

HCTRA UPDATES



Harris County drivers to save at the toll booth with new EZTag reductions

Houston Chronicle

January 31, 2023

<https://www.houstonchronicle.com/news/houston-texas/transportation/article/harris-county-eztag-tolls-drop-10-percent-17752006.php>

New policy streamlines costs for transponders and those billed by license plate, adds 10 percent break for those with HCTRA-supplied tag.

Harris County to cut EZTag tolls by 10 percent, starting this fall

Houston Chronicle

January 26, 2023

<https://www.houstonchronicle.com/news/houston-texas/transportation/article/harris-county-tolls-decrease-hctra-eztag-17738171.php>

Set for approval Jan. 31 by Harris County Commissioners Court, the planned rate adjustment for the Harris County Toll Road Authority would, for the first time, drop the price at dozens of tolling points along the HCTRA system.

Houston traffic: Weekend road closures from 1/28 - 1/30

FOX26

January 26, 2023

<https://www.fox26houston.com/news/houston-traffic-weekend-road-closures-from-1-28-1-30>

The Harris County Toll Road also said there will be major road closures for this weekend from Saturday at 9 p.m. until Sunday at 5 p.m.

Proposed policy change could make toll roads cheaper for drivers in Houston area

Houston Public Media

January 25, 2023

<https://www.houstonpublicmedia.org/articles/news/transportation/2023/01/25/442322/proposed-policy-change-could-make-toll-roads-cheaper-for-drivers-in-houston-area/>

Commissioners Rodney Ellis and Adrian Garcia proposed a policy change that will reduce local toll-rate for the first time by about 10%.

Commissioners propose new 'equitable, affordable' policy to save Harris County toll road drivers money

KPRC

January 24, 2023. Updated January 27, 2023

<https://www.click2houston.com/news/local/2023/01/24/watch-live-harris-county-commissioners-announce-new-hctra-toll-policy-to-save-drivers-money/>

Harris County commissioners Rodney Ellis and Adrian Garcia, along with Harris County Toll Road Director Roberto Trevino, announced a new proposal Tuesday aimed at helping local drivers feel less burn due to the hike in inflation. Officials said the county will soon be cutting toll rates by 10 percent. "Transportation is not a luxury; it is a necessity."

Changes proposed for toll roads in Harris County; what are they?

FOX 26 Houston

January 25, 2023

<https://www.fox26houston.com/video/1171219>

Changes have been proposed for the toll roads in Harris County.

New Harris County Precinct 4 commissioner Lesley Briones targets 'bold, innovative' approach to governance

Community Impact

January 23, 2023

<https://communityimpact.com/houston/katy/government/2023/01/23/new-harris-county-precinct-4-commissioner-lesley-briones-targets-bold-innovative-approach-to-governance/>

Briones outlined public safety, infrastructure and flood control as her top priorities, saying she wants to take a "deep dive" into all three. "We're the third-largest county [in the country], and we are not leading with regard to our infrastructure broadly, but certainly with regard to mobility," Briones said. "So looking at mobility from an environmental standpoint, from a physical, mental health standpoint and ... working with [the Harris County Toll Road Authority]... to improve connectivity."

SOCIAL MEDIA

- This week on Twitter, SMPS Houston [announced](#) HCTRA is Client of the Year.
- On Jan 24, HCTRA [posted](#) about a traffic alert, with a photo about a vehicle crash with HazMat spill, it received over 1,200 views.

- Harris County Commissioner Rodney Ellis, [commented](#) on ABC13 story about HCTRA proposing to cut toll rates by 10%, and wrote, "There are people who live in every precinct in Harris County who many times have no choice but to take a toll road to get to where they're going. This will make it a little bit easier for all of them, and reduce barriers to access."
- Ellis also [tweeted](#), "This is the first time in the history of our toll road that we are approving a toll rate discount for our customers."



DUG BEGLEY COVERAGE



The cost to drive on Harris County toll roads will drop in September, if you use EZ tag

Houston Chronicle

February 1, 2023

<https://www.houstonchronicle.com/news/houston-texas/transportation/article/harris-county-eztag-tolls-drop-10-percent-17752006.php>

Drivers who use Harris County toll roads will see a rollback in their costs, starting this fall. Harris Commissioners Court on Tuesday approved a 10 percent reduction in toll fees for most drivers, establishing a new rate system as the Harris County Toll Road Authority continues its transition to all-electronic tolling and aims to convince more drivers to get EZTags.

