

A Technical Report



2003 Central New York Rail Corridor Inventory



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Table of Contents

Introduction	1
Syracuse Railroads Historical Overview	2
Classification Overview	4
Railroad Overview	8
<i>CSXT Corridors</i>	9
Mohawk Subdivision	9
DeWitt Yard	11
St. Lawrence Subdivision	13
Fulton Subdivision	14
Baldwinsville Subdivision	15
<i>New York, Susquehanna & Western</i>	16
Syracuse Main Line	16
Syracuse Binghamton & New York Railway	17
<i>Finger Lakes Railway</i>	20
Auburn Road	20
Passenger Service	21
Amtrak	22
OnTrack	25
Opportunities	26
Appendices	
DeWitt Track Chart	A
Mohawk Subdivision	B
St. Lawrence Subdivision	C
Fulton Subdivision	D
Baldwinsville Subdivision	E
NYS&W	F
Finger Lakes Railway	G
New York State High Speed Rail Plan	H
Empire Service Amtrak Schedule	I
OnTrack Schedule	J
Glossary of Technical Terminology	K
Glossary of Acronyms	L

INTRODUCTION

The objective of the 2003 Syracuse Metropolitan Transportation Council (SMTC) Rail Corridor Inventory is to update the inventory of Central New York rail corridors published by the SMTC in 1996. The purpose is to provide information on their history, condition, current utilization, and future potential.

During 2002, a significant report, the “Freight-Rail Bottom Line Report” issued by the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO) Standing Committee on Rail Transportation (SCORT), was published. The report examined the capital needs of the industry and concluded that there were significant public benefits to be derived from funding freight rail projects to maintain a balanced, intermodal and fluid freight system. These benefits included economic enhancements, air quality improvements, reduced congestion and truck traffic, and reduced maintenance costs of the public highway network.

The Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act (ISTEA) and the Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century (TEA-21) specifically required Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs) to consider both freight and passenger movement in its planning process. Planning for the efficient multi-modal movement of goods and people in a manner that will make better use of existing transportation facilities, as directed by federal legislation, requires a better understanding of our rail infrastructure to complement our roadway inventory.

SYRACUSE RAILROADS HISTORICAL OVERVIEW



Eastbound New York Central freight train on Washington Street near City Hall in the 1930's.

Syracuse has been a major hub of rail transportation since 1839, when the first train of the Auburn & Syracuse Railroad (later part of the New York Central Railroad) operated down Washington Street. As the railroads overtook the canal system for the movement of people and freight, many of the small railroad companies consolidated to form larger railroad systems. Two major railroad systems served the Syracuse area: the Delaware, Lackawanna & Western Railroad (DL&W) and the New York Central System (NYC).

Syracuse was known as the “city with railroads in its streets” as both systems had tracks that utilized city streets. As congestion in the streets grew with a combination of trolleys, autos, horses and pedestrians, a solution needed to be found. Several studies were conducted and in 1927 a decision was made to elevate the railroads. The New York Central elevated its line in 1936 in a major undertaking to remove their tracks from the streets, and the Lackawanna completed their elevation project in 1943.

In 1968, the NYC merged with the rival Pennsylvania Railroad creating the Penn Central Railroad (PC). At the end of 1968, the New York, New Haven & Hartford Railroad was merged into PC by order of the Interstate Commerce Commission. Financial problems plagued the PC during its first couple years. Even though the merger had been planned for 10 years before its inception, many problems faced the combined companies, such as incompatible computer systems and signaling systems.

In June 1970, the PC declared bankruptcy.

Meanwhile, the U.S. Government created the United States Railway Association to develop a way to save rail services in the East, as the Erie Lackawanna (a combination of the Lackawanna and the Erie Railroads), Jersey Central, Lehigh Valley, Reading, and Pennsylvania-Reading Seashore Lines were all in bankruptcy in addition to the PC. The result was Conrail, which took over the above lines on April 1, 1976. The federal government, recognizing the national economic importance of the six railroads, responded by appropriating the funds needed to rebuild tracks, locomotives and freight cars. While Conrail succeeded in rebuilding the railroad, the problem of severe economic regulation remained.

With the passage of the Staggers Act in 1980, many of these constraints were loosened, giving railroads more freedom to compete with trucks. Later, other legislation transferred the burden of operating money-losing commuter rail service from Conrail to state agencies. In May 1971, Congress created Amtrak to take over intercity passenger service from the nation's freight railroads. By 1981, Conrail began its financial turnaround.

After June 1981, Conrail would no longer require federal investment, and finished the year with its first profit in its history. With Conrail continuing to succeed in providing high quality service for its freight customers and improving its financial outlook, the federal government sold its ownership interest in Conrail through what at the time was the largest initial public stock offering in the nation's history. This transaction returned the Northeast-Midwest rail freight system to the private sector as a for-profit corporation, as Congress had envisioned when it created Conrail as Consolidated Rail Corporation.

In 1993, Conrail opened a significant new intermodal terminal in DeWitt, New York to capture additional traffic moving by truck. This terminal replaced smaller terminals in Rochester, Buffalo, and Albany.

