

OSHKOSH STATION

Revised November 7, 2022

Oshkosh, Wisconsin. The County seat for Winnebago County. The home of the University of Wisconsin- Oshkosh Titans with a rich heritage in Division III athletics, but no recent heritage in passenger rail.

The Old Chicago & NorthWestern Station still exists on Broad St and is the only current reference for what was happening up to a half-century ago. At one time or another there were three different train stations in town, but all indications including views on the Historic Oshkosh website, the C&NW depot was the primary stop for most city residents.



The C&NW station is now used for other purposes. From the outside it looks like it's been well kept over the decades, but the roofing umbrella that was used to connect three separate buildings has been long gone.



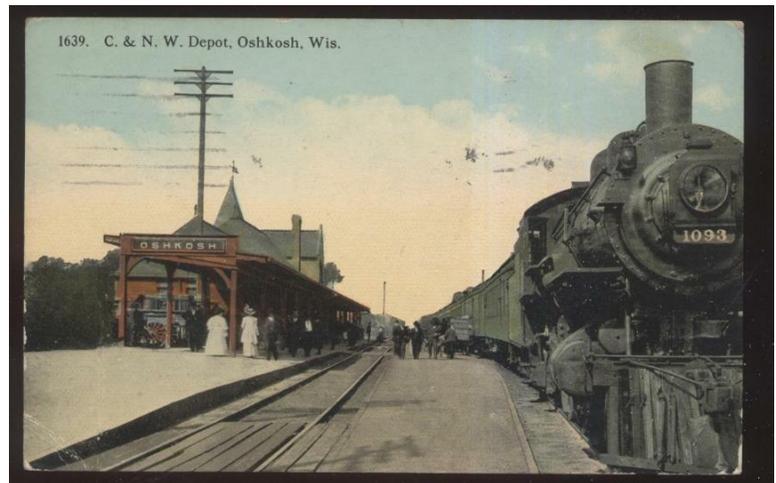
The active Canadian National mainline is on the backside of this building. It's a single track main. The boarding track or tracks have all been removed. Train speed is 30mph or less, and it's not because of the disrepair of the track. The track has been maintained to likely roll at 50mph, but the inner-city proximity of mostly residential homes will forever keep train speeds down.



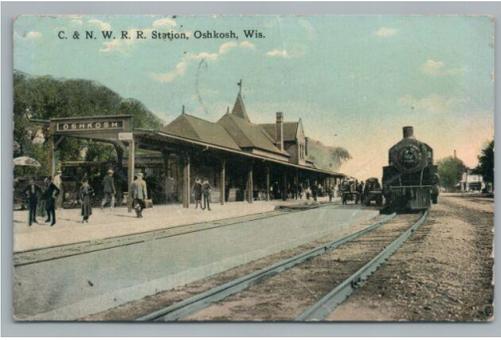
If the City of Oshkosh wishes to use this building as a train depot again, there's likely going to be a significant headache displacing the existing tenants. Parking would be limited, as this is land-locked in the middle of a residential neighborhood.

A LITTLE HISTORY - The undated pictures to the right and on page two below are from the south of the station near Washington Ave. The location of this depot was three blocks or more from downtown, depending on your destination. This is north of the Fox River. According to the Historic Oshkosh website the last passenger train to service Oshkosh was in 1971.

If you look on the web, you'll find a reference to the Soo Line Depot which was located south of the Fox River at 18th Ave. It was built in 1951 and isn't available for use today.



The original Soo Line Depot was downtown just off Main St. between Church and Algoma. Look at this location on Google Satellite Maps and imagine a mainline track running through. Those that have first-hand recollections of this track do have some stories to tell. For those that wish to dig deeper, there was also a Milwaukee Road station just off the Fox River.



Check out accounts of the C&NW station at:

<https://historicoshkosh.org/chicago-north-western-railroad-depot/>

<https://oshkosh.pastperfectonline.com/photo/63B5A016-7D0D-4072-9919-098972381286>

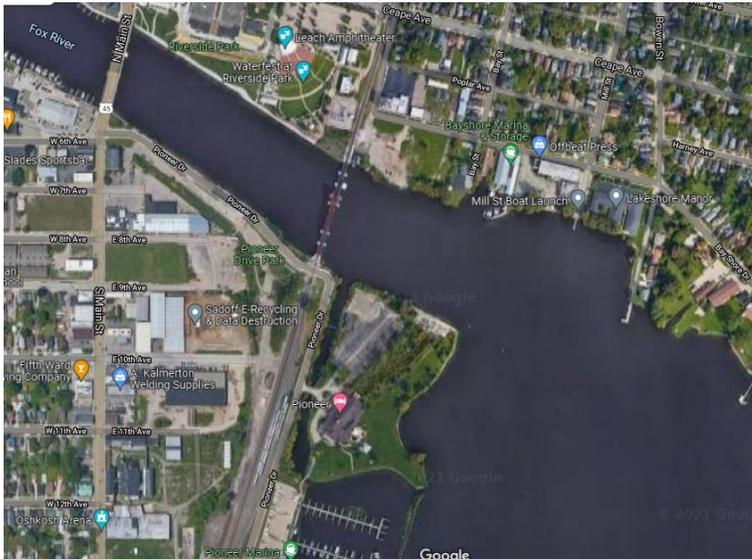
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FOX RIVER BRIDGE

Returning our discussion to the original C&NW station, another reason for slow CN train speeds around the old station is just to its south is the bridge over the Fox River. The station is located about five blocks north of the bridge, just off the top border of the Google Earth picture on this page. There is a 10-15 mph speed restriction over this bridge. (This may have been increased recently.)

CN did have the bridge repaired/ replaced in 2013, according to BridgeHunter.com. Benefits for boat traffic is listed, but no mention of benefits for the railroad, including pass through speed.



FUTURE STATION

Where could a future contemporary station go? If one prefers the location near downtown, where could it go?

The area just to the south of the Fox River bridge along the CN track could be a host. Pioneer Drive Park is at the northeast triangle of land including the track along the south bank. This park looks largely unused, and there is light industry in the area. A very nice view of the Fox River would certainly welcome anyone exiting a train.

Note: WisARP has no knowledge of the availability of land at this NE triangle. Replies received by WisARP news from the City of Oshkosh reflect no current train station planning is on any agenda.

Locations that might lend themselves more easily for development could be on the outskirts of the city. Abandoned manufacturing sites can be easier to develop, like the Oscar Mayer site the City of Madison is considering. The far north side of Oshkosh has some possibilities along the CN track. Turning towards the south edge of Oshkosh one would easily think to consider locating a train stop near Wittman Airport. The current Amtrak Bus Service to Milwaukee currently stops at Wittman.

How would any of these work? Consider having access to the Oshkosh City Bus system, which could include a direct shuttle to UW-Oshkosh. Consider having easy access to main thoroughfares and easy access to I-41.

PICTURES FOR THIS STORY

The top three pictures on page one were taken in October 2021 by tb. The two historic pictures of the C&NW depot were found at < www.historicoshkosh.org >. The satellite picture in the Future Stations section is a snap from Google Maps (satellite) in November 2021.