# Harris County Toll Road Authority (HCTRA) Projects and Plans

John C. Tyler, P.E.
Deputy Director
Harris County Toll Road Authority
Houston, Texas.

## 1. Introduction

HCTRA opened the first tollway in 1988 and has been expanding the system ever since. Users began paying tolls with cash, tokens were introduced, and more recently electronic tags. HCTRA currently has approximately 2.6 million EZ Tag accounts with over 3.6 million tags on vehicles. The tollway system is about 130 centerline miles and provides mobility options throughout the Houston-Harris County region.

## 2. Recent Improvements

HCTRA continues construction of several projects to improve mobility in our region. Widening of the Sam Houston Tollway continues from IH 45 to IH 10 on the east side, including the Ship Channel Bridge project. The required grade separations for the Hardy Downtown connector continue with on-going construction of the Lorraine underpass. The final grade separation at Quitman will begin construction early next year. The pandemic forced the removal of cash for toll payments from the system. HCTRA has and will continue to provide alternatives for customers to use the facility.

## 3. Capital Improvement Projects (CIP)

The new CIP for 2021 will be submitted to court soon and if accepted will account for approximately $1.7 billion of system improvements. HCTRA's plan includes continuing the construction of a new crossing of the Houston Ship Channel. The Hardy Toll Road connection into downtown continues to move forward with the construction of the Lorraine underpass. The last grade separation at Quitman is scheduled to begin construction in early 2022. HCTRA has begun design of interchanges at the Sam Houston Tollway and SH 225 and the Hardy Toll Road and Sam Houston Parkway. Construction has begun on the interchange of the Tomball Tollway and Grand Parkway, using a structural system of precast concrete curved girder units. HCTRA is in final design of two EZ TAG stores to replace existing leased facilities on the east side of town.

## 4. Conclusion