

In 2014, roughly 3 billion dollars were spent on mobility.



THAT TOTAL INCLUDES INVESTMENTS IN new infrastructure for neighborhood streets, highways, and METRO's bus and light rail network. This enormous sum of money moves through a complex system. Public records for total expenditures are relatively easy to obtain but teasing apart tax sources and the exact outcomes is far more difficult.

Houston-Galveston Area Council channels federal funds to various other governmental entities. Federal and state gas taxes only account for a portion of the Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT) total. The \$229 million spent by the City of Houston on neighborhood streets and thoroughfares comes out of the general fund and a new drainage fee. METRO's budget includes the revenues from a one-cent sales tax and fares, and their expenses include operating costs, debt servicing, and capital projects.

Many of the operating costs of car-oriented roads, including the police who manage them, are not included. As a result, comparing the totals across governmental

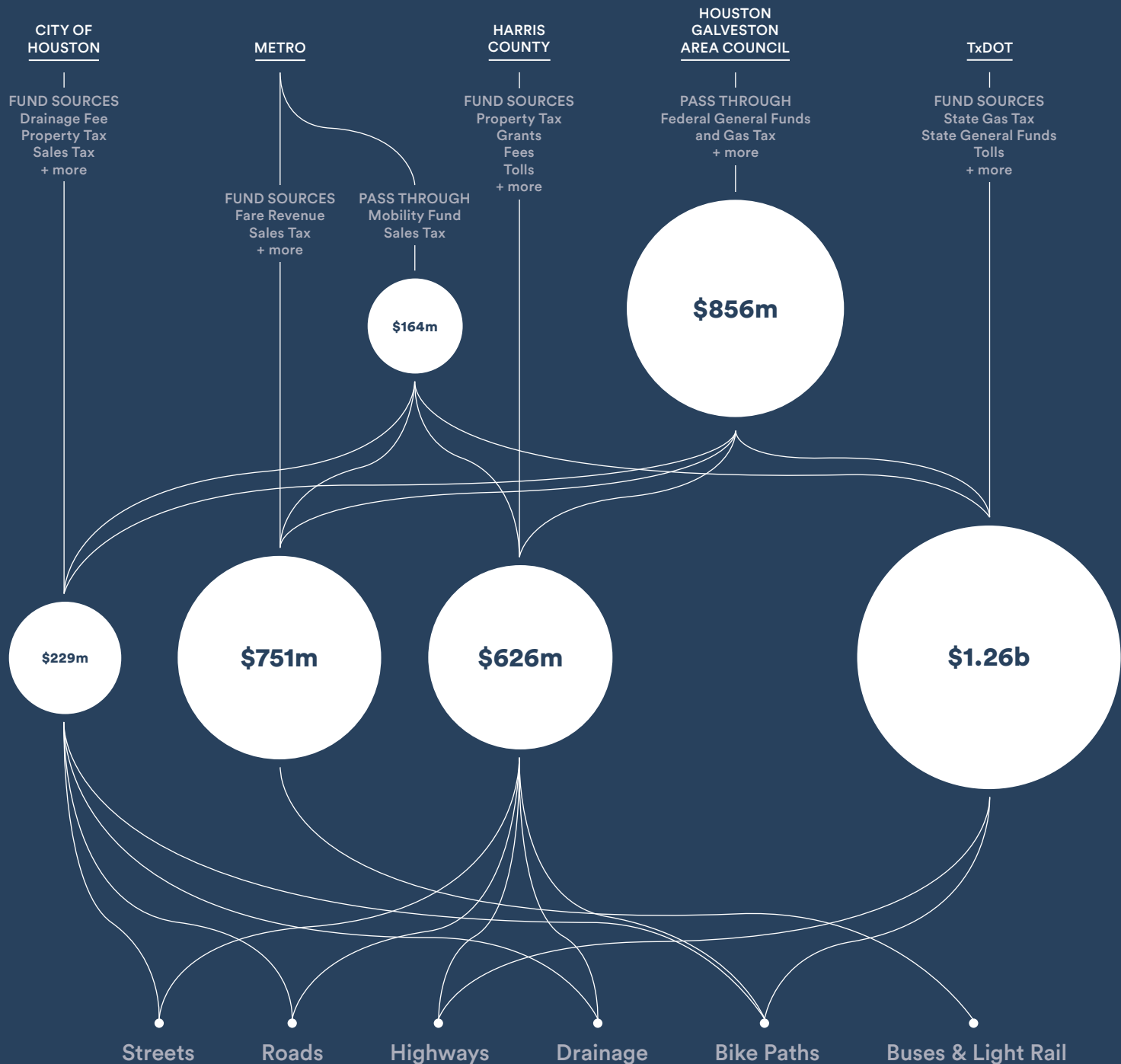
entities is not straightforward. Management districts and Tax Increment Reinvestment Zones are not included as well because poring over their many separate reports is outside the scope of this project. Indeed, a full accounting would be a major research undertaking.

Harris County is, perhaps, the most difficult government entity to understand because it collects tolls, encompasses Municipal Utility Districts, and multiple cities.

Respondents to the 2015 Kinder Institute Houston Area Survey identified traffic as the biggest problem for the region. Understanding the size of our budgets and how the money flows through bureaucracies is a first step to reframing and rethinking the challenge.

If we had a better understanding of the facts and funding of mobility, we could make more informed decisions. For example, would we rather put a high-quality bikeway in every neighborhood in Houston giving more people transportation choices or widen I-10 to temporarily alleviate peak hour congestion on that segment but moving the bottleneck elsewhere? ●

Transportation Funding 2014*



* These figures were taken from the websites of each agency with clarification by email from staff. Known unknowns include the budgets of Management Districts, Tax Increment Reinvestment Zones, Public Private Partnerships, and traffic operating costs (law enforcement) to the city, county, and state.