TRANSIT GUIDE

TSDCA Annual Meeting - Chicago 2026

A few tips before we get started:

- We highly recommend using public transit (CTA) for most of your travel around Chicago!
    - To pay fares, you will either need a contactless payment method (mobile wallet, chipped card, etc) or purchase a ***Ventra*** card. More info here.
        - Pro tip: if you plan on depending on public transit while in Chicago, buying a Ventra card with a 3-Day Pass is your most convenient option!
        - Transfers are free! This is between all trains and buses. Ventra will track that as long as you use the same card for paying fare each time.
    - People will refer to the CTA trains as "the L" or "El trains" since most train lines are on elevated tracks. However, even the subways are called the "L" by locals.
    - All buses and most CTA train stations are accessible. For questions about accessibility, follow this link: https://www.transitchicago.com/accessibility/
- Driving around Chicago is possible, but parking is not always easy/cheap/guaranteed, particularly in the areas where most activities will be taking place.
    - If you are driving, I highly recommend planning ahead for parking. I like using SpotHero to reserve parking rather than betting on public garages or street parking.
    - Here's Chicago street parking info. If you're doing any street parking or using ParkChicago surface lots, it's helpful to have the ParkChicago app, but not required. Every ParkChicago zone has its own pay box.
        - Fun fact - Chicago doesn't own its street parking. It's owned by private equity thanks to a deal made by Mayor Daley in 2008.
    - You'll also be driving in some of the densest street traffic in Chicago. Please be advised to pad travel times.
    - If you are driving *and* staying at the Knickerbocker, please be advised of their parking policies. You may have better luck using SpotHero or using a different public garage for your stay!
- Uber and Lyft are very prevalent in Chicago!
    - However, keep in mind that most of our activities and venues are within the main "congestion zone" of Chicago. These zones are in effect from 6am-10pm daily.
    - Pricing also shifts SIGNIFICANTLY with demand and the areas that you're traveling to/from. If you're traveling less than a mile or two, finding a different option for transit is probably worthwhile.
    - Rideshares to or from a Chicago airport (O'Hare and Midway) incur a $5 fee, which should be displayed in your trip price.
- Walking is also a very viable option! The parts of Chicago we're focused around this summer are very pedestrian-friendly.
    - That being said, Chicago drivers are a different breed. Please look both ways before crossing roads!

    - Also, while our locations are relatively close, a walk between any two of our locations this summer is well over a mile. Please plan accordingly!
- You can also bike just about everywhere here. Feel free to rent a Divvy bike if you're just visiting. Most of them have pedal-assist installed, so while they can be heavy bikes, they are quite sturdy & reliable.
    - There are Divvy stations everywhere around the city. Feel free to pick one up or drop one off at any station!
    - For anyone planning to bike in Chicago, check out the existing Chicago bike network map to help plan your routes.
- Pro navigation tip: Chicago is almost entirely on a rigid street grid, which makes navigation fairly simple. The lake is always to the east, and 8 street blocks = 1 mile.
- Need food & beverage suggestions while you're at the Annual Meeting? Look here!

1. IMPORTANT LOCATIONS, ADDRESSES, & LINKS

a. Knickerbocker Hotel
   i. Address: 163 E Walton Pl, Chicago, IL 60611
   ii. Welcome to the Magnificent Mile! (Mag Mile for short)
   iii. Closest CTA train station: Chicago/State Red Line Station; Chicago Brown Line Station

b. Steppenwolf Theatre Company
   i. Address: 1650 N Halsted St, Chicago, IL 60614
   ii. We will be up in Rehearsal Hall B
   iii. Closest CTA train station: North/Clybourn Red Line Station
   iv. Steppenwolf's parking & transit instructions
      1. Steppenwolf has offered free parking in their parking garage - waiting for more details - NO OVERNIGHT PARKING

c. Theatre of the Mind
   i. Address: 333 N La Salle St, Chicago, IL 60654
   ii. This is NOT the Goodman's main building! It is a separate address at the Reid Murdoch building!
   iii. Closest CTA train stations: Merchandise Mart Brown Line Station; Clark/Lake Station (Brown, Orange, Green, Pink, transfer to Red); Grand Red Line Station

d. Shure, Inc.
   i. Address: 5800 W Touhy Ave, Niles, IL 60714
   ii. This is out in the suburbs and will require a vehicle for travel!
      1. There is a one-way bus shuttle from Steppenwolf available
   iii. Shure Tour sign-up form - REQUIRED TO ATTEND

e. Chicago Transit Authority (public transit - buses and trains)
   i. Pay with tap/mobile cards OR with Ventra card
   ii. Trains will get you to and from the airports, to Steppenwolf, and very close to the hotel
      1. Buses can get you even closer if needed!

