

SALT LAKE CITY BICYCLE ADVISORY COMMITTEE
A standing committee of the TRANSPORTATION ADVISORY BOARD

Salt Lake City Transportation Division Office - 349 South 200 East, Suite 150 - P.O. Box 145502
Salt Lake City, Utah 84114-5502

October 20th, 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 Planning Grant 2022

Dear Secretary Buttigieg:

On behalf of the Salt Lake City Bicycle Advisory Committee, 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.

Crossing the train tracks forms a major challenge for bicyclists. One of our committee members lives on the west side, but has doctors, dentist, physical therapist, and primary grocery store all on the east side of the railroad tracks. If he wants the option to bike to those, he has to make sure to leave extra early in case he has to reroute to the roads with bridges over the tracks. He has also heard from a neighbor, that she's been late to work going east by bike due to a train, and a coworker who has considered not biking to work because of train delays. This coworker will often drive over biking, if he is at all worried about getting stuck at the train crossing.

Another BAC member notes, that at time she opts for the railway overpasses to avoid being delayed at the train crossings notes, though no east/west corridor is "pleasantly" bike able. She calls the 13th S/California Ave her "hope & pray" route. The overpass on 13th S is unsettling for cyclists. Either she takes the "sharrow" lane which feels unsafe with traffic coming from the interstate, or takes the sidewalk, impeding pedestrian traffic. She most frequently opts for 17th S, which has at level train crossing, but it often has debris (which occasionally causes flats).

The Committee's mission is to promote, enhance, preserve and, where necessary, restore physical, social, political and economic environments in which bicycling is recognized as an essential element of a clean, healthy, and vital community.

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In summary, the routes with bridges over the railroad are very busy with car traffic because of the I-15 ramps, and the other routes that cross the interstate have at level railroad crossings causing major delays to bicyclists and pedestrians, and promoting risky behavior to cross the tracks while the gates are down. We feel that there needs to be multiple ped/bike separated crossings of both the train tracks and the freeway to allow for comfortable crossing of these barriers. We are especially excited about the possibility of putting the train tracks into an underground box as this would largely solve the problem with crossing the tracks, and we would be left with digging a few tunnels under the I-15 to construct non-motorized paths across the whole width of this barrier.

The Bicycle Advisory Committee supports Salt Lake City's grant application to the federal Reconnecting Communities program to conduct a comprehensive planning project to make improvements across the east-west divide. This work will improve our community.

Sincerely,

Martin Cuma

Chair, Salt Lake City Bicycle Advisory Committee

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