



Commission on Disability
AGENDA
Regular Meeting

Commission on Disability

Wednesday

City of Berkeley Corporation Yard

06/05/2019

1326 Allston Way

6:30 PM

Willow Room

Berkeley, CA 94702

A. PRELIMINARY BUSINESS

- 1) Call to Order by Chair Ghenis
- 2) Roll Call by Secretary
- 3) Public Comment on Items Not on the Agenda. (Up to 3 minutes per speaker)
- 4) Approval of Draft Action Minutes of May 1, 2019*
- 5) Staff Update.
- 6) Approval and Order of Agenda

B. DISCUSSION/ACTION ITEMS

The public may speak at the beginning of any item.
(Comments may be limited to 3 minutes per speaker)

Commission will take a 5 minute break around 8pm

1. Meeting logistics and related concerns.

Clarify that all concerns have been addressed; note if there are any ongoing barriers, and what barriers are; progress as needed (5 minutes / Ghenis)

2. San Pablo Avenue Plan.* Relevant Staff will present, provide an update, and gather input from Commission on Disability. Time for discussion and update. (20 minutes/COD)

3. Relocation of Commission Meetings. Discussion of alternative meeting locations (5 minutes/ Ghenis)

4. Town Hall. Disability Town Hall will occur in place of regularly-scheduled October meeting. Discussion and Update (5 minutes / Ghenis)

5. Homeless Concerns - Access to electric charging facilities for wheelchairs.* Council item will explain problems, concerns, and outline options for next steps. Discuss informational and/or action item to be submitted to Council. (10 minutes / Ghenis)

6. Homeless Concerns - RV Parking.* Update and feedback from staff and commissioners. (10 minutes / Smith)

7. Discussion on changes to PG&E Medical Baseline Program. Discussion and Update (5 minutes / Ghenis)

8. New Construction and Renovations – Accessibility

Guidelines and Regulations** (10 minutes/ Ghenis)
Develop comprehensive framework for accessibility in new construction and/or renovations. Discussion of Council item.

9. Vision Zero. (Walsh/ 5 min) Discussion and update.

10. Commission on Ageing and COD Representation. (Walsh/ 5 min) Discussion and update.

11. Berkeley Photos for Commission work. Discuss photos to include in future materials by the Commission, e.g. of inaccessible entryways or sidewalk obstructions. Commissioners may agree to take certain photos or types of photos in future weeks. (5 min / Ghenis)

12. Announcements

C. INFORMATION ITEMS AND SUBCOMMITTEE

REPORTS

1. Peace and Justice Commission Subcommittee on the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities- Update on activity or projects of this subcommittee since last meeting. (5 minutes / Walsh & Weiss)

D. COMMUNICATIONS

1. FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS (from adopted work

plan, referrals, etc.)

Navigable Cities Items

- **Construction issues**
- **Portable signs**
- **Photo survey**

Sidewalk discussion item

Events Calendar

Service Animals Welcome

Elevator ordinance

Access line item in Council templates

E. ADJOURNMENT: no later than 9:30pm

Agenda Posted: TBD

- * Indicates written material included in packet.
- ** Indicates material to be delivered at meeting.
- *** Indicates material previously mailed.

A complete agenda packet is available for public review on the web at:

https://www.cityofberkeley.info/Clerk/Commissions/Commissions_Commission_on_Disability_Homepage.aspx

Available also at the main library, and Public Works, Engineering Division, 1947 Center Street, 4th Floor.

ADA Disclaimer



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location. To request a disability-related accommodation(s) to participate in the meeting, including auxiliary aids or services, or alternative formats, please contact the Disability Services specialist at 981-6400 (V) or 981-6347 (TDD) at least three business days before the meeting date. Please refrain from wearing scented products to this meeting.

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Commission Secretary: Dominika Bednarska, Disability Services Specialist, 1947 Center St., 4th Floor, Berkeley, CA, 94704, Telephone (510) 981-6411, Fax: (510) 981-

7060 TDD: (510) 981-6347.

Email: DBednarska@cityofberkeley.info



Commission on Disability
AGENDA
DRAFT Meeting Minutes

Commission on Disability

Wednesday

City of Berkeley Corporation Yard

5/01/2019

1326 Allston Way

6:30 PM

Willow Room

Berkeley, CA 94702

A. PRELIMINARY BUSINESS

- 1) Call to Order by Chair Ghenis at 6:40.
- 2) Roll Call by Secretary Bednarska: Present: Walsh, Smith, Ghenis, Weiss, Ramirez, Singer; LOA: Leeder.
- 3) Public Comment on Items Not on the Agenda. (Up to 3 minutes per speaker)
None.
- 4) Approval of Draft Action Minutes of March 6, 2018***
Motion to Approve, (Weiss/Smith, all ayes)
Regular Meeting and Draft Action Minutes of April 3, 2018 Regular Meeting.*
Motion to Approve (Singer/Smith, all ayes)
- 5) Staff Update.

