

Friday, October 17, 2003

The Metro Solutions plan to greatly improve transit in the Houston region will come to a vote on November 4. To help increase understanding of the proposal and of transit's place in the greater transportation picture the Gulf Coast Institute will publish a series of educational bulletins.

Metro Solutions and the "100% Solution Plan"

The table and graphs on this page compare the METRO Solutions transit plan and the Houston-Galveston Area Council's (H-GAC) "100 Percent Solution Plan."

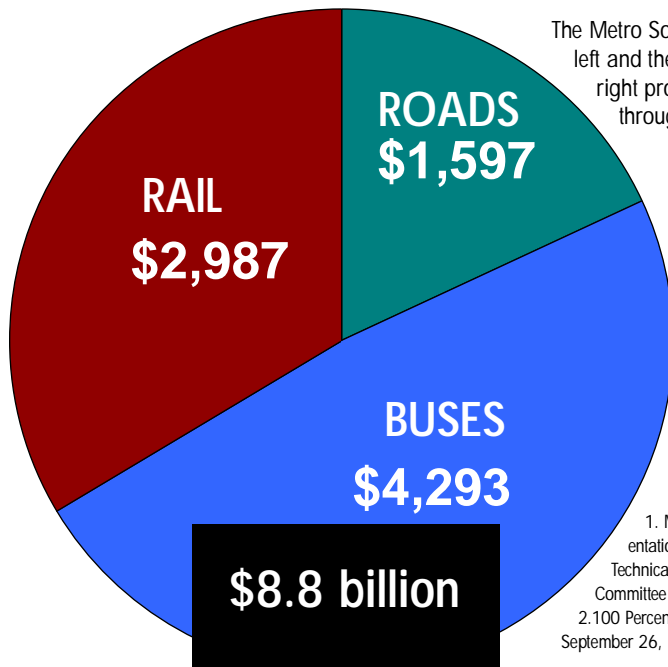
Opponents of the METRO Solutions transit plan have offered the 100 Percent Solution Plan as their alternative to the METRO Solutions plan. However, it is important to note that the two are not alternatives to each other. First, unlike the METRO Solutions plan, the 100 Percent Solutions Plan is an unfinished study, not a plan. Second, the METRO Solutions plan is primarily a transit plan that only covers a portion of the 8-county region. The 100 percent study eventually will incorporate the Regional Transportation Plan (RTP), a multi-modal plan that covers the entire 8-county region. But the RTP is not a substitute for METRO Solutions; it includes METRO Solutions. Also unlike the METRO Solutions plan, the 100 percent study will go beyond planned projects to include a "wish list" of regional road and transit projects that have no identified funding and would require significant amounts of right-of-way. The claim

	Metro Plan	100% Study
Capital cost	\$8.8 billion*	\$30.2 billion, preliminary estimate for construction of lane miles, express roads conversion, and Intelligent Transportation Systems (ITS) such as Transtar, and traffic lights. Current study does not include costs for transit or significant requirements for new right-of-way .
Operations & Maintenance	\$14.6 billion	TBD
Tax Increase	No	Needs over \$11 billion of new sources for additional lane-miles, plus funds for new right of way.

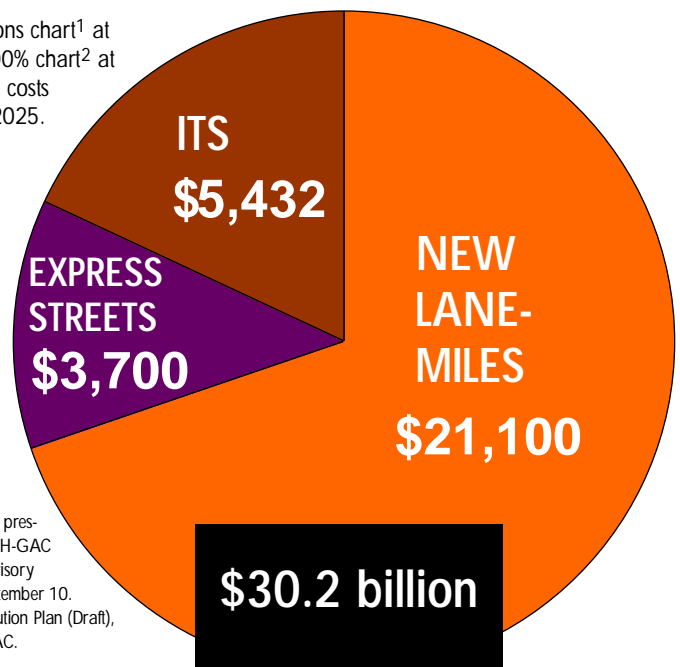
by METRO Solutions opponents that the 100 Percent Solution Plan can reduce congestion depends upon this wish list of projects that the federal government currently prohibits local officials from planning and programming as they have no existing revenue streams to fund such projects.

Therefore, unless new taxes are raised or funding levels from the federal and state governments are increased, much of the 100 Percent Solution Plan is only theoretical in nature. METRO Solutions, on the other hand, is an actual plan that requires no new taxes. Metro Solutions, in some form, will be part of the 100 Percent Solution plan, although it will be a more solid part because it has been through the public planning process and has identified funding sources.

Metro Solutions Plan



100% Solution Plan



The Metro Solutions chart¹ at left and the 100% chart² at right project costs through 2025.

1. Metro presentation to H-GAC Technical Advisory Committee, September 10.
2. 100 Percent Solution Plan (Draft), September 26, H-GAC.

*Only the first 10 years or about \$4.6 billion of these capital costs will be decided at the November 4 referendum. Voters will return to approve the remaining amount as early as 2009.