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- None at this time.

By [JENNY MANNING](#)  
**Mercer Island Reporter City Reporter**  
Aug 17 2010, 12:58 PM · **UPDATED**

In July 2008 the city of Mercer Island reached a new level of transparency by televising its City Council meetings on channel 21, dubbed MI-TV.

During the January 2010 City Council planning session, Council member Mike Cero suggested that the city also broadcast Planning and Design Commission meetings. The proposal, which was supported by the majority of the Council members, went before the Council this month.

However, the document's cost breakdown concerned several Council members who noted the tight budget situation as a reason not to support the effort that could run between \$4,000 and \$12,000 each year depending on the number and duration of meetings.

The cost of televising the 2009 City Council meetings totaled \$10,187, and the 2010 meetings have tallied \$6,125 so far this year.

According to city documents, several private citizens have asked that the Planning and Design Commission also be included on the MI-TV channel; however, no formal requests have been submitted.

Longtime Islander Myra Lupton's first reaction was, "Sure. Do it." However, the open-government advocate's second thought put the city's budget situation in context.

"Let's be sensible and realistic," she said of the cost. "It should be among the priorities, but I'm not sure if it would rank as a top priority."

City Finance Director Chip Corder will present the 2011-2012 preliminary budget at the Oct. 4 City Council meeting. The tentative budget schedule will give the Council an idea if there's any wiggle room for non-budgeted items such as broadcasting the Planning and Design Commission meetings next year.

"In light of all the other priorities, I'd be surprised if it would get funded," Corder said, adding that the Council would likely need to search for additional sources of funding to support the request.

With other needs, such as public safety, the additional television broadcasts are unlikely in the next biennium, unless the Council decides to increase taxes or cut other programs, he said.

The Council voted to postpone further discussion until the budget process is finished.

**Mercer Island Reporter City Reporter Jenny Manning can be reached at [jmanning@mi-reporter.com](mailto:jmanning@mi-reporter.com) or (206) 232-1215.**

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