Secretary provided the following updates: the Kiosk informational item was submitted for May 28 City Council Agenda, COD 2019 Work Plan submitted for internal review and should head to Council in late June.

- 6) Approval and Order of Agenda
(Weiss/Singer, all ayes)

B. DISCUSSION/ACTION ITEMS

The public may speak at the beginning of any item.
(Comments may be limited to 3 minutes per speaker)

Commission will take a 5 minute break around 8pm

1. Secretary issues and accessibility concerns.

Concerns regarding the accessibility of the meeting room, size of room, and proximity to transit raised.

Request that staff look into alternative location such as South Berkeley Senior Center or Ed Roberts. No action taken.

2. Navigable Cities Informational Report to Council.

Discuss and review report. (20 minutes / Ghenis)*

Discussion. Motion: Walsh to represent

COD on Vision Zero committee (Weiss/Ramirez, all ayes)

Motion: Approve informational item for submission to City Council with photos. (Singer/Ramirez, all ayes)

3. Town Hall. Discussion and Selection of date. (5 minutes / Ghenis)

Discussion of town hall in lieu of regular meeting in

October. Secretary and Chair to explore having the meeting at Ed Roberts Campus.

Motion to approve: (Walsh/Weiss, all ayes)

4. Homeless Concerns - Access to electric charging facilities for wheelchairs. Discuss information that has been collected and explore future course-of-action. (10 minutes / Ghenis)

Public Comments from Stacey Hill, Alex Williams, Yesica Prado in support of public charging stations. Discussion. Motion for Chair Ghenis to further research issue and draft informational item. (Walsh/Singer, all ayes) Request for Secretary/staff to follow up on request for power at Stacey Hill's Here/There Camp with Public Works.

5. Homeless Concerns - RV Parking. (10 minutes / Smith) Public comment from Yesica Prado and Richie Smith on need for overnight RV parking. Discussion. Request for Secretary/Staff to provide any available updates on the issue. No action taken.

6. Discussion on changes to PG&E Medical Baseline Program. PG&E recently changed policies to its medical baseline program. Discuss changes, impacts, and potential courses of action. (10 minutes / Ghenis) Public comment by Christine Schwartz. Discussion. Request for Jennifer Lazo to address how Emergency Services and the Committee may work together to address potential adverse impact on people with disabilities who rely on medical equipment.

7. Discussion on Zero Waste Commission. Discuss how to collaborate with ZWC on any future efforts that may affect people with disabilities. A Zero Waste Commission member may attend, or Ghenis will communicate with ZWC and report back. (10 minutes / Ghenis)

Discussion. No action taken.

8. San Pablo Avenue Plan. An update on the planning process, and report on Feb 13 stakeholder meeting. (10 minutes / Walsh)

Discussion.

Request to invite county staff to present and address accessibility concerns related to mobility and visual disabilities.

9. Public Outreach Informational Item Discuss and review report. (15 minutes /Ghenis)*

Discussion. Motion to approve informational item for submission to City Council. (Singer/Walsh, all ayes)

10. Announcements

Weiss-Team came in 1st in MS Walk, fundraising still ongoing. Bednarska-Annual stipends forms due May 31st.

C. INFORMATION ITEMS AND SUBCOMMITTEE

REPORTS

1. Peace and Justice Commission Subcommittee on the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities- Update on activity or projects of this

subcommittee since last meeting. (5 minutes / Walsh & Weiss)

CRPD's second annual Berkeley forum on access and disability rights at Ed Roberts on May 8, 3 to 5pm. Secretary Bednarska added as panelist.

D. COMMUNICATIONS

1. FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS (from adopted work plan, referrals, etc.)

Navigable Cities Items

- **Construction issues**
- **Portable signs**
- **Photo survey**

Sidewalk discussion item

Relocation of Meetings

PG&E

Town Hall

RV Parking and Wheelchair Chargers

Elevator Ordinance Review

San Pablo Corridor

Service Animals Welcome

Commission on Ageing

E. ADJOURNMENT: 9:25 PM (Walsh/Smith, all ayes)

Agenda Posted: April 22, 2019

- * Indicates written material included in packet.
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Email: DBednarska@cityofberkeley.info

Planning for giant San Pablo Avenue facelift gets underway (article sent via email at the request of Commissioner Walsh <https://www.berkeleyside.com/2019/04/24/planning-for-giant-san-pablo-avenue-facelift-gets-underway#> (Full text below)

Photo: [LPS.1](#)/Wikimedia

It's a project so massive, it will likely take workers longer to complete than the Golden Gate Bridge and the first Bay Bridge – combined.

