

Flyer Photo Layout Tour: The Long Island Rail Road (LIRR)

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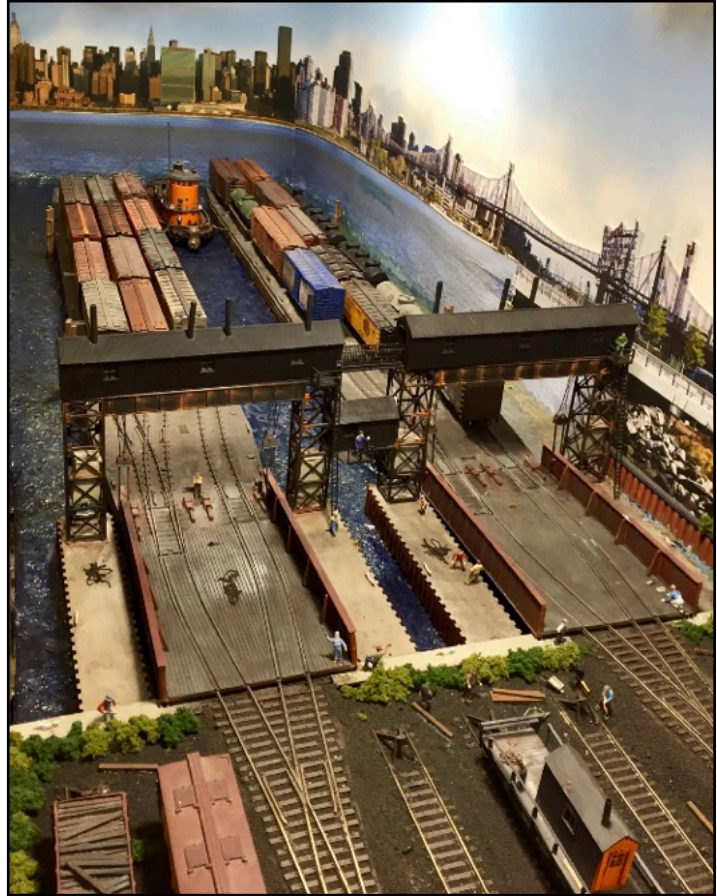
[Editor's Note: Brian's layout was one of two Maryland open houses on Sept. 28th.]



I was fortunate to have my HO scale Long Island Rail Road (LIRR) layout featured in the August 2024 issue of Model Railroader magazine.

Although most of the details about my layout are contained in the article, I will repeat them here for those that haven't seen the article.

I model the Long Island Rail Road (yes, Rail Road is written as two separate words in LIRR) in HO scale. I started the layout in 1988 when my family moved into our current house. I originally modeled just the Port Jefferson branch, which runs from Port Jefferson to Hicksville and from Hicksville to Jamaica station in the Borough of Queens. I set the era to be 1964, because that was the year the World's Fair was held in Flushing Meadows, New York,



and the LIRR commemorated it by painting their fleet of C420's, RS1's, and RS3's gray with an orange sweep on each side.



Several years ago Broadway Limited Imports (BLI) came out with an H10 steam engine, which was the freight workhorse of the LIRR before dieselization. I bought several of these engines, and decided that if I turned the clock back about 10 years, I could



prototypically run steam on my layout. My steam roster also consists of K4's, E6's, L1's, B6's, G5s's, and a G53sd, all prototypic of the steam era on the LIRR. The G5s's, B6's, and G53sd are older brass models in which I had to install sound decoders.

All of the mainline and yard trackage is code 83 with the exception of Sunnyside Yard, which is code 70.

In 2005 I expanded my layout into an adjacent 12' x 12' room and modeled the City Terminal Zone, which runs from Jamaica to Pennsylvania (Penn) Station in Manhattan. This included high-rise buildings, an operating elevated subway, and a cutaway showing the mezzanine level one level below Penn Station. Here I modeled the shopping mall and LIRR ticket windows and the level below the mezzanine level



where LIRR trains would arrive and depart.

In 2015 I retired from the Nuclear Regulatory Commission after 42 years of government service and expanded my layout once again into the finished portion of my basement. This expansion is a 5' x 17' island with a view block running down the middle. On one side I modeled the LIRR's car float bridges



and yard on the East River in Long Island City in Queens. On the other side, I modeled the LIRR's Atlantic Branch. This included modeling Flatbush Avenue in Brooklyn (which also includes an operational elevated subway running above the roadway) and Holban

Freight Yard (which is not actually on the Atlantic Branch, but I needed a freight yard!).



The layout is powered by a Digitrax DS100 Command Station and two DB150 boosters. The average height of the layout is about 50" off the ground and the minimum radius is about 24."

I belong to an operations group and when we operate on my layout, I can accommodate a maximum of eight operators

In addition to modeling the railroad I was familiar with as I grew up on Long Island, one of my goals in building the layout was to also try to capture the hustle and bustle of the largest class one passenger railroad in the United States. This meant

lots of people and cars. There are over two thousand figures and over eight hundred vehicles on the layout. Another goal was to capture details so the layout looked realistic. I have incorporated a lot of detail on the layout, ranging from discarded newspapers blowing up against posts to operating crossing gates.

Considering that the original layout is now close to 37 years old, it has held up fairly well with routine maintenance, and I look forward to more years of operating fun.

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Brian Sheron, MMR is a former Superintendent of the Potomac Division.

Editor's Note: The Potomac Flyer is seeking members who are willing to provide a photo layout report for our newsletter. You can take your own photos and provide basic layout info, but we are also looking for members willing to act as a photographer for these visits. This initiative is designed to supplement, not replace, our regular in-person layout tours. It will allow those of you may be reluctant to host a tour to let other members see what you've done or are constructing without the pressure of preparing for scores of visitors. If you are willing to participate in these solo layout visits or act as photographer, please send an email to the Flyer at Potomac-Flyer@potomac-nmra.org.