



COLORADO
Department of Transportation

Transit Rail Advisory Committee (TRAC) Update

May 2021



Overview of FRPR

The Project

To reduce pressure on key freight corridors by moving people off congested highways, a passenger service rail linking Pueblo, Colorado Springs and Fort Collins to Denver—a 173-mile corridor—is currently being planned. The project will be the transportation "spine" along the Front Range, with other multimodal systems east and west of the I-25 corridor integrated into Front Range Passenger Rail.

The People

The Front Range Passenger Rail project consists of a "blended team" led by the Rail Commission and CDOT. The team includes a range of specialized professionals with decades of experience in transportation and on Front Range projects.



Where We've Been

Status and Accomplishments

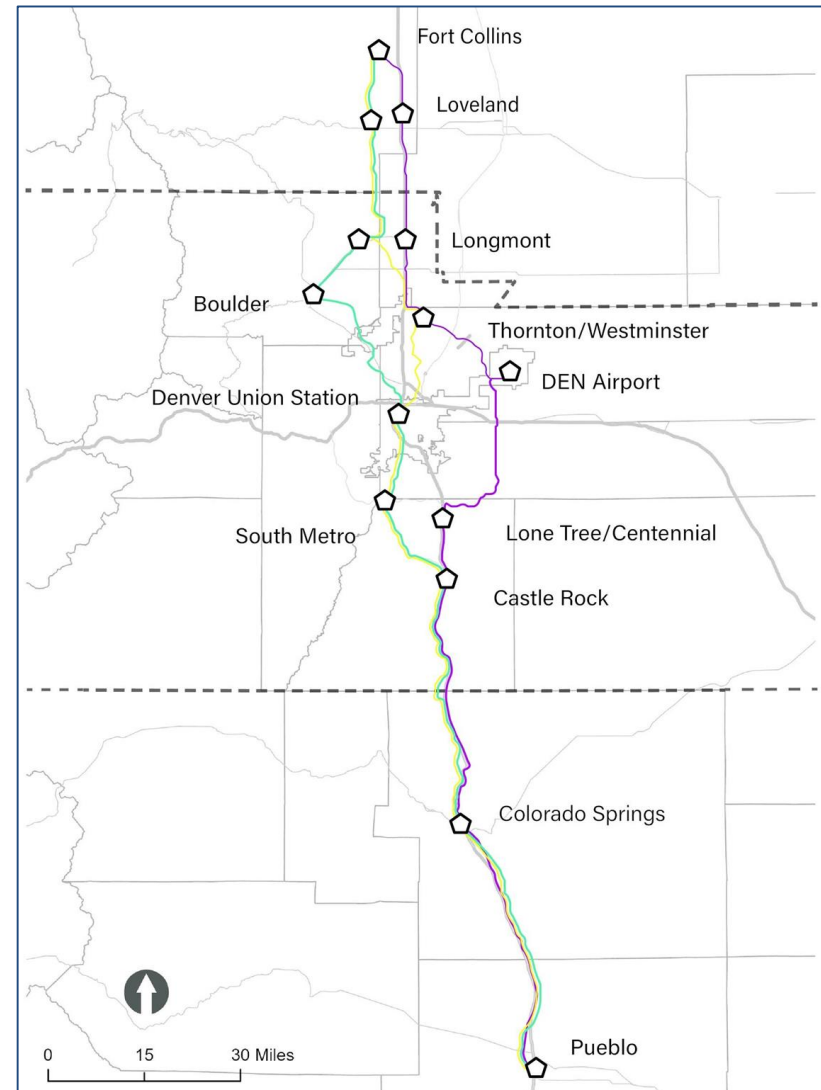
- ✓ Vision
- ✓ Environmental review
- ✓ Pre-NEPA ridership modeling
- ✓ Conceptual cost estimating
- ✓ Alternatives speed profiles and travel time
- ✓ Conceptual design plans, standards & criteria
- ✓ Preliminary alternatives analysis
- ✓ Funding and Finance analysis
- ✓ Governance analysis
- ✓ Stakeholder coalitions engagement
- ✓ Public engagement via website, surveys and online meetings

FRPR: Long Range Vision (2045)

180 miles, double track

Three technically feasible alignments

- **Stations:** Nine with option for secondary stations
- **Round trips:** 24 weekdays/ 18 weekends
- **Ridership:** Up to 2.2m per year (2045)
- **Max Speeds:** 90-110 mph
- **Travel time:** 2.5-3 hours (end to end)
- **Conceptual Costs:**
 - **Capital:** \$7.8-\$14.2B
 - **Operating:** \$135-\$172M/per year



Where We Are - Commission Recommendations

Evaluation encompassed full corridor from Pueblo to Fort Collins. Upon defining its scale, the Commission now focuses on early implementation strategies:

Implementation recommended: Identify viability of interoperating with railroads on freight alignment

Why phased approach?

