

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Wednesday, March 30, 2016 9:25 PM
To: Cooper, Barry (FAA)
Subject: Re: Additional information - Questions regard ORD runways, etc.

Thank you for responding, but you didn't answer/address any of my questions/concerns.

Maybe you can answer the following?:

[REDACTED]

Secondly, why is 9R rarely used for arrivals yet 27L is the most used runway at O'Hare for arrivals?

Lastly, why is 9R used predominantly for departures in east flow yet 27L is rarely used for departures in west flow?

On Wed, Mar 30, 2016 at 2:16 PM, <Barry.Cooper@faa.gov> wrote:

[REDACTED]

A few weeks ago I provided you responses to some questions you had, and following my responses you offered more information and asked a few more questions. I wanted to follow up with you on at least some of your response information, additional questions, etc.

Regarding "who owns ORD", I stated previously that the City of Chicago owns ORD. However, you are correct when you suggest that FAA plays a significant role in what runways are used at any given time. Specifically, the City does indeed own the airport, and accordingly, the City generally determines what runways are available for use. The FAA, in turn, determines what runways will be utilized for arrivals/departures at any given time, based on a number of factors, with the most significant factor normally being weather/wind.

Regarding West Flow operations, during daytime hours when demand dictates, three parallel runways – 27R, 27L, and 28C – are used for arrivals, while Runway 28R is used primarily for departures, along with another runway, normally 22L. I acknowledge I'm oversimplifying things in this brief response, but FAA's Air Traffic staff determines runways to be used for arrivals vs. departures based on a number of safety and efficiency factors, including runway separation rules for simultaneous arrival operations, and efficiency of ground taxiing operations. The use of 27R, 27L, and 28C for simultaneous arrival operations in West Flow is included in FAA's EIS Record of Decision issued in 2005.

It should also be acknowledged that, when future Runway 9C-27C is commissioned, the EIS reflects a visible decrease in the use of Runway 27L for arrival traffic, as 27L will primarily be used as a departure runway at that time.

You inquired about new Runway 10R-28L and asked why there is not an instrument approach for 28L. I'll start by saying there is a straight-in ILS approach established for both ends of 10R-28L. However, in my prior message I explained that an "offset" ILS approach was also established for 10R to allow for simultaneous use of 10R and 10C for instrument operations (because of the 3100' separation between 10R and 10C). I stated in my response that "FAA is in the process of assessing the feasibility of an offset approach for 28L, similar to the 10R offset approach". The short story behind that is that establishment of an offset instrument landing system (ILS) for 28L presents some physical challenges in regard to placing ILS antennas near existing pavements and complying with FAA's siting and operational standards. As I stated previously, solutions to these challenges are being studied, and it is FAA's hope that an offset ILS approach can indeed be established for Runway 28L sometime in the future.

Regarding West Flow vs. East Flow, it is correct that, since the commissioning of new Runway 10R-28L last fall, the operational capability of the East Flow configuration is now comparable to the West Flow configuration, when weather conditions are favorable (visibility, cloud ceiling, etc.). That creates operational flexibilities that we hope to take advantage of as weather patterns permit. Since the 10R commissioning last fall, what I will call typical weather patterns for the fall/winter/early spring season have dictated the use of West Flow much of the time. It is our hope and expectation, as we enter the warmer spring weather season, that we will see increased opportunities to use East Flow. But again, weather is the primary driver of those decisions.

Lastly, I feel it's important to re-state the importance of the role that the O'Hare Noise Compatibility Commission (ONCC) plays in today's discussions about ORD noise issues. While these issues are challenging and ONCC cannot instantly resolve every issue, ONCC, as a body, represents the full spectrum of communities and school districts with primary interest in ORD noise issues. As I mentioned in my prior email, ONCC is working with the City of Chicago right now to explore alternative nighttime runway use options to address community noise concerns. This is exploratory work that has not been done previously at ORD. The area in which you live has a designated ONCC representative. I would, again, encourage you to talk to your ONCC representative and make sure he/she has your input and perspective.

I know this added information likely doesn't answer all questions you have, but hopefully it adds a little more to the information I originally provided you. Let me know if there's something specific I've missed that you'd like me to address.

