

Media Contact:

Patti Evans, Communications Manager

Office: (832) 601-7838

e-mail: patti.evans@hctra.com

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

Katy Freeway Managed Lanes to Open for HOV Traffic *New Commuting Option Ready for Drivers Starting October 29th*

HOUSTON – Beginning at 5 a.m. on Wednesday, October 29, 2008, Houston-area drivers will have a new commuting option when the Katy Freeway Managed Lanes open to High Occupancy Vehicle (HOV) users for the first time. The Katy Freeway Managed Lanes will be located in the center of the newly reconstructed Katy Freeway. The managed lanes will replace the single, reversible HOV lane with two dedicated lanes in each direction that will ultimately serve METRO buses, HOV riders and motorcycles, as well as individual drivers willing to pay a toll for greater travel-time reliability.

From October 29, 2008 to Spring 2009, the managed lanes will be open exclusively to HOV users, motorcycles and mass transit vehicles during HOV hours and will be closed at all other times. Once the facility becomes fully operational in Spring 2009, the managed lanes will operate as a dynamically-priced tollway, offering drivers an option to pay for greater travel-time reliability while also offering free service for mass-transit and HOV users during HOV hours. School buses and METRO vehicles will have free access to the managed lanes 24 hours a day.

The Katy Freeway Managed Lanes are the first of their kind in the Harris County region and offer a new approach to easing traffic congestion during peak travel periods by expanding options and roadway capacity for all commuters. As a joint project between the Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT), the Metropolitan Transit Authority (METRO), and the Harris County Toll Road Authority (HCTRA), the twelve-mile facility in the center of Interstate 10 stretches between State Highway (SH) 6 and Interstate Highway (IH) 610 West and is accessible from the main lanes of the Katy Freeway at multiple entrances and exits, as well as the Addicks Park and Ride facility. Work is also being completed to make access available to and from the Northwest Transit Center Park and Ride facility in the coming weeks. The Toll Road Authority is responsible for operating the lanes and will assume management of HOV service in the Katy corridor from METRO.

“The Harris County Toll Road Authority is committed to responsible projects and partnerships to help address transportation challenges in our region,” said Gary Stobb, Director of HCTRA. “Along with TxDOT’s expanded Katy Freeway and METRO’s enhanced Park and Ride service, the managed lanes should create more capacity for HOV and mass-transit operations while offering all commuters more choices for their commute along the Katy corridor.”

Initial Rules of Operation

During the initial phase of operation, which runs October 29, 2008 through Spring 2009, the following rules apply for using the Katy Freeway Managed Lanes:

1. HOV 2+ and motorcycles ride free both eastbound and westbound during normal HOV hours: 5 a.m. – 11 a.m. and 2 p.m. – 8 p.m., Monday through Friday.

2. Katy Freeway Managed Lanes will be open exclusively to HOV riders, motorcycles, and buses. Carpool access will be limited to normal HOV hours, while school buses and METRO buses may access the facility 24 hours a day. The managed lanes will not be open to any other traffic until a capacity determination has been made.

In Spring 2009, the managed lanes will open to toll users and become a 24-hour a day facility, once a determination of capacity is made and toll rates have been set by Harris County Commissioners Court, the Toll Road Authority's governing body.

Toll rates will be set dynamically when the Katy Freeway Managed Lanes reach full operations in the Spring, meaning the cost to use the lanes will fluctuate based on traffic conditions in order to maintain a minimum speed of 45 miles per hour in the lanes.

A joint project of TxDOT, METRO, and Harris County Toll Road Authority, the Katy Freeway Managed Lanes are an integral part of the newly expanded Katy Freeway. Thanks to HCTRA's \$250 million contribution, Katy Freeway construction was completed in half the expected time.

For further details and information regarding the Katy Freeway Managed Lanes visit www.hctra.org.

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