In 1999, Conrail was jointly purchased by the Norfolk Southern Railway (NS) and CSX Transportation (CSXT), which split its assets between the two companies. All Conrail lines in the Central New York area were purchased by CSX. There are also two other entities operating the former Conrail lines; the New York, Susquehanna & Western Railway (NYS&W), and the Finger Lakes Railway (FGLK). Although both new railroad companies primarily operate freight service, the NYS&W operates a passenger shuttle service within the City of Syracuse known as OnTrack, while the FGLK operates occasional shipper specials and excursions.

Mainline intercity passenger service continues to be provided by Amtrak.

CLASSIFICATION OVERVIEW



CSX Transportation eastbound merchandise train at Park Street

Railroad Classification

The first step for understanding railroad infrastructure is to develop an understanding of the industry classification of railroads.

Railroads in the United States are classified by two different entities utilizing different criteria. The Surface Transportation Board (STB), successor to the Interstate Commerce Commission (ICC), the federal agency responsible for regulating certain economic aspects of the industry, classifies railroads by the level of operating revenue.¹ The levels are adjusted annually for inflation.

The classification is as follows (in millions of dollars):

Class 1	Class 2	Class 3
\$266.7 or more	\$21.3 - \$266.7	Less than \$21.3

The ICC historically required all three types of railroads to report their financial and operating information, but after 1979, reporting requirements were eliminated for all but Class 1 railroads. To fill the void the Association of American Railroads (AAR) began to survey non-Class 1 railroads. The AAR discovered that the smaller railroads had characteristics other than revenues that made them both similar to the Class 1's and yet distinct. It chose to redefine non-Class 1 railroads as being either Regional or Local based upon their mileage and revenue.

¹ The Interstate Commerce Commission was abolished by an act of Congress on December 31, 1995. It was replaced by the Surface Transportation Board within the United States Department of Transportation.

The AAR classification criteria for non-Class 1 railroads are as follows:

Regional:	Line haul railroad, operating at least 350 miles and/or earning revenue between \$40 million, and the Class 1 revenue threshold of \$266.7 million.
Local/ Switching & Terminal:	Line haul railroad falling below Regional criteria and non-Class 1 primarily engaged in switching and/or terminal services for other railroads

In the SMTC study area, the railroads fall into the following categories:

Railroad	ICC Classification	AAR Classification
CSXT	Class 1	Class 1
New York, Susquehanna & Western Railway	Class 2	Regional
Finger Lakes Railway	Class 3	Local

The Finger Lakes Railway also fits under the more common designation of a short line railroad. A Short Line is defined as a railroad company, which may originate or terminate freight traffic on its track, participates in division of revenue, and is usually less than 100 miles in length.²

Trackage Classification

As with railroad company classification noted above, there is also the classification of trackage. This classification system governs railroad maintenance, operations, and speeds. Track is the railroad infrastructure equivalent to our highway system.



CSXT Track Maintenance Crew undercutting rail and cleaning ballast.

² *Railway Age's Comprehensive Dictionary*, Omaha. Simmons-Boardman Books, Inc. 1992: pg. 131

Track is classified by the United States Department of Transportation (USDOT), Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) under Title 49, Part 213, Track Safety Standards. This classification system applies to all standard gage track (4' 8 1/2") in the general railroad system of transportation. Track located inside a facility and is not part of the general railroad transportation system (e.g. industrial track inside a factory) or track used exclusively for rapid transit service in a metropolitan or suburban area are not included.

To be included in a classification, the track must meet all requirements for its intended class. If not, it is reclassified to the next lower class for which it does meet all the requirements for its class. The following reflects the maximum allowable speeds for passenger and freight in the different track classifications:

Class	Max. Operating Speed (Freight)	Max. Operating Speed (Passenger)
1	10 MPH	15 MPH
2	25 MPH	30 MPH
3	40 MPH	60 MPH
4	60 MPH	80 MPH
5	80 MPH	90 MPH
6	110 MPH	110 MPH
7	N/A	125 MPH
8	N/A	160 MPH
9	N/A	200 MPH

There is also a classification for "Excepted" track. To be "Excepted" from compliance with minimum safety requirements on lightly used rail lines, the segment must be identified in the employee timetable or railroad special instructions as 'excepted track', cannot be located within 30 feet of an adjacent track which can be subjected to simultaneous use at speeds in excess of 10 miles per hour and must be inspected at the frequency in accordance with that specified for Class 1 track (noted below). From an operational standpoint, trains on excepted track are limited to speeds under 10 miles per hour; no occupied passenger trains may be operated; and freight trains will not be operated that are hauling more than five rail cars of hazardous materials. Excepted track is primarily found on industrial lead tracks or seldom used branches.

In addition to speed, the classification system impacts the following infrastructure elements:

- Roadbed construction and maintenance, which includes drainage and vegetation control;
- Track geometry, which includes gauge, alignment, curve elevations/speed restrictions, and track surface; and

- Track structure, which includes ballast, cross ties, rail defects, rail joints, tie plates, turnouts/track crossings, switches and frogs.

The designations for Class 7 through 9 are recent actions by the FRA to address the movement by states to develop incremental high-speed rail. There are a number of conditions involved in upgrading track to these classifications, which are beyond the scope of this inventory. There is no track classified above FRA Class 4 track in the study area at the current time.

