

Class 1 Rail Lines in the Chicago Area

Routes, operations, traffic, etc. of the six Class 1 roads entering the Chicago area. Chicago's commuter train agency, Metra, is included since its routes and operations are closely intertwined with the Class 1s. Also provided are references to the major interlockings through which the routes pass. Use the links on the home page to find out more about these locations.



BNSF

BNSF is the easiest railroad to describe. It enters Chicagoland via just two routes, both of which see over 40 freights per day. Both are controlled by dispatchers in Ft. Worth, Texas.

Chicago Subdivision: former Burlington Northern (Chicago, Burlington & Quincy) triple track main line (the "racetrack") between downtown Chicago and Aurora. The Chicago sub extends west from the Canal Street Wye, passing



through Union Avenue, LaVergne, Congress Park and LaGrange on its way to Aurora. In addition to BNSF freights, UP trains on trackage rights can also be seen. Metra commuter trains use the line extensively, terminating at Aurora. Amtrak's *California Zephyr*, *Southwest Chief* and corridor trains to Quincy, Illinois, also use the Chicago sub. An average weekday sees about 100 trains. On the west side of Aurora, the route splits. The **Mendota Subdivision** extends from Aurora to Galesburg, Illinois. Beyond Galesburg, this line reaches west to Omaha and Denver. The **Aurora Subdivision** runs from Aurora through Rochelle to Savanna, Illinois, and from there the line runs along the Mississippi River to the Twin Cities and points west.

Chillicothe Subdivision: extends from approximately Corwith Yard on Chicago's south side to Fort Madison, Iowa. At one time it terminated at Chillicothe, Illinois, but was extended to Fort Madison in the 1980s. The Chillicothe runs from Corwith in a southwesterly direction through McCook Junction and Joliet Station. This is the famous ex-Santa Fe "transcon" main line to Kansas City and the west coast. It features all kinds of freight traffic but time-sensitive intermodal trains are dominant, with many serving the large UPS terminal at Willow Springs or the Logistics Park terminal west of Joliet. No commuter or Amtrak trains operate on this sub.

BNSF's major yards in the Chicago area are Cicero Yard on the Chicago sub and Corwith Yard on the Chillicothe. Both have evolved into major intermodal terminals. In addition to Willow Springs, the Chillicothe is also home to Logistics Park, a large intermodal and warehousing facility southwest of Joliet. Constructed in 2005, it occupies the former Joliet Arsenal military site. Most carload traffic is handled at Eola Yard or else delivered to Clearing Yard (Belt Railway of Chicago). Cars bound for those yards are sorted and pre-blocked at Galesburg, Illinois. The majority of auto rack traffic is delivered to Indiana Harbor Belt's Gibson Yard.

Canadian National

Canadian National's acquisition of the Elgin, Joliet & Eastern has produced major changes in CN's Chicago area plant. The EJ&E route is now CN's main line through the Chicago area, linking its ex-Wisconsin Central with the former Illinois Central and with its Grand Trunk Western subsidiary. The WC connects with the J at Leithton, the IC at Matteson and GTW at Griffith.

Leithton Subdivision: former EJ&E Western sub stretching from Waukegan to Joliet, passing through



Leithton, Munger, West Chicago, and Eola. CN has upgraded the sub with CTC. At Leithton, a connection in the northwest quadrant enables trains coming south from Wisconsin to access the J. CN has double tracked the connection and broadened the curvature to allow faster speeds. Nearly all southbound WC trains transfer to the J, with only two or three continuing south on the Waukesha sub. About 20 trains will use the connection. Further south (to east) on the Leithton, traffic is expected to increase, with around 25 trains a day at Turner (West Chicago). No commuter or Amtrak trains use the Leithton sub.

Matteson Subdivision: former EJ&E Eastern sub running east from Joliet through Matteson, Chicago Heights, Dyer and Griffith to Kirk Yard, now CN's major classification yard in the Chicago area. The sub has been converted to CTC operation. At Matteson, CN has built an elaborate double track connection between the J and the IC main with wyes at both ends. Trains on the J can head either north to Markham yard and the Moyers intermodal terminal or south to Memphis and New Orleans. At Griffith, a second connection between the J and GTW was constructed, with the result that WB trains on GTW can either head west on the J to Matteson and Joliet or north on the J to Kirk Yard. Very few trains now continue west on GTW's Elsdon sub. Between Joliet and Matteson, about 25 trains a day use the Matteson sub, with as many as 30 between Matteson and Griffith. No Amtrak or commuter trains use the Matteson sub.