Two counties, seven cities, 12 miles and at least a dozen years: all are factors in preparing the San Pablo Avenue corridor for the future.

The ACTC is holding a public workshop tonight about the San Pablo Avenue plan. Future meetings are on May 14 and May 23. For all info, visit the [project website](#). Take the [San Pablo Avenue survey](#).

The goal is to develop a “long-term vision and near-term improvements for San Pablo Avenue that will allow it to function better and be safer for people who walk, bike, drive, and take the bus,” according to the Alameda County Transportation Commission (ACTC), which has started briefing local agencies on what's coming.

The ACTC is hosting a [public workshop](#) about the plan tonight from 6:30-8 p.m. at the Emeryville Center of Community Life, and two more locally on May 14 and May 23.

The trick for planners will be re-adjusting one of the East Bay's busiest corridors into something that can accommodate "a huge amount of growth," ACTC planner Cathleen Sullivan told the Berkeley Transportation Commission, at its April 18 meeting.

San Pablo Avenue's versatility complicates things, as the thoroughfare —which is State Route 123 —embraces swaths of businesses and housing, which limits the space to potentially be changed. Compromises among competing interests will be necessary to keep things flowing.

"There's a lot of growth projected," Sullivan said. "And conditions will get worse."

45,000 new households and 33,000 new jobs are forecast to be coming to the San Pablo corridor area by 2040.

Extending from downtown Oakland all the way north to the Hilltop Mall region of Richmond, San Pablo is already one of the Bay Area's busiest streets, even when things are relatively smooth on nearby freeways. Commute snarls and accidents cause additional traffic to spill onto San Pablo almost daily. The route is also a main bus artery and runs parallel to the Richmond BART line, which means thousands of transit users end up traveling around San Pablo to get to and from transit.

Planners face a monumental task of striking balance among commuters, residents and local businesses. An ACTC study released in March 2018 says there are approximately 74,000

households and 145,000 jobs scattered among the seven cities along the San Pablo corridor.

That's before the coming eruption of growth.

The number of households is projected to grow by 1.5% each year, until at least 2040, which means 45,000 new households. Total employment in the area is projected to grow by 1.2% per year during the same time, meaning 33,000 new jobs, according to ACTC.

“Most of the cities’ land use and economic development plans envision a significant increase in residential development, with commercial uses concentrated at major intersections and other key nodes,” the report says.

Most planned development around San Pablo will be “replacing low-intensity strip retail with higher density residential or mixed-use development,” bringing more people with less room to commute.

According to ACTC, most construction in the San Pablo corridor planned by 2018 was slated for Oakland (4,281 units), El Cerrito (1,470 units), Berkeley (1,170 units) and Emeryville (882) units.

The report says the corridor is relatively low-income, compared to the rest of Alameda County, and has “a significant transit dependent population.” More than two-thirds of the households within the study area own one or no car. Many people travel by bus, on foot or on bicycles. Although the

majority of San Pablo Avenue is considered relatively safe, “the existing pedestrian facilities are very uncomfortable in some areas of the corridor.” In the five years covered in the report (2009-2013), four pedestrians and one bicyclist were killed by traffic collisions in the corridor.

“Crossing conditions are pretty poor for bicyclists and pedestrians,” Sullivan said.

The area is served primarily by four public transportation providers: AC Transit, BART, WestCAT and Emery Go-Round. Four BART stations in the study area have more than 40,000 boardings per week day. Thirty-one percent of all morning travel activity – nearly 41,000 person trips – are BART-related, with about half via walking and biking.

AC Transit sees more than 19,600 bus boardings per weekday in the corridor, with more than 11,000 on San Pablo.

The report says the corridor “is generally characterized by a lack of a continuous and connected bicycle network.” There are small segments of bicycle corridors, but “not connected to one another to form a continuous facility, and San Pablo Avenue is difficult to cross in most areas along the corridor, serving as a barrier to east-west bicycle connectivity.”

