

DUS News Digest

April 27 – May 3, 2013

Model train club being railroaded at Union Station.....	2
April 27, 2013 <i>The Denver Post</i>	
RTD West light rail line opens with speeches, free rides.....	3
April 27, 2013 <i>The Denver Post</i>	
Union Station Construction Displaces Model Trains.....	5
April 29, 2013 <i>CBS4</i>	
Union Station: Model-train club packs up, new-home option isn't free.....	6
April 29, 2013 <i>Westword</i>	
Union Station-booted model-railroad club will make a stop at History Colorado.....	9
April 30, 2013 <i>Westword</i>	

Model train clubs being railroaded at Union Station

April 27, 2013

By The Denver Post Editorial Board, *The Denver Post*

It sounded great in 2011 when officials with the Union Station Alliance said they wanted to keep the large and elaborate model railroad displays in the basement of the building that have lit up the eyes of children of all ages for nearly 80 years.

"We want to make it more of a museum-like place," Dana Crawford, CEO of the Union Station Alliance said of the basement at the time. "They (the model trains) are a huge asset to the community, and we want to give them more exposure because they aren't seen enough."

Fast-forward to 2013, and the story now has changed dramatically. As The Denver Post's Adrian Garcia reported this week, the two model train clubs that operate the basement displays are being kicked out of the station during renovations and may not be allowed to come back.

Union Station is a community asset, and these train displays have been a part of its heritage for many decades now. It would be wrong to flatly kick the clubs to the curb after giving them assurances they could stay.

Every effort should be made to allow the clubs to stay, and if that's not possible, they should be given special assistance in relocating to affordable digs that are a "museum-like place."

RTD West light rail line opens with speeches, free rides

April 27, 2013

The Denver Post

GOLDEN — The first arm of the metro-wide FasTracks project is like a long-lost friend to long-time Golden residents Charlie and Clare Taylor.

As kids, they remember hopping on the old Denver Tramway System that ran into downtown Denver. The Taylors see the newly opened W light-rail line as a perfect next-generation successor to that past commuter system.

"We have been so excited about this for the past four years," Clare Taylor said. "We'd watch the construction move along, and we just couldn't wait until it's finished."

"We are going to use it to go to the Rockies games downtown," said Charlie Taylor. "You can't beat the convenience."

The Taylors were among the thousands who cheered the opening of the 12.1-mile W Line during ceremonies on a sunny Friday morning at the Jefferson County Government Center.

Officials hailed the W Line — formerly known as the West Rail Line — as a huge step forward in linking the entire metro area through mass transit.

"We are a model for the nation," said Denver Deputy Mayor Cary Kennedy.

Gov. John Hickenlooper and U.S. Sen Michael Bennet also said that Colorado is breaking new ground in providing commuting options.

"This is an example of how fast-moving Colorado is," Hickenlooper said.

Officials said the new line will be a huge job creator for the west metro area, spawning transit-oriented developments around each rail stop. "We will see little villages all along the FasTracks corridor where people will live and shop," said Hickenlooper.

"And all that time we will be eliminating congestion and using less carbon and less energy," he said.

During the four years of construction of the W Line, contractors pumped more than \$356 million into the local economy, said Phil Washington, Regional Transportation District executive director.

The \$707 million W Line is RTD's newest light-rail line and the first corridor completed under the metro-wide FasTracks commuter rail project. The voter-approved \$7.8 billion FasTracks program is the largest transit expansion in the nation.

The W Line runs from Denver Union Station to the Jefferson County Government Center in Golden and through Lakewood and Golden. Light-rail trains will follow the West Rail Corridor, which has been in existence in various forms for more than 100 years.

There was a huge party atmosphere at the dedication ceremony in Golden, with food, bands, gospel singers and performers in Wild West period costumes.

There are 11 stations along the route, as well as six park-n-Ride structures and 5,605 parking spaces. The W Line, officials note, was finished eight months ahead of schedule.

They also predict that 19,300 passengers will ride the W Line on an average weekday in 2013. By 2030, about 29,700 passengers are expected to board the W Line on an average weekday.

