



ET GROUP

A RICOH Company

Designing a Council Chamber AV Solution with Televic

A collaborative approach to designing a council chamber that supports structured governance, cultural tradition, and hybrid participation.



Project Overview

Sagamok Anishnawbek is a First Nation community located along the north shore of Lake Huron in Northern Ontario, Canada. Governed by an elected Chief and Council, the Nation gathers regularly in council chambers to discuss community priorities, deliberate on initiatives, and make decisions that guide the future of the community.

Council meetings at Sagamok follow a circular format that reflects a long-standing approach to collaborative dialogue and shared participation. Historically, discussions were often held in a circle, a setting that symbolized openness and equal visibility among speakers. Though the setting and tech have evolved over time, the circular structure remains essential to preserving the collaborative nature of these governance discussions.

Most conferencing systems are designed for rectangular boardrooms - not circular governance environments like Sagamok's council chamber. They required a technology partner capable of designing a solution specifically suited to this environment.

Project at a Glance

Organization:

Sagamok Anishnawbek First Nation

Location:

Northern Ontario, Canada

Market:

Government

Solutions:

Televic uniCOS Core
Microsoft Teams Rooms
Custom Nameplate Overlay

Services:

Consulting
Design
Integration

Project Goals

Designing technology for a council chamber environment requires a **different approach than traditional meeting spaces**. For Sagamok Anishnawbek, the chamber needed to support structured governance discussions while **respecting the traditions** that guide how leadership meetings take place.

To successfully support Sagamok's governance, the solution needed to address several key areas:

1) Technology for a Circular Governance

Camera and microphone layout that provides equal coverage for a seating arrangement that is focused on in-room participants facing each other.

2) Structured Dialogue and Speaking Order

Ability for individual participants to mute unmute their microphones, with visual confirmation, so that meeting order is preserved.

3) Participation Requirements

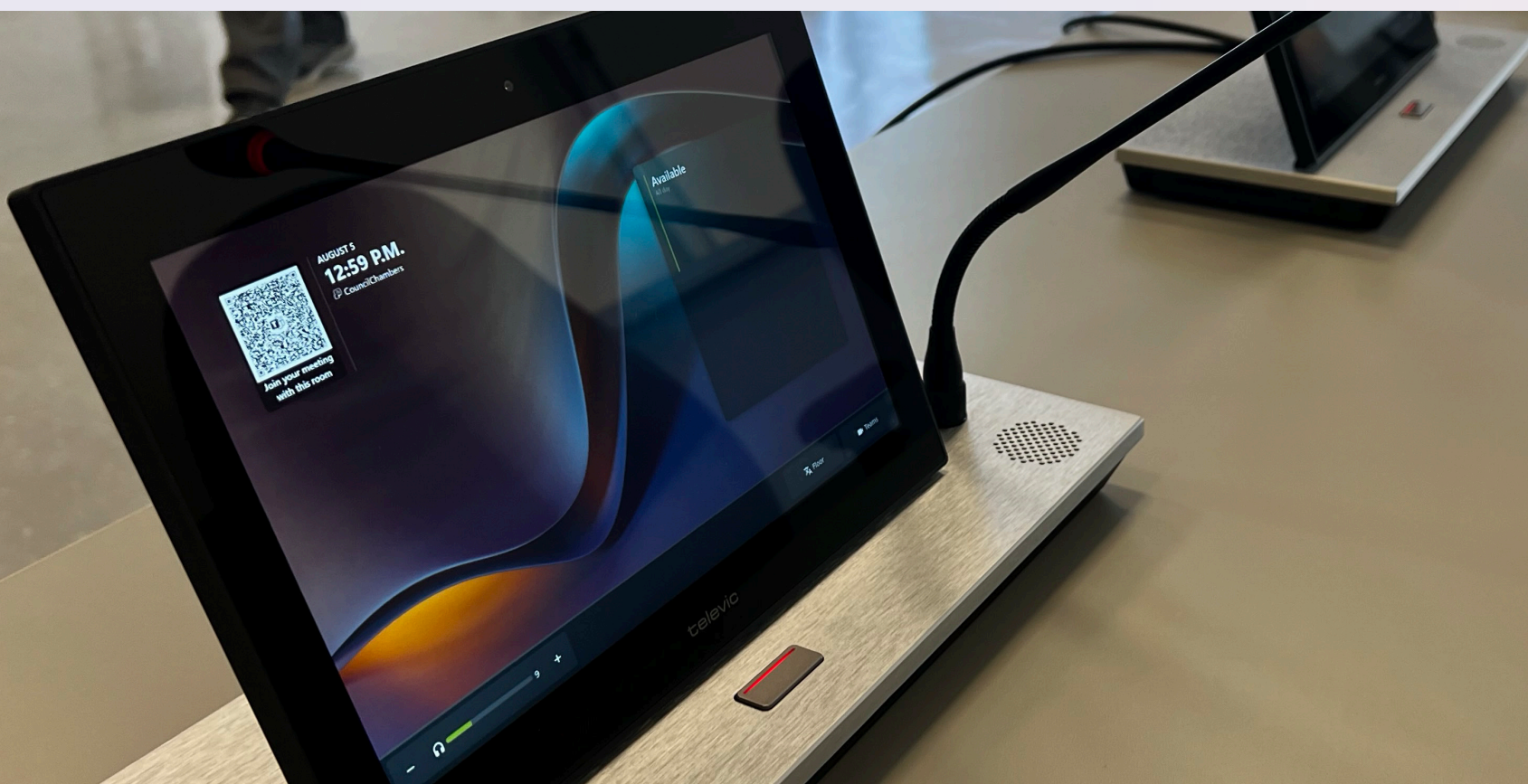
Connection to a Teams codec so that remote presenters and viewers can equally communicate with the council members.

