



**City of Oakland**  
**\*\*\* Special Meeting \*\*\***

Mayor's Commission on Persons with Disabilities (MCPD)  
Monday, February 24, 2025 5:30 p.m.-7:30 p.m.  
Hearing Room 1, First Floor  
One Frank H. Ogawa Plaza (City Hall), Oakland, CA 94612

**Minutes**

**Commissioners:** Anwar Baroudi (Chair), Benjamin Bartu (Vice Chair), Jia Wilson, Fatimah Aure, Linda St. Julian, James Carter, Raven Foote, Brittaney Creswell, Kaitlin Roh

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

**Presenters:** Jasmine Pomar, facilitator

**Other attendees:** Sheela Gunn

**Attendees on Zoom:** Victor Pineda, Ryan Manriquez, Lauren Reed

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

- No food or open drink allowed in Hearing Room 1 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 1, near the elevators.

## ***Exhibit A***

Chair Baroudi called the meeting to order at 5:41.

### **Roll Call**

- At roll call, quorum was established with seven of nine commissioners present.

<b>Commissioners</b>	<b>Present (x)</b>
Anwar Baroudi (Chair)	X
Benjamin Bartu (Co-Vice Chair)	X
Fatimah Aure (Co-Vice Chair)	X
Linda St. Julian	X
Jia Wilson	X
James Carter	X
Raven Foote	X
Brittaney Creswell	Absent (excused)
Kaitlin Roh	Absent (excused)

### **Open Forum:**

- There were no public comments.

### **Approval Of Minutes**

- Comm. Carter moved to approve the December and January minutes. Comm. Wilson seconded. Motion approved 7-0.

### **Commissioner's Announcements**

- There were no commissioner's announcements.

## ***Exhibit A***

### **Strategic Plan 2025**

- Jasmine Pomar gave her presentation.
- Comm. Carter proposed merging service navigation and web accessibility.
- Co-Vice Chair Aure asked if web accessibility referred to the commission's website or to the city website as a whole. Ms. Pomar responded that both are easily achievable. Co-Vice Chair Aure added that she works for The Kelsey housing organization and thus would be willing to work on the housing issue.
- Comm. Carter asked about the scope of transportation advocacy, and whether we should focus on city resources or outside agencies such as AC Transit and BART. Ms. Pomar noted that she had previously suggested a reliability audit of outside agencies. Chair Baroudi noted that MCPD has received presentations from outside agencies in the past, and added that he would be willing to work on transportation advocacy.
- Comm. Wilson noted that the recent survey should inform future decisions and actions.
- Co-Vice Chair Bartu mentioned that he would be interested in working on both housing availability and affordability and city communications and web accessibility. He added that an audit of the city's web accessibility would be easy and cost-effective.
- Comm. Wilson expressed her interest in service navigation, housing accessibility, and web accessibility. She added that we could strengthen community centers and hubs by emphasizing their role in service navigation. Ms. Pomar agreed.
- Comm. Carter mentioned his interest in working on housing affordability and accessibility, and added that he was personally experiencing struggles in that area.
- Comm. Foote selected service navigation, strengthening community centers and hubs, and basic needs support.
- Comm. Wilson proposed setting up subareas under service navigation, such as basic needs support and strengthening community centers and hubs. Ms. Pomar expressed agreement.
- Ms. Pomar asked the group what actions could be taken in the areas of web accessibility and housing availability and accessibility.
- Comm. Carter mentioned that a lot of housing advocacy, such as the elevator ordinance, focused on large landlords rather than smaller ones. He called for engagement with smaller landlords who may not know the law. Comm. St. Julian noted that she is a landlord who is dealing with a problem tenant and that in cases like these, landlords aren't always at fault. Ms. Pomar suggested a future presentation on this topic. Comm. St. Julian asked how tenants would afford rent if programs like Section 8 are cut.

