

AGENDA ITEM SUMMARY

City Council



STAFF

Caryn Champine, Director, Planning, Development and Transportation
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SUBJECT

Resolution 2026-090 Supporting the Front Range Passenger Rail District’s Narrative Summary for Proposed Fort Collins Station and the Development of Passenger Rail Service Along the Front Range.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The purpose of this item is to consider a Resolution of support for the Front Range Passenger Rail (FRPR) project.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends adoption of the Resolution.

BACKGROUND / DISCUSSION

The proposed inter-city passenger rail, Colorado Connector (“CoCo”), and its starter service “Joint Service” were presented to Council at the May 26, 2026, Work Session (AIS packet attached). City Council engaged in a discussion about adopting a resolution for support (attached) of the proposed CoCo service. The discussion primarily surrounded the merit of the Drake Station location. The discussion summary and follow-up information was provided in the Work Session Summary memo, dated June 1, 2026 (attached).

Additional follow-up from May 26, 2026, Work Session:

- How will the additional trains affect traffic congestion?
 - (Response from CDOT, not captured in June 1 Work Session Summary) Most freight trains on the Front Range Sub range from 5,000-15,000 ft. while passenger trains will be around 500-700 ft. Gate down time will be significantly shorter with passenger trains (under two to three minutes) but adding passenger trains even in the initial Joint Service phase will double the amount of trains through town as compared to freight only operations today. At full build out of FRPR it will quadruple the amount of trains compared to existing freight traffic.
- What is the cost estimate for moving the station to Downtown or East Vine Drive?
 - (Response from CDOT, not captured in June 1 Work Session Summary) Cost per mile for Positive Train Control (PTC): \$2,500,000; cost for street crossings to Downtown: \$15,000,000; capital

project costs to East Vine Drive: \$22,000,000; capital project costs for Downtown (including street closures, crossing removals, on-street parking removal, right-of-way and property acquisition based on assessed values): \$75,000,000 - \$100,000,000. Unknown costs include BNSF needs for fencing, street closures, and future track expansions.

- Current estimate for costs to move the FRPR station:
 - Downtown: ~\$125,000,000-150,000,000
 - East Vine Drive: ~\$50,000,000-60,000,000
- Can Local Return funding pay to move the station?
 - Given a successful ballot initiative, the City of Fort Collins would receive "local return" funds in the amount of approximately \$3,000,000 per year for 25 years (with an additional 10% incentive for endorsement of support before June 30, 2026, making the total \$3,300,000/yr.) The preliminary information provided by the FRPR District says that funds must "support the design, construction, operation, and maintenance of a passenger rail station, and may support broader station-area investments that enhance access, connectivity, and functionality, including multimodal access and first- and last-mile improvements." However, the final funding conditions, scopes, and obligations (specific use of the funds) will not be formalized until the City engages in an Intergovernmental Agreement (IGA) with FRPR District following voter approval.
 - If moving the station to a location further north meets the conditions of the IGA then the local return funds could contribute to moving the station location. This would mean that the City of Fort Collins would be the sole funding source for station area development activities noted above.

Summary of Staff Recommendation:

- Staff recommends approval of the Resolution of support. Staff has worked directly with FRPR District, CDOT, and the Governor's Office over a compressed timeline to ensure the train station is centrally located and therefore serves the Fort Collins community equally.
- The Drake Station location benefits the Fort Collins community and FRPR by being located on the MAX BRT line, providing 100+ parking spaces, having two regional trails close by (Mason Trail and Spring Creek Trail), does not have the physical constraints of other locations, is supported by BNSF Railroad, and is in Midtown which has much opportunity for transit-oriented development (TOD) redevelopment.
- Moving forward with the Drake Station gives staff the opportunity to begin engaging the community in a meaningful way about their needs and vision for the station and the future of Midtown.

CITY FINANCIAL IMPACTS

None associated with this Resolution. The Resolution does not include financial commitments.

BOARD / COMMISSION / COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION

Transportation Board is crafting a letter of support.

PUBLIC OUTREACH

Some preliminary engagement has been done by the Front Range Passenger Rail District and by City staff. The Station Planning process will include a community engagement plan.

ATTACHMENTS / LINKS

1. [Work Session Agenda Item Summary and attachments, May 26, 2026](#) (link)
2. Work Session Summary memorandum, June 1, 2026
3. Presentation
4. Resolution 2026-090