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**MAYOR EMANUEL AND THE CHICAGO DEPARTMENT OF AVIATION BREAK GROUND ON NEW SECURITY CHECKPOINT PROJECT AT MIDWAY**

*New 80,000 square foot security hall to double TSA screening capacity, further improve security wait times and efficiency at Midway*

Mayor Rahm Emanuel today joined the Chicago Department of Aviation (CDA), airport partners, elected officials and members of the community for the groundbreaking on a new security checkpoint and bridge expansion project at Midway International Airport. A new 80,000-square foot security pavilion will allow for additional security lanes, enhanced technology and a single checkpoint system that will double Transportation Security Administration (TSA) screening capacity and increase efficiency for passengers.

"Today, wait times at Chicago's airports are among the best in the nation because we have taken steps to improve efficiency, while ensuring more than 100 million passengers can travel safely through Midway and O'Hare each year," said Mayor Emanuel. "Our investments in security, the first step in Midway's modernization, are more important now than ever before. Over the next three years, we will transform Midway into a truly world class airport at no cost to taxpayers, while creating hundreds of jobs right here in the community."

The kick off of the security checkpoint marks the beginning of construction on the Midway Modernization Program—a \$323 million investment announced by Mayor Emanuel in 2015 to deliver the airport's most significant capital upgrade in nearly two decades.

"Each year, more than 22 million people travel through Chicago's Midway Airport, connecting passengers to destinations around the country—and even a few beyond our borders. This expanded security checkpoint will create jobs, and lead to a safer and more convenient travel experience that will further solidify Midway's position as a critical transportation hub," U.S. Senator Dick Durbin (D-IL) said. "I'm committed to working with the City of Chicago, TSA, and the airlines to ensure Midway has the resources it needs to continue to grow and thrive."

The new security structure and expansion of the pedestrian bridge will provide for a streamlined, single checkpoint area seven times wider than the current security hall and featuring new technology. This development, combined with new TSA automated lanes, is expected to increase the hourly throughput from 2,500 to 5,000 passengers per hour—double the existing capacity.

“Chicago’s airports are well-equipped to provide a safe and efficient experience to the traveling public, and to continue offering efficient wait times, thanks to our partnerships with the TSA and airlines,” said CDA Commissioner Ginger S. Evans. “With our passengers’ experience top of mind, security improvements like these continue to be a focal point as we embark on major development projects to ensure our airports are prepared for growing traveler volumes in the years ahead.”

By 2019, the addition of new lanes and technology will prepare the airport to meet forecasted passenger demand. With the FAA estimating that air travel in the U.S. is expected to double in the next 20 years, Chicago has already seen its passenger volumes increase. New security technology features installed under this project will improve checkpoint efficiency as the expansion is made, and ensure that as higher volumes of travelers are processed, that the highest levels of security are maintained.

“As a senior member of the House Transportation Committee and the Aviation Subcommittee, as well as the representative of Midway Airport, it’s great to join with Mayor Emmanuel and the Department of Aviation to announce this vital improvement for Midway. Because the airport was rebuilt before 9-11, the security checkpoint sometimes becomes a chokepoint for passengers. Once this project is complete, Midway Airport will be an even more convenient option for airline passengers,” said U.S. Congressman Dan Lipinski.

Over the next two years, the \$104 million security checkpoint project will create 470 new construction jobs. In total, the Midway Modernization Program—spanning the redevelopment of Midway’s concessions and terminal garage—will create at least 1,700 jobs and stimulate economic activity throughout the region.

“Moving travelers in and out of Midway in the most efficient, expedited, and safe manner must be a fundamental characteristic of an international airport like Midway Airport. In addition, creating over 1,000 new construction jobs is good for the local economy,” said Senator Martin Sandoval, Chairman of the Illinois Senate Transportation Committee.

Beyond the expanded capacity for TSA screening functions, the project will contribute to other aspects of the Midway Modernization plan by adding 18,000 square feet for new concession opportunities. Midway’s expanded concessions program will significantly increase dining and shopping options for travelers and generate additional non-airline revenue for the airport.

“We applaud Mayor Emanuel for his vision to modernize our largest operation, and we are pleased to invest in this expansion that will enhance the travel experience for our passengers as they move through Midway,” said Craig Vaughn, Director of Stations, Southwest Airlines, Co.. “The Southwest team is always looking to improve the customer experience, and we look forward to the modernization benefitting our tens of thousands of passengers in Chicago each day, as well as those in the community.”

Security enhancements are underway today at Midway with the installation of new automated screening lanes by the TSA, set to be operational by the end of this month. Midway joins a small number of U.S. airports to feature this innovative technology, which is designed to improve the screening process by automating many of the functions previously conducted manually, and allowing travelers to move more swiftly and efficiently through the checkpoint.

“The technology enhancements made by the City of Chicago today mean that Midway will be even better positioned tomorrow to continue providing travelers a safe and smooth travel experience,” Kevin McCarthy, TSA Federal Security Director for Midway. “Working with our partners at the City of Chicago, we are committed to leveraging the technology and resources that will contribute to an efficient checkpoint experience, but more importantly to ensure the highest level of security for our passengers.”

To engage residents in opportunities created by this project, the CDA will continue its ongoing outreach efforts by facilitating a career fair for residents seeking employment in partnership with the project's lead contractor, F.H. Paschen. In addition to CDA's rigorous community hiring requirements, the contractor has committed to hiring 10 apprenticeship positions, and will conduct its first outreach this fall.

Construction of the security checkpoint will be divided into three phases to minimize the impact to the flow of traffic on Cicero Avenue. CDA will work with its partners at the Chicago Department of Transportation (CDOT) to mitigate and inform the surrounding community of traffic impacts as a result of this project as they occur. Rolling, partial lane closures are expected to occur during specific evening hours as soon as next week. The project's phasing plan also ensures passengers can continue to clear security and get to their gate efficiently while the bridge construction is underway.

For updates on traffic, and on progress of the full Midway Modernization Program, the CDA has launched a new website to deliver key information to passengers as well as the general public. The website, [www.mdwmod.com](http://www.mdwmod.com), was designed to feature regular updates on construction of the three key Midway Modernization Projects, as well as information that will help travelers plan accordingly and minimize the impact of construction on travel plans. The site will also post information about career fairs and job opportunities for residents.

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