



Commission on Disability

ACTION CALENDAR

October 20, 2020

*(Continued from October 13, 2020)*

To: Honorable Mayor and Members of the City Council

From: Commission on Disability

Submitted by: Alex Ghenis, Chairperson, Commission on Disability

Subject: Proposed Navigable Cities Framework for Ensuring Access and Freedom-of-Movement for People with Disabilities in Berkeley

RECOMMENDATION

Receive a presentation on the Navigable Cities Framework for Ensuring Access and Freedom-of-Movement for People with Disabilities in Berkeley.

CURRENT SITUATION AND ITS EFFECTS

The Commission on Disability recently agreed upon a series of priorities for 2019 and early 2020. One of these priorities is a proposed “Navigable Cities” framework to guide investments, regulations, and other actions in the City of Berkeley. An initial Navigable Cities framework was approved by the Commission in its meeting on April 3, 2019. The framework features three (3) Principles of Navigable Cities and four (4) initiatives that the Commission on Disability will pursue throughout 2020. The full Navigable Cities outline is attached to this item.

The Commission on Disability requests that the City Council review and support the Navigable City framework, principals and initiatives. The Commission will provide updates to the City Council on progress moving forward, including any information discovered by the Commission, proposed action items for the City Council, etc. (Item approved 5/1/2019 to be submitted with photos. Motion: Singer, Second: Ramirez, Walsh: Aye, Smith: Aye, Ghenis: Aye, Weiss: Aye, Leeder: LOA, Abstain: 0. Photos approved 11/6/2019: Motion: Leeder, Second: Singer, Smith: Aye, Walsh: Aye, Ghenis: Aye, Ramirez: Aye, Absent: 0 Abstain: 0)

The full principles and initiatives of Navigable Cities are featured in the attached document. They are summarized here:

## Principles:

1. All people residing in and/or visiting the City of Berkeley have the right to efficient, convenient and barrier-free movement.

2. People with disabilities (PWDs) often have distinct transportation-related needs and may be less able to navigate around items obstructing pathways.
3. Changes to commercial activities and government policies (whether in Berkeley, the Bay Area, the State of California, or the United States as a whole) can have notable impacts on navigability.

Initiatives:

1. Support smooth, barrier-free pathways frequently used by PWDs.
2. Ensure that new transportation services provide appropriate access to PWDs and do not negatively impact navigability.
3. Provide appropriate input on plans to adjust the layout of neighborhoods, urban centers, streets, pathways, etc.
4. Address the availability and accessibility of appropriate parking options, especially in city-owned and/or city-maintained parking lots/garages.

Proposed “navigable cities” framework for ensuring access and freedom-of-movement for people with disabilities in Berkeley is a Strategic Plan Priority Project, advancing our goal to champion and demonstrate social and racial equity.

The City of Berkeley contains hundreds of miles of streets, sidewalks and other public spaces (e.g. outdoor plazas and parks). Many streets, sidewalks, bicycle pathways and other public spaces do not provide smooth navigation for people with disabilities (PWDs), who collectively represent around 15% of the City’s residents and visitors. In addition, Berkeley features many transportation options including pedestrian and bicycle pathways, BART, buses, paratransit, nonprofit transportation services, transportation network companies (TNCs, e.g. Uber & Lyft), bike-sharing services, etc.; however, not all of these provide full access to people with disabilities, endangering independence and potentially violating civil rights. Examples of inaccessibility include:

- Not all sidewalks feature “curb cuts” at intersections, meaning that individuals using wheelchairs or scooters must essentially take detours – either a full block, or to a nearby driveway. Exiting through driveways may present dangers, such as a lack of visibility to oncoming cars.
- Many sidewalks are excessively uneven, for example as tree roots push soils upward and displace sections of sidewalk. The exact nature of sidewalk damage varies across the City – some feature clear vertical breaks between sidewalk segments, while some sidewalks have “bumps” and cracks.
- Construction of new buildings and maintenance to pathways blocks sidewalks, forcing individuals to use designated temporary pathways or cross streets entirely.

Certain pathways do not feature appropriate accessibility – such as ramps from sidewalks to street-level pathways – or are otherwise difficult to navigate.

