

OPERATIONS AND COMMUNICATIONS

San Diego Trolley *From Super Bowl Rookie to Super Bowl Veteran*

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Every January the National Football League (NFL) presents its premier sporting event of the year in a major United States city. The selection of the host city is based on a rigorous competition involving countless factors. The winning host city expects to receive millions of dollars in economic benefit plus equal or more value through major media on-air and print exposure in the months leading up to the game and during Super Bowl Week.

The NFL has selected San Diego to host the Super Bowl three times—in 1988, 1998, and 2003. San Diego Trolley, Inc., (SDTI) became a “major player” during San Diego’s 1998 Super Bowl Week when more than 500,000 fans used the Trolley to go to the various events and the game. And that was one of the factors that contributed to San Diego being selected to host the game in 2003.

Together, SDTI and the Metropolitan Transit Development Board Regional Marketing Team leveraged their experience and lessons learned from the 1998 and subsequent special events and provided an entire new game plan for providing service and marketing.

This paper will provide history of public transit’s role at the 1988 and 1998 games plus compare and contrast the operating and the marketing strategies, activities, and outcomes for the 2003 game. The 2003 strategies were developed based on previous experience and the goals and objectives set by the NFL and the San Diego Local Host Committee, and new opportunities and challenges that arose in the interim.

INTRODUCTION

San Diego has hosted three National Football League (NFL) Super Bowl games—Super Bowl XXII in 1988, Super Bowl XXXII in 1998, and Super Bowl XXXVII in 2003. San Diego, like other cities, vigorously competes to host the event in the same way cities and countries compete to host other major special events like the World Cup or the Olympic Games. The motivation is the expectation of significant economic impact plus major media exposure.

A study commissioned by the San Diego Super Bowl XXXVII Host Committee (SBHC) and the NFL (1) estimates that Super Bowl XXXVII generated \$367 million in San Diego. The region also received extensive media exposure in the months and days leading up to the game and during the game where advertisers spent upwards of \$2 million for a 30-sec commercial (2).

The Super Bowl itself has transitioned from what was initially a football game with minimal pre-game hype in 1966 to an actual celebration of the sport with significant media and corporate hype. Once a city is selected, the committee begins a multiyear planning process to

address countless issues for the game and the associated special events that cover a 7- to 8-day period. One of the primary areas of planning is on transportation to the game and events.

When the NFL selected San Diego to host the NFL's January 2003 Super Bowl Game, the goal was for the NFL and San Diego Trolley, Inc., (SDTI) to leverage their experience from the 1998 game. That experience, plus heightened security concerns due to September 11, 2001, (9/11) terrorist acts, created an entirely new "game plan" for service and marketing SDTI.

While previous Super Bowls have generated significant transit ridership, there had been renewed interest in pre- and post-game public transportation due primarily to restricting Qualcomm Stadium's parking lot for other activities such as corporate hospitality, media set-ups, NFL invitation-only tailgating, and emergency services.

In 2002, tightened security intensified the need to eliminate almost all parking at the stadium as part of the additional mandated security measures due to 9/11. Because the strong security focus has continued, the 2003 game also included plans to eliminate almost all parking at Qualcomm Stadium.

Transportation consultants began meeting with local authorities approximately 1 year before the game. During these initial meetings, general plans were developed that provided local transit representatives with a broad perspective of the issues that required attention. Also participating in these meetings were members from the local SBHC and law enforcement.

For Super Bowl XXXVII, virtually all of San Diego Qualcomm Stadium's 19,000 available parking spaces would be unavailable for general parking, and all recreational vehicle parking was eliminated. Approximately 3,000 spaces were to be reserved for special VIP pass parking (limousines), disabled individuals (Americans with Disabilities Act), and reserved charter buses (which would take up the majority of these spaces).

OPERATING PLAN OVERVIEW AND STRATEGIES

With the ban on general parking and the experience from the 1998 Super Bowl, it was understood that public transit would shoulder the responsibility for carrying the majority of fans to the game with SDTI expected to be the largest ground transportation element for the game as well as most of the downtown Super Bowl events. The challenge for Super Bowl XXXVII was to create a plan that would allow SDTI to maximize resources to serve the highest expected demand in its history. This required executing a plan that would:

- Balance passenger loads between the Trolley and the local buses serving the game, and
- Allow the Trolley to adequately serve other Super Bowl special events located in downtown.

These challenges were made even more complicated by the need to address overriding security concerns.

Emphasis on Security

Super Bowl XXXVI (January 2002) held in New Orleans took place within months of 9/11. As a consequence, the event was designated a National Special Security Event (NSSE). The NSSE

status is provided to any event determined to be of national significance. The results of such a designation required federal authorities such as the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), U.S. Secret Service, and Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF) to maintain primary responsibility for determining the appropriate security measures that would be incorporated into the planning of the event. Further, while local and state police authorities were involved, they assumed a secondary or support role to federal authorities.

For Super Bowl XXXVII, the city and governor of California both requested NSSE status, but the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) rejected the request. Instead, the DHS granted a special Level 2 status, giving state and local police authorities the primary role with federal agencies providing secondary support. However, by all accounts, security measures were determined to be at a level that would have been consistent with measures initiated had the NSSE status been granted.

The two primary areas of security focus at the stadium involved establishing a perimeter control barrier that varied in location but was generally established at 300 ft from the stadium structure. The reinforced barrier also contained several sections with clusters of 20 or more magnetometers through which all fans would pass for security clearance.

Additionally, the event was determined by the city to be an “overflow capacity event.” This determination allowed the city to impose entry restrictions so only those with Game Day tickets or special NFL credentials were allowed access into the stadium from either the Trolley station area or into the parking lot.

Security Orientation and Drills

SDTI security and safety staff personnel, in conjunction with San Diego Transit (SDT), coordinated with local, state, and federal authorities in a variety of drills and orientation sessions.

- Multi-agency simulated terrorist disaster drill simulated a bomb exploding on a bus under the light rail transit (LRT) stadium station. All local, state, and federal (FBI) authorities participated. Various technical issues and response protocols were generated and applied to plans for Super Bowl XXXVII. The San Diego MTS director of transit security acted in a lead role and funds to cover the cost were generated by an FTA grant.