Barry Cooper
Regional Administrator
Great Lakes Region
Federal Aviation Administration

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Thursday, April 21, 2016 8:52 PM
To: Evans, Ginger; Cooper, Barry (FAA); Drouet, Christina (FAA)
Subject: 27L

WHY WON'T YOU USE 28L IN WEST FLOW?????

From: Cooper, Barry (FAA)
Sent: Friday, April 22, 2016 1:46 PM
To: [REDACTED]; Evans, Ginger; Drouet, Christina (FAA)
Subject: RE: 27L

[REDACTED]

Regarding the question below in your email from yesterday (and a few prior emails in the past couple of weeks), this subject was partially addressed in the last informational email I sent you (3/30/16). The Runway 28L straight-in ILS approach can be used in West Flow, but only under very restrictive conditions. As I explained previously, because of 28L's proximity to Runway 28C (3100 feet centerline to centerline) and FAA's operating rules for simultaneous parallel runway operations, 28L and 28C (a primary ORD arrival runway in West Flow) cannot be used together as part of a triple approach West Flow configuration, except when conditions allow for visual approaches. Additionally, using 28L for West Flow arrivals has an impact on departure capacity, as it affects the use of Runway 22L for departures. Consequently, 28L would only be used for arrivals under wind conditions that preclude the use of 22L for departures. Lastly, there are ground taxiing complexities that can cause airfield inefficiencies when using 28L for arrivals in West Flow.

In another recent email, you also asked another question, and I wanted to provide a response:

Why is Runway 9R rarely used for arrivals, yet Runway 27L is the most used runway at ORD for arrivals?

Response: Prior to the commissioning of Runway 10R-28L, Runway 9R was used in East Flow as a mixed use runway, meaning that it was used for both arrivals and departures simultaneously. Doing this does not create the most efficient operating scenario for ORD arrivals and departures. With the commissioning of 10R-28L last fall, including an offset ILS approach on 10R, we are now able to independently utilize, in East Flow, 9L, 10C, and 10R for simultaneous triple arrivals, which allows 9R to become exclusively a departure Runway on East Flow most of the time, along with 10L. Conversely, in West Flow, triple simultaneous parallel approaches must be done on 27R, 27L, and 28C due to ATC runway separation rules (recall my explanation above regarding limitations on the use of 28L), with 28R and 22L being used exclusively for departures in that configuration.

Barry Cooper
Regional Administrator
Great Lakes Region
Federal Aviation Administration

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Thursday, May 26, 2016 9:50 PM
To: Evans, Ginger; Cooper, Barry (FAA); Drouet, Christina (FAA)
Subject: 27L

WHY ARE YOU USING 27L WITH THE FOLLOWING WEATHER CONDITIONS?!

METAR KORD 270151Z 16004KT 10SM FEW055 SCT230 OVC250 23/18 A2988 RMK AO2
SLP113 T02280183

From: "Cooper, Barry (FAA)" <Barry.Cooper@faa.gov>
Date: May 27, 2016 at 5:32:52 PM CDT
To: [REDACTED]
Subject: Re: 27L

[REDACTED]

You have, on a number of occasions, asked questions specific to runway use and winds on a given day. Each day may generate a slightly different answer, but I'll use your email from last evening as an example response. Earlier last evening, before your message was sent, winds were out of the southwest at approximately 10 knots. That condition dictates use of west flow. Later in the evening, winds diminished (approximately 4 knots) and did change to be slightly from the southeast. That condition would allow for either east or west flow to be used. However, predictions for the early morning had winds expected from the southwest again. At 9:50 PM (the time of your email), FAA Air Traffic was handling a volume of evening traffic that precludes rotating operations from west flow to east flow unless changing wind conditions are significant enough to warrant that change. As that was not the case last night with light winds, and as predicted weather indicated west flow in the early morning, operations remained on west flow throughout last night and into this morning.

It is relevant to point out that, in recent weeks, the airfield has operated more on an east flow configuration than a west flow configuration. Again, wind/weather condition dictate that.

While I know the above information does not resolve your dissatisfaction, I wanted to provide the information to reflect the objective process that drives decisions to use west flow vs. east flow on any given day.

Barry Cooper
Regional Administrator
Great Lakes Region
Federal Aviation Administration