Lehigh Valley Rail Freight Study
2007

prepared by the
Lehigh Valley Planning Commission

for the
Lehigh Valley Transportation Study

August 2007

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# LEHIGH VALLEY TRANSPORTATION STUDY

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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Organization</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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<thead>
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<tbody>
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</tbody>
</table>

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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Staff Members</th>
<th>Positions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
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</tbody>
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**Project Planner**
*Staff for this report

August 2007

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# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Executive Summary</td>
<td>iii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rail Freight Overview</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lehigh Valley Railroad Companies</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intermodal Freight</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evaluation of Lines and Line Segments</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Glossary</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

# LIST OF MAPS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Selected Main Lines – Mid-Atlantic Region</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Lehigh Line</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Reading Line</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>C &amp; F Secondary</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Cement Secondary</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Portland Secondary and Associated Lines</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Lehigh Valley Rail Management</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>SEPTA</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>R.J. Corman Co.</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Penn Eastern Railroad</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>N.D.C. Railroad</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Belvidere &amp; Delaware River Railroad</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Delaware-Lackawanna Railroad</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Intermodal and Transloading Facilities</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Rail Lines Potentially at Risk</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Rail freight is an essential component of the Lehigh Valley’s and national goods movement network. Our economy depends on rail freight services. Other benefits of freight rail are 1) the reduction of truck travel, which reduces congestion and lowers highway infrastructure costs, 2) the role of rail as a critical link in the intermodal logistics network, 3) the improvement of air quality and fuel efficiency, 4) movements related to the military and national defense, and 5) the provision of transportation system redundancy during national emergencies.

The Lehigh Valley maintains a robust rail network. Since 1981, this network has been freight only. Presently, nine railroad companies operate or own tracks within the Lehigh Valley. These companies include Class One carriers such as Norfolk Southern and Canadian Pacific. They are complemented by short line and terminal railroads. The Class One railroads operate on two main lines and three groups of secondary lines. They also use two classification yards.

Railroads participate in intermodal movements by serving six intermodal or transloading facilities. These include facilities that handle containers and trailers. Other facilities unload commodities, either for temporary storage or directly onto trucks for local delivery.

During the last ten years, one line has been abandoned (R.J. Corman’s West End Branch) and service has been terminated on a part of Norfolk Southern’s Bethlehem Branch. No customer has seen a loss of service due to these actions.

While the overall Lehigh Valley rail system is healthy, the viability of each segment needs to be separately considered. The report evaluates the health of each of the rail lines within the Lehigh Valley. The evaluation identifies four lines that could be at risk for the loss of service or abandonment. These are the Allentown Industrial Track, the Roxburg Industrial Track, the Lehighton Industrial Track and the Odenwelder Branch. This analysis serves as input for decisions regarding possible intervention or investment in connection with abandonment. The report finds that the remaining lines in operation are viable.
RAIL FREIGHT OVERVIEW

RAIL FREIGHT IN AMERICA

The American Railroad System functions primarily to haul freight. Most lines are exclusively used for freight purposes. Some lines carry both freight and passenger trains. A few lines are exclusively used for passenger service. As such, the railroad system should be primarily viewed in its freight carrying capacity and its role within the nation’s economy.

The freight includes coal traveling from mines to power plants, grain heading from silos to ports, raw materials bound for factories, consumer products traveling between ports and distribution centers, automobiles moving from factories to distribution centers and even solid waste transported from transfer stations near big cities to distant landfills. One means of quantifying the movement of these commodities involves examining the data found in the 2006 Annual Report of Norfolk Southern. (Norfolk Southern data is being used as it is one of America’s seven largest railroads and the preeminent railroad in the Lehigh Valley.) It should be noted that the overall commodity mix in the Norfolk Southern system would likely vary from the particular flow of commodities through the Lehigh Valley.

The accompanying chart shows that coal provides about one quarter of the railway operating revenue. Intermodal traffic is second in importance with slightly over one-fifth of the railway operating revenue. The remaining revenue is split between the other five commodity categories.

The American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO) Freight-Rail Bottom Line Report provides an overview of the place of rail freight in the country’s transportation system. It reports that:

“The freight-rail system is an important part of the nation’s freight transportation system and is critical to the economy. Freight rail carries 16 percent of the nation’s freight by tonnage, accounting for 28 percent of total ton-miles, 40 percent of intercity ton-miles, and six percent of freight value.”

The report summarizes the public benefits of the freight rail system: The system:

- Provides cost-effective goods movement vital to economic development,
- Reduces truck travel, thereby reducing congestion and highway costs,
- Provides a critical intermodal link for international trade,
- Improves air quality and fuel efficiency,
- Supports military mobilization, and
- Provides transportation system redundancy during national emergencies.
According to the report, the absence of a rail freight system would have massive economic consequences.

“If all freight-rail were shifted to trucks tomorrow, it would add 92 billion truck vehicle-miles-of-travel (VMT) to the highway system and cost federal, state, and local transportation agencies an additional $64 billion for highway improvements over the next 20 years. This $64 billion is a conservative figure that does not include the costs of improvements to bridges, interchanges, local roads, new roads or system enhancements. If these were included, the estimate could double.”

“Freight rail provides shippers with cost-effective transportation, especially for heavy and bulky commodities, and can be a critical factor in retaining and attracting industries that are central to state and regional economies. If all freight-rail were shifted to trucks tomorrow, it would cost current rail shippers an additional $69 billion this year alone – or $1.4 trillion over the next 20 years – causing significant changes in business and consumer costs.”

To summarize, the benefits of the freight-rail system include:

- Economic development,
- Avoided costs to the highway system,
- Reduced highway congestion,
- Cost-effective delivery of products to consumers, and
- Air quality and other environmental parameters.

As the data from the AASHTO report substantiates, the economic benefits relative to avoided costs for highway system maintenance and improvements and reduced costs to shippers and consumers are hardly trivial.

THE LEHIGH VALLEY CONTEXT

Pennsylvania’s rail system reflects the national functional construct. Most lines carry only freight trains. Some lines carry both passenger and freight trains, such as Norfolk Southern’s main line west of Harrisburg. A few of SEPTA’s lines such as the Chestnut Hill East to Central Philadelphia line are the exclusive domain of passenger trains.

The Lehigh Valley maintains a robust rail network. All the lines in the two counties are strictly in freight service. This has been so for over twenty-five years. The last scheduled passenger train to call on the Lehigh Valley departed in July 1981, bound for Philadelphia. Freight has sustained the rail network since that time.

In May 1997, the Lehigh Valley Planning Commission completed the Lehigh Valley Rail Freight Study. The present study updates the 1997 study. Important changes have taken place in the rail system, nationally, regionally and in the Lehigh Valley. The 2007 Study provides current information pertinent to Lehigh Valley rail service and intermodal facilities. The study also evaluates the viability of the rail lines and identifies lines that may be at risk.

Once again, we put the Lehigh Valley rail network within a context of the national rail system and relevant events. The rail industry emerged from three decades of decline in the 1980s. Regulatory reform
at the Federal level, changes in distribution patterns and the economy, and the restructuring of the rail
industry are cited as the prime reasons for the turnaround. The restructuring most relevant to the Lehigh
Valley area was the 1976 creation of Conrail. Created by Congress from eight bankrupt railroads, Conrail
succeeded in becoming a viable and profitable railroad. Conrail’s importance to the Lehigh Valley was
demonstrated by its involvement in all but two of the lines surveyed in the 1997 study. Conrail owned or
operated all but two of the lines at one point or another during its existence.

Incremental change to the Lehigh Valley rail network took place during the Conrail era. Most notably,
new railroad owners and operators were introduced as Conrail followed a corporate strategy of seeking to
concentrate on providing trunk line services while minimizing short haul and switching operations. This
strategy resulted in the sale of branch and secondary lines within the two counties, as elsewhere.

The most significant event in the eastern United States rail network since the creation of Conrail took
place in the mid to late 1990s. At that time, three major carriers operated in the eastern states, Conrail,
Norfolk Southern and CSXT. In 1998, CSXT and Norfolk Southern jointly acquired Conrail. The Conrail
system was split into three parts. Some of the lines were acquired by Norfolk Southern. Others were ac-
quired by CSXT. The assignment of rail ownership to one or the other operators raised concerns in some
areas. In these areas, shippers and public officials sought to maintain the competitive advantages of service
by two carriers. In response, the plan to split Conrail devised a unique solution, Shared Assets. In three ar-
eas, Conrail would continue to operate as a separate corporation. Both CSXT and Norfolk Southern would
have access and the ability to serve customers within Shared Assets areas. Such an area was created in the
area surrounding New York City among others. This solution has had implications for the Lehigh Valley
rail network. More information regarding Conrail Shared Assets will be provided later in this study.

