

**RESOLUTION NO. 2025-17  
OF THE FRONT RANGE PASSENGER RAIL DISTRICT**

**ADOPTING THE DISTRICT'S 2026 BALLOT ACCESS PLAN**

WHEREAS, pursuant to Section 32-22-101, *et. seq.*, C.R.S. (the “Front Range Passenger Rail District Act”), the Front Range Passenger Rail District (the “District”) was established as a body politic and corporate and a political subdivision of the State of Colorado to research, develop, construct, operate, and maintain an interconnected north-south passenger rail system along Colorado’s front range (“Front Range Passenger Rail” or “FRPR”) that is competitive in terms of travel time for comparable trips with other modes of surface transportation; and

WHEREAS, pursuant to Section 32-22-105(1)(a)(I), C.R.S., the District’s Board of Directors (the “Board”) is vested with the power to adopt policy for the District; and

WHEREAS, pursuant to Section 32-22-109(1), C.R.S., before submitting a question to establish any District tax to the registered electors, the District is required to publish a proposed plan for Front Range Passenger Rail service and a detailed financing plan, and to make every reasonable effort to secure federal funding to support the development, financing, construction, operation, or maintenance of FRPR; and

WHEREAS, the District is further required to engage in comprehensive planning, public consultation, and technical coordination with local governments, state agencies, regional partners, and the public prior to making any decision regarding referral of a ballot measure; and

WHEREAS, the District has undertaken extensive work to develop a coordinated Ballot Access Plan, attached hereto and incorporated herein as **Exhibit A**, including an operating plan, station-area planning, precinct-level analysis, legislative readiness, financial modeling, and robust public engagement planning; and

WHEREAS, the Ballot Access Plan outlines the steps and requirements necessary for the District to prepare for a potential 2026 ballot measure, including potential statutory updates, financial plan development, outreach implementation, coordination with Class 1 railroads, and preparation of materials necessary for a Board vote to refer; and

WHEREAS, adoption of the Ballot Access Plan establishes a unified framework to guide the District’s pre-ballot activities, ensures transparent governance, and supports the District’s ability to meet statutory obligations under the Front Range Passenger Rail District Act, the Fair Campaign Practices Act, and other applicable state and federal requirements; and

WHEREAS, the District recognizes that adopting the Ballot Access Plan does not commit the Board to refer a measure to the 2026 ballot, but rather provides the structure,

sequencing, and deliverables necessary for the Board to make an informed decision in 2026;  
and

WHEREAS, the Board's Finance Committee, Planning Committee and Executive Committee have each reviewed key elements of the Ballot Access Plan, and District staff recommend its adoption to guide coordinated preparation efforts during calendar year 2026.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Board of the District to approve and adopt the Ballot Access Plan in the form attached hereto, and further to direct the General Manager to implement the Ballot Access Plan as set forth herein, subject to such other subsequent Board actions as might be required in accordance with applicable state law.

APPROVED this 21<sup>st</sup> day of November 2025.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'A. N. B.', written over a horizontal line.

Chair

ATTEST:

*Joan Peck*

Secretary

**EXHIBIT A  
(Ballot Access Plan)**

*[Separately attached.]*

# **Front Range Passenger Rail District**

## **Ballot Access Plan**

**2025–2026**

**Prepared for:**

Front Range Passenger Rail District Board of Directors

**Prepared by:**

Sal Pace, General Manager

**Date:**

November 2025

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### **Introduction**

The Front Range Passenger Rail District (FRPRD) is approaching the culmination of four years of foundational planning, technical development, public consultation, and corridor coordination. As the District prepares for a potential decision to refer a revenue measure to voters in November 2026, it must complete a comprehensive set of planning, financial, operational, legislative, and community-engagement tasks to ensure that any referral is grounded in technical rigor, transparency, and statutory compliance.

This Ballot Access Plan outlines the full scope of activities required between now and July 2026 to position the District for a potential Vote to Refer. The plan reflects guidance from federal partners, state leadership, local governments, transportation agencies, community stakeholders, and the FRPRD Board. It also incorporates the substantial technical work already completed—including the Service Development Plan (SDP), Joint Service negotiations, early station-area planning, precinct-level analysis, and financial modeling conducted by Ernst & Young.

The purpose of this plan is to ensure that FRPRD:

- Completes all technical and statutory prerequisites for referral
- Provides the public with clear, factual information about proposed service
- Engages local communities meaningfully and equitably
- Incorporates updated financial and operational assumptions into its planning
- Coordinates legislative needs in advance of the 2026 session

- Establishes the administrative readiness required to place a measure on the ballot

This document does not advocate for any electoral outcome. All activities described here are designed to comply fully with Colorado's Fair Campaign Practices Act (FCPA), TABOR, the Uniform Election Code, and all other applicable state and federal requirements.

Together, these workstreams form a unified roadmap that enables the District to complete Pre-Referral Readiness (Phase 1) and prepare informational materials for the period leading up to a potential referral decision (Phase 2). Should the Board decide to refer a question, all research and publicly funded pre-ballot activities will cease, and the District will transition into compliance mode per state law.

## Timeline & Phase Structure

### Overview of the Three Phases

FRPRD's Pre-Referral Readiness effort is organized into three phases aligned with statutory, legislative, technical, and outreach milestones. Each phase concludes with a **Board Go/No-Go decision point** to assess readiness and determine whether to proceed to the next stage.