## **Exhibit A**

- Chair Baroudi pointed out that the commission doesn't know enough about tenants' rights and how they affect people with disabilities, and that we need to gather more information about this. He then asked if any claims had been made under the new elevator ordinance, wondered if disabled tenants had access to the information they would need to make those claims, and gave thought to working with tenants' rights groups to disseminate the information. Comm. St. Julian asked when the elevator ordinance took effect.
- Comm. Wilson asked Co-Vice Chair Aure if any government agencies had signed on to The Kelsey's accessibility standards. Co-Vice Chair Aure replied that they get inquiries from people who need housing immediately, even though buildings like theirs take years to complete. Comm. St. Julian added that it is difficult for people to find information about available housing. Ms. Pomar suggested that we evaluate whether the resources we provide are effective.
- Comm. Foote asked what the basic needs support category contained. Ms. Pomar replied that it did not need to be considered as a separate category.
- Chair Baroudi stated that the group seemed to coalesce around a combination of city communication and web accessibility and service navigation as a third or fourth goal, along with housing accessibility and transportation advocacy. Ms. Pomar agreed.
- Chair Baroudi called on the commissioners to bring up a specific action they're interested in.
- Mr. Romoser reminded the commissioners to use their mics when speaking.
- Co-Vice Chair Bartu noted that Oakland has a large budget deficit, and that 70 percent of its expenditures go to labor, raising the prospect of cuts to the city's workforce. He suggested that we consult with city employees about how that might affect accommodations and workplace rights. Ms. Pomar suggested that the unions who represent most city employees could be a resource, and proposed adding making the city an accessible workplace to the city communication and web accessibility goal.
- Comm. Carter suggested calling the combined goal city operations. Ms. Pomar agreed.
- Sheela Gunn apologized for being late due to bus issues. They noted that Lars-Erik Holm had left his job as disaster preparedness coordinator for Eden I&R, that he had had a seat at Oakland's Emergency Operations Center when it was activated, and that he and Ron Halog were co-chairs of Alameda County Volunteer Organizations Active in Disasters (VOAD). They expressed sorrow at this and other losses of institutional memory and knowledge in the field, and stated that we need to preserve resilience. Ms. Pomar added that this underscores the need to strengthen community hubs.
- Comm. Wilson asked if it might be possible to do outreach to grassroots organizers as well as nonprofits and city staff. Ms. Pomar agreed.

## **Exhibit A**

- Comm. Foote asked how MCPD would get speakers on these issues onto its agenda. Mr. Romoser noted that staff maintains a meeting tracker in the form of a Google sheet, and that it has space for requested presenters. Ms. Pomar noted that each month, the following month's agenda is usually full, but there is often space available two or more months out.
- Ms. Pomar showed a slide detailing previous actions the commission had decided to take, and asked how many of them had been completed.
- Chair Baroudi stated that advocating for ADA office funds should continue, that requesting annual reports is low-effort, and that we should invite someone from the city attorney's office.
- Sheela Gunn mentioned that the Bay Area Housing Finance Authority (BAHFA) is involved in creating a universal application for affordable housing. Ms. Pomar suggested exploring this further.
- Comm. Wilson supported continuing the community needs survey, since needs change over time.
- Comm. Aure asked about department inclusion toolkits. Ms. Pomar replied that she was not involved in the creation of that plan. Chair Baroudi noted that the whole commission had turned over since then.
- Co-Vice Chair Bartu agreed with the idea of continuing the community needs survey on an annual basis. He added that requesting information about plans to improve air quality and creating air quality refuges is something that could be done easily, and that the department inclusion toolkits could be included in city communication and web accessibility under the workplace rights component.
- Ms. Pomar asked the group who has capacity to do the things being discussed. She called for one person to lead each goal, serving as a project manager, with a few other people assisting and tasks divided accordingly. She asked whether the discussion should continue item by item or each commissioner in order. Comm. Wilson supported item by item. Chair Baroudi wanted to go around by commissioner.
- Ms. Pomar called on Chair Baroudi. He volunteered to lead transportation advocacy, and expressed willingness to advocate for more funding for ADA compliance and ADA Programs Division as well.
- Ms. Pomar called on Co-Vice Chair Aure. She said she was willing to work on transportation advocacy, housing affordability and accessibility, and workplace rights, and added that she could lead housing affordability and accessibility.
- Co-Vice Chair Bartu chose city operations and workplace rights as well as housing. He stated that he could lead city operations and workplace rights. Ms. Pomar added that she already had him down for the community needs survey.
- Comm. Foote chose service navigation, strengthening community centers and hubs, and basic needs support.

