

TESTIMONY BEFORE CHARGERS TASK FORCE JANUARY 30, 2003

Thank you, Mr. Chairman and task force members for the opportunity to testify today. My name is Doug Barnhart, I am Chair of the City of San Diego, Qualcomm Stadium Advisory Board and I am here today representing the Board along with Bill Wilson, Stadium Manager, to speak about the deficiencies with Qualcomm Stadium.

1. **Foundation** – Qualcomm was constructed in phases that encompassed some 29 years, it does not have a common foundation system. The initial construction is supported by piling that transfers stadium loads to bedrock. The stadium additions are supported by large spread footings. The result is differential settlement between sections 42 and 43 of four to five inches. This cannot be economically corrected. There is little question that this issue affects drainage and other maintenance issues and will likely be an issue of any modernization attempt.

2. **“Back of the House”** - Qualcomm was originally constructed as a venue for approximately 52,000 people. It has been expanded to accommodate Super Bowl crowds with the use of temporary seating to 70,000 with little expansion of “Back of the House” facilities. As a result the maintenance crews operate out of storage containers located on the old practice field approximately ¼ mile distance. “Back of the House” spaces are normally located beneath the facility. Other problems with the “Back of the House” involve current media requirements. In 1967 sporting events did not receive the media attention that is today’s norm.

Other “Back of the House” operations are food service kitchens for 70,000 people as well as facilities for the actual event participants. Currently all food is prepared from facilities designed for 52,000 including club level services. Qualcomm needs full service kitchens at club and press levels.

3. **Multi-use Facilities** - In 1967 multi-use facilities were acceptable and in fact the norm. The games, however, have progressed to the point where professional sports facilities are more singular in purpose like college facilities. There is not a single multi-use college facility for football and baseball at any major university and only Miami, Oakland and San Diego are using a multi-use facility for professional football. In building a facility for both baseball and football you need a rotating temporary seat arrangement at field level to adapt the seating to different field configurations.

The problem with this arrangement is that it takes away from the quality of the experience. You essentially have to significantly increase the horizontal distance to the super structure to accommodate the temporary seats. The action is on the field and the more interaction generated between teams and fans the better the experience.

4. Plumbing - The original Stadium was built at a cost of \$27 million and had sufficient restrooms. There were no luxury suites (skyboxes) in San Diego Stadium as it was then called. Eventually 113 skyboxes were constructed and most of them now contain restrooms. This addition, an added load on the original plumbing, created a serious water volume problem for each major event. Since it is impractical to replace all of the original pipes that supply water to the upper levels of the Stadium, it is necessary for a Stadium plumber to manually bypass the pressure valves, which creates sufficient volume and pressure to activate the plumbing on those levels every time there is a large crowd in attendance.

The sewage system inside the Stadium is basically cast iron and has had some breaks and will probably experience major problems in the future. Serious grease plugs from the food service areas are removed on a regular basis. Sometimes these occur without notice and at least three or four times a year there is a backup of sewer water in the Stadium.

5. Electrical - Electrical problems have been increasing dramatically in recent years. The underground wiring in the parking lot has just been replaced. The field lights experienced a failure last season resulting in a baseball cancellation in the second inning. An infrared diagnostic test on the entire electrical system revealed considerable problems which have been corrected and the hope is that a major outage will not occur in the future. Lighted advertising panels (ringing the face of the loge level) have also been added to the original building and in a word the wiring has been “jury rigged”. The palm tree lights in the outfield during baseball games (these go away in 2004) is another example of an addition to the original facility. Over 1,200 television sets and air conditioning in four club lounges, three restaurants and 113 skyboxes (all of which were not present in the 1967 edition of the Stadium) overtax an already stressed electrical system.

6. Concourses - Narrow pedestrian concourses on the upper levels (vary from 12 to 18 feet) creating an almost impossible transit situation in front of concession stands on those levels. Additionally the Plaza interior concourse is also very narrow.

7. Playing Surfaces - The playing surface has been contaminated by clay over the years and is in need of replacement. However, lowering the field two feet would resolve the sight obstruction issue with the first seven rows the NFL refused to use for the Super Bowl but would cost about \$3.5 million. It would be necessary to build a watertight container (the field would be lower than the San Diego River and would flood during the winter rains) with pumping devices to make this proposal functional.

8. Locker Rooms - The locker rooms were created in the days when traveling NFL and college teams were much smaller and they are of insufficient size for today's teams. Storage for the stadium staff and the tenants is totally insufficient.

9. Club Seating – The club seating arrangement is awkward because of the need to accommodate such items as food and beverage service and retail sales. There is really no open flow because the public corridors were designed for a 52,000 person facility. In an attempt to introduce some interaction, pop-out lounges were added. These lounges are too small and unless you arrive at the game three hours before kick-off you cannot get a table. The restroom facilities are inadequate on the club level especially with regard to men's restrooms.

10. Maintenance – Qualcomm is showing its age. There are numerous areas where the stadium concrete is spalled and cracked. While these areas can be corrected using new age materials, any repairs will further degrade the facility of any architectural integrity that remains. Seismic upgrading of the 1967 construction should be examined. Unlike newer sports facilities the escalators are located in exterior locations and maintenance is a serious issue due to the age of the facility. These escalators will require major renovation in the coming years. Other maintenance issues are deteriorated expansion joints, which allow water penetration to seating areas and locker rooms. The parking lot has potholes and spider cracking and is in need of resurfacing.

11. Drainage – Due to the settlement issues previously discussed and the location of drains near the concrete risers, Qualcomm holds water, which will not flow to drains. This is a major problem because during events where rain occurs, fans must be relocated to other areas, which is obviously not a marketing advantage. More importantly, every time it rains even slightly or after every event wash downs it take approximately six maintenance personnel eight hours to manually remove the water.

12. Jumbo-tron Scoreboard – The main scoreboard is located on the East end below view seating. It is the only one in the stadium where scores from other games, game statistics and other information is visual. It is a fact that from Club Level 50 yard line seats you cannot see all of the scoreboard. This is another example of a line of sight issue. There are other seats where you cannot see the goal post in a football venue. Most newer facilities correct this problem with two scoreboards but that is not a good option at Qualcomm due to potential seat capacity lost.

A complete remodel of the existing facility might resolve the aforementioned deficiencies but it would not address the fact that the concourses, skyboxes, locker rooms, press box, and food service areas were considered great in 1967 but do not meet the standards of today's needs in a State of the Art Major League Stadium.

Thank you.