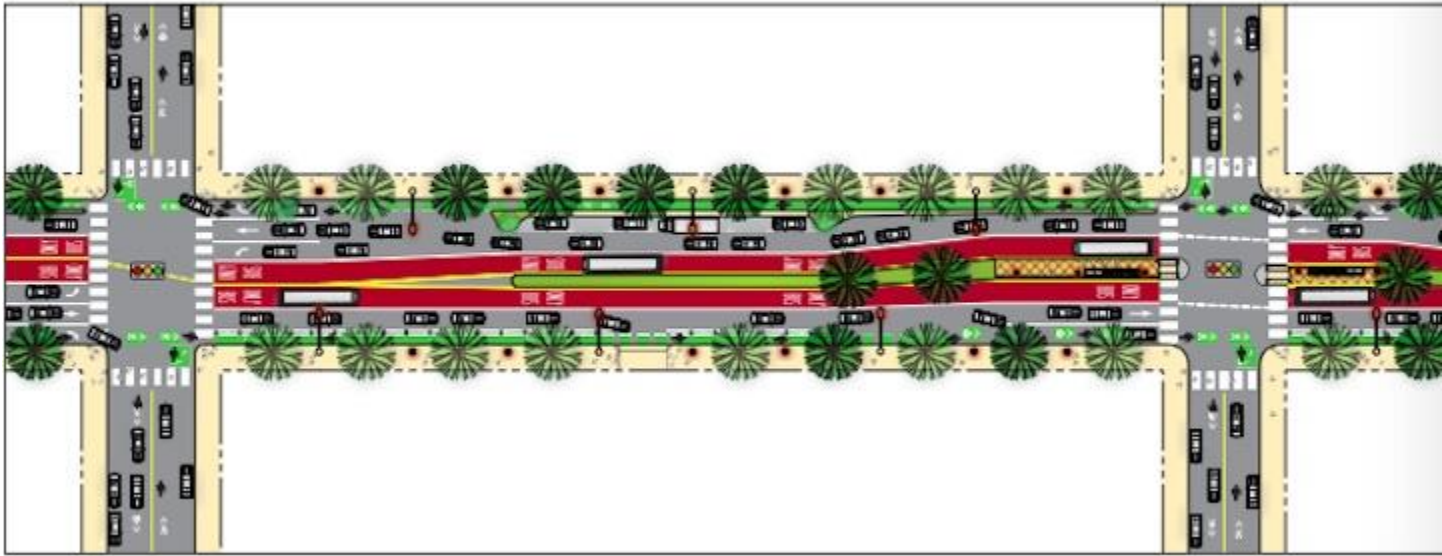
“It’s super important for all these communities,” said Karen Parolek, a member of the coordinating committee of advocacy group Walk Bike Berkeley. She says, though it’s still early in the

process, the group is happy to see the needs of pedestrians and bicyclists so prevalent in plans. “I’m glad (ACTC is) being as open and inclusive as they are. They’re thinking big picture, and it’s so important to these communities to do so.”

ACTC is working with [three concepts](#).

Concept A features bus lanes adjacent to the median. Bike lanes would run next to the sidewalk. Transit would become faster and more reliable, with 72 Local and 72 Rapid bus lines combining into one service. Bike travel would be safer, but there would be limited opportunities to shorten crossing distances for pedestrians. There would be a significant reduction of parking and loading spaces and potentially more delay at intersections. There would also be no left-hand turn lanes.

“That’s a pretty big trade-off with this concept,” Sullivan said.



(Image of Concept A. [See keys and concepts B and C](#). Image: ACTC)

Concept B also sees dedicated bus lanes next to the median, but bike routes moved to adjacent streets, which would lessen the stress on those bicyclists, but make conditions more difficult for ones still using San Pablo. Bus flow would improve, and pedestrian crossings could become shorter. Concept B would eliminate the fewest parking and loading spaces of the three plans, but potentially add more delay at intersections.

Concept C doesn't allow for a dedicated bus lane but puts a bike lane on San Pablo. AC Transit would remain as is, meaning slower and less reliable service as the area grows, according to ACTC. There would be some opportunities to shorten pedestrian crossings, though there would be fewer parking and loading spaces. Sullivan said mixed-use left-hand turn lanes could be added. Of the three concepts, this one would have the least impact on future delay and congestion.

Planners say it's too early to determine the project's cost, but funds from federal, state and local sources will likely come as work is done: in phases. That approach will also help neighborhoods adjust.

"There is really going to have to be an outreach component out there in the corridor during construction," said Berkeley Traffic Commissioner Beverly Greene, who said the plan must benefit businesses in the corridor.

