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Transportation

Front Range train eyes investing hundreds of millions around two Denver stadiums



View of Burnham Yard facing the northeast

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Story Highlights

- The Front Range Passenger Rail District will evaluate special event stops for the Coco Connector train.
- Denver could receive \$9.9 million annually if the city supports the rail project.
- Union Pacific and BNSF must approve service agreements for the stadium stops south of downtown.

Broncos and Summit FC fans could see hundreds of millions of dollars invested in an alternative to driving to the teams' planned stadiums on game days.

The Front Range Passenger Rail District is exploring the addition of special event stops at Burnham and Santa Fe Yards for its Coco Connector train, which would link Fort Collins and Pueblo and run on existing tracks through the heart of Denver.

It could bring more than \$300 million in new investment into the areas around planned Denver stadium developments, the district says.

The district is expected to ask voters in 32 municipalities along the train's route for a 1/3 cent sales tax that would generate \$295 million each year. A vote on the rail district measure could come as soon as November.

Plans developed over the last several years have been for the train to make stops in 12 cities, serving an estimated 1.6 million riders annually, with Union Station as Denver's sole stop.

But as the Broncos have pursued [Burnham Yard](#) as the NFL team's preferred site for a new stadium, the traffic that could pass through surrounding neighborhoods has been a [major concern voiced by the community](#). One solution the team has suggested is the Coco Connector.

The train would run along Union Pacific's and BNSF's tracks that neighbor both the Broncos' and Summit FC's stadium developments. The Broncos included a potential stop for the train when it submitted its large development review preapplication to the city in November.

"Even before we saw it on the Broncos' plan, we thought of them as critical transportation hubs," FRPR general manager Sal Pace said. "Both of the sports teams really want this connectivity."

The FRPR board voted in April to evaluate the feasibility of special-event stations. The train would only service the stops on game days and would start service in 2032, one year after the Broncos plan for their stadium to be complete. The board has also floated the idea of having the sports teams share some of the cost.

The Broncos identified a location southwest of the stadium off Eighth Avenue for a station. The Denver Summit FC stadium project, which is building a permanent home field for the professional women's soccer team, would likely place its FRPR stop at RTD's I-25 and Broadway station, which is connected to the Santa Fe Yards stadium property by a pedestrian bridge.

"We feel quite certain that these are going to be the strongest performing stops for ROI along the whole network," Pace said. "There's probably no better example or use of intercity passenger rail than these types of special event stops that will ease congestion."



Due south view of Burnham Yard.

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The core infrastructure investments at every station, including the station platforms themselves, would be paid for by the rail district. Each municipality with a station would then receive annual funding for 25 years, proportional to population, to spend on the station area and to build out multimodal connections to the stops.

A city is also eligible for a 10% funding boost from FRPR if the municipal government passes a resolution acknowledging the train would support city goals.

Including the boost, Fort Collins, which adopted a resolution of support on June 16, will receive \$3.3 million per year if the measure passes.

Currently, Denver would receive \$4 million annually for the Union Station stop, but Pace is proposing to raise the figure to \$9 million to account for the two station additions. If Denver passes a proclamation similar to Fort Collins's, as has been proposed by Denver City Council Member Darell Watson, that annual total would become \$9.9 million.

Additionally, Pace wants the district to spend at least \$100 million on additional transit and pedestrian infrastructure at the stadium stops, he said. That would bring the total investment from FRPR in Denver to nearly \$350 million over 25 years, the district says. The FRPR board must still approve both proposals.

The Coco Connector is expected to begin an initial service of three round trips a day between Fort Collins and downtown Denver's Union Station in 2029. The funding for that service and a [track-sharing agreement with BNSF](#) have both been secured.

But any service to the two new stadiums south of downtown would require the sign-off of BNSF and Union Pacific. The two railroads are still negotiating with the district on an agreement for the section from Union Station to Pueblo.

"Union Pacific is aware of the proposed special stations and look forward to continued progress and solidification of plans," a spokesperson for the railroad said. BNSF and the Broncos did not respond to requests for comment.

In July, FRPR district staff expects to have further information on the feasibility of the event stations for the board, including updated ridership numbers.

The Denver City Council is scheduled to vote on the FRPR proclamation on July 13.

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T H E L I S T

LGBTQ-Owned Companies

Number of full-time employees in the Denver area as of April 1, 2026

Rank	Prior Rank	Business name
1	1	Blue Pan Pizza
2	2	Proto's Pizza Inc.
3	3	Brothers Enterprises
View This List		