- On-site training at light rail vehicles (LRV) facilities familiarized ATF agents and specially trained bomb-sniffing dogs with the unique characteristics of LRVs and station facilities.

- Approximately 75 FBI Terrorist Response Team agents developed a variety of tactical approaches to entering an LRV that was otherwise secured.

Super Bowl Game and Associated Events

The NFL and SBHC worked over the course of a year and developed a variety of events including: recognition for community projects, VIP-ticketed events, general public ticketed events, and free public celebrations. Some (but not all) of the planned events affected public transportation:

- Martin Luther King Jr. Parade.....Saturday, January 18, 2003;
- Multi-Cultural Festival.....Saturday, January 18, 2003;

- NFL ExperienceSat.–Sun., January 18–19, 2003;
- NFL Experience (continued).....Thurs.–Sun., January 23–26, 2003;
- Super Hub/5th Quarter in the Gaslamp.....Thurs.–Sun., January 23–26, 2003;
- Cultural Arts Bowl and FestivalThurs.–Fri., January 23–24, 2003;
- Concert Series at EmbarcaderoFri.–Sat. January 24–25, 2003;
- Downtown Fireworks.....Saturday, January 25, 2003; and
- Super Bowl GameSunday, January 26, 2003.

With the exception of the game, all of the above events including the Fireworks, NFL Experience, and Super Hub/5th Quarter (which drew the largest crowds), were held in the downtown area along the Bay and in the Gaslamp Quarter. On Saturday night, the Fireworks and NFL Experience attracted a combined estimated crowd in excess of 200,000. Both events ended at the same time, creating a tremendous burden on the road network and Trolley service.

Lessons Learned from Super Bowl XXXII

In the aftermath of 1998's Super Bowl XXXII, a final report (3) prepared by the city of San Diego addressed a variety of issues and occurrences that took place on Game Day affecting transit services. SDTI undertook its own "lessons learned" report (4) to look at planning strategies and several equipment failures that affected the Trolley's efficiency with which service was provided. Both reports concurred that San Diego should:

- Develop a plan to provide a better mode split between LRT service and regional bus services. In 1998 over 29,000 used LRT service to the game while bus service ridership barely exceeded 1,000.
- Develop a more efficient means of handling pre- and post-event crowds at Qualcomm Stadium Station by reducing platform overloading.

In addition, the Trolley report concluded it should:

- Incorporate a train location feature to provide central control personnel more efficient monitoring of train movement.
- Install wayside emergency access gates in the vicinity of the golf course (about 4 mi west of the stadium).
- Purchase permanent manual ticket sales booths for Mission Valley Station locations where recurring high ridership is generated.
- Increase post-game service operations on the Mission Valley segment in order to improve over-the-line efficiency between Qualcomm and Old Town.
- Maximize pre-ticketing of fans and enhance use of the MTS website.
- Modify Mission Valley traction power substations to provide pass-through power from adjacent locations in the event of loss of an individual substation.
- Develop a contingency plan for sustaining a high degree of LRT service by strategically staging reserve backup buses in the downtown and Mission Valley areas.

While all of the elements contained in the Trolley report were implemented, installed, or acted up favorably before the 2003 game, it should be noted that several of the items noted occurred as a result of only 2 months of operating experience on the new segment serving the stadium. By the time the 1998 Super Bowl Game was played, SDTI had only provided service to two football games.

Between the 1998 and 2003 Super Bowl, SDTI had handled more than 500 special events along the Mission Valley West route including: Major League Baseball's 1998 Championship Playoff, Pennant, and World Series Games; 81 Padres baseball home games; 10 Chargers football home games; a Rolling Stones concert; and the annual college Holiday Bowl Game.

This wide variety of experience allowed SDTI to refine its operations to efficiently handle large crowds during capacity stadium events. This has also given staff at all levels significant experience in dealing with equipment, line operational characteristics, crowd handling/platform control, and service efficiency variations.

NFL Recommendations

The NFL relied heavily on SDTI staff to develop the plans for Trolley service levels, however the NFL recommended that SDTI:

- Develop a plan to deploy reserve buses in the event of a system failure. The NFL's initial request for 100 buses was pared down to 35 to be situated at various locations. This included small clusters of buses at locations along Harbor Drive (covering the Bayside area) to a variety of other locations covering Old Town and stations along Mission Valley. SDTI provided these buses and all drivers were given special route maps to a precise route if supplemental service was deemed necessary.
- Maintain an additional fleet of stand-by buses to use during the post-game time frame to relieve the anticipated crowding and excessive waits. The plan called for a total post event stand-by bus fleet of 85 to 100 units. Of this number, 35 were to be redeployed from the SDTI pre-event pool and the remaining number (50 to 65) would be dispatched from the main bus park-and-ride lot as described in more detail in the next section.

Bus Service Summary

Fans

Rather than repeat the 1988 and 1998 Super Bowls plans which offered bus service from a series of satellite park-and-ride lots, the NFL worked with the region's public bus operators, SDT, North County Transit, Chula Vista Transit, National City Transit, County Transit System, and ATC Vancom to create a single lot that was sufficiently large enough and strategically located to attract fans coming to the game from locations north of Interstate 8.

The lot selected was approximately 4 mi north of the stadium and could accommodate up to 8,000 cars. The NFL arranged for an overflow lot nearby for an additional 3,000 vehicles. Motorists could only enter if they had game tickets and paid \$10 per vehicle. All occupants received round-trip bus service to the game. The NFL handled all arrangements and paid \$60 per-bus, per-hour to the regional transit agencies for providing the 109 buses.

There were some communication difficulties between the bus operators and NFL representatives. Some of the issues related to insufficient NFL personnel to provide necessary directives to bus operators. Also, bus operation directions were changed at the last minute. Bus operator supervisors were quick to track down the problems and arrive at immediate solutions, thus eliminating complaints by attendees as well as operational oversights like sending out for water and refreshments for drivers and other staff.

Stadium Employees

Since there was no room for stadium employees to park at the stadium, a separate lot was used as a park-and-ride lot for stadium employees. SDTI operated this service beginning at 4:30 a.m. and continuing until 10:00 p.m.; 3,300 employees took advantage of this service.

