LAYOUT DESIGN

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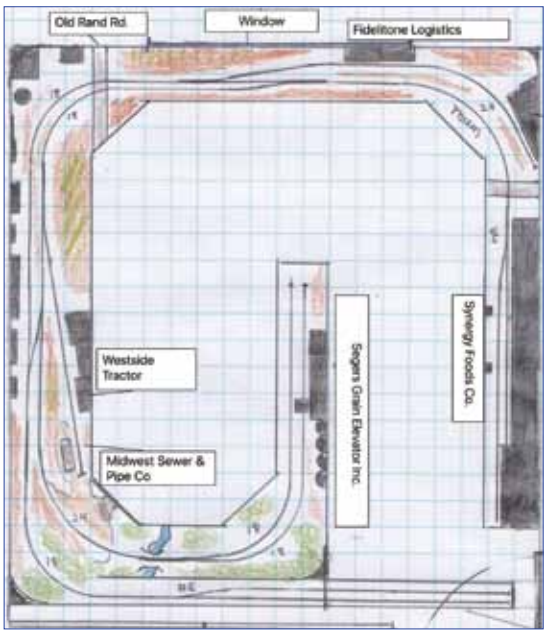
“Plates” to Change Eras, RRs
Creating a New Layout Room
Long-Lost Line, Modern Design
Ideas from SLC NMRA 2019
LDSIG Election



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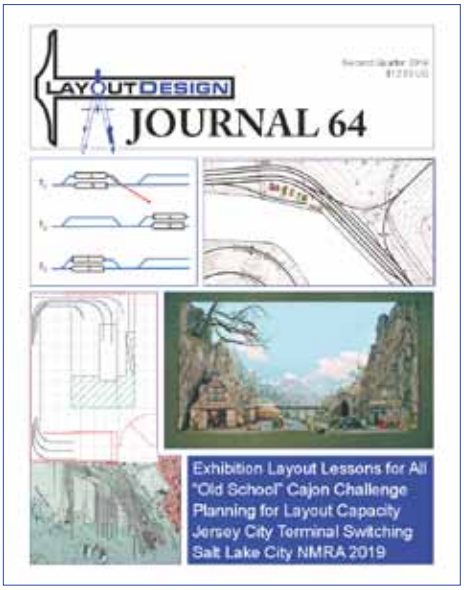
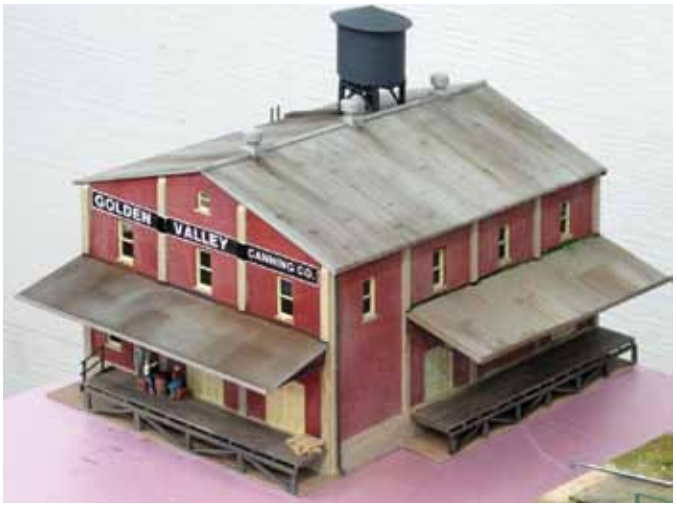


Photos and graphics are lower resolution in this sampler to reduce file size – they are reproduced in higher resolution in the full magazine.

Mike plans to "turn back the clock." The layout currently hosts 2006-era industries as seen at right. This modern elevator will be replaced in earlier eras by the plate at left – note that the industry kept the office when they tore down the wooden elevator, so it appears on both plates. All photos by Mike McGinley.

In the left-hand photo, we see an Oil Distributor mock up temporarily resting on the tracks. It will eventually replace the Liquefied Petroleum Gas (LPG) supplier as Mike back-dates the layout. In the photo at right, the LPG plate has been lifted out to show how the plates fit into the layout surface. The oil distributor models will be built onto a plate the same size and configuration as the LPG industry.



A cannery will eventually replace the loading dock currently in this spot.

garage along with a separate one-car garage. I really liked this layout.

My prior three-car garages had been a combined space which included my saws and other tools. As a result, everything was coated with sawdust. The other advantage of separate spaces is minimizing the up and down of the overhead doors to keep the temperature controlled when working.

