

From: [Transportation Commission](#)
To: [Jennifer Warner](#)
Subject: Fw: [EXTERNAL] 6-A Link21
Date: Wednesday, August 28, 2024 12:52:47 PM

6A public comment

From: Drew Dara-Abrams [REDACTED]
Sent: Wednesday, August 28, 2024 10:26 AM
To: Transportation Commission
Subject: [EXTERNAL] 6-A Link21

Dear Link21 team, City of Alameda staff, and fellow commissioners,

The Link21 project is intentionally amorphous, to keep options open. But when I get questions about it from folks around Alameda, I make it more concrete by replying that it's "Caltrain to Alameda!"

This framing often triggers a series of questions -- and an opportunity to share updates on how Caltrain is now fully electrified (so it's ready to travel through tunnels) and how the DTX/Portal project just received billions of dollars from the federal government (so Caltrain will finally extend into the actual SF central business district).

Even more importantly, this framing also opens many possibilities in Alameda residents' minds. Instead of just thinking of this as another path to commute to downtown San Francisco, or maybe a way to take a train to Sacramento occasionally, this project becomes a way to finally have a sane commute from Alameda to the mid-peninsula.

There are currently no good ways to travel from Alameda to the employment centers of the Peninsula by public mass transit. It's a car-only commute (or a long shuttle ride for the "lucky" employees of Genentech, Facebook/Meta, Google, etc.). The simple phrase of "Caltrain to Alameda" instantly frames this as a gigantic benefit to the many people, of a wide range of income levels, with these commutes. This framing also re-jiggers people's imaginations of the Bay Area — going to visit restaurants, festivals, and other destinations along the Peninsula or in the South Bay becomes a journey that feels possible by transit.

I share these comments realizing that the choice of rail technology and the choice of alignments are still in flux. It's good to see that some of the demographic and "access to destination" and analyses (in the slides) are already identifying the benefits of the broader reach of conventional rail and an alignment that features a station on Alameda Island.

Finally, regarding a potential station in Alameda, I hope the Link21 team will learn from what

has — and has not worked — for Bay Area metro stations. With all due respect to VTA, that agency appears to be currently spending huge sums of money to design and build BART station complexes that have massive parking garages, are surrounded by multiple roadways, and/or are so deep that riders will have to take many escalators to get down to the platform level. For the sake of the Link21 budget and for the sake of the rider experience, a station in Alameda should be kept to the smallest size necessary, so that it can fit into its urban surroundings. There's no need for a parking garage, although the station will ideally connect to a wide variety of bus, bike, pedestrian, bikeshare, taxi/TNC, and other ways for riders to reach the last few miles across Alameda Island as well as to Bay Farm.

Best,

Drew Dara-Abrams

(TC member who will be absent for this agenda item)