

## **Chicago 'L' - Transfers and Tickets**

CRT was never big on transfers. Except for Evanston and Niles Center (later Skokie) they relied on paid-area connections and small "raffle-type" tickets.

The first real use of transfers was on September 2nd, 1935, when the Illinois Commerce Commission ordered CRT to offer a joint fare with the Surface Lines, which was available to full-fare riders at all stations within the Chicago city limits until 1943, when the privilege was extended to the entire CRT middle zone system.

The transfers were printed by the Ansell-Simplex Ticket Co. on dark yellow paper, having a map of the L printed in red along with the name of one of the L branches and a series of numbers corresponding to the stations on that branch. Date and serial number were blue. Form number TK36 was soon added to the footer.

The branch designations were:

- Wilson-Howard
- Ravenswood
- Logan Square - Humboldt Park
- Lake
- Garfield Park
- Douglas Park
- Kenwood - Stock Yards
- Englewood - Normal Park
- Jackson Park
- Loop

On December 11th, 1935, an additional "Emergency" form was introduced, for use if a station ran out of regular transfers.

A similar joint fare arrangement with Chicago Motor Coach Co. started January 19th, 1936. Transfers were very similar except for being printed on green paper with map, station numbers, date and serial all in red and footer stating, "good on Chicago Motor Coach" instead of "good on surface lines". Again, form number TK-37 was soon added.

October 1st, 1943, the transfer system was modified to issue transfers at all stations in the middle zone and restrictions regarding which surface routes were "tributary" to which 'L' stations were removed.

The State Street Subway opened October 17th, 1943. A new "Subway" overprint was added to the yellow and green forms, showing the new subway routing thru the downtown area. A revised "Emergency" overprint showing the subway also came into use. Other overprints remained unchanged at this time.

As of January 1st, 1944, yellow transfers were replaced by blue transfers to simplify the transfer system. CRT to CSL and CSL to CRT were now blue, CRT to CMC and CMC to CRT were green. All printing on the blue transfers was changed to blue, but soon after the date and serial number were again changed, to red.

Sometime in 1946 all forms were finally modified to show the subway, and the Lake, Douglas, and Garfield forms had additional station numbers added to include the middle zone stations west of the Chicago city limits. The delay was apparently caused by CRT not being able to afford new plates.

October 1, 1947, CRT was taken over by CTA and blue transfers were slightly modified, adding a ½ box, as now reduced fare riders were also able to transfer between 'L' and surface routes. Green transfers to CMC were not changed, still available with full fare payment only. Another change implemented soon after was that instead of a single "Emergency" form, there were now seven A through G, corresponding to the days of the week.

July 10th, 1949, Douglas weekend service west of Cicero was replaced by buses. A special transfer was issued (form TK-59) an orange transfer by conductor when arriving at Cicero station. Buses also accepted white transfers from Cicero, South Cicero, and Cermak routes with payment of 2 cent 'L' upcharge. Eastbound buses issued same form which could be exchanged at Cicero station or on Cicero, South Cicero or Cermak cars and buses for blue or green transfers.

After September 17th, 1949, Cicero conductors would punch and return these transfers for further use at the Cicero stations on the Garfield and Lake 'L' routes.

Effective March 4th, 1950, these special transfers were replaced by white or pink surface Roosevelt-Cermak-Douglas transfers, though still issued at the 'L' fare. Passengers transferring to the Douglas 'L' had their white transfers exchanged for blue or green regular Douglas 'L' transfers.

June 1st, 1952, "T" and "25" ("T" and "10" on ½ fare version) were added to differentiate between riders paying cash from those presenting a token.

December 24th, 1952, another new overprint went into use, showing the new Dearborn Subway and deleting the Humboldt Park branch. Skokie, Evanston, and Westchester riders now kept their blue or white transfers at Howard instead of having them exchanged for blue middle zone transfers.

August 17, 1953, all 'L' transfers were changed. Still blue (but almost gray), the new "form A" transfers now showed the route on the map they were issued from instead of the whole system map.

November 8, 1955, new base D went into use, being printed on green paper. 'L' routes were shown as dots instead of dashes, and Normal Park was removed. "T" and "C" boxes were also added. Outer to Middle Zone form (now form O) was still longer than the rest.

Milwaukee, Douglas, and Garfield forms were replaced by new West-Northwest forms June 22, 1958, forms S,Y,W.

