U.S. Department
of Transportation
**Federal Aviation
Administration**

Great Lakes Regional Office
2300 East Devon Avenue
Des Plaines, IL 60018-4696

March 17, 2022

Mr. Joseph J. Annunzio
O'Hare Noise Compatibility Commission
P.O. Box 1126
Des Plaines, IL 60017-1126

Dear Chairman Annunzio:

Thank you for your correspondence dated January 6, 2022 on behalf of the O'Hare Noise Comptability Commission (ONCC) regarding follow-up questions from ONCC's December 9, 2021 meeting. Below are responses to the six questions provided by ONCC. We greatly appreciate the opportunity to address these questions, and value our partnership with the ONCC.

1. **What is the process for the installation and commissioning of navigational aids on runway 9R/27L? Please provide a timeline regarding navigational aids, burn ins and flight checks.**

The Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) has targeted an operational upgrade to Runways 9R and 27L in support of instrument approaches following the commissioning of the extension to Runway 9R/27L, which occurred on December 2, 2021. This upgrade will include Category I (CAT I) instrument landing system (ILS) operations and approach lighting system with sequenced flashing lights (ALSF) capabilities. This upgrade to commissioning status is scheduled to occur in mid-July 2022.

Following the expected commissioning of ILS CAT I and ALSF, the FAA will perform 2000 hours of ILS equipment operation (i.e., burn-in) on each runway end to allow full performance levels to be achieved during any weather condition. Please note the burn-in is designed to ensure reliability of the equipment without the concern of premature equipment failure as sometimes can happen with new equipment installation. The FAA is expecting burn-in completion and the availability of CAT II/III service capabilities by July 2023, although there is an earlier target date of December 31, 2022.

Navigational aid, or NAVAID, installation can be an extensive and time-consuming process. It involves the joint efforts of many, and includes representatives from the Chicago Department of Aviation (CDA), as well as various lines of business / staff offices within the FAA.

Installation of ILS facilities, following the construction of shelters (localizer [LOC], glide slope [GS], ALSF and precision approach path indicator [PAPI]), can take up to 8 months to complete, and the time varies by the type of facilities involved. Each shelter is initially populated with power and grounding systems, has unique equipment and fiber installed, and eventually has a series of stand-alone and integration tests performed. These stand-alone and

integration tests do not require flight checks. The individual light stations for the ALSF equipment (24 total on each runway end) are constructed as a separate initiative. The PAPI facilities are also constructed as an independent system on each runway end. Following stand-alone and integration testing, as well as grading by the CDA to ensure proper ground elevation, the physical portion of the facilities installation is largely completed. However, while construction and installation work is underway, the FAA flight procedures team is finalizing procedures that will be used to conduct flights into the airport and Runways 9R and 27L.

Flight checks for CAT I of Runways 9R and 27L are scheduled to occur between mid-April and late May 2022, and will generally be completed over the allocated performance window, barring any unforeseen circumstances. Flight checks require flight procedure usage to be verified under many different configurations. Most procedures will be checked during nighttime operations, so as not to interfere with normal daytime airport operations. However, some of the procedure checks will need to be performed during the daytime, as they require low altitude approaches and visual awareness of potential objects that could be risky to pilots performing these operations. Various sets of flight checks are duplicated and iterated on each runway end. Moreover, after each set of flight checks, the data are evaluated to ensure the outcome of each check performs as advertised. The actual sequence of tests can vary from airport to airport, runway to runway, and can be impacted by available resources from the flight inspection office to conduct the tests.

However, any problems that arise during flight checks could potentially delay the overall process, and there is no guarantee how long or often flight checks would need to occur to help resolve the challenge. For example, if a flight check discovers a piece of equipment is not performing as advertised, the FAA engineering services team would then review the test results, assess why they feel the problem may have occurred, coordinate with field technicians to make necessary equipment changes, and repeat the flight check initially performed. This iterative process is repeated until all problems have been resolved with each individual NAVAID facility, to include LOC and GS on either runway end. While the lighted NAVAID facilities (i.e., PAPI and ALSF) could be tested separately, the desire of the FAA is to flight check all facilities during the same 6- to 8-week period, although this can sometimes be limited by the availability of equipment.

2. Please provide an update on OMP Buildout runway utilization

- **a. What is the expected annual daytime runway utilization (percentages)?**
- **b. What is the expected annual nighttime runway utilization (percentages)?**
- **c. Should we expect any significant changes to the EIS runway utilization?**

Full Buildout of the OMP will not occur until the FAA achieves CAT II/III service for 9R/27L. While the projected date for achieving this level of service is not until July 2023, the FAA is working diligently to achieve this level of service by the end of 2022. The FAA is conducting an Environmental Assessment of the City's proposed Terminal Area Plan and Air Traffic Actions to retain operational efficiencies, which the FAA plans to finalize by the end of 2022. Updated noise contours and runway usage will be provided in the Draft Environmental Assessment for the Terminal Area Plan and Air Traffic Actions, which will be published for public and agency review by the summer of 2022. That document will

discuss anticipated runway utilization post-Buildout. An FAA decision on the Terminal Area Plan and Air Traffic Actions Environmental Assessment will supersede the Record of Decision issued for the 2005 O'Hare Modernization Environmental Impact Statement.

