Harris County Metro

HOV Lanes

January 2006
### Table of Contents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Basic Information</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IH-45 North/North Freeway</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>US 59 North/Eastex Freeway</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IH-45 South/Gulf Freeway</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>US 59 South/Southwest Freeway</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IH-10 West/Katy Freeway</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>US 290 North/Northwest Freeway</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Information compiled from Harris County Metro online maps, available at http://www.ridemetro.org/services/hovsystem.asp. Document produced 14 January 2006. Construction is currently underway on multiple HOV lanes, and as such, this document will not remain accurate as new entrance and exit ramps are built. Continue to check with Harris County Metro for the most up-to-date information.
Basic Information

Recognized as the leading network of its kind in the world, METRO's High Occupancy Vehicle (HOV) lane network continues to move commuters where they need to go quickly and efficiently. Built primarily for buses, the HOV also promotes ridesharing through vanpools and carpools, which reduce traffic congestion and provide cleaner, healthier air throughout the region.

Physically located in the center of most major freeways, HOV lanes typically are barrier-separated roadways that allow buses, vanpools and carpools to move higher volumes of passengers to and from Downtown and locations in between.

- METRO's HOV lanes facilitate almost 118,000 person trips each weekday, serving about 36,400 vehicle trips that would otherwise continue traveling the main lanes.
- The average rush-hour speed on Houston freeways is roughly 24 miles per hour. HOV lanes maintain an operating speed of roughly 50-55 miles per hour, hence saving the average commuter 12 to 22 minutes per trip.
- Our HOV network is so efficient that it would take as many as 24 freeway lanes combined to equal the amount of rush-hour passengers traveling the HOV lane network.

METRO operates and maintains HOV lanes on six of Houston's major freeway corridors to serve the eight-county region. METRO currently operates a total of 112.9 miles of HOV lanes of a planned 115-mile HOV lane network:

- I-45 North (North Freeway)
- U.S. 59 North (Eastex Freeway)
- I-45 South (Gulf Freeway)
- U.S. 59 South (Southwest Freeway)
- I-10 West (Katy Freeway)
- U.S. 290 West (Northwest Freeway)

A 2.1-mile addition to the Southwest HOV lane is under construction.

Diamond Lanes

The Katy Diamond Lanes operate the same as the other HOV lanes with one exception - no outside barrier. In its place are two distinctive stripes, which help guide commuters to their destination quickly and easily while warning mainstream traffic against entering the restricted lanes. There are only three points of legal entry.

Use of HOV Network

METRO's HOV network is open to buses, vanpools, carpools and motorcycles. Simply observe the occupancy requirements, rules of the road and hours of operation.

Vehicles Not Allowed on HOV Lanes

1. Single Occupant Vehicles. (Periodically, METRO allows cars with a single occupant on a portion of the HOV network. These temporary exceptions will be posted at the appropriate Park & Ride lots.)
2. Vehicles towing trailers of any sort.
3. Trucks with more than two axles or a gross weight capacity of one ton or greater.
**Inbound vs. Outbound**

HOV lanes move morning rush-hour traffic inbound toward Downtown, Monday-Friday. During afternoon and evening rush hours the HOV lanes reverse, moving traffic outbound away from Downtown. There are two exceptions which allow traffic to travel both inbound and outbound.

- US 290 HOV lane between Northwest Transit Center and Dacoma is open to two way traffic from 5-11 a.m. and 2-8 p.m. weekdays. For a visual reference see the US 290 #2 & #3 ramp details on the map.
- Katy/Downtown HOV lane, elevated over I-10 West just outside of Downtown, between I-10 West Studemont exit and Franklin at I-45 South is open to two-way traffic from 5 a.m. - 8 p.m. weekdays.

**Access Ramps to HOV Lane**

Strategically placed ramps along the lanes allow drivers to enter or exit the HOV from Park & Ride lots, Transit Centers or from mainstream traffic. One-way ramps operate as an entrance in the morning and exit in the evening. Two-way ramps are both entrance and exit, mornings and evenings. Pay attention to directional signs to follow traffic flow. Cross ramps are designed to allow access to/from both sides of the freeway. Pay attention to directional signs to follow traffic flow. Slip ramps allow you to merge into or out of freeway traffic. Most HOV lanes start/end with this type of ramp.

Signs leading to the entrance of an HOV lane or Park & Ride lot (left) are typically posted within two miles of the actual lane or access ramp. The "trailblazer" signs provide direction, and depending on the level of direction needed may also include two additional signs. The top sign is added to direct you to the access ramp at a Park & Ride or Transit Center facility. The bottom sign is added to show direction.