The split of Conrail was effectuated in 1999. All of the Conrail lines in existence at that time that had
not been already sold in the Lehigh Valley were incorporated into Norfolk Southern.

Several components comprise the changes in the distribution patterns and the economy that have af-
fected the rail industry. These include:

- Manufacturing, including heavy manufacturing, has continued to decline within the United
  States. This has reduced rail traffic for both raw materials needed for production as well as for
  the transport of finished products.
- The globalization of the economy has resulted in increased imports, particularly from Asia. Railroads
  have benefited from this change. Rail containers represent an efficient way of carrying these finished
  products from West Coast ports to consumers in the Eastern United States. Also, the North American
  Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) has increased trade involving Canada and Mexico.
- The relative affordability of coal for power generation has combined with environmental regu-
  lations that favor cleaner burning western coal over eastern coal to provide railroads with a
  substantial amount of long haul business.
- The exhaustion of solid waste disposal capacity in major metropolitan areas such as New York
  City has provided railroads with a business opportunity by hauling the waste to distant disposal
  and recycling facilities.
LEHIGH VALLEY RAILROAD COMPANIES

This section reviews each of the railroad companies that are common carriers operating in or owning lines in the Lehigh Valley. At present, nine railroads operate or own lines in Lehigh and Northampton counties. They are:

- Belvidere & Delaware River Railroad
- Canadian Pacific Railway
- Delaware-Lackawanna (PA Northeastern Regional Rail Authority)
- Penn Eastern Railroad
- Lehigh Valley Rail Management
- N.D.C. Railroad
- Norfolk Southern
- R.J. Corman and
- Southeastern Pennsylvania Transportation Authority (SEPTA)

This list compares to seven railroad companies noted in 1997. Of the companies found in 1997, five are unchanged in the 2007 survey.

The study does not cover the Wanamaker, Kempton and Southern Railroad. This railroad is a tourist carrier which operates between Wanamaker in Lehigh County and Kempton in Berks County, over tracks formerly part of the Reading Railroad’s Schuylkill and Lehigh branch. The Wanamaker, Kempton and Southern is rail isolated. It does not connect to other rail lines or haul freight. It is not a common carrier. Additionally, the study does not cover industrial railroad operations. Several companies provide rail switching services within the confines of their facility or plant. The service is provided with company owned locomotives and company personnel. The industrial railroad operations are not considered common carriers.
**Norfolk Southern**

Norfolk Southern is one of the seven Class One railroads operating in the United States. Headquartered in Norfolk, VA, Norfolk Southern identifies its system as consisting of 21,141 miles of road operated. It operates in 22 eastern states, and one Canadian province. Total trackage, which includes sidings and yard trackage, totals 37,966 miles. With 30,433 employees, Norfolk Southern utilizes 28 major rail classification yards and six locomotive shops. It serves 52 intermodal terminals, 14 Triple Crown terminals and 187 bulk transfer centers, among other facilities.

Norfolk Southern began operating in the Lehigh Valley in 1999, after it acquired the area’s Conrail facilities and trackage. It is the only Class One railroad operating in the Lehigh Valley over its own trackage. It is the Lehigh Valley’s predominate rail carrier in terms of trackage, tonnage carried and rail operations. Operationally, the trackage and facilities are part of the Harrisburg (PA) Division. Within the Lehigh Valley, Norfolk Southern operates two main lines, three secondary tracks and two yards. As compared to the Conrail system of 1997, this represents a loss of an intermodal facility and one less secondary track. The following text describes each of these lines and facilities.

**Lehigh Line**

The Lehigh Line consists of two distinctive parts. The first part runs from Port Reading Junction, New Jersey to Allentown. This portion of the Lehigh Line is a core main line within the Norfolk Southern system. In conjunction with other lines, it is part of the network that links the metropolitan New York area with the remainder of the country. At its eastern end, the Lehigh Line enters territory controlled by the Conrail Shared Assets Corporation at Port Reading Junction.

**Conrail Shared Assets Corporation**

Conrail is a Philadelphia based corporation, jointly owned by Norfolk Southern and CSXT. It serves as a terminal and switching agent for its owners in three areas, Northern New Jersey, Philadelphia/Southern New Jersey and Detroit. Conrail serves as an agent for both of its owners. A shipper in the Shared Assets area can have their cars delivered to either railroad through Conrail. This arrangement is advantageous to shippers whereas both railroads compete for their business.

Because of the physical arrangement of the rail system and traffic patterns, the Conrail Shared Assets operations in New Jersey influence the Lehigh Valley’s rail system and economy more so than the Philadelphia/Southern New Jersey operations. Conrail operates almost 200 miles of rail lines in Northern New Jersey. A classification yard in Newark is the operational hub. Nine other classification yards and an automobile distribution center are located in this area. The vast majority of Norfolk Southern traffic moving from the Northern New Jersey Shared Assets area passes through the Lehigh Valley. This makes the Lehigh Valley a viable alternative for industrial and terminal recruitment from Norfolk Southern’s perspective.

Conrail operates about 250 miles of rail lines in the Philadelphia/South Jersey area. A classification yard in Camden, New Jersey is the operational hub. Nine other yards serve the area. Connections between the Philadelphia/South Jersey Shared Assets area and the Lehigh Valley require movement either through northern New Jersey or Reading. Norfolk Southern’s traffic from the Philadelphia/Southern New Jersey Shared Assets Area to southern or Midwestern destinations does not pass through the Lehigh Valley.
From New Jersey, the Lehigh Line enters the Lehigh Valley at Easton and runs along the south bank of the Lehigh River. It makes two connections with its continuation, the Reading Line. One is at CP (Control Point) Allen at the west end of the Allentown Classification Yard in Allentown which is reached by crossing the Lehigh River at Bethlehem. The other is at CP Bethlehem at Bethlehem. Thus trains can connect between these two lines either through the yard or bypassing the yard.

The portion of the Lehigh Line between Allentown and New Jersey is double tracked, except for the approach to the bridge over the Delaware River and the entrance to the Allentown yard. Between the state line and Port Reading Junction, the line is single tracked. Passing sidings allow trains to pass in opposite directions. Norfolk Southern has undertaken the construction of additional passing sidings in the New Jersey portion of this line. Other passing sidings are in the works. With these actions, Norfolk Southern is increasing operational capacity of the line.

Two shortline operations connect with this portion of the Lehigh Line. These are the Belvidere & Delaware River Railroad which connects in Easton and the Lehigh Valley Rail Management Railroad which connects at Bethlehem. Connections with other Norfolk Southern lines include the Portland Secondary Track at Easton, the Cement Secondary Track at CP JU in Bethlehem and the Freemansburg Industrial Track also at CP JU in Bethlehem.

The 2003 Pennsylvania State Rail plan reports that this line carried 78 million gross tons of traffic annually, one of the five highest tonnage carrying lines in the state. Norfolk Southern’s Allentown Terminal Superintendent reports that 75 to 80 trains routinely operate over this portion of the Lehigh Line on a daily basis. Many of these trains are intermodal trains. The line carries doublestack intermodal containers. Canadian Pacific also operates over this line using trackage rights. (See the Canadian Pacific section for more detail.) Most of the Lehigh Valley part of the line has a maximum allowable speed of 40 miles per hour.

From Allentown, the Lehigh Line continues north along the east bank of the Lehigh River, exiting the Lehigh Valley at Lehigh Gap. Norfolk Southern’s ownership of the Lehigh Line continues north to M&H Junction (located in Carbon County), where the line continues as the Reading & Northern Railroad’s Lehigh Main Line. The part of the Lehigh Line between Allentown and Lehighton is a single track railroad.
The only passing siding within the Lehigh Valley is located between CP Allen in Allentown and Catasauqua. Double stack clearances were created along this part of the Lehigh Line in 1995. The line is posted with a maximum speed of 30 miles per hour. The 2003 Pennsylvania State Rail Plan reports that this portion of the line carries 23 million gross tons annually.

This status of this portion of the Lehigh Line differs from that reported in the 1997 report. At that time, Conrail ownership of the Lehigh Line extended north to Waverly, New York. Despite the current fractured state of the line’s ownership, the line’s status is stronger than it was in 1997. At that time, Conrail was using the line as a feeder line between the Hazleton area and Allentown. Canadian Pacific was operating the only through trains on the line. Under Norfolk Southern ownership, Canadian Pacific’s through trains have been supplemented with Norfolk Southern trains, adding traffic to the line. (Norfolk Southern trains reach New York State by using trackage rights over Canadian Pacific north of DuPont rather than continuing over the Lehigh Line at that point.) This additional traffic renders the Lehigh Line south of DuPont, including the part of the line in the Lehigh Valley, more secure. Norfolk Southern reports that this part of the line sees eight to ten daily train movements on average.

