

# Long Beach, CA

City modernizes its legislative workflow from start to finish and saves millions of dollars



Long Beach wanted to improve legislative efficiency, accountability, and transparency when they started working with Granicus back in 2003. Between council, boards, and committees, the city has 13 meeting bodies running approximately 6-8 meetings per week to serve the community. Ordinances are constantly being introduced, amended, and passed through this legislative process. Prior to Granicus, it required at least twice the number of clerical staff to manage this process effectively. Now, it requires less paper and people to run the legislative process, freeing up staff time to take on new projects and priorities. Granicus' workflow automation has adeptly saved the city \$3.1 million in total cost savings. Additionally, staff and the public have increased visibility into meeting related information—including video, agenda item calendaring, and tracking of committee referrals—resulting in broader engagement and understanding of activities.

“Our entire legislative culture changed - we moved from a reliance on paper to innovating with systems that are highly efficient, transparent, adaptable, timely, and secure.”

- Larry Herrera, City Clerk

## Success Highlights

- \$3.1 million in total cost savings from paper and labor reductions
- Delivery of faster and more in-depth public access
- Streamlined agenda, minutes, and reporting processes across their entire enterprise
- Improved transparency and accountability
- Creation of a permanent digital repository for support of policy, management, and decision-making

### Fast Facts

**Agency Type:** Local Government

**Population:** 462,257

**Solution:**

Granicus Platform  
Government Transparency Suite  
Citizen Participation Suite  
Meeting Efficiency Suite  
Legislative Management Suite

**Active Since:** 2003

## Challenge

Back in 2002, the City of Long Beach was challenged by a lengthy legislative process that depended on extensive manual effort as well as outdated technology. Here's a recap:

- **Cumbersome agenda creation** - The City Clerk's Office was spending countless hours on agenda creation before each meeting. They were manually processing up to 56 staff reports and then hand-typing recommended items into the meeting agenda. It required 4 people to collect agenda items, type and re-type ordinances, and check for accuracy.
- **Tedious agenda packet assembly** - They needed to print and compile thousands of sheets of paper into a rubber band bound agenda packet manually before each meeting.
- **Outdated technology** - "We were stuck in old word processors, PDF's, steno pads, and cassette tapes," explains Larry Herrera, City Clerk for the City of Long Beach. They relied on these tools to capture accurate minutes during and after the meeting. The process for finalizing their minutes took up to 3 weeks.
- **Overwhelming information requests** - Managing high volumes of incoming calls and requests for meeting recaps, legislative reports, and documents was a challenge. "We had no easy way to enable departments or the public to research what occurred during previous meetings. To fulfill information requests we had to dig through old cassette tapes, watch the television re-broadcast, or sift through large volumes of records," says Herrera.

## Solution

In 2003, Long Beach partnered with Granicus to modernize how they process and retain legislative information. They were able to enforce new legislative standards and rules across their entire enterprise. Here are the solution components they used to achieve this:

- **Automated and paperless agendas** - Staff leverages a web-based agenda system to submit items, create agendas, route approvals, and generate packets—it's completely automated and paperless.
- **Leveraging an enterprise solution** - Empowering city commissions, committees, and boards across their organization with access to agenda development and archival tools.
- **Built-in reporting** - Tools to quickly prepare legislative status reports or facilitate committee referrals.
- **Live meeting software** - Creation of "digital minutes" which are captured in real-time and indexed automatically to a video recording of each meeting. "The goal of digital minutes is 100% accuracy, increased transparency, and timeliness," says Herrera.
- **Searchable & indexed digital repository** - All legislation, public meetings, and videos are archived in a repository located centrally on the city's website. This gives staff and citizens convenient tools to research current and historical legislation whenever they want.

## Results

Now, the city runs its legislative workflows with greater efficiency and accountability than ever before. “We’ve been able to capture and memorialize public meetings online for all to see and in the most ethical and cost-efficient way possible,” says Herrera. Here are the results:

RETURN ON INVESTMENT	
Reduction in paper costs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 22 agenda packets down from 56 packets per month</li> <li>• \$17,000 / year saved</li> </ul>
Labor efficiency	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Flatter organization, less staff required to run the legislative process</li> <li>• \$308,900 / year saved</li> </ul>
Time-savings per month	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Agenda process: 47 labor hours to 21.5 hours (54.3% reduction)</li> <li>• Minutes production: 120 hours to 16 hours (86.7% reduction)</li> </ul>
Fewer information requests	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Experiences a much lower call volume to the City Clerk’s Office for council and committee meeting information.</li> </ul>
Better public access	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Delivers faster and more in-depth access to legislative information through a user-friendly online repository</li> </ul>

“Before Granicus, we were stuck in word processors and cassette tapes - it took us nearly 3 weeks to produce our meeting minutes. Now our minutes are completed in 2 days.”

- Larry Herrera, City Clerk