



Utah Rail Passengers Association

10 W Broadway Ste 700
Salt Lake City UT 84101

Thursday, June 27, 2024

To the Governing Bodies of:

Salt Lake City,

Salt Lake County,

and the **State of Utah,**

The Utah Rail Passengers Association 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. 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 hub of the greater state rail network into the core of 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, 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 a long-term political and fiscal commitment by the state government 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 to receive 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.

The Utah Rail Passengers Association 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,

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