A recent line sale within the Norfolk Southern system has further strengthened the future of this portion of the Lehigh Line. Norfolk Southern owned two routes by which traffic could be routed from central and western New York State to central and eastern Pennsylvania. The Lehigh Line is one of these lines. The Buffalo Line is the other line. The Buffalo Line extended from Buffalo, NY to Rockville, PA, just north of Harrisburg. In June 2007, Norfolk Southern conveyed a 73 mile portion of the line from Olean, NY to Driftwood, PA to the Western New York and Pennsylvania Railroad. The importance of this sale to the future of the Lehigh Line is that through Norfolk Southern trains will no longer be routed over the Buffalo Line. Only local and connecting traffic will be carried. Therefore, through traffic that might have been routed via the Buffalo Line will now be routed south through Binghamton, NY, raising the potential for additional through traffic on the Lehigh Line.

Within the Lehigh Valley, one shortline connects with this portion of the Lehigh Line. The N.D.C. Railroad connects at Northampton.

**Reading Line**

The Reading Line functions as a bridge between the Lehigh Line in Allentown/Bethlehem and the Harrisburg Line in the Reading area. It is part of the corridor that carries most of the Norfolk Southern traffic from the metropolitan New York area to points west and south. At Reading, traffic can continue to Philadelphia, South Jersey and Harrisburg. At Harrisburg, traffic is dispersed north, south and west. As previously described, the Reading Line connects with the Lehigh Line at two locations. One is at CP Allen at the west end of the Allentown Classification Yard in Allentown. The other is at CP Bethlehem at Bethlehem. Thus trains can connected between these two lines either through the yard or bypassing the yard.

This double tracked core main line is the most heavily used trackage in the Lehigh Valley carrying 78 million gross tons annually according to the 2003 Pennsylvania State Rail Plan. According to Norfolk Southern, the Reading line sees 75 to 80 daily train movements on average, the same number as reported for the part of the Lehigh Line east of Allentown. The only single track parts of the line are between CP Bethlehem and CP Burn in Allentown and between Blandon and CP West Laurel. (Both of these locations are east of Reading.) The Reading Line has clearances to accommodate double stack cars. Canadian Pa-
cific Railway maintains trackage rights to convey trains over the Reading Line. Within the Lehigh Valley, two shortline railroads connect to the Reading Line. These are the R.J. Corman Company, connecting at East Penn Junction which is located within Allentown and the Penn Eastern Railroad, connecting at Emmaus Junction in Emmaus. In Lehigh County, the Reading Line is limited to 40 miles per hour from Emmaus east and 50 miles per hour west of Emmaus to the Berks County line.

Secondary Lines

Bethlehem Branch

At the time the 1997 Rail Freight Study was written, the Bethlehem Branch was in service. The line provided service to Bethlehem Steel and to an interchange with the Philadelphia, Bethlehem and New England Railroad. It ran through the middle of South Bethlehem between CP Bethlehem on the Lehigh Line and the PBNE’s Iron Hill Yard. Since that time, Norfolk Southern has stopped service along the Bethlehem Branch and removed the tracks. The line has not been formally abandoned as of this writing. The abandonment process has been ongoing for several years and is tied to the efforts of the City of Bethlehem to acquire the area of this line. On July 20, 2007, the City of Bethlehem announced that it had reached agreement for the acquisition of the line from Norfolk Southern. A December 20, 2007 closing date is anticipated. The City intends to use it for recreational and other purposes. The Surface Transportation Board has extended the period for filing the abandonment notice to February 12, 2008. The abandonment involves the 3.7 mile stretch from milepost 53.0 in Hellertown to milepost 56.7 in Bethlehem. The abandonment has not resulted in the loss of service whereas alternate connections between Norfolk Southern and the Philadelphia, Bethlehem and New England’s successor are in use.

Since the writing of the 1997 report, the former Bethlehem Union Station, located at the west end of the Bethlehem Branch, has been redeveloped into offices for St Luke’s Hospital. The abandonment of the Bethlehem Branch virtually precludes the restoration of the Bethlehem Branch in South Bethlehem as a routing for future passenger rail service.

C & F Secondary

The C & F Secondary extends 11.6 miles from its connection with the Reading Line in Alburtis to Seiple in South Whitehall Township. The line represents the remaining portion of the Reading Company’s Catasauqua & Fogelsville branch. The single track line is maintained to 25 mile per hour standards.

Chapman Yard is located on this line and serves as the base for local operations. Current operations consist of two daytime switching jobs, one of which also travels to Reading to interchange cars. A third switching job operates at night, five times per week. Additional service is provided as needed. The C & F Secondary serves the massive industrial parks and distribution centers in Upper Macungie Township proximate to the interchanges of Interstate 78 with Route 100 and the Pennsylvania Turnpike with Route 22. Other customers are located along the line. The 2003 Pennsylvania Rail Freight Study reported that this line carries 1.5 million gross tons annually.
Cement Secondary

The Cement Secondary runs 22.6 miles from its juncture with the Lehigh Line in Bethlehem to Uhlers in Forks Township. Major points served include Bath, Nazareth and Stockertown. The Allentown Industrial Track extends 3.0 miles from the Cement Secondary starting at Allen Junction (near Martin Tower in Bethlehem) to East Allentown. Although no train movements have taken place over the Allentown Industrial Track in a number of years, Norfolk Southern has not sought to abandon the line.

The entirety of the Cement Secondary is a single track line. Parts are posted for a maximum of 10 mile per hour operations. Other parts are marked for 25 mile per hour operations. Current operations have a train leave Allentown on Mondays and Wednesdays. On Tuesdays and Thursdays, the train returns to Allentown from Stockertown. On Fridays, a round trip is made. Extra movements to meet customer needs may also be undertaken, such as providing coal to Hercules Cement in Stockertown. The 2003 Pennsylvania Rail Freight Study reported that this line carries 0.8 million gross tons annually.

Portland Secondary and Associated Lines

The Portland Secondary extends 22.0 miles from a connection with the Lehigh Line at Easton to Portland. The Secondary crosses the Delaware River immediately after the junction with the Lehigh Line at Easton to Phillipsburg, New Jersey. Hudson Yard, located in Phillipsburg is a base of operation for local trains serving the Portland Secondary as well as the interchange with the Belvidere & Delaware River Railroad. (See also the section of the report pertaining to the Belvidere & Delaware River Railroad.) The Portland Secondary follows the Delaware River north from Phillipsburg on the New Jersey side until it reaches Brainards. It then recrosses the river, reentering Pennsylvania near Martins Creek. At Portland, connection is made with the Stroudsburg Secondary. Norfolk Southern ownership of the Stroudsburg Secondary extends 2.0 miles from Portland to CP Slate at Slateford where interchange is made with the Delaware-Lackawanna Railroad. The Portland Secondary terminates at Reliant Energy’s Portland Generating Plant.
PPL’s Martins Creek Generating Station is served from an offshoot of the Portland Secondary. The generating station is accessed as follows. At Brainards, New Jersey, connection is made from the Portland Secondary to the Roxburg Secondary. The railroad proceeds 3.5 miles further upriver to Roxburg where the line again splits. The Roxburg Industrial Track crosses the Delaware River to reach the generating station. The Belvidere Secondary continues to Belvidere, New Jersey to serve customers in that town.

Most of the Portland Secondary has a 30 mile per hour speed limit, although parts have a 10 mile per hour limit. The Roxburg Secondary has a 25 mile per hour speed limit. According to the 2003 Pennsylvania Rail Freight Study, the Portland Secondary carried 2.2 million gross tons annually. This relatively heavy volume of traffic for a secondary line reflects the presence of two power generating plants on the line, the ConAgra grain mill, interchange for two railroads as well as other customers. Service is provided six days per week. Coal movements are provided by dedicated unit trains that operate on an as needed basis.

The amount of traffic on the Portland Secondary is expected to decline considerably. PPL has announced that the Martins Creek Generating Station will complete its conversion to the use of natural gas as a fuel in September 2007. Thus, the PPL dedicated unit trains carrying coal will disappear from the traffic mix. The coal carrying trains to the Reliant Energy Portland Generating Plant will continue.

Yards

Norfolk Southern operates two yards in Lehigh and Northampton Counties.

Allentown Classification Yard

The Allentown classification yard stretches from Allentown to Bethlehem on the north side of the Lehigh River. It is one of 28 major rail classification yards operated by Norfolk Southern. It is one of four within Pennsylvania. The classification yard at Conway serves western Pennsylvania. The classification yards at Enola and Harrisburg serve central Pennsylvania. The Allentown classification yard is the northeasternmost yard operated by Norfolk Southern. The yard has 29 classification tracks, six hump tracks and a seven track departure yard. Cars are classified using a gravity hump. The yard has a capacity of 800 cars. It is operated around the clock, seven days per week. Norfolk Southern reports that it typically sorts 1,280 cars daily using the gravity hump. Support facilities at the yard include a freight car repair department, track department facilities, and bridge and building department facilities. The yard connects to the Lehigh Line at both the east and west ends and to the Reading Line at the west end.

