



# Front Range Passenger Rail Update

**DRCOG RTC and Board**

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September 2024

**FRPR** FRONT RANGE  
PASSENGER RAIL

# Agenda

- Front Range Passenger Rail Refresher
- Project Updates
- Legislative Developments
- Accomplishments and Two Year Lookahead

# Refresher

A city skyline at dusk with construction cranes and a train in the foreground. The text is overlaid in large white letters.

A NEW WAY TO  
CONNECT  
COLORADANS

# Vision

- Safe, efficient and reliable travel
- Job growth and economic development
- Mitigated congestion and support of Colorado's air quality goals
- Expanded access to housing and employment options

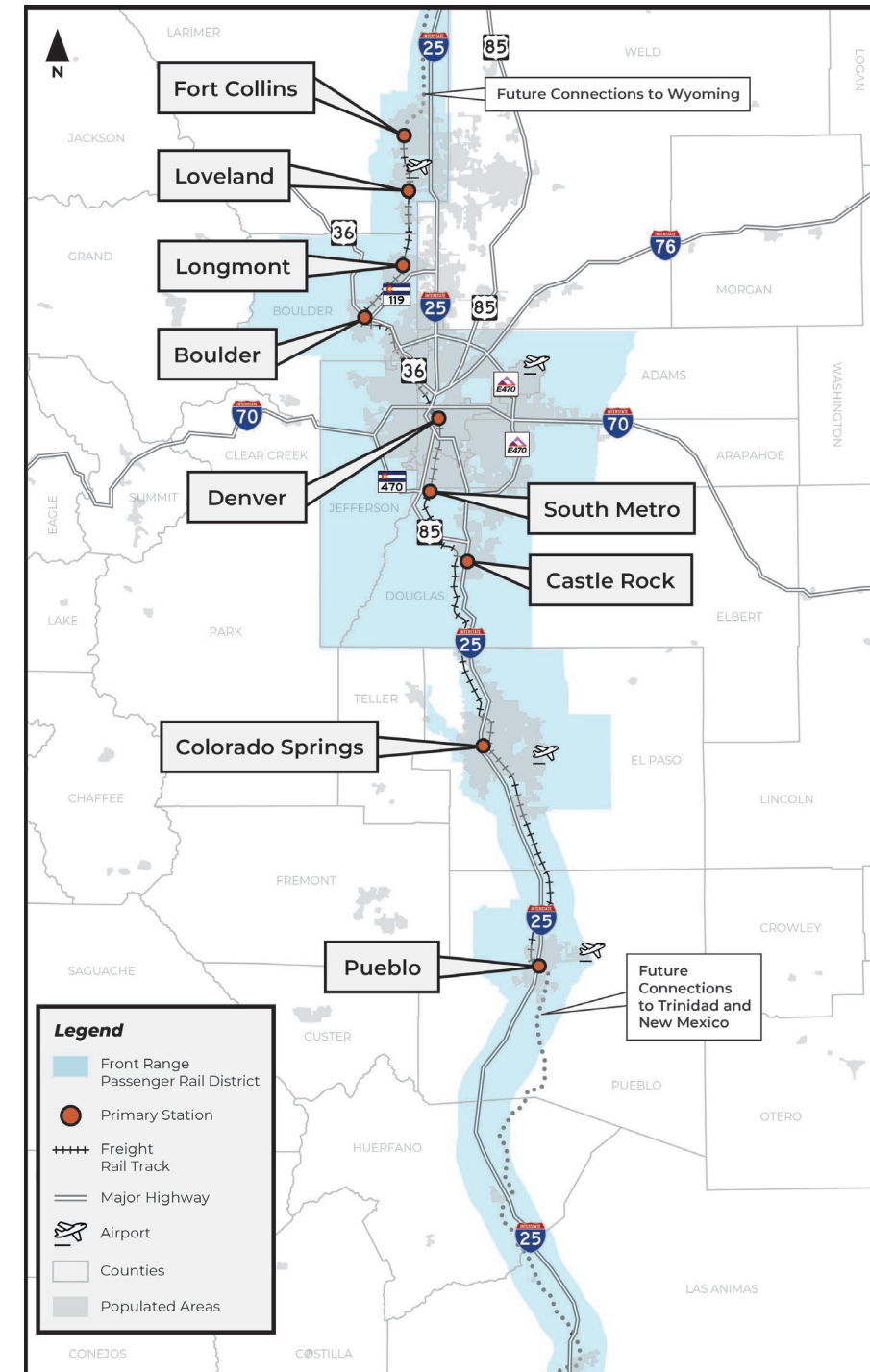


# Overview

- Using existing tracks to minimize costs and expedite service
- Nine initial primary stations from Fort Collins to Pueblo
- Long-term vision of connecting to Wyoming and New Mexico
- Goal: Initial service start in 2029 and six round trips daily by 2035
- Intercity rail service is faster; 79-90 MPH max speed
- Travel time estimate from Fort Collins to Pueblo is just over three hours

# Front Range Passenger Rail District

- Created by Colorado Legislature
- Largest special district in state
- Statutory direction: plan, design, finance, construct, operate, and maintain a passenger rail system along the Front Range
- 24-member board of directors, 5 staff members, initial budget of \$4M
- Partnerships with CDOT, RTD and FRA