- **Phase 1: Technical & Planning Completion (Nov 2025 – April 2026)**  
Completion of all technical, financial, research, legislative, and station-planning prerequisites required before public polling and full outreach can occur.
  - **Phase 2: Public Engagement & Ballot Preparation (May 2026 – July 2026)**  
Refinement of financial modeling, outreach delivery, town halls, and preparation of ballot-ready documents.
  - **Phase 3: Post-Referral Compliance (Begins only if the Board votes to refer)**  
All research and outreach cease immediately under Colorado law, and FRPRD enters compliance mode.
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### Estimated Timeframes for Each Major Activity

#### SDP Technical Refinement

- Phase 1 Technical Refinement: **Nov 2025 – Feb 2026**
- Station Determination Finalization: **Feb – Apr 2026**
- Phase 2 Light Updates: **May – Jun 2026**

#### Station Area Planning

- Corridor-wide Assessment: **Nov 2025 – Feb 2026**
- Station-Specific Planning: **Jan – Jun 2026**
- Station Planning Packets: **Mar – Jun 2026**
- MOUs with Communities: **May – Jul 2026**

#### Research & Data Analysis

- Precinct-Level Analysis: **Nov 2025 – Feb 2026**
- Demographic/Economic/Revenue Modeling: **Dec 2025 – Mar 2026**

- Polling Wave 1: **Apr – May 2026** (Go/No-Go #1: May 2026)
- Polling Wave 2: **Jun – Jul 2026** (Go/No-Go #2: July 2026)
- Research Freeze (if referred): **July 2026**

### **Legislative Strategy**

- Preparation & Briefings: **Dec 2025 – Jan 2026**
- Legislative Session Work: **Jan – Apr 2026**
- Post-Session Integration: **Apr – May 2026**

### **Financing Plan Development**

- Phase 1 Directional Modeling: **Jan – Apr 2026**
- Phase 2 Finalized Modeling: **May – Jul 2026**
- Financial + Implementation Plans: **Jun – Jul 2026**

### **Outreach & Engagement**

- Friends Platform Build-Out: **Nov 2025 – Jan 2026**
- Coalition Partners (Phase 1): **Jan – Apr 2026**
- Station-Area Partners (Phase 1): **Jan – Apr 2026**
- Town Hall Program Wave 1: **Jan – Apr 2026**
- Town Hall Program Wave 2: **May – Jul 2026**
- Text-Based Outreach: **Jan – Jul 2026**

### **Prepare for Referral**

- Railroad & County MOUs: **Apr – Jul 2026**
- Branding Exploration: **Apr – Jun 2026**
- Ballot Material Preparation: **Jun – Jul 2026**
- **Board Vote to Refer: Late July 2026**

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## **2. Service Plan & SDP Technical Refinement Strategy**

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### **2.1 Purpose of SDP Technical Refinement**

The Service Development Plan (SDP) is the federally recognized planning document that defines the proposed operating structure, service plan, alignment, infrastructure needs, and capital program for Front Range Passenger Rail. While the SDP is very close to a finalized long-range service plan—and reflects years of technical analysis and coordination with the Federal Railroad Administration—it is not the version that will ultimately be presented to the public as the District’s operating plan.

As the District prepares for a potential 2026 ballot referral, a focused set of technical updates, clarifications, and refinements will be required to ensure the Front Range Passenger Rail service plan is accurate, implementable, and aligned with community planning. These refinements are not changes to the core project; rather, they are targeted adjustments that must be resolved in Phase 1 to support downstream financial modeling, route alignment decisions, and corridor-wide planning coordination.

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### **2.2 Scope of Technical Refinements**

The refinement process will focus on those components of the service plan requiring additional clarity or adjustment based on:

- Ongoing Joint Service negotiations
- Updated station-area planning findings
- Community and jurisdictional coordination
- Operational feasibility considerations
- Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) feedback
- Board priorities and policy direction

The goal is to finalize a uniform, technically sound operating plan ahead of final financial modeling and Phase 2 public outreach.

#### **2.2.1 Final Station Location Determinations**

Several station locations must be finalized quickly due to dependencies with precinct analysis, district boundary considerations, and legislative timelines. Priority items include:

- Douglas County alignment and station determination
- Adjustments involving Joint Service stations
- Confirmation of platform configurations and approach geometry in constrained segments

These decisions must occur early in Phase 1 to ensure that precinct-level analysis, station-area planning, and legislative work remain synchronized.

### **2.2.2 Joint Service–Related Adjustments**

Discussions with RTD, the Governor’s Office, and BNSF have identified Joint Service refinements that must be incorporated into the SDP, including:

- Track rights and operating windows
- Shared-station operating assumptions
- Fare/payment system integration
- Platform design and interface standards
- Safety and dispatch protocols
- Unique constraints on shared infrastructure segments

Integrating these refinements will ensure consistency between the Joint Service framework and the corridor-wide operating plan.

### **2.2.3 Special Event Service Feasibility**

FRPRD will evaluate the feasibility of incorporating:

- Special event stops (e.g., stadiums, major gatherings)
- Event-day supplemental service
- Coordination with local transit partners for last-mile access

This analysis will clarify operational options while preserving the integrity of the baseline service plan.

### **2.2.4 Operational Modeling Adjustments**

Additional refinements may include:

- Updated recovery times, timetable assumptions, and schedule robustness

- Layover and storage requirements
- Integration of updated FRA modeling inputs
- Other minor operational adjustments

These refinements will not materially alter the SDP but are necessary to reflect finalized operating conditions.

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## **2.3 Process and Coordination Structure**

### **2.3.1 Coordination with SDP Team (CDOT / HNTB / FRA)**

FRPRD will work directly with the existing SDP consultant team—who already maintain the operating models, simulation tools, and FRA coordination—to run updated scenarios and incorporate refinements. Because this team controls the backend modeling infrastructure, leveraging the established framework is the fastest, most accurate, and most cost-effective way to finalize the technical plan. All refinements will be documented formally for Board consideration.