New transfer base G began in 1960. Kenwood, Stock Yards, and Douglas between Harrison and Lake were removed, with length increased to same as surface transfers.

July 23rd, 1961, CTA began charging for transfer. Thru riders could as an alternative receive an "identification check" (Form H) good for rides on southbound Evanston Express trains as evidence of payment of thru fare. As of May 18th, 1962, these ID checks were printed on green paper.

April 6, 1964, with the opening of the Skokie Swift, Evanston form O3 became OD with "Skokie" added. This was soon changed to OE, with "Skokie Swift" instead.

May 1969 Englewood Extension resulted in new forms BC, MC, PC.

There was a plan in 1969 to have all new L forms which would include a clock as the B series. This was never implemented, but examples of North-South BB, MB, PB do exist, but without a clock!

September 28, 1969, Lake Street form G was replaced by West-South GC. Upon opening of Kennedy Extension February 1st, 1970, new forms SC, YC, WC began being used showing the extension.

All existing transfers were replaced by an all-new type, which also resulted in major changes to the transferring rules. These will be treated separately.

### **Outer Zone (North of Howard, west of Desplaines)**

All stations in the Middle Zone in addition to collecting cash fares issued Form TK-2 (pink with red X) Thru Ride tickets for travel to the North or West Zones.

All stations in the North and West Zones issued Form TK-3 (lilac with red bar) Thru Ride tickets for travel to the Middle Zone. Additionally, all stations on the Evanston branch issued Form TK-10 (white) transfers to the Nilcs Center (later Skokie) branch, while stations on the Nilcs Center branch issued form TK-11 (pink) transfers to the Evanston branch.

Full fare riders from the north or west zones could obtain a blue or green transfer from the collectors at Howard St or on the train approaching Desplaines Ave in exchange for a lilac ticket.

Howard Street station was considered "neutral ground", with anyone arriving from the north having paid the North Zone fare, while anyone arriving from the south would have paid the Middle Zone fare.

As a result, any rider starting their trip at Howard Street got one of four tickets from the downstairs ticket agent, which was then surrendered to a collector upstairs upon boarding a train. Full fare riders going south received a Form TK-13 (yellow) ticket, while reduced fare riders received a Form TK-17 (green) ticket. Full fare riders going north received a Form TK-14 (gray) ticket, while reduced fare riders received a Form TK-16 (white with two red bars) ticket. In addition to a Form TK-13, full fare riders could also request a blue transfer to CSL or a green transfer to CMC from the ticket agent.

Thru full fare riders had to surrender their pink or lilac ticket to the collector, while anyone without these tickets and all reduced fare riders had to pay a second cash fare. Riders changing between Skokie and Evanston routes surrendered their TK-10 or TK-11 transfers also.

Sounds complicated? It was.

Westchester 'L' riders had it much easier. Westbound leaving Desplaines Ave collectors picked up pink tickets, eastbound leaving 5th Ave collectors picked up lilac tickets and issued blue or green transfers.

The Skokie branch was replaced by bus service March 27, 1948. As this route at this time was entirely in the North Zone, revised white "Evanston-Wilmette to Skokie Motor Bus" (with time stamp space) and orange "Skokie Motor Bus to Evanston-Wilmette" (with clock) transfers were put into effect replacing the old TK-10 and TK-11 transfers. A new brown Skokie bus to middle zone thru ticket was started. This ticket was good on Clark St streetcars, where it could be exchanged for a white surface/L transfer, or CMC buses. It would also be exchanged by the Howard Street ticket agent for a Form TK-58 (white with red ball) to be surrendered to the southbound platform collector.

Days later, May 30th, the Skokie bus was rerouted via McCormick and Howard and the part east of Kedzie was made part of the Middle Zone. As such, regular white and pink Skokie-Howard surface transfers were used east of Kedzie, while the brown transfers were changed to read "good at points of intersection of Surface Division routes" instead of "good on the Clark Street car". Fare collection was also changed, with all fares collected when boarding eastbound as before, but changed to being collected when exiting westbound. White and pink transfers were accepted as far as Kedzie, then only Evanston-Skokie tickets and pink thru-ride tickets were accepted.

