

## Link21 Equity Advisory Council Meeting 2 Office Hours

March 28, 2023

### Office Hours Recap Link21 Equity Advisory Council (EAC) Office Hours #2 Environmental Process and the Environmental Constraints and Opportunities (ECO) Report

March 28, 2023  
6:00 p.m. – 7:00 p.m.

#### I. Attendees

##### Present Members

Beth Kenny	Harun David	Angela E. Herring
Ameerah Thomas	Gracyna Mohabir	Mica Amichai

##### Staff

Frank Ponciano, Facilitator	Stefania Diaz, Technical Support	Tim Lohrentz, BART OCR
Cathy Lafata, Environmental	Rich Walter, Environmental	

This meeting was called to order by Tim Lohrentz, (Equity Programs Administrator (Acting), BART Office of Civil Rights).

Frank Ponciano (EAC Facilitator), made an introduction and explained the purpose to EAC Office Hours. Rich Walter (Environmental Manager, ICF), and Cathy LaFata (Environmental Justice and Equity Lead, HDR) also introduced themselves.

Rich Walter briefly recounted the EAC #2 presentation on the Link21 Program's Environmental process and the related ECO report.

Frank Ponciano opened the floor for questions from EAC members in attendance.

#### II. Questions

**A. Beth Kenny:** I heard that a concept station might be built on the West End of the City of Alameda, where the government plans to construct a VA hospital. Due to environmental issues, the VA hospital construction is delayed, but having a light rail in that location would be helpful for people accessing VA hospital services. Does the Link21 team know about this?

**i. Rich Walter:** While I may not be familiar with all of the VA hospital's challenges, I am aware of the Alameda Point Planning Process and its proposals. The Natural Refuge, which covers most of the former Naval station runways to protect the California least tern, has been identified as a critical constraint. We are currently exploring ways to launch the bore crossing the Bay outside of the refuge to minimize environmental impacts. The proposed station at Atlantic and Main Street is located adjacent to Alameda Point, which has remnants of military-base waste in certain areas from the former Naval Air Station. Mixed-use development at Alameda Point offers significant opportunities, particularly if the VA hospital is developed in the area, which will generate a lot of trips.

**ii. Beth Kenny:** Thank you for your information. Public transit is vital for people with disabilities who cannot drive to their appointments.

## **B. General questions about the EAC**

**a. Beth Kenny:** Recently Link21 presented at the Alameda Transportation Commission meeting, and it would be great if we were to know about those things ahead of time. Is there any way for the team to coordinate that so that we can join the meetings and be aware of what is going on. Recently, there have been a lot of articles about BART being insolvent, and I want to know how that is going to impact the Link21?

**i. Frank Ponciano:** Thank you for bringing up the matter regarding coordination so that we can make sure that EAC members are informed about relevant presentations and events.

**ii. Tim Lohrentz:** Although BART is currently seeking operating funding from State and Federal sources, it is unlikely to have an immediate impact on Link21. Our Capital Funds are separate from BART's budget and will last until mid-2024, with potential for an extension. While there may be a political risk, the financial impact is minimal.

**b. Gracyna Mohabir:** I would appreciate it if you could clarify whether events such as the Feb 28th meeting are listed on the Link21 page. It may be helpful to include this information on the website or through email outreach.

**i. Frank Ponciano:** I appreciate you raising this point, as it will help me provide more clarity to my team about the process. Public engagement is a significant part of this project, and we want to ensure that everyone is well-informed about upcoming events.

- ii. **Gracyna Mohabir:** I would like to suggest adding a section on the website that lists upcoming meetings, as this would be a very useful resource for the team and interested parties.
- c. **Angela E. Hearing:** Please provide a JPEG or flyer of upcoming Link21, BART, or Capitol Corridor events. We plan to promote these meetings on our social media platforms to increase attendance.
  - i. **Frank Ponciano:** Agreed. For inquiries or requests related to Link21, please contact the EAC email address for assistance.
  - ii. **Angela E. Hearing:** To ensure equity, we should consider holding meetings in the evenings, in addition to our regular meeting times, so that everyone has the opportunity to attend.
  - iii. **Frank Ponciano:** We are aware of this concern and are discussing potential solutions, such as alternating afternoon and evening meetings after June. Please email the EAC handle with any questions or concerns you have so that the Link21 team can be informed. You should also have received a link to a survey after the February EAC meeting where you'd be able to let us know more about your experience so far.
- d. **Mica Amichai:** Can you share the timeline for the whole project?
  - i. **Staff present:** [Showed Mica and EAC members timelines covering different aspects of the project]
  - ii. **Frank Ponciano:** We can make sure to make these available to you and there will be more discussion on this in the April meeting.
- e. **Ameerah Thomas:** The input process is valuable, as the project will affect those who have been displaced from certain areas. Considering the economic impact of the project, it is important to also consider the costs associated with displacing people.
  - i. **Frank Ponciano:** The upcoming EAC meetings will focus on concept evaluation, including discussion of potential risks and opportunities. We will address these issues proactively and examine positive impacts and potential challenges in the business case. Additionally, we will explore potential displacement concerns in a future meeting, though details are still being finalized.
  - ii. **Ameerah Thomas:** Thank you for providing a space to discuss displacement. I appreciate the opportunity to ask questions in a smaller group setting, as it can be overwhelming for community members to know where to provide feedback.
  - iii. **Frank Ponciano:** Thank you for raising this concern. I encourage you to share it with the larger group, and I would like to allocate some time to discuss any thoughts on how we can address this issue in our upcoming meetings.
  - iv. **Beth Kenny:** I agree with Ameerah's sentiment about not fully understanding the terminology presented and lacking the

opportunity to ask questions. Additionally, I agree with the concern about displacement and gentrification that often follows the construction of a new station.

- f. **Mica Amichai:** To ensure greater audience engagement and an equity-focused conversation, it would be beneficial to cover less during the presentations and address topics such as gentrification and displacement.
  - i. **Staff present:** [All in agreement]
- g. **Gracyna Mohabir:** Could we please review the definitions of unfamiliar terms to ensure that everyone can fully comprehend these high-level topics?
  - i. **Frank Ponciano:** Thank you for bringing this up. We'll discuss internally how we can include something like this in future meetings and presentations.

#### C. Chat Message

- a. **Angela E. Hearing:** No, I do not think I have the link to the survey...After our last meeting (2/14), I have emails referring to the 2/28 Full Packet, 2/14 Meeting Minutes, Concept Development, Constraints & Opportunities, Resource Hub, and Meeting Announcements. I don't necessarily need the post-meeting document you mentioned because I jumped on the bandwagon and shared my concern regarding advance notice/flyer advertisement for future Link 21 meetings.

### III. Next Office Hours Date: None scheduled at the moment.