

**Morris County Freight Rail Advisory Committee
Tuesday October 9, 2012: 2:00 PM
Morris County Administration & Records Building
Fifth Floor, Knox Room
Morristown, NJ**

The Meeting was called to order by Mr. Gerald Rohsler at 2:05 PM.

In Attendance:

Board Members	Other Attendees	Staff
Gary Behrens, Roxbury	Alice Cheng, Cheng Solutions	Gerald Rohsler
Jack Holland, Holland Manufacturing	Don Lotz, Cheng Solutions	Joseph Russo
Wesley Weis, M&E	Don Ehrenbeck, Cheng Solutions	
Allen Napoliello, Randolph	David G. Dawson, NJTPA	
	Ted Matthews, NJTPA	
	Chris Mazzei, M&E	

I. Welcome

Mr. Gerald Rohsler welcomed everyone to October's meeting.

II. Approval of minutes from July 10, 2012

Mr. Wesley Weis made a motion to approve the minutes. Mr. Jack Holland seconded the motion. The minutes from July 10, 2012 were unanimously approved.

III. Presentation - NJTPA Rail Freight Capacity and Needs Assessment to Year 2040 Study

Ms. Alice Cheng of Cheng Solutions, introduced colleagues Don Lotz and Don Ehrenbeck of Cheng Solutions, and provided an overview of the Rail Freight Capacity and Needs Assessment to Year 2040 Study, produced by Cheng Solutions LLC in conjunction with HDR Engineering Inc. and Egan Consulting Group for the North Jersey Transportation Planning Authority (NJTPA).

Ms. Cheng noted that the study has been in progress for well over a year and that her organization has been sharing the findings with the counties in the NJTPA region. Ms. Cheng briefly updated the FRAC members regarding the progress and tasks accomplished over the past year with the study.

Ms. Cheng elaborated on the direction that the study took, explaining that first, she and her organization wanted to have a key understanding of the main corridor studies. This was accomplished by collecting data from local municipalities who have a better idea of the characteristics of the rail within their municipal boundaries. Secondly, Cheng Solutions interviewed several railroad operators, who Ms. Cheng noted had been very helpful and provided a strong participation in the study. Lastly, incorporating passenger demand, they confirmed their forecasts with NJTPA's 2040 Freight Industry Level forecasts.

Ms. Cheng turned the presentation over to her colleague, Don Lotz. Mr. Lotz spoke about the freight operations in the region. He noted that most of the thru-trains in the region travel through New Jersey to the rest of the country. Mr. Lotz added that many limitations due to height restrictions and operational constraints would prove problematic in the future as they began to learn from their study that freight transportation is expected to increase. He noted that currently the Norfolk Southern (NS) line in the state carries 35-38 cars/day, maximum. Mr. Lotz noted that more cars could be added but sustainability and efficiency would drop. The study will show an expectation of 25 additional cars on Norfolk Southern's line between now and 2040, which would cause NS to exceed the maximum sustainable train cars and create operational constraints. Conrail's Lehigh line would suffer a similar situation as NS. Additionally, Mr. Lotz brought up several issues familiar with freight, including the current weight limitation of rail cars to 263k, height restrictions at the "hole in the wall" in Phillipsburg, NJ, and the lack of double-tracking along secondary rail routes.

Ms. Cheng felt it was worth noting that Bergen County expressed concerns regarding growing freight on the River Line and would be apprehensive about the crossings located on the line. She mentioned that the County would rather see freight pushed through an existing rail right-of-way instead of creating new ones or less used lines and creating NIMBY (Not In My Back Yard) issues.

Mr. Dave Dawson of NJTPA mentioned that their rail economist sketched out possibilities, but made no recommendations in regards to the "hole in the wall" at Phillipsburg. Mr. Ted Matthews of NJTPA explained the "hole in the wall" and the implications regarding options addressing the height restrictions. Mr. Matthews noted that NS has an issue with moving the track around the "hole in the wall". Currently, NS owns the switch west of the "hole in the wall" and moving the track would put the location of the new switch east of the "hole in the wall" and under NJ TRANSIT's jurisdiction which would limit NS's use of the switch. Mr. Matthews explained that discussion regarding ownership and use of the land is being debated between Phillipsburg and NJ TRANSIT also, delaying progress with resolving the height restriction at Phillipsburg "hole in the wall".