Chicago Subdivision: former Illinois Central main line to Memphis and New Orleans. The Chicago sub extends from 16th Street Crossing to Champaign, Illinois, passing through Kensington, Homewood, Matteson and Kankakee. With the acquisition of the J, traffic has diminished sharply between 16th and 95th streets and eventually CN will abandon (or possibly sell) most or all of this segment. From Homewood south, however, about 15-20 trains can be seen, with even more south of Matteson. Metra Electric's busy University Park line (also an ex-IC property) runs right alongside but is operated independently. Amtrak trains to Carbondale, Illinois, and New Orleans also use the Chicago sub.

Elsdon Subdivision: extending from the south side of Chicago to Griffith Junction, this ex-Grand Trunk Western main traverses Hayford Junction, Ashburn, Blue Island Crossing, Thornton Junction and Munster, where CSX's Monon sub joins it. The Elsdon once saw around 30 trains a day, but with the restructuring of the J, only a few CN trains will use it west from Griffith. However, in 2013 CSX was granted an easement on this property by CN from Chicago to Munster, which means that CSX will completely control and operate it (although CN will continue to own it). Hence traffic is still significant on the Elsdon, although less than the 30 trains it once saw. CN will continue to own and operate the Munster-Griffith segment, but CSX has trackage rights on it. No commuter or Amtrak trains travel the route. The **South Bend Subdivision** runs from Griffith to South Bend, passing through Wayne Junction and Wellsboro. From there, the GTW route heads northeast to Durand, Michigan where it splits, with one line running southeast to Detroit and the other heading east through Port Huron into Canada.

Waukesha Subdivision: former Wisconsin Central / Soo Line route between Chicago (roughly the Forest Park area) and Fond du Lac, Wisconsin. North of Fond du Lac the route extends to Superior, Wisconsin, and the Twin Cities. Upon entering the Chicago area, it passes through Leithton Junction, Deval Crossing and the busy Franklin Park interlocking. About 20 CN freights a day can be seen on the Waukesha with nearly all transferring to the J at Leithton. From

Franklin Park north to Antioch, Illinois, Metra's North Central commuter trains use the line. There is no Amtrak service.

Freeport Subdivision: another ex-IC route, the Freeport runs between 16th Street crossing on Chicago's near south side and Freeport, Illinois. Beyond there, the line runs west through Iowa, terminating at Coucil Bluffs. It enters the area at Munger, passing through LaVergne, Hawthorne, Bridgeport and 21st Street. West of Bridgeport with its connection to the IHB, this line sees considerably less traffic, with no commuter or Amtrak trains.

Joliet Subdivision: former Gulf, Mobile & Ohio (and before that, Chicago & Alton) route between Chicago and St.Louis, the Joliet sub extends from a point just north of Joliet station to the near south side of Chicago, passing through Argo, Brighton Park and ending at Bridgeport. South of Joliet, the line is owned and operated by Union Pacific (also called the "Joliet sub") and extends to St.Louis. This line sees little freight traffic, but has increased somewhat since the J was acquired and UP opened its Global IV intermodal yard. Mostly it is used by Amtrak's St.Louis trains and Metra's weekday-only Heritage Corridor trains which terminate at Joliet.

Kirk Yard, located on the lakefront in Gary, has replaced Glenn as CN's major classification facility. The J's East Joliet Yard has been expanded and reconfigured; it is now second in importance only to Kirk. Glenn Yard has been downgraded to local service, and Hawthorne--on the Iowa line--has also



been cut back. IC's Markham Yard in Homewood has been scaled back in favor of an expanded Moyers intermodal terminal.

The Leighton, Matteson, Waukesha, Chicago, Joliet and Freeport subs, along with a small segment of the Elsdon sub, are dispatched from Homewood, Illinois. The South Bend sub is dispatched from Troy, Michigan. Most of the Elsdon sub is dispatched by CSX.

For many years, CN trains have used trackage rights on the congested IHB main, accessing it from the Waukesha sub at Franklin Park, the Freeport sub at Broadview and the Joliet sub at Argo. However, because of their infrastructure improvements on the EJ&E, CN has greatly reduced their use of these rights.

South of Franklin Park, the Waukesha sub sees little if any traffic. It's possible this segment of the Waukesha will be sold off. Also, the Freeport between 21st and 16th streets has been single-tracked and will eventually be abandoned.

Ultimately, CN would like to abandon the Chicago sub from 16th to at least Grand Crossing (75th Street), but until new access to the Chicago sub is built for Amtrak trains running on the ex-IC, it will remain in operation.

Canadian Pacific

CP's operations in and around Chicago are entwined with those of Metra and Norfolk Southern, making for a rather complex picture.

