



October 10, 2022

Secretary Pete Buttigieg
U.S. Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE
Washington, DC 20590

RE: Letter of Support – Salt Lake City Reconnecting Communities Grant 2022

Dear Secretary Buttigieg,

On behalf of the Salt Lake City Council, I want to express our support of Salt Lake City's initiative to address east-west connections across the Interstate 15 (I-15) and north-south rail corridors, particularly for people walking, biking, and taking transit.

In the 1960s, I-15 was constructed through the west side of downtown Salt Lake City which created accessibility barriers for residents to navigate between the east and west sides of the city. As happened in many American cities, the neighborhoods cutoff from the rest of their city are majority-minority and represent the most ethnically diverse areas of Utah. The area is also boxed in by railroad tracks with frequent train stops across public streets. Consequently, these boundaries have historically disadvantaged communities on the west side. They are longstanding obstacles to reconnecting our City's urban fabric and improving the quality of life for impoverished areas.

Our west side residents frequently are impacted by missed appointments, slowed emergency response times, late home arrivals because of long delays (45 minutes or even more) and other daily impacts caused by freight trains blocking east-west roads. These impacts are worse for our neighbors who walk, bike, and take transit because they lack a personal vehicle to drive out of the way to one of the few bridges spanning the several railroad tracks.

Salt Lake City's initiatives to address east-west connections will effectively promote social equity by reducing historical disadvantages through seamless access to higher opportunity areas for all of Salt Lake City's residents. The City has partnered with our regional transit agency (Utah Transit Authority) to pay for frequent bus routes traveling east and west. The full benefits of this existing program are held back by the obstacles and delays caused by freight trains frequently blocking our streets. Transportation pain points caused by I-15's geographical location to the city will be mitigated through these increased accessibility measures that promote inclusivity, safety, and efficient urban travel practices. Funding could improve safety at dozens of at-grade railroad crossings in residential neighborhoods and the urban core of the Wasatch Front metropolitan area.

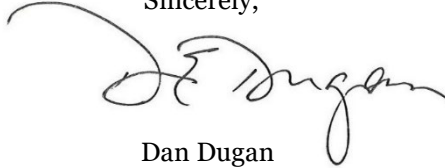
DAN DUGAN | DISTRICT 6 | COUNCIL CHAIR || DARIN MANO | DISTRICT 5 | COUNCIL VICE CHAIR ||
VICTORIA PETRO-ESCHLER | DISTRICT 1 || ALEJANDRO PUY | DISTRICT 2 || CHRIS WHARTON | DISTRICT 3 ||
ANA VALDEMOROS | DISTRICT 4 || AMY FOWLER | DISTRICT 7

OFFICE OF THE CITY COUNCIL
451 SOUTH STATE STREET, ROOM 304
PO BOX 145476, SALT LAKE CITY, UT 84114-5476

WWW.SLCCOUNCIL.COM
TEL 801-535-7600 FAX 801-535-7651
EMAIL: COUNCIL.COMMENTS@SLCGOV.COM

We support Salt Lake City's grant application to the federal Reconnecting Communities grant program to conduct a comprehensive planning project to make much needed improvements to multiple east-west crossings between 600 North and 2100 South. This important work will improve the quality of life for our westside community and uplift the whole city.

Sincerely,



Dan Dugan
Chair, Salt Lake City Council

DD/tn

cc: Salt Lake City Council
Cindy Gust-Jenson
Jennifer Bruno
Lehua Weaver
Mayor Erin Mendenhall
Rachel Otto
Lisa Shaffer
Blake Thomas
Orion Goff
Jon Larsen

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