

Link 21 Equity Advisory Council Meeting 3 Office Hours

May 2, 2023

Office Hours Recap

Link21 Equity Advisory Council (EAC) Meeting #3 Office Hours

Stage Gate Process

May 2, 2023

6:00 p.m. – 7:00 p.m.

I. Attendees

Present Members

Angela E. Herring	Dave Sorrell	Clarence R. Fischer
-------------------	--------------	---------------------

Staff

Frank Ponciano, Link21 Facilitator	Stefania Diaz, Link21 Notetaker	Iris Osorio-Villatoro, Link21 Tech Support
Tim Lohrentz, BART Office of Civil Rights	Joseph Chroston-Bell, Stage Gate Lead, Link21 Team	

The Office Hours virtual meeting begins at 6:03 p.m. EAC member Clarence R. Fischer is present.

II. Questions

- A. **Clarence R. Fischer:** I understand the Stage Gate concept of completing tasks, agreeing upon them, and moving on. My question is whether both potential options for the Capitol Corridor will happen, or if one will be chosen. The first option is to connect the Capitol Corridor by going underwater into San Francisco and connecting with CalTrain. However, Capitol Corridor is diesel and you can't have diesel fumes in a tunnel. This would require electrification due to safety concerns. The other alternative is to build a BART rail line underneath the tube, servicing stations south of Market. Which are we doing? Are we doing both?
 - a. **Joseph Chroston-Bell:** I work on the Stage Gate process, but with a background in train operations, I can offer insights on this topic. For further information, Chester and his team can also be consulted. The statewide mandate requires all vehicles to be zero emission, which could include electrification, battery-powered, hydrogen-powered, low carbon fueled, and dual-powered locomotives. Procurement processes have not yet been defined, but there are many solutions available.

- b. **Clarence R. Fischer:** It's helpful to know that we are still not at the stage of the project, but it'd be nice to know when we'll reach the project's next stage.
- c. **Joseph Chroston-Bell:** I plan to present more on the Stage Gate to the council. This presentation will cover the decisions we make, their practical implications, and the evidence we consider. It will serve as a framework for our work for the rest of the year.

Angela E. Herring joined the call at about 6:09 pm.

- d. **Clarence R. Fischer:** I did receive a very thorough document of the Stage Gate process, so thank you to whoever put that document together for me.
 - e. **Tim Lohrentz:** In October's EAC meeting, there will be a detailed service visioning session with the planning and engineering team to discuss the types of service and vehicles for the two options. New trains are expected to operate on regional rail, but the procurement details are uncertain.
- B. **Clarence R. Fischer:** Since you mentioned that there are other members of the Link21 team, it'd be great to be able to participate in discussions beyond the EAC. To prepare for a project that is 20-40 years out, it's crucial to focus on comprehending the key aspects of the project. Attending other meetings would aid in grasping the project's bigger picture and concepts.
- C. **Frank Ponciano:** Since Angela joined, I'll update her on our last office hours where she brought up concerns about not recording meetings. We'll discuss this in our June meeting and decide whether to record meetings going forward. If approved, we'll start recording the meeting after the vote.
- a. **Tim Lohrentz:** To comply with California law, we need everyone's consent before recording. We can discuss this in June and potentially record the meeting for the first time then.
 - b. **Frank Ponciano:** We also internally discussed improving email formatting to make communication more useful for EAC members' planning. Let us know of any further email communication issues. Also, feel free to bring up any other topics discussed last week or regarding Stage Gate.
 - c. **Angela E. Herring:** Thank you for the updates. I support equity at all stages and will advocate for those unable to attend the June meeting. I appreciate the change in email communications.
 - d. **Clarence R. Fischer:** Angela and I appreciate the advance notice for this meeting, compared to the previous one where we received less than 24 hours' notice. Ideally, 72 hours' notice would be preferable.
- D. **Clarence R. Fischer:** I am curious about the Stage Gate process and would appreciate an explanation or email outlining upcoming topics to be discussed, so we can be better prepared.
- a. **Tim Lohrentz:** The EAC meetings do not serve as a Stage Gate, but we will discuss the EAC topics for the remainder of the year and use them to

prepare for Stage Gate Two. These topics discussed are a lead up to the Stage Gate.

David Sorrell joined the call at about 6:21 pm.

