

DUS News Digest

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Union Station developers give beloved model train layout the boot 2

April 23, 2013 *Westword*

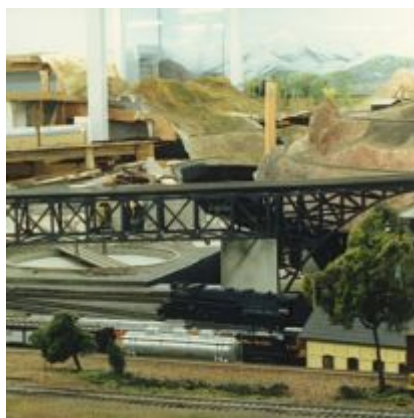
Model trains forced out by Union Station renovation are not certain to return 4

April 24, 2013 *The Denver Post*

Union Station developers give beloved model train layout the boot

By Patricia Calhoun, *Westword*

Apr. 23 2013



A segment of the O Scale.

The beloved [model-train layouts](#) in the basement of Union Station have reached the end of the line. Back when two developers were competing for the contract to redevelop the facility, both promised there would always be a [spot for the model trains](#) -- and the clubs that ran them. And when those rail buffs held one last public open house in November 2011 before shrouding their layouts until the redevelopment was done, they had no doubt that their trains would be back on track in 2014. But now that plan has been derailed.

Union Station Alliance, the outfit chosen by the RTD board to redevelop Union Station, has determined that both train layouts must go.

The Denver Society of Model Railroaders has had its 6,500-square-foot Colorado Midland Railway layout in the basement for close to eighty years; it's the oldest and one of the largest O Scale (1/4 inch = 1 foot) model-railroad layouts in the country. Right next door is a relative upstart: the 33-year-old Platte Valley & Western Model Railroad, a 2,000-square-foot layout that includes a re-creation of the long-gone 16th Street viaduct, a depiction of the old stockyards and packing plant, and a true-to-life scale model of Union Station.

Now you can take the train layout out of that station. Earlier this month, the PV&W crew learned that there would be no place for them in the real, revitalized Union Station, and would have to "tear the damn thing out over the next four weeks," says club supervisor Tarry Harrison. "We've been given our marching orders."

Club members have been looking for a spot where they could rebuild the layout, then open it again to the public, but have been quoted prices of up to \$12,000 a month for rent -- "and we're lucky if we get \$120 a month in donations," Harrison says. "Layouts such as ours exist because

of the largesse of other people." They'd talked to their neighbors, the DSMR, about a spot next to the O Scale layout in Union Station that it uses for a machine shop, but "that club declined to share," he reports.

No reason to fret: The DSMR and its O Scale won't be able to stay, either.

Here's the word that came down late yesterday from Union Station Alliance:

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.

As a means of celebrating of our city's heritage, Union Station Alliance is sponsoring the Colorado History Museum's upcoming All Aboard Colorado exhibit. 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.

USA has mentioned both the National Western Complex and the Colorado Convention Center as possible spots for the layouts to go. The latter might be particularly apt, since Visit Denver, the city's convention and visitors bureau, currently [touts the Union Station model-train layouts](#) as "one of the Mile High City's most exciting, historical attractions."

Model trains forced out by Union Station renovation are not certain to return

April 24, 2013

By Adrian Garcia, *The Denver Post*



(Leah Millis, *Denver Post* file)

Renovators of Union Station have told the operators of two model train layouts to leave their basement home.

Whether the displays will ever return is unclear.

The Union Station Alliance — Larimer Associates, Sage Hospitality, REGen Llc and Urban Neighborhoods — has asked the two model railroad clubs to remove their equipment by mid-May so workers can continue renovation and address hazard issues.

The Platte Valley & Western Model Railroad club has had its O-scale layout in Union Station for more than three decades. The Denver Society of Model Railroaders' Colorado Midland Railway layout has been there longer, nearly 80 years.

The PV&W club complains they are being permanently kicked out, but the Midland group sees it as a necessary short-term move and fully expects to be back.

"We haven't received any notice that we're being evicted," said Hugh Blaney, president of the Midland group.

The president of the PV&W, Chris Rand, however, thinks the alliance has been slowly pushing the [trains out for months](#).

"Every indication we have is that there's no space for us," Rand said. He said the developers have mentioned space is needed for a stairwell or mechanical room.

There is nothing in the alliance's contract that requires them to keep the train layouts, according to Regional Transportation District spokesman Scott Reed. But, while bidding for the Union Station contract [in 2011](#), the alliance reassured the RTD, the public and the model railroaders that the trains would remain and be highlighted.

A Wednesday news release from the alliance left the issue open.

"In an effort to show our ongoing support of the model train clubs," the release said, "we are working with the clubs to find acceptable space for the storage and potential permanent exhibition space."

Both Rand and Blaney said their groups have been working with the alliance to prepare an attractive space for the train layouts. Rand is not certain those plans will pan out.

"They've admitted a couple of times they need to work on better communication with us," Rand said. "... We're getting mixed messages on whether we're coming back or not."