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Council Finance Committee Hybrid Meeting
CIC Room / Teams
October 2, 2025
4:00 - 6:00 pm

Council Attendees: Mayor Arndt, Emily Francis, Kelly Ohlson, Susan Gutowsky,
Tricia Canonico

Staff: Kelly DiMartino, Tyler Marr, Caleb Weitz, Ginny Sawyer, Emily Land
Dianne Criswell, Terri Runyan, Taryn Moran, Joe Wimmer, Jen
Poznanovic, Victoria Shaw, Wendy Bricher, Jo Cech, Carissa Clinton,
Alexis Coppello, Christina Cornelius-Spight, Caryn Champine, Monica
Martinez, Seth Lorson, Jeff Rochford, Gerry Paul, Trevor Nash, Adam
Halvorson, Renee Reeves, Garrison Dam, Lawrence Pollack, Jill Wuertz,
Jacob Castillo, Drew Brooks, Josh Birks, Mallory Gallegos, Peggy
Streeter, Annabelle Phillips, Carolyn Koontz

Others:

Meeting called to order at 4:00 pm

Approval of minutes from September 4, 2025, Council Finance Committee meeting.
Motion made to approve by Emily Francis and seconded by Kelly Ohlson.
Approved via roll call.

A) DOLA Passenger Rail Grant and Local Match Funding

Monica Martinez, FP&A Manager, PDT
Caryn Champine, Director, PDT
Seth Lorson, Sr. Planner, Transportation

Monica Martinez – FP&A Manager, PDT

Caryn Champine – Director, PDT

SUBJECT

Local Match Support for the Front Range Passenger Rail Grant

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The City of Fort Collins has been awarded funding under the Colorado Department of Local Affairs ("DOLA") Energy and Mineral Impact Assistance Fund ("EIAF") program for station location and preliminary design of the Front Range Passenger Rail project ("FRPR"), a new passenger rail system along the Front Range. The total award amount is \$400k and requires a 50/50 local match. Loveland and Fort Collins are partners on this award with Loveland receiving \$150k and Fort Collins receiving \$250k. As such, Fort Collins must provide a match of \$125k.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends using 2025 Tax Climate to meet the \$125k local match requirement.

BACKGROUND / DISCUSSION

The City of Fort Collins is partnering with Loveland on the use of \$400k in DOLA grant funding. These funds are to be used for station location and preliminary design of the FRPR. At this time, staff is seeking the recommendation of Council Finance Committee on whether to fund the \$125k local match, and, if so, direction on the use of 2050 Tax Climate to fund this need.

CITY FINANCIAL IMPACTS

Use of \$125k of the 2050 Tax Climate for local match.

DISCUSSION / NEXT STEPS

Kelly Ohlson; it is a stretch for me to use Climate funds. I would like to send a message for the future that every time we do anything by any stretch of the imagination, related to climate

This is new and is gray to me but has more of a connection than some. We should be helping people on building things and energy things, retrofitting and then we don't have any money left due to death by a thousand cuts on all of these other things. A bigger number would have really got my attention but \$125K for a local match – I am probably ok with it

Kelly DiMartino; this is my summary, this is not the easy button. Be very diligent in using it for the intended purpose.

Mayor Arndt; what does 'the study' entail? I see preliminary design and identification of a location. I talked with Tracy, and he said there were basically two options for location, so do we need \$400K to find out the location?

Seth Lorson; there are a lot of moving parts to this one. This project is twofold; right now, they are working on a demonstration project called joint service, which is that initial project. There are two locations we are looking at for that, and we would like to look at them deep enough to identify the full cost and buildout for the intended design for joint service, but then there is a long-term station that really needs to be identified. The initial criterion for joint services is 'cheap and fast'.

Mayor Arndt; \$400K for cheap and fast? To spend that much on a study when we have two locations identified. I know there is a big push for front range passenger rail, and the joint service has been described to me as cheap and fast (like a bench and a covering)

If there are only 1-2 locations, I am not questioning you, but really questioning the state on why don't they just give us the money and not make us do the match?

