

INTRODUCTION

As part of the Regional Transit Framework Study, transit systems from six peer regions were reviewed in order to understand how the transit services provided Houston-Galveston region compare. The peer regions were selected based on population and size, growth patterns, transit system ridership, and other factors. The following peer regions were reviewed:

- Atlanta, Georgia
- Dallas-Ft Worth, Texas
- Denver, Colorado
- Miami-Ft Lauderdale, Florida
- San Diego, California
- Seattle, Washington

POPULATION AND DENSITY

The Houston-Galveston region ranks third in population and fourth in population density when compared to the peer regions.

On the basis of land area and population density, the Houston-Galveston region is comparable to the average of the peer regions.

Population and population density are important factors in identifying transit needs and success of a transit system; however, other factors such as transit services operated, and investment in transit will affect transit system performance.

Urbanized Area (UZA) Population and Densities

Region	2007 UZA Population	2000 UZA Land Area	Population per Sq. Mile
Atlanta, GA	4,030,000	1,963	2,053
Dallas-Ft Worth, TX	4,848,000	1,529	3,171
Denver, CO	2,065,000	499	4,138
Miami-Ft Lauderdale, FL	5,244,000	1,116	4,699
San Diego, CA	2,742,000	782	3,506
Seattle, WA	2,864,000	954	3,002
Average ¹	3,632,167	1,141	3,428
Houston-Galveston, TX	4,588,000	1,415	3,242

Source: American FactFinder: Community Survey Population 3-year Estimate (2005-2007)
¹Average does not include the Houston-Galveston region.



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REGIONAL TRANSIT FRAMEWORK STUDY

HOUSTON-GALVESTON AREA

Public transportation is beginning to play a larger role in many communities across the nation. Communities like Denver, CO and Seattle, WA are currently investing in new bus and rail services to provide more travel options within their respective regions. By studying transit systems in other regions, we can learn about new service concepts that if applied in our region will improve our transportation options and overall quality of life. Look inside to see how the Houston-Galveston area compares with these and other regions in terms of transit services operated, transit service performance and local investment in transit services.

Para más información y para solicitar actualizaciones del proyecto, por favor llame a Shaida Dezfuli al 713.627.3200 o envíe un correo electrónico a: PublicComents@h-gac.com.

TRANSIT SERVICES OPERATED

All of the regions, including the Houston-Galveston region, operate bus, paratransit, vanpool, and some form of urban rail. Urban rail may include heavy rail or light rail. The Houston-Galveston and Atlanta regions are the only two that do not operate commuter rail or do not have a commuter rail line currently under construction. Commuter rail service generally operates with fewer stops over longer distances providing service between suburban communities and a central business district. Commuter rail lines often focus operations during peak travel periods.

The availability of different transit services provides for a more efficient and effective multi-modal regional transit system. Multi-modal transit systems are able to better utilize resources where needed and provide the types of services necessary to meet demand. For example vanpools efficiently meet the needs of small groups of people from a common area that are regularly commuting to another common area, while light rail can effectively move large groups of people in busy activity centers or for highly attended events.

Region	Bus	Paratransit	Vanpool	Commuter Rail	Heavy Rail	Light Rail	Ferryboat
Houston-Galveston, TX	X	X	X			X	X
Atlanta, GA	X	X	X		X		
Dallas-Ft Worth, TX	X	X	X	X		X	
Denver, CO	X	X	X	X*		X	
Miami-Ft Lauderdale, FL	X	X	X	X	X		
San Diego, CA	X	X	X	X		X	
Seattle, WA	X	X	X	X		X	X

Source: National Transit Database – 2007 Transit Profiles
*Commuter rail is currently under construction.

Region	Total Operating Costs	Operating Costs per Capita
Atlanta, GA	\$418,690,802	\$103.89
Dallas-Ft Worth, TX	\$409,418,338	\$84.45
Denver, CO	\$345,241,035	\$167.19
Miami-Ft Lauderdale, FL	\$700,944,227	\$133.67
San Diego, CA	\$270,224,490	\$98.55
Seattle, WA	\$939,734,180	\$328.12
Average*	\$514,042,179	\$152.65
Houston-Galveston, TX	\$338,578,297	\$73.80

Source: National Transit Database – 2007 Transit Profiles
*Commuter rail is currently under construction.

INVESTMENT IN TRANSIT

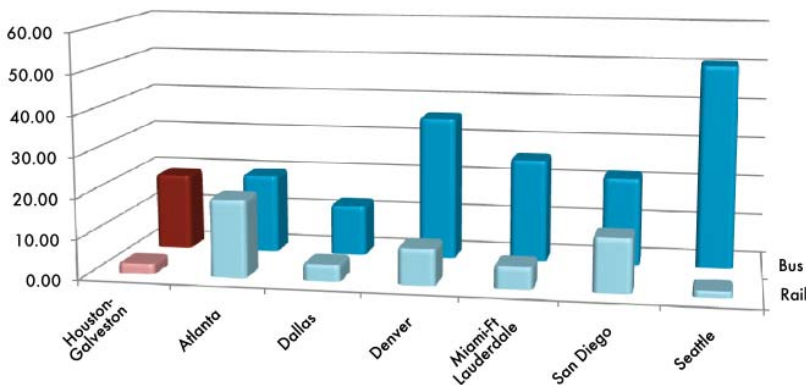
Transit operating costs are an indicator of how much a region continuously invests in public transportation services. Transit investment levels between the peer regions vary greatly; however, on average, the six peer regions invest approximately \$153 per person per year in transit operations. In comparison, the Houston-Galveston region invests lowest value per person at approximately \$74 per person per year. In terms of total dollars invested in transit operations, the Houston-Galveston region invests more than San Diego, CA and approximately the same as Denver, CO.

TRANSIT SYSTEM PERFORMANCE

Ridership per capita was calculated for both bus and rail by region. Ridership per capita is the total number of transit boardings in a year divided by the number of people in the region. This statistic indicates how well utilized each region's transit service is. Denver, CO and Seattle, WA have the highest utilization, but the rest of the regions including the Houston-Galveston region are relatively similar.

While each region operates some form of urban rail service, bus routes are carrying a much higher number of total passengers each year, with the exception of Atlanta, GA, which has about an equal split between rail and bus ridership.

2007 Ridership per Capita by Bus and Rail



Source: National Transit Database – 2007 Transit Profiles American FactFinder: Community Survey Population 3-year Estimate (2005-2007)

FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION ABOUT THE STUDY CONTACT:

Shaida Dezfuli of the Houston-Galveston Area Council at 713-627-3200 <http://www.h-gac.com/transit>

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