



City of Oakland

Mayor's Commission on Persons with Disabilities (MCPD)
Monday, August 17, 2026 5:30 p.m.-7:30 p.m.
Hearing Room 2, First Floor
One Frank H. Ogawa Plaza (City Hall), Oakland, CA 94612

Minutes

Commissioners: Anwar Baroudi (Chair), Jia Wilson (Co-Vice Chair), Fatimah Aure (Co-Vice Chair), Benjamin Bartu, James Carter, Nadia Morales-Saleh, Cynthia Gutierrez, Emily Habansky, Brian Hollander, Keana Giles

Commission staff: Anh Nguyen-ADA Programs Division Manager, Mark Romoser-ADA Programs Division Program Analyst I

Presenters: Jillian MacLeod, Erin Neff, Cory Mann, Michelle Matranga, Car-lette Garrett, Ana Bagtas

Other attendees: Sheela Gunn, Raquel Santiago, Meisha McGlothen, Kelly Cha

Attendees on Zoom: Assata Olugbala

Mark Romoser begins the meeting with a reminder of rules for in-person meetings:

- No food or open drink allowed in Hearing Room 2 to maintain a clean and professional environment.
- Drinks must be in a closed container to prevent any spills or accidents.
- When commissioners speak- please press the top red button that says "mic" and when you are finished, please press the button again.
- To ensure clarity and transparency, when commissioners speak, please state your name before speaking.
- When a member of the audience is speaking or commenting- please first state your name and any affiliations you may have.
- Restrooms are located outside Hearing Room 2, near the elevators.

Chair Baroudi called the meeting to order at 5:32.

Roll Call

- At roll call, quorum was established with eight of ten commissioners present.

Exhibit A

Commissioners	Present (x)
Anwar Baroudi (Chair)	X
Jia Wilson (Co-Vice Chair)	X (via Zoom)*
Fatimah Aure (Co-Vice Chair)	X (late)
Benjamin Bartu	Absent (excused)
James Carter	X
Nadia Morales-Saleh	X
Cynthia Gutierrez	X
Emily Habansky	X
Brian Hollander	X
Keana Giles	X

*Just Cause rule was used

Open Forum:

- Meisha McGlothen read a proclamation from Council President Kevin Jenkins honoring Disability Awareness Day and the 36th anniversary of the ADA. She then presented Anh Nguyen with a copy of the proclamation.
- Sheela Gunn mentioned that there would be a county access and functional needs committee meeting on the 21st. The topic will be their work with the county board of supervisors. The following week, there will be a meeting with VOAD (volunteer organizations active in disaster), also concerning its work with the board of supervisors. The hope is that the board of supervisors will come to understand what it takes to work with people with disabilities.

Approval Of Minutes

- The July minutes were approved 8-0. Motion by Comm. Carter, seconded by Comm. Gutierrez.

Creation of Ad Hoc Bylaws Committee

- Chair Baroudi explained the need for an *ad hoc* bylaws committee and asked for comment from commissioners. Comm. Gutierrez mentioned that the bylaws had not been revised since 2022, and that this would be a good time to do so. She also called for input from people not on the committee. Chair Baroudi added that interested commissioners should reach out to him.

Exhibit A

- Comm. Carter moved to approve the formation of the committee. Comm. Hollander seconded. Motion approved 8-0.

Recommendation to City Council to Support Connect Bay Area

- Chair Baroudi mentioned that Connect Bay Area had presented to MCPD last month. He briefly explained the initiative. He then noted that the Public Ethics Commission said that MCPD cannot endorse a ballot initiative, but that it can recommend that City Council do so. He asked for commissioner comments. Comm. Hollander noted that the sales tax that would fund the initiative would fall most heavily on those with low income, but that he supported the initiative. Chair Baroudi pointed out that the benefits of the initiative also go largely to low-income people, and added that he would include such wording in his letter to council.
- Comm. Aure arrived at 5:44.
- Sheela Gunn noted that they had been fighting for this measure since April, and that organizers understand that they would take a hit over the sales tax. They added that we need all forms of transit made available to everyone.
- Assata Olugbala recommended that MCPD look at a fiscal impact statement before making a final decision on the recommendation. She added that she preferred the sales tax to a parcel tax, which burdens homeowners, and that she hadn't seen results from the transaction and use tax. She called for full accountability on the part of the organizers.
- Comm. Hollander moved to approve the recommendation. Comm. Giles seconded. Motion passed 9-0.

Commissioner's Announcements

- Comm. Hollander mentioned that he and Co-Vice Chair Wilson have continued work on this year's survey, which is ready for review by the commission and should be ready to release to the public in September. Comm. Wilson added that commissioner comments were due by August 28.
- Chair Baroudi mentioned that he, Comm. Habansky, and Comm. Gutierrez met recently to discuss the bylaws, and have first-draft recommendations to discuss at the ad hoc committee meeting.
- Comm. Gutierrez mentioned that she and Co-Vice Chair Wilson have been working for a couple of months on assessing what community-based resources are available to PWDs in Oakland and Alameda County, and sharing the results with the commission. She added that she was disappointed in the lack of resources in Oakland proper.