Chapman Yard

The Chapman yard is located in Ruppsville (Upper Macungie Township) and serves as the center for C&F Secondary operations. It has four classification tracks with a 90 car capacity. Typically, 180 cars are handled per day. No support facilities are located at this yard.
Canadian Pacific maintains its unique position within the family of railroads operating in Lehigh and Northampton Counties in that it owns no track in the area. Its operations are entirely conducted on trackage rights over Norfolk Southern owned track. These trackage rights include the Lehigh Main Line between DuPont (south of Scranton) and Newark, NJ. Canadian Pacific also has trackage rights to reach Philadelphia via two routes. First, Canadian Pacific has rights to use the Reading Line between Allentown and Reading. Although Canadian Pacific maintains these rights, they have not exercised them in a number of years. The preferred routing involves trackage rights between Sunbury, PA, through Harrisburg and Reading to reach Philadelphia.

The trackage rights were originally provided in 1976 to the Delaware and Hudson Railway as an attempt to provide competition for Conrail in key northeastern markets. After several changes in ownership and operating entities in the intervening years, Canadian Pacific currently maintains these rights. Canadian Pacific is based in Calgary, Alberta. It operates a 14,000 mile rail system in Canada and the United States.

Over the years, Canadian Pacific and predecessor railroad service levels through the Lehigh Valley have fluctuated. At present, Canadian Pacific runs a daily train to and from the Allentown-Bethlehem area. The train interchanges both with Norfolk Southern at the Allentown Classification Yard and with the LVRM/PBNE at Bethlehem. These trains carry both merchandise and intermodal traffic. The Canadian Pacific train continues to Newark on an as needed basis. The train carries solid waste and merchandise traffic.

The 1976 granting of trackage rights involved certain limitations. While the trains can traverse the tracks, the trackage rights do not confer rights to serve customers or potential customers that the trains may pass. The singular exception to this rule occurs at the former Bethlehem Steel property. Shippers located at the former Bethlehem Steel property can choose to ship either via Norfolk Southern or Canadian Pacific. This two Class One carrier situation provides a competitive advantage for shippers at this site.
The Lehigh Valley Rail Management Company (LVRM) was created to own and operate rail service along several railroads that were once owned by Bethlehem Steel. In 2003, the LVRM acquired those Bethlehem Steel railroads at locations where steel making was discontinued from ISG Railways Inc. These railroads included the Philadelphia, Bethlehem and New England Railroad (PBNE) in Bethlehem.

In 1995, the last year of steelmaking at the plant, the PBNE had 47,889 carloadings that were interchanged with Conrail or Canadian Pacific. Additionally, the railroad hauled 39,127 carloadings not requiring interchange within the plant. With the demise of steelmaking and related operations such as coke production, the PBNE was faced with extinction. The railroad chose to reinvent itself, servicing the continued use and redevelopment of the Bethlehem Steel site.

Significant physical changes have taken place since the writing of the 1997 study. Some of the changes are the following:

- Five tracks that parallel the Norfolk Southern main line have been built. These tracks serve as the interchange point between the LVRM/PBNE (LVRM/PBNE is used to refer to the Lehigh Valley Rail Management operations over the former PBNE) and both Norfolk Southern and Canadian Pacific. This construction has allowed the discontinuation in the use of the Bethlehem Branch.
- An intermodal terminal was assembled for Triple Crown Roadrailer use. This terminal was subsequently relocated and reconstructed to make way for the Commerce Center Boulevard project. The current terminal consists of four tracks, measuring a total of 14,000 feet. The terminal is paved throughout and has 400 storage spaces.
- A new intermodal terminal for containers and conventional trailers was constructed. The terminal consists of two tracks, each measuring 4,500 feet in length, a paved drive lane area and 800 spaces for containers/trailers.
- The former Laubach Yard was transformed into a transloading facility.
- The Iron Hill and Shimersville yards have been rehabilitated.
- A new locomotive repair facility is under construction to replace the facility being torn down in connection with the construction of the Sands Casino.
- A new bridge spanning Commerce Center Boulevard was constructed to reach the new Triple Crown Roadrailer facility. Commerce Center Boulevard was constructed with the assistance of Northampton County to facilitate the redevelopment of a portion of the Bethlehem Steel site.
The LVRM/PBNE provides terminal switching services in the following categories.

- Transloading facilities are provided for the following commodities: plastic pellets, agricultural products, aluminum ingots, gypsum and sand.
- Conventional intermodal terminal. Starting in August 1999, an intermodal facility for containers and conventional trailers was established. The facility uses two side “Packers” to lift containers off and onto rail cars. This facility replaced the Norfolk Southern terminal in Salisbury Township.
- Starting in November 2001, a Triple Crown Roadrailer terminal was established. This terminal replaces New Jersey facilities proximate to New York City.
- On site services are available. Businesses located on the former Bethlehem Steel site are provided with door to door rail service. These sites include sites within Lehigh Valley Industrial Park 7.

The LVRM/PBNE has 52 total miles of track, of which eight miles are considered as main track. As could be expected, the amount of traffic handled dropped considerably with the ending of steel making. However, business has rebounded. In 1999, the railroad handled 14,880 intermodal carloads. This grew to 59,222 intermodal carloads in 2002 and to 75,645 intermodal carloads in 2006. (One intermodal car load is defined as 1.5 lifts. Each container is one lift. This definition is used to account for the presence of double stack containers.) Additionally, the LVRM/PBNE handled 3,000 non-intermodal cars in 2006. This business translates into 2.4 million gross tons in 2006. The entire railroad is capable of handling 286,000 pound freight cars.

Service is provided seven days per week by an average of three crews daily. Current service schedules have containers and conventional trailers dropped off by two daily trains. One outbound train of containers and conventional trailers departs daily. Triple Crown Roadrailer service consists of one daily inbound and one daily outbound train. Non-intermodal traffic is interchanged with Norfolk Southern and Canadian Pacific on a daily basis.
SEPTA

While the Canadian Pacific Railway operates service within the Lehigh Valley without owning track-age, SEPTA (Southeastern Pennsylvania Transportation Authority) does the opposite. SEPTA owns track-age in the Lehigh Valley but operates no trains. In connection with the creation of Conrail in 1976, SEPTA acquired the part of the Reading Railroad’s North Penn Branch between Lansdale (milepost 24.4) and Hellertown (milepost 52.6). The SEPTA line connected with the Bethlehem Branch at milepost 52.6. Initially, SEPTA provided passenger service between Bethlehem and Philadelphia while Conrail provided freight service on the line.

SEPTA terminated passenger service north of Lansdale in 1981. Also in 1981, Conrail stopped routing through trains via the line, leaving only local service. In 1983, Conrail changed its operating patterns, servicing the freight customers in the Quakertown area from Lansdale rather than from Allentown/Bethlehem. As a result, the portion of this line between Hellertown and Quakertown (milepost 40.2) has not seen train service in 24 years. Although tracks have been removed near the grade crossings and at least one new crossing of the line has been added, the line between Hellertown and Quakertown remains in SEPTA ownership and has not been abandoned.

In contrast, rail service continues from Quakertown south. Starting in 1997, freight service over the portion of the line between Telford and Quakertown has been provided by the Penn Eastern Railroad. Service between Lansdale and Telford was provided by Conrail until its demise in 1999. Since that time, CSXT has provided freight service between Lansdale and Telford. CSXT interchanges cars with the Penn Eastern Railroad at Telford.
R. J. Corman Co.

R. J. Corman is a Nicholasville, Kentucky based railroad enterprise. Among other railroad related businesses, the company owns and operates nine disconnected shortlines in six eastern states. These lines total 670 miles of track. Two of these shortlines are in Pennsylvania. These lines include the Allentown Division in Allentown. R.J. Corman acquired three lines in Allentown totaling seven miles from Conrail in July 1996. Of the three lines, two lines remain in 2007. The longest of these three lines is the Lehighton Industrial Track. This track was part of the Lehigh Valley Railroad’s main line. The line terminates four miles north of East Penn Junction in the West Catasauqua area of Whitehall Township. The current northernmost location of service is in the area of Allentown once occupied by the Lehigh Structural Steel Company. This facility is occupied by companies such as American Carbonation. In 2007, Dunn-Twiggar LLC, a real estate development company, announced that it has entered into an agreement to purchase the Lehigh Structural Steel site and intends to redevelop the site as a mixed use residential-commercial community. The second surviving line is the one mile segment of the Lehigh Valley Railroad’s West End branch. The branch leads to the R. J. Corman materials business and transloading facilities. The third line originally acquired by R. J. Corman was the two mile long Barbers Quarry Industrial Track. The track did not see revenue service in the period it was owned by R. J. Corman. The line has since been abandoned and conveyed to the City of Allentown. As such, the remaining R. J. Corman operations are conducted on five miles of track. Maximum speeds on both lines are limited to ten miles per hour.