C&M Subdivision: former Milwaukee Road / Soo Line main to Milwaukee and the Twin Cities. The C&M sub extends from Tower A2 at Metra's Western Avenue station north to Milwaukee, passing through Pacific Junction (Tower A5), Mayfair, Techny and Rondout. Between Milwaukee and Rondout, the line is owned, maintained and dispatched by CP, but from Rondout to Tower A2, Metra owns and maintains the infrastructure while all train movements continue to be dispatched by CP. Traffic is heavy with commuter trains between A2 and A5 towers, but about half of them (the Metra Milwaukee West trains) leave the C&M at A5 and head west on the Elgin sub (see below). From A5 north to Techny, the remaining Metra trains (Metra Milwaukee North service) are joined by a few CP freights. The majority of CP freights, however, access or leave the C&M at Techny. Metra Milwaukee North Trains travel to Rondout where they transfer to the Fox Lake sub (again, see below). Finally, Amtrak's *Hiawatha* trains and the *Empire Builder* use the C&M to Milwaukee.



From Western Avenue to Lake Street, just north of Union Station, traffic consists entirely of Metra and Amtrak trains. The tracks are owned and dispatched by Metra. From Lake Street into the station, traffic is controlled by Amtrak operators.

Elgin Subdivision: also a former Milwaukee Road / Soo Line property, this sub extends west from Tower A5 at Pacific Junction through Cragin, Franklin Park and Bensenville to Elgin. As with the C&M sub, the Elgin is owned and maintained by Metra but dispatched by CP. Beyond Elgin, the line runs west through Iowa to Kansas City and belongs to CP, who acquired it in 2008 through its purchase of the Iowa, Chicago & Eastern. Located west of the Franklin Park interlocking (still called "Tower B12" though the tower has been moved and is no longer in operation) is CP's Bensenville Yard. CP freights running east from the yard either leave the Elgin sub at Franklin Park for the Indiana Harbor Belt or at Cragin for the Belt Railway main. A few continue east to Tower A5 where they head north on the C&M sub. Freights from other Class 1 roads can be seen operating on the Bensenville-Franklin Park-Cragin segment. West of the yard, traffic consists primarily of Milwaukee West commuter trains and a few CP freights. CN's Waukesha sub connects with CP and IHB at Franklin Park. No Amtrak trains operate on this sub.

Fox Lake Subdivision: originating at Rondout, this sub is a former Milwaukee / Soo branch that extends through Prairie (Grayslake) Crossing to Fox Lake. As before, the infrastructure is owned and maintained by Metra but is dispatched by CP. Beyond Fox Lake into Wisconsin, the track is owned by Wisconsin Southern. Traffic consists mostly of Metra's Milwaukee North trains that leave the C&M sub at Rondout and terminate at Fox Lake. A Wisconsin Southern freight can be seen on most days, and an occasional CP local uses the route as well.

The C&M, Elgin and Fox Lake subs illustrate the intricate relationship between CP and Metra. According to the CP timetable, Metra has jurisdiction over all their commuter trains, including schedules, train and engine crew assignments, and power and equipment distribution. However, the Metra trains are governed by CP rules, timetable and general orders. Tower A2 is manned by Metra operators, but B17 (Bensenville) tower is staffed by CP personnel (Tower A5 was closed in 2017 but is still used for other purposes). The towers do most of the routine dispatching in the Chicago area, but CP dispatchers in Minneapolis have ultimate control.

Canadian Pacific trackage rights - CP has no route of its own between Chicago and Detroit/eastern Canada. Using Norfolk Southern trackage rights, CP trains from Detroit travel southwest on the ex-Wabash main to Butler, Indiana where via a northwest quadrant connection built in 2005, they access the NS's ex-Conrail Chicago Line. They then proceed due west to the Chicago area. CP has its own facilities and crew-change point at Elkhart, Indiana.

CP trackage rights in the Chicago area: Upon reaching northwest Indiana, CP trains headed for Indiana Harbor Belt's Gibson or Michigan Avenue yards leave the Chicago Line at Indiana Harbor (CP 502) and head south on IHB's Kankakee Line. The majority of CP trains, however, continue on the Chicago Line past CP 502 and access the Belt Railway at Rock Island Junction (CP 509). They then travel west on the Belt and either enter Clearing Yard or else head north on the Belt via the 67th Steet wye, passing through 55th Street crossing and Hawthorne. At Cragin Junction they reach the Elgin sub and proceed west through Franklin Park to Bensenville Yard.

