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IN THIS ISSUE:

CURRENT EVENTS

Urban Commuter / Light Rail / Modern Streetcar News!

More on the Philadelphia & Western Railroad (AKA NHSL)!

OTHER TRACTION ITEMS

WCTS HO scale Sideframes Now Available!

HO Scale Contemporary Urban Rail Transit Models!

A LITTLE MODERN HISTORY

SEPTA 9111 in Germantown!

CURRENT EVENTS.....

Urban Commuter / Light Rail / Modern Streetcar News!

LOS ANGELES, CA - Progressive Railroading reported on January 22nd that before the end of the month, the Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority (LA Metro) was scheduled to expand its ride-hailing service, Metro Micro, to three new service areas near rail stations in Compton/Artesia, El Monte and North Hollywood, California.



The areas are now served by LA Metro's Mobility on Demand pilot project in partnership with Via, which will end Jan. 24 after two years. The new program, operated by RideCo. Inc., will begin operating in the new service zones on Jan. 25, LA Metro officials said in a press release.

The service is designed to replace short, solo trips to-and-from rail stations by offering on-demand service in vehicles operated by LA Metro employees.

On January 28, LA Metro's board was scheduled to vote to approve about \$6 million to cover the cost of operations in the new zones beyond the current fiscal year.

LA Metro's Mobility on Demand pilot provided more than 250,000 rides and met or exceeded project goals for average wait times, ridership and average ride ratings. Ridership grew by 178% in 2020 compared to 2019, LA Metro officials said.

RIVERSIDE COUNTY, CA - Progressive Railroading also reported on January 22nd that the Riverside County Transportation Commission (RCTC) in mid-January 2021 announced it is nearing completion of an environmental impact report and service development plan for a daily passenger-rail service between Los Angeles and the Coachella Valley in California.

The draft environmental impact report/environmental impact statement proposes twice-daily service from Los Angeles via Fullerton, Colton, and the San Geronio Pass to Indio or Coachella. The 145-mile route would take less than three-and-a-half hours and offer an alternative to the often congested Route 91 and Interstate 10, RCTC officials said in a press release.



The environmental analysis addresses questions and impacts of the project, but does not identify station locations or other specific infrastructure for the new service. More detailed studies would be conducted as part of a future Tier 2 environmental analysis, which would involve station selection and determining rail improvements required for the proposed service, officials said.

RCTC, the California Department of Transportation, the Federal Highway Administration and other local partners are exploring funding to develop the Tier 2 environmental analysis.

Other technical modeling for the project also has been completed, including how the trains will travel through the higher elevations in the San Geronio Pass and maintain speeds for effective travel.

Later this year, RCTC will host meetings to invite public comment on the draft studies. Following the public comment period, the RCTC and its project partners anticipate project approval by the end of 2021. If funding can be secured, work then could begin on the Tier 2 environmental studies, followed by detailed project design, and then construction.

More on the Philadelphia & Western (AKA NHSL)!

George L. Huckaby

Last month we reported on the latest addition to the Norristown High Speed Line (NHSL) originally the Philadelphia and Western Railway (P&W). This issue will concentrate on the rich history of this railroad, the only standard gauge light rail line in the Philadelphia area.

The P&W was originally planned as the proposed eastern link of a transcontinental railroad connecting to the [Western Maryland Railroad](#) at York, PA. The first train ran from 69th Street to Stafford on May 22, 1907. On June 6, 1907, the company defaulted on the payment of first mortgage bonds it had issued, so the company was sold at public sale by the bond trustee for \$1,000,000 to the Sheldon Syndicate of New York, which was the original owner of the company. The planned extension to [Parkesburg](#) and York was officially abandoned on March 22, 1912. An alternate extension to the PRR main line in Stafford opened on October 11, 1911. The Norristown Branch opened on December 12, 1912.

The railroad built a 20-acre amusement park called the Beechwood Amusement Park in the Powder Mill Valley in 1907 to provide a potential destination for riders. The park opened on May 30, 1907 and could accommodate 15,000 people and included 10 acres of rides, picnic grounds, and a lake with rowboats for rent. The park had 5,000 visitors on the opening day but began losing money almost immediately after opening due to competition from other parks in Willow Grove, Chestnut Hill, and Washington Park. The railroad finally abandoned the park in 1909.

