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**MAYOR EMANUEL AND THE CITY OF CHICAGO TAKE STEPS TO ADVANCE O'HARE EXPRESS
RAIL FROM VISION TO REALITY**

*City will select engineering team to develop conceptual designs, including routes and terminal options
by March*

Mayor Rahm Emanuel announced today that the City of Chicago is moving forward to create the O'Hare Express Rail Service, providing commuters with a convenient transit option to travel directly from the airport to downtown. The new system will strengthen Chicago's competitiveness, foster economic growth, and improve the City's overall transportation network by creating a speedy, reliable and comfortable link between O'Hare International Airport and downtown Chicago.

Next month, the Chicago Department of Aviation (CDA) will select an engineering team to analyze and develop conceptual designs as well as an overall timeline for the project. The City recently sought proposals from a pre-qualified pool of vendors who were tasked to develop designs for the project. Three proposals have already been received by the CDA and each will be evaluated based on a "best value" approach to ensure the most viable route for the express rail and technology. The overall proposal will require an expedited review of terminal options, as well as careful analysis of potential routes, amenities, and project timelines.

"O'Hare is an essential economic engine for the City of Chicago. By providing passengers with a faster, smarter, and more efficient way to connect between O'Hare and downtown, we will take it to the next level," said Mayor Emanuel. "As we modernize O'Hare to make Chicago even more competitive in the 21st century economy, my goal is to make it not just the busiest but also the best airport in the world. This new express service is an important step toward achieving that goal."

The rail service stands to offer a myriad of benefits to the City, commuters, and residents: providing a faster commute from the airport to downtown and vis versa; helping to mitigate congestion on the region's roadways; and fostering economic growth and creating jobs throughout the lifetime of the project.

"Creating a modern, cutting-edge transportation system between O'Hare to the downtown area will further enhance Chicago's standing as a global business and tourism destination," CDA Commissioner Ginger S. Evans said. "This goal of this project is to provide safe, fast and reliable access to the airport and to secure Chicago's long-term economic future with the continued developments at O'Hare."

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Previous attempts to create an express rail service from O'Hare and downtown focused on using existing, heavily-utilized rail stations, which prevented the plans from being feasible. Understanding these limitations, CDA is now asking vendors to focus its attention on other ways to build the rail service while avoiding previously identified obstacles. All plans for the express rail service will be coordinated with the upcoming gates expansion and terminal developments at O'Hare, the existing plans for the Airport Transit System (ATS), as well as ongoing updates to passenger demand and transportation options.

The City will initiate negotiations with relevant stakeholders in 2016, and a contract bid for final design, construction and financing could be awarded in 2017. There are no cost estimates for this project yet as it is still in the planning phase, but the goal is to ensure that no taxpayer money is needed.

Airport express rail service is a key component in Mayor Emanuel's ongoing plan to modernize O'Hare for the 21st century. Today's announcement follows the historic \$1.3 billion agreement reached in January 2016 that includes a new runway (Runway 9C/27C), deicing pads and other critical airfield projects at O'Hare that will allow for additional gates and terminal improvements. It also follows a recent announcement by Mayor Emanuel and American Airlines to add five new gates at O'Hare by 2018, creating the first major gate expansion since 1993. Additional gates will increase capacity at the airport, provide significant economic benefit to the city of Chicago, and improve airline on-time performance.

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