The FRA also requires specified periodic track inspections based on classification. They are as follows:

Class of Track	Type of Track	Required Frequency
1,2,3	Main track & sidings	<i>Weekly</i> with at least a 3 calendar day interval between inspections, or before use, if the track is used less than once a week. <i>Twice weekly</i> with at least a 1 calendar day interval between inspections if the track carries passenger trains or has more than 10 million gross tons of traffic during the preceding calendar year.
1,2,3	Other than main track & sidings	<i>Monthly</i> with at least a 20 calendar day interval between inspections.
4,5,6		<i>Twice weekly</i> with at least a 1 calendar day interval between inspections.

Source: United States Department of Transportation (USDOT), Federal Railroad Administration (FRA), Title 49, Part 213, Track Safety Standards

RAILROAD OVERVIEW

CSX Transportation (CSXT) is the only Class 1 freight railroad in the Syracuse Metropolitan Area. CSXT is part of the CSX Corporation family of transportation companies operating worldwide. These include CSX Intermodal, CSX World Terminals, and Customized Transportation, Inc. On June 1, 1999, CSXT began operating Conrail lines in the Central New York region as part of its purchase of 40 percent of Conrail.

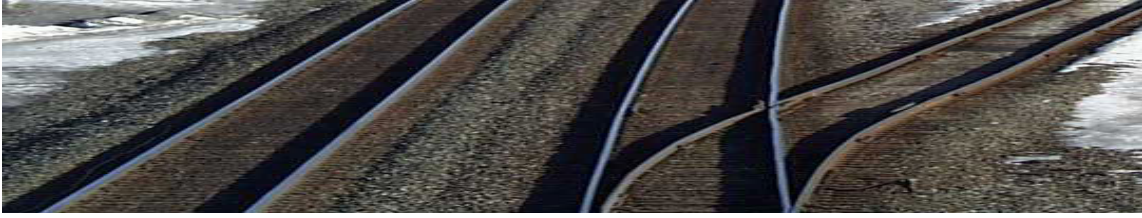


CSXT operates 23,297 route miles in 23 states, the District of Columbia and two Canadian provinces. It is the largest rail network in the northeast. It owns 1,333 route miles in New York State with the key commodities transported being automotive, grain, food products, paper and chemicals.



CSXT Locomotives in DeWitt Yard

CSXT Corridors



Mohawk Subdivision (Chicago Main Line)

The CSXT Mohawk Subdivision (Chicago Main Line) is one of several subdivisions within the Albany Division of CSXT that utilizes the former New York Central (NYC) main line track as its primary route between New York, Boston and Chicago. It is a well-maintained double track main line constructed of continuous welded rail. Traffic consists of approximately 70 freight trains per day with eight daily Amtrak trains. Track 1, on the north side, is the primary westbound track with Track 2, on the south side, primarily eastbound traffic. From east of Syracuse (beyond the study area) to Belle Isle, near the State Fair, at Control Point (CP)³ 297, Track 1 carries nearly 69% of the tonnage. Centralized Traffic Control (CTC), and reversed signaling allows train movements to occur in either direction on any track. Under CTC, trains move by signal indication, and signals and switches are controlled by a dispatcher in a central location (for CSX the dispatching center is in Selkirk, NY near Albany).

In January 1996, Conrail downgraded the Chicago Line classification from FRA Class 5 to Class 4 trackage. As part of the STB approval of the merger of Conrail into CSXT and NS, CSXT had agreed to consider restoration of the track to Class 5 standards. As of October 2003, CSXT has not done so.

Moving west through Central New York, the line traverses Kirkville, and DeWitt (location of the truck/rail intermodal terminal opened in 1993) before making a loop around Syracuse on the old New York Central freight by-pass.⁴

³ Each siding switch is a *control point*, where the signals and the switch machine are interlocked. The switch can not be thrown unless the signals display stop, and the signals display aspects that depend on the position of the switch and the direction selected

⁴ The original passenger main line alignment became I-690 in 1963. This alignment still runs past the former Erie Boulevard passenger station. This was part of the 1936 elevation project to remove trains from Washington Street. The former passenger main rejoined the freight by-pass (now the current main line) at Solvay.



Westbound Conrail doublestack train passing the overheight detectors on the north running lead at Kirkville Road just east of DeWitt Yard.

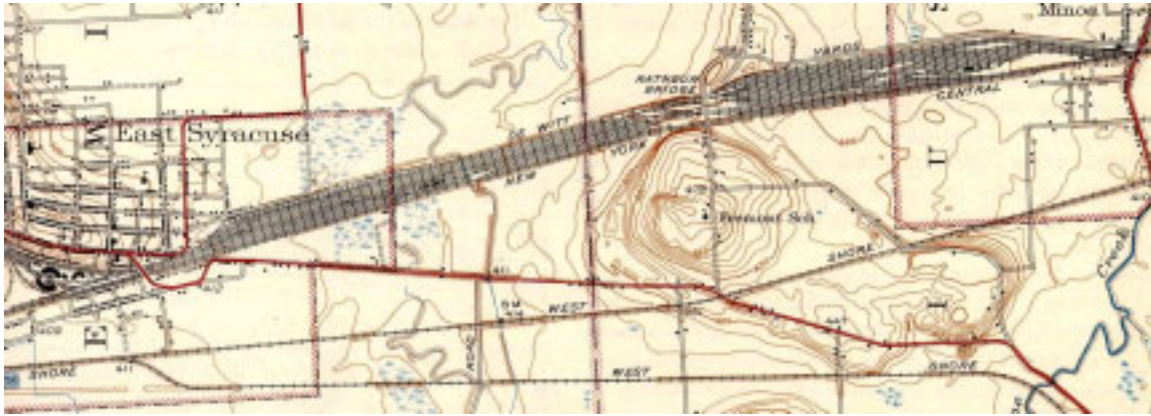
The current main tracks cross over Park Street at the site of the William F. Walsh Regional Transportation Center (opened in 1999) past the Carousel Center and traverse the rear of the New York State Fairgrounds. There is a 10,300-foot controlled siding at Milepost (MP) 283.8. At MP 293.5, there is a 15,300-foot controlled siding where the Finger Lakes Railway and Baldwinsville Subdivision tracks diverge from the main line near the State Fair Grounds.

