



COMMISSION ON PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES
MINUTES FOR REGULAR MEETING
March 12, 2025, CITY HALL COUNCIL CHAMBERS

The regular meeting of the Commission on Persons with Disabilities was called to order at 6:35 PM.

1. ROLL CALL

Present: Chair Mullings, Commissioner Schmitz, Commissioner Bonsmith, Commissioner Beehler, Commissioner Hall

Absent: Commissioner Roloff

Staff: Secretary Sarah Henry

2. NON-AGENDA PUBLIC COMMENT

- Speaker Lilian Jewell, incoming Commission Secretary and ADA Coordinator, City of Alameda provides introductory remarks and background information

3. REGULAR AGENDA ITEMS (labeled as on Meeting Agenda)

4-A Study Session - Zoning Ordinance Amendment - Universal Design Ordinance Updates

- Presented by Tristan Suire, Planner II, City of Alameda
- Universal Residential Design Ordinance in Alameda to ensure accessibility, adaptability, and visitability of all new housing development
 - Purpose of Revisions: exemptions added to streamline permitting process; decision-making authority revised
 - Shifted decision-making authority about “undue financial hardship” from Planning Board to Building Official; also limits waiver determinations to narrower context as opposed to multiple aspects of Universal Design
- Secretary Henry asked if this item would be brought back to this Commission for approval after review by other bodies; Speaker Suire said that approval from this Commission is not required, but that he would try to bring it back a second time.
- Clarifying Questions
 - Chair Mullings asked about criteria for financial hardship; Speaker Suire offered that past determinations were somewhat arbitrary and so the new designation will adhere to building codes which provide a better guideline
 - Chair Mullings asked how accessible housing is being incentivized; concern with phrasing of permit “shall be granted”

- Speaker Suire said that current exemptions allow for broad waivers to Universal Design, while this Amendment would narrow the exemption
- Commissioner Hall stated that accessible housing is important and is glad to see the Building Department working on the ordinances
- Commissioner Beehler asked about differences within Exemption Matrix; clarification on 30-18.5.b (waivers)
 - Speaker Suire will change Commission name within the code and confirmed that this Commission is part of the waiver review process
- Commissioner Bonsmith asked about design threshold of ground level being less than 150 square feet and waiver timeline
- Chair Mullings asked about percentage of Alameda housing that is visitable and accessible; noted that impact of decisions is generational
- Secretary Henry mentioned that past waiver reviews included shifting of one category (e.g. visitability) to offset another (e.g. accessibility)

4-B Approve the City of Alameda Transportation Program Plan for Older Adults and People with Disabilities for Fiscal Year 2025/2026

- Presented by Lisa Foster, Transportation Planning Manager, City of Alameda and Liz Escobar, Paratransit Coordinator, City of Alameda
- City of Alameda Paratransit Program Plan
 - Program Overview: Free AC Transit bus pass program, Alameda Independent Mobility (AIM), outreach, BayPass for Alameda Point Collaborative
 - Free Bus Pass Program ridership continues to increase; March '24, 18,000 rides; popular program with high customer satisfaction
 - AIM: expanded eligibility to anyone over 70 years old, no longer requiring East Bay Paratransit enrollment; 171 participants, Dec '24, 138 rides
 - Further Evaluation needed for vehicle accessibility, program costs
 - Staff recommendation is for approval of Free AC Transit Bus Pass to permanent program, AIM Pilot extended one year, and continue regular services
- Clarifying Questions
 - Commissioner Beehler asked about customer feedback surveys; number of people who are enrolled in Free Bus Pass Program but have not yet taken advantage of the program
 - Coordinator Escobar said she is reviewing a report from AC Transit
 - Chair Mullings asked about difference between AIM and East Bay Paratransit
 - Commissioner Hall asked about survey frequency
 - Commissioner Schmitz stated that AIM being on-demand is a great feature because East Bay Paratransit requires advance planning, but that cost is high considering AIM concern of vehicle accessibility
 - Commissioner Bonsmith asked about AIM cancellation rate
 - Chair Mullings stated that “gamble” of AIM is accessible vehicles being available and if other options are being discussed
 - Coordinator Escobar said she is aware of cities that are managing their own programs of on-demand vehicles

- Commissioner Schmitz asked if East Bay Paratransit could be improved; Coordinator Escobar reiterated that as a separate agency, there is little enforcement possible
- Roll Call Vote to Approve: unanimous (5)

4-C Review Design Concept for Willie Stargell Complete Street Project

- Presented by Susie Hufstader, Senior Transportation Coordinator, City of Alameda
- Feedback from this Commission will be included in Staff Report and updates for Council
- Project Location: Willie Stargell Ave from Main St to Mariner Square Loop
- Goals: to improve safety, to slow speeds, to add roundabout and accessible bus stops
- Commissioner Questions and Comments
 - Commissioner Hall remarked on benefit of roundabouts, additional bus stops, and speed control into Alameda West End
 - Chair Mullings asked about bus stops design and locations
 - Coordinator Hufstader stated that large land strip on the roadside allows for ample accessible planning at the bus stops
 - Commissioner Beehler asked about pedestrians crossing the bike lane at one bus stop
 - Coordinator Hufstader stated there will be tactile features and landscape dividers so that bicycle lane crossing is minimized
 - AC Transit Design Guidelines are being approved for standardization
 - Commissioner Beehler asked about engagement with visually-impaired community
 - Commissioner Bonsmith asked about quick-build (short-term) design
- Coordinator Hufstader asked for further insight on specific pedestrian needs and pathways in the area, impact to visually-impaired community

4. COMMISSION COMMUNICATIONS

- Commissioner Hall asked about changing Commission Communications to top of the Agenda; confirmed this Commission will be in July 4th Parade; seasonal warming shelter to be closed at end of March and third shower to be added to Christ Church for outreach to unhoused individuals
- Commissioner Beehler asked for next Agenda to include 2024 SeeClickFix data

5. STAFF COMMUNICATIONS

- Oakland-Alameda Access Project to begin August 2025; impact to tubes and traffic flow
- Alameda Police Department Beat Meetings to be good option for Commissioners to attend
- Central Ave Project construction in progress
- 35th ADA Anniversary in July

Meeting adjourned at 8:40 PM.