



Commission
on
Disability

Commission on Disability Minutes re September 9, 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, Mina Sun, Bonnie Lewkowicz, Jae Mann, Fred Nisen, and Valerie Coleman
Commissioner absent: Richard Paz
Staff present: Thomas Gregory
Public members present: Kelly Hammargren, Donna, Maria Sol, Chris Fendrick, Shirley Kirsten, Robert Byler, Erik Knaresboro, Sandy Z., and Rachel Longan
4. Public Comments
Fendrick emphasized the importance of keeping mis-parked micromobility devices from becoming barriers to accessing sidewalks and ramps, the public right-of-way, and asked about CoD's role finding a solution.
5. Approval of draft minutes: July 8, 2026 and May 13, 2026 meetings
"...to approve the May 2026 draft minutes with the following edit, proposed by Walsh: delete the final seven words of the first sentence of the first paragraph of the Commissioner Reports/Announcements section." Moved by: Fischer. Seconded by: Coleman. Ayes: unanimous. The motion passes.

"...to approve the July 2026 draft minutes." Moved by: Lewkowicz. Seconded by: Sun. Ayes: unanimous. The motion passes.
6. Approval: Order of Agenda
"...to approve the draft agenda." Moved by: Coleman. Seconded by: Nisen. Ayes: unanimous. The motion passes.

Discussion/Action Items

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

Fischer reported that the process between CoD's PROWAG ad hoc committee and

Public Works (PW) is ongoing and read aloud Transportation Mgr. Mark Helmbrecht's communication on the subject.

Fischer also suggested that CoD make two recommendations to Council to use the City's Report & Pay webpage (AKA 311 Online) to report: 1) PROWAG violations during construction; and 2) e-scooter and other micromobility devices that create dangerous conditions in the public right-of-way.

The discussion turned to the related issue of mis-parked e-scooter/micromobility devices as dangers in the public right-of-way. Walsh suggested that CoD consider how these reports will be tracked by staff.

Sun noted that she has reported micromobility issues in the past and that the existing complaint-driven system does not effectively address the problem. In addition, reporting is not easily accomplished. She noted that Sacramento fines scooter operators for their customers parking violations, which can then be collected from the user. This provides an incentive for operators to enforce/follow up on violations and for users to park correctly.

Fischer said that CM Tregub recently introduced a new policy on micromobility parking enforcement that relies on education and more parking corrals, noting that it is unlikely Council would implement a new approach until CM Tregub's proposal proves insufficient.

Coleman suggested that CoD inquire into the benchmarks the City will use to determine progress under CM Tregub's approach.

Public comment

Byler said that he has been tracking and reporting micromobility-related problems for 2.5 years. He had seen disabled pedestrians injured and needing help. He believes that Council has not been taking the issue seriously enough, indicating that fines might be the only way to change behavior. Berkeley_Scooterland, Byler's Instagram, documents Berkeley's e-scooter wasteland. He welcomes info and collaboration with others and can be reached at byler510@gmail.com.

Knarensboro commended Byler's advocacy efforts and said that CoD needs to impress upon the City that these barriers to the public right-of-way are unlawful.

Hammergren expressed her appreciation that CoD and community members were discussing these micromobility-related access barriers.

A motion made "...to establish an ad hoc committee on micromobility policy review consisting of Commissioners Coleman, Mann, Sun, and Nisen." Moved by: Fischer. Seconded by: Lewkowicz. Ayes: unanimous. The motion passes.

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

Fischer read aloud language from Oakland's recently issued guidance on running EV charging cords across sidewalks from an Oakland document that staff provided as a potential model for Berkeley. The following concerns were identified:

-- Regarding "All cord covers...[s]hall be on sidewalks with a running grade of 5% or less," Fischer noted that this standard would preclude many Berkeley Hills. Mann introduced the possibility of using a charge arm that brings the cord up and over the sidewalk.

-- Regarding "all cords, cord covers, and other equipment must be removed from public space when an active EV charging is complete and in all cases within 24 hours of beginning a charge," commissioners agreed that the City should use a time limit less than 24 hours.

-- Regarding "Shall be constructed of sturdy material that should not flex noticeably under a 200-pound point load," Fischer pointed out that her power wheelchair weighs 400 pounds unoccupied.

-- Regarding "If the material used does not possess a slip resistant property, apply a non-slip coating (available at a hardware or home improvement store), preferably bright yellow," Fischer recommended that City rules require cord covers that are already slip resistant when purchased.

Commissioners felt that the Oakland guidance was a good basis on which to model a Berkeley policy.

Public comment

Sandy Z., a Berkeley homeowner and EV owner, indicated that there is currently no legal path for a Berkeley EV owner to run a cable across a sidewalk in order to charge an EV. He said that Oakland's approach was simple and ADA-compliant and would be a good basis on which to model a Berkeley approach.

9. Hopkins Street redesign: ways for the CoD to proceed

Fischer said that she believes that the CoD's best approach is to propose specific recommendations during the input and design phases of the project. CoD's input should focus on known hazards and challenges: the danger to blind/low-vision pedestrians, safe parking for wheelchair vans with ramps, loading zones for paratransit, etc. She reported that, to-date, PROWAG/ADA-based law suits have resulted in added accessible parking spots, but have not stopped curbside or protected bike lanes.

10. Work Plan Updates and Developments

Commissioner Reports/Announcements

The Disability Film Festival, hosted by the Disability Cultural Center in San Francisco, is this week.

Nisen: next week is Disability Voting Rights Week.

Staff Updates

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

Adjournment at 7:31pm

Minutes approved by CoD vote on: ____10/14/26____

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