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[Bridges & Tunnels](#)

IMMEDIATE

A Farewell to Arms: Removal of Gates at Henry Hudson Moves MTA Toward All-Electronic Tolling

New technology will eliminate tollbooth backups and reduce the cost of toll collection

The Metropolitan Transportation Authority (MTA) today launched a pilot program that will test both gateless and cashless all-electronic tolling at the Henry Hudson Bridge. MTA Chairman Jay H. Walder, MTA Bridges and Tunnels President Jim Ferrara, MTA Board Members Mark D. Lebow, Robert C. Bickford, Charles G. Moerdler as well as Assemblymen Jeffery Dinowitz, Guillermo Linares, State Sen. Adriano Espaillat, City Councilman James Vacca, and Kate Slevin, executive director of the Tri-State Transportation Campaign, held a ceremony on the Bronx-bound plaza to remove the first padded, aluminum gate arm from a bridge tollbooth. Gateless operations begin today, with all-electronic tolling scheduled to begin at the facility in 2012.

"There's a better way to collect tolls in the 21st century, and it's called all-electronic tolling," Walder said. "By removing the gate arms today we begin the process of ushering in this new era in toll collection. If all goes according to plan, by next year the Henry Hudson Bridge will be the first cashless bridge in the country, reducing travel times for drivers and expenses for the MTA."

A decision on whether to expand either the gateless or cashless operations at other MTA crossings will be made after the pilot has ended. Currently Denver, Texas and Florida operate cashless systems in a highway environment. In the New York region, several tolling authorities operate mixed cash and electronic systems but none are totally cashless.

Assemblyman Dinowitz applauded the change saying, "The elimination of the toll booth gates is an important first step in moving to a cashless tolling system of the Henry Hudson Bridge. This is a positive change for commuters." Manhattan City Councilman Robert Jackson said although most of the drivers who use the bridge are not from his district, "my constituents will also benefit indirectly from the speedier flow of traffic and reduction in vehicle idling."

"This is another example of MTA CEO Jay Walder's ability to bring innovation to the MTA and our regional transportation network," said Kate Slevin, executive director of the Tri-State Transportation Campaign, a policy watchdog organization that has long advocated for non-stop tolling at MTA crossings. "This move will shorten travel times and improve safety for drivers while reducing congestion and pollution at toll facilities."

Three gateless E-ZPass Only and three Cash Only lanes will be available in each direction. During the gateless phase of the pilot, new state-of-the-art cameras that are positioned within the existing toll plaza configuration and back office operations will be tested.

"This pilot will significantly change our approach to toll collection," said MTA Bridges and Tunnels President Jim Ferrara. He added that customers will notice the difference in the gateless phase right away because they will not have to come to a stop and wait for gate arms to lift. "Our message to E-ZPass customers at the Henry Hudson is simple," he said, "Don't stop, keep moving!"

The Henry Hudson Bridge, which links the Inwood section of Manhattan to the Riverdale section of the Bronx, was chosen for the pilot because of its favorable plaza configuration, its high E-ZPass market share (85 percent weekdays), and the fact that there is no commercial traffic.

Electronic signs in E-ZPass lanes will tell motorists "Toll Processed. Do not stop." Cash lanes will continue to operate as they do now. Cash customers must use the Cash Only lanes. Cash customers who use E-ZPass Only lanes without a tag during this phase of the project will receive a \$50 toll violation in the mail. "Make no mistake; if you go through a gateless E-ZPass lane without a tag you will receive a toll violation notice in the mail," Ferrara said, "so it is important for drivers to use the correct lane."

In addition, motorists are urged to secure their E-ZPass tags on their windshields, and register the license plates of any car that regularly uses tags on their account. Up to four E-ZPass tags can be linked to the same account. Motorists can obtain an E-ZPass or register a license plate by calling 1-800-333-TOLL or visiting www.ezpassny.com.

The Henry Hudson Bridge opened to traffic Dec. 12, 1936. In 2010, the bridge carried an estimated 23 million vehicles.

MTA Bridges and Tunnels, with crossings connecting the five boroughs in New York City, is the largest bridge and tunnel toll collection agency in the country, used by an average 800,000 vehicles daily. Its facilities include Robert F. Kennedy, Throgs Neck, Bronx-Whitestone, Henry Hudson, Verrazano-Narrows, Cross Bay Veterans Memorial and Marine Parkway-Gil Hodges Bridges, and the Queens Midtown and Brooklyn-Battery Tunnels.