Another major use of trackage-rights can be found in Chicago's north suburbs. CP trains coming south from Milwaukee leave the C&M sub at Techny and access Union Pacific's Milwaukee sub (often called the "New Line"), which runs southwest through Deval and then south around O'Hare airport. At Bryn Mawr, CP trains leave the Milwaukee and head south on their own trackage to Tower B17 at the west end of Bensenville. This short stretch of track is technically part of the C&M sub. Most CP freights use this route, but a few continue south on the C&M past Techny to Tower A5 and take the Elgin sub to the east end of the yard.

Although its hump was closed around 2010, Bensenville Yard remains CP's major Chicago facility. CP's intermodal facility is also centered at Bensenville.

CSX

CSX enters the Chicago area on two major routes and several minor ones.

Former Baltimore & Ohio Main Line: the busiest main line, with 40 to 50 trains daily, the B&O delivers all traffic from east coast points to Chicago. It is divided into four subdivisions, but only the first three listed below are major arteries. From Pine Junction to the west, this route technically belongs to the **Baltimore & Ohio Chicago Terminal Railroad**, a former subsidiary of B&O. Even though the B&O itself is long gone, B&OCT still exists (on paper at least) and is now a CSX holding. No commuter or Amtrak trains use this route.

Garrett Subdivision: extends from Garrett, Indiana (about 25 miles north of Ft. Wayne) west through Wellsboro to Willow Creek Junction, where it crosses CSX's Porter Branch (former Michigan Central main line, later a Conrail property). A connection was constructed after the Conrail breakup to allow westbound trains on the Garrett to access the Porter Branch and is used by a small number of trains.



Barr Subdivision: runs between Willow Creek and Blue Island Crossing passing through Miller, Pine Junction, Calumet, State Line, Calumet Park and Dolton. At Pine, the trackage becomes B&OCT property and remains so for the rest of its Chicago route. The Barr sub of course also travels through Barr Yard, CSX's major classification yard in the Chicago area. A connection between Barr and Indiana Harbor Belt's nearby Blue Island Yard allows for extensive interchange between the two roads.

Blue Island Subdivision: extends from Blue Island Crossing north through Chicago to Rockwell Street (also known as Ogden Junction), located near Roosevelt Road and Western Avenue. It passes through 75th Street (Forest Hill), where it connects with the Belt Railway, and further north to Brighton Park, where it crosses Canadian National's Joliet sub. It also connects with BNSF's Chicago sub (the "racetrack") at about 18th Street. Rockwell Street should not be confused with Rockwell *Junction*, which is about a mile to the north and does not involve CSX.

Altenheim Subdivision: begins at Rockwell Street and runs due west to Forest Park where the tracks become the property of Canadian National (ex-Wisconsin Central, ex-Soo). From Rockwell to the Belt Railway crossing near Cicero Avenue, the Altenheim is out of service.

Former Chicago & Eastern Illinois Main Line: nearly all traffic from the south enters Chicago on this route. CSX inherited it from Louisville & Nashville who acquired it from C&EI. The line runs north from Evansville, Indiana, to Woodland Junction, where it joins Union Pacific's ex-C&EI, ex-Missouri Pacific line from St. Louis and the southwest. From Woodland north to Dolton, the line is jointly owned but is dispatched and maintained by UP as part of their Villa Grove sub.

Woodland Subdivision: extends from Danville, Illinois, to Woodland Junction. CSX inherited L&N's ownership of this segment. Many CSX trains from the south leave UP tracks at Dolton Junction and join the Barr sub for the short trip to Barr Yard. Other trains continue north to reach Clearing Yard or CSX's nearby Bedford Park intermodal terminal. Traffic averages around 15 to 20 trains per day; a few of them being Indiana Rail Road trains exercising haulage rights. No Amtrak trains use the Woodland sub.

Other Routes Into Chicago:

Monon Subdivision: extends from Greencastle, Indiana north through Lafayette to Maynard (Munster, Indiana). North of Maynard into Hammond, the Monon track is out of service. Hence, trains from Lafayette transfer to CN's ex-Grand Trunk Western main line (Elsdon sub, now operated by CSX) and head northwest to Thornton Junction, where they access the UP's Villa Grove sub. From there they run north through Dolton, and as with the Woodland trains, can reach either Barr Yard or Clearing. An average day sees about six trains. Trains from Indianapolis access the Monon at Crawfordsville, Indiana. Amtrak's *Cardinal* (and until its demise, the *Hoosier State*) uses the Monon sub, making the same connections at Maynard and Thornton. At Crawfordsville, Indianapolis-bound trains transfer to CSX's ex-Conrail, ex-P&E route.

