

RIO GRANDE PLAN

SALT LAKE CITY

Tuesday 1st April, 2025

Vol. 3



A group of Rio Grande Plan supporters gathered on a cold March morning at the Rio Grande Depot. It was great to meet everyone! Thank you Isaac Madsen for capturing the moment!

A HUGE MILESTONE FOR VIA RIO GRANDE

After months of hard work, we are thrilled to announce that Via Rio Grande has been officially incorporated as a Utah Nonprofit Corporation and is in the process of incorporating as a 501c3 nonprofit! Achieving this milestone unlocks many new benefits for the Rio Grande Plan including:

- 1) **Fundraising** - With official non-profit status, we are now able to accept donations and raise funds from various sources. This will enable us to more reliably purchase educational materials, plan outreach events, and engage in other activities that until now have been paid for personally by a handful of core volunteers. With greater funding, we will have the flexibility to be more creative and bold in our mission!
- 2) **Merchandise** - Community demand has been strong for items such as t-shirts and stickers that allow people to proudly showcase their support for the Rio Grande Plan. As a non-profit we now feel comfortable producing and selling Rio Grande Plan merchandise designed by our talented volunteers, with all proceeds funding our advocacy efforts.
- 3) **Access/Outreach** - One of the greatest strengths of the Rio Grande Plan has been the grip that it has on ordinary citizens who embrace it and go on to advocate for it. Becoming an official non-profit opens new opportunities from hosting tables at farmers markets and street fairs to being formally invited to speak at panels or conventions.

We are very excited to be taking this next step in a way that lets many more of you be involved! [Click here](#) if you would like to donate to Via Rio Grande directly. For more information on the merchandise, see below.

APRIL GOALS

Spread the Word

The Rio Grande Plan can only succeed if it has strong public support from across the state. Make a goal to share it with five people this month! (Tip: Wearing merch is great conversation starter!)

Designs Needed

We have some amazing design ideas for the new platform, but we need more! Different designs will resonate with different people. If more options are put out there, more people will catch the vision.

New Community Outreach

Help us connect! Let your local community, city, and municipality groups know how the Rio Grande Plan helps communities all over Utah and let us know if they'd like to learn more. Our team is ready to meet with and present the plan to your communities.

OUTREACH TRAINING

April Outreach Goal: Your State Representatives

If you want to lend your voice in support of the Rio Grande Plan, outreach to public officials makes a HUGE difference. Check out these resources for tips on sending a note of support to your representatives: [Outreach Tips](#) & [How to Find your State Representatives](#)

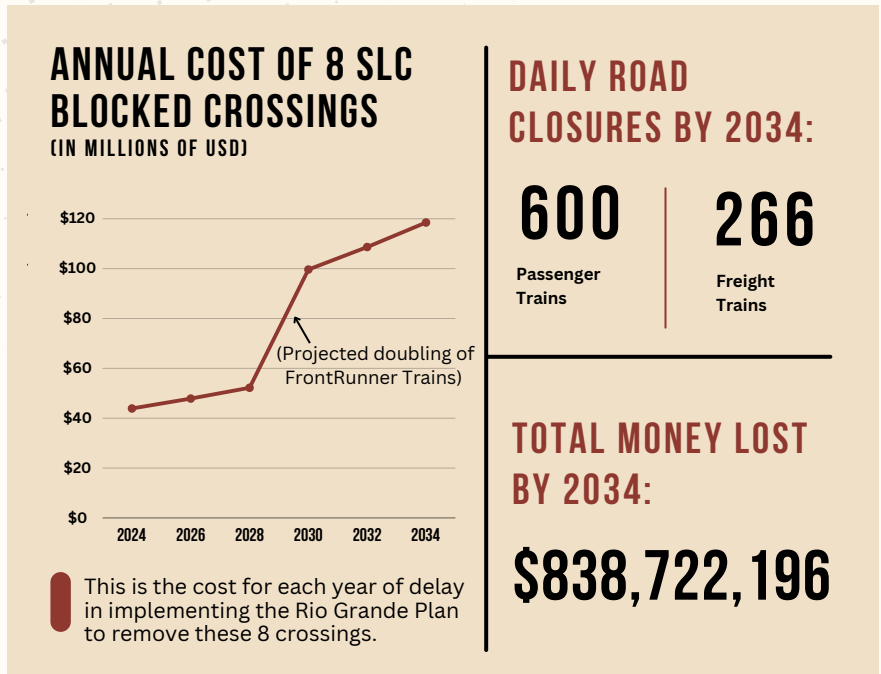


<https://riograndeplansaltlakecity.org/>



UTAH IS LOSING BIG AT BLOCKED CROSSINGS

We've talked a lot about the mental, social, and physical tolls taken by lengthy freight and FrontRunner trains blocking city roads. Did you know they take a significant financial toll as well? Economist Dr. Kerk Phillips, Ph.D. calculated how much time and positive economic impact Utah is losing while waiting for trains and waiting on the Rio Grande Plan.