Light Rail Service Plans

Enhanced Service by Day and Time

Service level adjustments were made to coincide with Super Bowl events anticipated to have an impact on Trolley ridership based on their location and projected attendance. Enhanced LRT service consisted of one or more of the following components:

- Increased frequency,
- Increased consist size,
- Extended hours of operation, and
- Overlay of special Green Line and special trains. The Green Line's direct service between the Convention Center area and adjacent hotels to Mission Valley was the most important component of the game day plan (Figure 1)

Super Bowl Week events officially opened the weekend before the Super Bowl Game with the opening of the NFL Experience and continued in varying degrees until the close of the Super Hub/5th Quarter in the Gaslamp activities that continued after the game ended Sunday until early Monday morning.

Special Run Pick

The scope of the operating plan was to manage available resources (i.e., equipment and personnel) in a way that allowed for maximum efficiency. Train operator assignments were adjusted to better distribute the workload over the course of each operating day, which would require fewer train operators to facilitate. The train operators were then able to bid their shifts based on seniority. This exercise was a critical element and the key reason that the level of service needed, could be offered. Under normal circumstances, this amount of service would have required a greater number of personnel to operate.



FIGURE 1 SDTI special event service map.

Game Day Operations

Game-day service enhancements were designed to provide a sufficient level of service between downtown and Qualcomm Stadium through increased service on the Blue Line and Orange Line plus an overlay of additional service on the special event Green Line. The adjustments were based upon past experience and projections.

Blue Line

Normal Sunday 30-min headway would increase to 15-min service by 8:00 a.m. and every 7½ min at 10:00 a.m.

Green Line

Begin 15-min service at 8:00 a.m. and every 7½ min by 10:00 a.m.

Orange Line

With the increased number of Blue and Green Line trains operating on the Bayside and through downtown, it was determined that normal Orange Line service would add unnecessary traffic congestion on these corridors. Instead, Orange Line trains would terminate at a temporary station east of the 12th and Imperial Transfer Station starting at 8:00 a.m. on Game Day. This also provided additional vehicles as the Orange Line fleet requirements were reduced by two two-car train sets.

Mission San Diego Station

The tracks to this station, east of Qualcomm Stadium, were needed to store trains on game day. Therefore on Super Bowl Sunday, wheelchair accessible shuttle bus service carried 593 passengers between the Mission San Diego and Rio Vista Stations from 8:00 a.m. to 10:00 p.m.

Supplemental Mission Valley Service

Two four-car Trolleys were coordinated to meet the four Coaster train arrivals at the Old Town Transit Center. (The Coaster is a commuter rail line service operating along a 40-mi route between Oceanside and Downtown San Diego.)

This extra capacity provided adequate service for the hundreds of transferring Coaster passengers without overburdening the other Trolley trains operating at near capacity through Mission Valley. In addition, these special four-car trains also provided extra service between Hazard Center and the stadium to ease congestion through Mission Valley.

Post-Game Service

Eighteen trains were scheduled to be stored east of the stadium in preparation for post-game crowds. A number of additional consists were also to be sent from the yard during the game.

Game Day Results

Well over 9 h before kickoff on Super Bowl Sunday, the first extra Blue Line train departed the yard to begin service to Qualcomm Stadium. This was the first step toward the full deployment of the SDTI game-day operating plan. The expanded service was implemented in stages based upon expected ridership demands as shown in this game day implementation schedule summary:

Pre-Game Service

5:52 a.m.—With the Blue Line operating every 30 min, the first extra train begins service in order to increase the frequency to 15-min intervals throughout the Blue Line by 8:00 a.m.

8:00 a.m.—Special Event “Green Line” service begins operating at 15-min frequency between the Bayside/Convention Center area and Qualcomm Stadium. The combined service through Mission Valley is averaging every 7½-min. Alternative shuttle bus service begins operating between the Mission San Diego and Rio Vista Stations.

Westbound Orange Line service begins terminating at temporary station just east of the 12th and Imperial Junction. The Orange Line is still operating a normal 30-min headway and the expanded Blue and Green lines provide an adequate alternative for transferring passengers. The Mission San Diego Station is closed and shuttle bus service begins.

9:00 a.m.—Two four-car trains depart the yard to meet the southbound Coaster trains at Old Town Transit Center. In addition to facilitating the transfer passengers from four Coaster arrivals, these trains run intermediate trips between Hazard Center and the stadium. A total of five trips originated at Hazard Center between 11:45 a.m. and 1:45 p.m. Passenger volume had declined significantly by 2:00 p.m. At that point, these trains continue to operate trips between Old Town and the stadium as needed.

10:00 a.m.—Green Line service frequency increases to 7½-min intervals, which doubles the amount of service. Blue Line service between downtown and the stadium is also increased by the same amount. By 10:32 a.m., the first additional train reaches the stadium and service frequency through Mission Valley is now operating at a system capacity of 3.75-min. This level of service remains in place for 5 h, until the 3:25 p.m. kickoff. The Orange Line transitions to regular 15-min frequency.

2:36 p.m.—Although almost 50 min remains before kickoff, ridership has slowed to a trickle into the stadium. Event trains begin being stored east of the stadium station for post-game service. Orange Line service resumes downtown shortly after 3:00 p.m. Regular Blue Line service continues to terminate at the stadium.

5:00 p.m.—All event trains are in place east of the stadium and ready for post-game service.

Post-Game Service

6:05 p.m.—Regular Blue Line trains begin carrying significant passenger loads departing the stadium. At this time, the regular 15-min headway is adequate.

6:46 p.m.—The first event train departs the stadium. Although the game is far from over, the lopsided score has convinced some fans that the outcome is inevitable. Demand is sufficient that trains are departing at the optimum 4-min rate. The demand ebbs somewhat as the score becomes surprisingly close after the trailing team scores a couple of quick touchdowns late in the game. The rate of departures is slowed accordingly for a short time.

7:17 p.m.—The game is over and the stadium begins to empty. The line begins to form into the stadium LRT station. There are still some activities inside the stadium (the post-game trophy presentation followed by a concert) so many fans remain inside.

9:23 p.m.—The final, fully loaded train departs the stadium. There have been 38 train departures in just the 2½ h since the first event train left averaging one departure every 4 min. Over-the-line trip times between the stadium and Old Town average about 17 min compared to 14 min under normal conditions. In 1998, some trains took an hour to make the trip. Credit for the improvement goes to the strict 4-min departure schedule, which kept the system from becoming overloaded, as well to the use of station teams to minimize dwell times at down line stations.

