



Memorandum

DATE: October 15, 2026

TO: Honorable Members of the Berkeley Rent Stabilization Board

FROM: Outreach and Accessibility Committee

By: Abby Vieira

SUBJECT: Recommendation to Adopt Resolution 26-34: *Ensuring Equitable, Accessible, and Inclusive Participation in Berkeley Rent Board Meetings*

Recommendation

The Outreach and Accessibility Committee recommends that the Board adopt the attached Resolution 26-34: Ensuring Equitable, Accessible, and Inclusive Participation in Berkeley Rent Board Meetings.

Background and Need for Rent Board Action

On September 30, 2026, the Outreach and Accessibility Committee discussed the staff analysis of the impact of implementing the Resolution and voted to recommend its adoption by the full board.

The full Board first considered the Resolution on April 16, 2026, when it was referred back to the Outreach and Accessibility Committee for further discussion about the implications of implementing the Resolution before returning to the full board for a vote. During the June 24, 2026, Outreach and Accessibility Meeting, staff was asked to perform an analysis that would examine the financial, operational and policy implications of the resolution. The staff analysis and staff revised resolution are both attached to this memo.

II. Existing Framework for Access and Inclusion

Accessibility and Disability Compliance

The Rent Board operates in accordance with the requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and all City of Berkeley policies that implement its requirements. Recent efforts include compliance with WCAG mandates for web content accessibility as well as accessibility considerations embedded in the core functionality of a new Rent Registry and Housing Services Data System. Additionally, in the past four years, no

complaints have been filed, and no findings of accessibility barriers have been made related to Rent Board ADA compliance.

Language Access Services

The Rent Board provides language access, including ASL, through City Language Line services, translated materials including the Rent Control Guide in Spanish, website translation tools, public notices of language access availability, and bilingual staff who provide real-time assistance.

Technology and Equitable Access

The Rent Board's investment in a modernized Rent Registry and Housing Services Data System to replace the legacy system represents its commitment to accessibility, usability, and equitable access to the agency's services, data, and documents.

III. Operational and Resource Considerations

Rent Board staff conducted a preliminary evaluation of the cost, staff time, and anticipated policy implications of each of the nine recommendations included in the June 24 memorandum from the O&A Committee. Below is each recommendation, followed by staff's analysis of the policy considerations, estimated implementation time, estimated cost, and staff's recommendation on whether to adopt it.

1. **Advance notice and clarity:** Accommodation deadline (48 hours), and accessible parking entry instructions broadly across agenda notices, website, and meeting reminders.
 - **Policy considerations:** There is no specific time frame required by ADA, and the standard practice used by the Commission on Disability and other COB departments is 72 hours.
 - **Estimated staff time:** 4hrs. This is a two-step process: confirming 48 hours' notice for accommodation requests and creating a list of accessible parking options with entry instructions for both locations where Board and Committee meetings are held.
 - **Estimated cost:** \$500. This cost is an estimate that includes staff time to research parking options and to develop standard language for agenda notices, meeting reminders, and the website.
 - **Staff recommendation:** RSB staff recommend using consistent practices with other COB departments and request 72 hours' notice for accommodations in the entry instructions for agenda notices, the website, and meeting reminders.
2. **Transit guidance:** Provide consolidated transit directions (BART station exits, nearest bus/rail stops, elevator locations) on meeting notices.

- **Policy considerations:** None identified.
 - **Estimated staff time:** 2hrs. One-time staff investment to research transit directions and then develop standard language for instructions.
 - **Estimated cost:** \$250. This cost is an estimate that includes staff time to conduct research, and development standard language for notices.
 - **Staff recommendation:** RSB staff recommend the approval of a requirement to consolidate transit directions on meeting notices.
3. **Physical access:** Ensure meeting locations, entryways, seating, restrooms, and parking meet ADA standards.
- **Policy considerations:** These requirements are already codified into existing RSB and City of Berkeley accessibility policies, as required by ADA.
 - **Estimated staff time:** None identified.
 - **Estimated cost:** None identified.
 - **Staff recommendation:** RSB staff do not recommend adopting this requirement since the objective is already being met by COB and RSB policies, as required by ADA.
4. **Remote access:** Notice the high-quality, reliable virtual participation options (live streaming, two-way remote participation, and archived recordings). Ensure live-stream captions and ASL interpretation on request.
- **Policy considerations:** RSB currently provides virtual participation options and is required to provide notice in accordance with Brown Act requirements. Captions and ASL interpretation are covered under the adopted Language Access Policy.
 - **Estimated staff time:** Staff time to provide this accessibility request is already planned for and incorporated into workflow for FY 26-27.
 - **Estimated cost:** Annual Zoom subscription, including live-stream captioning capabilities, is projected to be \$3,240, and sufficient budget is already appropriated for FY 26-27.
 - **Staff recommendation:** RSB staff do not recommend adopting this requirement since the objectives are already being met by current policy. The Brown Act mandates the notice requirement, and RSB's adopted Language Access Policy includes the captions and ASL interpretation requirements.
5. **Communication access:** Notice the offer of real-time captioning, sign language interpretation, large-print and braille documents, and plain language materials.

