

Powered by *The Dallas Morning News*

TxDOT engineer who drove a decade of Dallas projects is headed to Austin

85 9 0 Share 0 1 AA

By BRANDON FORMBY

Transportation Writer

bformby@dallasnews.com

Published: 10 August 2014 10:48 PM

Updated: 10 August 2014 10:55 PM

Bill Hale remembers when the neon Pegasus atop the Magnolia Petroleum Building towered over Dallas, before skyscrapers took over downtown. The Samuell High grad also recalls life in South Dallas before Interstate 45 came through, when he drove over to Oak Cliff to visit his girlfriend, who went to Sunset High.

Hale's far from alone when it comes to recounting how Dallas used to look. But as the Texas Department of Transportation's Dallas district engineer, he's among the few who shaped how the city — and all of North Texas — has changed. Now, he's about to have a hand in how every metropolitan area in the state takes shape.

Hale last month was named the state transportation agency's director of engineer operations for metro districts. The title is a mouthful that essentially means Hale will oversee transportation planning in all of the state's big cities.

"You're going from being a player to being a coach," Hale said.

The position is a new one that reflects TxDOT's aim to develop uniform approaches and strategies across the state. A similar position was created for the state's rural areas.

As the head of the Dallas district since 2003, Hale has overseen the planning of some of the biggest highway projects in area history. That includes the ongoing expansions of LBJ Freeway and Interstate 35E and the redo of the Horseshoe, where I-35E and Interstate 30 interchange near downtown.

"He and his team have created some of the best practices in the metroplex that can be helpful in other areas where there's been so much construction and so much interaction with partners at the city level," said Bob Kaufman, a spokesman for the state agency.

His promotion comes at a time when TxDOT is partnering with private developers more frequently to add tolling components to projects to help fund highway renovations and expansions. Agency officials often say that structural shortfalls in state funding require toll lanes to finance construction needed to keep up with the growing region.

TxDOT deputy executive director John Barton said Hale was instrumental in getting construction started on LBJ Freeway's expansion, a thoroughfare known for decades as being consistently congested with traffic. Barton said officials knew for years that lanes needed to be added, but without enough money, plans for the project stalled.

The state paired with a private developer to add managed tolled lanes to finance the rebuilding of the highway's free main lanes. The \$2.7 billion expansion is expected to be complete next year. The first two phases have already opened.

"Bill was a critical part of bringing all those parties together, understanding the unique challenges it represented and coming up with a solution the private sector could embrace and the community could accept," Barton said.

Hale first became interested in engineering during a summer job at Dallas Power and Light. An employee there asked him if he'd ever considered pursuing civil engineering and started showing him the basics of the science.

"I got to liking that element," he said.

Hale had been studying general business at Stephen F. Austin State University but transferred to the University of Texas at Arlington, where he majored in civil engineering. He then got his master's in the same subject. After graduating, he took a job in TxDOT's Ellis County office.

Hale said the physics behind transportation immediately became fascinating.

"When I got in there and started to look at it, I got intrigued," he said.

Hale became the area engineer for southeast Dallas County in 1992, then took over the Abilene district in 1999. In 2003, he was named Dallas' district engineer. His replacement has yet to be made, and he continues to work in his old and new jobs.

With his new position, he'll spend most of his time in Austin. But he's not moving there. Hale says on the weekends, he'll continue commuting back to Abilene, where he lives with his wife, DD.

She's that girl from Oak Cliff he used to drive across town to see.

Follow Brandon Formby on Twitter at @brandonformby

Did you see something wrong in this story, or something missing? [Let us know.](#)

You Might Also Like



Taliban Celebrates Capture Of Special Forces DOG (GND News)



15 Forgotten Actresses From the '90s - Where Are They Now? (Fame10)



The 8 Least Expensive States to Live in the U.S. (Wall Street Cheat Sheet)



Decks You Won't Believe Are Real (Porch: Get Advice)

From the web

[What are the Origins of Your Last Name?](#) Ancestry.com

[The Plants You Shouldn't Plant in Your Yard](#) HouseLogic

[25 Biggest Decorating Mistakes to Avoid](#) HGTV

More from Dallasnews.com

[Gunfire near Plush early Monday morning shatters glass at downtown Dallas restaurant](#) Crime Blog

[Hopes for Israel-Palestine peace raised once again](#) News

[Dallas Maritime Museum's bid for submarine put on hold](#) News

Recommended by

Recommended by

Comments

To post a comment, log into your chosen social network and then add your comment below. Your comments are subject to our [Terms of Service](#) and the privacy policy and terms of service of your social network. If you do not want to comment with a social network, please consider writing a [letter to the editor](#).



Write a comment

1 Comment

Sort Subscribe RSS



Mark Brown

4 hours ago

hope he does to austin what he did to dallas !

Reply Share

0 0

AdChoices