2. GETTING FROM THE AIRPORT/AMTRAK TO STEPPENWOLF
    a. O'Hare International Airport
        i. CTA Blue Line
            1. Once you are off your airplane and have your baggage, follow the signs for the Blue Line train/station.
            2. After you've descended to the depths of the O'Hare CTA Blue Line Terminal station, you will need to buy fare and head to the train platform
                a. O'Hare is the exception to the standard CTA fare. A single trip purchased from O'Hare on the Blue Line will cost $5 (rather than the standard $2.50 for any other L train trip). The only way to avoid this surcharge is to buy an unlimited pass of any kind
                    i. 1-day and 3-day Ventra passes are available. You can even put a 1-day pass on a temporary Ventra ticket, or just buy a 3-day pass at the O'Hare station Ventra vending machine
            3. Hop on a train heading toward either Forest Park or UIC Halsted, and make yourself comfortable for the next 45 minutes or so until you're downtown (in the Loop)
            4. Get off the Blue Line at Washington station and transfer to the Red Line (follow the signs!)
                a. Find your way off the Blue Line train and follow the signs marked for the Red Line.
                    i. This will involve exiting a turnstile, and you will have to tap again to enter the Lake Red Line Station. THIS IS A FREE TRANSFER.
                    ii. Find your way down to the Red Line subway platform and hop onto a northbound train headed toward Howard.
            5. You will get off the Red Line at the North/Clybourn station.
                a. Follow the exit signs, heading upstairs, out the gates, and through the doors into daylight
            6. Once you exit the station, find your way to Halsted Street and look for the BIG Steppenwolf sign - walk toward that!
                a. If you can't see the sign, walk toward and under the elevated train tracks. Steppenwolf is just north of those tracks.
                b. Steppenwolf sits less than a block north of the North/Clybourn Red Line station
        ii. Taxi/Rideshare

1. All rideshares from O'Hare *should* take place on the **DEPARTURES** (upper) level at Terminal 2 (the center terminal) in the "rideshare zone".
    a. There are sections in this zone that are labeled with letters (look at the concrete columns!). Your app will likely ask what section you are waiting at.
    b. There is a limited rideshare zone on the upper level of Terminal 3 as well
2. Taxis are available outside all terminals on the arrivals level.
    a. PLEASE make sure you are hopping into a licensed taxi.
    b. Drivers might try to offer you a flat fee to get you to your destination. Running the meter is always the better/safer option.
3. Yes, it is chaotic. Yes, people really are that bad at airport traffic. Yes, the rest of Chicago traffic is also bad.
4. REAL PRO MOVE: Ride the ATS to the Car Rentals stop and call a rideshare from there.

iii. IF YOU ARE FLYING INTO TERMINAL 5

1. This is the international terminal, but there are some domestic airlines that use this terminal as well. (Looking at you, Frontier)
2. Unless you're using a taxi, find your way to the ATS (airport tram system) and ride over to Terminal 2. From there, all transit options will be available to you, in particular the Blue Line train and the rideshare zone.

b. Midway International Airport

i. CTA Orange Line

1. Exit the terminal, and follow the signs that guide you toward CTA/Train/Orange Line
    a. This is a bit of a maze and some long hallways. Once you're past the parking garage, you're almost there!
2. Once you are at the Midway CTA train station (as far as you can walk indoors), purchase your fare & go down to the train platform.
    a. Since Midway is the terminal station for the Orange Line, there's often a train already sitting and waiting to depart.
3. Ride the Orange Line towards the Loop. Enjoy the sights of industrial Chicago!
4. You need to get off the Orange Line at Roosevelt and transfer to the Red Line trains (down many stairs/escalators, but hopefully the elevators are working that day!)
    a. Once you are on the subway platform for the Red Line, you will want to take a train heading toward Howard (northbound).