- **Policy considerations:** The notice of real-time captioning, sign language, and large print are currently addressed through RSB's Language Access Policy and City of Berkeley accessibility policies. Additionally, COB policies require that documents be translated into braille when requested and, when possible, materials are developed for a 6th grade reading level to satisfy the best practice of writing in plain language. No other policy conflicts have been identified.
 - **Estimated staff time:** 8 hrs. This cost is an estimate that includes a one- time staff investment to develop standard language for the notice, review COB's braille translation contract with Lighthouse for the Blind, and to draft and enter into a vendor contract for braille translation.
 - **Estimated cost:** \$1,000. This cost is an estimate that includes staff time to draft a contract with Lighthouse for the Blind, braille translation with an estimated cost of \$45/page, time to coordinate the translation of requested documents into braille, time to ensure materials are offered in plain language, and to develop language for the notice.
 - **Staff recommendation:** RSB staff recommend the approval of the requirement to offer documents in plain language and braille when requested, consistent with other COB agencies. Real-time captioning, sign language interpretation and large print are all services that are already required by RSB's adopted Language Access Policy.
6. **Clear signage & wayfinding:** Post accessible route and parking instructions at site entrances and on the meeting webpage; include downloadable accessible map with agenda.
- **Policy Considerations:** None identified.
 - **Estimated staff time:** 4 hrs. One time staff investment to research accessible mapping options and develop standard language for parking instructions. Possible ongoing staff time if routes change overtime.
 - **Estimated cost:** \$500. This cost is an estimate to cover staff time to research accessible mapping, develop standard language for instructions, and to allow for ongoing modifications, if necessary.
 - **Staff Recommendation:** RSB staff recommend the approval of a requirement to post accessible route and parking instructions at site entrances where meetings are held, and on meeting webpages.
7. **Language Access:** Provide notice and timely interpretation in commonly used community languages for meetings and, upon request, translated meeting materials.

- **Policy Considerations:** Language access standards are currently included in RSB's adopted Language Access Policy.
 - **Estimated staff time:** No additional staff time required. Ongoing staff time has already been implemented into workflow for FY 26-27.
 - **Estimated cost:** \$30,000 has been budgeted for FY 26-27; future costs TBD.
 - **Staff Recommendation:** RSB staff do not recommend adopting this requirement since the objective is already being met by RSB's Language Access Policy.
8. **Procedural access:** Make public comment, agenda access, and meeting notices accessible and explainable in multiple formats and channels including digital.
- **Policy Considerations:** Notices are currently required by COB policy to be posted on-site and online. RSB staff are working on development of an online educational video resource library intended to make information on RSB procedures and processes more accessible to the general public.
 - **Estimated staff time:** None identified.
 - **Estimated cost:** None identified.
 - **Staff Recommendation:** RSB staff recommend the approval of a requirement to make public comment, agenda access, and meeting notices accessible and explainable in multiple formats and channels, including digital.
9. **Sensory accommodations:** Request that attendees refrain from wearing perfumes or scented products to accommodate those with environmental illnesses or multiple chemical sensitivities.
- **Policy Considerations:** Already codified in existing COB policies.
 - **Estimated staff time:** None identified. Ongoing staff time has already been implemented into workflow for FY 26-27.
 - **Estimated cost:** None identified.
 - **Staff Recommendation:** RSB staff recommend the approval of a request that attendees of meetings refrain from wearing perfumes or scented products to accommodate those with environmental illnesses or multiple chemical sensitivities to align with other COB agencies.

IV. Summary of Staff Recommendations

Based on analysis of the requested policy provisions for feasibility, cost, and compatibility with existing City of Berkeley and Rent Board policy, RSB staff recommend the following policy provisions for approval by the Outreach & Accessibility Committee.

- Requiring consolidated transit directions on meeting notices and posting of accessible route and parking instructions at site entrances and on webpages. This practice will increase the ease of planning for and attending in-person meetings.
- The right to request documents in braille or plain language. These provisions complement already existing COB and RSB policies that provide real-time captioning, sign language interpretation, and access to large print materials.
- Requiring standard language requesting attendees of in-person meetings to refrain from wearing perfumes or scented products. This would strengthen our already existing accessibility practices to encourage greater in-person participation.

