



## Work Session Memorandum

Date: June 1, 2026  
To: Mayor and City Councilmembers  
Through: Kelly DiMartino, City Manager <sup>DS</sup>  
Caryn Champine, Director, Planning, Development and Transportation <sup>Initial</sup>  
From: Seth Lorson, Senior Transportation Planner <sup>Initial</sup>  
Subject: May 26, 2026 Work Session Summary: Front Range Passenger Rail and Joint Service Update

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### Bottom Line

The purpose of this memo is to document the summary of discussions during the May 26, 2026 Work Session. All Councilmembers were present.

### Discussion Summary

Sal Pace, General Manager for the Front Range Passenger Rail District, provided a presentation about the planned first phase of service “Joint Service” and the long-term vision for the Colorado Connector “CoCo”. He also requested that Council consider a resolution of support for the planned inter-city passenger rail service.

The discussion was generally focused on the chosen station location, Drake Station. Some Councilmembers were supportive of the location noting that it’s central to the entire community and will provide an economic boost for Midtown. Support for the station location also noted the efficient use of public resources because of its reduced cost due to the ease of development which, in turn, facilitates the compressed timeline with service starting on January 1, 2029.

Some Councilmembers noted concern about the Drake Station location citing that Downtown or East Vine Street would be preferable for delivery of riders to the city’s primary activity center and additional space for redevelopment respectively. Additional concerns were voiced about the quick timeline, creating a lack of communication and engagement with the community to get a better understanding of who will ride the train and why.

Despite the above concerns, there was sufficient support from Council to bring forward the resolution.

## **Next Steps**

City Council will consider a resolution of support at the June 16, 2026 Regular Meeting.

## **Follow-up Items**

Questions/Comments:

### Traffic

- How will the additional trains affect traffic congestion?
  - The passenger trains are planned to be significantly shorter than the freight trains currently travelling through Fort Collins. CoCo's northernmost location will be Drake Road, so it will only cross 5 streets in Fort Collins (Trilby Road, Harmony Road, Horsetooth Road, Swallow Road, and Drake Road). Considering these factors we do not anticipate long traffic delays. City Traffic Engineering and Operations will be part of the station planning process and will provide recommendations and strategies to consider ease of all travel modes.

### Resolution

- To what does the proposed resolution commit the City?
  - The proposed resolution simply shows support for Front Range Passenger Rail, agrees to take the FRPR District's money via local return, and adopts The Narrative (Exhibit A, included with the resolution). The resolution does not express support for the ballot initiative nor a new tax.

### Drake Station

- What is the cost estimate for moving the station to Downtown or East Vine Drive?
  - The city has a request with CDOT to get more detailed cost information regarding the improvement of the railroad for passenger rail to Downtown and East Vine Drive. This information will be available for Council's consideration of the resolution.
  - A major factor beyond cost of improving the railroad for passenger rail that removed the Downtown Transit Center from consideration is the physical limitations. According to initial design estimates, the siding to accommodate a 700-foot platform will need to be ~1,000 feet long. This would require the closing of one or both streets (Laporte Avenue and Maple Street) and removal of a corner of the Civic Center Parking Structure.

- One comment speculated that there are not anybody living within ½ mile of Drake Station.
  - Within ½ mile radius of Drake Station has a population of 1,975 people and 3,712 jobs with an additional 808 bedrooms currently being developed.
  - The Drake Station planning process will include targeted Transit Oriented Development (TOD) implementation strategies to optimize current conditions and plan for future transformation and redevelopment in Midtown, nearby neighborhoods, adjacent employment areas and CSU campus.
- Please provide economic analysis of Downtown versus Drake Station and include hotel and retail spending.
  - To the extent feasible, initial market opportunities were considered in evaluating the different station locations. Given multiple factors of current population, employment, transportation connectivity and development opportunity, the Drake Station scored higher than the Vine/Linden location from an economic perspective.
  - A more detailed economic assessment could provide more specific analysis on economic impacts, market opportunities such as hotels, and sales tax projections. However, it is not possible to complete that work in advance of the June 16 Regular Council Meeting.
  - City Staff are committed to further economic and market assessment for the Drake Station during the station planning process. This will allow the City to establish a local strategy and optimize the success of this station location.

### Community Engagement

- The timing of Joint Service has not afforded the city the ability to engage with the community on station location and residents' likelihood and purpose of riding the train.
  - Feedback on the different station options would have added value to the process and improved our understanding of our community's needs and desires. In addition, there were many parameters constraining the options and the decision was not in our control.
  - City Staff was successful in influencing the location of the Joint Service station to relocate from South Transit Center to the Drake Station, a more accessible location for our community.

- As part of the Drake Station planning process, City Staff will have the opportunity to engage with the community and gain greater insights on who and how our community will use and need the train over time. These inputs will be used to shape the vision and implementation strategy for the station area.