Grand Rapids Subdivision: a former Pere Marquette (later, Chesapeake & Ohio) route between Grand Rapids and Porter Junction. At Porter, CSX trains access Norfolk Southern's Chicago Line and proceed west on trackage rights to the Barr and Lake subs at Pine Junction. Amtrak's *Pere Marquette* between Chicago and Grand Rapids uses this route. About six to eight trains a day can be seen on the Grand Rapids.

Porter Branch: runs west from Porter Junction to the Indiana Harbor Belt main at Ivanhoe on the far west side of Gary. Further west, at Calumet Park and also near Dolton, CSX trains access the Barr sub. Other Class 1 roads use this line on trackage rights. Eastbounds feed into the Chicago Line at Porter and continue to NS's classification yard at Elkhart, Indiana. This route was once part of the Michigan Central Chicago-Detroit main line (later New York Central), but the crossing with the Chicago Line at Porter was severed back in the 1970s. No commuter or Amtrak trains use the Porter Branch.

Lake Subdivision: known locally as the B&O passenger line, this route at one time began at Pine Junction, leading off the Barr sub. However, it was cut back in the 1970s to a point about three miles to the northwest. As of 2019 few if any CSX trains use this sub. However, the South Chicago & Indiana Harbor (formerly Chicago Short Line) uses this route to serve steel mills in East Chicago. Back in the old days, B&O passenger trains were the primary traffic on the Lake.

New Rock Subdivision: a segment of the former Rock Island main line running between Joliet and Bureau, Illinois. East of Joliet, the line is owned and operated by Metra, and CSX trains use trackage rights to reach Barr Yard. West of Bureau, the track belongs to Iowa Interstate, who uses trackage rights on the New Rock and Metra to reach the Chicago area. CSX also operates a portion of a line running south from Bureau to Peoria and it is also part of the New Rock. Very little CSX traffic actually uses the sub; on most days just an out-and-back local freight. No Amtrak trains use the New Rock, and Metra's commuter trains terminate at Joliet. .

Chicago Heights Subdivision: runs from Harvey Junction just west of Barr Yard south to end of track at the suburb of Thornton. At one time, it extended further through Chicago Heights to Faithorn, Illinois. South of Faithorn the track belonged to the Milwaukee Road who used trackage rights on B&OCT to reach there. The Milwaukee line ran south through Danville, Terre Haute and Bedford, Indiana. The Terre Haute - Bedford segment is now owned by the Indiana Rail Road. A segment from Danville north to Iroquois Junction is now owned by Kankakee, Beaverville & Southern. Everything else is gone.

Fort Wayne Line: CSX also owns a large segment of the former Pennsylvania main line, extending from Tolleston Junction in Gary, through Ft. Wayne to Crestline, Ohio. However, in 2004 CSX leased this route to Rail America (later acquired by Genessee & Wyoming), and it is now operated as the Chicago, Ft. Wayne & Eastern Railroad. At Tolleston, the line feeds into the Porter Branch, and CF&E trains head west to Indiana Harbor Belt's main line at Ivanhoe. They tie up at IHB's Blue Island Yard.

Eldson subdivision: extending from the south side of Chicago to Griffith, Indiana, this trackage belongs to Canadian National. However, in 2013 CSX was granted an easement on it by CN, and it is now controlled and operated by CSX from Chicago to Munster as if it were their own

property. CSX also acquired trackage rights on the remaining segment between Munster and Griffith. For more on this sub, see the CN section of this page.

Barr Yard near Riverdale, Illinois, is CSX's major classification yard. It is flat-switched and has been downsized as part of CSX's Precision Scheduled Railroading program. Some trains that once used Barr are now sent to BRC's Clearing Yard. CSX also has two intermodal terminals in the Chicago area: Bedford Park, located on the south edge of Clearing Yard, and 59th Street (a former Pennsy yard) on B&OCT's Blue Island sub. Auto rack classification is done at IHB's Gibson Yard.

Until 2018, nearly all Chicago area dispatching was carried out at a facility in Calumet City, Illinois. However, now the dispatching is done from Jacksonville, Florida.

Norfolk Southern

NS has two major routes entering Chicago from the east, a minor one from the south plus trackage rights routes from Decatur and Peoria.