LRT Service Summary

On the event days leading up to Super Bowl XXXVII, the planned service was operated as scheduled with the largest crowds occurring on Friday and Saturday nights. Although the Green Line appeared to have the highest level of ridership each day, both Orange and Blue Lines realized a significant amount of activity.

Friday night crowds were significant. Inbound and outbound traffic patterns were steady with noticeable peaks at the close of the NFL Experience and as 5th Quarter in the Gaslamp activities concluded. Extra Green Line trains departed the yard as needed.

Saturday was by far the busiest day with the added attraction of what was billed as the largest fireworks display in the history of San Diego. The events attracted an estimated 200,000 people to downtown. Fully loaded trains were arriving from all points for several hours leading up to the 9:15 p.m. fireworks. The most intense activity occurred when the fireworks show and the NFL Experience concluded at the same time. The tens of thousands of people left their vantage points along the Bay and walked either to Bayside stations or across the tracks into the Gaslamp Quarter as did thousands of those attending the NFL Experience. All Trolley stations between Gaslamp and Santa Fe Depot were inundated with people attempting to board outbound trains. Demand not only exceeded train capacity, but also exceeded station capacity as the crowds spilled over into the surrounding streets. People who were driving also experienced gridlock as they attempted to exit downtown.

Train operation was slowed considerably due to the volume of pedestrian traffic in the stations and at the grade crossings. Transit security officers performed admirably keeping the tracks clear for train movement. When possible, some trains expressed through the Gaslamp Station in order to provide relief to the stations down line. Passengers at these other stations were having difficulty boarding due to the “full trains” departing the Gaslamp Station. Heavy passenger loads continued to all points until well after midnight. Over 200 additional train trips were operated to satisfy the demand.

Contingency Plan Summary

In almost every case, the benefits of executing the “lessons learned” and the contingency plans were seen during the Super Bowl.

Back-up Buses

Seven hours before kick-off, 35 buses were deployed at selected locations including downtown, Old Town, and selected Mission Valley locations. During the game, the buses went to the Qualcomm Stadium LRT station to join a group of 50 buses to create a larger fleet of buses to be used for post-game overflow capacity relief in the event crowds exceeded LRT service capability. The cost for the reserve was shared between SDTI and the NFL.

While the stand-by buses were not used for any line failure, during the post-game egress, the NFL diverted an estimated 3,000 passengers from the LRT queuing line to the 85 buses for express service to downtown hotels. This resulted in relieving some of the post-game wait that would ordinarily be experienced by passengers.

Special Teams Summary

In 1998 it was clear that any delay in the field, whether related to passenger boardings or equipment failure, created a “domino” effect in delaying train service. Once a delay occurred, given the magnitude of the Super Bowl Game Day service, the Trolley could not easily recover. As a result, it was determined that Trolley could prevent the domino effect by deploying a variety of staff, contractor, and outside agency teams, who would be ready to respond to a wide range of potential problems in the field.

Station Teams

The NFL’s ticket distribution formula only allows 5% of tickets to be distributed to host team fans. In 1998, the vast majority of those riding to the game were not familiar with the operation much less procedures for boarding and de-boarding. Field personnel could document first-hand the significant problems this lack of familiarity created in both pre- and post-game operations. The problem worsened during the intense post-game close headway operations when station dwells were excessive. Passenger confusion created loss of efficiency and trains backed up.

SDTI created station teams under the control of a management employee designated as the station manager. The plan called for the teams to range from a minimum of 8 employees to as many as 12, depending on station location and volume. Each team consisted of personnel in a variety of categories, including security, code enforcement, LRV maintainers, or other supervisors.

Team managers wore an orange vest for easy recognition. Teams were deployed in the field prior to the enhanced service initiated on game day, and their responsibilities included: assisting passengers, distributing riders evenly along the platform, and responding to operational or vehicle problems. The teams remained deployed throughout game day until after the crowds had diminished at approximately 10:00 p.m.

Station teams proved extremely helpful and provided the essential assistance we were looking for. Having fans evenly spread out along the platform resulted in quicker more uniform boarding. During the post event, their ability to assist passengers with de-boarding improved the over-the-line efficiency. Also, the LRV technicians in the team proved extremely beneficial. In one particular case, passengers boarding a post-game train at Qualcomm Station experienced an air conditioner compressor failure. It caused a small explosive noise and a small amount of smoke. But the experienced technician on the platform immediately recognized the symptoms and took corrective action by tripping the circuit breaker while the train was still loading allowing an on-time departure.

Track Crew and Equipment Deployment Teams

Separate teams made up of staff with track expertise were deployed to a variety of locations including Old Town Transit Center, Qualcomm Stadium, and where train service merged at the Santa Fe Depot at Broadway. Further, specialized equipment was also strategically deployed at locations along the route extending from downtown to Qualcomm Stadium. This included the track-truck, re-rail, and other specialized on-track equipment in the event of a derailment or track appliance failure.

A rule infraction early in the game day operating plan resulted in minor damage to a crossover switch near Old Town. Because the field track crew was assigned to this critical location, they responded within minutes and made the necessary adjustments to the switch allowing unimpeded continuation of train movement. This event was transparent to the public.

Wayside/Train Control Deployment Teams

The Wayside Department maximized its force of field technicians and assigned them to interlocking locations as well as traction power substations at all critical locations from Downtown through Mission Valley. Had such a plan been in place for Super Bowl XXXII (1998), the temporary power failure experienced could have been minimized and power restored almost immediately when the feeder breakers tripped.

In 2003, a minor technical malfunction caused a brief period of red signals for trains leaving Qualcomm Station during the post-game operation period. The Wayside Train Control supervisor assigned to the station quickly responded and manually selected desired routes and cleared signals. This was a single occurrence and did not recur during the evening.

Overhead Catenary Response Teams

In order to provide the existing SDTI maintenance staff with an expanded capability, a highly specialized overhead line contractor assembled a team for centralized deployment. This included a variety of specialized equipment that could be immediately put into service in the event of any failure in the overhead power line distribution system. This arrangement was deemed necessary due to the deployment of other personnel and the interest in maximizing our capability to quickly respond and restore service.