Exhibit A

Disability Rights Education and Defense Fund

- Jillian MacLeod and Erin Neff gave their presentation.
- Co-Vice Chair Aure asked how DREDF differed from Disability Rights California. Ms. Neff replied that DRC is a qualified legal service center, not a support center, so they do a lot of front-line work and individual representation. She added that DRC is larger than DREDF, and works with issues like benefits, and sometimes refers cases to DREDF. Ms. MacLeod added that every state has a protection and advocacy agency like DRC, which advocates for the rights of people with disabilities and has investigative powers that other agencies like DREDF do not.
- Comm. Hollander commented that he had worked for DRC, and asked if DREDF represented students or families in suspension or expulsion cases. Ms. Neff replied that they might if the case was disability-related, but that they don't take every case referred to them. Ms. MacLeod added that DREDF's Parent Training and Information Center might be able to help.
- Comm. Gutierrez thanked the presenters, and noted that Ms. MacLeod is in a reproductive rights group with her. She added that she is on an advisory committee for the Oakland Unified School District, noted that DREDF's Parent Training and Information Center might be able to help many under-resourced parents in Oakland, and offered to collaborate with DREDF.
- Comm. Giles asked if DREDF worked with immigration cases. Ms. MacLeod replied that they had released a toolkit for immigrants with disabilities, but that they probably would not take such a case unless it qualified as impact legislation.
- Co-Vice Chair Wilson asked what DREDF was doing in Oakland rather than at the state or federal level. Ms. Neff replied that most of their work in Oakland is with the unhoused population. She added that it would have been nice if DREDF had been consulted about the new encampment abatement policy, which DREDF opposes as being harmful to people with disabilities, added that Oakland is still required to provide accommodations to unhoused people with disabilities, and encouraged Co-Vice Chair Wilson to advocate for this. Co-Vice Chair Wilson agreed.
- Chair Baroudi noted that he hoped MCPD could serve as a resource for DREDF, and could use DREDF's network for outreach. He then asked whether cases involving unhoused people with disabilities could be referred to DREDF. Ms. Neff replied that they could. Chair Baroudi then asked whether DREDF did most of its work at the state or federal level. Ms. MacLeod replied that they had been focusing more on the federal level in recent years, but has continued its work at the state level and have hired a state lobbyist. Ms. Neff then asked how best to contact MCPD. Chair Baroudi replied that the contact information for ADA Programs staff is publicly available, and that she could go through them.

Exhibit A

- Mx. Gunn noted that they work at the Center for Independent Living, and added that they are frustrated with the lack of accessibility in voting by mail, since all the materials are in print, and that wet signatures are required. They noted that this requires them to vote at vote centers, and that Fred Nisen at DRC has been working on the issue. They then asked which of various agencies like DREDF, DRC, and Disability Rights Advocates does what. Ms. Neff replied that DRA is a national organization that does impact litigation, and added that what sets DREDF apart is its focus on special education, that DRC provides one-to-one services in a number of areas, that they can provide referrals to the correct organization, and that she agreed that vote-by-mail is inaccessible, and that several organizations are working on the issue.

Action Items: Ms. Neff will contact ADA Programs staff to get contact info for commissioners.

Planning for Oakland Sea Level Rise

- Cory Mann and Michelle Matranga gave their presentation.
- Co-Vice Chair Wilson asked if the climate adaptation plan included the unhoused population. Mr. Mann replied that they had not started working on the adaptation strategies yet, and that that would be the time for this discussion.
- Comm. Morales-Saleh asked whether SB 272 funding was one-time or ongoing. Ms. Matranga replied the funding was distributed by project, and that she believes it's a permanent source. Mr. Mann added that some of this is to be determined, that the state is rewarding jurisdictions that complete their plans, and that there are other funding sources like the Coastal Conservancy. Comm. Morales-Saleh then asked when the team was hoping to hear about the grant. Ms. Matranga replied that they hoped to hear about the grant by the end of August, and added that Phase One funding is for staff time only, and that they were partnering with Alameda and with the Port of Oakland, which is doing engagement.
- Comm. Hollander asked how closely they were working with emergency preparedness organizations. Ms. Matranga replied that they had just started the process. Mr. Mann added that the Port of Oakland had its own risk management division, and that the work would be coordinated through the Local Hazard Mitigation Plan and transportation agencies like Caltrans, BART, and AC Transit.
- Comm. Giles offered support for community engagement and simplifying the language for outreach to youth.
- Mx. Gunn suggested they contact Dawn Skaggs, an emergency preparedness expert at the World Institute on Disability.

Mayor's Commission on Aging Transportation Subcommittee

- Car-lette Garrett and Ana Bagtas began their presentation.
- Chair Baroudi asked for a motion to extend the meeting by 15 minutes. Comm. Hollander so moved. Comm. Giles seconded. Motion passed 9-0.
- Ms. Garrett and Ms. Bagtas completed their presentation.
- Comm. Hollander asked about the possibility of a joint task force between MCPD and MCOA, so as not to duplicate efforts. Chair Baroudi replied that he had served as a liaison to MCOA in the past but can no longer make their meetings, and called for another commissioner to serve as such a liaison. Ms. Garrett added that MCOA has three subcommittees, and that they would welcome a liaison from MCPD.
- Ms. Matranga asked if MCOA had a report or recommendations that she could include in the general plan's Land Use and Transportation Element. Ms. Garrett asked for further clarification on what is needed, and promised to get the information to her.
- Mx. Gunn noted that they will soon turn 55, and expressed frustration that people seeking Oakland paratransit aren't also set up with East Bay Paratransit. She added that the Oakland paratransit program is based on print communication, and that TheCIL in Berkeley and CRIL in Hayward are Aging and Disability Resource Centers. Ms. Garrett added that the issue of accessible voting needs to be more widely emphasized.

Action Items: Chair Baroudi will find a commissioner to serve as liaison to MCOA.

Staff Announcements

- Mr. Romoser mentioned that OakDOT is conducting outreach for both the Embarcadero West project and projects in Chinatown.

Meeting adjourned at 7:40.