Harris County to cut EZTag tolls by 10 percent, starting this fall

Houston Chronicle

January 25, 2023

<https://www.houstonchronicle.com/news/houston-texas/transportation/article/harris-county-tolls-decrease-hctra-eztag-17738171.php>

The daily commute for tens of thousands of drivers in Harris County could get a little cheaper after Labor Day, if officials can finalize a planned 10 percent decrease in toll rates announced Tuesday.

One [commenter](#) directed a tweet to @DugBegley and @HCTRA,

"Wouldn't be equally as important to drop METRO prices 10% as well? I mean... The quote from Commissioners Ellis and Ramsey would indicate that they both share the idea that "transportation is not a luxury; it is a necessity." And that people are "feeling the pinch."



Struggling Houston bike sharing system will be integrated into Metro operations

January 26, 2023

Houston Chronicle

<https://www.houstonchronicle.com/news/houston-texas/transportation/article/bike-share-houston-metro-transit-bikehouston-17744012.php>

Houston's bike sharing system, which struggled in affording to maintain its growing system of docked bicycles mostly within Loop 610, got a boost Thursday when Metro officials approved folding the system into its own operations.

Southbound I-45 closed at Crosstimbers this weekend. Drivers to be rerouted to Loop 610, TxDOT says

Houston Chronicle

January 26, 2023

<https://www.houstonchronicle.com/news/houston-texas/transportation/article/houston-highway-closed-weekend-reroute-loop-17744406.php>

Roadway repairs along southbound Interstate 45 will detour drivers onto Loop 610 in Independence Heights this weekend, according to the Texas Department of Transportation.

TEXAS TRANSPORTATION TRENDS

In brief: HCTRA proposes to cut toll rates by 10%, offer EZ tags at no cost. An old bus station for sale could transform the area between Houston's Midtown and Downtown. CTRMA Launches MoPac Auxiliary And Merge Lanes Project Next Week. Biggest loop in America is about to get wider before it's even completed. Every Year, DFW Commuters Spend More Time in Rush Hour Traffic Than Average Americans. Tesla's Huge Expansion Plans At Giga Texas. Audio from SH 99 plane crash revealed. Largemouth Bass Conservation License Plate Celebrates 20 Years of Conservation Milestones.



Harris County Commissioners approve new toll-road discount for drivers

Fox26

January 31, 2023

<https://www.fox26houston.com/news/harris-county-commissioners-approve-new-toll-road-discount-for-drivers>

By Labor Day, 2023, non-commercial two-axle vehicles with an EZ TAG will receive a ten percent discount on all transactions on HCTRA roads.

Harris Co. toll roads about to be 15 cents cheaper after officials agreed to help out commuters

ABC13

February 1, 2023

<https://abc13.com/harris-county-commissioners-court-toll-road-price-houston-drop-payments/12755652/>

During Tuesday's Harris County Commissioners Court meeting, one item that got everyone's support was giving drivers a discount on the toll road. Commissioners approved reducing the amount you pay on the toll road. Instead of \$1.50, it'll be reduced to \$1.35.

HCTRA proposes to cut toll rates by 10%, offer EZ tags at no cost

ABC13

January 27, 2023

<https://abc13.com/harris-county-toll-road-authority-houston-traffic-hctra-tolls-pricing/12741903/>

Harris County Commissioners will vote next week on a proposal that would make local toll roads cheaper. The proposed plan says toll road prices would be cut by 10% and EZ tags would be free permanently with up to eight free tags per household.

