



Canal Trails & Active Transportation

Rep. Lesser | Transportation Interim Committee | September 18, 2023

Purpose:

1

Create a strategic plan for use of canal trails in the Utah Trail Network (UTN)

2

Develop a toolkit for political subdivisions and MPOs to incorporate canal corridors into transportation plans



The Murdock Canal Trail is a 17-mile paved trail in Utah County. Piping and capping the canal saved approximately 25% of water that was previously lost due to seepage and evaporation.

Action Items:

1

Ensure that planned canal trails are included in city or county master plans and encourage development code that requires trail construction along existing canals

2

Create a toolkit for local entities to facilitate canal trails, including sample license agreements, funding resources, and lessons from previous projects

3

Prioritize state funding for projects with greatest potential for water savings or to replace failing infrastructure

Key Principles:

WATER SAVINGS

Enclosing, piping, or lining canals can lead to significant water savings, improved water quality, and improved public safety.



CANAL INFRASTRUCTURE

The American Society of Civil Engineers graded Utah's Canals D+ in 2020, meaning "poor, at risk".

LIMITING LIABILITY

Canal companies are hesitant to engage with trails due to liability concerns. HB 33 from GS 2023 addressed some of these concerns.



LAND OWNERSHIP

Canal corridors and rights-of-way have a variety of land ownership models, such as fee title, express easement, and prescriptive easements. The state does not have eminent domain power for trails.

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