### **2.3.2 Coordination with the Planning Committee**

The Planning Committee will play a central role in:

- Reviewing and validating refinements
- Recommending final station-location decisions to the Board
- Providing policy guidance on Joint Service issues
- Integrating station-area planning insights into the technical plan
- Ensuring operational assumptions reflect community priorities

Timely Planning Committee action is critical to meeting Phase 1 deadlines.

### **2.3.3 Technical Advisory Team**

FRPRD will convene a small internal/external technical advisory group—including rail operations specialists, planners, and schedulers—to:

- Validate modeling assumptions
- Conduct targeted analyses
- Advise on feasibility and operations

### **2.3.4 Board Adoption of Refinements**

All material refinements will be formally adopted by the FRPRD Board during Phase 1 to ensure that:

- A unified operating plan is presented during public outreach
  - Legislative discussions reflect finalized technical assumptions
  - Station-area planning efforts rely on stable inputs
  - Boundary-refinement recommendations incorporate final station siting
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## **2.4 Timeline and Phase Alignment**

### **Phase 1 (Now–April 2026) — Majority of Work**

- Finalize station locations, including Douglas County
- Incorporate Joint Service negotiation outcomes
- Update assumptions and modeling inputs
- Evaluate special event service feasibility
- Validate schedules, recovery times, and equipment planning
- Coordinate with local jurisdictions and planning teams
- Prepare refined operating diagrams for public dissemination
- Present refinements to the Board for adoption

All refinements must be fully completed and documented by the end of Phase 1.

### **Phase 2 (May–July 2026) — Minimal Work**

Phase 2 is primarily focused on outreach and legislative follow-through. Only minor adjustments may occur, such as:

- Incorporating updated local planning inputs
- Responding to Board or legislative requests
- Preparing refined graphics for public packets

No major technical changes should occur in Phase 2.

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## **2.5 Outputs and Deliverables**

The SDP Technical Refinement effort will produce:

- A refined service plan incorporating targeted adjustments
- Final station location decisions
- Updated operating schedules, timetables, and diagrams
- Documentation integrating Joint Service agreements
- A special event service feasibility memo
- Updated technical assumptions for precinct analysis and legislative strategy
- A Board-adopted set of refinements for public release

These deliverables will support the Research Strategy, Legislative Strategy, Station Area Planning, and Public Engagement programs throughout 2026.

### 3. Station Area Planning Strategy

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#### 3.1 Purpose of Station Area Planning

Station area planning is a central pillar of the District’s pre-ballot readiness work and is distinct from the Service Development Plan (SDP) Technical Refinement. While the SDP effort focuses on the rail service itself—alignment, operations, engineering, timetable, on-track activities, and Federal Railroad Administration compliance—station area planning focuses on the communities, their vision, and the built environment around each station.

The goal of this work is to support each community in developing a clear, locally driven concept for what their station area should become. This includes land-use planning, economic development potential, pedestrian and bicycle access, multimodal integration, first- and last-mile connections, transit-oriented development (TOD) frameworks, and placemaking concepts that reflect community goals.

To support transparency and public understanding, FRPRD will create a standardized planning packet for each station area. Each packet will compile:

- Local plans and studies
- Community visions and conceptual designs
- Maps, sketches, and consistent illustrative graphics
- Summaries of nearby development activity
- Station concepts generated by communities with FRPRD assistance
- A clear, accessible explanation of each station’s opportunities, constraints, and next steps

These materials will be written and illustrated for public comprehension, allowing residents to easily understand how station areas may evolve and how the rail system integrates with local planning.

Because each community along the corridor is at a different level of readiness, FRPRD will provide both a standardized regional framework and tailored technical support. This ensures that station planning is aligned with community values, regional mobility objectives, and the SDP’s technical parameters.

Station area planning is also essential for transparent governance: it provides the public, local elected officials, and the Board with consistent, objective information about each community's status, progress, and planning capacity.

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### **3.2 Comprehensive Station Area Planning Assessment**

FRPRD will complete a corridor-wide station area planning assessment using a standardized methodology. This assessment will establish a baseline for each community and identify where further planning, technical assistance, or intergovernmental agreements are needed.

The assessment will cover all thirteen station areas:

- The nine primary SDP stations
- The three Joint Service stations
- Trinidad, which has a Southwest Chief platform but no station facility

#### **Assessment Elements**

The assessment will review the following for each station area:

- All existing station plans, subarea plans, mobility studies, and land-use documents
- Gaps in planning coverage or technical detail
- Local planning capacity, staffing, and consultant support needs
- TOD opportunity areas, land-use patterns, first/last-mile connections, multimodal access, density considerations, and placemaking strategies
- Alignment between local planning efforts and the SDP's technical constraints and station siting
- Opportunities for shared frameworks or regional coordination

This baseline assessment will identify which communities are prepared for next-phase planning and which require more foundational work.

#### **Current Status**

Some communities—such as Denver, Boulder, and Pueblo—have completed or initiated station-related planning. Others are in early exploration stages.

Station planning will occur concurrently with SDP Technical Refinement, which will finalize station locations, platform configurations, and operational requirements. Final station siting decisions emerging from the SDP work will directly inform the community planning process and the contents of the standardized station packets.

### **Next Steps**

The assessment will guide:

- Community-specific planning recommendations
- Tools and templates for local planning
- Identification of potential intergovernmental agreements
- Prioritization of technical assistance

### **Phase 2 (May–July 2026)**

During Phase 2, FRPRD will synthesize station-area findings into corridor-wide summaries and share them with local governments and the Board. Phase 2 will also culminate in the development of community-specific station concepts, including visualizations, site diagrams, and planning frameworks.

Critically, station area planning will be completed—even during Phase 2—regardless of whether FRPRD moves forward with a ballot measure, as this work is essential for long-term project readiness.