"Not good": SH 99 plane crash audio revealed

Houston Chronicle

January 23, 2023

<https://www.houstonchronicle.com/news/houston-texas/article/grand-parkway-plane-crash-17736188.php>

Traffic camera footage of SH 99 shows a small plane crash. Surveyor was pilot of plane that crashed on Grand Parkway. [Also this month, a 'plane makes emergency landing on interstate in Knoxville, Tennessee.,' via [CNN](#)]

Biggest loop in America is about to get wider before it's even completed

KHOU

January 26, 2023

<https://www.khou.com/article/traffic/grand-parkway-expansion/285-bcef481d-87e3-482e-9f0c-6ea172a364da>

The Grand Parkway isn't even a complete loop yet and the Texas Department of Transportation is already in a position to widen it. TxDOT has gradually opened new segments of the tollway over the last few years.

An old bus station for sale could transform the area between Houston's Midtown and Downtown

Houston Public Media

January 25, 2023

<https://www.houstonpublicmedia.org/articles/infrastructure/2023/01/25/442271/an-old-bus-station-for-sale-could-transform-the-area-between-houstons-midtown-and-downtown/>

A 1.44 acre tract known as the Greyhound Bus Station site in Midtown is now being promoted as an opportunity to completely change the face of Midtown.

North Texas roadway authorities, cities prepare for winter weather on Tuesday

CBS News

January 23, 2023

<https://www.cbsnews.com/dfw/news/north-texas-roadway-authorities-cities-prepare-for-winter-weather-on-tuesday/>

The winter weather could impact travel on Tuesday, with cold rain during the morning commute and the potential for snow on the drive home. TxDOT crews across North Texas spent all day Monday pre-treating roadways with brine, specifically targeting on bridges and roadways.

CTRMA Launches MoPac Auxiliary And Merge Lanes Project Next Week

Community Impact

January 26, 2023

<https://communityimpact.com/austin/northwest-austin/government/2023/01/25/ctrma-projects-across-austin-on-track-for-completion-for-183-north-mopac/>

Updates from the Central Texas Regional Mobility Authority's key highway projects in Austin show construction work is generally on track with expected lags and accelerations where possible.

What the Tech?: Blur your home on Google Maps

tylerpaper.com

January 24, 2023

https://tylerpaper.com/news/texas/what-the-tech-blur-your-home-on-google-maps/article_ae611607-4eb5-5719-af1e-a3ce75f74faa.html

You may have thought it was pretty cool at first. Seeing your house on Google Maps and Google Earth. Now, it's kind of creepy. And putting pictures of private residences online for anyone in the world to see, has reportedly put some people in danger, here is how to blur it.

Texas Is Actually One Of The Best States To Drive In & Your Bad Driver Opinions Might Be Wrong

Narcity

January 24, 2023

<https://www.narcity.com/austin/texas-one-of-best-states-to-drive-in-bad-driver-opinions-wrong>

The entire Lone Star State has quite a notorious reputation when it comes to how we drive. Our welcome signs remind us to "drive friendly, the Texas way," but so many situations we face on the road lead us to believe differently, and social media users have a lot to say about it.

Tesla's Huge Expansion Plans At Giga Texas

CleanTechnica

January 23, 2023

<https://cleantechnica.com/2023/01/21/teslas-huge-expansion-plans-at-giga-texas/>

Tesla has been looking to expand Gigafactory Texas since its opening, but the scope of the electric vehicle automaker's plans hasn't been exactly clear. Now, Tesla has filed official documents for multiple expansion projects, set to yield huge increases to production capacity, surface area and the reach of the factory's various projects.

Every Year, DFW Commuters Spend More Time in Rush Hour Traffic Than Average Americans

Dallas Observer

January 23, 2023

<https://www.dallasobserver.com/news/dfw-commuters-spend-more-time-in-rush-hour-traffic-than-average-american-15754825>

Commuters, not just those heading to and from work, 92% use private transportation. There have been efforts in North Texas in recent years to help clear the roads during peak hours.

Largemouth Bass Conservation License Plate Celebrates 20 Years of Conservation Milestones

Texas Parks and Wildlife News Release

January 24, 2023

<https://tpwd.texas.gov/newsmedia/releases/?req=20230124c>

Since 2000, the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department's Conservation License Plate Program has helped generate funds to support state parks, outdoor recreation, wildlife management and research, and conservation projects in Texas.