- Implement passenger rail quickly and efficiently
- Build on existing rail to develop a network
- Build culture of passenger rail and build ridership

Learned experience from other successful systems:

- Washington, Utah, Oregon

Rail Commission 2021-22 Work Plan

- Rail Simulation Modeling and Preliminary Service Development Planning (in Partnership with RTD)
 - Goal is to define viable system and demonstrate NEPA readiness
-
- Continue program outreach and collaboration (RTD, BNSF, Amtrak, FRA)
 - SB 21-238
 - Short and long term funding



Previewing FRPR & NW Rail (RTD) Peak Service: Initial Technical Comparisons

Studies' Similarities

- Improve Mobility, Provide Mode choice, Econ Development, Reliable Trip
- Alignment/ Right of Way
- Longmont, Boulder, Denver
- Engineering
- Environmental Context

Critical Questions for Studies

- Operator?
- Technology?
- Train Schedule?
- Stations?
- Maintenance Yards?

Framework for Advancing to Next Steps

Policy

- Governance Options
- Funding & Finance Options

Program

- Inclusion in Local, Regional and State Plans

Project

- Alternatives Analysis
- Advance to NEPA

SB 21-238: Rail District Creation

- Powers: Finance, Design, Construct, Operate, Maintain Passenger Rail
- District Boundaries & Representation
- Would repeal Rail Commission by May 2022 and transfer its remaining funds by February 2022
- Timing/Next Steps

SB 21-238

- 6 Governor's Appointees
 - 1 - Representative affiliated with Organized Labor
 - 1 - Representative affiliated with Conservation Organization with Transit Oriented Land Use Development
- 10 MPO/COG Representatives (Senate Confirmed)
 - 4 - MPOs representing more than 1.5m residents (DRCOG)
 - 2 - MPOs representing more than 500,000 residents but less than 1m (PPACG and NFRMPO)
 - 1 - PACOG
 - 1 - South Central COG
- 1 Director Appointed by CDOT Executive Director
- Non-Voting Members
 - BNSF Railway
 - Union Pacific
 - Amtrak
 - RTD
 - Wyoming
 - New Mexico



SB 21-238: Powers

- Subject to the approval of the voters of the district and other specified limitations, **to levy a sales and use tax** and to exercise specified taxing authority common to special districts within the district and to issue bonds;
- Subject to the approval of the owners of property within a 2-mile radius of any existing or proposed passenger rail station, to **create a station area improvement district** with the authority to levy additional sales and use tax, special assessments on real property, or both, to cover the costs of construction, operation, and maintenance of the station;
- To **enter into public-private partnerships**; and
- To employ its own personnel or contract with public or private entities, or both, for the operation and maintenance of the system.

SB 21-238: Amendments

- **L.001: Technical Amendment (insertion of bill number)**
- **L.002: CDOT coordination**
- **L.003: Technical Amendment (strike may not, substitute shall not)**
- **L.004: Boundary Amendment**
- **L.006: Board Members**
- **L.008: Transparency and Oversight**
- **L.009: Reporting and Auditing**
- **L.010: Public-Private Partnership Contracting Clarification**
- **L.011: Rail Commission's recommendation for NW Rail Alignment**

Critical Questions to Advance Vision

- How can the team work together with RTD? With NFRMPO Premium Service study?
- Can FRPR interoperate with freight rail?
- What information do local agencies need to endorse the station area planning efforts?
- What is the logical phasing to plan, design and construct FRPR?
- How can FRPR partner with AMTRAK?

- Can a new governance structure be created and secure sustainable funds to plan, design, construct, maintain and operate a system?
- How to prioritize FRPR with the state's competing transportation programs and limited funding?
- Can the program demonstrate eligibility and NEPA readiness for a federal approval process?

Ways to Learn More



-Project Website

<https://www.frontrangepassengerrail.com/>

-FAQs

-Follow up meeting with your organization

Please contact:

Spencer Dodge, Rail Commission Liaison

spencer.dodge@state.co.us

David Singer, Passenger Rail Program Manager

david.singer@state.co.us