Phase 2 will conclude with draft Memoranda of Understanding (MOUs) for each station jurisdiction, outlining commitments, planning milestones, TOD goals, and coordination expectations.

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## **3.3 Technical Coordination and Local Government Support**

Because local planning capacity differs widely across jurisdictions, FRPRD will provide targeted technical support to help communities advance or refine their station area work.

### **Technical Support Activities**

The District's team will:

- Review existing materials for completeness and technical quality
- Provide detailed feedback on draft plans

- Create standardized planning frameworks and templates
- Assist communities in scoping studies, RFPs, or technical analyses
- Provide planning, design, and technical writing support
- Conduct preliminary site analysis or conceptual planning for low-capacity communities
- Offer subject-matter expertise in TOD, multimodal connectivity, complete streets, placemaking, and urban design

This work will be closely coordinated with local planning departments, FRPRD staff, and—where applicable—CDOT.

### **Multi-Jurisdictional Coordination**

The consultant team will support consistent application of planning frameworks across all communities while ensuring that each station area reflects local context and goals. Activities include attending local planning meetings, technical working sessions, and alignment of local planning with the SDP.

### **Current Status**

FRPRD has initiated small contracts with its preferred consulting team and intends to expand that scope to a full station-area planning contract. Coordination protocols with local governments are being developed.

FRPRD also intends to set aside funds to assist communities with limited planning resources—ensuring equitable readiness across the corridor.

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## **3.4 Standardized Planning Assessment Materials**

To ensure clarity, transparency, and public accessibility, FRPRD will produce standardized, high-quality planning packets for each station.

### **1. Public-Facing Summary Assessment (Visual Packet)**

Includes:

- Context maps
- Summary of planning status
- Key frameworks (TOD, multimodal, land use, density)

- Opportunities and constraints
- Walkability and first/last mile analysis
- Concept drawings or site visualizations
- Recommended next steps

## **2. Technical Backup Documentation**

- Comprehensive planning process review
- Analysis of land use, mobility, density, development potential
- Gaps or areas needing further work
- Data tables, maps, diagrams

### **Quality Standards**

All materials must be:

- Corridor-consistent
- Visual and intuitive
- Professionally formatted
- Objective, highlighting each community without comparison

Packets will be used throughout Phase 1 and Phase 2 for public engagement and internal readiness.

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### **3.5 Transit-Oriented Development (TOD) Framework**

FRPRD will create a corridor-wide TOD Framework aligned with best practices and concepts from previous mobility-focused work. Topics include:

- TOD principles and design guidelines
- VMT reduction and multimodal integration
- Wayfinding and transit network coordination
- Walkability, complete streets, and placemaking
- First/last-mile strategies including micromobility
- Land-use and density considerations supporting housing goals

- Public-realm and urban design concepts
- Economic development and value-capture opportunities

This framework will be adaptable for communities at all levels of planning capacity.

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### **3.6 Station Area Planning Agreements**

FRPRD will prepare station area planning agreements—anticipated as MOUs—with local governments. These will define:

- Planning standards
- Coordination expectations
- Benchmarks and milestones
- TOD and multimodal access goals
- Readiness checklists

#### **Current Status**

Initial templates are under development and will be reviewed at the upcoming Board retreat.

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### **3.7 Project Management and Deliverables**

The multi-jurisdictional planning effort will require:

- Monthly progress reports
- Regular meetings with FRPRD staff and communities
- Budget and risk tracking
- Quality assurance
- Workshop facilitation

All deliverables—including visual packets and draft MOUs—must be completed by June 2026.

## **4. Research & Data Analysis Strategy**

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### **4.1 Purpose of Research**

The Front Range Passenger Rail District (FRPRD) will base its planning and public decision-making on objective, data-driven analysis. To meet statutory obligations and support transparent governance, the District must ensure that its recommendations are grounded in credible research, clear methodologies, and an accurate understanding of public attitudes, demographic trends, and jurisdictional alignment.

This research program—combining precinct-level analysis, demographic and economic modeling, projected tax revenue evaluation, polling, and voter-records-based insights—will help the District:

- Assess public awareness and understanding of passenger rail proposals
- Evaluate regional patterns in support, opposition, and undecided sentiment
- Identify outreach gaps and informational needs
- Analyze demographic, economic, tax revenue, and jurisdictional trends along the alignment
- Inform legislative adjustments to District boundaries
- Support equitable and data-informed public engagement and planning

All research activities are strictly informational and non-advocacy and must comply with Colorado’s Fair Campaign Practices Act, TABOR, and the Uniform Election Code.

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### **4.2 Precinct-Level Analysis & Boundary Evaluation**

A core component of FRPRD’s 2025–2026 research agenda is a comprehensive precinct-level analysis, as outlined in the District’s RFP for Precinct-Level Data Analysis and District Alignment Recommendations.

When the District was created through Senate Bill 21-238, the rail alignment had not yet been finalized. With the alignment now established, the District requires a detailed evaluation of whether existing boundaries appropriately reflect the communities most directly served by the corridor.

#### **Scope of Work**

The selected consultant will:

- Analyze precinct-level demographic trends
- Overlay the finalized rail alignment with all precincts along the corridor
- Evaluate adjacent precincts for potential service-area relevance
- Identify population, economic, tax revenues, and mobility patterns that may inform boundary refinements
- Develop maps, visualizations, and analytic materials to support Board deliberations
- Produce a written report outlining findings and potential legislative adjustment options
- Present findings to the FRPRD Board or designated committees

### **Current Status**

The District plans to execute a contract with a consultant in November, 2025. A draft report is scheduled for January 10, 2026, and the final report for January 24, 2026.

### **Next Steps**

These findings will directly support potential statutory adjustments to FRPRD's boundaries. With the General Assembly convening in early January, deliverables must be timed to support immediate legislative engagement.

