



Commission
on
Disability

Commission on Disability Minutes re May 13, 2026 meeting

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

Preliminary Matters

1. Call to Order by Chair Fischer at 5:05pm
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, Mina Sun, Bonnie Lewkowicz, Jae Mann, Fred Nisen, and Valerie Coleman. Absent: Richard Paz.
Staff present: Thomas Gregory.
4. Public Comments
5. Approval of draft minutes: March 11, 2026 meeting
“...to approve the minutes as drafted.” Moved by: Pugh. Seconded by: Fischer.
Ayes: Walsh, Fischer, Pugh, Sun, Mann, Nisen, and Coleman. Abstention: Lewkowicz. The motion passes.
6. Approval: Order of Agenda
“...to approve the order of the agenda.” Moved by: Fischer. Seconded by: Lewkowicz. Ayes: Walsh, Fischer, Pugh, Sun, Lewkowicz, Mann, Nisen, and Coleman. The motion passes.

Discussion/Action Items

7. Updates from CoD subcommittees

a. Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG)

Fischer reported that Crystel Hadley, the City’s Digital Communications Coordinator, is very effective at pushing the City toward WCAG compliance. Federal DOJ pushed the WCAG compliance deadline to April 2027.

The City has hired a consultant, Blind Institute of Technology, to conduct an audit of the City website and to advise in developing a transition plan to full compliance. CoD’s input will inform this plan. City-wide WCAG Task Force has met bi-weekly.

Approximately 35 apps are attached to the City website (e.g., to pay a parking ticket, to register for summer camp). These app providers will need to verify WCAG compliance in order to continue contracting with the City.

The City will buy form-building software so that currently PDF-based forms will become WCAG-compliant online forms. The City Manager sent an all-staff memo advancing WCAG compliance

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

Transportation Manager Mark Helmbrecht’s recommendation was to include language

requiring PROWAG compliance be added to operational specs only. COD's PROWAG recommendation needs to go back to the FITES Committee. Fischer's draft letter contains the CoD response with additional places to include the need to follow PROWAG. Commissioners should send input on the draft letter by 5/18.

c. Accessibility at City Meetings and Events

Fischer felt that this subject is too broad and recommended that it be broken into smaller categories (e.g., address accessibility at public meetings separately from addressing accessibility at public events). Fischer also recommended that the focus should be on approaches and toolkits rather than only adding accessibility statements to material promoting events.

Commissioner Reports/Announcements

Walsh: FEMA released its final report. The Center for Independent Living is collecting lived-experience stories from disabled people, caregivers, and allies about navigating protected bike lanes and sidewalks.

Sun: the US Attorney's Office responsible for Northern California recently took its entire staff to LightHouse for the Blind for a tour and presentation, at which the US Attorney's Office stated that 95% of the cases it litigates are referred to the federal Dept of Justice via its online complaints portal. Also, the office litigates on behalf of individuals, not just class-action plaintiffs. The portal with which one may report complaints is here: [lodge a civil rights complaint with the federal DOJ](#).

Coleman: An MTC-funded consultant has partnered with Marin County on a pilot program promoting Universal Design, and the goal is to create a template that others can use.

Fischer: There is a same-day wheelchair-accessible (WAV) ride service called Onward. The ride cost starts at \$6 and trips can be up to 60 miles long. Rides are only available until 6pm in the evening.

Staff Updates

- 9. Log of Access Complaints
- 10. Email and voicemail sent to the Commission

Adjournment at 6:55pm

Minutes approved by CoD vote on: _____9/9/26_____

_____*Thomas Gregory*_____
Thomas Gregory, Secretary to Commission