Local Electric Utility Company Provides Trouble Teams

The San Diego Gas and Electricity deployed up to six “trouble teams” at locations extending from Downtown to Mission Valley. SDTI staff were provided with direct communication with these teams in the event a power failure occurred that affected LRT service.

Advance Facilities Enhancement Summary

Line and Vehicle Inspections

Vehicle and line inspections were intensified during the months preceding Super Bowl XXXVII. The LRV Department initiated enhanced inspections of LRVs with particular emphasis on overhead power collection devices (pantographs). This effort was mirrored by the Wayside Maintenance Department with increased emphasis on switch inspections and overhead catenary equipment. This effort included a complete replacement of all wayside signal bulbs in order to ensure no dark signal conditions. All this work was completed by mid-January.

Comprehensive Station Appearance Program

The Facilities Maintenance Department initiated this effort and repainted station equipment, structures, warning strips, disabled symbols, etc., at all of the 21 stations between Qualcomm Stadium and Downtown. In addition, minor repairs were made to station facilities as required. This effort resulted in an extremely positive image that was recognized by visitors, the media, and local residents.

California Public Utilities Commission Approval for Expressing Trains

This California Public Utilities Commission activation was contingent upon SDTI modifying their expressing procedure, and incorporating several additional measures at grade crossings to further enhance recognition of unprotected crossings. Transportation Department staff worked very closely with Metropolitan Transit Development Board (MTDB) consultants to accelerate the changes deemed necessary to modify grade crossings along the Green Line route. This route was selected in consideration of the efficiency improvements that would result from trains circulating between Qualcomm Station in a shorter time frame for second and third trips. The desired level of efficiency was achieved by trains along the Green Line route returning back to Qualcomm Station within 1 h and 10 min of their previous departure.

Train Location Feature

The ability to monitor train movement and initiate field commands from Central Control and the Supervisors booth at Qualcomm Station was part of MTDB-directed improvements post Super Bowl XXXII. This capability was finalized and fully activated in early January 2003. The controllers were able to monitor all train movements from County Center Station to Mission San Diego and make critical decisions regarding operations and service levels.

Enhanced Closed Circuit Television

The existing closed circuit television (CCTV) capability from Old Town to Qualcomm Station was upgraded and additional operating flexibility was provided. Additional cameras were provided with tilt-pan-zoom capability. Further, monitoring of the CCTV cameras was transferred from the Old Town Transit Center to the centralized security center in Building C at the main maintenance facility in advance of Super Bowl. This monitoring proved to be very efficient and benefited SDTI security as well as state, local, and federal authorities.

Ticket Sales Booths

Four ticket/information booths (with either two or four sales windows) for permanent installation at stations with recurring special event patronage were purchased. The booths were installed in December at the Morena/Lind Vista, Fashion Valley, Hazard Center, and Mission Valley Center Stations.

These fixed booths enabled SDTI to rotate the existing seven mobile ticket booths to other essential locations for Super Bowl Week. However, because the need for still other manual ticket sales locations was determined, an effort was made to solve this by procurement of

portable tent units with single or multiple positions for ticket sales. Nine of these units were purchased and most placed into service during Super Bowl Week.

These additional units allowed staff to provide 19 manual ticket sales units to be deployed at 15 separate station locations. This represented a significant improvement over 1998 when manual ticket sales were restricted to less than half that number. Further, many of these units were in service for 3 to 4 days and service hours extended from 16 to 20 h in order to cover the enhanced service period for each of the high-volume days. Fans purchased 60,864 round-trip tickets or Commemorative Day Tripper passes during the 4-day period from January 23–26 (the equivalent of over 117,000 single rides) generating \$218,387 in fare revenue.

MARKETING, INFORMATION, AND ADVANCED SALES OVERVIEW

In the summer of 2002, a cross-functional team of Operations, Information Technology, Finance, and Marketing staff began meeting to outline and implement the various marketing, public information, and advanced sales programs and strategies.

Target Markets and Strategies

The primary marketing and information programs were targeted to four specific groups:

- 500,000+ fans (locals and visitors who came downtown to be part of the “party”).
- 200,000 daily riders who would be impacted by changes in regular service and the “special event” riders.
 - 67,500 fans with game tickets (with only several hundred parking spaces available for NFL owners and suite-holders) all other fans were to arrive via the Trolley or special buses.
 - 7,000+ Volunteer Ambassadors (recruited by SBHC) to work the various special-events like the NFL Experience, Cultural Arts Bowl and Festival, and Downtown Fireworks.

In addition, a unique advertising program was targeted to “NFL approved” sponsors who were interested in reaching the Super Bowl fans and taking advantage of the incredible media exposure that would accrue to San Diego and SDTI.

Specifically, the marketing/information/sales plan included:

- Super Bowl website pages. Various pages were developed for the transit website at www.sdcommute.com to provide with travel information from hotels and to the venues. This would also be a resource for locals who were going to the venues either as volunteers or as fans.
 - eStore launch. In fall 2003 the region opened its first online “eStore”. This multipurpose site would be used to sell Super Bowl Commemorative Day Trippers for 1, 2, 3, and 4 days to out-of-town visitors. The need for an advanced sales outlet for out-of-towners had been documented in the 1998 Super Bowl Experience.
 - Group sales program. Advance sales of Commemorative Day Trippers (1 to 4 days) for orders of 100 or more units.
 - Point-of-sale and information materials. Develop and distribute materials to hotels, visitor information centers, and the SBHC.

- Super Bowl edition of the *MTS Newsletter*. This was posted onboard buses and Trolleys; 80,000 copies were printed and in addition to distributing them to riders, they were used in training sessions for the SBHC volunteers.
- Super Bowl XXXVII window decal. This was produced and installed on 123 LRVs and 600 buses.
- Transit Training Program. This was presented to front-line hotel and visitor information staff as well as SBHC volunteers.
- Advertising plan for print and electronic media.
- Secure board approval for a one-time-only sales effort to sell advertisers interested in “wrapping” 10 SDTI vehicles during the Super Bowl time period.