'Cagers,' 'squids,' alcohol and high speeds: Bikers talk about why motorcycle deaths are up in Houston

Houston Chronicle

January 30, 2023

<https://www.houstonchronicle.com/news/houston-texas/transportation/article/motorcycle-deaths-in-texas-rise-17714074.php>

Perhaps it is the cagers, or maybe it is the squid out on a time trial. It could be a loner or weekender that has too much lump. Whatever anyone wants to call it – and riding is riddled with lingo – more motorcyclists are dying on Texas roads.'

A Tremendous Year for Port Houston

Press Release/ Business Wire

January 31, 2023

<https://www.businesswire.com/news/home/20230131005749/en/A-Tremendous-Year-for-Port-Houston>

The Port Commission of the Port of Houston Authority met for its first regular meeting of the year on Thursday, January 26. Port Chairman Ric Campo opened the meeting by praising employees, partners, and stakeholders for achieving the highest general cargo volume in the history of Port Houston – 55 million tons in 2022 – marking tremendous growth for the eight public terminals serving the region.

Mayor Sylvester Turner and Houston Leaders Tour Toshiba's Advanced Manufacturing Campus to Boost Energy Transition Initiative

Business Wire

January 30, 2023

<https://www.businesswire.com/news/home/20230130005170/en/Mayor-Sylvester-Turner-and-Houston-Leaders-Tour-Toshiba's-Advanced-Manufacturing-Campus-to-Boost-Energy-Transition-Initiative>

The City of Houston's Mayor Sylvester Turner, along with Greater Houston Partnership CEO Bob Harvey and Consul General Hirofumi Murabayashi, will tour Toshiba International Corporation's manufacturing campus in Northwest Houston today as part of a larger effort to progress the Houston Energy Transition Initiative.

Houston Metro and Lone Star college launch new pilot service for Lone Star College-Houston North Fallbrook campus

Mass Transit

January 30, 2023

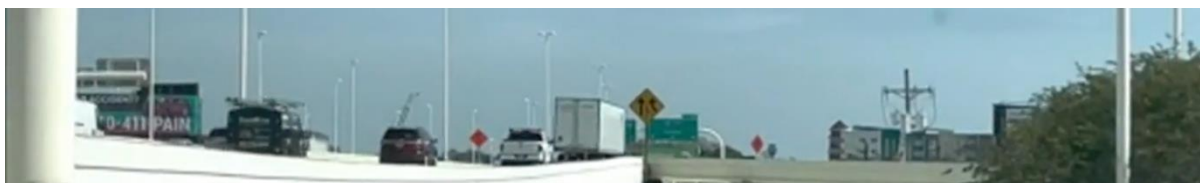
<https://www.masstransitmag.com/bus/press-release/21294024/metropolitan-transit-authority-of-harris-county-metro-houston-metro-and-lone-star-college-launch-new-pilot-service-for-lone-star-collegehouston-north-fallbrook-campus>

The Lone Star Connector runs six and a half miles near the campus, improving student's and faculty's commute and providing important connections to three local bus routes.

- On Jan 31, Port Bureau [tweeted](#), David Grzebinski Selected as the Port Bureau's 2023 Maritime Leader of the Year. David Grzebinski, President & CEO, Kirby Corporation will be honored at the 94th Maritime Dinner on 8.26.23 for his commitment to improving the Houston port region. Details: <http://txgulf.org/events>
- "Our freeways are like driving in a george miller movie"
On January 30, on Reddit a [post](#) asked, "Is anyone else planning to leave Texas? If so, where do you plan on going and what caused the decision to leave?" It received 900 comments. Another commenter said, "Traffic influenced my move to Houston. I was living in DC and it's ten times worse there."
https://www.reddit.com/r/houston/comments/10odork/is_anyone_else_planning_to_leave_texas_if_so/

NATIONAL TOLLING AND TRANSPORTATION NEWS

In brief: California Supreme Court Upholds 2018 Referendum Approving Bridge Toll Hikes. Bills In Five States Propose Highway Speed Limit Increase. Oregon DOT Has "Spicy Exchanges" With State Lawmakers Over Tolling. Buttigieg Visits Golden Gate Bridge To Celebrate Seismic Retrofit Grant. Fla. Low-cost tiny electric cars could be the next big thing. Brookings Report Spotlights Ways To Use IIJA Funding For Workforce Development. California accounted for 40% of U.S. zero-emission vehicle sales in 2022. Ecotoll is now available in Texas, Kansas, and Oklahoma.



