



August 28, 2024

Alliance for a Better Utah
PO Box 521847
Salt Lake City, UT 84152

To the Governing Bodies of:
Salt Lake City,
Salt Lake County,
and the State of Utah,

Alliance for a Better Utah fully supports the Rio Grande Plan, a citizen-led infrastructure plan that proposes to grade-separate the railroads that cut through downtown Salt Lake City and to reactivate the historic Rio Grande Depot as the city's central train station. Moving the rails below-grade will eliminate conflicts among trains, vehicles, pedestrians, and cyclists and increase the efficiency of passenger rail across the entire Utah network. Most importantly, the project would help heal Salt Lake City's east-west divide.

Connecting communities by rail demonstrates a long-term political and fiscal commitment by the state government to communities across the state, large and small. Historically, highway construction and transportation plans have divided communities, leading to historically underinvested and neglected communities. The Rio Grande Plan would remove barriers that residents and visitors face when navigating Downtown and surrounding neighborhoods. Additionally, the Plan would open up dozens of acres for private and public development, bringing opportunities for housing, business, and greenspace to a part of our state's capital city.

As Utah continues to invest in rail infrastructure, utilizing the Rio Grande Depot will more closely integrate the hub of the greater state rail network into the core of Downtown Salt Lake City, knitting our communities together into a cohesive fabric.

The Rio Grande Plan is an ideal candidate to receive federal funding earmarked for reconnecting communities by improving transportation infrastructure. Also, with significant funds already slated for Salt Lake City for the National Hockey League, the National Basketball Association, and the upcoming 2034 Winter Olympics, the Plan is a way to help share these investments with all Utahns. Now is the time to change the rail infrastructure of the city and state, and Utah should begin with the Rio Grande Plan.

Alliance for a Better Utah fully supports the implementation of the Rio Grande Plan, and urges Salt Lake City, Salt Lake County, the State of Utah, and the United States Department of Transportation to formally support this innovative and transformative grassroots project.

Sincerely,

Chase Thomas, Senior Policy Advisor
Alliance for a Better Utah