



EXECUTIVE DECISION DOCUMENT

GENERAL MANAGER APPROVAL: <div>DocuSigned by: <i>Michael Jones</i> 47000790F2D7463...</div>		GENERAL MANAGER ACTION REQ'D: N/A		
DATE: 5/30/2025 6/6/2025		BOARD INITIATED ITEM: Yes		
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Link21 Stage Gate 2 Approval

PURPOSE:

To seek Board approval of the Link21 staff recommendation to advance standard-gauge train technology (Stage Gate 2) for future program development and to authorize continued development of the standard-gauge transbay crossing by the Capitol Corridor Joint Powers Authority (CCJPA), under State leadership.

DISCUSSION:

The need for and value of a new transbay passenger rail crossing between San Francisco and Oakland has been identified in various state and regional plans for years and has twice received support from Bay Area voters. The San Francisco Bay Area Rapid Transit District (BART) and the Capitol Corridor Joint Powers Authority (CCJPA) have jointly led the development of this new crossing through the Link21 Program (Link21), bringing it to this important decision point.

Link21 has reached the Stage Gate 2 milestone, focused on advancing a new underground passenger rail crossing of the San Francisco Bay. Staff recommends that the new crossing be built using **standard-gauge** track, which is the national and international rail standard used by most intercity passenger rail, commuter rail, high-speed rail, and freight services. This differs from BART's **broad-gauge** track, which operates exclusively within a closed network.

The strategic selection of standard-gauge track for the new crossing allows for multiple passenger rail services to cross the Bay between Oakland and San Francisco while also improving connections for BART customers traveling between the BART system and the broader Northern California standard-gauge rail network, alleviating potential crowding in the existing BART transbay tube, and potentially expanding transbay train service hours. Detailed findings and evidence for this recommendation are presented in the Stage Gate 2 Report.

Approval of Stage Gate 2 will:

- **Advance the staff recommendation** to pursue standard-gauge train technology for future development. This will enable the team to conduct more detailed work on crossing concepts, including service planning, project extents and alignments, stations, and associated improvements. Selecting standard-gauge will also position Link21 for inclusion in the Corridor Identification and Development Program, led by Caltrans and funded by the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA).
- **Transfer program management responsibilities** to CCJPA, under state leadership, with ongoing oversight of CCJPA's Managing Director. BART will remain an active partner by providing staff resources and representing the agency on future stakeholder committees.

FISCAL IMPACT:

The Link21 Program has been funded to date through BART Measure RR (2016) and annual support from the State of California via Capitol Corridor's budget. Beginning in Fiscal Year 2026, the primary sources of funding will be grants from the State of California's 2023 Transit and Intercity Rail Capital Program (TIRCP), as well as potential support from the Federal Railroad Administration's (FRA) Corridor Identification and Development Program.

Eligibility for these funds requires that improvements to intercity passenger rail are a primary benefit of the project, which is only achievable with a standard-gauge crossing.

This action is not anticipated to have any Fiscal Impact on unprogrammed District reserves.

ALTERNATIVES:

The Board could reject the staff recommendation for standard-gauge technology and retain program management within BART. However, without a standard-gauge crossing, State funding for further project development would be in jeopardy due to the reduced potential for improving intercity passenger rail service. Without a decision on technology, BART would continue as the lead agency, and either (1) further study both technology options or (2) pause project work. In this case, any additional work would require the use of Measure RR, Regional Measure 3, or other local and regional funding sources to support continued progress.

RECOMMENDATION:

It is recommended that the Board adopt the following motion:

MOTION:

The Board approves the Link21 Program staff recommendation to:

1. Advance a standard-gauge crossing between Oakland and San Francisco and associated improvements (Stage Gate 2) for continued project development within the Link21 Program;
2. Transfer leadership of the Link21 Program to the State of California with program management responsibilities and policy oversight assigned to the Capitol Corridor Joint Powers Authority (CCJPA), with continued staff support and involvement from BART; and
3. Affirm the District's essential role in the Transbay Corridor, and the Program's continued engagement with BART labor leadership on future workforce opportunities as it advances.