

TESTIMONY OF DOUGLAS E. BARNHART

I would like to thank the Task Force for the opportunity to provide some observations on Qualcomm.

As many of you are aware, I have served on the Qualcomm Advisory Board since its establishment by Mayor Golding and am the current Chairman of the Board. I am also one of the partners in San Diego Ballpark Builders, the joint venture that is constructing the new Padres Ballpark downtown. You should also be aware that I am Chairman of the Professional Sports Committee for the San Diego International Sports Council. I am here not representing the Qualcomm Board, but these positions do provide a perspective regarding the Qualcomm facility that no one can duplicate.

As I see it there is no question that Qualcomm will be replaced at some point in time. The question is really one of timing. After all Qualcomm is 35 years old and even under the most aggressive time estimate will be 43 years old before a replacement facility could be in place. That is if a decision to replace were made today.

Since its construction in 1967, Qualcomm has served the community very well. It is however, showing its age and deficiencies as an entertainment venue. The games it supports are not the same as in 1967 and as the sports world has evolved it has not maintained its position as a premier sports venue facility. This next Super Bowl may very well be the last “hurrah”.

I want to emphasize that Qualcomm is first and foremost an entertainment venue so the quality of the experience cannot be underestimated for both the individual and business user.

Today I will highlight what I believe are Qualcomm’s deficiencies. You can make the decision as to the seriousness of the deficiencies as they may relate to the continued use of the facility past a replacement age of 43.

1. Foundation – Because 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 short of starting all over. There is little question that this issue affects drainage and other maintenance issues and will likely be an issue of any modernization attempt. All structures settle, but what you want is uniform settlement.

2. Back of the House – I am assuming the task force understands what constitutes “Back of the House”. Qualcomm was originally constructed as a venue for approximately 45,000 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 House” facilities. As a result the maintenance crews operate out of storage containers located on the old practice field

approximately ¼ mile distance.

I am sure no one would argue that such an arrangement is inefficient. “Back of the House” spaces are normally located beneath the facility so nothing less than a complete “start over” will properly correct this deficiency. I wonder how much lost maintenance effort is related to this configuration and suspect it is significant.

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. We are part of a community which needs a facility that can accommodate the media requirements of a Super Bowl which is a worldwide media event. Qualcomm simply does not measure up to other venues in this regard and I again believe we need to start over. In 1967 the facility was not designed for “Super Bowl” type events. Along this same line I have been informed that approximately 20% of football fans are Hispanic. While Hispanic radio is available, there is no room in Qualcomm for a second local television crew with Spanish broadcast.

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 45,000 including club level services. Qualcomm is obviously not where it should be by just looking at the band-aid approach used to augment food service on the concourse.

3. 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. I am unaware of a single multi-use college facility for football and baseball at any major university and only 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. This places the more expensive revenue generating club seats and suites at a longer distance from the field of activity. Until the Padres park construction commenced, I really did not understand the visual and interactive impact.

The action is on the field and the more interaction generated between teams and fans the better the experience.

4. Obstructed Views – I am told that the first eight rows of Qualcomm are sold at ½ price by the football team. That reason is that you cannot see the game without standing. At club level on the 50-yard line you cannot see all sections of the scoreboard and at view level you cannot see the goal line. Some club seats are obstructed by essential ADA compliance issues.

5. Suites – Much of the local wealth is concentrated in small business rather than

Fortune 500 firms. What this really means is that the suite configuration, size and other factors are very important to any suite marketing effort. Any existing sports facility has its section configuration set. That pattern dictates to a large extent suite configuration and size. While I believe the City has made every effort to develop attractive suites given the parameters, the mix is not optimum. Most football venue fans want yardage seats and a very high percentage of Qualcomm suites are in the goal line areas. Another problem with the suite level is that it is not exclusive. Below most suites is general seating. This is a major issue in the suite venue where companies pay a premium for an exclusive experience. All suites do not contain restrooms and the temporary seating arrangement is a negative when sightlines and distance from the field are considered. To be a first class business entertainment venue, there needs to be a premium level kitchen facility on the club level. Such a kitchen does not currently exist at Qualcomm. Newer facilities have communication and visual amenities that Qualcomm lacks such as interactive video feeds from other games.

6. Club Seating – The club seating arrangement is awkward because of the need to accommodate such items as handicapped access and food and beverage service and retail sales. There is really no open flow because the public corridors were designed for a 45,000 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 quite inadequate on the club level. I hear the complaints at every event from the men who are standing in line. The only solution without reducing seating capacity in my opinion would be to relocate out the exterior shell, which essentially would mean a complete reconstruction of Qualcomm.

7. 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. Although I am told the facility meets current seismic standards, to be honest I see no evidence of any seismic upgrading of the 1967 construction and believe it 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 replacement in the coming years. Other maintenance issues are deteriorated expansion joints, which allow water penetration to seating areas and locker rooms, and parking lot resurfacing as the last resurfacing was 15 years ago. I am also told that you cannot hear the public address system underneath the overhang in some sections.

8. 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.

9. Jumbo-tron Scoreboard – The jumbo-tron 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 jumbo-tron. This is another example of a line of sight issue. I am told by staff 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.

10. Other Issues - I have purposely not addressed locker rooms, game day offices, press boxes and other stadium spaces, which are clearly deficient especially for worldwide events like the Super Bowl. In summary I believe it is important to remember that things change. The house you build in 1967 is not the house you would build in 2010. Families are different, lifestyles are different. We have hundreds of channels on TV instead of two so you have media rooms, larger personal areas, great rooms in lieu of living rooms etc. It is not that we were unhappy in our 1967 house, because it satisfied our needs at that time and we did not have the opportunity to see what we were missing. Things change however and our facilities must change. The time to address Qualcomm is now because this grand facility that has served us well is outdated. The games played have changed financially, and the fans are more demanding. It is an entertainment venue.

The City staff has in my opinion performed very well in maintaining the structure given the limitations. I realize many believe another modernization project can correct all deficiencies and save valuable resources. I am not of that opinion because another modernization project will be extremely expensive and likely will need to be funded without any outside financial contributions. And when it is completed what you will have is still a very old maintenance intensive facility.