The following policies were identified as having objectives that are already being met by existing RSB, or COB policy or by requirements of the ADA or Brown Act.

- Changing our policy regarding advance notice for accommodation requests and clarity of accessibility routes from 72 to 48 hours. Maintaining our current policy allows our office time to adequately comply with all requests, and preserves consistent standards with other City of Berkeley departments and the Commission on Disability.
- Recommendations that are already codified into existing Rent Stabilization Board policies, such as ensuring ADA standards are met in all meeting locations, the provision of interpretation and translation, and virtual participation options, like live-stream captions, are not suggested by staff for further adoption, as they are already embedded in our accessibility framework.

V. Conclusion

The actions and commitments outlined in the Resolution largely align with existing Rent Board practices and ongoing initiatives. Specifically, accessibility commitments are being addressed through compliance with federal ADA requirements, City of Berkeley policies, the Rent Board's adopted Language Access Policy, and continued efforts to achieve WCAG compliance, including accessibility considerations embedded in the approved RFP for a new core data system. Current language access service needs are met through City Language Line services, some translated public-facing materials, website translation tools, and bilingual staff support, with continued refinement through clearer public notice and consistent application across programs.

Recommendations for technology investment are being advanced through the Board-approved data system replacement process, intended to improve usability, accessibility, and equitable access to services. Training and awareness objectives are supported through existing City-provided ADA, reasonable accommodation, and customer service training available to staff, with any future formalization or expansion of training

requirements to be evaluated in coordination with Citywide policies and resource availability.

Where the Resolution calls for new or expanded actions, such as providing accessible transit routes and parking instructions, translating documents into braille, translating transit instructions into Chinese, and translating materials into plain language, this policy enhancement will require one-time and ongoing investments of staff time and resources.

In this way, adoption of the RSB staff-recommended objectives of the Resolution reaffirms the Rent Board's direction and values while ensuring that implementation of its specific actions remains sustainable, coordinated, and grounded in existing operational frameworks.

The full staff analysis and staff revised Resolution are both attached to this memo.

Financial Impact

Estimated one-time costs of \$2,250 including materials and staff time.

Contact Person

Abby Vieira, Public Information Unit Manager, avieira@berkeleyca.gov

Attachments

1. Resolution 26-34: Ensuring Equitable, Accessible, and Inclusive Participation in Rent Board Meetings
2. Staff Analysis for Outreach and Accessibility Committee of Resolution Ensuring Equitable, Accessible, and Inclusive Participation in Berkeley Rent Board Meetings

RESOLUTION 26-__

ENSURING EQUITABLE, ACCESSIBLE, AND INCLUSIVE PARTICIPATION IN RENT BOARD MEETINGS

BE IT RESOLVED by the Rent Stabilization Board of the City of Berkeley ("Board") as follows:

WHEREAS, the Board is an independently governed, fee-funded public agency responsible for administering the City's rent stabilization and housing programs; and

WHEREAS, the Board is committed to providing equitable and meaningful access to its meetings, services, information, and resources for tenants, landlords, commissioners, persons with disabilities, individuals with limited English proficiency, and other members of the Berkeley community; and

WHEREAS, the Board currently provides accessibility measures through compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act, City of Berkeley accessibility policies, the Board's adopted Language Access Policy, virtual participation and captioning practices, and ongoing efforts to meet Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG); and

WHEREAS, on April 16, 2026, the Board referred the proposed Resolution: Ensuring Equitable, Accessible, and Inclusive Participation in Berkeley Rent Board Meetings to the Outreach and Accessibility Committee for further review of its fiscal, operational, staffing, and policy implications; and

WHEREAS, staff subsequently evaluated the proposed accessibility measures and identified opportunities to strengthen access while avoiding duplication of requirements and services already established by federal law, City policy, Board policy, and existing agency practices; and

WHEREAS, the Board seeks to implement accessibility improvements in a manner that is practical, sustainable, coordinated with Citywide standards, and responsive to the needs of the public;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the City of Berkeley Rent Stabilization Board reaffirms its commitment to equitable, accessible, and inclusive participation in Board and Committee meetings and directs staff to implement the following accessibility enhancements:

1. Provide consolidated public transit directions on meeting notices, including relevant BART, bus, rail, and elevator information, as appropriate;
2. Provide accessible route and parking information at meeting locations and on meeting webpages, including clear entry instructions where applicable;
3. Make documents available in braille or plain-language formats upon request, consistent with applicable City policies, available services, and operational requirements;
4. Continue improving access to public comment procedures, agendas, and meeting notices through multiple formats and channels, including digital resources; and
5. Include standard language requesting that attendees at in-person meetings refrain from wearing perfumes or scented products to support individuals with environmental illnesses or multiple chemical sensitivities.

