

= Milwaukee Airport Railroad Station =

The Milwaukee Airport Railroad Station is an Amtrak railway station which opened for service on January 18 , 2005 . It is located at 5601 South 6th Street , just south of Wisconsin Highway 119 , near the western edge of General Mitchell International Airport in Milwaukee , Wisconsin , United States . The facility accommodates travelers who use the Hiawatha Service between Chicago Union Station and the Milwaukee Intermodal Station , and sees fourteen daily arrivals , seven each from Milwaukee and Chicago . There is a shuttle from the station to the terminal of Mitchell Airport .

= Service and facilities =

The Milwaukee Airport Rail Station 's primary functions are to serve as an airport rail link for General Mitchell International Airport and to serve as an alternate to the downtown Milwaukee station for residents of the southern portions of the Milwaukee metropolitan area . The station is served only by the Amtrak Hiawatha Service , and sees fourteen daily arrivals , seven each from Milwaukee and Chicago Union Station . The station is the first stop en route to Chicago , with a travel time along the 8 @-@ mile (13 @-@ kilometer) section taking 10 minutes . It is also the third stop en route to Milwaukee , with a travel time along the 78 @-@ mile (126 @-@ kilometer) section taking one hour and 14 minutes . For 2008 , the station handled 149 @, @ 824 passengers .

The 1 @, @ 600 @-@ square @-@ foot (150 m²) station includes a Quik @-@ Trak ticket vending machine , restrooms , a seating area and covered walkways to both the drive @-@ up area and the boarding platform . As the station is unstaffed , all tickets from the station need to be pre @-@ paid , purchased from Quik @-@ Trak or on the train from a conductor . The station parking lot contains 300 spaces and costs \$ 5 per day per vehicle . All revenue generated from parking fees is used to finance the station 's operating costs . Transport to and from the airport terminal is provided by the free parking shuttle buses operated by the airport .

= History =

The idea of opening an Amtrak station in the vicinity of Mitchell Airport is one that had been discussed since the mid @-@ 1970s . The justification for not building the station at the time was based on infrequent Amtrak service and relatively congestion @-@ free access to the airport from the south by road . By the late 1990s , a station at the airport was proposed as part of the Midwest Regional Rail Initiative . In June 2001 , the Wisconsin Department of Transportation authorized \$ 100 @, @ 000 to start the preliminary design for the station , with an original opening slated for late @-@ 2003 . Although funding was authorized for preliminary work , funding for actual construction had not been secured .

How to fund construction of the station became an issue following objections from both airport and Milwaukee County officials . Although supported by both airport and local officials , they stated that financing a facility to transport persons primarily away from Milwaukee should not be done with local , but rather state and federal sources . As a result of this sentiment , Senator Herb Kohl requested \$ 5 million for its construction as part of a federal transportation appropriations bill in July , only to see it reduced to \$ 2 @. @ 5 million in the final bill in December . With an additional \$ 4 million in funding secured by Kohl in February 2003 , combined with the \$ 2 @. @ 5 million previously appropriated , construction of the \$ 6 @. @ 5 million station could commence .

Groundbreaking for the facility occurred on June 28 , 2004 . Present at the ceremony was Governor Jim Doyle , Herb Kohl and state Transportation Secretary Frank Busalacchi . Included in its \$ 6 @. @ 8 million budget was funds for both the construction of the station in addition to track improvements to reduce delays between Milwaukee and Chicago . State and local economic development officials saw its construction as an opportunity for travelers from Greater Chicago to use the station as a rail link to reach General Mitchell International Airport as an alternative for both Chicago 's Midway and O 'Hare airports . The station opened for service on January 18 , 2005 , as a regular stop along Amtrak 's Hiawatha Service . At the time of its opening , this became only the

fourth Amtrak station to have direct service to an airport after Baltimore , Newark and Burbank . In January 2006 , the station was awarded an Urban Design Award from Milwaukee mayor Tom Barrett for its design as a " Prairie @-@ style transportation symbol . "

In 2009 , the Wisconsin Department of Transportation proposed adding 400 feet (120 m) to the southern end of the existing 400 @-@ foot (120 m) platform . The station was designed for trains carrying only four coach cars ; however , service has since been expanded to five cars with a sixth being proposed for the future . A six @-@ car train is nearly 700 feet (210 m) long , thus the additional platform space is necessary to accommodate the increased train length for boarding and deboarding passengers .