

# MEMORANDUM



**TO:** VICTOR CARDENAS, CITY MANAGER  
**FROM:** SHERYL WALSH-MOLLOY, DIRECTOR OF COMMUNICATONS  
**SUBJECT:** COUNCIL CHAMBERS REFRESH OPTIONS  
**DATE:** FEBRUARY 27, 2026

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Following discussion with the Finance and Administration Committee, staff have evaluated the need and potential scope for upgrades to the City Council Chambers and the adjacent Council Conference Room. The accompanying memorandum provides a high-level overview of the rationale, available options, financial considerations, and next steps for Council's direction.

The Council Chambers serves as the primary venue for Novi's legislative process, public engagement, and live broadcast of public meetings. While routine maintenance has occurred over the years, the core technology systems, lighting, layout, and overall design remain largely unchanged since the Civic Center was constructed in the early 1980s. Consequently, several elements no longer align with modern expectations for broadcast quality, accessibility, operational efficiency, or contemporary civic design.

Key areas identified for improvement include aging audio-visual infrastructure, insufficient lighting for professional-grade broadcasting, limited technology integration at the dais, suboptimal acoustics, and a conference room configuration that does not adequately support meeting preparation or closed sessions. Addressing these issues would enhance transparency, improve the experience for residents and meeting participants, and better support Council and staff operations.

To provide flexibility, staff developed three scalable upgrade options:

- **Option 1 – Technology Refresh (\$380,000 – \$520,000):** Modernizes core audio-visual, lighting, and control systems while maintaining the existing layout and architectural features.
- **Option 2 – Technology + Aesthetic Refresh (\$750,000 – \$1,500,000+):** Includes full technology upgrades along with coordinated visual and acoustic enhancements to modernize the appearance and functionality of the space.
- **Option 3 – Complete Redesign (\$2,200,000 – \$3,000,000+):** Comprehensive reconfiguration of the Chambers and Conference Room, including updated layout, finishes, custom dais, and seating to create a fully modernized civic environment.

Funding for eligible components would be available through Public, Educational, and Governmental (PEG) revenues. It is estimated, the City will have \$1.6 million in restricted PEG fees at the end of FY 26-27.

The cost ranges provided are preliminary February 2026 estimates based on recent municipal bid results for comparable facilities and include equipment, installation, programming, design and engineering services, and permits. Final costs will be determined through a competitive bidding process and may vary based on final specifications and material selections.

**Next Steps**

Staff seek Council direction regarding the preferred scope, budget parameters, and long-term vision for the City Council Chambers and Conference Room. Upon receiving guidance, staff will proceed with design concepts, developing formal bid specifications, and establishing an implementation timeline.

# MEMORANDUM



**TO:** SHERYL WALSH-MOLLOY, DIRECTOR OF COMMUNICATONS  
**FROM:** JOSH BUSCHER, SENIOR VIDEO PRODUCTION SPECIALIST  
**SUBJECT:** COUNCIL CHAMBERS REFRESH OPTIONS  
**DATE:** FEBRUARY 27, 2026

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## **Purpose**

Following initial discussions with the Finance and Administration Committee, staff have explored options for refreshing the City Council Chambers and, potentially, the adjacent Council Conference Room. This memorandum outlines the identified needs and scalable approaches for consideration.

Any improvements would be intended to enhance transparency, accessibility, functionality, and the overall experience for Council, staff, residents, and meeting participants. Funding for eligible components would be available through Public, Educational, and Governmental (PEG) revenues.

## **Background & Need**

The City Council Chambers serves as the primary venue for the City's legislative process and public engagement. While routine updates have occurred over time for wear and tear (seating replaced 18 years ago and carpet when needed), the core layout and infrastructure have remained largely unchanged since the Civic Center was constructed in the early 1980s.

A review of the space identified several areas where modernization is warranted, including aging audio-visual systems, limited technology integration at the dais, insufficient lighting for broadcast quality, functional constraints within the Conference Room, and overall acoustic and aesthetic elements that no longer reflect contemporary municipal standards.

To assist in determining the appropriate level of investment, staff have developed three scalable options, each building upon the previous and aligned with varying budget and design objectives.

## **Upgrade Options**

### **Option 1 – Technology Refresh**

This option focuses on modernizing the Chambers' core audio-visual and control systems while maintaining the existing dais, tiered seating, and primary architectural elements. It provides the most significant functional improvement at the lowest cost and with the shortest anticipated construction timeline.

**Key elements include:**

- Replacement of the failing projector with a large-format, high-brightness display to improve presentation clarity and operational reliability.
- Upgrade of the TriCaster system from TC1 to TriCaster 2 Elite to enhance reliability and expand live streaming and recording capabilities.
- Installation of four new 4K PTZ cameras and camera control system to provide a clearer, future-ready broadcast experience.
- Reconfiguration and upgrade of the Crestron room-control system to enable intuitive, one-touch operation of integrated technology.
- Re-integration and optimization of the audio system to improve clarity and intelligibility for both in-room participants and remote viewers.
- Complete replacement of the lighting system with high-output, color-matched LED fixtures and advanced controls to significantly increase brightness and provide even, professional illumination throughout the chamber.

**Estimated Cost Range:** \$380,000 – \$520,000

**Option 2 – Technology + Aesthetic Refresh**

This option includes all elements of Option 1, along with a coordinated visual and functional modernization of the Council Chambers space.

In discussing this modernization, City Facilities staff recommend engaging a professional design firm (such as DeMaria or HED) to ensure cohesive planning, design continuity, and coordination among contractors if Council chooses Option 2 or Option 3.

In addition to the full technology package outlined in Option 1, this option includes:

- Replacement of existing wood slat wall treatments with a more contemporary design.
- Installation of new acoustic wall panels to enhance sound quality while providing a clean, modern backdrop for meetings and broadcasts.
- Refresh of the existing dais structure.
- Replacement or redesign of the podium to align with updated chamber aesthetics.
- Renovation of the structural pillars flanking the dais. While these load-bearing elements cannot be removed, their visual footprint may potentially be reduced through thoughtful redesign.
- Redesign of the back wall behind the dais, including replacing the single display with two coordinated screens positioned to the left and right.
- Refresh of the Council Conference Room (Painting, furniture, lighting – no structural changes)

**Estimated Cost Range:** \$750,000 – \$1,500,000+

**Option 3 – Complete Redesign**

This option incorporates all elements of Options 1 and 2, along with a comprehensive reimagining of the entire space. The objective is to create a modern civic facility designed to enhance public engagement, accessibility, operational efficiency, and long-term adaptability.

The scope would include:

- All technology and aesthetic upgrades described above.
- Reconfiguration of the room layout to improve sightlines, ADA accessibility compliance, and overall flow.
- New flooring, ceiling treatments, and a complete interior design package for both the Council Chambers and Council Conference Room.
- Design and installation of a new custom dais, including revised placement and full technology integration.
- Replacement and/or reconfiguration of the existing tiered seating.

**Estimated Cost Range:** \$2,200,000 – \$3,000,000+

This option represents the most comprehensive and transformative solution, but it also involves the highest cost and the longest construction duration.

Please let me know if you have any questions regarding any of the above-mentioned options. I look forward to assisting with this potential project and enhancing the quality of Studio No.Vi productions in the Council Chambers.