



Sept 12, 2024

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

As Chair of the Poplar Grove Community Council, and on behalf of our board, I express our strong support for the Rio Grande Plan—a citizen-led initiative to grade-separate the railroads through downtown Salt Lake City and reactivate the historic Rio Grande Depot as the city’s central train station. This plan was presented at our most recent Community Council meeting, where it received positive feedback from our board and community members who recognize its potential to address critical transportation challenges while enhancing connectivity and quality of life.

By moving the rail lines below grade, the Rio Grande Plan will eliminate conflicts among trains, vehicles, pedestrians, and cyclists, creating safer and more efficient streets for everyone. The revitalized Rio Grande Depot will become a central transit hub, integrating the state’s rail network into Downtown Salt Lake City and connecting seamlessly with the TRAX system to expand public transit access across the region.

As a council representing citizens on the Westside of Salt Lake City, we recognize the historic marginalization and redlining that have long impacted our communities. The Rio Grande Plan is a meaningful step toward addressing those inequities, helping to heal Salt Lake City’s east-west divide by improving accessibility and reconnecting neighborhoods. By enhancing access to key destinations like the Salt Lake City International Airport, the Delta Center, and the University of Utah, this project represents an investment in the long-term growth of areas that have often been overlooked.

The Rio Grande Plan aligns with broader state and federal initiatives, such as the Federal Railroad Administration’s Long-Distance Study and Amtrak’s “Connects US” plans, making it an ideal candidate for federal funding aimed at reconnecting communities. With major investments coming to Salt Lake City for events like the NHL, NBA, and the 2034 Winter Olympics, this plan ensures that those benefits are shared with all Utahns through a more accessible and unified transportation network.

We urge Salt Lake City, Salt Lake County, the State of Utah, and the US Department of Transportation to support this innovative and transformative project that will help rectify historic injustices and create a more connected future for all.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Daniel Tuutau".

Daniel Tuutau, DMA
Chair, Poplar Grove Community Council