Near Carousel Center, there is a connection to track 7 at CP 293, which is the former DL&W line to Jamesville and Binghamton. This track is operated by the NYS&W. In 1995, this interchange point with the NYS&W replaced a previous interchange at Utica.

Track speeds for passenger trains are 79 MPH on the two main tracks, except for a stretch of trackage from MP 285 to MP 286.8 (near the former Amtrak Station in DeWitt), which is 40 MPH, and a 6.9 mile stretch from MP 286.8 to MP 293.7 (from DeWitt to the State Fair), which is 60 MPH. With the opening of the Regional Transportation Center in 1999, track 7 became the passenger station track and runs between CP 286.8 at DeWitt to CP 291 at the intermodal facility. Speed limit on this trackage is 30 MPH.

Freight train speeds are divided into two categories: Trail Van (TV) and Freight (FRT). TV trains are those consisting entirely of equipment designed to carry trailers, single or doublestack containers and/or multi-level automobile carrying cars. TV trains on CSXT are restricted to a maximum of 60 MPH, while general freight trains are restricted to a maximum of 50 MPH. Prior to the downgrading of the track from Class 5 to Class 4, the respective maximum speeds had been 70 and 60 MPH. Speed restrictions within the study area include between CP 278 and MP 282.3 near the east end of the DeWitt Yard where Track 4 diverges from the Main Line and enters the yard as the north running lead. Track 4's speed is restricted to 40 MPH. There is also a 1.8 mile long speed restriction of 30 MPH between MP 285 and MP 286.8 near the former Amtrak Station.

DeWitt Yard



DeWitt Yard 1938

There is one rail yard of significance on the Chicago Main Line in the study area. The DeWitt Yard has been a major presence since the 1870's. In the year 1853, the Syracuse-Utica Railroad Line became part of the New York Central Railroad System and was a major contributor to the development of the Village of East Syracuse. In 1872, due to continued growth of traffic in the region, the area called Messina Springs was purchased by the railroad to establish the DeWitt Yard.

In 1904, the yard was expanded to include two hump facilities (the moving of cars up a hill, and then rolling them down onto different classification trackage to make up freight trains). In the 1920's and 1950's, the NYC again enlarged and improved the yard. In the mid-1960's, the NYC made a decision to make Selkirk near Albany the main yard and began a process of downgrading DeWitt. Traffic at DeWitt continued to dwindle into the 1980's. In January 1991, Conrail closed the hump classification operation. The formerly active classification yard was limited to storage of freight cars. The eastbound yard was relegated to storage of freight cars and maintenance-of-way equipment.

In 1993, Conrail opened a new truck/rail intermodal facility in the DeWitt yard. Under CSXT auspices this has grown to be the largest intermodal yard in New York State. It currently generates 70,000 lifts/year (nearly 200 each day, 8 each hour) and is showing 6% annual growth. CSXT is proposing expanding the terminal and enhancing highway access in partnership with the public sector.



Hump Yard looking east in the 1970's.

Loadings are a mix of containers (or stacks) and trailers. Trailers are utilized to service local, and regional customers while containers are generally through service. This intermodal facility replaced several smaller facilities in Buffalo, Albany and Rochester. Intermodal business continues to grow and is a major segment of the business at DeWitt.

A track chart of the DeWitt Yard is found in Appendix A.



CSX Intermodal Facility at DeWitt

The Chicago Main is surrounded by a variety of land-use types. Primarily woodlands east of DeWitt, there is some residential development in the Manlius/DeWitt vicinity. Throughout the City of Syracuse surrounding land is primarily industrial in nature, and then reverts to woodlands west of the New York State Fairgrounds. Mohawk Subdivision (Chicago Line) track charts are found in Appendix B.

St. Lawrence Subdivision



Southbound Canadian National/CSXT Freight Train over Onondaga Lake Parkway

The St. Lawrence Subdivision, a former New York Central secondary line, is a single-track railway that runs 158.8 miles from the Chicago Main Line near Carousel Center in the City of Syracuse to the junction at Massena with the Canadian National Railway (CN) to Montreal. The portion from the Chicago Main Line to Watertown is 70 miles. On that section there are two controlled passing sidings; one at Control Point Woodard (CP W) north of Liverpool that is 5,300 feet long within the Woodard Industrial Park, and another at Pulaski that is 6,000 feet in length.