Collectors checking all riders at Howard St was a time-consuming process, and after the July 31st, 1949 North-South service realignments became even more of a problem. As a result, on December 31st, 1950 the method of checking thru fares was changed. The southbound

platform became a Middle Zone paid area, while the northbound platform remained an unpaid area. The lilac full fare thru fare tickets were eliminated and southbound riders from Evanston going past South Blvd all had to pay the thru fare and receive a green full fare or orange half fare small ticket. Conductors would collect these tickets leaving Main St and on request issue a "Evanston Skokie" blue or green transfer. A separate blue transfer with a ½ overprint was used for reduced fare riders. A passenger wishing to change to the Skokie bus or exit the system would turn in their blue transfer to the Howard upstairs ticket agent for a refund of the thru portion of the fare. If the rider was going to change to the Skokie bus, the ticket agent would also issue an orange "Evanston to Skokie" transfer for that purpose. Northbound thru riders still used a pink ticket, collected on the north bound platform.

Fare collection on Skokie buses also changed. Brown transfers were replaced by blue and green "Evanston Skokie" transfers, same as in Evanston.

August 1st, 1951, green Evanston Skokie forms were eliminated, with blue full fare forms now good on CMC.

December 9th, 1951, Evanston-Skokie transfers were replaced by Evanston-Skokie-Westchester forms when the 'L' west of Desplaines Ave (On Sundays west of Laramie) was replaced by the Westchester bus. Riders boarding Westchester buses at or east of Desplaines Ave or Garfield Park Extension buses received a white transfer which was exchanged for a blue form at Marion/Lake or Central/Lake stations.

With the restoration of Sunday service to Desplaines Ave September 20th, 1953, white Westchester-Forest Park/Garfield Park transfers were discontinued.

Starting March 5, 1954, a new "Outer to Middle Zone" transfer (form B) replaced the blue Evanston-Skokie-Westchester transfers, issued to full fare Skokie riders boarding west of Kedzie traveling to points east of Kedzie and to all southbound Evanston riders. Handling procedures at Howard Street for North Zone riders were not changed.

Another new scheme of fares collection at Howard Street went into effect October 3rd, 1954, when collectors on the northbound platform were eliminated. For passengers passing thru northbound, fare differential is collected on the train after leaving Howard Street in cash, as the pink thru-fare tickets were eliminated. The orange Skokie to Evanston and white Evanston to Skokie transfers were also eliminated.

Riders originating at Howard Street pay agent North Zone fare and receive an orange "Howard to Evanston" form C ticket which is collected on the train. Southbound procedures did not change.

An orange form C transfer was issued by bus drivers to any rider boarding in Skokie traveling to Evanston. The same form was also issued by agent at street level to passengers originating at Howard Street going to Evanston, and by agent on south bound Howard platform in exchange

for Outer to Middle Zone transfers along with thru fare refund to passengers originating in Evanston going to Skokie.

July 5th, 1957, thru fare was also applied to Evanston Express trains south of Howard, with conductors checking Outer to Middle Zone transfers or collecting the 13 cents southbound after leaving Loyola and collecting the 13 cents northbound leaving Merchandise Mart and issuing a Outer to Middle Zone transfer on request.

September 10th, 1957, passengers continuing north past Howard on Evanston Express trains were issued a green Evanston-Skokie-Westchester transfer (02) that replaced the Outer to Middle Zone form, to be picked up by conductor leaving Howard Street, or to be used on Skokie bus for travel west of Kedzie. This transfer was also issued to all riders paying thru fare southbound.

October 7, 1957, the northbound platform at Howard St was divided into two paid sections. Passengers arriving on North-South trains paid the extra fare to an agent in a platform booth, while riders originating at Howard St or Skokie bus presented their north zone ticket to the agent. Arriving Evanston Express riders no longer needed to be checked, and on-train fare inspection northbound was discontinued.

North zone local fares were finally eliminated September 7, 1959. All riders now paid the thru rate, and southbound fare inspection was no longer needed, along with the thru fare refund at Howard Street. Orange north zone local tickets were eliminated.

October 28, 1959, Evanston-Skokie-Westchester O2 transfer replaced by green Evanston O3 and Westchester-Skokie DY (bus) transfers.

January 6, 1960, Northbound Howard platform was rearranged so all North-South trains discharged on east track, while all Evanston shuttle and express trains loaded at north end of west track.

Compiled by Andre Kristopans (Updated 11/14/2023)