I designated the one-car garage as my shop area. The builder had an optional upgrade in the plan to make the garage 5' wider, which I jumped at. That would allow space for workbenches and saws against each wall, while still allowing for a car to squeeze in if our son stayed with us after high school. When there isn't a car in residence, I can set up large work tables in the open space.

The wider garage put us right on limit of the build line to fit the width of the house on the property, so there was no more room there to expand the train room in width. But I could go 14' longer on the train room before I hit the build limit front-to-back.

Byron and I agreed that the L-shaped room is good, and that longer is better. I ended up extending the long dimension of the room by ten feet (about 160 ft^2) to help fit in a longer Eola yard (see floor plan page 13). I stopped four feet short of the absolute limit, thinking that it was then big enough (what was I thinking?! – more is always better!), as I didn't want to wipe out one of my few remaining trees.

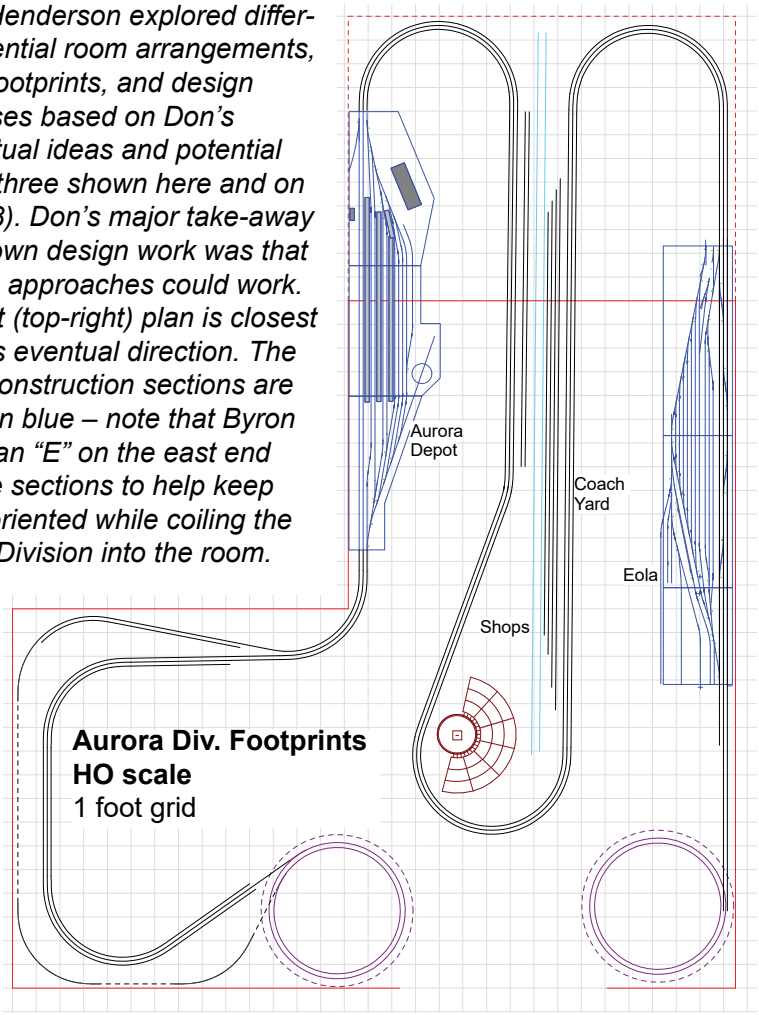
Footprint alternatives

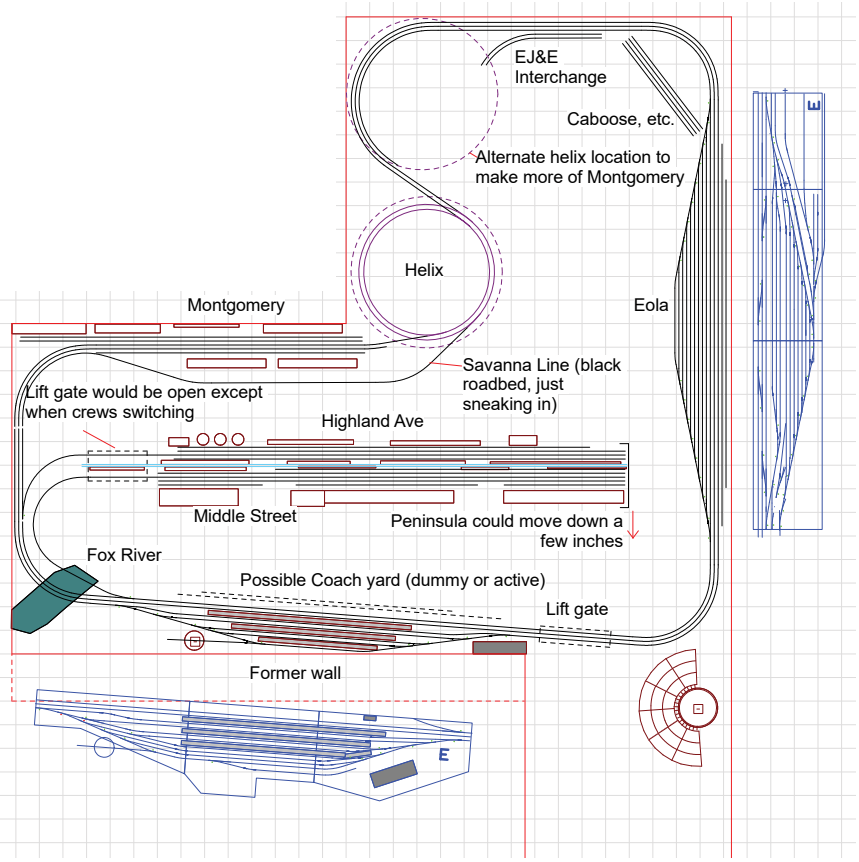
Byron created a few different layout options for discussion (at right and page 18). I think my key take-away from this process was not so much focused on a specific plan, but a realization that the room size and shape should be able to support a broad range of approaches.

One of my givens was for a walk-in layout with no duckunders. I wanted operators to be able to follow their train along the main track without obstacles. I was willing to accept a duckunder or lift out to access the branch lines if the operator only had to cross the main once to get to his work area.

One thing the layout designs revealed is that I needed enough space at the end of the long run to accommodate a turnback loop or helix. I added more length to the 5' bump-out