The St. Lawrence Subdivision is FRA Class 3 track with a maximum speed for freight trains of 40 MPH. The only speed restriction within the study area is on the wye track from the Mohawk Subdivision (Chicago Main Line) of 10 MPH. Track speed on the Woodard running track in the industrial park is 10 MPH. Trackage is continuous welded rail for its length, including the Woodard Running Track. This welded rail dates from the mid-1970's to the early 1980's when a major line upgrade occurred.

In this study area the line serves Liverpool and Clay before traversing north to Parish and points beyond. Current traffic consists of CSXT/CN overhead freight service from

Montreal to Selkirk twice daily, with two locals to Watertown, and two locals to Woodard, servicing customers in the Liverpool and Woodard Industrial Park vicinity. This line also carries one local per day leaving the Montreal line at Woodard and proceeding up the Fulton Subdivision.

In the Town of Clay, CSXT maintains a small yard at CP W, which serves the Woodard Industrial Park. Woodard Industrial Park is a large industrial zone sited between Henry Clay Boulevard and Morgan Road. This is a unique industrial site as both roads are designated Access Roads by the New York State Department of Transportation (NYSDOT) for special dimension vehicles, while the St. Lawrence Subdivision with the Woodard Running Track operates through the middle. This provides two modal forms of freight access for industrial and distribution customers in the park. CSXT recently initiated intermodal service on this traffic lane in coordination with CN.

The St. Lawrence Subdivision skirts the living history museum at St. Marie de Ganathaha and adjacent parklands on Onondaga Lake Parkway before heading north to Clay. Through the Village of Liverpool, the track is abutted on both sides by residential areas. North of Liverpool to Woodard is primarily industrial with some adjacent residential property, and beyond Woodard to Brewerton is primarily rural woodlands and mixed residential. A track chart of the Montreal Subdivision is found in Appendix C.

Fulton Subdivision

The Fulton Subdivision is a single-track line with no passing sidings that runs 25.8 miles from the Montreal Subdivision at Woodard, north of Liverpool, to Oswego, serving customers in Phoenix and Fulton on the east side of the Oswego River. This was formerly the NYC line to Fulton and Oswego. The line consists of continuous welded rail its entire length. The FRA track classification for the Fulton Subdivision is Class 3. CSXT maintains a 30 MPH timetable speed on this line with restrictions between Woodard (MP 7.2) and MP 7.4 of 10 MPH. There is a small yard in Fulton between MP 21.6 and MP 22.8 near the former Miller Brewing company site that is currently underutilized. A switch crew that was stationed at Fulton has been discontinued due to the loss of traffic from several closed manufacturing facilities.

Current traffic includes one local per day serving industrial customers in Oswego County. The crew servicing this line works out of Liverpool's Woodard yard office. The former Miller facility has excellent rail access with a four-track storage yard and numerous lead tracks into the plant facilities.

Past Woodard the Fulton Subdivision line branches off to the northwest. The Fulton line traverses what is now significant residential development along the right of way in the Town of Clay. The line is also in close proximity to growing residential areas in southern Oswego County. A track chart of the Fulton Subdivision is found in Appendix D.

Baldwinsville Subdivision

The Baldwinsville Subdivision is a single-track line consisting of continuous welded rail with no passing sidings that runs from MP 1.9 to Oswego. From the Mohawk Subdivision (Chicago Main Line), near the State Fairgrounds, to MP 1.9 the track is considered the Fairgrounds Subdivision, but due to its short length it is included in the description of the Baldwinsville Subdivision. This is a distance of 34.7 miles to end of track. This is the northern section of the former DL&W line to Oswego. The southern end of this line is operated by the NYS&W.

The track is FRA Class 3. CSXT has a 30 MPH maximum speed on this line. Track speed restrictions are between CP 293 (connection to the Chicago Line), and MP 2.0 of 10 MPH, and between MP 22 and MP 30 of 25 MPH. There is an additional speed restriction between MP 30 and end of track in Oswego at MP 34.7. The continuous welded rail section of this line is from CP 293 to MP 22 just north of Fulton. Beyond this point to end-of-track, the line consists of jointed track. Current traffic includes two local freights per day primarily serving accounts in the Baldwinsville, Radisson and Fulton areas, including distribution facilities near State Fair Boulevard.⁵ These points are served out of the DeWitt Yard.

At MP 11 near Radisson, a wye leads off the Baldwinsville Subdivision to serve a yard facility and industrial trackage for the Radisson Industrial Park. Major customers include Ball Corporation and the Anheuser Busch Brewing Company. CSXT ownership ends at MP 22, and, from that point north, is owned by NRG Corporation for service to its tank farm at MP 33.4. This tank farm provides fuel oil for the steam plant in Oswego.

Leaving the Chicago Main Line, the Baldwinsville Subdivision line traverses heavy industrial land for a short stretch before passing the main gate of the New York State Fairgrounds. Past the State Fair, the line is mixed residential and light industrial until past John Glenn Boulevard in the Town of Salina. North of that point, the land use is primarily rural woodlands and increasing residential development as far as Baldwinsville. Beyond Baldwinsville the surrounding land use is primarily rural woodlands. Track charts of the Baldwinsville Subdivision are found in Appendix E.

