


# Once flooded by Sandy, basement at this City Hall is transformed into COVID-safe work space

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Jersey City's City Hall basement renovations

By [Ron Zeitlinger](#) | [The Jersey Journal](#)

The basement of all 125-year-old buildings should look this good.

Some 15,000 square feet at Jersey City's City Hall that had been left nearly unusable because of flooding from Superstorm Sandy has now been converted into open, attractive and smart work spaces — perfect for social distance protocols during the ongoing coronavirus pandemic.

Officials say the basement had been relegated to use as storage space after the five feet of flood water was removed following the 2012 storm. But during the pandemic, the city administration saw the value of utilizing the lower level as a way to increase social distancing and give employees and visitors more space to conduct business, officials said.

Some of the highlights of the newly renovated 15,000 square foot space include:

**Council L Room:** A new gathering space was created as a supplemental space to the city council chambers that were renovated in a historical manner about 20 years ago.

**Original staircase:** Reimagined with black and gold paint, a nod to other areas of the building.

**Large meeting room:** Created from a space previously used for seasonal storage and housekeeping supplies.

**Non-binary restrooms and lactation room:** Built to add maximum privacy instead of the typical flimsy bathroom stall dividers.

**Technology:** Upgraded telecommunication VOIP phone lines, update data infrastructure for each employee workstation, Wi-Fi at all meeting areas, one-button video conferencing using Microsoft Teams, which addresses social distancing requirements.

The work was completed by 50-plus seasonal employees to ensure adequate manpower was available to deliver the primary tasks required by each respective building trade.

City officials say the design “is a practical blend of contemporary aesthetic while celebrating moments of the building’s history in a tasteful way, with all necessary approvals from local and state historic preservation offices.”

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