3. **Please provide an update on the Environmental Analysis on the Scoping Process for the Terminal Area Plan. What is the timeline? Please address timeframe for Public Hearings or Workshop.**
    a. **What, if any, will the air traffic changes associated with the Terminal Area Plan be?**
    b. **The EIS ROD states the CDA is required to produce a new noise contour– Does this NEPA document change that requirement?**

The FAA is conducting an Environmental Assessment of the City's proposed Terminal Area Plan and Air Traffic Actions to retain operational efficiencies. Updated noise contours and runway usage will be provided in the Draft Environmental Assessment that will be published for public and agency review by the summer of 2022. A FAA decision on the Terminal Area Plan and Air Traffic Actions Environmental Assessment will supersede the Record of Decision issued for the 2005 O'Hare Modernization Environmental Impact Statement.

Scoping documentation and videos for the Terminal Area Plan and Air Traffic Actions Environmental Assessment are available at https://www.faa.gov/airports/great_lakes/TAPandATEA/. The FAA held a 45-day public comment period for the scoping process for this project from May 25-July 9, 2021. During the scoping process, the FAA sought input from the public and other agencies to define the range of environmental issues and possible alternatives to study in the Environmental Assessment.

The 2015 Written Re-Evaluation of the EIS included the assumption that Runway 10R/28L would be used for arrivals with temporary offset approaches until the completion of Build Out of the OMP, currently planned for the end of 2022. The Terminal Area Plan and Air Traffic Actions Environmental Assessment includes the analysis of the impacts of the proposed permanent implementation of offset arrival approaches to Runway 10R/28L.

4. **The Fly Quiet Committee is making progress on developing alternatives for the new permanent Fly Quiet Program and hopes to advance options to the full commission this spring. Thus far, does the plan appear to be feasible? Are there any red flags, anything being considered that can't be done?**
    a. **You suggested meeting with the Chief Pilots regarding the Fly Quiet program - when do you recommend this? While plan is in development? After plan has been approved by the full commission?**

The FAA has provided preliminary technical input to configurations for the new permanent Fly Quiet Program. The FAA does not provide detailed assessments of proposals that are not

formally under consideration. We will be happy to provide assistance when the plan is ripe for review throughout the plan development.

The Chief Pilots meeting is generally coordinated by the Chicago Department of Aviation (CDA). Due to COVID-19, there has not been a Chief Pilot's meeting in the last two years. Prior to COVID-19, Chief Pilot's meetings were generally conducted once or twice a year. The FAA will defer to the Chicago Department of Aviation on when to bring the Chief Pilots into the planning process and conduct a Chief Pilots meeting.

5. **The 2nd Quarter 2021 Fly Quiet report had increased deviations on preferential flight tracks. In the past, we were told tower managers were actively monitoring, training, and following up with controllers – how is this being handled by tower managers today?**
    a. **You mentioned you would check to see if Mitre is still conducting data analysis on flight track deviations. Do you have any information?**

O'Hare Tower – Previously, the Chicago Department of Aviation would inform the ORD Air Traffic Manager (ATM) of any specific noise violations. Each event was shared with the Operational Supervisors/Operational Managers or the Quality Control Manager, who would review/discuss the incident with the controller. The FAA will restart this review of specific noise violations if CDA decides to restart this program, and provides the event information to the FAA. If a supervisor or Operational Manager were to observe a controller not complying with Fly Quiet, a performance discussion would occur. Training on noise abatement procedures, including annual refresher training, is conducted and monitored for compliance.

The FAA has reached out to MITRE, and it has told the FAA it may be able to conduct a study looking at departures and deviations. The FAA would need to work with MITRE to determine the scope of the study, associated costs, and where it would fit into MITRE's current work program. This may be an option to pursue if the ONCC is interested in flight track deviations for departures. However, another option to pursue as noted above is having the CDA provide event information to the FAA on specific noise violations. The FAA could then research the event to determine the scope of the deviation. This is likely to be a more effective way to address specific concerns.

6. **What is on the horizon for the FAA? (NextGen Updates? Community Outreach?) How can the ONCC be of assistance?**

The FAA is developing the Airspace Modernization Roadmap, which will serve as the agency's strategic plan to continuously evaluate and modernize the National Airspace System (NAS). The Roadmap will build on the agency's PBN NAS Navigation Strategy 2016 and map out how the agency plans to achieve remaining commitments. The FAA will move away from single-site and single-procedure modernization efforts and towards data-driven priorities that deliver more holistic and sustainable benefits.

While developing the Roadmap, Mission Support Services will collaborate with the FAA internal Lines of Business (LOBs) to integrate strategic priorities. This includes aligning agency priorities with stakeholders priorities provided in the Minimum Capabilities List (MCL), the Performance Based Navigation (PBN) NAS Navigation Strategy, and the PBN Clarification Task.

The FAA believes the ONCC can be of assistance to the FAA in the Terminal Area Plan (TAP) outreach process once the draft Environmental Assessment (EA) for the TAP is published in the summer of 2022. Once the FAA completes the draft EA for the TAP project, the FAA will have a public comment period in which it will consider and review all substantive comments during the comment period. We encourage the ONCC to provide comments and to notify their member communities of the process to provide comments.

The FAA's mission is to provide the safest, most efficient aerospace system in the world, and we hope that the responses proves helpful in addressing the questions presented by the ONCC. If you require further assistance, please feel free to contact me at (847) 294-7294.

Sincerely,

Rebecca MacPherson
Regional Administrator,
Great Lakes Region