Byron Henderson explored different potential room arrangements, layout footprints, and design emphases based on Don's conceptual ideas and potential space (three shown here and on page 18). Don's major take-away for his own design work was that multiple approaches could work. The first (top-right) plan is closest to Don's eventual direction. The under-construction sections are shown in blue – note that Byron placed an "E" on the east end of these sections to help keep things oriented while coiling the Aurora Division into the room.





Modern Version of a Long-Lost Line

Switching design for the Palatine, Lake Zurich, & Wauconda

by Jeremy Dummler

"... narrow benchwork instead of a deep layout ..."

From 1912 to 1924 a small rail line, most commonly known as the Palatine, Lake Zurich, & Wauconda (PLZ&W), ran eleven miles from a connection with the Chicago & Northwestern at Palatine, IL across a connection to the Elgin, Joliet, & Eastern (EJ&E) at Lake Zurich, IL, and then on to a terminus in the small town of Wauconda, IL (the line had multiple other names over the years due to corporate reorganizations). For only a brief time the line commonly hauled vacationers headed for the "Lakes" area of northern Illinois, a favorite vacation and weekend area for those living in the city of Chicago, along with freight commodities such as tile, lumber, and farm goods.

The real railroad is long-since gone, but the business community in the town of modern-day Wauconda would be appropriate for railroad service. The idea of a present-day PLZ&W spare-bedroom-sized switching layout is based on what I envision the northern end of the line would look like in serving the business district of Wauconda.

First try a little too tight

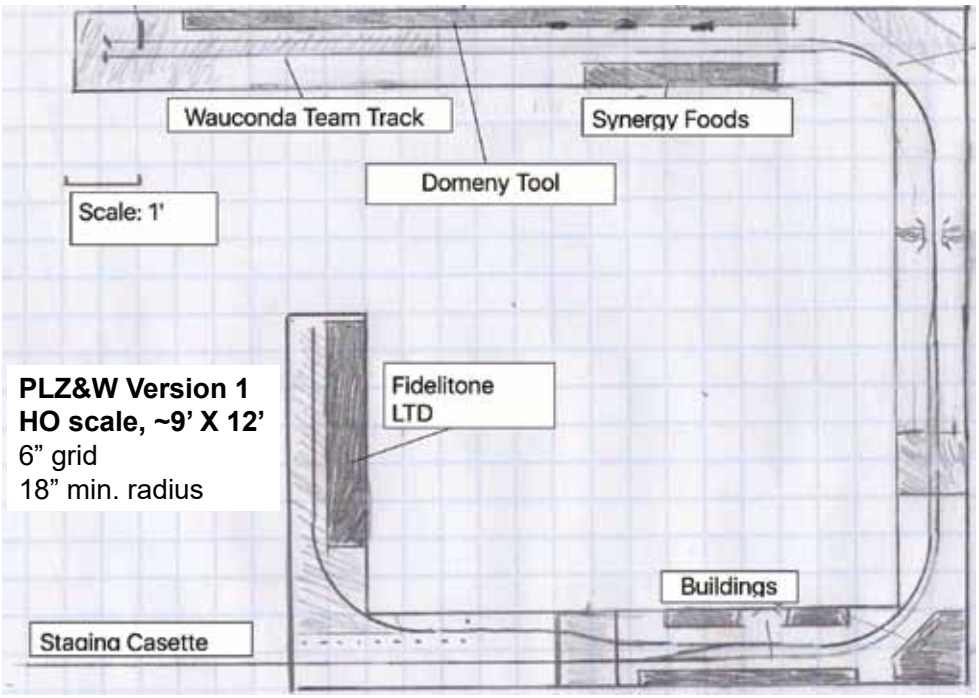
I started planning the modern-day PLZ&W as a layout for myself (coincidentally nearly matched to the size of the 2016 LDJ Design Challenge) with some specific criteria (see plan lower left). I wanted to use narrow benchwork instead of a deep layout, modeling only the railroad itself and industry flats.