Service is provided on an as needed basis, typically four or five days per week. Interchange is scheduled with Norfolk Southern twice each week. The track is suitable for 286,000 pound cars and can handle Plate F cars. Carloadings are higher than were experienced at the close of Conrail ownership of the lines. In 1995, the last year of Conrail ownership, the lines carried 367 cars. In 2006, the lines carried 603 cars. The majority of the business uses the transload facilities north of Gordon Street. The Morning Call is the leading shipper on the line, receiving newsprint.

R. J. Corman Co. train hauls newsprint in Allentown.
Penn Eastern Railroad (Penn Eastern) and its affiliated East Penn Railways own and operate ten rail lines in eastern Pennsylvania. Of these, one operates within Lehigh County. This line is operated as the Perkiomen Division.

The line was the northern segment of the Reading Railroad’s Perkiomen Branch. Not included within Conrail, the line was conveyed to the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania in 1976. Since that year, the line has been operated by a succession of designated operators. Eventually, the State divested itself of line ownership. Ownership of the Perkiomen Branch has passed through several hands since then. Since 2002, the line has been owned by Penn Eastern Railroad.

The line extends 15.5 miles from its interchange with Norfolk Southern at Emmaus Junction as far as Pennsburg in Montgomery County. Although most of the line is in Lehigh County, all of the customers are in Montgomery County. The line is limited to ten miles per hour. The track is capable of handling 286,000 pound freight cars and Plate F freight cars.

Carloading levels have remained steady since the 1997 study. That study reported 800 carloadings annually. The railroad reported 825 carloadings in 2006. Commodities handled include paper, roll paper, food products, bauxite ore and scrap paper. Service is typically provided three days per week.

East Greenville bound Penn Eastern train is in a rural part of Lehigh County.
N.D.C. Railroad (NDC) operates a terminal railroad that provides switching facilities in the Borough of Northampton. The railroad extends from its Norfolk Southern connection also in Northampton to the site of the former Atlas Cement plant which is in adaptive reuse and has also been redeveloped. NDC was created in 1979 to assume operations over the remaining portion of the Northampton and Bath Railroad.

The length of the railroad is one mile. A total of two and a half miles of rail are involved with the operations. The track is capable of handling 286,000 pound freight cars. The railroad has seen explosive growth in carloadings. The railroad only hauled 11 cars in 2000. This grew to 238 cars in 2001, 605 cars in 2002, 596 cars in 2003 and 910 cars in 2004. The NDC topped the 1,000 car mark in 2005 with 1,332 cars handled. Traffic more than doubled in 2006 when 3,229 carloads were handled. Currently, all carloads are associated with transloading operations. Contaminated soil constitutes the majority of the traffic. The NDC also handles salt and clay currently. Service is currently provided five days per week. The transloading facility features will be detailed in the intermodal facilities portion of this report.
The Belvidere & Delaware River Railroad owns and operates the Odenwelder Branch. This track is located in Easton and West Easton. The railroad is associated with the Black River & Western Railroad. Phillipsburg, New Jersey is the base of operations for the Belvidere & Delaware River Railroad. Interchange with Norfolk Southern takes place in Phillipsburg. From Phillipsburg, track extends to Milford, New Jersey. For operations involving the Odenwelder Branch, the railroad uses trackage rights on Norfolk Southern’s Portland Secondary track from Phillipsburg to Easton. At Easton, the railroad connects with the Odenwelder Branch which terminates at the former Ecolaire plant in West Easton, a distance of 1.8 miles.

Faced with possible abandonment of the line by Conrail, Ecolaire Inc. purchased it in 1987. Ecolaire took this action to guarantee service to its West Easton plant which fabricated steam surface condensers. Rail service was essential to the shipment of the condensers. Alstom, a subsequent owner of the Ecolaire company, sold the line to the Belvidere and Delaware River Railroad in 1995.

The track is limited to a top speed of ten miles per hour. The line is capable of handling 286,000 pound freight cars. Carloadings on the line have dropped since the 1997 study. That study reported 150 annual carloadings on the line. Of these, 130 were provided by the Technical Oil Company. The other 20 were provided by Ecolaire. The Belvidere & Delaware River reports 25 carloadings during 2006 of which 5 were associated with the Technical Oil Company and 20 with the UBA site (UBA was at that time the owner of the former Ecolaire site.) After repeated flooding by the Lehigh River, UBA decided in 2005 to move the fabricating operations and the office functions to other locations. At this writing, the former Ecolaire site is unused and is for sale.

At the time of the 1997 study, the Ecolaire site, the Technical Oil site and the nearby area were included in an Enterprise Zone, a designation intended to promote economic development. The Enterprise Zone designation of this area has since lapsed.
The Delaware-Lackawanna Railroad is the contract operator of track owned by the Pennsylvania Northeastern Regional Rail Authority. The Authority was created in 2006 through the merger of the Lackawanna County Rail Authority and the Monroe County Railroad Authority. The Authority owns 88 miles of track in Lackawanna, Wayne, Monroe and Northampton Counties. Operations are based in Scranton. The Railroad maintains two interchanges. The Railroad interchanges with Canadian Pacific at Taylor and with Norfolk Southern at Slateford in Upper Mount Bethel Township in Northampton County.

The railroad’s Pocono Main Line extends southward from Scranton. It enters Northampton County south of the Borough of Delaware Water Gap and continues to Slateford, two miles north of Portland. None of the twelve customers on the Pocono Main Line are located in Northampton County.

Traffic on the Delaware-Lackawanna has fluctuated from year to year since year 2000 with an overall trend toward an increase in traffic. Carloadings ranged from 6,000 in year 2000 to 6,400 in 2002. Since that time, carloadings have fluctuated between 7,000 (in 2006) and 7,500 (in 2005). Current operating patterns have the Delaware-Lackawanna Railroad interchanging with Norfolk Southern at Slateford three days per week.

Efforts have been long underway to restore passenger service between Scranton and the metropolitan New York area utilizing the Pocono Main Line. These efforts are continuing. Over the years, various proposals and studies have emerged. In 2006, an environmental assessment was released which pegged the estimated capital costs at $512 million. If the project is brought to successful completion, passenger trains would cross Northampton County over Rail Authority trackage. A connection to a bridge crossing the Delaware River would be restored at Slateford Junction just north of Slateford. No passenger stations are planned for Northampton County. The closest station would be in Delaware Water Gap Borough in Monroe County.
INTERMODAL FREIGHT

OVERVIEW

Railroads move truck trailers and containers as part of an intermodal system. These containers can contain a wide variety of products, including consumer goods. Containers can be placed directly onto flatcars. Over-the-road trailers mounted on truck chassis can be placed on flat cars or on cars especially designed to carry trailers. Additionally, Triple Crown Roadrailers involve truck vans on temporarily placed wheel sets. Railroads have increased capacity by the use of double stack cars, in which containers are placed two-high, one on top of another. In the Lehigh Valley, both main lines, the Lehigh Line and the Reading Line, have adequate clearances to accommodate double stack cars.

AASHTO’s Freight Rail Bottom Line Report offers the following assessment of the rail component of intermodal container business.

“Intermodal service accommodates higher-value, lower-weight commodities than unit train or carload services. The service offers faster speeds, higher train frequency, better schedule reliability and more visibility on route – albeit at a higher price – and is competitive with door-to-door trucking over longer distances (generally starting at 400 to 500 miles, depending on equipment and corridors).”

“More than any other rail service, intermodal depends on partnerships with trucking companies, seaports and others in the transportation logistics chain. Each container … is an individual shipment, and there are a vast number of origins and destinations to be served. In response, both railroads and truckers have recognized that the best approach to this market is to let each mode do what it does best. Railroads handle the long-haul movement of large quantities of containers and trailers between major hubs such as seaports and major population centers, while truckers handle the short-haul movement to/from the customer’s ‘front door’.”
The role of freight rail intermodal traffic can be best understood by the following example of a logistics move. The container is packed with manufactured goods in China. It is carried on a cargo ship to a west coast port such as the Port of Long Beach. Once unloaded, the container is drayed by truck to an intermodal container transfer facility. There, the container is loaded onto a double-stack train operated by a western Class One railroad such as BNSF, is transported to a Midwestern location such as Chicago, where it is interchanged with an eastern Class One railroad like Norfolk Southern. Norfolk Southern carries the container on a double stack train and delivers the container to an East Coast intermodal terminal such as the Beth Intermodal facility. The container is then trucked to a warehouse facility which may be in Lehigh Valley, elsewhere in eastern Pennsylvania or in New Jersey. The container is unloaded at the warehouse. The goods are distributed in smaller trucks to retail outlets and ultimately to consumers.

