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Date: December 30, 2015 at 12:46:32 PM CST

To: [REDACTED]

Cc: "Drouet, Christina (FAA)" <Christina.Drouet@faa.gov>, "Evans, Ginger" <ginger.evans@cityofchicago.org>

Subject: RE: 27L and safety

[REDACTED]

This email is provided in response to questions you asked in your 12/9/15 email to me, plus subsequent emails. We offer the following responses to questions captured in your emails:

1. Who owns Chicago O'Hare International Airport?

Response: The City of Chicago owns O'Hare Airport, and the Chicago Department of Aviation (CDA) operates the airport.

2. Why is Runway 27L used more than any other runway at O'Hare?

Response: Runway 27L has been a primary O'Hare arrival runway for decades. In today's configuration, 27L is used extensively for two reasons. First, 27L is one of three east-west runways used simultaneously for daytime arrivals in "West Flow", when winds are from the west and aircraft land from east to west into the headwind. Runways 27R and 28C are also used in this configuration. The analysis that led to the design of CDA's O'Hare Modernization Program (OMP) included an analysis of 10 years of historical wind and weather data. While weather patterns are variable, the historical data analysis concluded that "West Flow" can be expected to be in use approximately 70% of the time. Secondly, during nighttime hours, 27L is designated as a primary arrival runway in West Flow conditions under the CDA's "Fly Quiet" nighttime noise abatement program.

3. Why have we not used 28L for arrivals in West Flow?

Response: New Runway 10R-28L is open and available for arrivals/departures in East Flow and West Flow. However, 10R-28L is positioned 3100 feet to the south of Runway 10C-28C, and that spacing is not sufficient for simultaneous independent parallel approaches on those two runways - meaning that both 28C and 28L currently cannot be used simultaneously for straight-in arrivals (FAA separation standards for simultaneous independent parallel arrival operations). For the 10R approach, FAA established an "offset" instrument approach procedure that allows us to safely use 10R and 10C simultaneously for arrivals in East Flow conditions. We do not currently have a similar offset approach established for 28L. FAA is in the process of assessing the feasibility of an offset approach for 28L, similar to the 10R offset approach.

4. Do you think it is safer and more efficient to have 75% of arrivals landing with crosswinds and tailwinds?

Response: The determination of what runways to use for arrivals at any given time is based primarily on wind direction and intensity. After considering wind, arrival and departure runways are selected to create the safest and most efficient operating configuration possible. The FAA would not select or use any runway that is not safe for arrival and/or departure operations.

5. What do you plan to do 3% of the year when strong NNW or SSE winds occur, as happened on 11/18/15? Will the airport be closed on those days? Without 14R/32L and 14L/32R the airport will not be operational.

Response: First, it is important to clarify that the 14-32 diagonal runways are scheduled to be decommissioned under the City of Chicago's O'Hare Modernization Program (OMP) to make way for the construction of future Runway 9C-27C, the extension of Runway 9R, and associated infrastructure changes needed to complete these runway projects. FAA's analysis, when completing the O'Hare Modernization environmental impact statement (EIS), concluded that the end-state OMP airfield, which includes six parallel east-west runways and two diagonal SW-NE runways (the 4-22 runways), will be able to handle traffic in virtually all wind conditions. Your reference to 11/18/15 is a good example of this. While O'Hare experienced strong winds that day (wind gusts over 40 knots from the south), operations were adjusted to allow for safe operations and accommodate traffic demands. A large part of the day the east-west parallel runways were used for arrival and departure operations. Additionally, Runway 22L was used for departures, as it often is in West Flow, and Runway 22R - and to a lesser degree Runway 14R - were used for arrivals during portions of that day.

6. You should test the air quality after many consecutive days of using 27L for arrivals. Who should we contact about this?

Response: Air quality impacts were addressed in the O'Hare Modernization EIS, which was completed in 2005, and again in an extensive reevaluation of the EIS, which was recently completed and publicly released on 10/14/15. The EIS determined that any air quality impacts associated with O'Hare modernization comply with United States Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA) and Illinois Environmental Protection Agency (IEPA) air quality standards. IEPA has an active air quality monitoring program in place, and information on that program can be found on IEPA's public website. If you have specific concerns in regard to air quality, we suggest that you contact the IEPA.

You have also sent numerous emails to me inquiring why the West Flow configuration was being used in various weather conditions in recent days. Aside from referring you back to response 2. above, I will add that the decision to utilize West Flow can be based on various weather factors, including not just wind, but also visibility and cloud ceiling factors, as the West Flow configuration provides a more efficient operation in marginal weather conditions. In general, the West Flow configuration provides the greatest level of operational efficiency. The addition of new Runway 10R-28L in October 2015 greatly enhanced the capability and efficiency of the East Flow configuration, and we anticipate some degree of increase in the use of East Flow in the future, when weather conditions are suitable. However, once again, we anticipate West Flow to be the preferred configuration the majority of the time, now and in the future.

Lastly, since the thrust of your questions appears to be focused on runway use alternatives as a means of addressing noise impacts, I want to point out that CDA, in conjunction with the O'Hare Noise Compatibility Commission (ONCC), is currently exploring options for the possible use of alternative nighttime runways, to address present-day community noise concerns. You may be aware that ONCC represents 55 suburban communities, City of Chicago wards, and local school districts. I strongly suggest that you share your concerns with your designated ONCC representative, so that ONCC's ongoing dialogue will include, or at least consider, your perspective and your input.

I hope that the above information adequately addresses at least some of your questions.

Barry Cooper
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