### **Phase 2 (May–July 2026)**

Minimal work is expected during Phase 2; most analysis will be completed during Phase 1.

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## **4.3 Polling & Survey Research Program**

To complement precinct-level data and demographic modeling, FRPRD will conduct structured polling to gather reliable insights about public awareness and informational needs as Phase 1 concludes.

### **Polling Objectives**

- Establish baseline awareness of Front Range Passenger Rail
- Assess public understanding of FRPRD's statutory responsibilities
- Measure perceptions of passenger rail benefits, costs, and concerns

- Identify demographic and geographic patterns in support and opposition
- Evaluate responsiveness of informational materials
- Track changes in public awareness over time

### **Data Sources & Methodology**

The polling program will include:

- Regionwide baseline polling
- Sub-regional district-specific polling
- Oversamples in targeted station-area communities
- Testing informational themes (not ballot language)
- Qualitative methods such as listening sessions or interviews

Additional contextual datasets will include census data, transportation models, demographic projections, and station-area planning insights.

### **Current Status**

FRPRD is evaluating use of its previously contracted polling firm. Polling will occur near the end of Phase 1 and after the legislative session, particularly if boundary refinements are adopted.

### **Phase 2 (May–July 2026)**

A second tracking poll will measure changes in awareness following town halls, outreach activities, and the launch of the Friends of Front Range Rail platform.

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## **4.4 Demographic, Economic, Taxing-Potential & Mobility Modeling**

In addition to precinct-level analysis and polling, the research program includes comprehensive modeling to understand population dynamics, economic activity, mobility flows, and potential tax revenue capacity.

### **Taxing Potential Analysis**

FRPRD will evaluate:

- Estimated tax revenue under various revenue mechanisms
- Geographic variations in taxable activity

- Revenue projections at precinct, municipal, and county levels
- Sensitivity to economic or demographic shifts
- Comparisons of alternative funding mechanisms

### **Analytical Components**

- Census-based demographic modeling
- Population growth projections
- Employment and commuter-flow analysis
- Housing and land-use scenario modeling
- Economic development and station-area opportunity mapping
- Environmental justice and equity indicators
- Transit accessibility and mobility gap analysis

### **Current Status**

Modeling will be conducted in coordination with the precinct-level consultant and station-area planning teams, incorporating updated assumptions from the SDP Technical Refinement effort.

### **Phase 2 (May–July 2026)**

All major modeling must be completed early in Q1 to align with legislative needs. Phase 2 will focus on refinement and integration.

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### **4.5 Phase 3: Cessation of Research if a Measure Is Referred**

In accordance with state law and FRPRD procurement requirements, all research activities will cease immediately once the Board votes to refer a ballot measure to the 2026 ballot.

- No public funds may support research intended to influence an election.
- All contractors must deliver completed work before cessation.
- Any remaining analytical work will resume only after the election.

This ensures full compliance with FCPA, TABOR, and the Uniform Election Code.

## 5. Legislative Strategy for the 2026 Session

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### 5.1 Purpose of Legislative Engagement

As the District completes Phase 1 of its technical, planning, outreach, and research work, several statutory adjustments may be necessary during the 2026 legislative session to align the District's structure with the finalized alignment, ensure legal clarity around a potential 2026 ballot referral, and support the administrative needs associated with preparing a ballot question.

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### 5.2 Boundary Refinement Based on Precinct-Level Analysis

#### Purpose of Boundary Refinement

The precinct-level analysis described in the Research Strategy will provide a data-driven evaluation of:

- Which precincts are directly adjacent to or influenced by the corridor
- Which precincts may be misaligned with the final SDP alignment
- How population, economic patterns, and mobility flows relate to station areas and service zones
- Whether refinements would improve fairness, accuracy, or functional governance

#### Legislative Need

If warranted by the findings, statutory adjustments may be required to:

- Add precincts clearly connected to the corridor
- Remove precincts outside the service area
- Clarify boundaries in rapidly growing regions
- Align district boundaries with finalized station locations

Boundary refinement would not alter local control or representation, but would ensure that the District footprint accurately reflects the communities tied to the service corridor.

#### Timing and Process

Because the General Assembly convenes in early January, the precinct-level contractor's schedule is designed to deliver actionable recommendations by mid-January 2026. This will enable FRPRD to:

- Brief legislators
  - Provide objective, non-advocacy analysis
  - Support drafting of any boundary-refinement bill
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### **5.3 Authority for Sectional or Tiered Ballot Referral (If Pursued)**

The District may wish to explore whether statute should permit—but not require—the option of referring a ballot measure to:

1. The full District (current baseline)
2. A subsection of the District
3. Multiple sections simultaneously, accompanied by governance adjustments if necessary

This section does not assume that such authority will be requested or recommended. Rather, the District may need to understand its legal and structural options before making its 2026 ballot decision.

### **Rationale for Evaluating Sectional Referral Authority**

A statutory review could examine whether:

- Certain segments have distinct planning or readiness levels
- Costs, ridership, or local benefit vary across the corridor
- A multi-tiered governance model could activate in specific segments
- Financial administration can remain compliant and unified under Title 32

### **Potential Legislative Questions to Explore**

- Could FRPRD be permitted—but not obligated—to refer separate ballot measures, including simultaneously?
- Would new governance structures or representation models be required under such a scenario?

- Would financial or administrative segregation be necessary?
- What guardrails are needed to maintain fiscal integrity?

Any exploration of these questions would occur only after Board direction and appropriate legal analysis.

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#### **5.4 Conditional State Appropriation for Ballot Access Costs**

During the 2026 legislative session, the Governor’s Office intends to support a conditional appropriation of \$1 million to assist FRPRD with ballot access costs paid to county clerks.

