

Dolphins to seek public support for stadium renovations to attract future Super Bowls

By Sarah Talalay, Sun Sentinel
7:47 p.m. EDT, June 21, 2010

MIAMI GARDENS —

The [Dolphins](#) should pursue public funding to renovate Sun Life Stadium to keep it competitive to host Super Bowls, despite the fact this year's game pumped fewer dollars into the region's economy than the 2007 game.

That was the recommendation presented Monday to the South Florida [Super Bowl](#) Host Committee by a panel charged with studying the value of the [NFL](#)'s championship game and whether stadium upgrades are needed to keep it coming to South Florida. The group's findings were released along with an economic impact study showing the 2010 Super Bowl and Pro Bowl in South Florida generated \$333 million for local businesses.

That's a drop from the \$463 million the 2007 Super Bowl was said to have brought to South Florida's economy. Both studies were conducted by West Palm Beach-based Sport Management Research Institute. The decrease was blamed on the struggling economy and the [Indianapolis Colts](#) playing in both Super Bowls, but South Florida Super Bowl Host Committee officials said they were pleased.

"Every major city in America wishes they had a Pro Bowl and Super Bowl on their books for February 2010. We were fortunate to have that kind of business," host committee chairman Rodney Barreto said. "It was business that was needed ... Hey, it's better than zero."

Echoing comments made by NFL Commissioner [Roger Goodell](#), the panel's chairman, former Dolphin Dick Anderson, said renovations are needed to keep up with newer, glitzier venues in Dallas and Phoenix. And with the potential for new stadiums for the [San Francisco 49ers](#) and in Los Angeles, South Florida's average 41/2-year gap between Super Bowls since 1989 will grow, he said.

In January, the Dolphins unveiled renderings of potential upgrades including a partial roof-canopy covering the seating, and a new seating bowl. The work is estimated to cost \$187 million.

Dolphins CEO Mike Dee said the team, which spent \$300 million on stadium upgrades in the past five years, cannot make the investment by itself.

"There has to be a public-private component to this. There has to be some participation if we're going to finish the job," Dee said, adding the team is studying funding options and expects to present its ideas in September. "All those ideas are going to need to be under the category of the community wanting to do this."

Dee said timing is crucial, because South Florida, which last month lost out on the 2014 game

to the New Meadowlands Stadium in New Jersey, is bidding for the 2015 and 2016 Super Bowls, which the NFL is expected to award next May.

But the stadium will be competing against other public needs. [Bill Talbert](#), president of the Greater Miami Convention & Visitors Bureau, reminded that the Miami Beach Convention Center has long sought renovations. [Nicki Grossman](#), president of the Greater Fort Lauderdale Convention & Visitors Bureau, said other community needs include "library hours and lifeguards."

"This is going to be a hard sell on a hard-pressed community," she said.

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