FDOT plans public meetings before I-275, I-4 interchange construction

CBS News

January 22, 2023

<https://www.cbsnews.com/tampa/video/fdot-plans-public-meetings-before-i-275-i-4-interchange-construction/>

FDOT plans public meetings before I-275, I-4 interchange construction

Secret Sauce? Public Works department treats bridges and overpasses with a brine and beet solution

Oklahoma City Sentinel

January 22, 2023

https://www.city-sentinel.com/community/secret-sauce-public-works-department-treats-bridges-and-overpasses-with-a-brine-and-beet-solution/article_42c89982-9ab3-11ed-806d-a35a37726446.html

Oklahoma City's Public Works Department treated 11 bridges and overpasses with a brine and beet solution on Sunday morning. Beet juice is used with salt in cities like Calgary, Washington, D.C. and Cincinnati.

And, neighbors to the north -- specifically, the Kansas Department of Transportation -- have used the tactic to counter bridge icing problems for almost a decade.

Michigan rejected 21000+ vanity license plates for being offensive

Detroit Metro Times

January 24, 2023

<https://www.metrotimes.com/news/michigan-rejected-21000-vanity-license-plates-for-being-offensive-32183693>

'BONER4U,' 'EFTRUMP,' and 'F1STM3' are among the vanity plate requests rejected by the state.

California Supreme Court Upholds 2018 Referendum Approving Bridge Toll Hikes

San Francisco Chronicle

January 25, 2023

<https://www.sfchronicle.com/bayarea/article/california-supreme-court-rejects-lawsuit-against-17742422.php>

The California Supreme Court dismissed a lawsuit that challenged a 2018 ballot measure aiming to raise billions of dollars for transit and highway projects through toll hikes at seven state-owned Bay Area bridges.

Oregon DOT Has "Spicy Exchanges" With State Lawmakers Over Tolling

BikePortland

January 23, 2023

<https://bikeportland.org/2023/01/23/spicy-exchanges-with-lawmakers-portend-challenges-for-odot-toll-program-369586>

At the first two meetings of the [Joint Committee on Transportation](#) in the Oregon legislature last week we learned how key lawmakers feel and how high the stakes are for a program that hopes to begin charging tolls for driving trips for the first time ever by the end of next year.

Buttigieg Visits Golden Gate Bridge To Celebrate Seismic Retrofit Grant

CBS BAY AREA

January 23, 2023

<https://www.cbsnews.com/sanfrancisco/news/golden-gate-bridge-400m-grant-leaders-celebrate-biden-infrastructure-law/>

Buttigieg and Pelosi join Mayor Breed to praise the famed span and give thanks for the federal funds granted for seismic reinforcements.

Bills In Five States Propose Highway Speed Limit Increase

Landline

January 27, 2023

<https://landline.media/bills-in-five-states-call-for-speed-limit-changes/>

Pursuit underway at statehouses around the country would revise speed limit rules. Bills introduced include the elimination of speed limit differentials for cars and trucks, and increased speeds for all vehicles. The Owner-Operator Independent Drivers Association says roadways are safest when all vehicles are allowed to travel at the same rate of speed. The Association does not advocate for a specific speed limit.

Low-cost tiny electric cars like these could be the next big thing

Electrek

January 23, 2023

<https://electrek.co/2023/01/23/low-cost-tiny-electric-cars-lsv-nev/>

It's true that prices for many leading full-size electric cars have dropped slightly in the last few months. But even a \$50,000 Tesla is still much harder to afford than an electric micro-car that can cost a quarter of the price. Those smaller electric tiny cars, NEVs, and LSVs also come with big advantages over their full-size cousins, saving more than just cash.

California accounted for 40% of U.S. zero-emission vehicle sales in 2022

Reuters

January 25, 2023

<https://www.reuters.com/business/autos-transportation/california-accounted-40-us-zero-emission-vehicle-sales-2022-2023-01-23/>

In 2022, California sold 40% of all zero-emission vehicles in the United States. Electric, hydrogen-powered, or plug-in hybrid vehicles (PHEVs) are considered zero-emissions vehicles (ZEVs), and automakers sold 345,818 of them in California in 2022. Which represents an increase of 138% over 2020 and 38% over 2021.

