

Link 21 Equity Advisory Council Meeting Office Hours #5

July 18, 2023

Office Hours Recap

Link21 Equity Advisory Council (EAC) Office Hours #5

Concept Development, Service Considerations, and Initial Evaluation Results

July 18, 2023

6:00 pm – 7:00 pm

I. Attendees

Present Members

David Ying	Beth Kenny	Gracyna Mohabir
Linda Braak	Angela E. Herring	Landon Hill
Ameerah Thomas		

Staff

Frank Ponciano, Link21 Facilitator	Stefania Diaz, Link21 Notetaker	Iris Osorio-Villatoro, Link21 Tech Support
Tim Lohrentz, BART Office of Civil Rights	Emily Alter, Equity Inclusion Lead	Brian Soland, Manager of Rail and Planning

II. Discussion

A. **Frank Ponciano:** Introduced EAC members to Office Hour meeting and staff.

- a. **Brian Soland:** The Link21 concepts were presented during the recap presentation, offering the EAC members an overview of the rail's planned extension, routes, and connections. Brian clarified that the Link21 team is currently in the exploration phase and has not finalized station locations or service partners. This phase aims to ensure that Link21 effectively accomplishes its objectives.
- b. **Frank Ponciano:** Before proceeding, I'd like to hear from Emily if there are any additional points she'd like to raise. Afterward, we'll invite questions from the EAC members.

- c. **Emily Alter:** I'd like to address the equity findings slides we didn't cover in the last EAC meeting. We will provide a more detailed presentation of this information during the next meeting. If you have any questions about these slides, including those presented by Andrew Tang regarding evaluation results, please feel free to ask; we'll gladly answer them.
 - d. **Frank Ponciano:** Thank you, Emily, and welcome, Landon. We're glad to have new participants in our EAC Office Hours. This is a platform for addressing any questions you may have. Brian and Emily will cover concept development and equity considerations. Please feel free to ask questions on these topics and welcome Angela to the meeting.
 - e. **Landon Hill:** Please share any slides or visuals that could provide us with a better understanding of the topic at hand.
 - f. **Frank Ponciano:** Before we review the visuals, I'll give Brian a moment to share any important information. Meanwhile, if anyone has any topics they'd like to discuss, please feel free to bring them up.
- B. **Brian Soland:** Provided a brief recap of the 6 concepts being explored, including service.
- a. **Tim Lohrentz:** Before proceeding, we should allow time for any questions from EAC members.
 - b. **Frank Ponciano:** If you have any questions, feel free to unmute yourself.
 - c. **Brian Soland:** If you have any questions, feel free to ask, and I will try to answer them the best I can.
 - d. **David Ying:** I would like to gather your recent presentation and Brian's insights on the early-stage progress. Specifically, I'm interested in understanding the service and technology that will be adopted. Please provide additional information beyond the presentation and previous discussions. Also, share your initial thoughts on favoring a specific technology and provide an overview of your observations and early indications.
 - e. **Brian Soland:** We are conducting a comprehensive analysis to determine the most effective approach for our project. We focus on assessing the viability of extending the infrastructure across the Carquinez Bridge to Richmond or possibly beyond. Additionally, we are evaluating whether it is more beneficial for the regional rail services to stop at the Salesforce transfer center or continue south towards Millbrae. For BART, we are investigating the advantages of connecting it to the north and south branches. Throughout our evaluations, we have carefully considered the financial implications and sought a balance between benefits and costs. Although we cannot pursue every option, we aim to identify strong benefits and assess their alignment with associated costs. Among the examined scenarios, stopping at Emeryville and Richmond demonstrated increased benefits and improved accessibility for priority populations. Conversely, extending the project north towards Hercules and beyond the Carquinez Bridge yielded less significant ridership improvements. Richmond is the most suitable northern boundary for regional

rail, while for BART, connecting to all East Bay branches promises considerable ridership and priority population benefits. We are currently in the process of comparing regional rail and BART options, but the results are not available yet.

- f. **David Ying:** Thank you for explaining that; it makes sense.
- g. **Brian Soland:** Currently, we are evaluating the feasibility of expanding our operations to the Peninsula, specifically Millbrae.
- h. **Landon Hill:** What input should we provide, and what decisions will be made as a result?
- i. **Brian Soland:** Emily is the ideal person to address this question due to her thorough consideration of the business case and metrics, with a focus on equity. On the planning and engineering front, it's crucial to grasp the risks related to equity in communities and explore opportunities to make positive changes for underrepresented groups. To avoid perpetuating historical disenfranchisement, we must diligently work through concepts and ensure alignment with our goals.
- j. **Emily Alter:** At a high level, as we explore concepts, evaluate results, and present testing approaches, we value your insights on potential equity risks to our communities. Our equity evaluation approach, initially shaped by community input two years ago, continues to guide us in defining and weighing metrics. We recognize the importance of adapting our methodology to current community needs. During result presentations, we seek your feedback to ensure we appropriately address the concerns of priority populations. We focus on relevant metrics due to time constraints in the evaluation schedule for the upcoming round of results. Our commitment is to be accountable and avoid past instances where we couldn't integrate feedback effectively. While our aim is to provide comprehensive data and gather your input, we acknowledge the potential limitations in doing so fully. Ultimately, our goal is to present all available data for your review and feedback.
- k. **Tim Lohrentz:** Outside of the meetings, you may receive information between meetings, particularly regarding important results from round 2 evaluations. This feedback could be communicated via email or other methods and might not align with the scheduled meeting times for the EAC.
- l. **Landon Hill:** Feedback is essential when dealing with a large amount of information. However, there may not be a designated platform for providing feedback or clarifying Link21's decision-making process. It would be beneficial to explore establishing a system for this purpose.
- m. **Frank Ponciano:** Thank you, Landon. We aim to establish a conducive environment, and the initial 4 EAC Office Hours served to provide information. Moving forward, we will persist in generating ideas for this space. One such idea involves forming a subcommittee to address specific issues

