



Sophie Hahn
Councilmember District 5

REVISED AGENDA MATERIAL

Meeting Date: June 13, 2017

Item Number: 47

Item Description: Consideration of Universal Design Standards in City Projects

Submitted by: Councilmember Sophie Hahn

Adding Councilmember Harrison as a co-sponsor to this item. No further changes.

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CONSENT CALENDAR

June 13, 2017

To: Honorable Mayor and Members of the City Council
From: Councilmembers Sophie Hahn, Cheryl Davila, and Kate Harrison
Subject: Consideration of Universal Design Standards in City Projects

RECOMMENDATION

Refer to the City Manager to make the consideration of Universal Design features an explicit and listed criteria for all projects undertaken by the city, including the many upcoming projects to be funded through Measure T1.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

Unknown.

BACKGROUND

The City of Berkeley undertakes a number of design and construction projects, and currently holds bidders, consultants, and internal departments alike to accessible design standards, in accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and Title 24 of the California Building Standards Code. While compliance provides an acceptable baseline for project design, it does not consider the full spectrum of unique human characteristics and needs. Universal Design (UD) standards can meet such needs, and the City of Berkeley has the capability to meet such heightened standards.

In an information report presented to Council on September 20, 2016, The Commission on Disability detailed some of the objectives of UD, as well as resources that could be helpful in setting Universal Design standards for the City. Universal Design is defined by the Center for Universal Design as “the design of products and environments to be usable by all people, to the greatest extent possible, without the need for adaptation or specialized design,” and includes elements such as sidewalks with curb cuts and doors that open automatically when a person moves near them. These design standards benefit not only people with disabilities, but people with diverse age, stature, culture, and learning preference characteristics as well. The Center for Universal Design has also identified 7 principles of design: equitable use, flexible use, intuitive use, perceptible information, tolerance for error, low physical effort, and size and space for approach and use.

We recommend that consideration of universal design, including the above design principles, be included as explicit criteria on RFP responses, contract terms, project proposals, and any other planning and design projects undertaken by the City. UD standards should be considered for

both indoor and outdoor projects, whether done through City of Berkeley staff or a third-party. When UD is considered at the inception of a project, it does not necessarily result in greater project cost, whereas later adaptation may increase costs. Early consideration and adoption of UD standards is a cost effective way of adding enormous benefits to the community in the form of increased accessibility and usability. Not all architects and designers are familiar with UD, and by requiring it in the RFP process the City will move towards working with designers and builders knowledgeable about Universal Design.

The people of Berkeley have voted to provide much needed funding for parks and infrastructure via Measure T1. This significant infusion of capital and the many improvements the community will obtain in a relatively short period of time is an excellent opportunity to incorporate UD features to the greatest extent feasible.

By making UD standards an explicitly required consideration, it is our hope that UD will supplant ADA and Title 24 as the new standard of design in Berkeley. With UD the City can build more inclusive and sustainable parks, infrastructure, and facilities.

For more information about Universal Design, please see the following:

The Center for Universal Design:

<https://projects.ncsu.edu/www/ncsu/design/sod5/cud/index.htm>

Disabilities, Opportunities, Internetworking, and Technology:

<http://www.washington.edu/doiit/what-difference-between-accessible-usable-and-universal-design>

ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY

This recommendation is consistent with Berkeley's environmental sustainability goals. Consideration of inclusivity and the needs of Berkeley residents over their lifespan is more sustainable than later implementing modifications of existing structures.

CONTACT PERSON

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ATTACHMENTS

1. Incorporating Principles of Universal Design, Commission on Disability Information report, September 20, 2016.