New US Department of Transportation tool will help customers get canceled flight refunds

WOWK TV

January 21, 2023

<https://www.wowktv.com/news/u-s-world/new-us-department-of-transportation-tool-will-help-customers-get-canceled-flight-refunds/>

The Airline Customer Service Dashboard is located on the department's Aviation Consumer Protection website. It's designed to keep you informed on the services and amenities that each of the 10 major airlines provides to customers, based on controllable delays or cancellations – essentially, a delay or cancellation caused by the airline due to things like maintenance or crew problems, baggage loading, or fueling.

<https://www.transportation.gov/airconsumer/airline-customer-service-dashboard>

SPECIAL REPORT: EMEA Toll Roads - Peer Review 2022

Fitch Ratings

January 23, 2023

<https://www.fitchratings.com/research/infrastructure-project-finance/emea-toll-roads-peer-review-2022-23-01-2023>

Traffic resilience, debt protections and leverage in context of the asset remaining life, drive the ratings and explain differences in Fitch Ratings' EMEA toll roads peer group.

Ecotoll is now available in Texas, Kansas, and Oklahoma

EIN PRESSWIRE

January 20, 2023

<https://www.khon2.com/business/press-releases/ein-presswire/612337370/ecotoll-is-now-available-in-texas-kansas-and-oklahoma/>

The tolling app now offers its pay-as-you-go toll payment solution when driving through toll roads and bridges in these three states.

Brookings Report Spotlights Ways To Use IIJA Funding For Workforce Development

Brookings

January 19, 2023

<https://www.brookings.edu/research/how-state-and-local-leaders-can-harness-new-infrastructure-funding-to-build-a-stronger-more-inclusive-workforce/>

How state and local leaders can harness new infrastructure funding to build a stronger, more inclusive workforce.

Fla. Toll road extension project to begin in 2024

WESH-TV (Orlando, Fla.)

January 23, 2023

<https://www.wesh.com/article/poinciana-parkway-extension/42625235>

The project to extend Florida's Poinciana Parkway by three miles will begin in mid-2024 and will be separated into two segments. The extension is part of a larger plan to improve traffic flow and reduce emergency evacuation times across southern Osceola County.

Fla. Considers EV fee to offset gas tax

Fox Business

January 30, 2023

<https://www.foxbusiness.com/politics/florida-senate-weighs-tax-hike-ev-owners>

Florida legislators are considering a tax for EV owners to offset the loss of gas tax revenue. Florida is one of 30 states considering some type of EV fee.

Bay Area bridge toll increases finally approved at end of long litigation

RWC Pulse

January 30, 2023

<https://www.rwcpulse.com/local-news/transportation/bay-area-bridge-toll-increases-finally-approved-at-end-of-long-litigation-6459777>

A pot of \$545 million destined for new projects in the Bay Area may soon be released from escrow after litigation over a 2018 ballot measure on bridge toll increases finally comes to an end.

US House Transportation Committee Schedules New Session's First Hearing

February 1, 2023

<https://www.congress.gov/event/118th-congress/house-event/115262?s=1&r=9>

The Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure will hold its Organizational Meeting on Wednesday, February 1, 2023, at 9:30 a.m. ET, in Room 2167 of the Rayburn House Office Building. Immediately following the Organizational Meeting, the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure will hold a hearing titled, "The State of Transportation Infrastructure and Supply Chain Challenges" on Wednesday, February 1, 2023, in Room 2167 of the Rayburn House Office Building.

More EV Charging stations coming to Ohio Turnpike

WFMJ-TV

January 30, 2021

<https://www.wfmj.com/story/48260829/ev-chargers-planned-for-turnpike-service-plazas-in-mahoning-county>

Four service plazas along the Ohio Turnpike will have a total of seven new electric vehicle charging stations installed, according to an Ohio Turnpike and Infrastructure Commission announcement. The new charging stations will join the Electrify America and Tesla Supercharger stations already installed along the turnpike.