



CITY OF CHICAGO • OFFICE OF THE MAYOR



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

November 21, 2022

CONTACT:

Mayor's Press Office

312.744.3334

press@cityofchicago.org

MAYOR LIGHTFOOT, CHICAGO DEPARTMENT OF AVIATION JOIN SECRETARY BUTTIGIEG TO CELEBRATE KEY MILESTONE IN O'HARE 21 PROJECT WITH FAA DECISION

'Terminal Area Plan' at center of investment strategy gets green light to proceed

Following a thorough environmental review, the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) issued its finding there is “no significant impact” of the proposed Terminal Area Plan from the Chicago Department of Aviation (CDA), paving the way to start construction on two new satellite concourses at O’Hare International Airport — the new O’Hare Global Terminal that will replace Terminal 2 — and other associated projects Mayor Lori E. Lightfoot announced today at a celebratory event with Secretary Pete Buttigieg of the Department of Transportation (DOT), which oversees the FAA.

“O’Hare is the lifeblood of Chicago’s economy, directly employing tens of thousands of Illinois residents and bringing more than 70 million passengers to and through our city each year,” said Mayor Lightfoot. “The next phase of work will expand O’Hare’s capacity to serve travelers and improve the customer experience, transforming it into one of the greatest airports of the 21st century.”

“Chicago’s transportation infrastructure is what makes this city an economic powerhouse of global importance,” said Secretary Buttigieg. “Now, as we prepare to break ground on O’Hare’s newest terminal, Chicago and this entire region will be positioned to grow and create good-paying jobs through the benefits of first-rate infrastructure, beginning with the construction project itself.”

The FAA review process, which began in 2018, consisted of a complex technical review of the environmental impact of the Terminal Area Plan, or “TAP.” This review, which is common for large airport capital projects, was required by the National Environmental Policy Act, or NEPA.

“Today’s news from the FAA gives us a clear path forward to start construction on the Terminal Area Plan which includes Satellite Concourses 1 and 2 and the O’Hare Global Terminal, the centerpieces of the capital improvement program we call



CITY OF CHICAGO • OFFICE OF THE MAYOR



O'Hare 21," said Commissioner Jamie L. Rhee of the CDA, which owns and operates both O'Hare and Midway International Airports. "I thank the FAA for its comprehensive review of the proposed plan as we work to completely transform the O'Hare experience for the traveler of tomorrow."

Key engagement included coordination with federal, state, tribal, and local officials, a two-month public review period, and two public workshops. All comments received from members of the public were addressed in the final Environmental Assessment released today. Among the key findings from today's decision:

- There is no significant impact to the surrounding environment from the TAP.
- The TAP should ultimately decrease emissions by reducing taxi times.
- The TAP will not adversely affect the existing historic terminal elements, as determined by the State Historic Preservation Office in Springfield and the FAA.

"Transportation has always been our competitive advantage in Chicago, and O'Hare is our crown jewel," said Derek Douglas, president of the Civic Committee of the Commercial Club of Chicago. "The final approval for a new O'Hare Global Terminal and two new satellite concourses means that a great economic asset will become even greater."

The TAP is a critical component of the O'Hare 21 plan, an ongoing investment in the airport's terminals that will further support the breadth of air service that make O'Hare one of the world's busiest airports. Among other benefits, the TAP will:

- Maintain operational efficiency for existing and future air service.
- Improve the passenger experience with updated facilities and amenities.
- Provide increased gate flexibility for all sizes of aircraft.
- Reduce aircraft taxiing times and wait times for gates.
- Cohesively integrate all four O'Hare terminal facilities.
- Provide for significantly improved domestic and international connections.

The FAA's decision clears the way for construction to begin on the satellite concourses and related airfield work when the ground thaws this spring. The current construction timeline calls for the first satellite concourse to be completed in 2027 and the second satellite concourse to reach completion in 2028.

