despite an overall decrease in the number of tournaments (from 77 in 2016 to 58 in 2024). The Parks Athletics team and the Convention and Visitors Bureau have closely aligned their efforts in recent years, shifting toward a more intentional event-hosting strategy. This approach emphasizes hosting fewer, but higher-impact tournaments, while continuing to nurture longstanding relationships with tournament organizers. This shift has proven to be both sustainable and impactful, leading to stronger economic returns. By focusing on premium events, the team has attracted increased athlete participation and greater spectator interest, significantly enhancing overall economic impact.



Special Events in Plano

Parks, trails, and green spaces help attract visitors to Plano. These amenities are an important part of the tourism industry, providing places to access nature, engage in outdoor activities, and host special events.

Plano Parks and Recreation hosts events year-round that encourage people to visit Plano, including festivals, concerts, races, and parades.

While many attendees are community residents, some travel further for a day trip or overnight stay. These special events generate spending at local businesses, including restaurants, retail, and other entertainment activities. Businesses may benefit by directly participating in the festivals, such as restaurants or food trucks set up as vendors; others may benefit from increased pedestrian traffic during the event, attracting more customers and sales.

Between October 2023 and September 2024, Plano Parks and Recreation hosted 36 special events; of these events, Plano estimated attendance for 92% of them. **Across the special events hosted by Plano in FY23, an estimated 200,100 people were in attendance.** While most of these events are oriented towards Plano residents, larger events can generate significant economic benefits to the region (though spending and hotel room bookings for these events have not been estimated.) The three largest events were the Plano Balloon Fest (with 90,000 attendees), Dickens in Downtown (18,000 attendees), and the Texas Forever Fest (18,000 attendees).

These events play an important role in the economic vitality of Plano, building a sense of place and pride in the city, contributing to the overall quality of life that continues to attract and retain residents and a strong business community.

Case Study: Labor Day Invitational

Since 1980, the Plano Labor Day Invitational Tournament has been a cornerstone event for the Plano Youth Soccer Association and a testament to the long-standing partnership with the City of Plano. As one of the premier youth soccer tournaments in the Southwest, it attracts over 800 competitive and academy teams from across Texas and the United States each year. This long-standing event not only enhances Plano's reputation as a destination for youth sports but also delivers substantial economic benefits—consistently generating over \$5 million in local economic impact annually.



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