The signs shown to the right are found in and around METRO's Park & Ride lots, Transit Centers and along the freeways. They identify the HOV lane as an access point as well as provide directional information.
### Lanes, Schedule & Occupancy Requirements

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Freeway</th>
<th>Mon.–Fri.</th>
<th>Inbound</th>
<th>Outbound</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I-45 North</td>
<td>5-11 a.m.</td>
<td>2+</td>
<td>2+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North Freeway</td>
<td>2-8 p.m.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>US 59 North</td>
<td>5-11 a.m.</td>
<td>2+</td>
<td>2+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eastex Freeway</td>
<td>2-8 p.m.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I-45 South</td>
<td>5-11 a.m.</td>
<td>2+</td>
<td>2+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gulf Freeway</td>
<td>2-8 p.m.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>US 59 South</td>
<td>5-11 a.m.</td>
<td>2+</td>
<td>2+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Southwest Freeway</td>
<td>2-8 p.m.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I-10 West</td>
<td>5-6:45 a.m.</td>
<td>2+</td>
<td>3+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Katy Freeway</td>
<td></td>
<td>8 a.m. - Noon</td>
<td>2+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1-5 p.m.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>5-6 p.m.</td>
<td>3+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>6-8 p.m.</td>
<td>2+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Saturday</td>
<td>5 a.m.-8 p.m.</td>
<td>Outbound 2+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sunday</td>
<td>5 a.m.-8 p.m.</td>
<td>Inbound 2+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>US 290 West</td>
<td>5-6:45 a.m.</td>
<td>2+</td>
<td>3+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northwest Freeway</td>
<td></td>
<td>6:45-8 a.m.</td>
<td>2+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>8-11 a.m.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2-8 p.m.</td>
<td>Outbound 2+</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**QuickRide**

During Peak rush hours, some HOV lanes raise the minimum requirements to 3+ passengers. QuickRide is a program that allows commuters with less than three passengers to continue driving the HOV during these times for just $2 each way. Times vary per freeway, and registration is required. For more information on QuickRide, call 713-224-RIDE, 1-888-606-RIDE (toll free) or send your e-mail to rideshare@ridemetro.org

**HOV Safety**

The HOV network was designed and built as a high-speed lane for mass transit buses and vanpools. Carpools were included to increase efficiency. These lanes are at least 19 feet, 6 inches wide, which is sufficient clearance for buses to pass when one has pulled over to the right. If you experience mechanical problems while in an HOV lane, please follow these guidelines:

1. Exit the first available ramp. Avoid stopping in the lane if possible.
2. If you cannot make it to an exit ramp, pull over to the right as far as possible. Leave as much clearance as possible for traffic to pass. If you are passing traffic, slow down.
3. Turn on your emergency flashers.
4. If you have a phone, call METRO Police at 713-224-2677.

**Hero Hotline**

Motorists play an important part in monitoring the HOV lanes for proper use. Drivers are asked to report HOV lane violations such as insufficient occupancy, speeding or improper passing by calling the HERO Hotline at 713-921-HERO (4376). When calling, include the vehicle license plate number, vehicle description, date, location and time the violation occurred. All calls are confidential and violators will be mailed information regarding the proper use of the HOV lanes.
IH-45 North/North Freeway

AM HOV traffic moves in the direction of Downtown Houston. PM direction is away from Downtown Houston. As you enter a HOV ramp keep traffic direction in mind, then simply follow the direction signs and speed limits.

This map is an overview of HOV entrance/exit ramp locations. For a detail of each ramp, go to the page listed below. KeyMaps are listed in parenthesis.

1. A.M. @ Milam, P.M. @ Travis (493-L) – Page 7
2. A.M. @ Smith, P.M. @ Louisiana (493-L) – Page 7
3. I-45/I-10W (493-G) – Page 8
4. Quitman (493-G) – Page 9
5. Crosstimbers (453-K) – Page 10
6. A.M. entrance only N. Shepherd (412-V) – Page 11
7. Entrance/exit @ Veterans Memorial (412-V) – Page 12
8. P.M. exit only to North Frwy (412-V) – Page 13
10. Kuykendahl Park & Ride (372-G) – Page 15
Ramps 1 and 2
Ramp 7

Inbound A.M.

Outbound P.M.
US 59 North/Eastex Freeway

AM HOV traffic moves in the direction of Downtown Houston. PM direction is away from Downtown Houston. As you enter a HOV ramp keep traffic direction in mind, then simply follow the direction signs and speed limits.