## **Exhibit A**

- Comm. Wilson chose service navigation, workplace rights, and housing affordability and accessibility.
- Comm. St. Julian said that she was too busy caring for sick people to choose an area.
- Comm. Carter chose transportation advocacy, housing affordability and accessibility, and workplace rights.
- Ms. Pomar proposed chopping up areas with many people interested into separate projects. She mentioned transportation as an example. She noted that service navigation had the fewest volunteers. She asked the group if there were specific projects they wished to work on within each of the broad areas.
- Sheela Gunn expressed interest in working on the elevator ordinance, since they deal with evacuation in their job in emergency preparedness. They also expressed interest in transportation, citing the difficulty they had getting to the meeting. They asked about a return to virtual meetings. Vice Chair Bartu noted that a commissioner is resigning, creating a vacancy for them if they want it. Ms. Pomar said that the elevator ordinance would be in the plan somewhere and proposed a transit or mobility study.
- Chair Baroudi mentioned that AC Transit may have data on riders with disabilities. Comm St. Julian added that she rode the bus recently and was impressed by how well AC Transit treated people with disabilities.
- Chair Baroudi proposed a study of paratransit ridership and wondered if there were any gaps in paratransit service within Oakland. He added that AC Transit had released a draft of its supported transit guidelines. Sheela Gunn pointed out that East Bay Paratransit and TheCIL might be sources of data.
- Comm. Wilson proposed integrating major paratransit destinations into the regular transit system.
- Comm. St. Julian worried that programs like Medicaid that serve people with disabilities may get cut. Ms. Pomar suggested presentations from the various agencies about how funding cuts might impact them.
- Ms. Pomar asked the group if there were specific projects or actions within each goal area that people wanted to work on.
- Comm. Foote emphasized the importance of outreach, especially for programs that offer free services, food, etc.
- Comm. Wilson offered to do data crunching and said it might be useful for service navigation and housing affordability and accessibility.
- Comm. St. Julian pointed out that senior centers have lots of information about various programs.
- Comm. Wilson suggested creating heat maps of things like food pantries and free little libraries.
- Sheela Gunn said not to forget the Mayor's Commission on Aging and Senior Services Coalition. Chair Baroudi noted that he regularly checked in with them.

## **Exhibit A**

- Co-Vice Chair Bartu suggested putting together a departmental inclusion toolkit that includes web access and consultation with city unions regarding workplace rights. Comm. Wilson offered to help with workplace rights and suggested an employee satisfaction survey.
- Comm. St. Julian noted that she works with SEIU Local 2015 on housing issues.
- Ms. Pomar asked the group for any final input.
- Chair Baroudi asked if there were any areas without volunteers. Ms. Pomar replied that she couldn't think of any, and would assign people in areas with broad support like housing to individual tasks. She added that she would reach out to the two absent commissioners to find out their interests.
- Co-Vice Chair Aure asked about AC Transit and paratransit. Ms. Pomar replied that outreach to them was already in the plan.
- Comm. Wilson suggested reaching out to youth with disabilities for next year's community survey.
- Co-Vice Chair Aure mentioned that there might be a generational divide in usage of ride share services like Uber and Lyft. Ms. Pomar suggested asking one or both of them to give a presentation.
- Sheela Gunn pointed out that TheCIL has an active youth program and that it would be part of TheCIL's upcoming presentation.
- Chair Baroudi noted that there is a service, GoGo Grandparent, that books rideshares for people.
- Mr. Romoser mentioned that the Oakland Youth Commission has a member with a disability.
- Ms. Pomar noted that the California Public Utilities Commission has some regulatory power over rideshare companies, and so might be a source of information.
- Sheela Gunn mentioned that Lyft has an accessibility person who they would try to contact. They added that the frequent use of air fresheners in rideshare vehicles presents an accessibility issue.
- Ms. Pomar concluded her presentation.
- Vice-Chair Aure asked about the timeline for completing this work. Ms. Pomar replied that the plan covers calendar year 2025.

## **Staff Announcements**

- Mr. Romoser announced that Commissioner Cloyd is resigning, and mentioned a mayoral candidates' forum, upcoming Oakland budget workshops, and an Easy Does It barbecue in June.

Comm. Foote made a motion to adjourn. Comm. Wilson seconded. Meeting adjourned at 7:15.