



High Speed Rail Alliance
4765 N. Lincoln Ave.
Chicago, IL 60625

June 7, 2024

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

The national High Speed Rail Alliance fully supports the Rio Grande Plan, a citizen-authored infrastructure project 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.

The benefits of the Rio Grande Plan are clear. Salt Lake City's emergence as a transit leader has already brought benefits to residents and visitors alike. The Rio Grande Plan offers further return on this investment, by linking local transit with intercity rail. This should eventually include high-speed train service, such as the Brightline West line under construction now in neighboring Nevada. Brightline West will run 200 mph trains between Las Vegas and Southern California, and Utah can begin planning for this level of service too.

The added value of tying all this together through the Rio Grande Depot will make Salt Lake City a leader in the Mountain West. It will attract new riders—locally as well as visitors from out of state. Cleaner, more efficient transportation options will also cut pollution and help to improve quality of life for the entire Salt Lake region.

Like most other states, Utah needs a statewide rail plan to achieve these benefits. This means taking a Big Picture look at what is needed, then guiding and supporting work to make it a reality. States such as California, Colorado, Virginia, and North Carolina have already made great strides in doing this. Utah can do it too, and the Rio Grande Plan is the cornerstone of such a statewide strategy. Now is the time to change the rail infrastructure of the city and state, and Utah should begin with the Rio Grande Plan.

The High Speed Rail Alliance fully supports the implementation of the Rio Grande Plan, and 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,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Rick Harnish", is written over a light blue horizontal line.

Rick Harnish
Executive Director