

Wednesday, October 29, 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.

## What is the 100 Percent Plan?

Opponents of the METRO Solutions plan have offered something called the 100 Percent Plan as their alternative to the transit plan. However, as discussed in previous Bulletins, the 100 Percent Plan is neither a plan nor an alternative. This bulletin more thoroughly examines the 100 Percent Plan.

## Is the 100 Percent Plan a plan?

The 100 Percent Plan is actually not a plan, but an ongoing study of potential road and transit transportation solutions for the Houston-Galveston region.

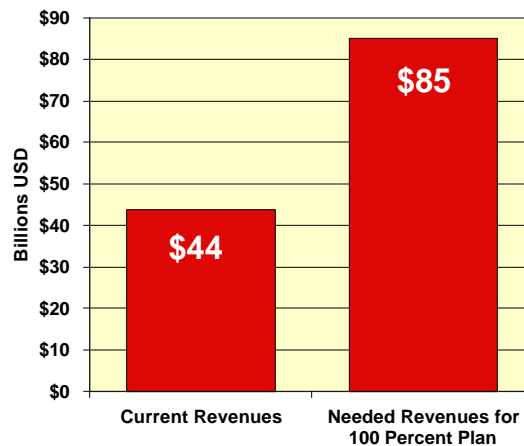
Essentially, it is a study that hypothesizes how the region might meet projected transportation demand if there were no financial or physical constraints. The

demand analysis includes a "wish list" of projects that would require funding and right-of-way requirements well beyond the region's current resources. The regional transportation agency that created the 100 Percent Plan, the Houston-Galveston Area Council, has said that the study should not be considered as a realistic plan, but rather a starting place for the investigation of potential congestion solutions.

## Is completion of the 100 Percent Plan feasible?

The 100 Percent Plan and its authors have stated that the plan in its entirety shouldn't be considered financially or physically feasible. "It is not the intent of the Houston-Galveston Area Council to suggest that all roadway expansion need generated by the [100 Percent Plan] can or should be built," according to the most recent draft. Alan Clark, the HGAC's chief transportation planner, has acknowledged to the Houston Chronicle that at least one-fifth of the proposed lane miles would be almost impossible to build because of limited right of way.<sup>1</sup> Further, the plan states, "The 100 Percent Plan does not currently have identifiable funding sources." Indeed, the federal government prohibits planning and programming of the 100 Percent Plan as it is not a plan that is "fiscally constrained," or one that has sufficient known revenues to construct and maintain its projects. In order to complete the plan, the region would have to nearly double its current transportation revenues from \$44 billion to \$85 billion and take significant amounts of right-of-way from property owners. At this time, it is unclear if the public would welcome higher taxes or significantly more road right-of-way.<sup>2</sup>

## 100 Percent Plan Shortfall



The 2022 Metropolitan Transportation Plan for the Houston region shows revenues of approximately \$44 billion. The 100 Percent Plan calls for \$85 billion in revenues, a shortfall of \$41 billion.

## How would the 100 Percent Plan's right-of-way requirements affect businesses and neighborhoods?

As the 100 Percent Plan is a study, not a plan, the Houston-Galveston Area Council has not done an approximation of how many businesses and residences would be displaced as a result of the increased road capacity. The expansion of roads to the degree envisioned in the 100 Percent Plan would likely displace thousands of businesses and residences if recent experiences hold true. Of the 10,703 lane miles in the 100 Percent Plan, approximately 20 percent would require the acquisition of right-of-way beyond what is already planned. The next highway expansion, the Katy Freeway expansion, will add approximately 100 new

lane miles, or less than 1 percent of planned lane miles for the region, and will displace over 870 businesses and 72 homes.<sup>3</sup>

## What kind of construction would the 100 Percent Plan require?

Building all of the 10,703 new lane miles in the 100 Percent Plan would be equivalent to building 66 new Katy Freeways across the region (I-10 at Loop 610 to I-10 west of Katy is about 161 lane miles, or seven lanes going 23 miles). This would mean approximately 90 percent more construction across the region than is already planned for the next 20 years (from 5,644 planned lane miles to 10,703 lane miles).

## Has the 100 Percent Plan had public involvement?

The 100 Percent Plan is an unfinished study, not an actual plan that would require public involvement. Therefore, it has not and will not have public involvement, although the final Regional Transportation Plan, which may or may not include elements of the 100 Percent Plan, will require public comment.

For more on the 100 Percent Plan:  
<http://www.h-gac.com/HGAC/Departments/Transportation/default.htm>

### Sources

1. Wall, Lucas, "Opponents eye Metro rail funds for highway work," Houston Chronicle, 26 October 2003.
2. Houston-Galveston Area Council, "2025 Regional Transportation Plan," presentation, 21 October 2003.
3. Texas Department of Transportation Katy Freeway website. <http://www.katyfreeway.org>