⁵ Traffic noted for the Montreal, Fulton and Baldwinsville secondaries is for weekday schedules. Weekend traffic will vary by route and will include a reduced number of train movements.

New York, Susquehanna & Western

The New York, Susquehanna & Western Railway (NYS&W) is a regional carrier that started service in the Syracuse Metropolitan Area in the early 1980's. The former DL&W line from Syracuse to Binghamton was proposed for abandonment by Conrail and subsequently taken over for operating purposes by the NYS&W in 1982. Conrail maintained the portion of the line from Jamesville to Syracuse and interchange of freight traffic with the NYS&W took place at Jamesville. In 1993, the Jamesville Secondary Track, which was the nine-mile segment from Jamesville to connection with the Conrail main line in Syracuse was put up for sale. As part of an effort to begin a passenger shuttle service, Conrail agreed to convey the property to the County Industrial Development Agency (IDA), which leased it to the Syracuse, Binghamton & New York Railway (SB&NY) a subsidiary of Delaware Otsego, the parent company of NYS&W. The SB&NY in turn has operated OnTrack, using New York State funds for the necessary capital improvements.



The NYS&W is a regional carrier that operates over 400 miles of track in New York, New Jersey, and Pennsylvania. This includes trackage rights over the Norfolk Southern (NS) to Buffalo. The range of commodities includes feed ingredients, lumber and other building materials, chemicals and aggregates for customers in New York State.

Syracuse Main Line

This Jamesville to Binghamton freight line is the former DL&W Syracuse Branch, which continued north to Oswego (now the Baldwinsville Subdivision of CSXT). South of Syracuse, the line traverses Jamesville, Tully, Cortland and thence to Binghamton. The line runs 73.4 miles from Binghamton to Jamesville. This line consists of jointed rail for its entire length, and is FRA Class 2 track.

Maximum speeds for the Syracuse Main Line are 25 MPH for freights, and 30 MPH for passenger trains. Runaround tracks are provided at Homer (1,600 feet, MP 237.3), Tully (1,000 feet, MP 248.92) and Apulia (1,400 feet, MP 250.71). NYS&W currently operates three trains per week to Binghamton to interchange with Canadian Pacific and Norfolk Southern. Additional trains are operated as needed. Loaded traffic is southbound with empties returning northbound and westbound. There is limited local traffic generated off this line in the study area. Traffic for Utica is interchanged at Syracuse for shuttle via Chenango Forks to Utica customers. This traffic is interchanged at the CSXT DeWitt Yard with NYS&W crews operating on the CSXT Chicago Main Line.

The NYS&W trackage in the study area, including the Syracuse, Binghamton & New York (see below), is owned by the Onondaga County Industrial Development Agency, and is leased to the railroad under the Payment-In-Lieu-Of-Taxes (PILOT) program.

Land use along this corridor is primarily rural with limited residential development south of Jamesville.



NYS&W northbound freight at Tully, NY

Syracuse, Binghamton & New York Railway

The Syracuse, Binghamton & New York Railway (a subsidiary of NYS&W) was formed as a non-union subsidiary to operate the trackage from Jamesville through Armory Square to Carousel Center. Freight trains operate over this trackage to connect with the NYS&W at Jamesville. The SB&NY runs 10.15 miles from MP 264.3 to the Carousel Center at MP 274.5. As with the rest of the NYS&W, this is constructed of jointed rail.

This trackage is FRA Class 2 with the following maximum speeds:

Track Section	Freight	Passenger
Between Jamesville at MP 264.3 and MP 270.9	30 MPH	30 MPH
Between MP 270.9 and MP 273.45	15 MPH	30 MPH
Between MP 273.45 and MP 273.55	10 MPH	15 MPH
Between MP 273.55 and MP 274.15	10 MPH	25 MPH
Between MP 274.15 (switch at CSXT Main) and MP 274.25 (Security Fence at Carousel Center)	10 MPH	15 MPH
Between MP 274.25 and MP 274.45 (end of track)	10 MPH	10 MPH

There are two locations of runaround tracks. One is at Jamesville with a 2,800-foot runaround at MP 264.9, and a series of runaround tracks at Armory Square. They include a 925-foot runaround passenger track located on the east side of the main track at MP 270.9, an equipment siding of 202 feet located on the east side of the passenger runaround, and a storage siding of 935 feet located on the west side of the main track.



Southbound NYS&W freight near Geddes Street

The SB&NY is also home to the OnTrack shuttle project that was initiated in 1994. The shuttle project includes an amendment to the initial agreement to provide for construction of a connector track from Carousel Center to the William F. Walsh Regional Transportation Center without entering CSXT's Chicago Main Line. The reason for the separate track is to avoid interference with CSXT operations. The extension of the line

is delayed until construction of a bridge over Park Street in the City of Syracuse takes place.

The SB&NY rail line from Jamesville to Brighton Avenue in Syracuse is primarily undeveloped rural property. From Brighton Avenue north, the line traverses local neighborhoods until passing the Syracuse University platform at Raynor Avenue, and passing under I-81 into the Central Business District (CBD). Land use within the city limits is primarily a mix of residential, commercial, retail and light industrial. NYS&W track charts are found in Appendix F.

