



TO: VICTOR CARDENAS, CITY MANAGER
FROM: SHERYL WALSH-MOLLOY, DIRECTOR OF COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT
SUBJECT: COUNCIL CHAMBERS MODERNIZATION/FUNCTIONALITY ENHANCEMENTS
DATE: DECEMBER 2, 2025

Mayor and Council –

The following is a request to you to provide a wish list for the Council Chambers if and when it is remodeled. As you'll see, the PEG fund currently has \$1.29 million, with about \$240,000 added each year. Depending on the requests/wishes, we are not sure how "far" those dollars will go.

- Victor

The purpose of this memo is to outline the need, goals, and potential approach for upgrading the City Council Chambers and the adjacent Council Conference Room. These improvements would enhance transparency, accessibility, functionality, and the overall experience for Council, staff, residents, and meeting participants. Funding for these upgrades would be eligible through Public, Educational, and Governmental (PEG) revenues.

Background & Need

The City Council Chambers serves as the central venue for our legislative process, public engagement, and civic participation. Although the facility has benefited from routine updates, the core functionality and layout of the Chambers has remained largely unchanged since the Civic Center was constructed in the early 1980s.

As a result, several elements no longer meet today's expectations for an effective municipal meeting environment:

- Aging audio-visual systems that do not align with modern broadcasting standards.
- A dais designed for a pre-digital era, lacking integrated technology and ergonomic features.
- A conference room behind the Chambers that was ill-designed, with odd access and privacy needs required for briefings, closed sessions, and meeting preparation.

Proposed Improvements

1. Technology Upgrades

To meet current standards for transparency and public access, staff recommend exploring:

- Ultra-high-definition broadcast and recording equipment
- Upgraded livestreaming capabilities and improved reliability
- Enhanced audio system with clearer speech reproduction
- Hybrid meeting tools and integrated control systems
- Digital speaker management platform
- Modern displays for presentations and public viewing
- Simplified technology controls/system for public users/renters

These investments would align Novi with contemporary municipal technology expectations.

2. New or Reconfigured Dais

A refreshed dais would address functional, aesthetic, and accessibility needs:

- Integrated wiring and technology ports to reduce clutter
- ADA enhancements
- Improved ergonomics, lighting, and visibility
- Durable, modern materials that reflect the quality of our facility

This redesign supports both current technology and future adaptability.

3. Council Conference Room Enhancements

The conference room behind the Chambers is critical for closed sessions and preparation. Improvements may include:

- Modern presentation technology
- Updated furnishings and layout adjustments
- Improved acoustics and privacy
- Better integration with Chambers technology
- Enhanced capacity for staff and Council collaborative work

Approach & Next Steps

If Council supports this direction, staff recommends:

- Engaging a design/technology consultant to assess needs and develop conceptual options.
- Identifying PEG-eligible components and creating a funding plan. **Currently, there is \$1.295 million in restricted PEG funding available. The amount received annually has been declining each year. A conservative estimate would be approximately \$240,000 for annual revenue moving forward.**
- Returning to Council with design concepts, costs, and implementation options.

Conclusion

Because the Chambers' essential functionality has remained largely unchanged for more than 40 years, modernization is both timely and necessary. These improvements will enhance the Council's working environment, strengthen public engagement, and reflect the high standards of service the Novi community expects. PEG funds provide a fiscally responsible way to support many of these upgrades.

Staff welcomes Council direction on whether to proceed with developing formal concepts and cost estimates.