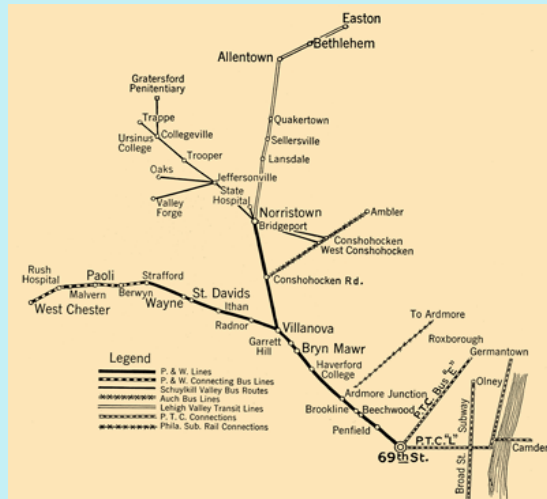
The first cars built for the P&W never actually ran on the P&W, since the cars were completed before the line was ready to open. Twenty-two wooden electric multiple-unit passenger cars and two full-baggage-configured MU's were built for the P&W by the St. Louis Car Co. in 1906. However, due to the San Francisco earthquake, twelve of them went to MUNI predecessor United Railroads of San Francisco (URR of SF), four went to the Sacramento Northern (SN) Railroad, and the remaining ten went to the Erie Railroad Rochester-Mt. Morris Branch, where they were modified and rewired for overhead AC operation. The twelve cars that went to URR of SF had their bulkhead doors sealed and their MU capabilities removed, operating strictly as single-units. The four SN cars were converted into motorized combination baggage/passenger cars and used on the Woodland Branch. The two baggage cars were accepted by the P&W, where they were turned into line-maintenance cars.

Finally in 1907, twenty-two wooden passenger cars, almost identical to the original order, arrived on P&W property. They were originally equipped with rectangular-shaped bow collectors, which were later replaced with trolley poles for use in the car barn area in addition to third rail shoes.

Of those 22 cars, No. 46, shown above operating on the now defunct Delaware Avenue Penn's Landing Trolley (1982 to 1996) survives, along with line car No. 401 from the original order; both of which are preserved at the Electric City Trolley Museum in Scranton, PA. Prior to the move to Scranton, they ran as a two-car train while in operation at the Philadelphia Waterfront every Christmas season for many years as the "Santa Train," with No. 401 operating as Santa's workshop and No. 46 used for the passengers.



Car 46 survived after serving as work car 446 for many years visible to all sitting outside the 72nd street shops.



The Philadelphia & Western Railway in 1941.

The P&W ran what were called the "Bullet cars" because of their shape and speed. The all-aluminum *Bullet cars* were the mainstay of the line from 1931 until 1990.



The current SEPTA *Norristown High Speed Line* (NHSL) began in 1907 as the Philadelphia & Western Railroad (P&W), which ran from the present 69th Street Terminal in Upper Darby, PA to a converted farmhouse station in Strafford PA. In 1911, the line was extended 0.47 miles (0.76 km) west to a new Strafford P&W station adjacent to the Pennsylvania Railroad's Strafford station, allowing easy interchange between the two lines. In 1912, a 6.2-mile (10 km) branch was constructed from Villanova Junction, 0.33 miles (0.53 km) west of the existing Villanova station, to Norristown. When the newly built branch quickly attracted more ridership than the Strafford main line, the Norristown section then became the main line and the Strafford stretch was demoted to branch status; in the mid-1930s, the Strafford spur was narrowed to a single track for its last 1.74 miles (2.8 km) between the Wayne-St. Davids and Strafford stations, while the Norristown line received a sleek new art deco terminus at Main and Swede Streets. Service to Strafford was finally abandoned on March 23, 1956.

The line is entirely double track except for the bridge that crosses the Schuylkill River. In a few places there are three tracks. The shops, referred to as the 72nd St shops, are located adjacent to the 69th Street Transportation Center, on the left side of the tracks as you head towards Norristown.