RESOLUTION 26-__

ENSURING EQUITABLE, ACCESSIBLE, AND INCLUSIVE PARTICIPATION IN RENT BOARD MEETINGS (Page 2)

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Board shall maintain the existing 72-hour advance notice standard for accommodation requests, consistent with City of Berkeley practices and the Commission on Disability, while continuing to address accommodation requests in accordance with applicable law and City policy;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that accessibility measures already required or provided through the Americans with Disabilities Act, City of Berkeley policies, the Board's Language Access Policy, Brown Act requirements, and existing Rent Board practices—including accessible meeting facilities, language interpretation and translation, virtual participation, live-stream captioning, sign language interpretation, and large-print materials—shall continue to be administered through those existing frameworks rather than duplicated through separate requirements under this Resolution;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that implementation of these accessibility enhancements shall be coordinated with the Board's annual budget, available staffing and resources, Citywide accessibility practices, and ongoing technology and digital accessibility initiatives; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Executive Director is authorized to implement the provisions of this Resolution through appropriate administrative procedures and to make operational adjustments necessary to maintain consistency with applicable law, City policy, Board policy, and available resources.

Dated: _____, 2026

Adopted by the Rent Stabilization Board of the City of Berkeley by the following vote:

YES:

NO:

ABSTAIN:

ABSENT:

Soli Alpert, Chair

Rent Stabilization Board

Attest: _____

DéSeana Williams, Executive Director



MEMORANDUM

DATE: July 16, 2026

TO: Outreach and Accessibility Committee, Berkeley Rent Stabilization Board

FROM: Abby Vieira, Public Information Unit Manager

SUBJECT: Staff Analysis of Resolution: *Ensuring Equitable, Accessible, and Inclusive Participation in Berkeley Rent Board Meetings*

I. Background and Purpose of This Analysis

On April 16, 2026, the full Board considered the Resolution: Ensuring Equitable, Accessible, and Inclusive Participation in Berkeley Rent Board Meetings for adoption. After full-board discussion, the resolution was referred back to the Outreach and Accessibility Committee to discuss fiscal and operational implications before returning to the full board for a vote. During the Outreach and Accessibility Committee meeting held on June 24, 2026, RSB staff was asked to perform an analysis of the cost, impact on staff time, and policy implications of adopting the Resolution. This analysis provides the information requested on the impact of implementing this resolution on the Rent Board's budget and staffing, allowing the O&A Committee to vote on adoption. This analysis will also include a staff-recommended revised resolution grounded in its findings.

II. Existing Framework for Access and Inclusion

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The Rent Board operates in accordance with the requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and all City of Berkeley policies that implement its requirements. Recent efforts include compliance with WCAG mandates for web content accessibility as well as accessibility considerations embedded in the core functionality of a new Rent Registry and Housing Services Data System. Additionally, in the past four years, no complaints have been filed, and no findings of accessibility barriers have been made related to Rent Board ADA compliance.

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9. **Sensory accommodations:** Request that attendees refrain from wearing perfumes or scented products to accommodate those with environmental illnesses or multiple chemical sensitivities.
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IV. Summary of Staff Recommendations

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- Requiring standard language requesting attendees of in-person meetings to refrain from wearing perfumes or scented products. This would strengthen our already existing accessibility practices to encourage greater in-person participation.

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- Recommendations that are already codified into existing Rent Stabilization Board policies, such as ensuring ADA standards are met in all meeting locations, the provision of interpretation and translation, and virtual participation options, like live-stream captions, are not suggested by staff for further adoption, as they are already embedded in our accessibility framework.

V. Conclusion

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Recommendations for technology investment are being advanced through the Board-approved data system replacement process, intended to improve usability, accessibility, and equitable access to services. Training and awareness objectives are supported through existing City-provided ADA, reasonable accommodation, and customer service training available to staff, with any future formalization or expansion of training requirements to be evaluated in coordination with Citywide policies and resource availability.

Where the Resolution calls for new or expanded actions, such as providing accessible transit routes and parking instructions, translating documents into braille, translating transit instructions into Chinese, and translating materials into plain language, this policy enhancement will require one-time and ongoing investments of staff time and resources.

In this way, adoption of the RSB staff-recommended objectives of the Resolution reaffirms the Rent Board's direction and values while ensuring that implementation of its specific actions remains sustainable, coordinated, and grounded in existing operational frameworks. RSB staff recommend the O&A Committee review the findings and recommendations in this analysis and consider the adoption of the staff proposed revised resolution that accompanies it.