

Tuesday, March 30, 2004

The 2025 Regional Transportation Plan created by the Houston-Galveston Area Council is the largest, long-term transportation plan for the Houston area. To help increase understanding of the plan the Gulf Coast Institute will publish a series of educational bulletins.

What is the 2025 Regional Transportation Plan?

The Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) is the most comprehensive transportation plan in the Houston region. It includes all road, transit, bike/pedestrian, and port/airport projects for the Houston-Galveston area over the next two decades.

Who is responsible for the RTP?

The Houston-Galveston Area Council (H-GAC), a regional governmental agency, develops the long-term plan with the cooperation of local cities, counties, and transportation agencies. The State of Texas designated H-GAC as the region's Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) that is charged with coordinating transportation planning for the 8-county region.

What is the purpose of the RTP?

The RTP is required by the federal government so that regions can create transportation systems that meet the area's long-term mobility goals and conform to federal clean air requirements.¹

How much will be spent?

The total proposed expenditures between now and 2025 are \$77 billion. \$65 billion is for road and transit projects (a small amount is set aside for bike and pedestrian projects) and the rest is for ports and airports.

How much of road and transit is new capacity?

Of the \$65 billion, \$29 billion is for new capacity, with \$24 billion of that going to roads and nearly \$5 billion for new transit capacity.

Can I vote on the RTP like I did on Metro's plan?

No. While voting for the RTP has been suggested by some, citizens may not vote on this plan as they did on the Metro Solutions plan. (However, the entire, voter-approved Metro Solutions plan is in the RTP.) Instead, the RTP is voted on by an H-GAC group called the Transportation Policy Council. Many members on the Transportation Policy Council are county judges, city council members, and other elected officials.

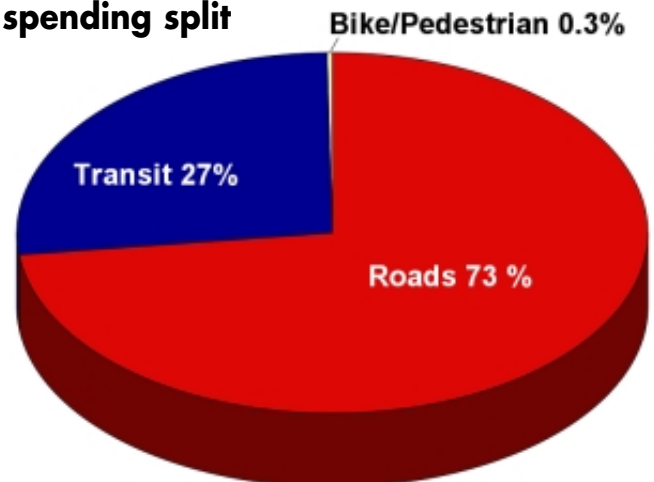
What road projects does H-GAC propose?

Of \$29 billion of added capacity road and transit projects in the plan, H-GAC itself proposes \$13 billion worth - all of them road-related. The H-GAC projects account for about half of all added capacity road dollars, and nearly three-quarters of the H-GAC projects are street widenings or new construction.²

How does the RTP affect my neighborhood?

Road and transit projects affect everything from flooding to air quality to

2025 ground transportation spending split



The overwhelming majority of funds to be spent for ground transportation go to roads. The RTP also covers port and airport expenses, not shown here.

property values in your neighborhoods. Many of those projects include road widening and construction, rail and busways, bike lanes, and sidewalks that could go through or near your neighborhood. There is another \$12 billion worth of airport and port projects that will impact certain neighborhoods. The projects affect the air you breathe, where you can choose to live, how you get to work, green space and open space, flooding, as well as the economic futures of many entities such as the City of Houston. Tax revenue distribution and collection is closely associated with the design of transportation networks.

What is the 100 Percent Plan?

The 100 Percent Plan is a study H-GAC completed with consultants to come up with a full list of projects and solutions that would address future congestion. The \$112 billion 100 Percent Plan³ contains projects beyond the RTP in that it includes about \$35 billion in projects that the region can not currently afford.

Unless otherwise noted, all information is from the 2025 Regional Transportation Plan. The entire plan, with all its appendices, is at www.2025plan.org.

Other sources:

1. The Metropolitan Transportation Planning Process: Key Issues, a publication of the Metropolitan Capacity Building Program, Federal Highway Administration, Federal Transit Administration, et al. November 2001.
2. Excel spreadsheet "Rankings.projworkshop.xls" distributed by H-GAC, March 15, 2004
3. H-GAC presentation at March 23, 2004, public meeting