Seth Lorson; we only have \$250K and Loveland has another \$150K.

Mayor Arndt; why wouldn't it go together? Does Loveland get a station?

Seth Lorson; yes

Emily Francis; I am confused as to what it is covering; is it site analysis for those two sites and the long term?

Seth Lorson; there will have to be more funding to be able to design and engineer the future site. Preliminary evaluation of seven sites we are looking at now which are all the way from Vine and Linden to the south transit station.

Mayor Arndt; so, we only have \$250K because Loveland has their share – so, it is not \$400K. So, it is coming from the 2050 tax, I totally agree with you on that. If it was from the General Fund, it would be a hard no for me.

Kelly Ohlson; can we get specific details on what we get directly for the \$400K?

Seth Lorson; I do have a scope of work outline for the \$250K. We plan to issue an RFP as soon as we can. Service is expected to be in 2029, so we want to be able to get ahead of it and have the community input as well as design for first joint services as well as this long-term consideration for a site. So, we are looking at evaluating seven different sites as well as community engagement, putting site plans together, engineering, working with front range passenger rail district and BNSF on an operations plan. We are looking at economic development, future funding - how can we use this as a catalyst project in the TOD (Transit-Oriented Development) overlay zone, how do we connect in other modes of transportation into it and for our pedestrian network, how can we make sure it is a walkable space.

Kelly Ohlson; are we doing this or contracting most of it out?

Seth Lorson; all going to a sub-contractor, consultant services who are experts in this area.

Kelly Ohlson; is that who came up with \$400K?

Seth Lorson; it is what we could get from DOLA, max for the Tier 2 grant. This is the fourth grant we have looked at for this effort.

Kelly Ohlson; have we hired that group?

Seth Lorson; no, we are issuing an RFP after we get approval

Kelly Ohlson; I am a yes, but this is a bit of a challenge for me as this is kind of a soft cost in climate versus something that has direct impact that can be measured – it is really not a match for building renovation -

Emily Francis; what happens after, and do we know the cost?

Seth Lorson; we will identify the cost during this phase – what a station will cost - working directly with a political and changing entity – this new Joint Services Executive Oversight Committee represented by the Governor's office, RTD, CDOT and other entities. They are pushing it forward a little quickly, wanting service to start in 2029. What we would like to do is to assert our own autonomy and be able to say, this location works for the city of Fort Collins. We haven't done any community engagement so far about a new train station coming to Fort Collins. We need that input and we need to do a technical analysis. What is the best station for ridership and community connection?

Emily Francis; what happens in the next phase?

Seth Lorson; we should have enough information to be able work with joint services. We think they are going to pay for the pad, the station amenity itself. The confusion is that we are not sure, they haven't told us anything certain yet so in that uncertainty we feel like we need to grab on to it and gain an understanding of what is going on and use our own process.

Tyler Marr; we are sitting on some buffer in the climate portion of the 2050 tax. Council has expressed a willingness to help the county with their grant. That is later than we expected but still underway. I don't know that there is an immediate trade off of something that won't happen as we are sitting on some buffer in the tax.

Mayor Arndt; I won't say no, but I would say no more money until the tax passes. The Front Range Passenger Rail. I don't want Fort Collins to invest our precious dollars or to carry this – we need to get the district to vote yes. I would caution giving any more money until that passes and we know that this is a distinct possibility for Fort Collins.

Tricia Canonico; there should be more information coming in the next month or two with more certainty around the temporary station location

Mayor Arndt; if they know what the location is, what is the grant for?

Tricia Canonico; this is for the temporary location which could be different from the permanent location. That would be something to defer to staff, there are more technical questions on why the temporary platform is up in the air

Kelly DiMartino; there has been an idea put out for a preferred temporary station location which does have some technical challenges. We need some additional due diligence before we could even say, yes this is a viable temporary location.

Emily Francis; more information

DRAFT