

Upgrade to Route 59 train station complete



Officials line up for a ribbon-cutting at the Route 59 train station in Aurora Tuesday. (Steve Lord / The Beacon-News)

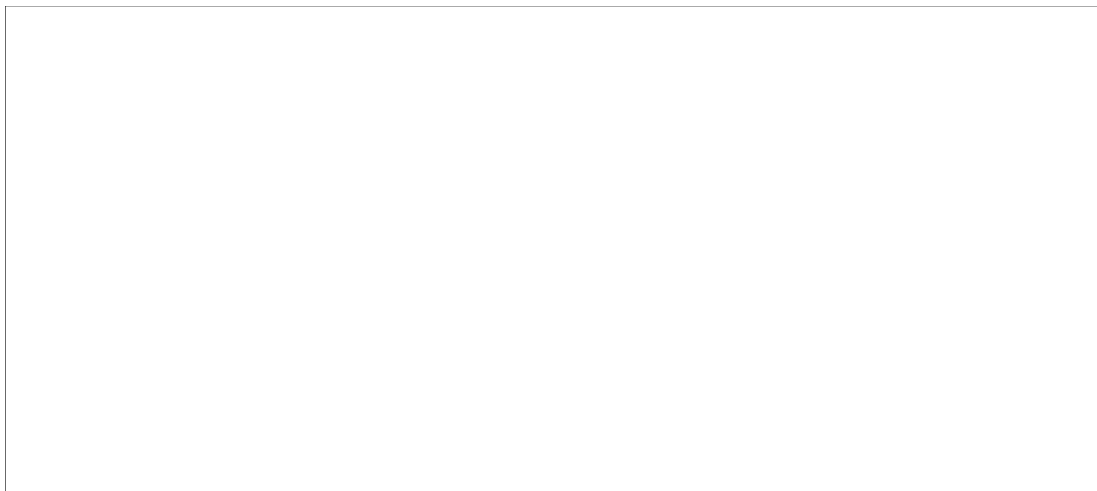
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Aurora Beacon-News

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A 1988 aerial photograph of the area along the [Burlington Northern Santa Fe](#) railroad tracks, just west of Route 59, shows farm fields with no development in sight.

People looking at the photo, part of a display at a ribbon-cutting Tuesday for the Route 59 train station renovation project, marveled that in less than 30 years, the property now contains the busiest train station on the entire [Metra](#) commuter rail system with 6,000 riders on a normal weekday, parking for 2,700 cars and connections to [Pace](#) buses throughout [Aurora](#) and Naperville.

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And it's surrounded by commercial development, and more than 1,400 housing units on the Aurora side between the station and New York Street, where Fox Valley Mall sits.

It prompted former Aurora Mayor Tom Weisner to note that the transit-oriented development between the mall and the station has been a success.

"Think what we've accomplished where commuters can live nicely — with a nice standard of living — near the station that they use," he said.

The ribbon-cutting was to celebrate the finish of the \$4.5 million upgrade of the Route 59 station on the Aurora side — the station area straddles the border with Naperville — that included repaving of the entire lot, the addition of 448 new parking spaces, the total reconfiguring of the lot to make it safe, a new Pace bus pulse point that commuters can reach without crossing traffic, a bridge over Waubonsie Creek and new traffic signals at the entrance to the lot, and new, better lighting.

"It used to be that commuters would have to cross 17 drive points to get to the cars or bike paths," said Ken Schroth, Aurora's public works director.

Officials said the renovation also was an example of what can happen when the federal, state and local government work together, plus organizations such as the [Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning](#), Metra and Pace.

Joe Szabo, Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning director, pointed out that the station and the transit-oriented development dovetails nicely with one of the goals in the group's long-range plan to double ridership on public transportation.

"Without cooperation between lots of different entities, it would not have gotten done," said Aurora Mayor Robert O'Connor.

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