Officials understand not everyone will be completely satisfied with the long process and the inevitable traffic delays. "Short-term pains for long-term gains," said Sullivan.

Parolek said safety concerns make San Pablo a safer option for bicycles than parallel bike routes in Concept B, due to better lighting and more activity. She said Walk Bike Berkeley would support "pedestrian scrambles" where all four ways of an intersection turn red to vehicles, allowing pedestrians to cross from all directions at once. It would also eliminate conflict between cars trying to turn right on a red and pedestrians in a crosswalk.

"It would really be for key intersections where there's enough traffic to make it reasonable," Parolek said.

The organization also wants "bulb-out" curb extensions, which narrows right-hand traffic turn lanes, giving pedestrians more space and visibility. They also reduce vehicle turn speeds and reduce illegal parking near crosswalks.

“The benefit is it shortens the distance that pedestrians spend in the street,” said Parolek. Cars tend to be a little more careful in turning that corner.”



[Commission Name]

INFORMATION CALENDAR

[Meeting Date (Month Day, yyyy)]

To: Honorable Mayor and Members of the City Council
From: Commission on Disability
Submitted by: Alex Ghenis, Chairperson, Commission on Disability
Subject: Wheelchair Charging Stations for Homeless Individuals

INTRODUCTION

A significant portion of Berkeley's homeless population has disabilities, including many individuals who use power wheelchairs for mobility. However, there are extremely limited options for people to charge those very power wheelchairs: public power outlets are increasingly disconnected, covered or otherwise unavailable, and there are limited to no viable outlets at homeless encampments. The inability to charge wheelchairs has drastic consequences for individuals' health, mobility, safety and independence; it also presents logistical and fiscal consequences for the City of Berkeley, its medical providers and public safety departments. The current situation presents significant challenges and, arguably, an unrecognized crisis for an already-vulnerable group.

Providing opportunities for homeless individuals to charge power wheelchairs will support their health, independence, safety, and overall well-being at many levels, while saving the city valuable resources. There are several potential options for how to better allow for wheelchair charging including but not limited to: coordinating to turn on outlets at or near encampments with homeless wheelchair-users, providing publicly available wheelchair chargers at designated areas, or keeping chargers at existing homeless shelters or public buildings (e.g. senior centers or libraries). The Commission on Disability is requesting that City Council take appropriate action and/or direct staff to develop a strategy for providing opportunities for public wheelchair charging.

CURRENT SITUATION AND ITS EFFECTS

At least several dozen, and possibly over 100, of Berkeley's homeless individuals use power wheelchairs to navigate their surroundings. When these wheelchairs are charged, their owners can navigate Berkeley to acquire much-needed goods, meals, and services. Proper mobility can also support circulation, skin integrity, etc. by allowing individuals to get out of beds/encampments, sit upright and move around. When wheelchair batteries drain to empty, individuals may become stuck in sidewalks or crosswalks, requiring assistance from strangers or paid city staff to move them to safety; this can potentially be extremely costly in cases when emergency personnel are

required. Batteries must also be regularly charged to continue functioning, so individuals who are unable to charge batteries risk having non-functional wheelchairs. Easy Does It Emergency Services (EDI) – which partly operates using city funds for transportation and wheelchair repair – has committed energy, staff time, transportation services and wheelchair repair resources to maintain functioning wheelchairs for the homeless population, charge them as needed, and sometimes provide transportation to stranded individuals. EDI's costs could be drastically reduced if individuals had proper access to charging stations and could keep their wheelchairs working properly.

Berkeley's homeless residents live in a diverse range of circumstances. Some live in well-managed encampments while some are in unorganized encampments and others live alone. There is also a range of capabilities regarding self-care influenced by health, substance use, personal capacities, etc. These and other factors mean that there may not be a "one-size-fits-all" solution to providing reliable charging, but that does not negate the City's responsibility to seek out a better course-of-action.

BACKGROUND

In early 2019, the Commission on Disability was approached by multiple homeless and disability advocates concerned about the lack of available options for homeless power-wheelchair-users to charge wheelchair batteries. Public outlets near sidewalks, which used to be a main option for charging wheelchairs, have increasingly been covered up or turned off in recent years. Building owners/operators turn away individuals attempting to use indoor outlets. There are no reliable outlets near encampments, and none have been made available despite multiple requests. Charging "boxes" – which convert outlet AC power into DC power for battery plugs – are not available at homeless shelters or in reliable locations, even though nearly all wheelchairs use the same power converters.

