

# Google Transit How-To Guide

## I. Important notes about Google Transit

Google Transit is still under development, and Metra is working with Google to resolve the trip planner's limitations. You might notice two of its biggest limitations: The trip planner will often direct you to walk a far distance to or from your nearest Metra station, and the trip planner does not include Pace buses.

### A. If Google Transit directs you to walk to or from your nearest Metra station (and that's not feasible)

One of Google Transit's limitations is that it can only calculate either trips that use solely personal automobiles or trips that use a combination of walking and public transportation. When you choose "By public transit" from the drop-down menu, Google automatically excludes the possibility of you driving a personal vehicle at any time during that trip. Thus, the resulting itinerary often directs you to walk to the nearest Metra station, regardless of how far that Metra station is.

To resolve this problem, you can:

1. **Use the walking directions as driving directions.** (This will work in most cases, but not all. Please be aware of one-way streets en route to your destination.) You can find detailed walking directions by clicking on the words "Show Details" that appear at the end of the step directing you to walk to the station.
2. **View the accompanying map to self-navigate to the station.** Click on the map to the right of the driving directions. Zoom in to the map by double-clicking with your mouse. Click and hold your mouse key while moving the mouse to scroll across the map. Self-navigate from your starting point to the Metra station.
3. **Go to Google Maps and click on the station's icon.** This will give you the option to request driving directions to the station. Enter Google Maps by clicking on its logo in the upper left corner of the window. Locate the station on the map and click on its icon. Then click on "Get Directions: [To here](#)" and type in your starting address. After you click on the "Go" tab, directions will appear.

### B. If you believe your itinerary should involve a Pace bus

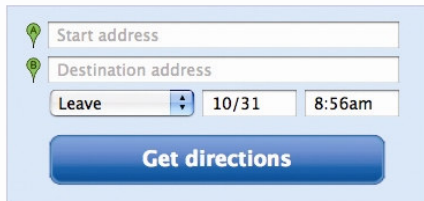
Google Transit has yet to include Pace buses in its transit itineraries. As a result, the trip planner may direct you to use an alternate form of transportation, even though a Pace bus might provide a better option.

To resolve this problem, you can:

Visit the RTA's trip planner Web site at <http://tripsweb.rtachicago.com/>. This site will include a Pace bus, if it is, in fact, the best way for you to get to your destination.

## II. Using Google Transit to calculate directions

Type your starting point in the box next to "A" and your ending point in the box next to "B".

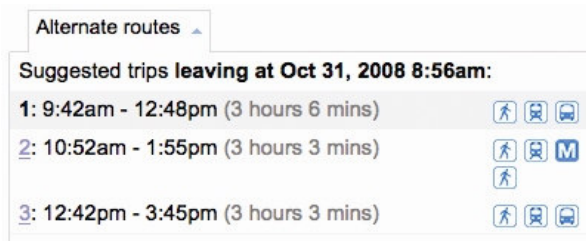


A screenshot of the Google Transit trip planner interface. It features two input fields for "Start address" and "Destination address", each with a location pin icon. Below these is a "Leave" dropdown menu, a date field showing "10/31", and a time field showing "8:56am". A prominent blue button labeled "Get directions" is positioned at the bottom of the form.

Click on "Get Directions".



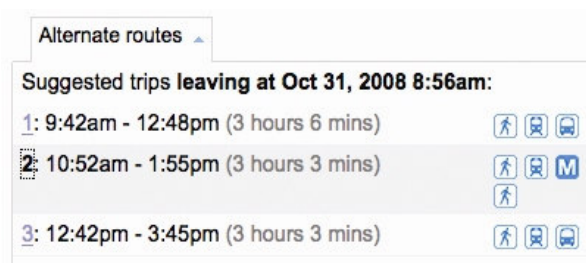
Google Transit will suggest three transit options that fulfill your time requirements.