Demolition of Terminal 2, the airport's oldest passenger facility, will occur in phases. The work is scheduled to begin in 2026, with a target completion date of 2030 for construction of the O'Hare Global Terminal. Construction of a large tunnel connecting passengers, baggage, and utilities between the O'Hare Global Terminal



CITY OF CHICAGO • OFFICE OF THE MAYOR

and the satellite concourses is anticipated to begin in 2024 with a construction completion date of 2030. All dates are subject to additional alteration as the extensive and challenging construction cycle begins next year.

The TAP was agreed to as a part of the 2018 O'Hare Airline Use and Lease Agreement, which approved more than \$8.5 billion of new capital funding in 2018 dollars. The agreement allows for increased project costs to account for the timing of the development. The current capital program for O'Hare is approximately \$12.1 billion, which accounts for current project estimates, escalated costs permitted under the 2018 agreement, as well as capital investments agreed to both since and prior to the 2018 agreement. The total budget for the TAP is currently estimated to be \$7.1 billion, or 59% of the overall capital plan.

Notably, O'Hare is one of only two airports in the country coming out of the pandemic with two higher credit ratings than it had going into it, with two recent upgrades from Fitch Ratings, and one from S&P Global Ratings on the O'Hare General Airport Revenue Bonds and the Passenger Facility Charge Bonds. These are the first rating upgrades for O'Hare in at least six years.

When completed, the Satellite Concourses will provide approximately 1.3 million square feet of gate and amenity space and dramatically expand the airport's flexibility to accommodate both narrow and wide-body aircraft, which allows for a more efficient use of the terminal facilities. Opening the satellite facilities first will allow O'Hare to maintain gate capacity when existing gates are withdrawn from service to allow construction on the O'Hare Global Terminal to begin later this decade.

Upon its opening, the O'Hare Global Terminal will be one of the most significant terminal developments in America, more than doubling the space of the existing Terminal 2 and allowing for the integration of international and domestic operations for the airport's two hub carriers.

Key capital investments at O'Hare continued to move forward while the TAP's environmental review was underway. Projects recently completed include:

- In October, Delta Air Lines, the airport's third largest carrier, [moved its operations](#) into newly renovated gates M2 to M11 in the western concourse of Terminal 5.
- In September, construction crews completed a \$48.8 million utility and pavement repair project in the arrival lanes of O'Hare's Main Terminals, installing new ADA-compliant crosswalks and a new 12-inch water main



CITY OF CHICAGO • OFFICE OF THE MAYOR



- with new fire hydrants that will be critical in the event of an emergency at the new O'Hare facilities.
- In August, construction wrapped on the 9,300-space Main Parking Garage, a \$25.5 million project that included pavement repairs and structural support work, which will prolong the life of the 49-year-old parking ramp another 15 years.
 - In June, the CDA [broke ground on a new, six-story parking garage](#) at Terminal 5, which will more than double the amount of available parking on site and offer a mix of long-term and short-term parking options, like those found in the Main Parking Garage.
 - Also in June, the CDA reopened seven pedestrian tunnels connecting the Main Terminals to the parking garage and the CTA Blue Line, using vibrant new designs that provide a world-class welcome to visitors and residents as part of a \$35.5 million project.
 - In April, the Airport Transit System (ATS) re-launched round-the-clock service, offering travelers a fully automated, convenient ride between O'Hare's four terminals and the Multi-Modal Facility (MMF) every three to five minutes.
 - Last year, [the CDA completed](#) a 16-year, \$6 billion investment in the O'Hare airfield with the opening of the extension of Runway 9R-27L, an unprecedented achievement in aviation engineering that has transformed O'Hare into the most capable civilian airfield in North America.

Additional upgrades continue to open in phases as part of a \$1.3 billion renovation of Terminal 5. The CDA is currently finalizing plans for a grand opening of Terminal 5's new eastern extension early next year, where seven new gates have already opened since this summer.

For the latest updates on O'Hare 21, follow @Fly20Hare on [Twitter](#), [Facebook](#) and [Instagram](#) and visit ord21.com, where you can sign up for email updates from the CDA.

###