

# LINK21

CONNECT NORTHERN CALIFORNIA

## Stakeholder Update



### 2023 Program Recap

Link21, in collaboration with agency and community partners, is currently working to identify a Preliminary Project as part of early planning work in the Project Identification phase. Throughout 2023, Link21 continued to focus on exploring and evaluating potential concepts for a new train crossing, and other train network improvements, to meet the goals and objectives established by the Program and reiterated through stakeholder and public input. Through ongoing analysis, Link21 is studying collected input and identified findings to assess potential benefits and trade-offs of either a BART or Regional Rail Transbay train crossing.

### Prioritizing Equitable Engagement Across the Megaregion



An understanding of Link21's transformational benefits to the Megaregion, coupled with a clear vision and commitment to equitable engagement, guided 2023's dynamic

outreach program. Link21 continued working collaboratively with megaregional stakeholder and community partners to co-create connection opportunities, specifically focused on priority populations.

Activities were structured to listen actively, learn from the past, and work together with communities to shape future transportation options. As a result, the Link21 Team successfully **connected directly with over 7,200 people at 176 unique events or activities**. Connections included megaregional policy leaders, elected officials, agencies, priority populations, tribal groups, students and youth, plus other key communities.



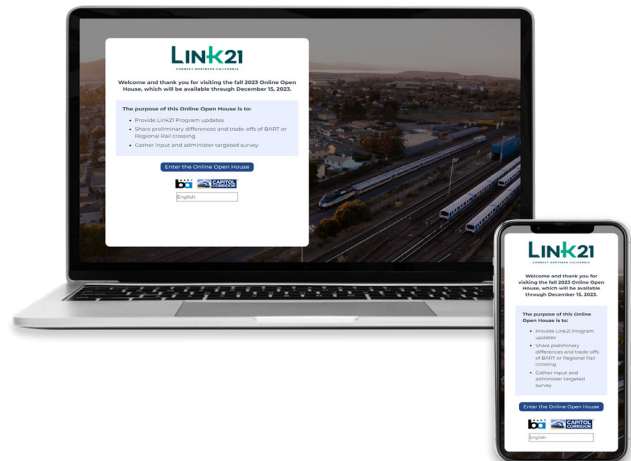
The Link21 Team created a logo and coaster for the Transit on Tap event hosted for Bay Area transportation advocates in Oakland on Oct. 25, 2023.



The Link21 Team presented to the Dogpatch Neighborhood Association in San Francisco on Nov. 11, 2023.

A critical component to Link21's equity program is the **Equity Advisory Council (EAC)** who met **seven times and held several office hours** in 2023 to discuss a wide variety of topics such as anti-displacement, outreach, transit fares, and equity metrics for evaluation.

The Program also successfully introduced a new equitable engagement tool by launching two multilingual and interactive **online open houses, which reached over 4,400 people**.



## 2023 Events & Activities Snapshot:



20	Elected Officials & Policy Leader Briefings
65	Agency/Industry Presentations
22	Link21 Committee Meetings
60	Community Events
9	Public Meetings

## 2023 Digital Communications Snapshot:



25k	Link21 Website Visits
167	Comments Received

### Summer & Fall Online Open Houses:



4,495	New Visitors
695	Survey Responses

## What Link21 Heard in 2023



During the recent fall engagement campaign, **1,255 respondents** in the 21-County Northern California Megaregion participated in a trade-off survey. Approximately half (49%) of the

responders were from within the nine-county Bay Area, almost 17% were from the Sacramento Area, and the remainder were spread throughout the outer Megaregion counties. Below are a few survey highlights.

When given a brief description of Link21, **70% of survey participants showed support for the Program** (38% chose strongly support and 32% chose somewhat support). This support is broad across lines of gender and age, and consistent across race/ethnicity throughout the 21-county Megaregion.

When asked which of two given features of Link21 is more important:

- **53% chose** a new regional crossing that enables **a train trip without transferring** between Sacramento, San Francisco, the Peninsula, the East Bay and other destinations throughout Northern California
- **21% chose** a new crossing that enables **increased frequency and capacity** of BART train service

When asked to rate the importance of various goals of the new train crossing, **the following were highest-ranked as extremely important/very important.**

- **83%** – Providing a safe and secure service
- **77%** – Improving reliability and travel time
- **76%** – Improving travel throughout Northern California
- **73%** – Reducing the number of cars on the road
- **68%** – Reducing the pollution that causes climate change
- **68%** – Meeting future ridership needs

## Key 2023 Accomplishments

### Equity Advisory Council's Inaugural Year

Link21's EAC recently completed its first year in session. The EAC's diversity of thought has been a valuable resource for Link21's evaluation of equity considerations. As the train crossing decision nears, findings and deliberation from the EAC will be incorporated into the train technology recommendation so that equity goals continue to inform the Program. In initial discussions regarding BART's racial equity initiative, EAC members refined their scope of work to include the ability to make proposals on how Link21 frames equity considerations.

The EAC provided feedback on Link21's crossing concepts, plus how to best weigh considerations to bring new service to transportation-isolated communities and improve existing service. The EAC also offered insight into access barriers for priority populations including a healthy discussion on fare integration between multiple megaregional agencies. Another accomplishment was the adoption of an anti-displacement focus statement acknowledging the need to center the upcoming work on the most vulnerable priority populations.

## Linking with UC Berkeley

Students in UC Berkeley's College of Environmental Design's Transportation and Land Use Studio (led by Professor Karen Trapenberg Frick) collaborated with the Link21 Team to explore potential Program research projects such as investigating possible improvements in equity, siting stations, and coordinating with Freight Railroads. Students presented their semester-long projects to the Link21 Team in November 2023. Reviewers posed questions, and offered suggestions on how their work could be expanded and the findings implemented.



Students in UC Berkeley's College of Environmental Design's Transportation and Land Use Studio presented their semester-long projects to the Link21 Team in November 2023.

Among the projects the students produced was a [Transportation Insecurity Assessment Tool](#) that processed census tract data and analyzed residents' access to opportunities against socio-economic barriers.

“It's a platform to allow government and transit agencies and the public to start a conversation. Community members have lived experiences and understand the needs of their neighborhoods, but don't always have the data for those experiences. The tool helps agencies and community members come together with the same level of information.”

— Edna Aguilar, UC Berkeley third year student

For more information, visit Link21's [student and youth engagement webpage](#).

## A Decision on the Horizon in 2024

The Link21 Team will be recommending a Preliminary Project that identifies a train technology (BART or Regional Rail) to operate in the new crossing. This recommendation, which will be driven by the Program's desired service outcomes, will be shared with Program stakeholders, including public outreach in spring 2024. The formal recommendation will go to the BART and Capitol Corridor Boards of Directors in mid-2024.

Following this train crossing decision, Link21 will continue collaborating with key agency partners and community stakeholders to refine the Project, including decisions on station locations, track alignments, and supporting infrastructure improvements. The Preliminary Project will be advanced and refined to define a Proposed Project in the next phase of work, which will be Environmental Review. Visit Link21's [concepts webpage](#) to learn more.

### Connecting with Link21

[Link21Program.org](https://Link21Program.org)

[Online Comment Form](#)

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Link21 is sponsored by the San Francisco Bay Area Rapid Transit District (BART) and the Capitol Corridor Joint Powers Authority (Capitol Corridor).