San Diego Super Bowl XXXVII Host Committee Partners with Metropolitan Transit Development Board

Just prior to the January 1998 Super Bowl, MTDB waived policy and approved the SBHC’s last-minute request to provide complimentary transit passes for 7,000+ Super Bowl ambassadors. The approval was based in part because it was deemed a good way to introduce the then “just opened” Mission Valley LRT extension to the large number of San Diegans who were volunteering their time for the Super Bowl.

Before the 2003 Super Bowl, the SBHC and MTDB developed a partnership agreement that provided MTDB and SDTI in excess of a three-to-one ratio of in-kind value. In return, MTDB provided 7,000 high-quality, reflective stickers that could be affixed to the reverse side of each volunteer’s valid California driver’s license. The sticker allowed volunteers unlimited access on the public transit routes from January 18–26, 2003. As a security feature, SBHC staff affixed the sticker on the volunteers’ drivers license and the sticker would shred if removed.

The partnership agreement gave MTDB/SDTI use of the host committee’s logo for promotional purposes and 25 volunteers to staff key Trolley stations during the events to help visitors navigate the system. The SBHC also included Trolley information in its collateral information, news releases, and website. In December 2002, the president of the SBHC went to the Transit Call Center for a television news interview promoting the Commemorative Super Bowl Day Trippers. The SBHC included MTDB, SDTI, and SDT in the “Sponsor Thank You” media campaign following the game.

Transit Super Bowl Web Page

During 1998 the Internet was just beginning to increase in use and popularity. The following year, MTDB began enhancing the MTS website. Given the increased popularity of websites there was significant interest in expanding the MTS website for Super Bowl to provide specific information, trip planning, and generating related links to the SBHC, NFL, and San Diego’s Convention and Visitors Bureau sites.

Additional enhancements included a special section dealing with “getting to the game” which provided a wide range of options based on geographic location. The Web development staff, in conjunction with marketing and graphics staff, created a hotel locator feature. Visitors who clicked on their hotel or point of origin would automatically see a screen that illustrated their proximity to closest Trolley station or bus park-and-ride as well as provide walking and/or driving directions.

The enhanced website received substantial use during Super Bowl Week and for several weeks in advance of the game. According to statistics generated by the Internet Service Provider, page views increased 74% and visits increased 66%. During the period from January 18–27, total page views were 323,197 and visits were 38,180 for an average of 3,818 visits per day. Overall, the total number hits and unique visitors in January 2003 showed dramatic increases over the month before and after.

	<i>December 2002</i>	<i>January 2003</i>	<i>February 2003</i>
Hits	479,124	816,286	541,626
Average Hits/Day	15,455	26,331	19,343
Unique Visitors	37,910	61,988	41,624

Commemorative Day Tripper Sales

MTDB produces Commemorative 1-, 2-, 3-, and 4-day Day Trippers for special events that have the potential for advance or walk-up sales. The Day Tripper passes were priced at \$5, \$8, \$10, and \$12 for 1, 2, 3, and 4 days, respectively. Besides appealing to visitors as souvenir the pass provided operational benefits by:

- Reducing queues at ticket machines or ticket booths on the day of the event;
- Reducing chance passenger would either leave or not buy a ticket before boarding to avoid waiting in line; and
- Eliminating rider confusion at the vendomat about what type ticket to purchase.

Most importantly, advance pass sales also create a stronger commitment by the visitor to using public transit.

Group Sales Program

This effort was targeted to sales of 100 passes or more. Given the fact that the two teams wouldn't be selected until 1 week (January 19) before the January 26 Super Bowl Game the number of advance sales fell short of the 1998 number. (In 1998 the teams had 2 weeks in between the playoffs and the Super Bowl.) As the final games were played in December and January, travel agencies that specialize in sporting events set up contingency plans to book hotels and ground transportation in case their customers' team won. In 2003, group sales exceeded \$24,000.

eStore

Plans to open the eStore began in Spring 2002. The eStore opened in September 2002 as MTDB's first e-commerce program. This provided 3 months experience before introducing the Commemorative Super Bowl XXXVII Day Trippers. Advance work involved setting up the agreements with the banks, designing the online store pages, promoting the eStore to customers, setting up the proper procedures to fulfill the orders according to finance regulations, and creating links to the site from the SBHC website.

The eStore was promoted on the transit website home page and in all SBHC printed materials that went to fans and ticket holders. News releases were sent to the cities whose teams were contenders for the NFL's Super Bowl. Fans purchased \$4,228 (not including shipping fees) in Commemorative 1-, 2-, 3-, and 4-Day Super Bowl Day Tripper passes.

Trolley Station Manual Ticket Booths

Each day, sales kits were prepared containing round-trip tickets as well as quantities of the appropriate Commemorative Day Tripper passes. Booth sales staff sold a total of 4,273 Commemorative Day Tripper passes (150 4-day passes; 481 3-day passes; 815 2-day passes; and 2,827 1-day passes), totaling \$17,403 or 8% of the total manual ticket booth sales.

Advertising "Wraps" Generate Significant Revenue

In summer 2002, sports marketing consultant, ACME Marketing presented an unsolicited revenue-generating proposal to the MTDB Board of Directors. MTDB approved a one-time suspension of Policy 22 (adopted in 1981) prohibiting exterior advertising on the Trolley to generate one-time dollars (Figure 2).

The impetus to approve this suspension was to jump-start the exterior rehabilitation of SDTI's LRV fleet. In 2002, about 50% of SDTI's 123 vehicles were in dire need of repainting. Sun, wear, and damage had discolored the "bright red" paint on more than half of the fleet. Underneath the paint, most of the vehicles also required significant bodywork and there was only funding available to rehabilitate six to seven LRVs.

During the Super Bowl, SDTI anticipated the entire fleet would be needed to maintain service levels and handle excess crowds. ACME Marketing's proposal that MTDB market a "modified wrap" to NFL sponsors met with the Board's approval because the wraps would serve two purposes. First, the wraps would mask the exterior condition of up to 10 vehicles. Second, the wraps would create a funding source that could double, or more than triple, the existing rehabilitation dollars in FY 03. Because of security concerns and the long-standing advertising ban, the Board set the number of cars to be wrapped at 10 and that wraps would not be allowed to cover any passenger windows unlike most full bus wraps.