- “Shared mobility” services – e.g. ride-sharing and shared bicycles (Ford Go-Bike, etc.) – do not always feature fully-accessible products and services. For example, TNCs have only recently introduced wheelchair-accessible vehicles, which still feature delays compared to TNCs’ regular time frames. Bike-sharing services do not provide alternative, accessible options for individuals with limited balance who could otherwise ride tricycles. Proposed motorized scooters likewise do not provide accessible options, and scooter-riders on sidewalks present dangers to many PWDs.
- Items which are present in the middle of sidewalks and other public spaces may pose barriers to some PWDs; these items include the large sign downtown announcing BART and bus schedules, as well as informational kiosks being explored by City Council and staff. Barriers are of particular concern to individuals who are blind or low-vision and have become familiar with Berkeley’s pathways without obstacles.

These items and more represent ongoing barriers and progressing problems for PWDs in Berkeley. The Commission on Disability is concerned by a lack of accessibility, in general and especially considering Berkeley’s identity as the home of the modern disability rights movement.

#### BACKGROUND

None noted, aside from the information above.

#### ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY

The Commission on Disability believes that pursuing a Navigable Cities framework will present opportunities to improve environmental sustainability. For example, more easily navigable pedestrian pathways and accessible alternatives to shared bicycles will enable PWDs to reduce reliance on personally-operated vehicles and related carbon emissions. The Commission will consider sustainability in its Navigable Cities initiatives.

#### POSSIBLE FUTURE ACTION

Unknown.

#### FISCAL IMPACTS OF POSSIBLE FUTURE ACTION

Unknown.

#### CONTACT PERSON

Dominika Bednarska, Disability Services Specialist  
(510) 981-6418

Attachments:

1: Attachments: Pictures and image descriptions of sidewalk issues.

## 2: Presentation

**From:** Shira Leeder [mailto:shira@leeder.com]

**Sent:** Tuesday, September 24, 2019 2:34 AM

**To:** Helen Walsh <branach@comcast.net>; Bednarska, Dominika <DBednarska@cityofberkeley.info>; Alex Ghenis <alex.ghenis@gmail.com>

**Subject:** Re: Shira's unsafe sidewalk experience Photos and notes

Photo 1: Rose and Henry streets pass the Safeway.

Side uneven tree roots causing cracks and uneven pavement making it unsafe for wheelchair users especially those with mobility equipments and seniors, it's like a roller coaster going down a deep grade drop.

Photo 2: 2 blocks away from Rose and Henry around apt 137 uneven side walk by tree. Side walk goes up then angles down very unsafe for wheelchair uses and those with mobility devices.

Photo 3: Up from last photo uneven sidewalk pavement unsafe for wheelchair and those with mobility devices and baby strollers.

Photo 4: by bus stop Berryman street uneven pavement unsafe for wheelchair, mobility devices and baby strollers to pass. The sidewalk needs to be repaved the entire block because the sidewalk is bumpy and dangerous and too narrow. I have to go in the streets where vehicles are and it is risky because of taking chances of being hit and killed.

Photo 5: Sutter and Amador streets by bus stop uneven pavement bump in front of curb cut making it unsafe to pass. I have to use bike lane against traffic or with traffic depending on where I am going especially going home when going toward Solano Avenue. That whole two or three blocks of that since from Shattuck and Rose going toward Sutter street needs to be repaved and put several stop signs or pedestrians safely signals.

Photo 6: No curb cut, drive way cracked sidewalk and street, gravel ditch my wheelchair has to go up or down. This is by the bus stop. The sidewalks are too narrow and at a down incline.

Photo 7: Using bike lane in opposite direction no other cross walks or ways to get to sidewalk. I have to ride in the streets / bike lanes if the sidewalks are too bumpy and hazardous and if there are tree roots issues or construction zones,

Photo 8: No curb cut from bike lane using only cross walk to cross street, no stop sign cars go fast and not stop especially at night time with no street lights and signal to walk in the crosswalk without risking of being hit and killed by vehicles passing by.

On Monday, September 23, 2019, 3:25:08 PM PDT, Helen Walsh <[branach@comcast.net](mailto:branach@comcast.net)> wrote:

Photo 1: Rose and Henry

side uneven tree roots causing cracks and uneven pavement making it unsafe for wheelchair users.