The first large group of cars built for use on the then new Strafford line were named the "Strafford Cars" and these 11 cars were built by the J.G. Brill company of Philadelphia. Three similar cars, called the 50-series, were purchased 1920 and these cars actually opened the line. They were several inches wider and several feet longer than the later Straffords and never had vestibule steps but had trolley poles so they could be used on the branch to Norristown. They were never rebuilt, so with their top speed still only 45 mph (72 km/h), they had to be used strictly in rush hour short-turn service so they wouldn't get in the way of the other much faster trains. They were finally scrapped in 1952. Maximum speed was 44 miles per hour, and the cars featured smoking compartments, parcel racks, and train doors for easier passage trains of more than one car. The P&W was pleased with the first car #60, and subsequently ordered 5 more cars (61-65) in 1927, followed in 1929 by 5 additional cars (66-70), bringing the total fleet of 60 cars to 11 by 1929, one of which is shown below left. The last Strafford Car was retired on March 30, 1990.



Before the new cars arrived beginning in 1991, various pieces of equipment from Chicago and Philadelphia were used on the line. Above right is one of the seven married pairs of the 6000 series of Chicago Transit Elevated cars (*obtained very cheaply*) that allowed the line to resume full service in December 1986 after the line had to be shut down in August 1986 when the number of available cars were insufficient to maintain service. The line also used five former single unit M3 Market Frankford Subway Elevated (MFSE) 1960 era "Almond Joy" cars beginning in 1989.

The two former CNS&M 'Electroliners' 801-802 and 803-804, shown in the center and right photos below, came to the NHSL in 1964. The trolley poles and steps were removed, new doors were added in the center coach sections, and updated third-rail contact shoes were installed. They emerged from the shops in the then "Red Arrow" colors of cream and maroon as shown the below right photo. The tavern-lounges continued in service, providing coffee and pastry in the morning, and beverages and snacks in the evening. 801-802 was renamed "Valley Forge", while 803-804 became "Independence Hall". They were retired in 1978 and both survive in museums.



Almond Joy 601 on the NHSL.



Electroliner still in Chicago livery.



Electroliner in LibertyLiner livery.

The 26 single unit ABB N-5 cars which replaced the Bullet cars were originally considered a light rail vehicle, but because of its separated right-of-way, high platforms, and 3rd rail supply, it is now considered a "heavy rail interurban line" and SEPTA renamed it the *Norristown High Speed Line* in September of 2009. Prior to that, it was known as Route 100, and many still refer to it as the "old P&W".



Besides the system being unique in many ways, the cars are unique in their own right, as they are only the second set of cars made by Asea Brown Boveri (ABB) in the United States, sharing the same technology as the Baltimore LRV's - not just similar, but the exact same, with things like the propulsion modules, auxiliary modules, etc, being interchangeable with the ones on the Baltimore cars. ABB Traction (now Bombardier) delivered N-5 No. 451 in 1991. The production fleet arrived in 1993. No. 451 was then renumbered 130. Additionally, six cars more than required for 69th St. to Norristown service were purchased to provide expansion capacity for the King of Prussia (KoP) extension. It isn't out of the realm of possibility that the now 27-year-old N5s will not see KoP, but their replacements now will.

The extension will leave the Route 100 alignment north of the Hughes Park Station and the Pennsylvania Turnpike. Three operations will be provided: 69th Street Terminal to King of Prussia, King of Prussia to Norristown Transportation Center, and the current 69th Street to Norristown operation. Representatives from the project planners and SEPTA made a detailed presentation. Throughout the planning process, stretching over more than two decades, business, government representatives at Federal state, and local levels and residents have been intimately engaged in the process.

Twenty-one different alignments had been proposed and withdrawn in response to concerns about construction disruption associated with an alignment along US Route 202, DeKalb Highway and other proposals that would have caused acquisition of many private homes and noise and visual issues along different proposed alignments. The current proposal has alleviated all private resident concerns and virtually no homes will be impacted. Unfortunately, responding to these local concerns has enhanced community buy-in but has resulted in a lengthy delay which has increased the projected cost from roughly \$450 million (2000) to almost \$2 billion (2020), a hefty price tag for a four-mile route. Usually around 20-25% of the cost of a transit extension is for rolling stock but planners claim that purchase of only four additional vehicles is needed to supplement the N-5 fleet, which might be optimistic, especially since the earliest introduction of service will be in 2025, at which time the N-5 fleet will be almost 35 years-old.

