



Will Link21 have a shared crossing that serves both train types?

Study Purpose: Assessment of dual-gauge track for the new underground train crossing

The Link21 Team has conducted several important initial studies to address key technical issues that will help shape the future of Link21 planning. One study examined the possibility of constructing a two-track train crossing that could accommodate both BART and Regional Rail (which operate on different track gauges) within the same track alignment. This assumes that accommodating both in a smaller crossing would result in cost savings.

While a single alignment that uses overlaid or “dual-gauge” tracks and trains are common in many places around the world, like Spain and Russia, operation of these two types of trains together does not currently exist anywhere within the United States.

About Link21

Link21 and its partners will transform Northern California’s train network into a faster, more integrated system, to provide safe, efficient, and affordable travel for everyone. At the core of Link21 is a new underground train crossing between Oakland and San Francisco.



Key Findings

Constructing a dual-gauge crossing would result in increased costs elsewhere on the train network that would outweigh the cost savings of building a dual-gauge two-track crossing. The heavier weight of Regional Rail trains would require upgrades to approximately 30 miles of elevated BART infrastructure that was designed and built for lightweight BART trains.

Additionally, one train crossing with dual-gauge tracks creates safety and regulatory challenges, likely requires significant changes throughout the BART system, and would limit the number of trains that could operate in the new crossing. BART and Regional Rail are required to meet very different structural safety standards for vehicle construction, and current regulatory and safety oversight does not allow these two trains to operate together within the same track alignment.

Even if safety concerns could be addressed in a cost-effective way, the regulatory oversight issues would remain and not being able to resolve them in a timely manner would present a major risk to Program delivery.

Future Link21 planning will focus on either BART or standard gauge tracks through the new underground train crossing that are configured in ways with greater likelihood of meeting safety and operational needs for megaregional rail operators and riders.



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