

From the Dallas Business Journal

:<http://www.bizjournals.com/dallas/print-edition/2014/02/28/texpress-nte-projects-move-into-high-gear.html>

SUBSCRIBER CONTENT: Feb 28, 2014, 1:13pm CST

## TEXpress, NTE projects move into high gear



Nicholas Sakelaris

Staff Writer- *Dallas Business Journal*

[Email](#) | [LinkedIn](#) | [Twitter](#) | [Google+](#)

Drivers could be using new TEXpress lanes on the DFW Connector by March, the North Tarrant Express will open to full capacity by the end of 2014 and high-speed trains could be zipping across Texas by 2021.

These were the highlights of the Northeast Tarrant Transportation Summit at the Hurst Conference Center on Feb. 21.

The \$1.2 billion DFW Connector project will officially be completed in March with the opening of four miles of TEXpress, or managed toll lanes, on State Highway 114. The lanes will allow drivers to bypass Grapevine as they head from Southlake to Irving with a minimum guaranteed speed of 50 mph but they will pay a toll that goes up or down based on congestion levels.

The massive NTE project will be finished by the end of year, weather permitting, [Robert Hinkle](#), director of corporate affairs for the NTE project, announced.

The project includes new free lanes and TEXpress lanes on Interstate 820 and State Highway 183/121 from Interstate 35E in North Fort Worth to Industrial Boulevard in Euless.

[Mark Hindman](#), city manager of North Richland Hills, said the constant construction has been a challenge and there will continue to be challenges once the TEXpress lanes open.

"How do you respond to a managed lane incident effectively because you have limited access to get there and that's going to involve a lot of cooperation between the cities? Because it may be in North Richland Hills but the access to that may come from Hurst," Hindman said.

All agreed that they never want to go through this kind of massive highway reconstruction again.

"There's a light at the end of the tunnel for all of these projects and I think that light at the end of the tunnel is a train," Hindman said. "Trains that we need to get building so we're not doing this kind of construction."

The **Texas Central Railway** could take the idea of passenger rail a step farther by building a privately funded bullet train from Dallas to Houston. The 200 mph train could be making the 90-minute trip by 2021, said Robert Eckels, president of the Texas Central Railway.

This train doesn't need government subsidies or taxes to stay on track, Eckels said.

"If it fails, the guys who are at risk are the investors and the bank, not the taxpayers of Dallas County or Tarrant County or the state of Texas," Eckels said.

Nicholas covers the energy and banking beats for the Dallas Business Journal.  
[Subscribe the Energy Inc. newsletter](#)