In the first version of the track plan, I used only four turnouts in a roughly 9'X12' space. While the plan met my goals, and the operational challenge presented to crews would have been interesting, I found some of the corners were tight – and the curve radius in the corners of the plan wound up cutting very close to the edges of the layout.

Fixing the human space in version 2

The plan evolved, adding triangular corners to soften the inside of the layout space and improve comfort for operators so that the corners were no longer 90 degrees. My good friend, Lionel Strang, has talked about rounding corners a great bit; and the triangular corners where the benchwork changes direction could easily incorporate smoothly rounded fascia to eliminate any kind of straight angle.

This second track plan (page 25 upper right) also incorporated additional turnouts to add more industry spots to the layout. The overall footprint changed to 10'X10' with staging still envisioned to be outside the main layout space.



First-pass track plan for the PLZ&W. While it works nicely as a walk-in layout, Jeremy felt that the narrow benchwork created some awkward corners for track work and human interaction. An interesting layout can be designed with only four turnouts!

2016 Switching Challenge version

I drew a third version to match the roughly 10'X12' overall room plan of the 2016 LDJ Design Challenge (page 26). The challenge requirements include maintaining access to the closet in the room in order to share that space with others in the house. I decided not to include the closet in my track plan for the PLZ&W. Instead, I would suggest leaving the closet open

Design Ideas from SLC NMRA 2019

Benchwork and Human Factors ideas from layout tours

Harry Brooks has a multi-level layout. Some areas aren't separated enough for two discrete decks, but are built as a stair-step. So how does he handle the backdrop for the lower tier? He paints it on the fascia for the upper tier! With tight cropping, one can get nice shots of trains on either tier. [See LDJ-58 page 14 for another approach to similar "mezzanine" decks – *BH*] *Bruce Metcalf text and photo.*

We all need to connect joists to roadbed, and we can't always position the joists at the exact right height. Risers are usually made of wood, and require clamps and fiddling before we screw them into place. Jon Robinson had a different idea. His joists were within an inch of the right height, but instead of a wood riser, he used steel angle brackets. Those shown at left are Simpson ZMAX parts from Home Depot; under 65 cents each, less in quantity. Attach them to the joist with truss-head wood screws, slide up or down to position, and then add a third screw below to hold in place. Two screws up into the roadbed above and all is solid; but can be adjusted using just a screwdriver. *Text and photo by Bruce Metcalf.*

A multi-turn helix is often a necessary evil for climbing between decks, but demands a big footprint from the layout space *and* hides the trains during the climb or descent. Gary Petersen opted to make his helix open on his Salt Lake Southern, scenicking the area as a deep box canyon of sorts. Trains stay in view so that operators may easily monitor progress and speed. Note that the support column and beam are painted to reduce their visual impact. *Photo and text by Byron Henderson.*

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Special interest or skills, such as scratch building structures, yard design, cars, operations, scenery, etc?

☐ Yes ☐ No Special interest or skill: _____

Would you be willing to be a presenter or clinician at a national, regional or local meet? ☐ Yes ☐ No

Do you model a specific prototype? ☐ Yes ☐ No Prototype(s) modeled: _____

What specific areas or locale of railroading do you model (location) ? _____

Era modeled: _____ Scale(s): _____

Other interests (Main line, branch, yards, division, multi-scales, etc.) _____

Status of layout: _____

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