FIGURE 2 Eight SDTI cars wrapped by advertisers generate incremental revenue.

By August 2003, MTDB and ACME launched an aggressive marketing campaign sending out more than 300 proposals. In this short time frame, and despite the numerous restrictions, ACME sold eight wraps: one to a local bank, one to a San Diego-based national electronics firm, one to a local television station promoting its network's programs, and five to an international electronics firm. The wraps earned \$290,000 in revenue for SDTI. During FY 03/04 SDTI used these funds to rehabilitate 24 cars.

Nineteen cars have been repainted and another five cars, which did not require extensive bodywork, were "wrapped" red. One LRV can be wrapped in 2 days at a cost of approximately \$6,000 versus repainting which can take between 10 to 15 days to complete at a cost of \$30,000 to \$40,000.

Additional Revenue

SDTI also generated revenue from two other sources. SDTI received \$5,300 from licensing the sale of Super Bowl memorabilia at key stations and another \$12,421 in commissions from the sale of soft drinks from vending machines located at stations throughout the system. The soft-drink commission for January was 28% over January 2002. And the increase was more than four times higher than increases for the months of December 2002 and February 2003.

Media Coverage

Trolley and bus service received wall-to-wall press coverage during Super Bowl Week. MTDB and SBHC press releases, press conferences, press interviews, and advertising promoted the Trolley and bus to all the Super Bowl events around town, and to the big game itself.

The majority of the electronic media was purchased on local radio stations. MTDB purchased spots that ran in the traffic reports on the local Clear Channel radio network (14 stations) plus there was a cross-promotion with NFL Experience tickets. Spanish radio tags were purchased on the Metro Traffic Network. Ads appeared in the *San Diego Union-Tribune* and *The San Diego Reader* newspapers. Spanish language TV promotions and traffic sponsorships appeared on the Univision and Telemundo networks.

MTDB's Communication Manager lined up dozens of TV interviews and live shots for SDTI President Peter Tereschuck and Special Event/Operations Coordinator Tom Doogan as well as other MTDB Marketing and Communications staff. On January 23, a KUSI-TV's news personality did a live shot at the Stadium Station, interviewing Peter Tereschuck and NFL Transportation Consultant Paul Ridgeway. Peter Tereschuck also appeared on national TV on Saturday's NBC Nightly News. Other staff were interviewed by the NBC affiliate in San Francisco.

On Super Bowl Sunday, three local television stations, KUSI, KNSD, and KGTV broadcast live from Old Town and the Convention Center Trolley Stations. The final priceless publicity for SDTI took place during the game itself. The ABC network broadcast a beauty shot of downtown San Diego with the Trolley running through the shot. Reportedly, advertisers paid \$2.1 million for each 30-sec commercial that ran during the Super Bowl Game and traditionally, Super Bowl Games, according to the Nielsen rating service website, rank in the top 10 programs viewed.

SDTI also received extensive coast-to-coast print coverage. During and following the Super Bowl the *San Francisco Chronicle*, *The Oakland Tribune*, *Contra Costa Times*, *The*

Sacramento Bee, *The Hartford Courant*, *The Miami Herald*, *San Antonio Express-News*, *New York Daily News*, *New York Times*, and *USA Today* ran stories praising the Trolley and the ease of travel.

The *San Diego Union-Tribune* re-cap article carried the headline “Transit Plan Near Perfect” and quoted the NFL as saying “Trolleys and buses kept traffic running smoothly.” In the letters to the editor section, one reader wrote that the Trolley service was “superb”.

Ridership, Cost, and Revenue Summary

Ridership

SDTI’s 4-day total estimated ridership was calculated at 801,430 passengers. The ridership level achieved on the Saturday before Super Bowl XXXVII exceeded the 219,034 ridership level in 1998 by 56.4%.

Utilizing all data available in conjunction with the standard ridership formula, the following Trolley ridership information was provided for the 4-day period beginning Thursday, January 23 through Sunday, January 26 (Super Bowl Day).

- Thursday, January 23, 2003.....105,841
- Friday, January 24, 2003.....224,322
- Saturday, January 25, 2003.....342,615 (highest day on record)
- Sunday, January 26, 2003.....128,652

Mode Split

On Sunday, January 26 buses and trolleys carried a 57% share of all fans attending the game and a 59% share of all stadium trips (fans and employees.) The ridership was well balanced between Trolley and bus with the 30.4% of trips on the Trolley and 29% on the bus.

- Pre-game to stadium.....23,000 (trolley)
- Post-game from stadium..18,000 (trolley)
- Fan park-and-ride to stadium.....16,500 (bus)
- Employee park-and-ride to stadium.....3,300 (bus)
- Post-game fans from stadium to downtown.....3,000 (bus)

Operating Costs

Total operating costs incurred by SDTI for Super Bowl XXXVII and related events was estimated at \$430,795 (Table 1).

Revenue

SDTI received \$793,441 (Table 1) and includes fares, wrap, and commission revenue.

