



Commission on Disability DRAFT minutes re March 11, 2026 meeting

North Berkeley Senior Center, Aspen Room
1901 Hearst Avenue, Berkeley, CA 94709

Preliminary Matters

1. Call to Order by Chair Fischer at 5:03pm
2. Land Acknowledgment recognizing Berkeley as the ancestral, unceded home of the Ohlone People.
3. Roll Call by Secretary
Commissioners present: Helen Walsh, Rena Fischer, Kathi Pugh, Jae Mann, and Fred Nisen.
Commissioner on a Leave Of Absence: Richard Paz.
Commissioners absent: Mina Sun, Bonnie Lewkowicz, and Valerie Coleman.
Staff present: Thomas Gregory, Terrance Davis (presenter), Nelson Lam (presenter), Evelyn Chan (presenter), David Sprague (presenter), and Uriel Gonzalez (presenter).
Public members present: Chris Fendricks, Michai Freeman, and Anonymous.
4. Public Comments
Michai Freeman announced that on 2/10/26 Center for Independent Living launched a campaign to lift the experiences of people with disabilities encountering access barriers within Berkeley's public rights-of-way, including barriers resulting from Class IV bike lanes, and that she intends to attend a subsequent CoD meeting to share community members' input.
5. Approval of draft minutes: February 11, 2026 meeting
"...to approve the February 11 minutes."
Moved by: Fischer; seconded by: Pugh.
Ayes: Walsh, Fischer, Pugh, and Mann.
Abstention: Nisen. The motion passes.
6. Approval: Order of Agenda
"...to approve the agenda."
Moved by: Fischer; seconded by: Pugh.
Ayes: unanimous. The motion passes.

Presentation

7. Potential Infrastructure Bond Measure in Nov. 2026
Public Works Director Terrance Davis, supported by staff members Nelson Lam, Evelyn Chan, David Sprague, and Uriel Gonzalez, discussed a proposed \$300 million general obligation bond, focusing on infrastructure needs. Presenters stated that they will relay feedback to Council.
Davis stated that the average annual capital need is \$1.87 billion.
Sprague stated that, with the exception of Fire Station #7, the City's fire facilities

were built in the 1950s and 1960s and that they currently need to be modernized and enlarged.

Davis asked CoD to consider four questions and provide any input commissioners may have: (1) among the infrastructure needs discussed by presenters, which needs are most urgent?, (2) were any pressing infrastructure needs missing from the presentation?, (3) what infrastructure projects would most enhance accessibility?, and (4) what infrastructure projects would create the greatest long-term benefits?

Chair Fischer stated that Live Oak Park is insufficiently accessible and that parks needed shady areas within the accessible paths of travel so that wheelchair users who need to do so can use shade to help regulate body temperature. Chair Fischer also expressed concern regarding proposed \$100 million limits of infrastructure project categories as these limits could result in the exhaustion of a category's available funds even if that category's needed ADA remediations are not fully addressed.

Commissioner Walsh and Chair Fischer stressed the importance of public playgrounds being as accessible as possible.

Public member Freeman appreciated the City's emphasis of safety improvements but expressed disappointment that the City is in a position that it must address so many priorities that addressing pressing accessibility issues might be delayed. Freeman emphasized that compliance with the ADA is paramount, that staff must understand that accessibility and inclusion relate to the ADA, that the ADA is a floor rather than a ceiling, and that the City needs to incorporate Universal Design principles into its design of transportation infrastructure.

Discussion/Action Items

8. Updates from CoD subcommittees

a. Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG)

Fischer reported that, re staff activity, there have been no substantive developments since the WCAG update at CoD's February meeting and that the team of UC Berkeley students whose project supports WCAG compliance is continuing to compete for \$100K in funding, with the competition's winner expected to be announced in May.

b. Public Right-of-Way Accessibility Guidelines (PROWAG)

Fischer reported that Transportation Manager Mark Helmbrecht is in the process of editing contract-related documents to highlight the need for contractors to comply with PROWAG.

c. Accessibility at City Meetings and Events

Fischer reported that she was accepted into a public policy program and that she intends to make the issue of accessibility at City meetings and events the focus of her participation in that program. Fischer will confer with Walsh and Pugh, her ad hoc committee colleagues re this subject.

9. Work Plan Updates and Developments

Commissioner Reports/Announcements

Staff Updates

10. Log of Access Complaints

11. Email and voicemail sent to the Commission

Adjournment at 7:13pm

Minutes approved by CoD vote on: _____

Thomas Gregory, Secretary to Commission