

LINK21

CONNECT NORTHERN CALIFORNIA

Link21 Program Monthly Stakeholder Update

First Public Workshop Series in the Books



This summer, the Link21 Team launched a series of virtual public workshops to introduce the public to Link21. For many, this introduction gave a glimpse of what the program could mean for their travel and their communities. In addition to the

workshops, the team hosted Office Hours events in July for those who had additional questions or wanted to further discuss topics surrounding Link21, including equity, the environment, and the market analysis.

The feedback received during the workshops and Office Hours provided the team with invaluable insight, including desired destinations, current travel challenges, and service aspirations. For example, participants listed Monterey, Tahoe, Sacramento, Napa, and San Francisco as top destinations in the Northern California Megaregion (Megaregion). Another poll identified traffic, congestion, frequency, and time as some of the greatest travel challenges. Finally, participants cited reliability, convenience, speed, and longer hours as things they would like to see in service improvements. This information and comments received through the website, email, phone calls, and the goals and objectives survey are being shared with the technical team as they develop the Program Concepts, which will be presented to the public in a future public workshop series.

Several agencies partnered to co-host the public workshops, including from the City of Oakland, Contra Costa County, City and County of San Francisco, City of Sacramento, and Placer, Solano, and Yolo counties.

As the team moves closer to developing a List of Concepts, stakeholders will see a more targeted approach to outreach based on the market analysis and Program Concepts.

Program Receives Funding Letter of Support from U.S. Congressional Representatives

Seven California U.S. Congress members signed a letter to support Link21's Rebuilding American Infrastructure with Sustainability and Equity (RAISE) planning grant application. The RAISE grant is a highly competitive federal grant sponsored by the U.S. Department of Transportation. The Link21 Team submitted a \$1.5 million request to support additional equity efforts throughout the Megaregion. Congressman Swalwell's office was instrumental in drafting and championing the letter of support. We thank Congress members Mark DeSaulnier, Barbara Lee, Jackie Spier, Zoe Lofgren, Eric Swalwell, John Garamendi, and Ro Khanna for their support of the Link21 Program.

Link21 equity work is in line with President Biden's Justice 40 Initiative, a commitment to deliver at least 40% of the benefits from federal investments to climate and clean energy in priority population communities. Through the RAISE planning grant, Link21 hopes to further its equity work to ensure past harms are not repeated to the Megaregion's most vulnerable communities.

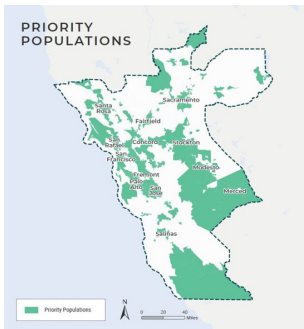
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Awards are expected to be made by November 22, 2021.

Link21 continues to look for additional funding through federal, state, and local resources to support ongoing planning efforts.

Input from Co-creation Workshops Informs Program Development



Over the past few months, the Link21 Team has synthesized and integrated information from the first round of community co-creation workshops into the program's more technical work, including the Business Case and Planning

and Engineering's concept development. Some notable takeaways that emerged were:

- High support for the Link21 goals and objectives, particularly transforming the passenger experience and enhancing community and livability
- Current, pressing issues, such as safety, cleanliness, displacement, COVID service cutbacks, and expensive fares make it difficult for many participants to focus on these long-term projects; we will continue to address these concerns and will gather and share out information on how we are currently addressing these issues to support participants in thinking about their priorities for the future
- Significant interest in using passenger rail for reasons other than commuting to work; we will continue to think through key non-work destinations for the program and to accommodate other service factors these types of trips may need, like longer service hours or more frequent off-peak service

Throughout August, the team will conduct its second round of community co-creation workshops. Feedback from the second round will inform the fall update of Link21's priority populations definition, which is a central piece of Link21's equity work and is being redefined to better reflect inequitable conditions throughout the

Megaregion. In addition to partnering with community-based organizations (CBOs) to host workshops, the team will work with CBOs to distribute a survey to community members. This additional option should further lower barriers for participation, allowing the Link21 Team to hear from more community members.

Link21 Team is Growing

Earlier this year, the BART Board of Directors approved four contracts to support Link21 work: HDR for Engagement and Outreach, ICF for Environmental Services, Arup/WSP Joint Venture for Planning and Engineering, and Cambridge Systematics for Travel Demand and Land Use. Contracts are being finalized with Notice to Proceed expected shortly afterward. The addition of these consultants will support and advance technical work. The Program Management Team is currently working with BART, Capitol Corridor, and these consultants to finalize their first work plan.

Look Ahead

The Link21 Team will deepen its outreach efforts to further educate and engage the general public. There will also be a greater emphasis on identifying and cultivating program champions.

The team will continue to lay the groundwork for the Equity Council and begin to understand who should make up the Council and what decisions they will provide input on.

UPCOMING MEETINGS AND PRESENTATIONS

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| SEP 9 - | BART BOARD OF DIRECTORS (<i>tentative</i>) |
| SEP 15 - | CCJPA BOARD OF DIRECTORS |
| Q4 2021 - | PUBLIC WORKSHOPS SERIES 2 |
| FALL 2021 - | PROJECT DEVELOPMENT TEAM (PDT)
STAFF AND EXECUTIVE MEETINGS |
| FALL 2021 - | JURISDICTIONAL WORKING GROUP
(JWG) MEETING |

Connecting with Link21

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