**TABLE 1 San Diego Trolley Super Bowl XXXVII
Expenditure and Revenue Summary**

Item	Expense	Revenue	Notes
3rd Generation Embroidery	\$2,083.62		Employee Hats
Airgas	\$753.04		Safety Cones & Caution Tape
Applied Industrial	\$1,128.14		Station Paint
ATC VanCom	\$1,181.25		Pre-game S/D support (3 veh.)
ATC VanCom	\$1,500.45		MSD to Rio Vista Shuttle (2 veh.)
Barnes Printers	\$53.00		Business Cards
Batteries Plus	\$261.18		Various Batteries
Batteries Plus	\$678.59		Radio Batteries
Communications Co.	\$337.50		Stadium PA Repair
Communications Co.	\$875.20		Qualcomm Amplifier
Communications USA	\$2,466.90		Radio batteries and chargers
Communications USA	\$28,349.00		Handheld Radios
Costco	\$85.50		Bottle Water for Field Personnel
Delux ICI Paint	\$628.83		Yellow ADA Paint—Qualcomm
Delux ICI Paint	\$2,335.60		Yellow ADA Paint
Deter's	\$85.16		Portable Restroom—Morena Station
Emergency Equipment	\$400.31		Radio Holders
Fire Hawk	\$240.19		Fire Extinguishers (MVW)
Firehawk	\$484.60		5 Fire Extinguishers
Fixture Pronto	\$771.59		Pedestrian Barriers (Qualcomm)
Grainger	\$595.00		Chairs for Ticket Booths
H&L EZ UP	\$3,639.40		Collapsible Ticket Booths (9)
Home Depot	\$61.96		Ticket Booth Supplies
Home Depot	\$127.95		Totes for Ticket Kits
Home Depot	\$135.46		Booth Lights & Cords
Hornberger Wedges & Blocks	\$385.20		MOW Equipment
ICI Delux	\$1,292.68		Paint (Qualcomm)
ICI Delux	\$1,292.75		Paint (Qualcomm)
IDG	\$406.90		36 45-type locks
Kinko's	\$10.78		USD Overflow Parking Signage
Laidlaw Transit Services	\$2,681.70		MTS Access Vehicle Support
Mass Electric	\$4,020.91		Game day support
McMaster-Carr	\$181.27		Anti-Fatigue Mats (Ticket Booths)
Misc. Office Supplies	\$23.20		Ring Binders
Misc. Office Supplies	\$233.07		Ops Plan Binders, Inserts, etc.
Misc. Other	\$1,500.00		
MTDB SB 37 Marketing	\$50,000		Media buys, collateral, volunteer stickers, pins, <i>MTS News</i>

continued

**TABLE 1 (continued) San Diego Trolley Super Bowl XXXVII
Expenditure and Revenue Summary**

Item	Expense	Revenue	Notes
Nextel	\$772.14		Cell Phone Billing
Nextel	\$1,201.00		Cell Phone Batteries
Office Depot	\$206.89		Ticket Booth Supplies
OneSource	\$60.25		Ticket Booth Power Cords
Onfield Apparel	\$4,514.18		Employee Shirts
Payroll—CCI	\$19,192.49		
Payroll—Facilities	\$21,265.30		
Payroll—LRV	\$18,235.14		
Payroll—MOW	\$22,068.68		
Payroll—Revenue	\$5,286.68		
Payroll—Stores	\$626.67		
Payroll—Transportation	\$71,681.87		
Petty Cash	\$131.99		
Safety Gear Depot	\$325.00		(24) Station Manager Vests
San Diego Plastics	\$1,627.02		Lexan for Timetables
SD Lamps	\$226.28		Stadium Lighting
SDTC	\$1,737.00		USD Shuttle—3 Buses
SDTC Post-game Support	\$5,324.50		30 buses @ 177:29 billable hours (\$60 ea) x 50%
SDTC Post-game Support	\$19,918.50		NFL Portion (payable to SDTI per agreement)
SDTC Pre-game Support	\$11,460.00		30 buses @ 191:00 billable hours (\$60 ea)
Select Personnel Services	\$806.26		Manual Ticket Sales Personnel Support
Sir Speedy	\$632.40		Ticket Printing
Sir Speedy	\$632.40		Ticket Printing
Sir Speedy	\$736.11		Ticket Printing
Sir Speedy	\$821.11		Ticket Printing
Sir Speedy	\$865.22		Round Trip Tickets
Sir Speedy	\$921.11		Ticket Printing
Sir Speedy	\$960.52		Ticket Printing
Squires Belt	\$12.22		Portable Booth Weights
Tops Staffing	\$4,380.30		Manual Ticket Sales Personnel Support
Traction Power Use	\$61,004.53		61,783 car mi at \$.9874 each
Transit Security Personnel Hours	\$86,589.96		
West-Lite	\$1,066.73		Signal Bulbs
West-Lite	\$2,285.65		Stadium Lighting
Willy's	\$404.06		Handheld Radio Antennae
Willy's	\$691.75		Bullhorns

continued

**TABLE 1 (continued) San Diego Trolley Super Bowl XXXVII
Expenditure and Revenue Summary**

Willy's	\$835.77	Station Amplifiers (MVW)
Wrap Commission on Sales	\$31,900.00	To consultant
Advance Group Sales	\$24,889.10	
Coca-Cola Commission	\$12,421.00	
Internet Sales on eStore	\$4,060.30	
Kobeys—Commission	\$5,300.00	Souvenir Sales at Stations
Ridgeway International	\$19,918.50	Bus Support Contribution
Ridgeway International	\$3,500.00	Driver's Party Fares
Ticket Booths	\$230,071.32	Manual Ticket Sales
Ticket Vending Machine Sales	\$203,281.32	Estimated Excess Over Average Sales Volume
Wrap Sales	\$290,000.00	Eight Trolley Wrap Advertising Revenue
TOTALS	\$512,695.57	\$793,441.54
DIFFERENCE		\$280,745.97

CONCLUSION

Super Bowl XXXVII represented the most significant challenge for transit in terms of commitment of vehicles, resources activated, special plans developed, and ridership generated. Public events directly and indirectly related to the Super Bowl created levels of activity that may never be exceeded in San Diego again. Crowd estimates varied in the downtown area but have been estimated in the general range of 250,000 to 300,000 people. Major objectives were achieved and additional lessons were learned:

- Public transit achieved a 59% share of trips to the game through a more effective use of the same resources that were available in the 1998 game.
- Trips were closely balanced between bus and LRT services compared to 1998. The Trolley carried 41,000 trips and buses carried 39,600 trips to and from the stadium.
- Group sales and the eStore generated significant advanced ticket sales.
- Expanded number of manual ticket booths at 15 locations captured increased revenue.
- Pre- and post-game service was provided without any noticeable problems.
- Deployment of various specialized teams that separately focused on passenger needs, track needs, LRV needs, and power needs proved highly effective for the public and beneficial for train movement, efficiency, and reliability and allowed quick response to on-line conditions and minimized service impacts.
- Major special events create new revenue opportunities including the sales of eight wrapped LRVs and licensing Super Bowl memorabilia sales outlets at stations.

There was also general consensus that the lessons learned from the 1998 Super Bowl XXXII provided valuable input for the operational issues for Super Bowl XXXVII. It was the response to these issues and aggressive planning that created an environment for success. As the

Senior NFL Transportation consultant Paul Ridgeway put it in his letter to SDTI, “compared to 5 years ago, this time it was magic.”

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[Click here to see Doogan and Leitner's Powerpoint slide presentation.](#)