The alignment will have five stations and will serve the Henderson Road shopping complex, the King of Prussia Mall complex with shuttles to the new entertainment and dining venues at the King of Prussia Town Complex and additional commercial, residential and development space. The route will end near a hotel and casino complex with easy access to Valley Forge National Park. Together these comprise some of the largest retail and entertainment venues in the United States with more square feet of retail space than Center City Philadelphia and the highest concentration of entry level jobs in the region. Already more than 60,000 people work in King of Prussia, a number expected to grow by at least 30% in the next 15-20 years. The area is served by six SEPTA bus routes which must contend with local traffic, including the Schuylkill Expressway (I-76) and consequently have the worst on-time performance of any routes on the SEPTA system. King of Prussia is vibrant and growing but is totally automobile dependent. It is a magnet for students from local colleges along the old Main Line, including University of Pennsylvania, Bryn Mawr, Haverford, Rosemont and Villanova. The line will be an engine for transit-oriented development-residential, commercial, retail, and entertainment.

Success will depend on frequent and free shuttle bus service linking the route to various destinations including King of Prussia Town, the large Children's Hospital of Philadelphia satellite on Upper Gulph Road, and the theatre complex between the King of Prussia Mall and the Pennsylvania Turnpike. Schedulers will need to acknowledge that peak ridership to a mall complex is unlike usual weekday peak service. Demand will be high in mid-afternoon, late evenings, and weekends when shoppers, retail workers and entertainment seekers travel to and from the area. Planners will be well advised to review the scheduling and operations of other rail projects serving large suburban retail and commercial agglomerations, including Mall of America in the Twin Cities, South Hills Village outside of Pittsburgh, and the large mall that will be served by the Edmonton Light Rail operation. The tough design of some of the elevated structure may complicate issues like snow removal. Nonetheless, this is the highest priority transit project in the greater Philadelphia area, has enormous promise as a job generator, source of transit-oriented development, traffic mitigator, and environmental and quality of life enhancement. A no-build option would leave the King of Prussia area totally car dependent. For information about the project, visit their web site <https://www.kingofprussiarail.com/>

OTHER TRACTION ITEMS:

WCTS HO scale Traction Sideframes Now Available!

With the rapid increase in the availability of 3D printed HO scale traction models from early 20th century wooden streetcars to the latest low-floor light rail vehicles, modelers have been looking for available durable drives. Two of those are the Bowser drives with 6' 4" and 4' 10" wheelbases which can be used for cars with prototype drives of these wheelbases and other with wheelbase measurements within six inches of the Bowser wheelbases.

West Coast Traction supply (WCTS) has made available several such side frames as follows:

VEHICLE	TRUCK/SIDEFRAMES	WHEEL SIZE	BOWSER DRIVE	SOURCE*
PERy Hollywood Car	St. Louis Car Co M-72	26"	125100	A
PERy 100-114 Car	St. Louis Car Co E.I.B.-64	26"	125100	B
ITS Combine	Baldwin 78-25	36"	125115**	C
IT Class B Loco	ALCo RM63B	36"	125115**	D
LARy Wood Cars	St Louis Car Arch Bar	30"	125130***	E
Johnstown Traction 350-69		26"	125130***	F
PE "Submarine"	Baldwin Swing Bolster	30"	125130***	G
IT 470 series CE Car	Commonwealth 75	28"	125100*	H

* The 125100 traction mechanism comes from Bowser with 26" wheels. 28" wheels may be available from Custom Traxx or NorthWest Short Line.

** The 125115 traction mechanism comes from Bowser with 33" wheels. 36" wheels may be available from Custom Traxx or NorthWest Short Line.

*** The 125130 traction mechanism comes from Bowser with 33" wheels. 26" or 30" wheels may be available from Custom Traxx or NorthWest Short Line.

Just paste the selected below URL into your browser to reach the source of the desired 3D-printed model.

- A - <https://www.shapeways.com/product/VX7A7YR69/ho-hollywood-car-sideframes>
- B - <https://www.shapeways.com/product/JR4AVWB5W/pe-100-sideframes-only>
- C - <https://www.shapeways.com/product/PRJLA222Z/ho-illinois-terminal-combine-sideframes-only>
- D - <https://www.shapeways.com/product/EY2NJE6QF/ho-illinois-terminal-class-b-sideframes-bowser>
- E - <https://www.shapeways.com/product/DJMZSRX4W/ho-lary-sideframes>
- F - <https://www.shapeways.com/product/KEGB2K2AX/ho-johnstown-traction sideframes>
- G - <https://www.shapeways.com/product/JUJ7BR8GF/ho-pe-submarine-sideframes>
- H - <https://www.shapeways.com/product/3BM39YZS8/ho-it-470 sideframes>

HO Scale Contemporary Rail Urban Transit Models!