4) Meeting Accessibility for All Participants

Digital nameplates that automatically display for the active speaker so that remote and guest participants can identify council members.

5) Purpose-Built, Non-Standard AV Design

A custom solution was needed, starting with concept. To ensure the users would have a productive and valuable experience, **new solutions** had to be created and integrated.





Phase 1: Aligning on Needs and Exploring the Right Approach

We started by understanding how the Council Chambers needed to function in a way that supports Sagamok's approach to governance.

Through conversations and time spent onsite, it became clear that a traditional boardroom setup wouldn't work. The circular format, structured speaking process, and need for hybrid participation required a more tailored approach.

"How technology is typically designed around 'traditional' (diversity). Cultural diverse experiences"

As we worked through options together:

- Multiple technology paths were explored, with different capabilities and cost considerations
- The limitations of the existing system became clear in practice
- Solutions like Televic stood out for their ability to support structured dialogue in a non-standard meeting environment

Rather than adapting the space to fit the technology, the decision was made to invest in a solution designed around how the Chamber actually operates.



Phase 2: Designing a Cohesive Purpose-Built Solution

With a clear direction in place, the focus shifted to designing a system that felt natural within the space.

Using VR renderings, stakeholders could step into different versions of the room, compare layouts, and refine how the system would function before anything was built.

As the design evolved:

- Televic conferencing was integrated directly into the council table to support full AV accessibility at every seat
- The head end equipment was built, programmed, and tested off-site and then deployed into a room adjacent to the chambers to minimize on-site installation time
- Layout and sightline adjustments ensured visibility across the full environment

Refinements continued as details became clearer:

- A larger projection screen was introduced to improve visibility and accessibility
- Additional adjustments were made to ensure an equitable experience across all seats

Each step built on feedback — shaping a system that fits the way the Chamber is used, rather than forcing change.



Phase 3: Delivering, Refining and Supporting Real-World Use

Once the system was in place, the focus shifted to how it performed in real use.

We stayed closely involved as the space began to be used, validating performance and making adjustments where needed.

This included:

- Fine-tuning audio, video, and conferencing behaviour
- Ensuring clarity of communication across both in-room and remote participants
- Making targeted updates to improve usability and accessibility in practice
- Continued user education on best practices (camera angles/ microphone),

Today, the Chambers are being used beyond formal Council meetings — supporting a broader range of discussions and use cases.

With a strong foundation now in place, the system is positioned to evolve alongside Sagamok's future needs, including expanded digital access for community Members.





What Solutions were Deployed

To support Sagamok Anishnawbek's council chamber environment, ET Group designed and implemented a fully integrated audiovisual system centered around Televic's digital discussion platform.

The solution combined specialized conferencing hardware, hybrid collaboration tools, and custom system integrations to enable structured governance meetings within a circular chamber layout.

The deployment represents the first Televic core implementation of its kind in Canada, requiring close coordination between ET Group, DataVisual, and Televic to ensure proper system design, configuration, and integration.

1) Televic uniCOS Multimedia Units

At the core of the solution are Televic uniCOS multimedia discussion units, deployed at each seat within the council chamber.

Each unit includes:

- Integrated microphone, camera, and speaker
- Touchscreen interface for user interaction
- Individual participant control for speaking and discussion

This system enables:

- Controlled microphone activation
- Structured speaking order
- Consistent audiovisual capture across all participants

2) Televic Plixus Engine & Discussion Management

The system is powered by the Televic Plixus engine, which manages all discussion activity within the chamber.

This includes:

- Microphone control and prioritization
- Active speaker management
- System-wide audio distribution
- Integration with external codec and AV control systems

The Plixus platform provides the foundation for structured, moderated discussions required in council settings.

3) Microsoft Teams Rooms

The council chamber was integrated with a Microsoft Teams Rooms (MTR) environment to enable hybrid participation.

This allows:

- Remote attendees to join council meetings
- Seamless audio and video integration between in-room and remote participants
- Hybrid accessibility to content and discussions

4) Camera Switching & AV Integration

The system includes integrated cameras and switching logic to support active speaker visibility during meetings.

When a participant speaks:

- The system activates the camera at their seat
- The active speaker is captured and shared with remote participants
- Video output is aligned with the flow of discussion

5) Custom Integration & Speaker Name Overlay

To further enhance the hybrid experience, ET Group developed a custom integration using the Televic API.

This enables:

- Dynamic speaker identification
- On-screen name overlays tied to active microphones
- Real-time synchronization between audio, video, and participant identity

This functionality is not native to the platform and was engineered specifically for this deployment.

6) Full-Seat Deployment & System Scalability

During the design process, the system was expanded to include Televic units at every seat, ensuring a consistent experience for all participants.

The solution was also designed with scalability in mind, allowing for:

- Future expansion of seating and system capacity
- Integration with additional spaces or facilities
- Adaptation to evolving governance and community needs



The Result

"The system has allowed us to expand how we use the space, supporting both Council and broader engagements across the organization."

The council chamber has improved collaboration by providing a consistent experience for both in-person and remote participants. Its intuitive design allows different groups across the organization to use the space confidently with minimal technical support.

Beyond Council meetings, the space now supports workshops, presentations, community meetings, and other collaborative activities, maximizing the value of the investment.

Looking ahead, Sagamok plans to extend participation through a secure online portal, enabling community Members to engage remotely while maintaining the privacy and governance controls required for Council business.

Ready to Modernize Your Council Chamber?

Whether you're building a new council chamber or upgrading an existing space, ET Group helps Indigenous communities create secure, intuitive environments for collaboration, governance, and community engagement.

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Featured Partner



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