**INTERMODAL FACILITIES**

Six intermodal and transloading facilities serve the region. Direct service to these facilities involves four different carriers. Of these facilities, all except one are served by short line carriers. Only one is directly served by a Class One railroad. The Lehigh Valley Rail Management Railroad serves three different intermodal facilities. R. J. Corman Co. serves a transloading facility as does the N.D.C. Railroad and Norfolk Southern. Of the facilities, one handles containers and trailers and one handles Triple Crown Roadrailers. The remainder involve the direct transloading of specific commodities. Indoor storage is available at four of the facilities. Outdoor storage is available at three of the facilities. A wide variety of products are handled. These include:

- Minerals, such as gypsum, salt, clay and sand.
- Food products, such as soybeans and vegetables.
- Building products, such as lumber and bricks.
- Waste materials, such as construction and demolition waste (permit pending) and contaminated soil.
- Products used in manufacturing processes, such as plastic pellets, aluminum ingots, lubricants and newsprint.

The following table provides a summary of the facilities. The facility locations are marked on Map 14. Additional information about the facilities follows.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Railroad</th>
<th>Commodities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 Beth Intermodal</td>
<td>Bethlehem</td>
<td>LVRM/PBNE</td>
<td>Trailers, containers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Beth Intermodal</td>
<td>Bethlehem</td>
<td>LVRM/PBNE</td>
<td>Minerals, food products, building products, manufactured products</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transloading</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 East Penn Sanitation</td>
<td>Lower Nazareth Twp.</td>
<td>Norfolk Southern</td>
<td>Minerals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 N.D.C. Railroad</td>
<td>Northampton</td>
<td>N.D.C. Railroad</td>
<td>Waste materials, minerals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 R.J. Corman</td>
<td>Allentown</td>
<td>RJ Corman</td>
<td>Manufactured products, food products</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 Triple Crown Roadra</td>
<td>Bethlehem</td>
<td>LVRM/PBNE</td>
<td>Triple Crown Roadrailler trailers</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
1. **Beth Intermodal.** The current Beth Intermodal facility was opened in August 1999 to serve as the facility for the transloading of trailers and containers. The secured facility features two tracks, each with a length of 4,500 feet. Two side “Packers” are used for lifting containers and trailers onto and off of rail cars. The facility has 800 spots for trailers/containers and features a paved drive lane. The site is served by the Lehigh Valley Rail Management Railroad. Two Class One carriers, Norfolk Southern and Canadian Pacific, connect with the LVRM/PBNE Railroad.

2. **Beth Intermodal Transloading.** Located on the grounds of the former Bethlehem Steel plant, the Beth Intermodal Transloading facilities are in the vicinity of the one-time Philadelphia, Bethlehem & New England Railroad’s Laubach yard. The facilities have been used for the transloading and storage of numerous materials. These include lumber, wood products, plastic pellets, soybeans, gypsum, sand and aluminum ingots. A variety of equipment and facilities are available for transloading use. These include truck access adjacent to rail cars, a mobile drop conveyor, a fixed drop conveyor, docks, a loading conveyor, heavy duty fork lifts and enclosed space. Site access is restricted by security.

3. **East Penn Sanitation.** East Penn Sanitation operates a Dept. of Environmental Protection (DEP) permitted solid waste transfer facility in Lower Nazareth Township to the south of Hanoverville Road. The site is rail served by Norfolk Southern, located on the Cement Secondary. The solid waste transfer operations currently taking place involve trucks only. East Penn Sanitation made an application to DEP to allow the transfer of construction and demolition waste from trucks to rail. The permit application has been pending for numerous years. DEP staff has stated that it will not act on the application until matters relating to facility operations and related violations have been fully resolved. The site is available for material transloading unrelated to waste materials. The site has been previously used for salt transloading and storage. Currently, no products or materials are being transloaded. The site offers enclosed space, front end loaders and secured access.

4. **N. D. C. Railroad.** Transloading facilities are available at the former Atlas Cement plant site in Northampton Borough. The site fronts on Route 329. As previously described, 3,229 carloads of transloaded material were handled in 2006. The majority of this material was contaminated soil. Salt and clay are other materials currently handled. Salt and clay are stored on site. Rail service is provided by the N.D.C. Railroad. A variety of equipment and facilities are available for transloading use. Included are scales, silo storage, a ramp for truck access, a conveyor pit for bottom unloading and fork lifts.

5. **R.J. Corman Company.** R.J. Corman’s transloading facilities are located to the north of Linden Street and abutting American Parkway in Allentown. The R.J. Corman Company Railroad serves the site along the former West End Branch. Commodities currently transloaded at the facility include newsprint and foodstuffs. A dock is at the site.
MAP 14
INTERMODAL & TRANSLOADING FACILITIES

Facilities
1. Beth Intermodal
2. Beth Intermodal Transloading
3. East Penn Sanitation
4. N.D.C. Railroad
5. R.J. Corman Company
6. Triple Crown Roadrailer

Source: Lehigh Valley Planning Commission
LEHIGH VALLEY PLANNING COMMISSION
961 Marcon Boulevard, Suite 310
Allentown, PA 18109-9068
(814) 254-4544
6. **Triple Crown Roadrailer.** Norfolk Southern operates Triple Crown Roadrailer Service between thirteen terminals in the eastern and Midwestern parts of North America. Roadrailers are truck vans that ride highways on rubber tires or rails on wheelsets temporarily placed under them. Service is provided between these terminals on regularly scheduled, dedicated trains. (Trains hauling Roadrailers are dedicated in the sense that the train carries no freight cars other than the Roadrailers.) The Roadrailer terminal in Bethlehem was established in 2001 on the grounds of the former Bethlehem Steel plant. The Roadrailer terminal in Bethlehem represents the relocation of the facility located in New Jersey that was positioned to serve the metropolitan New York/New Jersey area. The original Bethlehem Roadrailer facility was relocated as its site was needed for the construction of Commerce Center Boulevard. The current Roadrailer facility opened in 2006. It features four tracks totaling 14,000 feet of track. The roadways and apron areas are entirely paved. Space exists for 400 trailers. The LVRM/PBNE serves the facility, handling the cars delivered to Bethlehem by Norfolk Southern. A heavy duty forklift is used to lift the trailers off and onto the tracks.
EVALUATION OF LINES AND LINE SEGMENTS

While the overall Lehigh Valley rail system is healthy, the viability of each segment needs to be separately considered. One part of the rail system may be secure while service on a nearby line may be at risk. This section of the report provides an evaluation of the health of each of the rail lines within the Lehigh Valley. Lines at risk of abandonment or lost service are identified. This analysis considers the loss of service from the perspective of its effect on the Lehigh Valley economy and employment. This analysis serves as input to decisions regarding possible intervention. For instance, if a line were at risk and the cessation of service would adversely affect the viability of shippers on that line and therefore jobs, governmental investment or intervention may be warranted. In different cases, if we identify that the loss of service would not adversely Lehigh Valley employers, i.e. no shippers would be affected, no governmental investment of intervention may be needed.

In the ten year period between the preparation of the Lehigh Valley Rail Freight Study in 1997 and the present, only two negative changes in rail line segments have occurred. Neither resulted in the loss of service to a shipper. Norfolk Southern’s Bethlehem Branch is the first rail line involved. The use of this line has ended and the tracks have been removed. As was described earlier in this report, the line is in the formal abandonment process. The loss of service on this line is not of consequence whereas an alternate routing of trains to the former Bethlehem Steel site is available and in use. The Barbers Quarry Industrial Track is the second rail line involved. The line was out of service in 1997. The 1997 Rail Freight Study reported that line had not been operated in many years. Since 1997, R.J. Corman has formally abandoned and sold the line. Since no shippers were on the line, no service loss occurred between 1997 and the present.

MAIN LINES

Lehigh Line (west of Allentown)

West of Allentown, the Lehigh Line loses much of the traffic that plies the line east of Allentown. Despite the lower traffic levels, it is also a viable line due to its multifaceted roles. These three roles are carrying through traffic, providing connections to short lines and branch lines and serving on line shippers. Between the traffic contributed in each the roles, the line remains viable and secure.

