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New Forney bridge set to foster major developments

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Dallas oilman W. Herbert Hunt is building a bridge.

So far his project hasn't attracted nearly as much attention as the one named for his late sister, Margaret Hunt Hill.

But just like that Dallas landmark, Hunt's project — on U.S. Highway 80 east of Dallas — is expected to spur development in a large area.

Forney officials anticipate that construction of the six-lane bridge over U.S. 80 and railroad tracks will open up more than 2,200 acres on the town's east side for development.

Hunt's family investment group is paying more than half the cost of the \$20 million span, which will extend the new Gateway Boulevard to more than 1,400 acres the group owns.

"When we first acquired the property there nine years ago, there wasn't any thought of a bridge," Hunt said. "It was just a good tract of land."

But first you have to get to it. Along with the highway, there's a busy Union Pacific rail line to cross before accessing the area.

"I've been told there are 26 trains a day going down those tracks," Hunt said. "Forney has been a divided city, straddling U.S. 80 as well as the railroad.

"There has been no easy means of getting from one side to the other," he said.

That's changing with construction of the new bridge and 2.2 miles of roadway.

"It's going to open up development on the east side of Forney and give us a new traffic loop," said Kim Buttram, Forney's director of economic development.

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