The Commission on Disability held several discussions to explore concerns and opportunities for providing wheelchair charging opportunities for homeless individuals. The Commission did not endorse one specific course-of-action, but rather wishes to request that appropriate city staff prioritize this concern and develop a well-designed strategy to ensure that homeless individuals may charge power wheelchairs.

ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY

Providing wheelchair charging could lead to related environmental benefits. One main benefit is that regularly charging batteries extends their service life and means that fewer batteries must be produced and disposed of, which both have environmental externalities. Secondly, guaranteeing functional power wheelchairs means that fewer individuals will be stranded near encampments, on sidewalks or in crosswalks; this will reduce emissions from fossil-fuel-powered emergency vehicles, wheelchair transportation services, and other services which would otherwise be necessary to bring an individual to safety. Other environmental benefits may exist but are not listed here.

POSSIBLE FUTURE ACTION

The City may provide reliable wheelchair charging through several methods. These include, but are not limited to:

- Ensure that certain outdoor power outlets are turned on and uncovered, and potentially work with staff or volunteers to assist homeless individuals with disabilities to use them for wheelchair charging.
- Provide reliable electric power at recognized homeless encampments with wheelchair-using residents.
- Keep wheelchair chargers at designated areas of homeless shelters and/or other public buildings (e.g. libraries, senior centers, etc.), and raise awareness in the homeless community about the location of charging stations.
- Others, as identified by City Council and staff.

FISCAL IMPACTS OF POSSIBLE FUTURE ACTION

Providing reliable wheelchair charging will almost certainly save the city money overall through reduced costs from emergency personnel, medical services and similar expenses. The money that the City grants to EDI for transportation, wheelchair repair, etc. will be able to be better used by EDI and thus better serve its clients, Berkeley's residents with disabilities (whether housed or homeless). The various options for providing reliable wheelchair charging will surely have different fiscal costs and benefits, which may be determined by appropriate city staff.

CONTACT PERSON

[Name], [Title], [Department], [Phone Number]



[Commission Name]

[CONSENT OR ACTION]

CALENDAR

[Meeting Date (MM dd, yyyy)]

To: Honorable Mayor and Members of the City Council

From: Commission on Disability

Submitted by: Alex Ghenis, Chairperson, Commission on Disability

Subject: Providing Wheelchair Charging Opportunities for Homeless Individuals

RECOMMENDATION

Direct appropriate city staff to develop services and/or regulations which will provide accessible, reliable opportunities for homeless individuals with disabilities to charge power wheelchairs. Staff is directed to research existing conditions of homeless individuals with disabilities; barriers to charging power wheelchairs; related consequences; and potential City actions to provide accessible, reliable wheelchair charging. Request that staff assemble a policy to be reviewed and implemented.

FISCAL IMPACTS OF RECOMMENDATION

Providing reliable wheelchair charging will almost certainly save the city money overall through reduced costs from emergency personnel, medical services and similar expenses. The money that the City grants to EDI for transportation, wheelchair repair, etc. will be able to be better used by EDI and thus better serve its clients, Berkeley's residents with disabilities (whether housed or homeless). The various options for providing reliable wheelchair charging will surely have different fiscal costs and benefits, which may be determined by appropriate city staff.

CURRENT SITUATION AND ITS EFFECTS

At least several dozen, and possibly over 100, of Berkeley's homeless individuals use power wheelchairs to navigate their surroundings. When these wheelchairs are charged, their owners can navigate Berkeley to acquire much-needed goods, meals, and services. Proper mobility can also support circulation, skin integrity, etc. by allowing individuals to get out of beds/encampments, sit upright and move around. When wheelchair batteries drain to empty, individuals may become stuck in sidewalks or crosswalks, requiring assistance from strangers or paid city staff to move them to safety; this can potentially be extremely costly in cases when emergency personnel are required. Batteries must also be regularly charged to continue functioning, so individuals who are unable to charge batteries risk having non-functional wheelchairs. Easy Does It

Emergency Services (EDI) – which partly operates using city funds for transportation and wheelchair repair – has committed energy, staff time, transportation services and wheelchair repair resources to maintain functioning wheelchairs for the homeless population, charge them as needed, and sometimes provide transportation to stranded individuals. EDI’s costs could be drastically reduced if individuals had proper access to charging stations and could keep their wheelchairs working properly.

Berkeley’s homeless residents live in a diverse range of circumstances. Some live in well-managed encampments while some are in unorganized encampments and others live alone. There is also a range of capabilities regarding self-care influenced by health, substance use, personal capacities, etc. These and other factors mean that there may not be a “one-size-fits-all” solution to providing reliable charging, but that does not negate the City’s responsibility to seek out a better course-of-action.

