



## **County of Santa Cruz Board of Supervisors**

### **Agenda Item Submittal**

**From:** General Services Department

**Subject:** Government Broadcasting Revitalization Project Design Concept

**Meeting Date:** January 28, 2025

**Formal Title:** Approve recommended Board of Supervisors Chambers conceptual layout for the Government Broadcasting Revitalization Project, approve transfer of funds and adopt resolution accepting unanticipated revenue in the amount of \$2,310,500 from Digital Infrastructure Video Competitor Act / Public Education Government fees, and take related actions

### **Recommended Actions**

1. Approve staff recommendation to select Board of Supervisors Chambers Design Concept C for the Government Broadcasting Revitalization Project:
2. Approve transfer of funds in the amount of \$2,310,500 from Digital Infrastructure Video Competitor Act (DIVCA)/Public Education Government (PEG) fees;
3. Approve a resolution accepting and appropriating unanticipated revenue in the amount of \$2,310,500 from DIVCA/PEG fees; and
4. Authorize the Director of General Services and County Capital Projects staff to proceed with the construction documentation of selected conceptual layout.

### **Executive Summary**

The Santa Cruz County Board Chambers and its associated broadcasting areas are outdated and require updates in terms of layout, furnishings, and technology. In addition to Board meetings, these chambers are used for public meetings, various commissions, and committees, all of which are televised. Approval of this item and the selection of a conceptual layout will provide guidance for modifying the board chambers, enhancing both the constituent experience and the quality of broadcasts for public viewing.

### **Discussion**

The Santa Cruz County Board Chambers, built in the late 1960s, have seen minimal updates over the years, with only occasional technological improvements and minor topical changes like new paint and carpet. The current dais, audience seating, and adjacent conference rooms have remained unchanged for a number of years.

The County collects Digital Infrastructure Video Competitor Act (DIVCA)/Public Education and Government (PEG) fees, which can only be used for capital improvements and equipment upgrades supporting public meeting broadcasts. These funds cannot be allocated for general operating costs or non-broadcasting-related capital expenses. The proposed actions aim to enhance the public's experience of Board of Supervisors meetings, both in person and via broadcast.

Upgrading the Board Chambers, enhancing adjacent conference rooms, and expanding broadcasting capabilities in community rooms will improve both attendee and viewer experiences while increasing transparency and the quality of government meetings.

The Government Broadcasting Revitalization Project is planned to be accomplished in three phases:

- Phase one, completed in November 2024, focused on upgrading technology in the adjacent conference rooms.
- Phase Two, expected to finish by Spring 2025, will expand broadcasting capabilities in the community rooms at the County Government Center in Santa Cruz and South County Government Centers in Watsonville.
- Phase Three, which involves remodeling and upgrading the Board Chambers, is slated for construction during the Board's summer break (late June to early August 2025). All phases will be funded by DIVCA/PEG fees.

County staff has contracted with Bill Fischer Architects to create concept drawings for the Board Chambers remodel in Phase Three. The County Administrative Office (CAO), Clerk of the Board, Information Services Department (ISD), General Services Department (GSD), County Safety Officer, and the Sheriff's Office have all provided input on their programmatic needs to the architectural team.

Two layout concepts are proposed and attached for review:

- Design Concept C rotates the space 90 degrees; and
- Alternate Concept A maintains the current room orientation.

Both layouts increase the amount of public seating, ensure visibility for the Board and County staff, introduce a new media area, and improve the entryway design for a more logical flow. Both Concepts can be reviewed in the attached diagrams and 3D renderings.

Staff recommends the selection of Design Concept C due to the enhanced safety through additional exits for members of the Board and public, and the ability to open the curtains and benefit from natural light in the room, enhancing the broadcasting experience. Alternative Concept A is viable but not recommended by staff because there are no safety improvements to add exits, and the curtains must remain closed while broadcasting meetings.

Construction on the selected layout is expected to begin in Late Spring 2025.

## **Financial Impact**

Phase Two of the project consists of major equipment purchases including installation at the major community rooms in each County Government Center, with an estimated cost of \$330,500. The construction and equipment installation costs for Phase Three is estimated to be \$1,980,000, with a negligible cost difference between the two design options.

Funds for the Government Broadcasting Revitalization Project are provided by DIVCA/PEG fees which are restricted funds limited to capital improvements that support public education and government broadcasting and digital access. The recommended actions allow these funds to be transferred, accepted and appropriated, in the amount of \$2,310,500, into the proper capital accounts to continue to fund the project with the preferred conceptual design.

**Strategic Initiatives**

Equity Framework - County Facilities & Infrastructure  
Operational Plan - Operational Excellence

**Submitted By:**

Michael Beaton

**Recommended By:**

Carlos J. Palacios, County Administrative Officer

**Artificial Intelligence Acknowledgment:**

Artificial Intelligence (AI) did not significantly contribute to the development of this agenda item.