The line carries through freight traffic on trains operated both by Norfolk Southern and Canadian Pacific. These trains continue on the portion of the Lehigh Line that was sold to the Reading & Northern Railroad at M&H Junction, eventually connecting to a Canadian Pacific Railroad main line at DuPont, PA. The use of the Lehigh Line for through freight use by two railroads represents an improvement from the situation in 1997 when only CP Rail (as Canadian Pacific was then named) subsidiary Saint Lawrence & Hudson Railway used the line for through freight movements. (Conrail did not use the line for through freight movements at that time.) Two changes to the northeastern rail system have affected the status of this part of the Lehigh Line for through traffic movement. As was previously covered, Norfolk Southern has ended through traffic movements on the Buffalo Line, a line in the western part of Pennsylvania, that duplicated the functions of the Lehigh Line in linking Pennsylvania and New York. Norfolk Southern no longer uses the entirety of the Lehigh Line to connect with its Southern Tier Line in New York State. Instead, Norfolk Southern through trains use Canadian Pacific tracks between Du Pont and Binghamton, NY, where access to the Southern Tier is achieved. This alternate routing has not diminished Norfolk Southern’s use of the Lehigh Line for through traffic movement west of Allentown.
The Lehigh Line west of Allentown provides numerous interchange points with short lines. These include the N.D.C. Railroad at Northampton, the Chestnut Ridge Railroad at Palmerton in Carbon County and the Reading and Northern at Packerton Junction in Carbon County.

In addition to the on line shippers, Norfolk Southern uses the Lehigh Line to reach its operations base at Hazleton. Numerous customers of manufactured products are located proximate to Hazleton. The Hazleton area has seen growth in distribution centers as well.

**Reading Line, Lehigh Line (east of Allentown)**

These two lines are considered together in that one line acts as the extension of the other. These lines are core main lines within the Norfolk Southern system. They are part of the corridor that links the metropolitan New York area with the rest of the country and are among the five busiest rail lines in Pennsylvania. The flow of products from West Coast ports to metropolitan New York traverse this routing. The number of trains operating on these lines and the concomitant tonnage assure the continued essential nature of these lines to the regional and national rail network.

**Secondary Lines and Short Lines**

As with the 1997 Rail Freight Study, the viability of secondary lines and short lines will be evaluated on the basis of annual cars per mile. The standard for viability used in the 1997 study was derived from the Pennsylvania Rail Freight Study. The 1997 Study included the following quote from the Pennsylvania Rail Freight Study “the more typical operation would require 75 -80 cars per mile to sustain its viability… Absent public investment or the economics of being included as part of a larger system, lines generating less than 50-75 cars per mile are generally not considered to be viable.” Therefore, for our purposes, lines which have annual carloadings of 80 or more are considered to be viable. Lines with lower carloadings will be subject to additional examination. Carloading information cited earlier in this report is used for short lines. Carloadings for Norfolk Southern secondary lines were derived by the use of tonnage figures and assuming that each car carried 143 tons.
C & F Secondary

The 11.6 mile line carried 1.5 million gross tons according to the 2003 Pennsylvania Rail Freight Study. This translates to 10,490 cars or 904 cars per mile. These totals show substantial growth in traffic as compared to the 1994 numbers reported in the 1997 Lehigh Valley Rail Freight study. (6,680 carloads were reported.) As such, traffic has grown by 3,810 carloads or 57%. The 904 cars per mile is more than 11 times as high as our viability standard. As such, this line can be considered to be viable.

The line serves the Iron Run Industrial Park, Lehigh Valley West and other industrial parks that have sprung up in Upper Macungie Township. The location of this industrial area surrounding the interchanges involving Interstate 78, Route 22, Route 100 and the Pennsylvania Turnpike has led to the erection of numerous distribution centers ranging in size from 500,000 square feet to 2,000,000 square feet. The continuing emergence of this area as an industrial and distribution center reinforces the future of the C&F Secondary.

Cement Secondary

The Cement Secondary has also seen growth in its carloadings, although it has the lowest carloadings of any of the three secondary lines. The 25.6 mile line (the length includes the 3.0 mile long Allentown Industrial Track) carried 0.8 million gross tons according to the 2003 Pennsylvania Rail Freight Study. This translates into 5,594 cars or 219 cars per mile. The 1994 numbers reported in the 1997 Lehigh Valley Rail Freight study were 2,870 carloadings. Thus, the traffic has nearly doubled. The per mile carloadings is 2.7 times that set as our viability criteria. As such, the Cement Secondary as a whole is considered viable. It serves the Forks Industrial area and other industrially zoned areas of Northampton County. New siting opportunities for rail served industrial development are being realized in Lower Nazareth Township. The line is important to Northampton County as it provides prime rail served siting opportunities.

The viability of the overall Cement Secondary is not shared with its three mile offshoot, the Allentown Industrial Track. The Allentown Industrial Track begins at Allen Junction, near Casilio & Sons along Mauch Chunk Road in Bethlehem. It skirts the former Bethlehem Steel Martin Tower site and the former Durkee Foods plant (now redeveloped as a Lowe’s store), crosses over Route 378 and terminates in the east side of Allentown. The only shipper on the line at the time of the 1997 Lehigh Valley Rail Freight Study was Weyerhauser, dealing in lumber products. The facility has since closed. The line has not seen service since the closing. It is currently intact. Abandonment proceedings are not underway. Given this set of circumstances, the Allentown Industrial Track must be considered at risk.

Portland Secondary and Associated Lines

The Portland Secondary carries the most traffic of any of the Norfolk Southern secondary tracks. According to the 2003 Pennsylvania Rail Freight Study, the line carried 2.2 million gross tons annually. This translates into 15,385 annual carloadings or roughly 699 carloadings per mile. This is almost nine times the viability criteria.
The function of the Portland Secondary has seen an important change since the 1997 study. Another important change is around the corner. Today, the Portland Secondary provides the Norfolk Southern interchange with the Delaware-Lackawanna Railroad. This traffic did not traverse the Portland Secondary at the time of the 1997 study. At that time, Conrail served customers as far north as Gravel Place in Monroe County. The track between Gravel Place and Mount Pocono was out of service. First, the Monroe County Rail Authority reopened and rehabilitated the line between Gravel Place and Mount Pocono. The Authority then purchased the portion of the Stroudsburg Secondary south to Slateford. Thus, the Portland Secondary today not only carries the freight cars that are interchanged with the Delaware-Lackawanna Railroad that were formerly delivered to customers on the Stroudsburg Secondary but also cars that are bound for other shippers on the Delaware-Lackawanna Railroad. This change has a positive impact on the future viability of the Portland Secondary.

An announced change, at the time of the writing of this report, portends a significant decline in carloadings and tonnage along the Portland Secondary. As was previously stated in this report, PPL has announced that the Martins Creek Generating Station will complete its conversion to the use of natural gas as a fuel in September 2007. Thus, the PPL dedicated unit trains carrying coal will disappear from the traffic mix. The routing for this business is entirely within the portion of the Portland Secondary that is in New Jersey except for the Roxburg Industrial Track as it crosses the Delaware River and enters the generating station. PPL has not indicated whether it foresees the need for rail service to this site once the coal deliveries have ceased. Absent service to the Generating Station, service along the Roxburg Secondary will consist of traffic destined for Belvidere, NJ. As such, the need for and viability of the Roxburg Industrial Track is uncertain at this juncture.

**Lehigh Valley Rail Management**

This line has weathered the ending of the Bethlehem Steel steelmaking operations by seizing new business opportunities. In 2006, the railroad hauled the equivalent of 78,645 carloads. This translates to 1,512 carloads per mile if one were to consider all 52 miles of track on site. This number would be many fold increased if one were only to consider the main trackage. Given the viability standard of 80 carloads per mile, the viability of the LVRM/PBNE line is evident. As the terminal railroad for the intermodal facility and the Triple Crown Roadrailer facility for the Lehigh Valley and surrounding area, the LVRM/PBNE line is well positioned. As the redevelopment of the former Bethlehem Steel plant continues, the LVRM/PBNE can expect to compete for additional shippers.
As was previously described, the part of this line between Hellertown and Quakertown has not seen service since 1983. It is owned by SEPTA which is retaining the line for possible future use. A need for the future use of the portion of the line in Lehigh and Northampton counties is not evident at this time. Freight service to the Quakertown area is available through alternate routing. Use of the Lehigh and Northampton counties portion of the line for the restoration of passenger service is not planned. Efforts to reinstate rail passenger service to part or all of the Bethlehem branch have been ongoing for nearly twenty years. A number of proposals involving several different entities have been put forth. The service restoration has been the subject of several formal studies. The current efforts to restore service are under the aegis of the Bucks County Transportation Management Association. An alternatives analysis study is under preparation. The study is a prerequisite for seeking Federal Transit Administration approval to enter into preliminary engineering under the New Starts/Small Starts program. The proposal involves the service restoration as far north as Shelly (in Richland Township, Bucks County). A park and ride facility would be constructed in Shelly. The proposal does not involve service extension into Lehigh and Northampton counties.

R.J. Corman Co.

Overall, the R.J. Corman operations in Allentown are viable. In 2006, the line carried 603 carloads over its two line segments. This translates to 120 carloads per mile over the five mile operation. The carloads per mile in 2006 is much improved over the 52 carloadings per mile found in 1995. The increase in carloadings per mile results both from the increased number of carloadings and the reduction in trackage following the abandonment of the Barbers Quarry Branch.