##### **Conditions for the Appropriation**

The appropriation would:

- Be contingent on the FRPRD Board voting to refer a measure to the ballot
  - Be restricted to allowable administrative and statutory costs related to election administration
  - Not support advocacy, persuasion, or campaign activity under any circumstances
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#### **5.5 Additional Statutory Clarifications Potentially Needed**

As the District completes the SDP Technical Refinement, station-area planning, and precinct-level analysis, additional statutory clarifications may emerge. These adjustments—if any—would be administrative in nature and intended solely to ensure clarity, alignment, and compliance in advance of a potential ballot referral. No specific changes are proposed at this time.

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#### **5.6 Timeline and Phase Alignment**

##### **Phase 1 (Now–April 2026)**

- Finalize legislative team and begin initial outreach to legislators
- Secure bill sponsors
- Conclude precinct-level analysis
- Finalize SDP Technical Refinement

- Identify any needed statutory updates
- Prepare informational briefings for legislators
- Support drafting and passage of legislation

### **Phase 2 (May–July 2026)**

Most legislative activity will be completed during Phase 1. Phase 2 may include:

- Post-session follow-up
- Integration of statutory changes into District planning
- Continued briefings for local governments and stakeholders

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## **5.7 Guiding Principles for Legislative Strategy**

FRPRD will approach the 2026 legislative session guided by the following principles:

- **Objectivity:** Provide legislators with technical information only; avoid advocacy.
- **Transparency:** Ensure that statutory adjustments are grounded in completed research and planning.
- **Compliance:** Adhere strictly to FCPA, TABOR, and the Uniform Election Code.
- **Regional Fairness:** Ensure that statutory updates enhance representation and accuracy across the corridor.
- **Preparation:** Support District readiness for a potential ballot decision, regardless of the outcome.

## 6. Financing Plan Strategy

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### 6.1 Purpose and Framework

Before referring any ballot question to voters, the Front Range Passenger Rail District (FRPRD) Board must adopt two foundational financial documents:

1. **A Financial Plan** describing how any proposed funding source will be managed, allocated, and safeguarded.
2. **An Implementation Plan** demonstrating how revenues will be used to deliver measurable outcomes.

Together, these plans will establish a framework for fiscal transparency, accountability, and statutory compliance under the FRPRD Act and Title 32, C.R.S. They will ensure that any proposed ballot measure is supported by clear, technically sound, and publicly understandable financial documentation.

These plans will build directly on the substantial technical groundwork already completed through the Service Development Plan (SDP), the Joint Service negotiations with BNSF, and the financial modeling performed by Ernst & Young (EY) in 2024. Together, these efforts provide a robust analytical foundation for the District's financial planning, ensuring that cost estimates, revenue assumptions, and funding structures are well-informed, consistent, and defensible.

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### 6.2 Objectives of the Financial Plan and Implementation Plan

#### 6.2.1 Financial Plan Objectives

The Financial Plan will:

- Define projected revenues, costs, and timelines for capital improvements, operations, and maintenance.
- Establish a comprehensive revenue model incorporating tax-base estimates, bonding capacity, and potential matching funds.
- Clarify spending priorities and phasing to help voters understand how early revenues will translate into visible results.
- Include a public-facing executive summary to build confidence in the District's fiscal discipline and management integrity.

#### 6.2.2 Implementation Plan Objectives

The Implementation Plan will:

- Link financial resources directly to service outcomes and corridor build-out.
- Identify performance benchmarks and accountability mechanisms to ensure transparency in expenditure and delivery.
- Outline a reporting framework for annual updates to taxpayers and the legislature.

Preparation of both plans will involve close collaboration among FRPRD staff, financial advisors, and CDOT. Together, they will form the backbone of the District’s ballot narrative and the foundation for long-term public trust in its financial stewardship.

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## **6.3 Building on Existing Financial Work**

### **6.3.1 Service Development Plan (SDP)**

The federally recognized SDP provides detailed capital and operating cost estimates that serve as the baseline for all subsequent financial projections. These assumptions will be refined to reflect final station locations, alignment updates, and other technical adjustments identified through the 2025–2026 refinement process.

### **6.3.2 Joint Service Negotiations**

Negotiations with BNSF and RTD have generated refined cost data for track access, access fees, and operations. These updated figures will be incorporated into the FRPRD financial framework to ensure consistency between operating assumptions and capital requirements.

### **6.3.3 Ernst & Young Financial Modeling (2024)**

In 2024, EY conducted substantial financial modeling for FRPRD, developing an advanced analytical platform capable of testing long-term revenue scenarios, bonding capacity, and expenditure phasing. This model will serve as the core tool for integrating updated SDP and Joint Service data—making the refinement process efficient, cost-effective, and technically robust.

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## **6.4 Core Components of the Financing Plan**

### **6.4.1 Capital Cost Refinement**

The financial plan will update and reconcile capital cost estimates derived from the SDP and EY modeling to incorporate:

- Final station siting and platform configurations

- Joint Service infrastructure agreements
- Construction phasing and escalation assumptions

#### **6.4.2 Operating and Maintenance (O&M) Cost Refinement**

Updated O&M projections will integrate:

- Service assumptions from the SDP Technical Refinement
- Baseline parameters from EY's 2024 model
- Costs aligned with Joint Service operations, including access and dispatching fees

#### **6.4.3 Revenue Mechanism Evaluation**

FRPRD will evaluate permissible funding mechanisms under Title 32, including:

- Sales and use tax
- Hybrid or phased mechanisms
- Federal matching funds and low-interest loan programs such as RRIF

Each mechanism will be modeled using ranges, not fixed amounts, to support early-stage polling and public communication.

