

**PERFORMANCE
AUDIT OF THE
LINK21 PROGRAM**

March 12, 2026

Jorge Oseguera

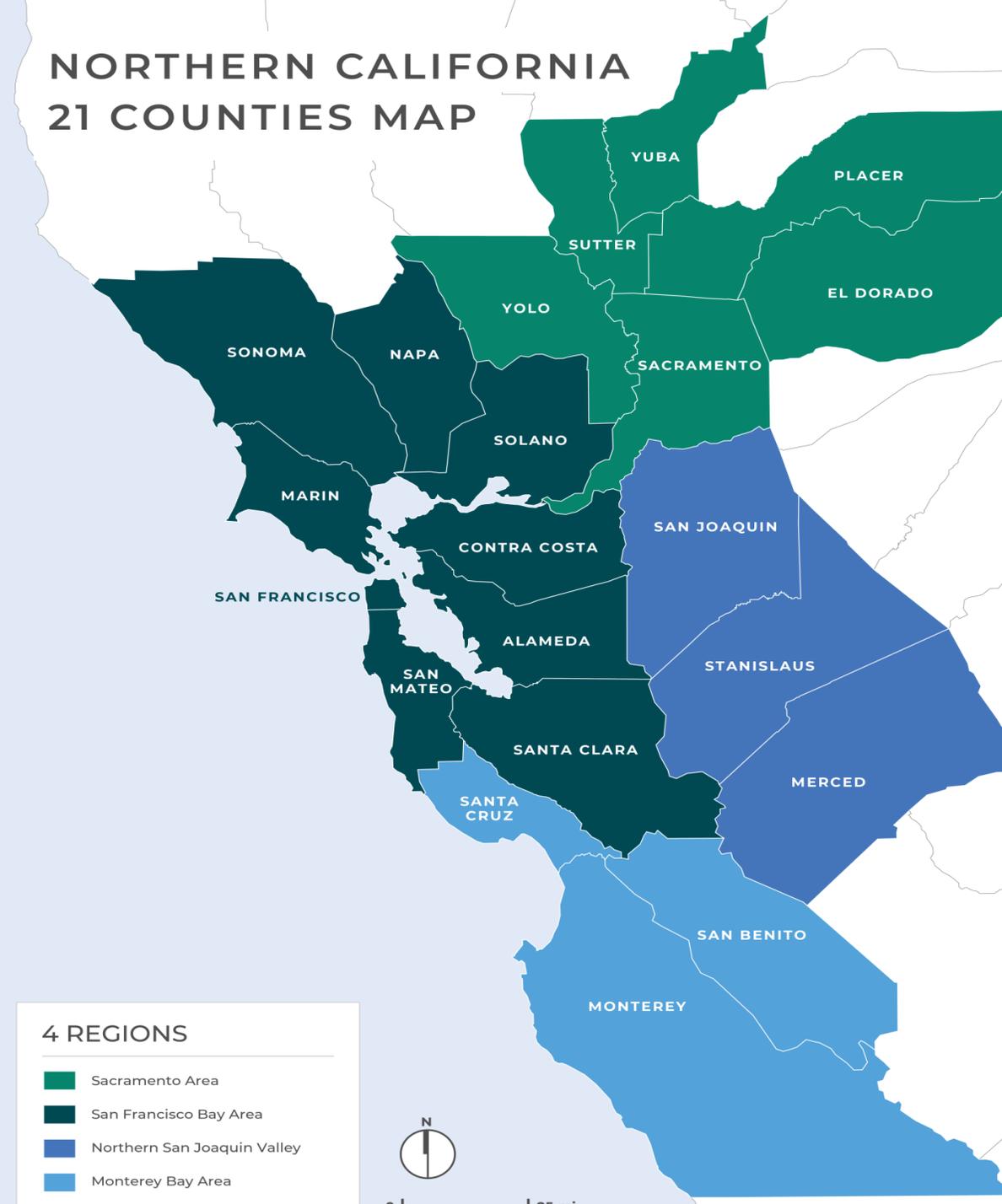
Deputy Inspector General

WHAT IS LINK21?

Link21 is a long-range, regional rail infrastructure program focused on the Northern California Megaregion comprised of 164 cities and 21 counties within four regions: the greater San Francisco Bay Area, the Monterey Bay area, the Sacramento area, and the Northern San Joaquin Valley.

This Megaregion accounted for 31.5% of California's population, totaling 12.7 million people as of January 2021. Link21's core vision is to create a better-connected, more reliable rail network that supports economic growth and reduces congestion.

