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Press Release

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[Bridges & Tunnels](#)

IMMEDIATE

Two Capital Improvement Projects At Flagship Robert F. Kennedy Bridge Underway

MTA Bridges and Tunnels has embarked on two major projects to improve the flagship Robert F. Kennedy Bridge complex by rebuilding the original 1930s-era Bronx toll plaza and the East 125th St entrance and exit ramps. This work is part of \$1 billion in investments committed through 2026 to ensure the 79-year-old bridge continues to serve its 170,000 daily customers and unite the New York region.

"This work is critical to help maintain our multi-spanned bridge, which impacts motorists in three different boroughs and serves as a key link to several major regional expressways that carries motorists and commercial traffic throughout the state," said MTA Bridges and Tunnels President James Ferrara.

The Bronx toll plaza and its supporting steel substructure are original to the bridge and must be replaced. Under a \$213 million, 54-month-long project the plaza will be transformed into a sleek, modern toll plaza with a modular design that will allow Bridges and Tunnels to continue collecting tolls under the current method, or be easily converted by lifting out the toll booths to accommodate any future change to all-electronic tolling.

Both projects are in the early stages of construction work. "Although the projects overlap, both have been carefully planned and designed with maintenance of traffic and project efficiency in mind and when they are finished, the RFK Bridge will be able to meet 21st century traffic demands," said MTA Bridges and Tunnels Vice President and Chief Engineer Joe Keane.

East 125th Street Ramps

Contractor DeFoe, of Mount Vernon, N.Y., is getting ready to build a temporary exit ramp on the south side of the street as part of the \$68.3 million project to rehabilitate and reconstruct the East 125th Street ramps. Traffic will be shifted onto the temporary ramp this fall, allowing reconstruction of the original ramp without a loss of traffic lanes.

This winter, work will begin on the entrance ramp at East 125th Street. Motorists will not lose capacity there through the use of a temporary roadway that will give drivers access to the Harlem River Drive ramp from East 125th Street. "Working on both ramps simultaneously is the most efficient use of manpower and may help reduce the December 2017 project completion date by up to six months," said RFK Bridge Assistant Facility Engineer Adam Rose, who is overseeing the ramp project.

Bronx Toll Plaza

The redesign of the toll plaza is just one element in the project, whose main goal is to replace the 1930s substructure of the plaza. The work includes replacing 350,000-square-feet of original concrete roadway decking with a new jointless deck that will reduce future maintenance costs, increase seismic performance, and enhance the structure's durability and longevity. The new structure will be upgraded to meet current roadway standards. New LED roadway lighting, storm drainage systems and utilities will also be added.

Pre-construction work is underway. It includes building an elevated employee path above and across the toll plaza to allow Bridge and Tunnel officers to cross safely during construction, a new utility building to house equipment that runs the toll plaza, and rehabilitation work on portions of the Manhattan to Queens and Queens to Manhattan ramps. The contractor on the project is El Sol, of Queens.

Traffic on the Manhattan to Queens ramp, which leads to Queens after the Harlem River Lift Span, will be shifted slightly but two lanes will remain open. Two of three lanes will remain open during reconstruction work on the Queens to Manhattan ramp, which takes motorists from the Queens suspended span into Manhattan.

Later this summer a new traffic pattern will be in place on the Bronx Kills truss span with five lanes heading south-bound into Queens and Manhattan, and three lanes heading north into the Bronx. "This is being done to facilitate traffic flow from the Deegan and Bruckner expressways toward Manhattan during the Bronx toll plaza reconstruction work," said RFK Bridge Assistant Facility Engineer Armindo Monteiro, who is overseeing the project.

The main toll plaza roadway reconstruction will take place in four stages over 36-months and is scheduled to begin next spring. During this time, 12 of the 16 toll lanes will remain open; six in each direction. "We work very hard to minimize impact to customers by maintaining as many lanes of traffic as we can," said Director of Bridges North Cassandra Edghill. The project is scheduled to be completed in 2019.

Both projects are part of MTA Bridges and Tunnels 2010-2014 Capital Program, which is funded by Triborough Bridge and Tunnel Authority bonds that are backed by toll revenue collection. Bridges and Tunnels' Capital Program is not subject to the State Legislature's Capital Program Review Board.



Current RFK Bridge Bronx Plaza



Conceptual rendering of RFK Bridge Bronx Plaza