



Commission on Disability Minutes re July 8, 2026 meeting

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

Preliminary Matters

1. Call to Order by Chair Fischer at 5:02pm
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, Mina Sun, Bonnie Lewkowicz, Jae Mann, Fred Nisen, and Valerie Coleman
Commissioner on a Leave of Absence: Richard Paz
Commissioner absent: Kathi Pugh
Staff present: Thomas Gregory, Presenter: Crystel Hadley
Public members present: Ann Freeman, Eric Knaresboro, Odile Lavault, and Kelly Hammergren
4. Public Comments
Lavault, a member of the City's Commission on Aging, introduced herself as the Commission on Aging's designated liaison to the Commission on Disability (CoD).

Knaresboro, a guide dog user, is looking for suitable space to continue a guide dog play group and seeks advocacy from the CoD regarding this issue.
5. Approval of draft minutes: May 13, 2026 meeting
"...to consider approving May 13's draft minutes at the next Commission on Disability meeting." Moved by: Lewkowicz. Seconded by: Coleman. Ayes: unanimous. The motion passes.
6. Approval: Order of Agenda
"...to move item # 10 to the beginning of the Discussion/Action Items portion of the meeting and to otherwise approve the agenda as drafted." Moved by: Fischer. Seconded by: Sun. Ayes: unanimous. The motion passes.

Presentation

7. Conversation with Crystel Hadley, Digital Communications Coordinator for the City of Berkeley. What Works: Effectively Implementing Accessibility Changes in City/Title II Areas. Lessons learned from the (ongoing) Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) project.

Hadley reported that her involvement in WCAG-compliance began in April 2024 when the federal government announced that WCAG standards would be enforced beginning in April of 2026 (This date has shifted to April of 2027). The effort toward

compliance intensified after CoD passed its WCAG recommendation.

Hadley began meetings with CoD's ad hoc committee on WCAG. In August of 2025, she established a staff Task Force focused on compliance, with all departments represented. Hadley's team contracted with a vendor to perform an audit of the City's website. The audit and fixes are ongoing, with work by the City's website developer to address issues identified in the audit.

Separately, various trainings and tools (e.g., templates, step-by-step written guidance) have been provided to staff. A major takeaway for Hadley is that leadership's buy-in is critical to this effort's success. The City Manager has sent all-staff emails on the importance of WCAG compliance.

Fischer said that the WCAG Task Force could be a useful model for other accessibility issues that require staff-wide awareness for compliance. Hadley said that staff could propose this idea to leadership.

Sun stated that she had seen Hadley's training materials and found them useful and technically sound. Sun also noted that real change happens at the program staff level and that staff must use the trainings and tools for this effort to be successful.

Public comment

Knaresboro stated that WCAG compliance is one of the most important issues that the City should be investing in.

Discussion/Action Items

8. Update on CoD and Public Works discussions on including PROWAG in the City bid and contracting process.

Fischer reported that CoD has asked the City to include language on the need for PROWAG compliance in: contact boilerplate language, pre-bid meetings, the first page of bid packets, post-bid roundtable meetings, and Traffic Control Plans (TCPs). CoD also asked that a one-pager on PROWAG obligations be developed and attached to TCPs.

Fischer also proposed that the City create an online form through which PROWAG issues could be reported – since enforcement during construction frequently relies on public reporting.

9. Developing accessibility guidelines for electric vehicle (EV) charging that impacts the public right-of-way, e.g., when cables cross sidewalks.

"...to take up this EV topic at our next meeting in September." Moved by: Lewkowicz. Seconded by: Fischer. Ayes: unanimous. The motion passes.

10. A request that the City conduct a supplemental accessibility analysis of the Bicycle Plan, with specific attention to accessibility in the public right-of-way.

Walsh said that a "structured accessibility review" and/or a "supplemental accessibility

analysis” is required to adequately implement the recently adopted Bike Plan update.

Coleman said that expanding bike lane networks, especially regarding protected bike lanes, is new territory for most cities. Let’s advocate that the City more fully consider the accessibility ramifications of expanding the City’s bike lane networks.

Fischer said that it would be more effective for CoD to put forward specific design and compliance recommendations as opposed to requesting an accessibility analysis. Coleman agreed with Fischer that any requests by CoD be very targeted and specific.

Public comment

Freeman reported that during a trip to UCB’s Zellerbach Hall, she had to park in a blue spot on the left-hand side of one-way Bancroft. She was forced to enter an active traffic lane as she exited her vehicle. She then needed to cross an active bike lane in order to access the nearest curb cut.

Hammargren reported that it is frustrating that the Bike Plan update failed to address all aspects of accessibility.

Commissioner Reports/Announcements

Staff Updates

- 12. Log of Access Complaints
- 13. Email and voicemail sent to the Commission

Adjournment at 7:26pm

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

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