**Dearborn Division,
Chicago Line, Chicago
Terminal Dispatcher:**
former New York Central,
Penn Central and Conrail
main line between Chicago
and Cleveland. From
Whiting, Indiana, into



Chicago, the ex-Pennsylvania Ft. Wayne line is used instead of NYC. The Chicago Terminal dispatcher handles all traffic between 21st Street Junction on Chicago's south side to Porter Junction at CP 482. Within this area, there are important interlockings at Rock Island Junction (CP 509), Indiana Harbor (CP 502) and Pine Junction (CP 498). This is one of the busiest main lines in the area with as many as 70 trains on an average day. In addition to NS freights, Chicago Terminal handles Amtrak trains to Michigan and the east coast, as well as CSX and Canadian Pacific trains on trackage rights. To add to the congestion, Indiana Harbor Belt uses trackage rights between Burns Harbor (CP 485) and Indiana Harbor. CSX eastbound trains leave the line at Porter and head north on the Grand Rapids sub, as does Amtrak's *Pere Marquette*. Amtrak's other Michigan trains also leave at Porter using Amtrak-owned ex-Michigan Central tracks to Kalamazoo. Most CP trains continue east from Porter to Butler, Indiana, where they access NS's ex-Wabash line to Detroit. No commuter trains use the Chicago Line.

Most westbound NS freights leave the Chicago Line at Root Street, a couple of miles south of 21st, and head west to Ashland Avenue Yard. From there, other railroads may be accessed using

former Chicago River & Indiana trackage previously owned by Conrail. This route, which traverses Brighton Park Crossing, is also part of the Dearborn Division. UP and BNSF trains can often be seen here.

Lake Division, Chicago District: former Nickel Plate main line to Cleveland and Buffalo. The Chicago District (NS prefers 'district' to 'subdivision') extends from Van Loon junction on the west side of Gary, Indiana, through Wayne/Spriggsboro to Fort Wayne. Before the Conrail merger, the Chicago District extended into Chicago, but west of Van Loon the line is now part of the Dearborn division. About 25 freights a day use the Chicago district; many of them originate or terminate at Calumet Yard on the far south side of Chicago. Most steel mill traffic transfers to the Canadian National's former EJ&E main at Van Loon or to the Indiana Harbor Belt at Osborn. Intermodal trains use Landers Yard on Chicago's southwest side. No Amtrak or commuter trains use the route.

Dearborn Division, Kankakee Line: former New York Central line extending east from Hennepin, Illinois, through Streator and Kankakee to Schneider, Indiana. It then heads north to a point near the Little Calumet River in Hammond, Indiana. Although NS operation ends there, the tracks continue north through Osborn, Gibson, Grasselli and Calumet to the lakefront industrial area of Indiana Harbor (CP 502). This segment is operated by the Indiana Harbor Belt under a long-term lease agreement. At Osborn, NS trains can transfer to the Chicago District or head north on IHB to CSX's Porter Branch at Gibson or continue still further to the Chicago Line at CP 502. Traffic is light, perhaps eight to ten trains daily, including a few BNSF freights that transfer at Streator and use it as a Chicago bypass to reach NS's yard at Elkhart. No Amtrak or commuter trains use this line.

Trackage Rights, Peoria and Decatur: Trains from Peoria use an ex-NKP line east to Gibson City, Illinois. Trains from Decatur use a former Wabash main line north to Gibson City. There, the two lines join with a Canadian National ex-Illinois Central secondary line from Springfield. NS trains travel on trackage rights to Gilman, Illinois, where they access CN's ex-IC Chicago sub. Once in the Chicago area, they leave CN at 95th Street and head east to Calumet Yard. Only a few NS trains use these routes.

The Chicago Line does not have a major classification yard in the Chicago area. At NS's huge terminal in Elkhart, Indiana, trains are sorted and pre-blocked for Chicago delivery. From there, many trains travel directly to the yards of other roads in the Chicago area, with some transferring to the Indiana Harbor Belt at CP 502. Others proceed to Ashland Avenue yard, as noted earlier. The only major classification yard in the Chicago area is the NKP Chicago District's Calumet Yard. The primary intermodal facilities are Landers Yard on the ex-Wabash line (now Metra's Southwest sub), and the 47th Street and 63rd Street terminals along the Chicago Line. Most auto rack traffic heads to IHB's Gibson Yard.

Nearly all NS dispatching is now located in Atlanta, Georgia.

Union Pacific

Union Pacific has four major freight routes into Chicago, two more busy lines featuring mostly commuter trains, plus several minor routes. Left-hand operation continues to be the rule on all former Chicago & North Western trackage.

