

## **"Big Zone" Transfers**

January 7, 1974 "Big zone" transfers start. The base form was designated A. The size of zones was expanded from 15 blocks by 15 blocks to 30 blocks by 30 blocks. Transfers were still 6½ inches long, same as previously. A total of 10 overprints were produced. #1 was "Bus", #2 was "Rapid Transit" for use by conductors when collecting fares aboard trains, #3 thru #9 were also "Rapid Transit" but with "prepunched" marks for each zone that the L operated in for use by ticket agents. #10 was marked "Fare Paid" and was for use on L and bus routes in the North and West zones along with the short-lived "West Suburban" zone - that part of the Lake, Congress, and Douglas L routes west of the city limits, along with the Douglas Park Extension bus. This form had squares showing 65, 70, 75, 85, along with a blank box corresponding to the additional fare rates.

The basic rules for transferring were revised in an effort to simplify most riders' trips. For the first hour, transfers were good at any stop in any direction. After an hour, the old rules still applied as to only good at recognized transfer points with 30 minutes allowed per zone traversed. Time stamping when changing from L to bus was eliminated. During the early part of 1974, weekend transfers were printed on green paper to use up existing stock.

December 17, 1973, the "West Suburban" zone had been eliminated, with regular fares being charged. As a result, the "Fare Paid" form soon had the lines corresponding to the L segments involved were ground off, along with the "65" fare designation. A new #12 Rapid Transit form was started to cover those parts of the L, while the Douglas Park Extension bus started issuing regular Bus transfers.

Supertransfers (good all day on Sunday and on holidays) were introduced June 2, 1974. The initial version was produced for the Operations Planning Department with a form number of OP-x74250. As of July 14th, 1974, a new plate with no plate number but printed on an A base replaced it.

April 26, 1975, Separate Bus and Rapid Transit forms were eliminated, replaced by a single "Standard Transfer". Length was reduced from 6 ½ inches to 6 inches, and new base was designated B. Standard Transfer was overprint #1, while the special fare form (now labeled "Fare" with boxes for 20, 25, 30, 35, 50, 55, 60, 65, 70, 75, 80, 85) retained #10. Supertransfers were now #11.

As fares kept changing, the premium fare form kept getting changed to keep pace. #10B from September 1976, with 25, 30, 35, 45, 50, 60, 75, 80, 85, 90, 95, 100 boxes, while #10C from April 1977, has 15, 20, 25, 30, 35, 40, 45, 50, 55, 60, 75, 90 boxes. #10A probably also existed, but so far, no examples have been located.

A "5c Senior Handicapped" form (#12) was started December 15, 1975. Other reduced fare riders were given standard transfers with "½" circle punched. December 1979 the "senior handicapped" portion was ground off as all reduced fare transfers were now 5 cents as of

November 4, 1979. An all-new form showing 5c "Reduced Fare" (B12A) started in January 1980. On January 3, 1983, a new "senior handicapped" form (SH) started stating "good for two hours weekdays 9am to 3pm" instead of one hour like regular reduced fare transfers. Strangely, this used the old 6½-inch-long format.

February 9, 1986, the transfer system was again completely revised. Transfers were now good for two hours, but only two hours, and not on route of issuance. The new base was now D, and was the first not to have a map. All new style overprints were now made, one for each garage, listing routes operated from that garage, as numbers 1 through 9, with 10 being for Evanston routes 201 through 204, and 12 having the L "route segments".

The "premium fare" and "reduced fare" versions disappeared, and reduced fare transfers were now only distinguished by punching the "½" circle. However, as of March 30th, 1976, reduced fare transfers while identical in format to full fare transfers, were printed on green paper.

Supertransfers were not updated until March 30th, 1976. New versions were initially form 13, but soon changed to form 14 with no physical changes. In the interim, old forms were used, but were issued in two separate bundles, one to be used for full fares, one for reduced fares.

Reduced fare transfers and Supertransfers were changed February 23rd, 1988, from green to white paper because green paper was becoming unavailable. Overprint was at the same time changed from green to red. Because of printing timelines, this change did not take effect on L transfers on weekends until May 14th.

A final change on February 2nd, 1992, added a new "S/D" box, and changed the "½" circle to a box, resulting in base E.

When this form of transfer was first introduced, CTA's operating structure had been fairly static for a long time, but now changes started coming hot and heavy.

North Avenue garage was closed, and Lawndale garage was reopened September 7th, 1986, with the replacement Chicago Avenue garage opening July 3rd, 1994, with Lawndale closed permanently. On the same day, Limits garage was also closed.

June 26th, 1988, Beverly garage was replaced by the new 103rd garage,

Meanwhile on February 21st, 1993, North-South and West-South L routes exchanged south terminals, and the new Midway L opened November 7th, 1993.

Lastly, September 12, 1995, 69th garage was replaced by new 74th garage.

With many routes changing garage assignments as a result, almost all overprints had to be replaced, some several times, and some errors were made with routes being omitted. The Evanston form was eliminated, and those routes added to the North Park form as they were fully

integrated into the regular system. Political interference in the route revision planning associated with the Midway L resulted in Archer garage getting several new overprints in short order in 1994.

By 1996, the decision had been made to reduce driver contact with transfers, with an additional Transfer Issuing Machine added to existing fare boxes that would print and read cardstock transfers, printing time and bus number at time of issue. These new transfer cards first appeared September 17th, 1995, on the Pulaski, Cicero, North, and Fullerton routes out of Chicago Ave Garage. Drivers still had to blank transfer cards one by one into the transfer issuing machine. Full rollout started in March 1996, with new turnstiles being installed in L stations and bus fareboxes being modified. By October, all fareboxes had been modified and all stations had a turnstile issuing and reading transfer cards, and paper transfers were history.

January 1997, transfer issuing machines were modified to print route number or station number on the transfer card.

April 1997, transfer cards were replaced by plastic stored-value Transit Cards, which functioned the same as former transfer cards but included the ability to store monetary value for future use.

Starting August 18th, 1997, and completed September 15th, the L was converted to full exact fare with ticket agents no longer collecting money, all transactions handled by ticket vending machines and turnstiles.

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