and have deeper discussions. I am interested in gauging the reception of this proposal. Concerns about capacity exist, as EAC members have limited time between meetings for their work and research, but we will explore ways to accommodate it within those constraints.

- n. **Beth Kenny:** Before the committee convened, the priority populations were established, but unfortunately, people with disabilities were not included among them. This omission is troubling as we are often underrepresented in various priority groups, leading to a lack of consideration for our needs. It is crucial that people with disabilities are recognized as a priority population, particularly because we heavily rely on public transportation. The subcommittee concept is commendable, and allowing our active participation is highly beneficial.
- o. **Frank Ponciano:** Can you elaborate on the issue of people with disabilities not being a priority population, Emily?
- p. **Emily Alter:** We encountered an issue in locating geographic data for individuals with disabilities, which is crucial for defining priority populations equitably. Our team acknowledges that the current definition of priority populations is not exhaustive and that we must include other identities and experiences in the planning process. Could you suggest any reliable data sources to address this gap and facilitate meaningful changes in our implementation?
- q. **Beth Kenny:** I have initial ideas, but I'll consult my colleagues before providing a response.
- r. **Emily Alter:** That would be great, thank you.
- s. **Frank Ponciano:** That is a good follow-up item thank you for bringing it up.
- t. **Gracyna Mohabir:** I advocate for the establishment of a subcommittee, providing a valuable space for EAC members to interact, exchange ideas, and collaborate on various topics. Such a forum would facilitate constructive conversations and mutual growth.
- u. **Frank Ponciano:** Thank you.
- v. **Angela E. Herring:** I advocate for extending to Millbrae and credit Beth for her dedication to the disability community. Disabilities can be visible or invisible. Reach out to colleagues like AARP, Human and Health Resources, SSI Department, and Disability Rights of California. I previously pushed for transportation to Golden Gate Fields, and now I propose developing the property for reliable transportation. Funding from potential partners like Kaiser could help make it happen. Additionally, I advocate for better transportation options in Vallejo to improve access to jobs for residents facing traffic challenges. Through strategic partnerships and research, we can achieve these goals.
- w. **Brian Soland:** I will follow up on the Capitol Corridor's analysis of Carquinez for the connection. Collaboration will be essential for this endeavor.

- x. **Frank Ponciano:** Brian, is there anything else you would like to add before we move forward?
- y. **Brian Soland:** Emily, if you'd like to share any slides or input, feel free.
- C. **Emily Alter:** Provide a brief recap of the "what we have learned" and "Initial Priority Population"
 - a. **Brian Soland:** What is the reason behind Mission Bay not being considered a priority population neighborhood?
 - b. **Emily Alter:** Folks from the east bay are showing interest in areas like Mission Bay and locations to the south. Their demand is not directed toward the Salesforce transit area. Instead, the East Bay's population is increasing, with more people heading to Mission Bay's attractive destinations.
- D. **Emily Alter:** Provided a recap of regional rail results.
 - a. **Beth Kenny:** The Alameda station's impact would be limited due to its location in an underserved area with a high demand for transportation, primarily among low-income residents. There are plans to construct additional low-income housing to address this.
 - b. **Brian Soland:** Which location, in particular?
 - c. **Beth Kenny:** AC Transit underserves City College, Alameda Point, and the surrounding area.
 - d. **Emily Alter:** The lower-than-anticipated ridership response in Alameda may be attributed to existing commuters driving from Alameda to Fruitvale and other Eastbay stations. These individuals are already accounted for in the baseline rail ridership, and their new trips would require less or no additional riding. However, it's important to note that this shift would not represent new riders; rather, they would simply be relocating from one station to another.
 - e. **Angela E. Herring:** How many minutes would it be off if there was transportation to Alameda?
 - f. **Brian Soland:** Approximately 25-35 minutes or more.
 - g. **Frank Ponciano:** We are at 6:59 pm, and I encourage you all to email us any questions we did not address and forward them to the respective teams. We will have an Office Hour on displacement on Tuesday, and I hope to see you there.

III. Next EAC Office Hours Date: July 25, 2023

The Office Hours virtual meeting ended at 7:00 pm.