As you, our readers, know, we have been extolling the virtues of many 3D-printed models of contemporary urban rail transit vehicles. In this article, we have listed those that we know have been made available to the modeling public in HO scale:

<i>Vehicle</i>	<i>Scale</i>	<i>Prototype City</i>	<i>Developer</i>	<i>Modeler's Source</i>
<i>Kinki-Sharyo P3010</i>	<i>HO</i>	<i>Los Angeles</i>	<i>West Coast Traction Supply</i>	<i>Shapeway Store</i>
<i>Nippon-Sharyo P865/P2020</i>	<i>HO</i>	<i>Los Angeles</i>	<i>West Coast Traction Supply</i>	<i>Shapeway Store</i>
<i>Siemens S70</i>	<i>HO</i>	<i>San Diego, Salt Lake City, Atlanta</i>	<i>Interurban Traction Models</i>	<i>Shapeway Store</i>
<i>Kinki Sharyo Type 7</i>	<i>HO</i>	<i>Boston</i>	<i>Tramspotter</i>	<i>Shapeway Store</i>
<i>Breda Type 8</i>	<i>HO</i>	<i>Boston</i>	<i>Tramspotter</i>	<i>Shapeway Store</i>

We know of other models that have been made by individuals but have not been placed in the public market. If those developers would send us a photo of their models, we would let the modeling public know that someone made that model. If they finished the model, we would like to know what paints and/or decals were used so we can pass that data to other modelers.

A LITTLE MODERN HISTORY:



SEPTA (Philadelphia, PA) 1981 Kawasaki streetcar 9111 is southbound on Germantown Avenue on Route 23 at Maplewood street on 7/3/1994. The trolley is passing the Deshler-Morris House where President George Washington stayed during the yellow fever pandemic in 1792. Germantown was a separate township in Philadelphia County at that time. Car 9111 was normally assigned to Elmwood Depot at that time for use on the Subway-Surface routes 11-13-34-36. But was sent to Germantown Depot to supplement the three PCC cars used on the Chestnut Hill Trolley (CHT). On this day the car is operating on a rail fan charter trip that included Route 56 (*another temporarily "bussed" line and still bussed 28 years later*). It is shown below leaving the Bethlehem Pike Loop on the same day. 9111 went back to Elmwood on 10/2/1994. Car 9111 was the last of 112 cars (series 9000-9111) that replaced PCC

cars on the five subway-surface route beginning in 1981 and still operate today almost 40 years later. These remarkable cars were designed by SEPTA employees without the assistance of so called "consultants"!



On February 21, 1992, the Southeastern Pennsylvania Transportation Authority (SEPTA) had finally reached its goal of eliminating all the trolley lines in North Philadelphia as now Routes 6 (Ogontz Ave), 23 (Germantown Avenue), 47 (North 5th Street), 53 (Wayne Avenue), 50 (Rising Sun Avenue), 56 (Erie Avenue), 60 (Allegheny Avenue) were equipped with the latest gas/diesel fuel guzzlers. The 1992 bus substitutions on routes 23, 56 and Girard Ave Route 15 were listed as *"temporary"* while SEPTA almost immediately placed Luzerne Depot (*which supported all but one of the above routes*) up for sale.

Naturally, there were several riders who objected to the new buses especially in Germantown where their precious cobblestoned street had been carefully restored recently and we all know what buses stopping and starting quickly can do to street paving. So from November 1992 to June 1996, the CHT operated just over two miles of the north end of Route 23 from Germantown Depot to Bethlehem Loop in Chestnut Hill. The service operated on weekends and during special events in Chestnut Hill, Germantown and other locations on the former 12-mile line. Route 23 had been served by PCC cars since Mother's Day in 1947.

Data provided by Ed Springer, SEPTA Retired.

Coming Next Month - We hope to see the completed model of Dallas Brookville Liberty #302 being completed from a 3D printed model from Volkmar Meier. The A section is at right after being airbrushed with TCP-005 white on January 31, 2021. The B and C sections have been completed.



[Trolleyville](#) | [Trolleyville Times](#) | [School](#) | [Library](#) | [Clubhouse](#)

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