Geneva Subdivision: running from downtown Chicago to Clinton, Iowa, this is a former C&NW main line that is now UP's major route to the west. From downtown, it passes through Western Avenue interlocking (Tower A2), Proviso Yard, Elmhurst and West Chicago (Turner Junction). Further west, the line crosses BNSF's Aurora sub at Rochelle. Within the greater Chicago area, this is a mostly triple track main. From downtown to the suburb of Geneva, an average weekday sees as many as 100 trains. UP freights are plentiful but so are UP/Metra's West Line commuter trains that terminate at Elburn, Illinois. No Amtrak trains travel this route.



Villa Grove Subdivision: extending from Chicago's south side to the town of Villa Grove in central Illinois, this sub was once part of the Chicago & Eastern Illinois and later the Missouri Pacific. It is divided into two halves. From Woodland Junction, where it is joined by CSX's ex-C&EI Woodland sub, north to Chicago it is jointly owned double track with UP dispatching and maintaining it. About 35 to 40 trains can be seen on an average day, passing through Momence, Chicago Heights, Thornton Junction and UP's Yard Center in Dolton. South of Woodland, it is an all-UP single track line that sees roughly 15 to 20 trains per day. Beyond Villa Grove at Findlay, Illinois, the route splits. One line heads to St.Louis with the other heading further southwest, crossing the Mississippi River and joining the ex-MP main running south from St.Louis. No Amtrak or commuter trains use the Villa Grove sub, but Metra hopes to someday begin commuter service with trains terminating at Crete, Illinois, a few miles south of Chicago Heights. For now, however, it remains little more than a hope.

Milwaukee Subdivision: running between Milwaukee and Proviso Yard near Elmhurst, this is an ex-C&NW all-freight route. It heads due south from Milwaukee but veers southwest at Valley Junction near the suburb of Northbrook. From this point to Proviso, it is often called the "New Line." A few miles further in the suburb of Glenview, a connection off CP's C&M sub joins it at Shermer. Most CP trains coming south from Wisconsin transfer to the New Line here and proceed on trackage rights through Deval to Bryn Mawr on the west side of O'Hare airport. From

there, they use their own tracks to reach Bensenville Yard. UP freights continue on the New Line, crossing over Bensenville on a viaduct, and head to Proviso.

Joliet Subdivision: spanning the distance between Joliet and Bloomington, Illinois, this sub is part of the former Chicago & Alton, ex-Gulf, Mobile & Ohio route to Springfield and St.Louis. UP inherited it from Southern Pacific, who had purchased it from the bankrupt Chicago, Missouri & Western. From Joliet to Chicago, the track is owned by Canadian National, who also calls it the Joliet sub. Freight traffic is moderate; UP prefers the Villa Grove sub. However, with the completion of the Global IV intermodal hub, traffic has increased. Amtrak's St.Louis corridor trains, as well as the *Texas Eagle*, use the Joliet, as do Metra's weekday Heritage Corridor trains running between Union Station and Joliet.

Kenosha Subdivision: running between Kenosha, Wisconsin and downtown Chicago, this sub parallels the Milwaukee sub south from Milwaukee, running closer to the Lake Michigan shore line. It is also a former C&NW line that featured intercity passenger trains to the Twin Cities and Wisconsin points before the creation of Amtrak. Traffic now consists almost entirely of UP/Metra North Line commuter trains, most of which terminate at Waukegan with a few continuing on to Kenosha. Several UP freights from Wisconsin use the line to Lake Bluff, a few miles south of Waukegan, but transfer to the Milwaukee sub via the **Lake Subdivision**. The Lake diverges from the Kenosha at the Lake Bluff commuter station and runs southwest about a mile and a half, joining the Milwaukee sub at KO Junction. South of Lake Bluff, traffic on the Kenosha sub consists entirely of North Line commuter trains.

Harvard Subdivision: running northwest from downtown Chicago through Mayfair, Deval and Barrington interlockings to Harvard, Illinois, near the Wisconsin border, this is another former C&NW route whose traffic consists almost entirely of commuter trains. The majority of UP/Metra Northwest Line trains terminate at Crystal Lake, with a few continuing to Harvard. Beyond Harvard this is a secondary freight line to Janesville, Wisconsin. The relatively few UP trains from Wisconsin leave the Harvard just west of Deval and access the Milwaukee sub. They then head south to Proviso yard. East of Deval, an occasional switch job can be found serving local industries, but the Northwest Line commuter trains dominate the action. There is no Amtrak service on this route. The Northwest and North lines join at Clybourn on Chicago's near north side for the last few miles into downtown Chicago.

Minor Routes: in addition to the aforementioned Lake sub, UP has several other minor routes. The **Rockwell Subdivision** connects UP's Global I intermodal yard on Chicago's west side with the Geneva sub. The **Belvidere Branch** runs from UP's yard in West Chicago to Rockford, Illinois. One of the customers served is the Illinois Railway Museum. Remnants of two C&NW industrial branches on the north side of Chicago are still in operation: the **Cragin Industrial Lead** and the **Weber Industrial Lead**.