A screenshot showing the "Alternate routes" section of the Google Transit results. It lists "Suggested trips leaving at Oct 31, 2008 8:56am:" with three options:

Route	Start - End	Duration	Icons
1:	9:42am - 12:48pm	3 hours 6 mins	Walking, Bus, Bus
2:	10:52am - 1:55pm	3 hours 3 mins	Walking, Bus, M, Walking
3:	12:42pm - 3:45pm	3 hours 3 mins	Walking, Bus, Bus

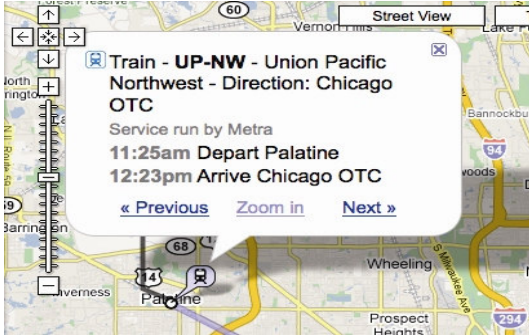
The first option will be shaded in gray and its directions will appear below. To view another option, click on its respective number (for example, [2](#)). That option will then be shaded in gray, and its directions will appear below.



A screenshot showing the "Alternate routes" section of the Google Transit results, where the second option is now selected and shaded in gray:

Route	Start - End	Duration	Icons
1:	9:42am - 12:48pm	3 hours 6 mins	Walking, Bus, Bus
2:	10:52am - 1:55pm	3 hours 3 mins	Walking, Bus, M, Walking
3:	12:42pm - 3:45pm	3 hours 3 mins	Walking, Bus, Bus

In your itinerary, you can click on each separate step to see its exact location on the map to the right. When you click on a step, the step should turn gray and the map should move to show you the correct location.

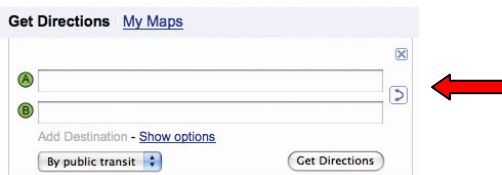


### III. Modifying your original directions

- A. Obtaining reverse directions
- B. Calculating directions based on arrival time rather than departure time
- C. Changing the date of your trip
- D. Changing the departure or arrival time of your trip
- E. Viewing possible driving directions

#### A. Obtaining reverse directions

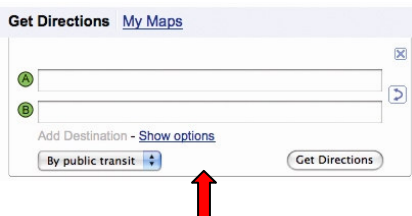
Click on the transpose icon. You'll find this icon to the right of where you entered your start and end points.



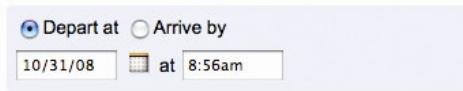
When you click on this icon, Google will automatically switch your start and end points and then calculate reverse directions.

#### B. Calculating directions based on arrival time rather than departure time

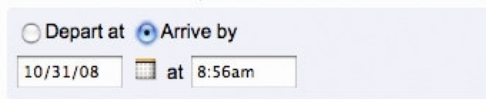
Click on the link for [show options](#). You'll find this link directly below where you entered your start and end points.



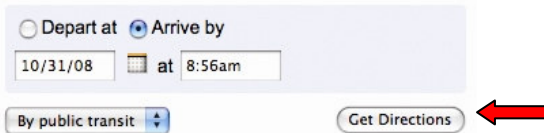
When you click on this link, a blue box will appear below.



To calculate directions based on your arrival time rather than your departure time, click in the circle next to “Arrive by”.

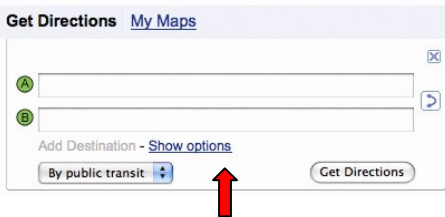


Click on the “Get Directions” icon, and Google will recalculate your directions.

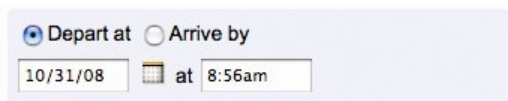


### C. Changing the date of your trip

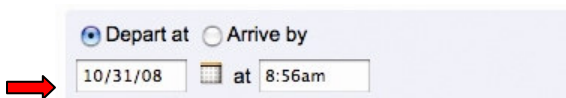
Click on the link for [show options](#). You’ll find this link directly below where you entered your start and end points.