At the Friday morning ceremony, Hickenlooper signed two mass-transit-related bills. One is Senate Bill 48, which gives communities new flexibility to spend their share of the \$250 million collected from gas taxes and license plate fees on bike and pedestrian paths and transit projects. The second allows private companies to lease, own or operate public parking structures. That measure will help RTD save money.

Following the opening ceremony, free rides were offered on the W Line, and those who took advantage included June and Carlos Padilla. "It wasn't too bad," said Carlos Padilla. "I'll take the train when I have to go to the courthouse and when it's snowing. That will be nice."

On Saturday, there will be W Line station parties between 10 a.m. and 4 p.m. at many of the stations along the line.

Also on Saturday, the entire RTD light-rail system will be free for the entire day. On Sunday, the W Line opens for the first day of paid service. To help passengers navigate the light-rail system, RTD "ambassadors" will be at all W Line stations to answer questions during the first week of regular service.

Union Station Construction Displaces Model Trains

April 29, 2013

CBS4



(credit: CBS File)

Work is well under way to return Union Station to its full glory and make it the heart of the city of Denver's regional transit system.

But while construction is ongoing, some trains — very small ones — are off their tracks.

“We’re removing pieces of the display that we’ve had down in the basement of Union Station for over 30 years,” explained Chris Rand with the Platte Valley and Western Model Railroad Club.

Those pieces belong to that club's display and are just one of the model railroads that have been housed at Union Station.

Union Station: Model-train club packs up, new-home option isn't free

April 29, 2013, By Patricia Calhoun

Westword



On Saturday, while thousands of freeloaders hopped on board the new [West Line](#) to ride light rail from downtown to Golden and back, members of the [Platte Valley & Western Model Railroad](#) club gathered in the dark basement of the shuttered Union Station and started dismantling the layout they'd initially constructed there three decades ago, a model railroad designed to commemorate the heyday of railroading in the '50s, when people really would "Travel by Train" -- not just across town, but across the country.

But this club has definitely reached the end of the line...at least in Union Station, the Denver landmark that's being redeveloped as not just a multi-modal transportation hub, but a hotel.

Both of the two developers vying to get the Union Station contract had initially promised to let both the PV&W and a second, larger layout, this one started by the Denver Society of Model Railroaders Club almost eighty years ago, stay in the station. Although that meant that the clubs would have to cancel their [public open houses for close to two years](#), they were willing to wait because when the station reopened in the summer of 2014, a whole new audience might discover them. And besides, where else could they go that would provide the same historic setting...for free?

But this month, members of the PV&W learned their layout would have to go, and go soon. And while members of the DSMRC are hopeful that they'll be allowed to stay at Union Station, it doesn't look promising.

Here's an April 24 update on the release that the [Union Station Alliance, the developer that got the contract in December 2011](#), had originally sent me a week ago, when I first asked about the fate of the two model railroad layouts:

As with the renovation of any historic building, there is a time in a renovation when removing hazardous materials and environmental abatement work must begin. This work will allow the building to be renovated to current building code and current life safety standards. As we begin this process, we must remove all items from the basement storage area in order to allow this work to be done. In addition to the abatement work, we will be installing new mechanical systems in the basement of Union Station. The basement of Union Station has been home to two model train clubs for many years.

In an effort to renovate the building and to create a safe environment for future patrons, we must ask these train clubs to move from the building. In an effort to show our ongoing support of the model train clubs, we are working with the clubs to find acceptable space for the storage and potential permanent exhibition space. The HO Club has already been provided with free storage space for their model trains until a permanent location is secured. Also, for permanent exhibition space, we have offered the basement of the Sage Building on 16th & Welton downtown.

As a means of celebrating of our city's heritage, Union Station Alliance is sponsoring the History Colorado Center's upcoming All Aboard Colorado exhibit. Opening in June, this exhibit is a tribute to train travel and will showcase two different model trains for two local clubs: The Platte Valley & Western Model Railroad Club and the Colorado & Great Western Model Railroad Club. We hope that everyone will visit this exhibit and join us in our excitement as we look to opening the historic Union Station train station in 2014.