Finger Lakes Railway

In 1995, a consortium of two shortline railroads (Farmrail and the Genesee & Wyoming) and one marketing company (Rail Services) formed the Finger Lakes Railway (FGLK) to purchase and operate 118 miles of former Conrail trackage known as the “Geneva Cluster” in the Finger Lakes region. The railroad operates from Solvay via Auburn to Geneva and to points in the Finger Lakes area. With headquarters in Geneva, New York, the railroad has grown traffic from 5,500 carloads in 1995 to nearly 15,000 carloads of annual traffic in 2003.



The Auburn Road

The Auburn Road (formerly the Conrail Auburn Secondary) of FGLK is a single-track line that runs 46.9 miles from CSXT’s Solvay Yard to Geneva, with a connection to the Norfolk Southern (NS) Corning Secondary and points in the Finger Lakes Region. This route traverses Skaneateles Junction, Auburn, Cayuga, Seneca Falls and Waterloo. The Auburn Road is FRA Class 2 trackage. The entire line is jointed track except for a stretch of continuous welded rail from the CSXT Mohawk Subdivision (Chicago Line) to Milepost (MP) 12.8 west of Martisco that was installed by Conrail in a track upgrade in 1980.



Westbound Finger Lakes Railway ballast train at Martisco, NY

The trackage from MP 2.8 (connection with the Chicago Line) to MP 3.61 remains a part of CSXT, and now functions as the Solvay Industrial Track, and the interchange with the FGLK. There are four sidings between Syracuse and Auburn. The first is a 2,200-foot siding near MP 3 that is part of CSXT's Solvay Industrial Track, a short 600-foot siding at Fairmount (MP 5.2), a 1,000-foot siding in Skaneateles Junction (MP 17.48), and a 3,000-foot siding at Auburn (MP 25.3).

Since taking over the line from Conrail in 1995, FGLK management has been aggressive in seeking new business. The line between Auburn and Geneva, which was originally out of service, now sees regular daily service. In June of 1999, CSXT and Norfolk Southern (NS) jointly purchased Conrail. This provides shippers on the FGLK access to two Class 1 railroads as opposed to the former Conrail-only routing option. FGLK interchanges with CSXT at both Solvay, near Syracuse, and Lyons, north of Geneva. Interchange with NS occurs at Geneva.

The FGLK trackage in the study area is owned by the Onondaga County Industrial Development Agency, and is leased to the railroad through the Payment-In-Lieu-Of-Taxes (PILOT) program.

The FGLK serves a heavily residential area as far as Camillus before heading west to the Auburn vicinity. Beyond Camillus are primarily rural woodlands. Track charts for the FGLK are found in Appendix G.

PASSENGER SERVICE

Central New York has traditionally maintained a variety of intercity rail passenger services. The New York Central Lines, the Delaware, Lackawanna & Western Railroad, and predecessor companies provided extensive intercity rail passenger network. Service was provided north, south, east and west on a variety of lines and schedules. There was also a proliferation of interurban electric railway lines throughout the region. During the 1930's over one hundred trains per day passed through Syracuse.

With the advent of competing modes, such as the automobile and the growth of the interstate highway system, rail service declined. As passenger rail service was reduced by the private railroads over the years (the DL&W discontinued passenger service to Oswego in 1949 and Syracuse in 1958), changes in right-of-way and service locations occurred.

In 1963 the New York Central abandoned their elevated right of way through the city, which became the roadbed to Interstate 690, and removed their station to a smaller facility in the DeWitt freight yards. The New York Central and successor company, Penn Central, utilized the new facility and then, in 1971, Amtrak, which extensively renovated the facility in 1985. In 1998 Amtrak closed the facility and relocated into the new

William F. Walsh Regional Intermodal Transportation Center, which provided enhanced intermodal connectivity to regional and local bus services as well as providing improved passenger accommodations.

There are two passenger operators in the Syracuse area. Amtrak provides intercity passenger service while the NYS&W operates a shuttle service between Syracuse University and Carousel Center. FGLK also has several pieces of passenger equipment, but it is used for special movements and not scheduled service.

Amtrak

Amtrak was created on May 1, 1971 as the National Railroad Passenger Corporation to assume the passenger operations of private railroads. Service provided by the private



carriers had been, except in a few cases, declining since the 1950's due to intense competition from the subsidized air and highway modes. In 1970, Congress recognized the need for a national rail passenger network, and passed the Rail Passenger Service Act to preserve, and revive passenger rail service. The Act gave railroads in the United States the opportunity to transfer their operations to the new national railroad

passenger system. Although Amtrak began managing the national passenger system on May 1, 1971, the ownership of the stations, yards, locomotives, and maintenance facilities remained with the individual private railroad companies for several additional years. Train, station and yard personnel also continued to be employees of the different railroads. What this meant was that Amtrak had to manage and set goals for the corporation without any real control over the people who provided the service.

In spite of many obstacles, including insufficient capital funding, Amtrak improved service over the years. In the 1970's, new passenger equipment started to replace what is now known as the "heritage fleet" of old cars that were built in the 1950's. By 1976, most of the employees worked directly for Amtrak, and that year marked the acquisition of the former Penn Central northeast corridor between Boston and Washington, D.C. During the 1980's and into the 1990's, further improvements were made in ticketing, computerization, passenger equipment, and locomotives.