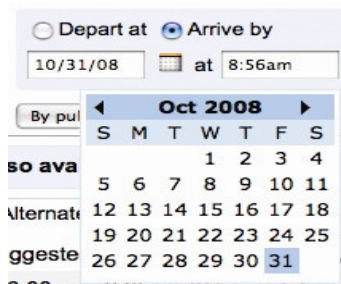
When you click on this link, a blue box will appear below.



Enter the new date of your trip in the following format: mm/dd/yy.



You can also click on the calendar icon to the right of the box. Select a date on the calendar, and Google will put the date in mm/dd/yy format for you.

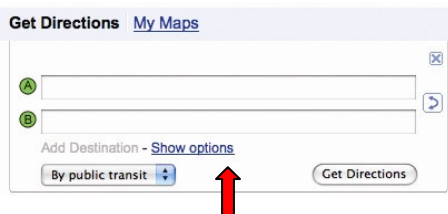


Click on the “Get Directions” icon, and Google will recalculate your directions.

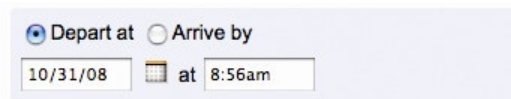


#### D. Changing the departure or arrival time of your trip

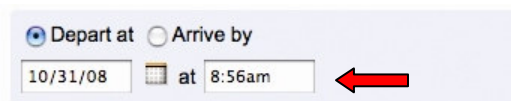
Click on the link for [show options](#). You’ll find this link directly below where you entered your start and end points.



When you click on this link, a blue box will appear below.



Enter your desired time of arrival or departure (including a.m. or p.m.) in the box to the right.

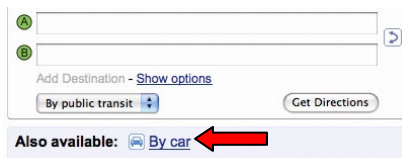


Click on the “Get Directions” icon, and Google will recalculate your directions.



## E. Viewing possible driving directions

Click on the link [By car](#) that can be found next to the car icon.



Your driving directions will appear below.

## IV. Going further: The benefits of Google Transit

### A. Street View, Traffic, Satellite and Terrain maps

### B. Food, shopping, etc.

### C. Obtaining more information on your route through Wikipedia

Metra decided to launch the trip planner due to the familiarity and confidence that consumers have in Google products. Google also provides a variety of added benefits that make Google Transit an incredibly useful tool.

### A. Street View, Traffic, Satellite and Terrain maps

To the right of your directions, you'll see an interactive road map. You can zoom in, zoom out and scroll through it. If you look to the top of the map, you'll see that you have other map options: You can also click on the Street View, Traffic, Satellite and Terrain tabs.

**1. Street View:** From a street-level perspective, you can view portions of many regions of the United States. If you want to see what your new office building looks like so you won't walk past it on your first day on the job, Street View is your best bet. Google obtained the pictures by driving a car with a 360-degree camera mounted to its roof.

**2. Traffic:** The area's major highways are colored in red, yellow or green to convey how quickly the traffic is moving at that moment. The traffic map even shows you which roads are currently under construction.

**3. Satellite:** View the area from an astronaut's perspective.

**4. Terrain:** Examine the area's elevation.










## B. Food, shopping, etc.

Google also has a “Find businesses” feature. To the right of the Google logo, you’ll see a rectangular search box. Type keywords in the search box to find local businesses of interest to you. For example, if your transit directions tell you to switch from a Metra train to a CTA bus and you want to stop for lunch, zoom in to your connection area on the map and type “food” in the search box. A number of area food options will appear. You can do the same thing to find local shopping or even a local gym.

## C. Obtaining more information on your route through Wikipedia

Google allows you to access user-generated content that’s relevant to your travel area. Click on “More” to view all existing Wikipedia entries about your travel area. When you click on a “W”, information from a Wikipedia entry will appear. For example, click on a “W” in Evanston, Illinois, and you’ll learn about Northwestern University. See the [Full Article](#) link to access the entire article through Wikipedia’s Web site.

## V. Index of symbols

	Walk
	Take a CTA bus
	Take the CTA elevated line
	Take a Metra train
	Drive
	Starting point on map
	Ending point on map
	Switch start and end points
	Recommended route of travel