Until summer of 2019 here's what UP's infrastructure looked like: UP had two major classification yards: Proviso, a large hump yard located along the Geneva sub, and Yard Center on the Villa Grove sub. It had five major intermodal yards: Global I, west of downtown Chicago using yards once operated by C&NW and B&OCT; Global II at Proviso; Global III located west of the Chicago area near Rochelle, Illinois; and Global IV, opened in 2010 and located on the

Joliet sub a few miles south of Joliet. In addition, intermodal traffic was also handled at Yard Center.

UP's commitment to Precision Scheduled Railroading will bring about major changes. The Proviso hump has been closed and the hump yards will be removed to make way for an expansion of the adjacent Global II intermodal facility. Global III has already been downsized; it no longer loads or unloads trains but remains open for block swapping and for local area freight movements. Eventually, Global I will be closed and operations moved to Global II when the rebuilding at Proviso is finished. Most of the Global III operations will be transferred to Global IV. Proviso will continue as a smaller, flat-switched facility.

Metra

Unless otherwise noted, the downtown terminal is Union Station. Except for the BNSF and UP routes, all local stations are operated by Metra.

BNSF Aurora Racetrack

(Chicago sub): BNSF operates Metra trains under a fee-for-service contract. BNSF owns, maintains and dispatches the physical plant, and also owns or leases some of the commuter equipment. Train crews are BNSF employees.

UP North, Northwest and West lines (Kenosha, Harvard and Geneva subs): UP operates Metra trains under a fee-for-service contract, and owns, maintains and dispatches the physical plant. Train crews are UP employees.

UP/Metra trains have their own terminal a few blocks north of Union Station. Known as the Ogilvie Transportation Center, it occupies the second floor of an office tower that replaced the demolished North Western station at Madison and Canal streets.

Milwaukee District (C&M, Elgin and Fox Lake subs): Metra owns and maintains the physical plant. Canadian Pacific dispatches the routes. Train equipment belongs to Metra, and train crews are Metra employees.

North Central line (CN Waukesha sub): Canadian National owns, maintains and dispatches the route between Antioch and Franklin Park. Train equipment belongs to Metra, and train crews are employed by Metra. North Central trains use the Milwaukee District between Franklin Park and Union Station.



Heritage Corridor (CN and UP Joliet subs): Trains operate on CN from 21st Street (about a mile south of Union Station) to the north end of Joliet. From there to Joliet station, the track belongs to UP. Metra owns the equipment and employs the train crews. CN dispatches the route.

Southwest Subdivision: former Wabash line to Decatur and St.Louis leased in 1993 from Norfolk Southern. NS retains trackage rights and continues to dispatch the route. Metra owns the equipment and employs the train crews. Most commuter trains terminate at the suburb of Orland Park, but a few continue on to Manhattan, Illinois. Beyond Manhattan the track is gone, but picks up again in central Illinois. The Bloomer Line uses it to Gibson City, and NS owns it from there to Decatur.

THE FOLLOWING ROUTES ARE ENTIRELY OWNED AND OPERATED BY METRA.

Electric District: former Illinois Central commuter route that runs south from downtown alongside CN's ex-IC Chicago sub. It is the only Metra district using electric power. The main line passes through Kensington, Homewood and Matteson, terminating at the far south suburb of University Park. Two branches depart the main, one at 67th Street running to the South Chicago area, and the other just south of Kensington, terminating at Blue Island. The downtown terminus is Randolph Street station (now euphemistically called "Millennium Station"). The **Chicago, South Shore & South Bend** interurban exercises trackage rights from Kensington (115th Street) to downtown. The South Shore is not a Metra entity. It is owned and operated by the Northern Indiana Commuter Transportation District.

Rock Island District: former Chicago, Rock Island & Pacific main line between LaSalle Street station in downtown Chicago and Joliet station. At 16th Street, it crosses both CN's Chicago sub and the St.Charles Air Line. Further south, it passes through Gresham and Vermont Street, and flies over Blue Island Crossing. The original LaSalle Street terminal was demolished in 1981 and replaced with an office tower. Metra trains operate out of a new facility at the rear of the building. Iowa Interstate and CSX use the Rock district on trackage rights. At Gresham, an all-passenger line diverges from the main and is used by most commuter trains. The two lines reunite at Blue Island. Beyond Joliet, the line is operated by CSX to Bureau, Illinois, and by IAIS west of there.

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