New Jersey Transit River Line
Conrail’s Freight Operation

Light Rail 2016 Conference
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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 maximizum 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