# Project Updates



# Corridor Identification and Development Program (FRA)

- Comprehensive intercity passenger rail planning program established through Bipartisan Infrastructure Law
  - Creates a pipeline of projects ready for implementation
- Accepted into Program in December 2023
  - District is eligible for millions of \$ in grant funding with 80/20 federal/local match for service planning and environmental clearance



*Governor Polis speaking at CIDP Acceptance Event*

# Planning and Project Development

## ► Federal Service Development Plan

- Complete: Route, Station Area, Ridership Analyses
- Underway: Operations and Service Modeling with Host Railroads
- Next Steps: Capital Projects and Costs, O&M Costs, Financial and Implementation Plans
- Completion: Late 2025

## ► Upcoming Public Outreach: Alternatives Analysis Report (Q4 2024)

- Public and stakeholders can sign up for updates at [ridethefrontrange.com](https://ridethefrontrange.com)

# Local Station Planning

- Station location criteria finalized
- Operations, environmental, connectivity
- District/local roles and opportunities
- Process for secondary stations
- Site visits with local jurisdictions
- Pin in the map for nine primary stations before Spring '26



# Legislative Developments

# 2024 Legislative Session

## HB 1012

### *Front Range Passenger Rail District Efficiency*

- Clarify Board terms and nominating timeline for MPOs
- Quorum clarification
- More efficient elections
- Board delegation of authority
- Boundary clean-up

## SB 184

### *Support Surface Transportation Infrastructure Development*

- New project-based funding for transit and rail
- Financing opportunities support federal funding requests for early capital construction
- Advancing passenger rail service from Denver to Fort Collins

## SB 230

### *Oil and Gas Production Fees*

- Funding for expanded transit service, passenger rail and wildlife projects
- Supports operations and capital
- Connecting existing and new transit and rail services statewide

# Colorado SB 24-184

- CTIO collects rental car fees for intercity bus and passenger rail services:
    - Bustang
    - Front Range Passenger Rail
    - Mountain Rail
  - Revenue collection begins late '25; \$58M/year
  - Capital project list developed through negotiations with the RRs and environmental clearance
  - In near-term, able to advance projects with independent utility
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- Collaboration between District, RTD, CDOT and CTIO to prioritize near-term rail service from Denver to Fort Collins
    - Partner working groups: governance, finance, operations and engagement
    - Linkage between FasTracks and FRPR

# Accomplishments and Next Steps

# Accomplishments

- ✓ Accepted into Corridor ID Program; one of two projects nationwide on Step 2
- ✓ Route and station markets adopted by Board
- ✓ Station location criteria finalized; local coordination started
- ✓ Extensive outreach throughout entire corridor
- ✓ Demonstration train from Boulder to Longmont; first passenger rail service since 1960s
- ✓ Public opinion polling shows strong support for project and charts course for communications plan
- ✓ Preliminary financial modeling to evaluate costs and sales tax ask of voters





# Ballot Timing Decision

- District Board evaluated information presented through workshops, survey data, financial modeling and community input
- Focus on creating a viable transportation project before going to the voters for a sales tax approval
- Fiscal stewards to best use the recently passed state funding mechanisms, leverage resources by continuing to work with partners and consider opportunities to buy down the ask to the voters
- Continuing education and outreach to communities, business leaders and local governments
- Completing Service Development Plan

# Two Year Lookahead

- Service Development Plan and NEPA
- SB24-184 implementation
- Initial host railroad agreements
- Financial plan
- Economic Impact Study
- Community education and outreach
- Coalition building
- Ballot initiative

# Colorado's Opportunity

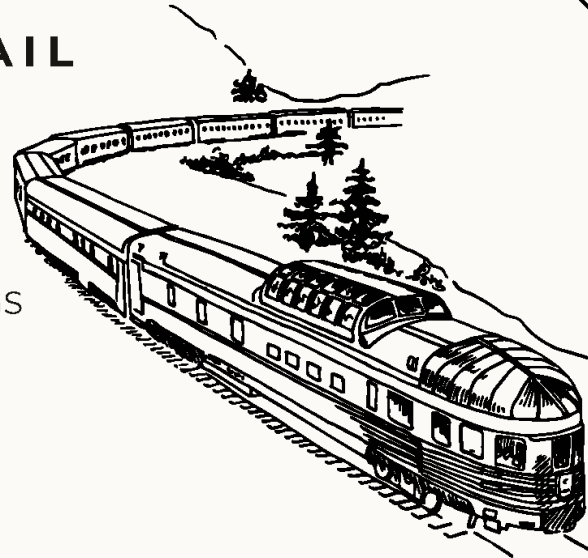
- Intercity passenger rail is fast, safe and reliable
- Bipartisan Infrastructure Law offers federal funding opportunities
- Creation of District to build upon partnership with CDOT and RTD
- Headquarters of rail innovation outside Pueblo at the Transportation Technology Center
- Effectively serve Coloradans' transportation needs now and, in the future



# How Will You Use the Train?

## FRONT RANGE PASSENGER RAIL TRAIN RIDE

FORT COLLINS    BOULDER    CASTLE ROCK  
LOVELAND       DENVER     COLORADO SPRINGS  
LONGMONT      SOUTH METRO    PUEBLO



**ADMIT ONE**

[RideTheFrontRange.com](https://www.RideTheFrontRange.com)



**HOW WILL YOU  
USE THE TRAIN?**