Ms. Cheng agreed that there are a number of options to address the "hole in the wall" issue. Mr. Wes Weis of the M&E mentioned that even if NS maintained control of the switch, NJ TRANSIT would still operate at the 263k weight restriction, limiting the amount of freight that would be shipped regardless of height restrictions. Mr. Gerald

Rohsler of Morris County added that this is an impending issue as Plate C rail cars (263k restricted cars) are becoming obsolete and would cause the County to lose the railroad if weight restrictions were not increased to 286k. Mr. Jack Holland of Holland Manufacturing added that if he could no longer receive shipments from rail, they would become uncompetitive in their market and subsequently be put out of business.

Ms. Cheng asked if Holland Manufacturing was the biggest customer of the railroad, to which Mr. Weis responded was Kuiken Lumber. Mr. Rohsler added that Kuiken Lumber had built a state of the art facility to handle 286k cars and currently have to short-fill their cars to 263k reducing operations at their facility.

Ms. Cheng and her associates agreed on the weight and height restrictions in the County and thanked Morris County for hosting the meeting and allowing her and her associates to present their study and have an informative discussion on rail freight in the County.

IV. Current Initiatives – Kenvil Team Track Design Engineering

Mr. Gerald Rohsler briefly went over the design engineering of the Kenvil Team Track. Mr. Rohsler informed the committee that the project is being funded by State Rail funds in which the County was awarded to hire a consultant, CHA Engineering. Using the site plan that CHA Engineering drafted, Mr. Rohsler explained that all operations would be conducted within the fenced-in transload yard and overall the improvement will enhance the flow of rail activity on the site. Mr. Gary Behrens requested a digital copy for Roxbury Township and mentioned that they will look to discuss the draft design site plan at their next Township meeting. Mr. Holland asked if track would be on both sides of the existing concrete pad within the transload yard, to which Mr. Rohsler affirmed.

Mr. Behrens asked whether unloading would occur on Berkshire Valley Road and rose concerns regarding landscaping at the team track. Mr. Chris Mazzei responded that all unloading would be conducted within the team track's fenced transload area. Mr. Rohsler agreed that the landscaping was reduced in the current draft due to physical constraints found from the study. Mr. Rohsler reminded Mr. Behrens that the original concept plan was a conceptual idea laid on top of an aerial and the current draft is much more precise. Mr. Rohsler added that nothing was left out from the original concept, save for two differences that included the driveway from Berkshire Valley Road and the landscaping. Mr. Behrens agreed and mentioned that the lack of landscaping would be an issue. Mr. Rohsler agreed but insisted that evergreen and landscaping would provide site issues for trains and trucks pulling out of the site crossing Berkshire Valley Road.

IV. Open Discussion

The committee had no more discussion involving freight and items related.

V. Other Business

Mr. Chris Mazzei informed the committee that Toys for Tots is scheduled for December 15 and the Morristown & Erie Railway would be out along the High Bridge Branch on the weekend of the 13th of December to clear any brush that may have fallen on the track. Mr. Gary Behrens inquired the committee regarding Toys 'R' Us' interest in rail at the moment. Mr. Mazzei responded that unless height restrictions are addressed, Toys 'R' Us will not use the rail. Curious if length was an issue, Mr. Holland inquired Mr. Mazzei regarding the possible length of a typical rail car. Mr. Mazzei informed Mr. Holland that a rail car can be 86-feet in length but are more typically between 40-60-feet.

VI. Adjournment

Mr. Gary Behrens made a motion to adjourn the meeting and Mr. Jack Holland seconded the motion. The meeting was unanimously adjourned at 4:00 pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

Joseph A. Russo
Assistant Planner