



Commission
on
Disability

Commission on Disability Minutes for the Special Meeting on January 21, 2026

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

Preliminary Matters

1. Call to Order by Chair Pugh at 5:06pm
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, Richard Paz, Jae Mann, and Valerie Coleman.
Commissioner absent (excused absence): Fred Nisen.
Staff present: Thomas Gregory.
Public member present: Erik Knaresboro.
4. Public Comments
Erik K. addressed a building, among the tallest in Berkeley, approved for Shattuck at Allston that could negatively affect pedestrian and transit access. He asked that CoD help ensure construction does not negatively affect accessibility of the public right-of-way and transit users.
5. Approval of draft minutes: November 12, 2025 meeting
“to approve the November minutes as drafted.”
Moved by: Lewkowicz; seconded by: Pugh.
Ayes: Fischer, Pugh, Lewkowicz, Paz, Mann, and Coleman.
Abstentions: Walsh and Sun. The motion passes.
6. Approval: Order of Agenda
“to approve the agenda as drafted.”
Moved by: Lewkowicz; seconded by: Pugh.
Ayes: Fischer, Pugh, Sun, Lewkowicz, Paz, Mann, and Coleman.
Abstention: Walsh. The motion passes.

Discussion/Action Items

7. Accessibility Guidelines: City Meetings, City-Sponsored & City-Permitted Events

The CoD wants to ensure that these events are accessible and that materials effectively communicate availability of ADA accommodations. Fischer recommended that the CoD report be a policy proposal with examples of best practices, useful language, and strategies.

8. Reports from Commission subcommittees meeting with City staff:

a) Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG)

Commissioner Sun noted that at the 12/10/25 meeting staff reported on: i) an RFP being issued to audit berkeley.gov and develop a work plan to reach full compliance by their April 2026 deadline; ii) job descriptions to implement work plan (funding not committed); iii) City Manager

sent all-City staff emails indicating that meeting the deadline is a City priority and that staff should avoid posting PDFs when another approach works; e.g., the CoD agenda is now posted with an HTML link; iv) 50+ staff trained on some best practices; v) Cal student teams will address accessibility in a design competition in February.

The subcommittee believes that City staff working on WCAG want a compliant site, but does not believe that goal is achievable without committing money for staff/contract time for remediation and work plan implementation.

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

Commissioner Coleman reported that Public Works staff want to find ways to include PROWAG in the bid and contracting process, since the accepted bid serves as the contract. The new recommendation is focused on how to best implement this.

Coleman views engaging with PROWAG on three tracks: Inclusion in the bid process and documents to set PROWAG expectations; addressing subjective design decisions; strengthening enforcement.

9. Vision Zero (VZ) 2026 Update Advisory Committee

Vice Chair Fischer reported that the initial 2020 VZ plan needs to be updated to ensure continued project funding. A 2026 VZ Update Advisory Committee was formed. Fischer reported that: i) the City intends to improve data on the crash maps; ii) create a quick build toolkit to move projects from design to street faster; iii) break critical streets into .5 mile segments of particular concern; iv) benchmark against leading cities and national best practices.

At the VZ meeting, Fischer asked that data on disabled people injured or killed in traffic accidents be tracked and that the growing risk involved with micromobility be addressed in the update. Staff seeks input on: 1) the 2020 Plan -- what is missing and should be included in the update; and 2) What disability-specific issues should be addressed? Fischer asked: what street segments and intersections are of concern to people with disabilities and which should be prioritized for improvements, e.g., audible pedestrian signals?

Public comment: Erik K. recommended that the East Bay Center for the Blind be involved in updating the City's Vision Zero Plan.

"...to elect Commissioner Coleman to be CoD's primary representative on the City's Advisory Committee to update the Vision Zero Plan."

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

10. Work Plan Updates and Developments

Commissioner Lewkowicz reported that she and Commissioner Coleman met to discuss expanding the workplan priority focus from Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs) to broader issues of universal design, accessibility in housing, and increasing the percentage of accessible units in new construction. Ideas include identifying Bay Area best practices, engaging planning students for comparative research, exploring federal action on ADU financing as an accessibility opportunity, and developing model designs or guidance for accessible ADU options, similar to programs in San Francisco.

Staff Updates

11. Log of Access Complaints

Moving forward, CoD's secretary will format the Log of Access Complaints as table-less text.

12. Email and voicemail sent to the Commission

Adjournment at 7pm.

Minutes approved by CoD vote on: _____2/11/26_____

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