b. You will get off the Red Line at the North/Clybourn station.
    i. Follow the exit signs, heading upstairs, out the gates, and through the doors into daylight
c. Once you exit the station, find your way to Halsted Street and look for the BIG Steppenwolf sign - walk toward that!
    i. If you can't see the sign, walk toward and under the elevated train tracks. Steppenwolf is just north of those tracks.
    ii. Steppenwolf sits less than a block north of the North/Clybourn Red Line station

ii. Taxi/Rideshare
1. Taxis are very prevalent on the Arrivals level. The taxi line starts just outside Door 2
    a. PLEASE make sure you are hopping into a licensed taxi.
    b. Drivers might try to offer you a flat fee to get you to your destination. Running the meter is always the better/safer option.
2. There is a dedicated rideshare zone on the Arrivals level in the center lane of traffic between Doors 2-4.
    a. The zone is subdivided further into Blue Zones "A" & "B", Orange Zones "C" & "D", and Green Zones "E" & "F"

c. Union Station

i. Public Transit
1. There are CTA ticket stations in Union Station to get you started with either a Ventra card or just a standard ticket/day pass. Please refer to this page for a station map and more info.
2. Bus → Red Line Train
    a. Follow the signs to exit out of the Jackson Boulevard exit on the south side of the station.
    b. Once out of the station, cross Jackson and find the CTA bus stop/station. Make sure there are signs for the 7 bus and/or the 126 bus.
        i. Whether you're catching the 7 or the 126, you'll want to be sure you're heading eastbound (across the river). The bus will say it's heading toward Michigan/Ida B Wells.
    c. Ride the bus, and get off at Jackson & State. From there, find an entrance to the Jackson Red Line subway train station on the sidewalk.
        i. You can opt to skip the bus and just walk to this Red Line station. It's about a 15-20 minute walk from Union Station once you exit onto Jackson Boulevard

d. Head into the station and make your way down to the train platform. You are looking for Red Line trains headed toward Howard (northbound).
e. You will get off the Red Line at the North/Clybourn station.
    i. Follow the exit signs, heading upstairs, out the gates, and through the doors into daylight
f. Once you exit the station, find your way to Halsted Street and look for the BIG Steppenwolf sign - walk toward that!
    i. If you can't see the sign, walk toward and under the elevated train tracks. Steppenwolf is just north of those tracks.
    ii. Steppenwolf sits less than a block north of the North/Clybourn Red Line station

3. Blue Line Train → Red Line Train
    a. Follow the signs to exit out of the Jackson Boulevard exit on the south side of the station.
    b. Find your way to the intersection of Jackson & Clinton at the southwest corner of the train station (away from the river)
    c. Walk south on Clinton away from the Union Station for two blocks. Look for the entrance to the Clinton Blue Line Station in the underpass of the interstate.
    d. Head down into the station and find your way to the train platform. You're looking for trains headed toward O'Hare
    e. Ride the Blue Line train two stops, getting off at Jackson. At Jackson, follow the signs to transfer to the Red Line station.
        i. You will probably exit a turnstile and need to tap payment again to enter the Red Line station. As long as you're using the same payment method, THIS IS A FREE TRANSFER!
    f. Once in the Jackson Red Line Station, head to the train platform. You are looking for Red Line trains headed toward Howard (northbound).
    g. You will get off the Red Line at the North/Clybourn station.
        i. Follow the exit signs, heading upstairs, out the gates, and through the doors into daylight
    h. Once you exit the station, find your way to Halsted Street and look for the BIG Steppenwolf sign - walk toward that!
        i. If you can't see the sign, walk toward and under the elevated train tracks. Steppenwolf is just north of those tracks.
        ii. Steppenwolf sits less than a block north of the North/Clybourn Red Line station

ii. Taxi/Rideshare
    1. There is a taxi stand outside of the Jackson Boulevard exit on the south side of the station.
        a. PLEASE make sure you are hopping into a licensed taxi!
    2. The rideshare zone is outside of Adams Street exit on the north side of the station.
iii. Bike
    1. There's solid bike infrastructure to get you from Union Station to Steppenwolf.
        a. For more bike route info, check out Chicago's current bike network map.

