

Friday, April 9, 2004

The 2025 Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) created by the Houston-Galveston Area Council (H-GAC) 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. For other transportation bulletins about the RTP, visit www.livablehouston.org

Regional Transportation Plan Goals Compared

Below is a list of stated goals in the Atlanta, Houston, and Dallas regional transportation plans. Houston is the only region of the three that does not include quality of life in the stated goals.

Houston

- 1) Reduce congestion and improve access to jobs, markets, and services
- 2) Preserve and maintain existing transportation infrastructure
- 3) Improve transportation safety and security
- 4) Be environmentally responsible

Atlanta¹

- 1) Accessibility and mobility for people and goods
- 2) Attain regional air quality goals
- 3) Improve and maintain system performance and system preservation
- 4) Protect and improve the environment and quality of life

Dallas²

- 1) Transportation (Accommodate expected demographic growth, reduce traffic congestion, provide multimodal options, improve travel efficiency)
- 2) Quality of Life (Provide for continued economic development, provide increased transportation accessibility, reduce environmental and community impacts)
- 3) Financial (Pursue stable, long-term revenue options, reduce transportation system costs)

Highlights from other RTPs

Atlanta's Regional Transportation Plan has what is called the "Livable Centers Initiative" (LCI) that will allocate over \$5 million on a competitive basis to nonprofits and local governments for town center/activity center policy studies. The studies will look at things such as land use efficiency. The LCI will then award \$350 million to various groups for project implementation.¹

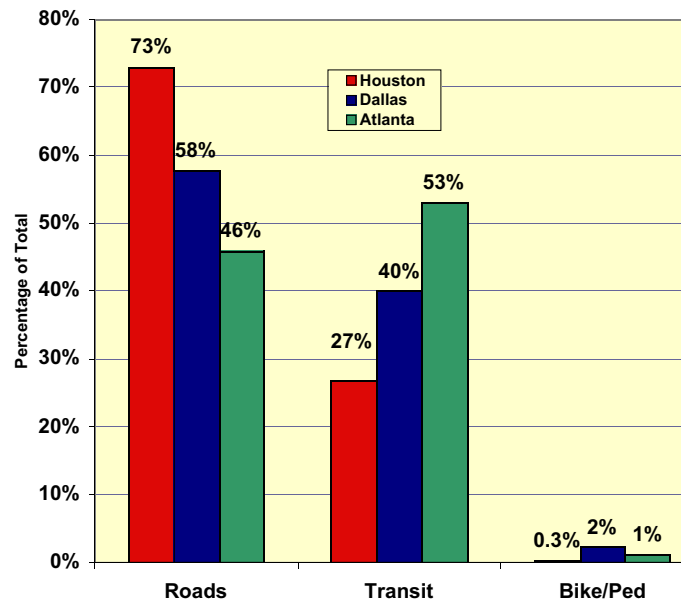
Atlanta's Balanced Transportation Plan

"The RTP is a balanced plan of projects such as bridges, bicycle paths, sidewalks, transit services, roadway upgrades, safety improvements, transportation demand management initiatives and emission reduction strategies," according to the Atlanta Regional Commission, the group that creates their RTP. Indeed, if you look at Atlanta's funding distribution on the above chart, their plan does appear more balanced than Houston's in that funding is more evenly dispersed.³

Question

Does the current split between roads (73 percent) and transit (27 percent) in Houston's RTP represent the public's desire for "more balance in our transportation system to support multi-modal travel choices that are safe, convenient, effective, and efficient for people and goods" as

Roads/transit balance in three regions: Houston, Dallas, Atlanta



The graph above shows that Houston has the highest percentage of roads and the lowest percentage of transit and bike/pedestrian projects of the three 2025 regional transportation plans.⁴

stated in the "Involving the Public in the Planning Process" section in the current Draft RTP?

Your chance to talk about what you want

The next public meeting on the RTP is Tuesday, April 13th at H-GAC's offices at 3555 Timmons (Greenway Plaza) starting at 6 pm. For more information, visit www.2025plan.org. The next chance to talk directly to elected officials who will vote on the plan will be Friday, April 23rd at H-GAC's offices at 9:30 am.

Sources

1. Atlanta Regional Commission, Regional Transportation Plan 2025, October 2002. www.atlantaregional.com
2. North Central Texas Council of Governments, Mobility 2025: The Metropolitan Transportation Plan, 2004 Update. This document was approved by public officials January 2004 but is currently pending air quality conformity analysis. <http://www.dfwinfo.com/trans/mtp/current/index.html>
3. Atlanta Regional Commission, 2025 Regional Transportation Plan Executive Summary brochure. www.atlantaregional.com/transportationair/2025RTP.html
4. The graph only shows stated investments in road, transit, bike, and pedestrian categories. In some cases, other categories covered by the plan were omitted. For example, Houston's numbers do not include port and airport categories, Dallas's numbers do not include "Congestion and Mitigation Strategies" (it's unclear where those Houston RTP strategies are recorded), and Atlanta's numbers do not include an "Other" category