BACKGROUND

In early 2019, the Commission on Disability was approached by multiple homeless and disability advocates concerned about the lack of available options for homeless power-wheelchair-users to charge wheelchair batteries. Public outlets near sidewalks, which used to be a main option for charging wheelchairs, have increasingly been covered up or turned off in recent years. Building owners/operators turn away individuals attempting to use indoor outlets. There are no reliable outlets near encampments, and none have been made available despite multiple requests. Charging “boxes” – which convert outlet AC power into DC power for battery plugs – are not available at homeless shelters or in reliable locations, even though nearly all wheelchairs use the same power converters.

The Commission on Disability held several discussions to explore concerns and opportunities for providing wheelchair charging opportunities for homeless individuals. The Commission did not endorse one specific course-of-action, but rather wishes to request that appropriate city staff prioritize this concern and develop a well-designed strategy to ensure that homeless individuals may charge power wheelchairs.

ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY

Providing wheelchair charging could lead to related environmental benefits. One main benefit is that regularly charging batteries extends their service life and means that fewer batteries must be produced and disposed of, which both have environmental externalities. Secondly, guaranteeing functional power wheelchairs means that fewer individuals will be stranded near encampments, on sidewalks or in crosswalks; this will reduce emissions from fossil-fuel-powered emergency vehicles, wheelchair transportation services, and other services which would otherwise be necessary to bring an individual to safety. Other environmental benefits may exist but are not listed here.

RATIONALE FOR RECOMMENDATION

A significant portion of Berkeley’s homeless population has disabilities, including many individuals who use power wheelchairs for mobility. However, there are extremely limited options for people to charge those very power wheelchairs: public power outlets are increasingly disconnected, covered or otherwise unavailable, and there are limited to no viable outlets at homeless encampments. The inability to charge wheelchairs has drastic consequences for individuals’ health, mobility, safety and independence; it also presents logistical and fiscal consequences for the City of Berkeley, its medical providers and public safety departments. The current situation presents significant challenges and, arguably, an unrecognized crisis for an already-vulnerable group.

Providing opportunities for homeless individuals to charge power wheelchairs will support their health, independence, safety, and overall well-being at many levels, while saving the city valuable resources. There are several potential options for how to better allow for wheelchair charging including but not limited to: coordinating to turn on outlets at or near encampments with homeless wheelchair-users, providing publicly available wheelchair chargers at designated areas, or keeping chargers at existing homeless shelters or public buildings (e.g. senior centers or libraries).

ALTERNATIVE ACTIONS CONSIDERED

The Commission on Disability considered developing a specific policy but believes that staff are better equipped to research existing conditions and develop concrete policies.

Some potential policies include but are not limited to: ensuring that certain outdoor power outlets are turned on and uncovered, at least at designated times; providing reliable electric power at recognized homeless encampments with wheelchair-using residents; working with city staff, volunteers, or other stakeholders to manage charging “boxes” at designated public outlets; keeping wheelchair chargers at homeless shelters and/or other public buildings; and actively communicating with the homeless community about charging options and locations.

CITY MANAGER

The City Manager [TYPE ONE] concurs with / takes no position on the content and recommendations of the Commission’s Report. [OR] Refer to the budget process.

Note: If the City Manager does not (a) concur, (b) takes any other position, or (c) refer to the budget process, a council action report must be prepared. Indicate under the CITY MANAGER heading, “See companion report.”

CONTACT PERSON

[Name], [Title], [Department], [Phone Number]

RESOLUTION NO. ##,###-N.S.

WHEELCHAIR CHARGING FOR BERKELEY'S HOMELESS RESIDENTS

WHEREAS, a significant number of homeless individuals in Berkeley have disabilities and use power wheelchairs for independence, health and well-being; and

WHEREAS, there are few to no reliable, accessible locations in Berkeley for homeless individuals to charge power wheelchairs; and

WHEREAS, power wheelchairs must be regularly charged, using a proper power converter, in order to function and for batteries to remain viable; and

WHEREAS, individuals whose wheelchairs run out of power may be unable to access vital areas, goods, and services, and may become stranded, including in the middle of sidewalks or crosswalks, in ways that jeopardize health, safety and well-being; and

WHEREAS, repairing wheelchairs and/or rescuing stranded individuals requires significant resources by emergency personnel and local nonprofits and may endanger their safety; and

WHEREAS, people with disabilities have a human right to health, independence, and mobility, which are often provided by charged and functional power wheelchairs.