3. GETTING FROM STEPPENWOLF TO THE KNICKERBOCKER

a. CTA Red Line
    i. Steppenwolf sits about one block north of the North/Clybourn Red Line Station
        1. Once you exit Steppenwolf, turn right (south) and walk down the sidewalk until you're across North Avenue. Look for the Apple Store - that's basically where you're headed.
        2. The entrance to the North/Clybourn station is right next to the Apple Store, right in the elbow of the actual intersection of North Ave & Clybourn Ave
        3. Once in the station, look for trains headed toward "95th". These are southbound trains that will take you downtown
            a. "Howard" trains are northbound for folks who might be going elsewhere
        4. Ride the train a couple stops, and get off at the Chicago Red Line Station (often announced as "Chicago & State" on the trains) and make your way up to street level, exiting the station
            a. If you can make sense of the exit signs or find the compass on the floors, try to use the northeast exit.
            b. If nothing makes sense, just get yourself up to the street!
        5. Once on the sidewalk, walk east (toward the lake, away from the distant elevated train tracks) on Chicago Avenue for a few blocks.
        6. Stay safe crossing the entirety of Michigan Avenue, and once you're all the way across (across the street from the historic water tower), turn left and head north along Michigan Avenue
            a. Michigan Ave in this area is VERY BUSY, especially in the summer season with tourists. Keep your eyes up & wits about you.
        7. When you get to Walton Street, turn right before crossing the street & walk east (toward the lake, away from Michigan) on Walton for less than a block. Look for signs for the Knickerbocker.

8. You have arrived! The entrance to the Knickerbocker lobby will be to your right, on the south side of Walton!

ii. CTA Buses are technically an option, but it's 1-2 bus transfers to get you close to the hotel

1. To get you closest with buses, try taking the 72 North Ave bus east (toward North Ave Beach) and transferring at North Ave & Clark St to the 36 bus south (toward LaSalle Metra Station). Hop off the 36 at State & Delaware, walk south (same direction as bus) one block, and then turn left & walk east about 3 blocks to land at the Knickerbocker

b. Walking/Biking

i. Steppenwolf sits just under 2 miles from the Knickerbocker hotel.

1. That's about a 45-minute walk
2. That's a 15-ish minute bike ride (maybe less depending if you're familiar with the route & Chicago streets)
    a. For more bike route info, check out Chicago's current bike network map
    b. There are Divvy stations nearby both Steppenwolf and the hotel.

c. Taxi/Rideshare

i. Rideshares and taxis are available very consistently throughout all hours of the day in Chicago.

ii. Please be advised that Steppenwolf, Theater of the Mind, and the Knickerbocker Hotel all sit squarely within the main congestion zone for Chicago. That just means that a surcharge ($1.50) is added to your ride's total if you are traveling between the hours of 6am-10pm.

4. GETTING FROM STEPPENWOLF TO THEATER OF THE MIND

a. CTA Red Line

i. Exit Steppenwolf and turn right to head south toward North Ave. Keep your eyes peeled for the Apple Store.

ii. The entrance to the North/Clybourn station is right next to the Apple Store, right in the elbow of the actual intersection of North Ave & Clybourn Ave

iii. Once in the station, look for trains headed toward "95th". These are southbound trains that will take you downtown.

iv. Ride the train for several stops, and get off at the Grand/State stop (sometimes just called Grand).

v. Exit the station onto Grand Ave and walk west (toward the elevated train tracks) until you hit La Salle Dr, about 3 blocks.

vi. Take a left at La Salle before crossing the road, and walk south (toward the river) about 4 blocks until you arrive at the theater. Look for Theater of the Mind signs!