This map is an overview of HOV entrance/exit ramp locations. For a detail of each ramp, go to the page listed below. KeyMaps are listed in parenthesis.

1. Quitman (494-A) – Page 19
2. Neches (454-S) – Page 20
3. Kelly (454-N) – Page 21
4. Tidwell Transit Center (454-A) – Page 22
5. Eastex Park & Ride (375-W) – Page 23
6. Will Clayton via McKay Blvd (375-B) – Page 24
7. Will Clayton T-Ramp (454-A) – Page 25
Ramp 1

Collingsworth

Inbound A.M.

Eastex Fwy Access Rd

Quitman

Outbound P.M.

Eastex Fwy Access Rd

Quitman
IH-45 South/Gulf Freeway

AM HOV traffic moves in the direction of Downtown Houston. PM direction is away from Downtown Houston. As you enter a HOV ramp keep traffic direction in mind, then simply follow the direction signs and speed limits.

This map is an overview of HOV entrance/exit ramp locations. For a detail of each ramp, go to the page listed below. KeyMaps are listed in parenthesis.

1. Downtown AM exit Dowling/St. Joseph (493-V) – Page 27
2. Downtown PM entrance Pierce/Dowling (493-V) – Page 28
3. Eastwood Transit Center (494-W) – Page 29
4. I-610 South Loop AM exit, PM entrance (535-J) – Page 30
5. I-610 South Loop AM entrance, PM exit (535-J) – Page 30
7. Fuqua Park & Ride and South Point Park & Ride (576-U) – Page 32
8. Dixie Farm Road (617-A) – Page 33
Ramps 4 and 5
US 59 South/Southwest Freeway

AM HOV traffic moves in the direction of Downtown Houston. PM direction is away from Downtown Houston. As you enter a HOV ramp keep traffic direction in mind, then simply follow the direction signs and speed limits.

This map is an overview of HOV entrance/exit ramp locations. For a detail of each ramp, go to the page listed below. KeyMaps are listed in parenthesis.

1. S. Shepherd (492-Y) – Page 35
2. Edloe (492-X) – Page 36
3. Westpark AM exit, PM entrance (491-Y) – Page 37
4. Hillcroft Transit Center (531-A) – Page 38
5. Westwood Park & Ride (529-V) – Page 39
6. West Bellfort Park & Ride (569-C) – Page 40
7. South of West Airport (569-F) – Page 41
Ramp 3
Ramp 4
Ramp 5
IH-10 West/Katy Freeway

AM HOV traffic moves in the direction of Downtown Houston. PM direction is away from Downtown Houston. As you enter a HOV ramp keep traffic direction in mind, then simply follow the direction signs and speed limits.

This map is an overview of HOV entrance/exit ramp locations. For a detail of each ramp, go to the page listed below. KeyMaps are listed in parenthesis.

1. West of Washington (492-E) – Page 43
2. Post Oak/Northwest Transit Center (491-D) – Page 44
3. Gessner (490-A) – Page 45
4. Addicks Park & Ride (488-A) – Page 46
5. West of SH 6 (487-D) – Page 47
6. Diamond Lane between Fry and Mason (486-A) – Page 48
7. Diamond Lanes between Mason and Grand Parkway (485-C) – Page 49
Ramp 6

Inbound A.M.

Katy Frwy

Outbound P.M.

Katy Frwy
Ramp 7

Inbound A.M.

Outbound P.M.
US 290 North/Northwest Freeway

AM HOV traffic moves in the direction of Downtown Houston. PM direction is away from Downtown Houston. As you enter a HOV ramp keep traffic direction in mind, then simply follow the direction signs and speed limits.

This map is an overview of HOV entrance/exit ramp locations. For a detail of each ramp, go to the page listed below. KeyMaps are listed in parenthesis.

1. I-10 W to NW Transit Center (492-A) – Page 51
2. Northwest Transit Center (491-D) – Page 52
3. Dacoma (451-V) – Page 53
4. Pinemont Park & Ride (451-F) – Page 54
5. W. Little York Park & Ride (409-V) – Page 55
6. Northwest Station Park & Ride (409-E) – Page 56
7. FM 1960 (408-D) – Page 57
Ramp 1
Ramp 2
Ramp 3
Ramp 4

Inbound A.M.

Outbound P.M.
Ramp 5
Ramp 6
Ramp 7

Inbound A.M.

Outbound P.M.