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Council of the City of Berkeley that the City Manager and other appropriate staff research existing conditions of homeless individuals with disabilities using power wheelchairs, available charging options, and potential actions and policies to provide reliable, accessible wheelchair charging for homeless individuals; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the City Manager and appropriate staff develop actions and policies to provide reliable, accessible wheelchair charging for homeless individuals and return to City Council with proposed policies for further discussion and approval.

From: Bednarska, Dominika
Sent: Thursday, May 02, 2019 3:02 PM
To: 'dbednarska@cityofberkley.info'
<dbednarska@cityofberkley.info>
Subject: FW: RV Parking at Golden Gate Fields-May 1
Commission Meeting

Hello,
Yesica Prado has asked me to share this item with the
Commission. I will include it with the agenda packet for our
next meeting,
Best,

Dominika Bednarska PhD
Disability Services Specialist
City of Berkeley
(510) 981-6418
1947 Center St.
4th Floor
Berkeley CA 94704

From: Yesica Prado [<mailto:yesica.prado13@gmail.com>]
Sent: Wednesday, May 01, 2019 8:46 PM
To: Bednarska, Dominika <DBednarska@cityofberkeley.info>

Subject: RV Parking at Golden Gate Fields-May 1 Commission Meeting

My apologies for the previous incomplete email. Please share this one with the commissioners. Thank you!

Dear Commissioners,
Thank you for listening to our public comment on April 3rd, regarding RV parking at Golden Gate Fields. On our last discussion, we ran into a few issues that prevented the RV parking. To recap, they are the following:

"1. Fields are private property, 2. Harness racing is conflict, and 3. Sewage disposal is an issue. Commission discussed. No action taken."

After the commission's meeting, our community also took the initiative to meet with Mayor Arreguin on April 16 to get updates on open parking lots for RV parking and we were informed that talks with Golden Gate Fields have been ineffective. Notes from her legal aide read: "Any contact with Golden Gate Fields? **Yes, several times. Each time they have resisted and said no.**"

While Golden Gate Fields might be out of the question, we believe it is still very important to advocate for a parking lot. An RV is sometimes the last form of housing for many of our disabled neighbors, choosing to stay housed in their vehicles because shelters will lack the resources to accommodate every disability. Most importantly, they are also competing for resources with every person staying on the shelter and puts them on a long waiting list.

I would like to emphasize that the Berkeley overnight RV ban criminalizes sleeping in your recreational vehicle between the hours of 2 a.m. to 5 a.m. in any city street. Vehicles without a "parking permit" will be cited and towed. The ban is not being enforced unless there are "health and safety concerns," an amendment added by the Mayor, which was a vague action. What counts as health and safety concerns? Why are the stakeholders not aware of these "conditions"?

While the politics of vehicle living are still being discussed throughout California cities, vehicular residents continue to live in fear of being criminalized, cited and towed. Vehicular residents are economic refugees and people are being displaced every 72 hours. Imagine having to figure

out where to go next every three days? It's a challenge.

In San Diego, the overnight parking ban has been proven unconstitutional in the courts. Please read: [Judge Blocks San Diego RV Parking Restriction](#)

"The injunction is a win for a group of about 800 disabled San Diegans who [filed](#) a class action against the city last year for criminalizing their living situation. The group, represented by attorneys with Disability Rights California, claims the ordinances used to ticket them and impound their vehicles disproportionately affect people who cannot afford rent or use local homeless shelters because the shelters cannot accommodate their disabilities.

The judge understood the vehicle habitation ordinance is unconstitutional and the impact it was having on people affected by its enforcement. He had to balance the equities and looked at what was going on and decided the harm was way greater than any legitimate enforcement purpose," Menasche said.

The lawsuit against the city survived [dismissal](#) earlier this summer, when

Battaglia [found](#) “facially neutral” policies may still violate the Americans with Disabilities Act if they disproportionately affect disabled people.”

I hope you will strongly consider continuing a search for an open parking lot in Berkeley for RV parking. Items for the council to consider the creation of an "RV park" in Berkeley has appeared on previous agendas, an item authored by Vice Mayor and Councilmember Cheryl Davila (June 26, 2018 agenda). It's a possibility to introduce a similar item to come up again to allocate a place for RV parking with your support. I hope you will consider it. Thank you for your time and support.

Warm regards,

Yesica Prado

Writer | Photographer

773.751.9522 | [Berkeley Friends on Wheels](#)

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