

WINGS OVER CHICAGO

Data Centers #6 • Teens 10-15

with Dess, the Infrastructure Guard and Lena Ashgrove of Channel 5



CREDITS

Wings Over Chicago · Data Centers #6 · Teen edition (ages 10–15)

Story and production: GOTB Consulting, Chicago

Lead: Dess · Heroes: Commons, The Auditor, Gridline, Undertow · On screen: Lena Ashgrove,
Channel 5

AI-GENERATED ART, FICTIONAL CHARACTERS

All characters, the town of Prairie Bend and Channel 5 are fictional. Any resemblance to real people is a coincidence. No real logos are shown. Real institutions are described by role. Every number in this book was checked against public sources before printing; see 'Sources' near the end.

Airport safety: watch planes only from terminals and observation decks; never approach runways, engines or fences.

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THE CREW



DESS

Our lead. Follows the network from rail to air.



COMMONS

Hero of crews. Lantern up.



THE AUDITOR

Sees and reports. Cannot stop anything.



GRIDLINE

Keeps the runway lights on.



O'HARE STATION · NIGHT

DESS

THE L BROUGHT US HERE. NOW: THE AIRPORT, A CITY THAT NEVER CLOSES.

FACT FILE

The CTA Blue Line reaches O'Hare; the Orange Line reaches Midway.

Source: CTA, "Facts at a Glance" (Blue/Orange to the airports)



DEPARTURES

DESS

2025 AT O'HARE: ABOUT 84.9 MILLION PASSENGERS. ROUGHLY 70 MILLION DOMESTIC, 14.8 MILLION INTERNATIONAL.

FACT FILE

O'Hare 2025: 857,392 aircraft operations (+10.49% vs 2024) and 84,856,018 passengers (+5.97%).
O'Hare 2025: about 70.0 million domestic and 14.8 million international passengers; 5,993,221 through Customs.

Source: Chicago Dept. of Aviation, "O'Hare Year-To-Date Operations, Passengers, Cargo Summary, As of December 2025" (PDF, dated 04/09/2026)

EIGHT RUNWAYS



THE AUDITOR

857,392 TAKEOFFS AND LANDINGS IN 2025, UP 10.5% FROM 2024. EIGHT RUNWAYS; THE LONGEST IS 13,000 FEET.

FACT FILE

O'Hare 2025: 857,392 aircraft operations (+10.49% vs 2024) and 84,856,018 passengers (+5.97%). O'Hare has eight active runways; the longest, 10L/28R, is 13,000 ft. The oldest active runways date from 1943; the newest, 9C/27C, opened in 2020.

Source: Chicago Dept. of Aviation, "O'Hare Year-To-Date Operations, Passengers, Cargo Summary, As of December 2025" (PDF, dated 04/09/2026); Chicago Dept. of



GATE TV

LENA (ON SCREEN)

REPORTED

NATIONALLY: 819.5 MILLION BOARDINGS IN 2023. THE FAA PROJECTS 1.3 BILLION BY 2044.

FACT FILE

U.S. passenger enplanements: 819.5 million in 2023 (629.5M in 2010); the FAA projects 1.3 billion by 2044.

Source: ASCE 2025 Report Card, "Aviation"

THE TOWER



THE AUDITOR

15.7 MILLION FLIGHTS CROSSED U.S. AIRSPACE IN 2023. ENGINEERS COUNT A SHORTAGE OF 3,000 AIR TRAFFIC CONTROLLERS.

FACT FILE

15.7 million flights in U.S. airspace in 2023. Air traffic control faces a gap of 3,000 controllers.

Source: ASCE 2025 Report Card, "Aviation"



THE APRON · RAIN

COMMONS

FUELERS, BAG CREWS, MECHANICS, WAND CREWS. EVERY FLIGHT IS A GROUND CREW FIRST.



THE AUDITOR

O'HARE'S OLDEST ACTIVE RUNWAYS DATE TO 1943. THE NEWEST OPENED IN 2020. THE AIRPORT KEEPS REBUILDING WHILE IT FLIES.

FACT FILE

O'Hare has eight active runways; the longest, 10L/28R, is 13,000 ft. The oldest active runways date from 1943; the newest, 9C/27C, opened in 2020.

Source: Chicago Dept. of Aviation, "Facility Data"



GRIDLINE

TERMINALS, RUNWAY LIGHTS AND THE TRAINS HERE ALL RUN ON THE GRID. WHEN PLANES KEEP FLYING, IT'S BECAUSE THE POWER STAYS ON.



DESS

MIDWAY: FOUR RUNWAYS, CLOSER TO DOWNTOWN, THE ORANGE LINE AT THE DOOR.

FACT FILE

Midway has four active runways. The CTA Blue Line reaches O'Hare; the Orange Line reaches Midway.

