



Commission on Disability Minutes re November 12, 2025 Meeting

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

Preliminary Matters

1. Call to Order by Chair Pugh at 5:04pm
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, Bonnie Lewkowicz, Richard Paz, Jae Mann, Fred Nisen, and Valerie Coleman.
Commissioners Absent: Mina Sun.
Staff present: Thomas Gregory and Mary Triston (presenter).
Public present: Maria Sol, Carole Marasovic, and Erik Knaresboro.
4. Public Comments

Maria Sol said they appreciate CoD's service.
Carole Marasovic said that the elevators in the building at Acton/Grant were frequently not working, making the building inaccessible for disabled tenants. They believe residential buildings should have accessible units on the ground floor, rather than dedicated commercial spaces. The City should ensure that AI technology is not used to the detriment of people with disabilities, low-income people, and others.
Erik Knaresboro reported on dangerously deep potholes in the east-west crosswalk at Shattuck/Durant.
5. Approval of draft minutes: October 8, 2025 meeting

"...to amend Item #10 of the draft minutes to reflect the motion as passed:
'...to request that the City use materials generated by CoD for use at its January 2026 meeting as an "HTML-first" pilot project and that an update on progress toward the January 2026 goal be brought to the commission at the November meeting.'"

Moved by: Fischer; seconded by: Lewkowicz.
Ayes: Unanimous. The motion passes.

"...to approve the draft minutes as amended."
Moved by: Lewkowicz; seconded by: Coleman.
Ayes: Unanimous. The motion passes.
6. Approval: Order of Agenda

"...to approve the agenda as drafted."
Moved by: Fischer; seconded by: Lewkowicz.
Ayes: Unanimous. The motion passes.

Presentation

7. Mary Triston, CoB Transportation Services Coordinator, on Berkeley Rides for Seniors and the Disabled (BRSD) informed CoD that:

- Easy Does It, the provider of rides for wheelchair users enrolled in BRSD, will once again accept advance reservations for non-medical rides.
- The BRSD first recertification process resulted in a 40-47% reduction in current participants. Mary thought that people had moved, passed away, or otherwise no longer used the program. This will increase capacity for new enrollment.
- Other city ride programs for seniors/disabled people in Alameda County require co-pays of about \$4/ride. BRSD is considering the same.
- BRSD may move toward relying on GoGo Grandparent for riders who do not need EDI vans. Riders would not pay GoGo Grandparent fees.
- Chair Pugh noted that BRSD does not collect email addresses or use online resources and strongly recommended that BRSD provide admin services online, in addition to mail and in-person. CoD indicated that this both improves service to people with disabilities, as computer use increases accessibility, and would result in efficiencies for BRSD. Commissioners strongly suggested collecting user email addresses, use of online satisfaction surveys, and accepting applications to enroll online.

Public Comment: They have had bad experiences with taxi scip and would like BRSD to use GoGo Grandparent more.

Discussion/Action Items

8. Draft recommendations for CoB accessibility statements, captioning (meetings/events); accessibility enforcement at CoB-permitted events.
- Boilerplate accessibility statements: Commissioners discussed the need to develop consistent statements for City meetings and events. Accessibility statements are currently inconsistent, sometimes inaccurate, and in conflict with one another. Different statement length and content is needed depending on the type of meeting/event and the type of communication—a longer statement vs. a single line.
 - Hybrid rollout: Policy committees are already hybrid; quasi-judicial boards are expected to follow, with full hybrid rollout for all commissions targeted for mid-2026. Captions should be on by default for hybrid meetings. CART/ASL must be provided when needed as an accommodation.
 - Checklists and toolkits: Commissioner Coleman suggested adapting SF's accessible public event checklist and SFMTA's event kit to create a Berkeley accessible event toolkit (checklists, sample wording, signage) for staff and event partners.
 - City-permitted events: Even when plans are accessible when the City permit is given, implementation on the ground can fail (e.g., booths setup facing a median curb). Commissioners stressed the need for enforcement in real time.

Public comment: Many deaf people don't participate at civic events because they believe that events will not be accessible. Providing captioning as standard practice is

a good idea.

9. WCAG meetings with City of Berkeley staff — update

Vice Chair Fischer reported that important steps have been taken by City staff to achieve WCAG compliance, reading from Commissioner Sun’s comment, “I think we’ve made incredible progress, especially in communicating the rationale, urgency and necessary steps toward compliance.”

City communications staff have ramped up significant initiatives, including an active Task Force; internal (intranet) digital accessibility info for staff; meetings with critical City staff and vendors; inclusion in the UC Berkeley Civic Innovation Challenge where students will pitch solutions to improve digital accessibility. However, the subcommittee remains convinced that funding must be committed to achieve compliance by April 24, 2026.

10. PROWAG meeting with staff — update

Commissioner Coleman reported on the PROWAG subcommittee’s first meeting with Public Works (PW) staff. Discussion focused on identifying documents, as early in the PW contracting process as possible, where contractors are informed that PROWAG compliance is mandatory. There are multiple official documents that contain City and PW guidelines, that should (and some do) include PROWAG mandates and guidance.

The subcommittee believes that the signed contract, including a PROWAG contract clause, should be among these documents—and would most effectively support enforcement. This is under review by the City Attorney’s office. The subcommittee expects additional information on this at the December meeting with PW staff.

11. Work Plan Updates and Developments

- a. Review of priorities
- d. Schedule of presentations to advance Work Plan priorities

Staff Updates

- 12. Log of Access Complaints
- 13. Email and voicemail sent to the Commission – None.

Adjournment at 7:18pm

Minutes approved by CoD vote on: ____1/21/26____

Thomas Gregory, Secretary to Commission