Amtrak Railroad Station and General Mitchell International Airport Parking Lot

5607 to 5727 South 6th Street, Milwaukee, WI

Milwaukee County

7.8 acres

Location: South side of Milwaukee, adjacent to Mitchell International Airport

A south side Milwaukee property that had served as a salvage yard for decades is turned into an asset for Wisconsin’s largest airport.

History
This 25.2-acre brownfield previously included a park, private residence, and two used auto salvage/parts properties that had been in operation since the 1950s.

Investigation and Cleanup
General Mitchell International Airport (GMIA) began the investigation and acquisition of four properties on the east end of the airport, adjacent to 6th Street, for the development of an Amtrak Railroad Station for direct commuter service to Chicago, as well as additional airport parking.

Each of the properties were purchased and investigated separately and incorporated into a single property for final cleanup activities.

All four sites were investigated for soil and groundwater contamination. The sites had two to six feet of fill material overlying glacial tills and clays. Groundwater ranged from six to 15 feet deep below the surface.

The majority of soil and groundwater contamination consisted of polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons (PAHs) and metals from the salvage and battery dismantling operations.
The two auto salvage sites had more soil sampling due to the visible surface contamination from leaking engines or the storage of dismantled car parts. Another property had a small onsite dump area consisting of empty car battery casings without the interior acid or metal plates.

Remediation of the soil and groundwater consisted of hot spot removal and excavation of 1,183 tons of soil. Monitored natural attenuation, a process allowing natural biodegradation of petroleum contaminants, was chosen as a remedy. An engineered cap for the site consisted of the asphalt parking lot and landscaped areas.

In 1998, following site investigation and remediation, the DNR granted an exemption request to build on an abandoned landfill. In June, 2006, the site received approval for closure from the DNR's Remediation and Redevelopment (RR) Program, and was added to the program's GIS database for closed remediation sites. State requirements with the properties' closure addressed residual soil contamination and maintenance plan for the entire site.

**Redevelopment**
The majority of the site is a long term parking lot for the airport. In 2005 Amtrak built a railroad station at the west end of the parking lot for commuters traveling to and from Chicago.

**Financial, Liability, Technical Assistance**
The project, which involved GMIA and Milwaukee County officials and required technical assistance and oversight from RR Program staff, took 12 years to complete, from the initial investigation to cleanup and final redevelopment of the four properties.

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