And on Thursday, Phillip Washington, general manager of RTD, whose board awarded the Union Station contract to the Union Station Alliance, sent this update to the PV&W group: As I stated in my e-mail to you on Monday, it has been the Regional Transportation District's (RTD) and the Union Station Alliance's (USA) ongoing interest in trying to find a workable solution for having the model railroad clubs remain in the basement of the redeveloped Denver Union Station. Since even then, however, it's been brought to our attention that there doesn't appear to be enough space following construction for either to return and feasibly operate as you both do now. As you also know, RTD's master lease with USA provides them the authority to both responsibly redevelop the entire building to finish out their plans for the hotel and other associated amenities as well as to meet local code and National Park Service oversight requirements which have, in part, limited your re-use options to a greater extent than originally anticipated. We understand that USA remains interested in attempting to find a suitable offsite location at this point and we continue to encourage you to work with them to find a solution that best represents all of our interests in having the clubs not only maintain your efforts but also allows the public a continued opportunity to enjoy them as well.

Despite the fact that both statements suggest that the DSMRC will have to move its 6,500 square foot layout, too, the club has yet hear from anyone officially. "We have never received any direct communication from the Union Station Alliance," Hugh Blaney, the group's president, told me Friday. "We made it very clear that this layout is not and cannot be moved. It's not designed to be moved."

And even if it could be moved, where would it go? One foundation has stepped forward to [give the clubs \\$25,000](#) to facilitate their moves, but at this point neither club seems to be seriously considering the basement of the Sage building, the former Fontius building on the 16th Street Mall; that space wouldn't be free, and parking is in short supply in that part of downtown. Still, time is running short -- the PV&W must be out within the month -- and this train is about to leave the station.

Union Station-booted model-railroad club will make a stop at History Colorado

April, 30 2013

By Patty Calhoun, *Westword*



Caution: railroad crossing.

The [Platte Valley & Western Railroad club](#) started packing up its thirty-year-old model-train layout in the basement of Union Station last weekend, with no idea where the 2,000-square-foot display will eventually land.

[Union Station Alliance](#), the developer of Union Station, says it's "offered the basement of the Sage Building on 16th & Welton downtown" -- although club spokesman Tarry Harrison says he hasn't heard about that offer from any source other than *Westword*.

The club *has* heard from both Englewood and Westminster, which would like to make the layout an attraction in those towns. But the club members would rather stay downtown, Harrison says -- and in the interim, they'll be able to get back on track at History Colorado this summer...sort of.

In the same April 24 statement in which Union Station Alliance mentions the Sage building, it adds this:

As a means of celebrating of our city's heritage, Union Station Alliance is sponsoring the History Colorado Center's upcoming All Aboard Colorado exhibit. Opening in June, this exhibit is a tribute to train travel and will showcase two different model trains for two local clubs: The Platte Valley & Western Model Railroad Club and the Colorado & Great Western Model Railroad Club. We hope that everyone will visit this exhibit and join us in our excitement as we look to opening the historic Union Station train station in 2014.

Unlike the PV&W layout, the [Colorado & Great Western](#) is designed as a modular layout, one that can be taken down and set up elsewhere; the club used to be featured at the Westminster

Mall once a month, and it frequently displays at train shows. "It's really a wonderful modular layout," says Harrison. And while his own club's layout isn't designed for temporary displays -- during this past weekend's packing, they had to sacrifice about \$2,000 in turnouts, he notes -- at least it has the members to help with manpower at the C&GW show at the [History Colorado Center](#).

According to History Colorado, *All Aboard Colorado*, which will open on the fourth floor of the center at 1200 Broadway on June 15 (just in time for Father's Day), "will feature a 1,200-square-foot modular train display that is evocative of Colorado landscapes and scenery. Motorized trains will operate at specific times." And members of PV&W will be on hand to flip the switch.

The [Denver Society of Model Railroaders](#), which has a 78-year-old, 6,500-square-foot layout in the basement of Union Station, isn't part of the *All Aboard Colorado* project. But then, unlike PV&W, which got the news that it had to pack up earlier this month, DSMR hasn't been told that it won't be part of Union Station when it reopens in the summer of 2014, according to club president Hugh Blaney. As far as he's concerned, the club will be staying put, as it was promised it could [back in November 2011](#) by the two developers then vying to get the Union Station contract.

"Someday down the road," Blaney says, "we hope to welcome the public to our trains and operations just as we have in the past -- in the basement of Union Station."