As was previously stated, a real estate company has expressed an interest in redeveloping the former site of the Lehigh Structural Steel Company. R.J. Corman’s active customers along the Lehighton Industrial Track are located within that complex. The loss of these customers would threaten the viability of that line. The line includes sidings at other locations, such as the now closed Tarkett Company in Fullerton and the E. Schneider & Sons scarpayard in Allentown. These sites are not currently generating shipments. They provide locational opportunities for businesses seeking rail served sites.

Potential changes to the viability of the Lehighton Industrial Track would not affect the viability of the West End Branch trackage, which currently carries the majority of the R.J. Corman Co. business.

Penn Eastern Railroad

The Penn Eastern Railroad’s Perkiomen Division considerably improved its carloadings between 1994 and 2006. By increasing the carloadings from 560 cars to 825, the carloadings per mile increased from 36 to 53. Despite the gain, carloadings per mile remain below the viability criteria used in this study.

Further examination of this line will not occur in this report because the line provides no service to customers within Lehigh or Northampton counties. Further, little potential exists for locating shippers along the line within Lehigh County due the rural nature of the area through which it passes, the absence of public sewer and water service once the line leaves Emmaus and municipal zoning which does not provide for industrial uses. Although most of the line is within Lehigh County, all of the businesses served are in Montgomery County. Thus, the line is more associated with the economic interests of Montgome-
tery County than those of Lehigh and Northampton Counties. A rail freight study of Montgomery County should consider the viability of the line.

**N.D.C. Railroad**

The N.D.C. Railroad is currently in the polar opposite position when compared to the circumstances in 1994. Carloadings have jumped from 40 in 1994 to 3,229 in 2006. Considering the total amount of track at this terminal operation, carloadings average 1,292 per mile. Current carloadings are considerably above the 80 carloadings per mile standard. As such, the line must be considered viable.

**Belvidere & Delaware River Railroad**

This analysis is limited to consideration of the Odenwelder Branch, located in Northampton County. The analysis does not consider the other line based out of Phillipsburg which proceeds to Milford, NJ.

The future of the Odenwelder Branch is at risk. The viability of the line has turned for the worse since the 1997 Rail Freight Study. At that time, the line’s two shippers combined for 150 carloadings, or 83 carloadings per mile. The 2006 carloadings totaled 25, less than 14 carloadings per mile. Technical Oil, which was the major shipper in the 1990s has considerably reduced the amount of carloadings. Ecolaire, the owner of the line in the 1990s, has sold the rail line and its other West Easton facilities. The former Ecolaire site is currently unoccupied. Absent increases in shipments, the Odenwelder Branch is at risk.

The former Ecolaire facility is available for reuse. It represents a rail served site for businesses needing such services.

**Delaware-Lackawanna Railroad**

The Delaware-Lackawanna Railroad extends into Northampton County to reach its interchange point with Norfolk Southern. The railroad serves many customers in both Lackawanna and Monroe Counties,
but none in Northampton County. Given the location of the railroad within Northampton County, adjacent to the Delaware River and largely abutting the Delaware Water Gap National Recreation Area, the potential for siting shippers on this portion of the line is unlikely.

Overall, the Delaware-Lackawanna Railroad hauled 7,500 carloads over its 58 route miles. This translates to 85 carloads per miles. This number is slightly higher than the minimum standard cited for this report. The line is more associated with the economic interests of Monroe and Lackawanna counties than those of Lehigh and Northampton Counties. The ownership of the line by an authority created by Monroe and Lackawanna counties is appropriate in these circumstances.

**Summary of Evaluations — Lines at Risk**

Overall, the state of the rail system in Lehigh and Northampton counties is healthy. Both main lines and most of the secondary lines owned by Norfolk Southern and by short line railroads have sufficient carloadings to be considered viable. However, several line segments are either currently at risk or could be at risk subject to certain future events. A description of each of these lines and the circumstances follows:

**Allentown Industrial Track.** This three mile line is part of the Cement Secondary. No service has taken place since the last customer on line closed its facility. Were the line to be abandoned, no existing customers would lose service. However, an opportunity would be lost to redevelop a site or sites for businesses requiring rail service.

**Roxburg Industrial Track.** This track leads from the Roxburg Secondary at Roxburg, NJ to the PPL Martins Creek Generating Station. The Roxburg Industrial Track currently sees heavy usage from coal trains leading to the generating station. With the announced decision not to use coal as a fuel, the Industrial Track could be stripped of its traffic.

**Lehighton Industrial Track.** This track connects with R.J. Corman’s West End Branch trackage in Allentown and reaches West Catasauqua in Whitehall Township, a distance of four miles. Currently, the line sees service to the area of the former Lehigh Structural Steel plant in Allentown. Several customers are located within that complex. If the Lehigh Structural Steel site were to be redeveloped, a currently active proposal, no active shippers would remain on the Lehighton Industrial Track. Were the line to be abandoned, no existing customers would lose service. However, opportunities to redevelop other sites along the line for businesses requiring rail service would be lost.

**Odenwelder Branch.** The 1.8 mile branch to West Easton is currently in service. However, current shipping levels are low, placing the line at risk. Were the line to be abandoned, one existing customer would lose service. Also, opportunities to redevelop other sites along the line for businesses requiring rail service would be lost.

Additional losses to the rail network are as follows:

**Bethlehem Branch.** The line is out of service and the tracks have been removed. It is in the abandonment process. No customers lost service due to the cessation of service.
SEPTA. The portion of the former Bethlehem Branch between the Bucks County line and Hellertown has not seen service in 24 years. SEPTA retains the line.

Of the four lines at risk, three currently have rail service. The loss of shippers along the lines due to business decisions or redevelopment render two of these lines at risk. In the third case, low traffic levels place the line at risk. Of the four lines at risk, only one potentially involves the loss of service to an existing shipper. In all four lines at risk, abandonment would preclude the redevelopment of sites suitable for rail served businesses.

If abandonment were proposed for these lines, county, municipal and state governments as well as economic development agencies should enter into a detailed evaluation as to the economic development and community development consequences of the abandonment. That analysis would form the bases of decisions regarding whether intervention into the abandonment process would be appropriate.
GLOSSARY

CLASS ONE RAILROAD. A railroad meeting the definition set by the Surface Transportation Board (STB). The STB defines a Class One railroad as a railroad with annual revenues of $319.3 million or more in 2005. (This figure is adjusted annually for inflation.) Class One railroads typically operate in many different states and concentrate on long-haul, high-density intercity traffic lanes.

CLASSIFICATION TRACKS. Tracks within yards used for storing and sorting cars in the process of assembling trains.

CLASSIFICATION YARD. See Yard.

CP _____. Terminology by which an interlocking (control point) is identified. An interlocking is a group of track switches and signals that allow trains to safely change tracks or cross other tracks.

DOUBLESTACK. A freight car designed to carrying containers stacked two high, one on top of another.

GRAVITY HUMP. A system by which cars are classified in a yard. Cars are pushed over a hill where they are uncoupled and roll onto different tracks. Automatic retarders are used to reduce car speed so that excessive impact upon coupling is avoided.

INTERMODAL. A transportation element that accommodates and interconnects different modes of transportation and serves intrastate, interstate, and international movement of people and goods.

PLATE F CARS. Rail cars meeting certain dimensional criteria set by the American Association of Railroads. Plate F cars have larger dimensions than usual freight cars.

SHORT LINE. A railroad meeting the definition set by the Surface Transportation Board (STB). The STB defines short lines as railroads with annual revenues of $25.5 million or less in 1991 (This figure is adjusted annually for inflation.) and switching and terminal companies regardless of operating revenues.

SIDING. A track auxiliary to the main track used for passing trains, car storage or delivery to or from a shipper.

SWITCHING AND TERMINAL RAILROAD. A railroad that operates solely within a facility or group of facilities or that is jointly owned by two railroads for the purpose of transferring cars between the railroads.

TERMINAL RAILROAD. See switching and terminal railroad.

TRACKAGE RIGHTS. An agreement between two railroads allowing one railroad to operate trains using the tracks of the other railroad.

TRANSLOADING. The process of transferring materials and cargo between truck, sea and rail transportation.
TRIPLE CROWN ROADRAILER SERVICE. Intermodal service provided by Norfolk Southern using roadrailer technology. Roadtrailers are truck vans that ride highways on rubber tires and rails on wheelsets temporarily placed underneath.

TRUNK LINE. A rail line handling long-distance through traffic. A main line.

UNIT TRAIN. A train carrying only one commodity between a single shipper and a single consignee.

YARD. A system of tracks within defined limits, other than main tracks and sidings, used for assembling and disassembling trains, car storage and other purposes.