1. If you've hit the river, you've walked past the theater!

b. CTA Brown Line
   i. Find your way to North Ave (about ½ block south of Steppenwolf), and turn left (east, toward the lake) when you hit that intersection.
   ii. Continue east for several blocks until you get to Sedgwick Street, following the elevated train tracks
   iii. Turn right and walk south on Sedgwick until you're at the entrance to the Sedgwick Brown Line station.
   iv. Enter the station and follow signs for trains headed towards the "Loop" (southbound).
   v. Ride the Brown Line and enjoy the views as you approach downtown Chicago!
   vi. Get off at the Merchandise Mart stop.
      1. If you don't mind a bit of extra walking and want some stunning views, ride the Brown Line one extra stop to Washington/Wells station. You'll get an iconic ride over the Chicago River and some time in the literal elevated "Loop" tracks of downtown Chicago!
   vii. Exit the Merch Mart station, head east on Kinzie St for one block until you're just across La Salle Dr. Once on the east side of La Salle, walk one block south toward the river and look for signs for Theater of the Mind.
      1. If you've walked all the way to the river, you've gone too far!

c. Rideshare
   i. You are welcome to call a rideshare directly to Steppenwolf. Please be advised that Steppenwolf lands in a rideshare congestion zone.
   ii. Please be advised that Steppenwolf, Theater of the Mind, and the Knickerbocker Hotel all sit squarely within the main congestion zone for Chicago. That just means that a surcharge ($1.50) is added to your ride's total if you are traveling between the hours of 6am-10pm

d. Bike
   i. To plan your bike route, check out Chicago's current bike network map
   ii. There are Divvy stations nearby both Steppenwolf and Theater of the Mind.

5. GETTING FROM KNICKERBOCKER TO THEATER OF THE MIND

a. CTA Bus
   i. You have several options, but all include some walking. A couple of suggested routes:
      1. Catch the 146 bus heading south. The closest bus stop is the west side (across Michigan, away from the lake) of Delaware & Michigan. Get off at State & Lake, walk west 3 blocks along Wacker/the Riverwalk, and then cross the river at LaSalle. That will get you right next to Theater of the Mind.

2. Head west (away from the lake, toward the distant elevated train tracks) from the hotel for a few blocks until you get to the west side of State Street. Catch the 36 bus heading south (toward LaSalle Metra Station), and ride until State & Marina City. Walk slightly north (away from the river) to Kinzie St, and turn left to walk west for 3 blocks. When you hit LaSalle, turn left again, and walk toward all of the Theater of the Mind signs
    a. If you hit the river, you've walked past Theater of the Mind!

b. Taxi/Rideshare
    i. You can order a rideshare directly to the hotel entrance.
    ii. You can also hail a taxi or have hotel staff help call a taxi. There is likely an abundance of taxis in the area!
    iii. You can drop off right in front of Theater of the Mind. Be advised that this is an extremely busy area with car, bike, and pedestrian traffic!

c. Walk
    i. If it's a nice night, feel free to walk! Theater of the Mind is about a 1.3 mile walk away from the Knickerbocker.
        1. That is approximately a 30-minute walk in the dense urban fabric of River North.
        2. It would be easy to break this up by stopping for dinner at one of the many restaurants that land between the two locations. Find some suggestions here!
            a. As an added bonus, tons of restaurants have outdoor/patio seating options in the summer. They're excellent on a nice Chicago summer evening :)

d. Bike
    i. To plan your bike route, check out Chicago's current bike network map
    ii. There are Divvy stations nearby both Knickerbocker and Theater of the Mind.

6. GETTING TO SHURE (Monday only)

a. The Shure facility that we are touring is located at 5800 W Touhy Ave, Niles, IL 60714. **You will need to use a vehicle (car or shuttle) to get to this location.**
    i. Be sure you have signed up for the Shure tour ahead of time. Security at Shure will be checking IDs and matching them to folks who have signed up!
        1. The Shure Tour sign-up form has been emailed to all registered in-person attendees of this year's Annual Meeting. This form includes sign-ups for the tour and the bus shuttle from Steppenwolf to Shure.

b. Driving
    i. Shure is located conveniently about one mile east of I-94 off the Touhy exit.