Westbound Amtrak train near Kirkville Road

Currently there is an active debate in Congress as to the role of intercity passenger rail service in the United States and the future of Amtrak as an entity. This debate continues while many states (including New York State) advance proposals and plans for high-speed rail corridors. In 1999, the NYSDOT developed a vision for high-speed rail in the State including the Empire Corridor in the Hudson Valley and west of Albany. Due to budget constraints and other issues, work west of Albany has not advanced. A copy of the State's High Speed Rail Plan is found in Appendix I.

Empire Corridor

Amtrak's Empire Corridor Service extends from New York's Penn Station up the Hudson River valley to Albany, and west to Niagara Falls. It also includes the segment from Albany to Montreal along Lake Champlain utilizing the Delaware and Hudson (CP Rail).



From Albany west, the corridor serves Schenectady, Amsterdam, Utica, Rome, Syracuse, Rochester, Buffalo/Depew, Buffalo/Exchange Street and Niagara Falls. The Maple Leaf continues to Niagara Falls, Canada and Toronto with intermediate stops. Upstate New York sees six daily frequencies (one of which is the Lake Shore Limited from Chicago/New York/Boston). Additional frequencies occur depending upon day of the week and direction of travel.



Westbound Amtrak train at the William F. Walsh Regional Transportation Center

The portion of the Empire Corridor that is the subject of this report utilizes the CSXT Mohawk Subdivision previously described in this report. Passenger train speeds are 79 MPH except for speed restrictions of 40 MPH from MP 285.0 next to the DeWitt Yard to CP 286 immediately west of the entrance to the yard limits. From CP 286 to MP 292.3 the passenger speeds are restricted to 60 MPH. At MP 292.3 (near the curve under I-690) the speed is restricted to 55 MPH for approximately one mile (MP 293.3). At MP 293.3 the limit is increased to 60 MPH and at 293.7 at the State Fairgrounds it returns to a maximum of 79 MPH.

Prior to Amtrak, however, both the New York Central and the Penn Central operated Empire Service trains at 85 mph. In the late 1960's the Penn Central removed all automatic train control equipment on their main line forcing a speed restriction of 79 MPH for passenger trains in accordance with FRA rules.

Passenger boardings at Syracuse have improved since the opening in 1999 of the William F. Walsh Intermodal Transportation Center, replacing a station built in 1963 by the New York Central in DeWitt. The Intermodal Transportation Center is located at CP 291 near Park Street.

A copy of the current Amtrak schedule for the Empire Corridor is found in Appendix H.

OnTrack

OnTrack operates a shuttle service provided by the New, York, Susquehanna & Western Railway's subsidiary, the Syracuse, Binghamton & New York Railway, known as the "City Express". The service runs primarily between a platform at Syracuse University, Armory Square and Carousel Center. The shuttle operates between 11:30 AM and 6:30 PM four days per week. Ridership numbers are not available for the shuttle service.



In addition to the scheduled service, during the summer months, service is occasionally expanded to Jamesville Beach County Park where a small platform is maintained. OnTrack also transports large numbers of people to Carrier Dome special events and concerts from both the Armory Square Station and Carousel Center. Regular trains are also operated for Syracuse University basketball and football games to alleviate traffic congestion in the University Hill area.



OnTrack Rail Diesel Car west of Carousel Center

A copy of the OnTrack route map and schedule are found in Appendix J.

OPPORTUNITIES

Each carload of traffic that moves by rail (either shortline, regional or Class 1) is an economic decision made by the shipper to enhance their competitiveness. Rail transportation is competitive with other modes and yields significant public benefits as the freight traffic increases. Many of these benefits were detailed in the “Freight Rail Bottom Line Report” issued by the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials.⁶ Shortline railroad carload traffic has been increasing with each passing year. Class 1 intermodal traffic has also been growing and is the fastest growing segment of their business nationwide. Recent changes in the trucking Hours-Of-Service rules is shifting more intermodal traffic to rail to increase efficiency.

Opportunities are being explored by various entities to enhance rail transportation in the Central New York region. CSX Transportation is working with the SMTC and local municipalities to look at improvements to its rail/truck intermodal terminal in DeWitt. Aspects of this project include improved access to the terminal to enhance operations, air quality and safety. Finger Lakes Railway is examining opportunities to gain direct access to several key manufacturing and shipping facilities in the area. These improved access links will increase carloadings, improve air quality and reduce congestion by moving some of the tractor-trailers off the highway.

There are also opportunities being examined by the New York State Department of Transportation, Amtrak and other parties such as the Empire Corridor Rail Task Force, to enhance passenger service on the Empire Corridor. These include seeking improved federal funding for corridor projects (several bills are currently under consideration by Congress for a rail fund similar to those created for highways, transit and aviation), refurbished trainsets, improved frequencies and marketing.

The potential development of DestiNY USA may cause rethinking of the major corridor passenger markets making Syracuse second on the corridor behind New York City. Amtrak is already considering possible impacts of that development, should it occur.

The railroad industry continues to evolve and change. Investment by both the private and public sector may create new opportunities for improvement and expansion of the local infrastructure, improve the competitiveness of our region and enhance freight and passenger mobility for the foreseeable future.

⁶ “*Freight-Rail Bottom Line Report*”, American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials, Standing Committee on Rail Transportation, Washington DC 2002.