#### **6.4.4 Bonding and Long-Term Financing**

Using EY's existing framework, FRPRD will test debt-service capacity and repayment stability under potential revenue mechanisms, evaluating:

- Revenue-backed bonding potential
- Debt coverage ratios and repayment schedules
- Compatibility with federal loan and credit programs

#### **6.4.5 Taxing Potential and Geographic Revenue Analysis**

Integrated with the Research Strategy, precinct-level and demographic data will allow FRPRD to analyze:

- Regional variations in taxable activity
- Revenue generation potential by county and corridor segment
- Sensitivity to economic growth and population trends

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### **6.5 Phase 1 Financial Modeling (Now – April 2026)**

Phase 1 will focus on producing **directional financial estimates**, rather than final ballot numbers, to inform polling, legislative briefings, and public education. This phase consolidates SDP, Joint Service, and EY financial data into a single framework.

#### **Phase 1 Priorities**

- Integrate SDP, Joint Service, and EY data into a single consolidated financial model.
- Develop capital and O&M cost ranges (low/medium/high).
- Model revenue ranges for potential tax mechanisms.
- Produce cost illustrations for polling.
- Prepare clear, non-advocacy financial summaries explaining potential funding structures.

These estimates will allow the District to test public understanding of funding options, evaluate revenue feasibility, and support legislative discussions.

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## **6.6 Phase 2 Financial Refinement (May – July 2026)**

If the Board advances toward a potential ballot referral, Phase 2 will translate Phase 1 findings into precise, ballot-ready financial models.

### **Phase 2 Work Includes:**

- Converting cost and revenue ranges into specific tax levels.
- Updating EY's model with final inputs and legislative outcomes.
- Finalizing debt-capacity and repayment schedules.
- Preparing the Financial Plan and Implementation Plan for Board adoption.
- Producing clear, public-facing materials that describe fiscal structure and accountability measures.

Phase 2 will conclude with a Board-ready financial recommendation integrating all technical and fiscal elements into a cohesive, voter-facing funding framework.

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## **6.7 Guiding Principles**

- **Foundation in Existing Work:** Build on the SDP, Joint Service, and EY models.
  - **Accuracy:** Ensure all assumptions reflect the most current and credible data.
  - **Transparency:** Provide clear, accessible financial summaries for public understanding.
  - **Conservatism:** Use validated and cautious financial estimates.
  - **Neutrality:** Maintain an informational—not advocacy—approach.
  - **Equity:** Evaluate fiscal impacts across regions and income levels.
  - **Accountability:** Link revenues directly to service outcomes and public reporting.
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## **6.8 Next Steps**

FRPRD will secure a qualified financial modeling contractor—potentially from its existing consulting bench—to support the integration of updated data from the SDP refinements, Joint Service negotiations, and boundary analysis. This work will position the District to deliver credible financial information for polling, legislative coordination, and future public engagement.

## 7. Outreach and Public Engagement Strategy

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### 7.1 Statutory Context and Responsibility to Engage the Public

As a political subdivision of the State of Colorado, the Front Range Passenger Rail District (FRPRD) is obligated to conduct broad, equitable, and transparent public engagement as part of its planning and decision-making processes. Colorado law requires the District to consult with local governments, planning agencies, community-based organizations, and the general public while evaluating proposed rail alignments, station-area concepts, service characteristics, environmental considerations, and potential funding mechanisms.

As the Board evaluates whether to refer a potential revenue measure to voters in 2026, the District must ensure that residents across the multi-county region have meaningful opportunities to learn about the work completed to date, offer input on next-phase planning, and understand how Front Range Passenger Rail may integrate into their communities.

All outreach activities are strictly **informational and non-advocacy**. Consistent with Colorado law—including TABOR, the Fair Campaign Practices Act, and the Uniform Election Code—the District and its contractors will **immediately cease all outreach work** if the Board votes to place a measure on the 2026 ballot.

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### 7.2 Friends of Front Range Rail Platform and Engagement Dashboard

To support transparent, two-way communication with the public, FRPRD is developing a digital engagement platform—**Friends of Front Range Rail**. This platform will serve as the centralized hub for community involvement and provide:

- Access to planning materials
- Meeting calendars and sign-ups
- Online engagement tools
- Station-area pages and community discussions
- Methods for residents to share information with neighbors
- Data tracking of participation and engagement

A dedicated **Friends/Data Program Coordinator** will manage the dashboard, oversee coalition pages, support the field program, and ensure compliance with state data-privacy and public-records requirements.

**Current Status:**

FRPRD is prepared to execute a contract in November, 2026 with a consultant and is on schedule for a January 2026 launch, aligned with the start of district-wide town halls. Recruitment into the Friends platform will occur via town halls and social media.

**Phase Two (May–July 2026):**

Continued volunteer onboarding, expanded analytics, and supportive data summaries for Board deliberations.

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**7.3 Coalition and Stakeholder Outreach**

FRPRD will contract one Coalition Engagement Partner for each major constituency sector. Each partner must complete a uniform deliverables package to document meaningful engagement across the region.

**Deliverables for Each Coalition Engagement Partner**

- **40** one-on-one stakeholder meetings
- **10** organizational sign-on letters
- **25** opinion-leader sign-on letters
- **50** Friends of Front Range Rail sign-ups (primarily via town halls)
- **Monthly** stakeholder meetings
- **Two** in-person town halls with **75+ attendees**, coordinated with the Town Hall Production Manager

**Coalition Sectors**

- Business leaders & major employers
- Labor organizations
- Environmental & conservation groups
- African American community groups
- Hispanic/Latinx organizations

- Military & veteran stakeholders
- Higher education institutions (with on-campus organizers as needed)

**Current Status:**

FRPRD is preparing to hire a Coalition Outreach Coordinator, who will manage all coalition partners, station-area partners, and the Town Hall Production Manager.