1. The Touhy exit can get incredibly busy and has some fun merge patterns.
    a. Zipper merge is your friend, even if it seems like a bunch of folks on the road missed that memo.

ii. There is a large parking lot adjacent to the Shure building that you are welcome to use.

iii. If you've crossed the railroad tracks, you've gone too far! Turn around!

iv. If you see a weird half-sized Leaning Tower of Pisa right in front of you, you've definitely gone too far.

1. They call it the Leaning Tower of Niles. Yes, it's real.

c. Bus Shuttle

i. We have hired a bus to take folks from Steppenwolf to the Shure facility in Niles! The bus will leave from Steppenwolf on Monday, July 27th at 2:15pm.

1. This bus has luggage storage for folks who have already checked out of their lodging and/or are headed to the airport after their Shure tour has ended

ii. Anyone riding this shuttle *must sign up in advance* via the Shure Tour sign-up form.

1. This form has been emailed to all registered in-person attendees of this year's Annual Meeting.

iii. This bus will only run once, one-way from Steppenwolf to Shure with no stops in between. You will need to figure out transportation from Shure to your next destination.

d. Carpool

i. Talk to your pals who have cars - we're all probably headed to the same place at the same time

e. Rideshare/Taxi

i. The most expensive option, but it is open to you.

7. GETTING FROM SHURE TO THE AIRPORT/AMTRAK

a. You will need to figure out your own transportation once you are done at Shure.

i. There is NOT a shuttle bus taking folks back to Steppenwolf.

b. CTA/Public Transit

i. O'HARE

1. Walk west of the Shure building to just across the train tracks and cross Touhy Ave. Then cross Lehigh Ave to get to the bus stop at the southwest corner of Touhy & Lehigh.
2. Catch the 85A bus south toward Jefferson Park, and take that all the way south to the Jefferson Park Blue Line Station (part of the Jefferson Park Transit Center)
3. Enter the Blue Line station and make your way to the train platform. Board a train headed toward O'Hare.

4. Ride the train until you can't anymore - you'll be at O'Hare, and ready for your next stint of travels! Be sure to follow signs to get yourself to the correct terminal.
    a. If you fly out of Terminal 5, you will need to find your way to the ATS (airport tram) and ride that over to Terminal 5.

ii. MIDWAY
1. Getting to Midway is also possible on public transit, but it is at least 2-3 transfers between buses and trains and about 1.5-2 hours to get you there. ***Rideshare is probably the way if this is your airport.***

iii. UNION STATION
1. Walk west of the Shure building to just across the train tracks and cross Touhy Ave. Then cross Lehigh Ave to get to the bus stop at the southwest corner of Touhy & Lehigh.
2. Catch the 85A bus south toward Jefferson Park, and take that all the way south to the Jefferson Park Blue Line Station (part of the Jefferson Park Transit Center)
3. Enter the Blue Line station and make your way to the train platform. Board a train headed toward Forest Park or UIC.
    a. Trains to UIC are a shortened Blue Line express route on weekdays, but those trains will get you to the stop needed for Union Station!
4. Ride the Blue Line train for a good while, and get off at Clinton station
5. Exit the station onto Clinton Street (under the interstate), and walk north (toward the skyscrapers!) about 2 blocks.
6. That puts you just outside Union Station. Feel free to enter anywhere that is convenient!

c. Taxi/Rideshare
i. Rideshares are nearly as prevalent in the suburbs as they are in the city. They are likely your quickest option to get to an airport from Shure.
1. Rideshares to or from a Chicago airport (O'Hare and Midway) incur a $5 fee, which should be displayed in your trip price.

ii. Taxis are also available, but you will need to call a number/communicate with a taxi company to get a car to Shure for you.

8. If you're not headed to a travel hub after Shure, you've got a few options:
    a. Talk to some of the local Chicago folks
        i. Many of us have cars and are anticipating some carpooling back into the city after Shure.
    b. Rideshare
        i. They're always available, but wait times in the suburbs can be a bit longer.
    c. CTA/Public Transit

i. Follow the rider instructions for the O’Hare option from Shure. When you get to the Jefferson Park hub, take a Blue Line train toward either Forest Park or UIC-Halsted (NOT O’Hare) to get you back downtown.