Costs Calculated using "The Value of Time in the United States" by Goldszmidt, et al (2020)

You can help! - Share these numbers with your state reps and in public meetings and urge them to work towards a complete solution by adopting the Rio Grande Plan.

Another important step you can take is reporting blocked crossings to the FRA via [this site](#). These reports will directly impact the federal government's willingness to help fund a solution so spread the word!

REP THE RIO GRANDE PLAN WITH OFFICIAL MERCH

Our online shop is officially live! Support the Rio Grande Plan by grabbing mugs, hats, postcards, shirts, and more. Every purchase fuels our ongoing efforts and helps spread the word. [Shop now](#) and make an impact!



PUBLIC COMMENT OPPORTUNITIES

Please look for opportunities to speak up for the Rio Grande Plan wherever you can! The [UTA](#), the [SLC Transportation Advisory Board](#), and most cities and counties across the state meet at least once a month and leave time for public comments. [Here](#) is a video example of what to expect and what you can say.

Some talking points could be:

- Address east/west divide
- Revitalize a historic and beautiful train station
- Make public transit better for everyone
- Open up 76 acres of land
- THIS should be the Winter Olympic project!

VOLUNTEER WISHLIST - WE NEED YOU!

If you are interested in supporting the Rio Grande Plan, here is are some current needs:

Regional Leader

Identifying relevant public forums to promote public transit and growing local public support. Currently needed in all counties!

College/ University Leader

Currently needed at all campuses!

Community Outreach Planner

Identify opportunities to set up booths and/or educate communities about the Rio Grande Plan (i.e. farmers markets, street fairs, etc.)

Community Educator

Help staff community events to educate people about the Rio Grande Plan

To the Rio Grande Team, thank you for your continued support. If you have any questions or ideas, [here](#) is an overview of the team - please feel free to reach out!

Sincerely,
The Via Rio Grande Team

A ROMANTIC PROPOSAL FOR THE RIO GRANDE

by Clayson Quigley

In the fall of 2012, I took a beautiful woman out on a ghost tour of Salt Lake City. We visited several of the famous 'haunts' around the town including the somewhat abandoned Rio Grande train station. The Rio Grande pretty much looked like a boarded up forgotten building. Its vibe was very much in sync with the ghost hunt theme of the night.

Our bus dropped us off in front of the dilapidated entryway of the building. The guide stopped us short of going inside and gathered us around for a chilling story about spirits that still wait for their trains inside the former station.

In a cheesy attempt to impress my date with my bravery I reached for the door and pulled it open. To our surprise the door did in fact open. She gave me a panicked look. I paused, then quickly shut the door, and we listened to see if an alarm would go off. I may not have been afraid of the ghosts lurking in the shadows, but I certainly wasn't planning on trespassing in a State historical building that night.

This became the subject of many jokes and prodding while we were dating. Fast forward to sometime later when I was ready to propose I knew just how and where to pop the question. I came up with an elaborate scheme to tell her I was finally ready to break back into the Rio Grande. Of course, I naively thought I could sweet talk a security guard to let me stage a little scene just inside the first set of doors. I would bring her down, burst through the doors, convince her to follow me in and bam! Candles, rose petals, maybe some music and then I would drop to one knee and ask her to marry me.

The week before I planned to propose I set out to find a hopeless romantic security guard to be my accomplice. I figured if I found someone on the night shift to buy into my plot I could come back when they were working again to execute my plan. After poking around, pulling on the doors, peeking through the windows, I did find a security guard. Unfortunately, they didn't share my romantic vision and told me to scram and not come back.

Ultimately, I found another way to propose. I shared my original plan with my now wife. She found my original plan endearing but was grateful I hadn't been arrested for trespassing. So, it all worked out in the end!

As an ode to our first date and my clumsy attempt at a romantic gesture we decided to take some engagement photos around the Rio Grande, forever enshrining it in the background of our story as a place of connection and a metaphor of transition from one chapter to another in our relationship.

The Rio Grande will always have a special place in our hearts. We hope that it will one day be a place of connection and transition for our community and the many people who visit our great city. Who knows, maybe even a few more young couples might fall in love under its roof.