Source: Chicago Dept. of Aviation, "Facility Data"; CTA, "Facts at a Glance" (Blue/Orange to the airports)

THE FUNDING BOARD



LENA (ON SCREEN)

REPORTED

THE 2021 LAW SENT AIRPORTS \$25 BILLION. ENGINEERS STILL SEE A \$114 BILLION TEN-YEAR GAP.

FACT FILE

The 2021 infrastructure law gave airports \$25 billion over five years; ASCE projects a \$114 billion 10-year funding gap; FAA estimates nearly \$68 billion is needed for 2025–2029 capital projects.

Source: ASCE 2025 Report Card, "Aviation"



WHO OWNS IT

THE AUDITOR

ABOUT 97% OF THE COUNTRY'S MAIN-PLAN AIRPORTS ARE PUBLICLY OWNED. THAT MEANS PUBLIC DECISIONS.

FACT FILE

About 97% (3,193) of the national-plan airports are publicly owned.

Source: ASCE 2025 Report Card, "Aviation"



COMMONS

SOME WANT MORE FLIGHTS AND JOBS. SOME WANT QUIETER SKIES.
BOTH LIVE UNDER THE FLIGHT PATH.



DESS

AIR, RAIL, ROADS: ONE NETWORK. BREAK ONE LINK AND THE WHOLE CITY FEELS IT.



DAWN CLIMB

DESS

NEXT: THE INVISIBLE NETWORK, THE FIBER THAT CARRIES THE
INTERNET.

GOTB Consulting works on the infrastructure and procurement behind projects like these.

BY THE NUMBERS

84.9 MILLION

O'Hare passengers in 2025, up 5.97%. (Chicago Dept. of Aviation)

857,392

O'Hare takeoffs and landings in 2025, up 10.49%. (CDA)

8 RUNWAYS • 13,000 FT

O'Hare's active runways and its longest. Oldest from 1943; newest 2020. (CDA)

15.7 MILLION • 3,000

U.S. flights in 2023; controller shortage. (ASCE 2025)

\$25B • \$114B

2021 law money for airports; 10-year gap engineers see. (ASCE)

97%

Share of national-plan airports that are publicly owned (3,193). (ASCE)

TWO SIDES

The strongest case on each side, labeled. Nonpartisan.

EXPAND

The airport is the region's economic engine: traffic grew 10% in one year. Growth needs runways, gates, controllers and power.

PROTECT THE NEIGHBORS

Growth lands on someone's roof. Ask who measures the noise and who gets a say.

PLAN WITH THE GRID

Terminals, runway lights and the Blue Line share the grid with data centers. Plan the loads together.

WHAT BOTH SHARE

Safe skies, public assets, decisions made in the open.

YOUR TURN

What would you ask before an airport grows? _____

AIRPORT WORDS

AIRCRAFT OPERATION

One takeoff or one landing.

ENPLANEMENT

One passenger boarding a plane.

APRON

Where planes park, fuel and load.

AIRFIELD LIGHTING VAULT

The room that powers runway lights.

NATIONAL PLAN AIRPORT

An airport in the federal plan, eligible for federal grants.

FLIGHT PATH

The route planes fly over the ground.

QUICK QUIZ

1. O'HARE PASSENGERS IN 2025?

a) 8 million b) About 85 million c) 850 million

2. LONGEST O'HARE RUNWAY?

a) 1,300 ft b) 13,000 ft

3. CONTROLLER SHORTAGE, PER ENGINEERS?

a) 30 b) 3,000 c) 300,000

4. SHARE OF NATIONAL-PLAN AIRPORTS PUBLICLY OWNED?

a) About 97% b) About 10%

ANSWERS

1 b · 2 b · 3 b · 4 a

SOURCES

Full list with fact IDs: FACT_BASE.md and NUMBER_CHECK.md (GOTB internal).

CHICAGO DEPT. OF AVIATION

Chicago Dept. of Aviation, "O'Hare Year-To-Date Operations, Passengers, Cargo Summary, As of December 2025" (PDF, dated 04/09/2026)

CHICAGO DEPT. OF AVIATION

Chicago Dept. of Aviation, "Facility Data"

ASCE 2025 REPORT CARD

ASCE 2025 Report Card, "Aviation"

CTA

CTA, "Facts at a Glance" (Blue/Orange to the airports)

ABOUT GOTB CONSULTING

WHO WE ARE

A Chicago firm working on infrastructure and procurement for the systems communities depend on.

DATA CENTERS

Siting, delivery and community questions.

POWER

Grid connections, substations and lines.

WATER

Supply, treatment and cooling.

PUBLIC WORKS

Roads, pipes and public spaces.

THE END



AIR, RAIL, ROADS: ONE NETWORK.

Next time: more from the Infrastructure Guard.

GOTB CONSULTING • CHICAGO

Data centers • Power • Water • Public works

AI-generated art, fictional characters