



Houston Artists Create “Gateway to the World” Mural in Support of Houston’s Bid to Host 2026 FIFA World Cup

HOUSTON (June 10, 2021) – The Houston 2026 World Cup Bid Committee, in collaboration with Houston Airports, will begin painting a 10,000-square-foot “Gateway to the World” mural at William P. Hobby Airport (HOU) in support of Houston’s bid to host the 2026 FIFA World Cup. Houston’s airports are a strength and asset in the city’s 2026 FIFA World Cup bid.

The 20-by-500-foot mural, titled “Gateway to the World,” will be painted on the exterior of the Price Compressor Co. building at Hobby Airport by renowned street artist Mario Figueroa Jr., artistically known as GONZO247, and six other artists.

Houston Mayor Pro Tem Dave Martin said: “History has shown that our city can mobilize and come together in big moments, and there is no doubt that we will be able to rise to the occasion once again and serve as a great host to FIFA. I can say with confidence that our airports’ backing for our World Cup Bid is unmatched by any of our competitors.”

The monumental mural will be visible from aircraft departing and arriving at Hobby Airport, and will capture the synergy of Houston as the most diverse and innovative city in America. The work of art will include iconic Houston imagery and will highlight the city’s love of soccer. In addition to the mural, large ceramic soccer balls will be painted and later displayed inside Bush and Hobby airports.

Houston 2026 President Chris Canetti said: “Soccer has always been an integral part of the history and future of Houston and it’s so wonderful to see our community come together to support the bid. We are really looking forward to seeing the artists’ vision come to life in the Hobby Airport mural and to showcase to the world why Houston is ready to host the 2026 FIFA World Cup.”

The World Cup will attract visitors from across the world. Houston is the only city in the Western Hemisphere to have two four-star Skytrax rated airports. In 2019, George Bush Intercontinental (IAH) and Hobby Airports served nearly 60 million passengers. In 2024, Bush Airport’s new Mickey Leland international terminal will provide greater capacity for wide-body aircraft.

Houston Airports Director Mario Diaz said: “There are no better airports than Houston’s to receive hundreds of thousands of passengers who will travel from every corner of the globe to witness the world’s most exciting soccer tournament. From an airport perspective, to host a global event like the World Cup, it’s critical to have two key elements – airport capacity and connectivity. We exceed both.”

GONZO247 and the six additional artists – [Sylvia Blanco](#), [Hannah Bull](#), [Roni Cabrera-Moreno](#), [Black Cassidy](#), [Nicky Davis](#) and [Mathieu Jeanbaptiste](#) – expect to have the mural completed by the end of the month.

GONZO247 said: “To have the opportunity to use street art to show the world how Houston embraces diversity, innovation and a passion for soccer, is honestly very exciting. As someone born and raised in Houston, one of the most diverse cities in America, it’s an honor that the street art community has been asked to play its part in supporting the city’s bid to host the world’s greatest single sports event – the FIFA World Cup.”

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About the Houston 2026 World Cup Bid Committee

The Houston 2026 World Cup Bid Committee is leading the South Texas region’s efforts to host the FIFA World Cup 2026™. It is a subsidiary of the Harris County – Houston Sports Authority. The FIFA World Cup 2026™ will be played in 16 cities across the United States, Mexico and Canada. Houston is among 17 cities vying to become a U.S. host city. A final decision is expected in late 2021.

About Houston Airport System

Houston Airports is the City of Houston’s Department of Aviation. Comprised of George Bush Intercontinental Airport (IAH), William P. Hobby Airport (HOU) and Ellington Airport (EFD) / Houston Spaceport, Houston Airports served nearly 25 million passengers in 2020 and nearly 60 million passengers in 2019.

Houston Airports forms one of North America's largest public airport systems and positions Houston as the international passenger and cargo gateway to the South-Central United States and as a primary gateway to Latin America.

Houston is proud to be the only city in the Western Hemisphere with two Skytrax rated 4-star airports. For more information about Houston Airports, please visit www.fly2houston.com

Media Contacts

Houston 2026:

US: Christy Cahill / Christy@jtapacific.sport / +1 617 777 4489

UK: Nick Dawes / nick@jta.sport / +44 7557 435851

Houston Airport System:

Augusto Bernal, Public Information Officer / Augusto.Bernal@houstontx.gov / +1 713 512-1490

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