

New Jersey Transit River Line Conrail's Freight Operation

RailwayAge

Light Rail 2016 Conference

RT&S

April 27, 2016



Conrail's Bordentown Secondary

- In 1999, Conrail sold the Bordentown Secondary to New Jersey Transit for the development of their River Line commuter operation
 - Conrail reserved freight rights on that line
- At that time, Conrail served 28 customers from the Bordentown Secondary
- The FRA authorized freight/commuter operation based on temporal separation
- Freight and passenger operations have a long history of co-existence; however, temporal separation with a defined and restricted freight operating window would require operating discipline

Design of temporal separation for freight/commuters on the River Line

- Conrail would operate freight from 10:00 p.m. to 6:00 a.m., six days a week
- A staging yard for freight was required and constructed at Burlington, NJ
- Freight service had to be redesigned to fulfill our customers' requirements
 - Many customers had to change their operations to accept nighttime deliveries
- Sidetrack agreements were modified for maintenance responsibilities
- Required 286K weight limit with maximum horizontal and vertical clearances
- The River Line had to protect our nighttime switching operation
- Parallel daytime operations were designed with as much physical separation as possible
- Liability insurance protection

Communication and planning ahead have been key to a successful working relationship



- Communication of operational needs is necessary, as our freight demand has more variability than commuter operations
- Protecting existing customers with consistent service and future customers by ensuring an acceptable cost structure
- Over time, a close working relationship and understanding each other's needs created flexibility
 - Operational adjustment to window for morning train starts
 - 2007 approval of extended temporal separation – Pennsauken, NJ
 - Expanding commuter operating window
 - Expanding freight window to service industrial park
 - Pennsauken Transfer Station
 - Culvert replacements impacting both right of ways
 - Ballast trains coordination
 - Special events requiring extended hours of operation

The Freight Perspective – Twelve Years Later

- 16 freight customers vs. 28 are currently served from the River Line
- Operating costs increase due to constraints of operating window

- Future projects should consider compliant vehicles, separated right of way, and explore emerging technology to eliminate temporal separation
- Planning agencies should not anticipate existing freight right of way has any available capacity for passenger operation
- Project design must contemplate longer-term needs
 - Anticipate and simulate future freight growth
 - Funding sources
 - Property acquisition
 - Station platform design
- Cost to locate future freight customers on line must be consistent with our costs
- Understand your mutual dependencies and work together to find common sense solutions