- b. **Joseph Chroston-Bell:** The board decision for Stage Gate Two is set for April 2024. An ongoing review will take place through to 2024 with the EAC and key stakeholders. Feedback will be documented and included in the Stage Gate report, leading to a formalized review and signoff action.
- E. **Clarence R. Fischer:** At the end of the meeting, we discussed prioritizing equity concerns for lower-income individuals within a 1-to-2-mile radius of the station. They should be given priority for funding over those who are well-off and can easily access the station.
 - a. **Tim Lohrentz:** The distribution of Link21 benefits across 21 counties is being evaluated. Priority populations, who have difficulty accessing stations, are being analyzed through various metrics. Once operationalized, local jurisdictions and transit agencies will implement services to help people reach stations. Link21 will provide additional services and programs for this purpose.
 - b. **Clarence R. Fischer:** BART had to introduce the BART express system as local operators were reluctant to provide service to connect with BART. The hope is that local jurisdictions will recognize the advantages of connecting and consider setting aside funding if required.
 - c. **Frank Ponciano:** In previous meetings, we discussed prompts regarding the total benefits of priority populations and measuring the percentage of benefits they receive. We can discuss this further today or decide to bookmark it for a later conversation with the rest of the EAC members. Today, we will focus on the stage gate process presentation, but feel free to bring up any other topics.
- F. **Dave Sorrell:** I need to follow up on transportation safety reading and studies, including a report on how women and the LGBTQ+ community experience safety. I'll share it with the group in chat.
 - a. [7 ways cities can make transportation safer for women: study - AMPO](#)
 - b. [Metro releases Understanding How Women Travel report | The Source](#)
- G. **Dave Sorrell:** Last mile service delivery is a challenge in the Bay Area, so we need to work with local governments and transit agencies to improve regional connectivity and eliminate access barriers. We should focus on strategies to assist those making long trips and always consider the last 10% of the trip.
 - a. **Tim Lohrentz:** Currently, Link21 prioritizes the second bay crossing, hoping to inspire other agencies to prioritize critical links within mega regions eventually. The second crossing is the next significant project that needs to happen. Our priority is the core piece, followed by ensuring equity, service, and demand are met.
- H. **Clarence R. Fischer:** To plan for the second crossing and train travel to San Francisco, we must consider the origin of riders. Previously, regional rail stopped

in Hercules and Crockett, with plans for a new Hercules station. However, during that previous time, commuters from Sonoma and Napa were able to use the Carquinez bridge to reach the Crockett station and connect to BART in Richmond to get to SF. Will they be willing to drive to Hercules instead of Crockett or will we lose that ridership? How will we accommodate them?

- a. **Frank Ponciano:** As I understand, there is a presentation with concepts that is being used for community presentations in the last few weeks. None of the concepts will go in the areas you spoke about Clarence.
 - b. **Tim Lohrentz:** We may develop a station in Hercules, but not in Crockett, as it is not part of the Capitol Corridor's plans. **Frank Ponciano:** Are these projects separate from the Link21 program, even though BART and Capitol Corridor may be involved?
 - c. **Tim Lohrentz:** Yes.
 - d. **Dave Sorrell:** (in chat)—Are there any documents on BART express service concepts available?
 - e. **Tim Lohrentz:** BART does not typically provide an express train on the yellow line towards Pleasant Hill and Concord, although they have done so occasionally.
 - f. **Clarence R. Fischer:** I was referring to the original BART core system where it had buses running from Livermore to Bayfair or from Brentwood and Antioch to Concord. BART paid for services to help priority populations get to BART stations, as they did with the BART express bus service to specific stations.
- I. **Dave Sorrell:** Is the team currently developing the timing strategy for the Stage Gate?
- a. **Joseph Chroston-Bell:** Our goal is to develop for Stage Gate Two a concept with options to move forward. We will then present the process.
 - b. **Frank Ponciano:** That would not be the June EAC meeting, correct?
 - c. **Joseph Chroston-Bell:** It will not, that is correct. It would be towards the end of the year.
 - d. **Tim Lohrentz:** About a year after Stage Gate Two, Stage Gate Three will define all necessary details, including stations, service and placement options. The engineering team will work on this. Then, it will proceed to the Environmental Review.
 - e. **Joseph Chroston-Bell:** That is correct.
- J. **Clarence R. Fischer:** Can you highlight the Stage Gate topics we discussed earlier? To be better prepared for project selection, we need to know which projects will be discussed and how we can provide valuable input.
- a. **Joseph Chroston-Bell:** After phase one ends at Stage Gate Two, phase 2 begins in April next year to identify the project for Environmental Review. We will provide definitions of the process and tie it into Tim's agenda. In phase two, there could be two to three flexible Stage Gates,

depending on funding. Right now we see Stage Gate Three starting the Environmental process. We envision a Draft Environmental Document for Stage Gate Four, and a final decision will be made at Stage Gate Five. Stage Gate Two lays the foundation for the coming months.

- K. **Clarence R. Fischer:** I'm concerned that everyone has a connection to priority populations, and there are many with different points of contact and interests. I hope that once concepts are decided on, there is an open discussion where all priority populations are considered equally, and their concerns are addressed before a final decision is made.
 - a. **Joseph Chroston-Bell:** Yes, that is certainly our intent, and there will be multiple opportunities to do so throughout the length of the project.
- L. **Clarence R. Fischer:** Will concepts be decided on before the end of our two year terms as EAC members? If not, will I still have an opportunity to provide input? How will it be decided whether to renew the two-year terms of EAC members? I want to make sure that I can provide input on the priority populations I am a part of.
 - a. **Tim Lohrentz:** I don't want to get too far ahead in terms of thinking about two years from now. We'll save the question for later, but currently, we are conducting outreach for several months to gather feedback from various priority populations.
 - b. **Frank Ponciano:** The question of whether EAC terms can be extended is still up in the air, but there are ways to let us know if any priority populations are not being sufficiently considered. You can use the equity flag process to broaden the scope of the conversation beyond the EAC and include any excluded populations.
 - c. **Clarence R. Fischer:** I'm selected from the Cherryland district, but I talk to lots of people outside of the Cherryland district, including Yolo County. I'm trying to make sure their perspectives are included as well, so thank you for that.

III. Next EAC Meeting Date: June 20, 2023

The Office Hours virtual meeting ended at 7 p.m.