Photo 2: 2 blocks away from Rose and Henry around apt 137 uneven side walk by tree. Side walk goes up then angles down very unsafe for wheelchair uses.

Photo 3: Up from last photo uneven sidewalk pavement unsafe for wheelchair.

Photo 4: by bus stop Berryman street uneven pavement unsafe for wheelchair to pass.

Photo 5: Sutter street by bus stop uneven pavement bump in front of curb cut making it unsafe to pass. I have to use bike lane against traffic or with traffic depending on where I am going.

Photo 6: No curb cut, drive way cracked sidewalk and street, gravel ditch my wheelchair has to go up or down. This is by bus stop.

Photo 7: using bike lane in opposite direction no other cross walks or ways to get to sidewalk.

Photo 8: no curb cut from bike lane using only cross walk to cross street. no stop sign cars go fast.

iSent from the Event Horizon





























**From:** MARTHA SINGER [mailto:marthasinger@me.com]  
**Sent:** Wednesday, November 06, 2019 3:06 PM  
**To:** Bednarska, Dominika <DBednarska@cityofberkeley.info>  
**Subject:** sidewalk obstacles domingo ave



MARTHA SINGER MD  
[marthasinger@mac.com](mailto:marthasinger@mac.com)

# NAVIGABLE CITIES FRAMEWORK

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ALEX GHENIS

CHAIRMAN

COMMISSION ON DISABILITY

# OVERVIEW

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- Goals & Framework
- Principles
- Initiatives
- Current situation
- Other factors
- Q&A

# GOALS & FRAMEWORK

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- Overarching work: create a fully navigable, inclusive city for people with disabilities
- Principles: 3 overarching principles on equity & inclusion
- Initiatives: 4 focus areas for ongoing & upcoming efforts
- COD will continue addressing initiatives; appreciate partnership & support

# PRINCIPLES

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1. All people residing in and/or visiting the City of Berkeley have the right to efficient, convenient and barrier-free movement.
2. People with disabilities (PWDs) often have distinct transportation-related needs and may be less able to navigate around items obstructing pathways.
3. Changes to commercial activities and government policies (whether in Berkeley, the Bay Area, the State of California, or the United States as a whole) can have notable impacts on navigability.

# INITIATIVES

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1. Support smooth, barrier-free pathways frequently used by PWDs.
2. Ensure that new transportation services provide appropriate access to PWDs and do not negatively impact and navigability.
3. Provide appropriate input on plans to adjusted the layout of neighborhoods, urban centers, streets, pathways, etc.
4. Address the availability and accessibility of appropriate parking options, especially in city-owned and/or city-maintained parking lots/garages.



# EXAMPLES OF INACCESSIBILITY

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## Curb Cuts

- Not enough curb cuts
- Need more detectable warnings
- Problems:
  - Extra travel distance (detours)
  - Unsafe crossings
  - Tripping hazard

## Sidewalks

- Sudden or gradual changes in elevation
- Often from tree roots
- Long back-log of 50/50 requests

## Construction Barriers

- Entirely blocked sidewalks
- Occasional detours w/ difficult access

## Shared Mobility

- Transportation Network Companies (TNCs): CPUC purview
- No accessible alternatives for bikes & scooters

## Sidewalk Obstructions

- Poorly-placed signs & items (e.g. trash bins) in PROW.
- Creates issues for: physical disabilities with obstruction and blind/low vision safety issues

# SOLUTIONS

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## Curb Cuts

- ADA Transition Plan (Survey in Process)
- Improvements as part of Construction Projects

## Sidewalks

- ADA Transition Plan (Survey in Process)
- Improvements as part of Construction Projects
- 50/50 Program

## Construction Barriers

- Resources for Increased Enforcement with Contractors
- Adoption of the Caltrans Temporary Pedestrian Access Routes Handbook (2020) for work zones

## Shared Mobility

- Transportation Network Companies (TNCs): CPUC purview
- Transportation and Disability Services are discussing providing adapted scooters and bicycles.
- Disability Services and Transportation are discussing adding adaptive driving equipment and wheelchair vans to City Car Share Fleet.

## Sidewalk Obstructions

- City Ordinance reinforcing the 3 ft clear rule in State and Federal law.
- Resources for enforcement, tree removal etc.



