

October 1 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 2022

Dear Secretary Buttigieg:

On behalf of the planning and design firm, ALTA, and as a concerned citizen, I write in support of Salt Lake City's initiative to address east-west connections across the I-15 and north-south rail corridors, particularly for people walking, biking, and taking transit.

I work as an urban designer in Salt Lake and as such, approach my view of the city from a design standpoint. The rails and freeway that cuts our city in half are huge obstacles. The disparity between neighborhoods, access to services and amenities is astounding (not to mention the several injuries and deaths that have occurred over the years from people trying to cross these barriers). We have a huge housing deficit in Salt Lake, and there are massive portions of wasted land because of the network of tracks and overpasses that criss-cross the west side of downtown. For the last two years, I have been working pro-bono on a citizen proposal called the Rio Grande Plan which aims to restore rail service to our historic depot, and in the process place all rail tracks underground through downtown. This would allow for the removal of many overpasses and barriers to both pedestrians and bicyclists. It would also open up many more transit opportunities and development parcels to help our growing city become more connected. My partner in this process, Christian Lenhart, and I have been amazed by the amount of support and excitement that our proposal has generated- to the point of the city wanting to include it in their studies! If the city were to receive funding for additional studies, it would go a very long way to helping address these connectivity, equity, and growth problems that this area has struggled with for years. It is exciting to see how much excitement and momentum is behind improving district, indicating how important an issue it is to the many who live, work, and commute here.

I support Salt Lake City's application for the reconnecting communities program, aiming to improve east-west connections to the city center and create a more equitable and sustainable capital city.

Sincerely,

Cameron Blakely

Senior Designer | ALTA