**Phase Two (May–July 2026):**

Each partner will host one additional coalition-specific town hall and continue stakeholder meetings.

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## **7.4 Station-Area Community Engagement**

FRPRD will hire one Station-Area Community Engagement Partner for each station community, with priority hiring for communities where planning work is already most advanced.

### **Station Communities**

Pueblo, Colorado Springs, Douglas County, Littleton, Denver, Boulder, Longmont, Loveland, Fort Collins, Westminster, Broomfield, Louisville, and Trinidad.

### **Deliverables for Each Station-Area Partner**

- **40** one-on-one stakeholder meetings
- **10** organizational sign-on letters
- **25** opinion-leader letters
- **50** Friends sign-ups
- **Monthly** community meetings
- **Two** in-person town halls per station, before May 15, 2026

Partners will work closely with the Station-Area Planner to ensure alignment between technical planning and community feedback.

**Phase Two (May–July 2026):**

One additional town hall per station area and continued public engagement.

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## **7.5 Town Hall Program**

FRPRD will conduct **34–40 professionally produced town hall meetings** between January and May 2026—two for each coalition and two for each station area. These events will:

- Present standardized informational materials
- Explain completed planning work
- Provide opportunities for Q&A
- Demonstrate transparency and regional accessibility

A **Town Hall Production Manager** will coordinate venue selection, accessibility, speakers, media, staging, materials, and event reports.

**Phase Two (May–July 2026):**

Approximately **20 additional town halls** will be held.

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## **7.6 Text-Based Outreach for Event Participation**

FRPRD will deploy text-based outreach to provide equitable access to:

- Meeting reminders
- Links to planning materials
- Town hall registration
- Real-time updates

The system will comply with Colorado data-privacy, public-records, and opt-in requirements.

**Current Status:** RFP in development.

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## **7.7 Coordination and Oversight**

FRPRD will retain a **Coalition Outreach Coordinator** to oversee all outreach contractors, including:

- Coalition Engagement Partners
- Station-Area Community Engagement Partners
- Town Hall Production Manager

- Friends/Data Program Coordinator

This role ensures consistent messaging, quality control, and timely execution of all deliverables.

**Current Status:** To be hired first in Phase 1; initial six-month contract.

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## **7.8 Purpose and Outcome of the Outreach Program**

This outreach program is designed to:

- Ensure transparent, inclusive public participation
- Document consultation with local governments and key constituencies
- Equip residents with reliable information ahead of a potential 2026 decision
- Provide the Board with high-quality community insights
- Prepare the region for a potential ballot question **without** advocacy

## **Phase 3 – Mandatory Cessation of Outreach Activities**

If the Board decides to refer a ballot measure, all outreach activities will immediately **stop**, including:

- Town halls
- Coalition engagement
- Station-area organizing
- Dashboard recruitment
- Text-based outreach

Contractors will deliver final products and suspend work until after the election.

## **8. Prepare for Referral**

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### **8.1 Purpose of Final Readiness Actions**

As FRPRD approaches a potential decision to refer a ballot question, several operational, administrative, and partnership steps must be completed to ensure full readiness. These actions will help solidify key relationships, clarify election administration logistics, and position the District to move efficiently into implementation if voters ultimately approve a measure.

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### **8.2 Railroad Coordination and Memoranda of Understanding (MOUs)**

#### **8.2.1 Class I Railroad Coordination (BNSF and Union Pacific)**

FRPRD will prepare Memoranda of Understanding (MOUs) with BNSF Railway and Union Pacific Railroad (UP) outlining mutual expectations for next-phase collaboration ahead of any potential referral. These MOUs will:

- Define the intent to negotiate detailed Access Agreements following the election, if a measure is approved.
- Clarify ongoing coordination on corridor planning, the Service Development Plan (SDP), Joint Service operations, and shared infrastructure considerations.
- Establish communication and data-sharing protocols between FRPRD and the Class I railroads.

Formal Access Agreements—governing track rights, dispatching, safety, and operational details—will only be executed following voter approval and in accordance with federal requirements.

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### **8.3 Ballot Access Agreements with Counties**

Prior to any referral decision, FRPRD will negotiate Ballot Access Agreements with each county clerk within the District's jurisdiction. These agreements will:

- Define the cost structure for ballot placement and election administration.
- Establish consistent communication protocols between FRPRD and county election offices.

The District intends to share ballot access costs proportionally with station communities and partner jurisdictions that directly benefit from inclusion on the 2026 ballot. These agreements ensure full compliance with state election law while promoting fairness in how administrative costs are distributed.

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#### **8.4 Branding and Public Identity**

In preparation for a potential public vote, FRPRD will evaluate and develop early branding concepts to define how Front Range Rail will be presented publicly. This work will:

- Explore potential names and brand identity concepts for the corridor.
- Review national best practices from comparable passenger rail services.
- Develop a unified visual identity suitable for coordination with federal, state, and local partners.

Branding decisions during this period will remain informational and preliminary. However, establishing a coherent brand concept will support clear, engaging communication with the public during outreach and informational activities.

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#### **8.5 Vote to Refer**

Upon completion of the District’s technical, financial, legislative, outreach, and administrative preparations, the FRPRD Board will formally consider a vote on whether to refer a ballot question for the 2026 General Election.

This action will:

- Be based on certified, factual documentation from each work stream.
- Occur only after all statutory and procedural requirements have been met.
- Include a public presentation summarizing the Service Plan, Financial Plan, station-area readiness, and outreach record.

A successful vote to refer would represent the culmination of years of coordinated research, planning, and stakeholder engagement—positioning the Front Range Passenger Rail District to move from planning into implementation in partnership with the people of Colorado.