

July 12th 2024



Bike Utah

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

Bike Utah fully supports the Rio Grande Plan. This citizen-authored infrastructure project 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, increase the efficiency of passenger rail across the entire Utah network, and help heal Salt Lake City's east-west divide. Utilizing the Depot will more closely integrate the greater state rail network's hub into Downtown and the Utah Transit Authority TRAX network servicing the greater Salt Lake region.

The benefits of the Rio Grande Plan will reach far beyond Salt Lake City. The streets and railroads will move residents and visitors more efficiently and seamlessly into Downtown via driving, biking, and walking, and with fewer railroad crossings, everyone will have greater access to several destinations, including Salt Lake City International Airport, the Delta Center, Temple Square, and the medical, educational, and research resources at the University of Utah. Connecting communities by rail demonstrates the state government's long-term political and fiscal commitment to communities across the state, large and small. This aligns well with the Federal Railroad Administration's Long-Distance Study, Amtrak's "Connects US" plans, and LinkUtah's statewide strategic vision.

The Rio Grande Plan is an ideal candidate for receiving federal funding earmarked for reconnecting communities by improving transportation infrastructure. Also, with large amounts of capital 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.

Bike Utah fully supports the implementation of the Rio Grande Plan. It urges Salt Lake City, Salt Lake County, the State of Utah, and the US Department of Transportation to formally support this innovative and transformative grassroots project.

Sincerely,

Bike Utah