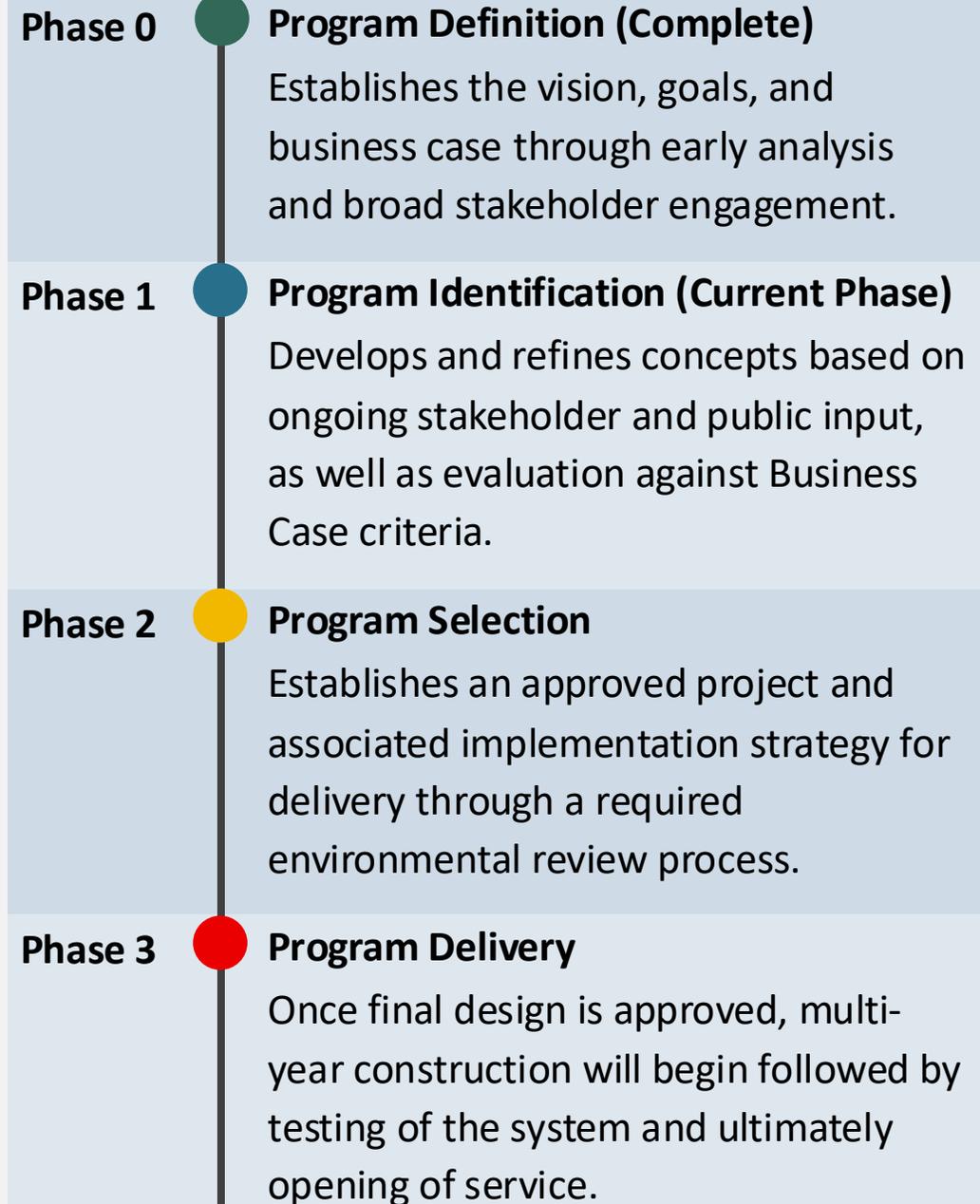
NORTHERN CALIFORNIA 21 COUNTIES MAP



BACKGROUND

- This audit is part of the OIG’s Fiscal Year 2024–2026 Audit Plan, which focuses on large-scale reviews of areas posing great risk to BART.
- We commissioned this audit to assess whether the Link21 program’s spending and contract-management practices align with BART policy and best practices.
- From program inception through June 30, 2024 (the target audit period), Link21 contractors expended \$121.4 million.

Link21 Program Phases



OBJECTIVE SCOPE & METHODOLOGY



Assess

- Contractor selection process.
- Contract compliance and management oversight.
- Funding adequacy and security.
- Impact of the equity outreach efforts.

Test

- Potential conflicts of interest.

Analyze

- Work Plan Proposal (WPP) approval process.
- Identify, quantify, test, and analyze project expenditures.
- Outreach costs.

AUDIT PERIOD:
AUGUST 2019 TO
JUNE 2024

FINDINGS

Overall: The Link21 program is fundamentally on track. Staff's work is consistent with program goals and contract spending appears consistent with program purpose. There are a few areas that need some attention:

Billing Rate Inconsistencies

- \$929,830 in labor rate differences.
- \$75,628 overhead rate differences.

Procurement Authority Limit

- \$302,500 contract & amendments total without clarity on Board approval requirements.

Contract Timelines and Amendments

- \$2.1 million of work performed outside of workplan schedule.

Campaign Contribution Limits

- \$1,000 vs. \$500 BART contribution limit double state limit.

Program Funding Outlook

- Further federal funding uncertainty puts program is at risk.



RECOMMENDATIONS

OIG Recommendations

Our audit includes 24 recommendations to assist the Link21 team in their program management:

- Nine (9) to strengthen planning and policies.
- Seven (7) to tighten oversight and control activities.
- Three (3) to ensure contract term enforcement.
- Three (3) to improve engagement.
- One (1) to improve accountability.
- One (1) to address system limitations.

Management Response

Management provided detailed responses to each recommendation. In summary:

- BART management agreed with most of the recommendations.
- BART management acknowledged that opportunities exist to further streamline processes.
- Specific to equity related recommendations, BART management noted all equity-related work referenced was completed prior to January 20, 2025, before the issuance of new federal executive orders and grant condition changes.



CONCLUSION

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