



Monday Morning Report

April 1, 2024

INTERNAL

The next meeting **Austin-San Antonio** Corridor Council Executive Committee is tentatively scheduled for Wednesday, April 17 at 2pm by Zoom. If you would like to add an item to the agenda, contact council@thdecorridor.org.

INFRASTRUCTURE

Autonomous trucks without safety drivers will begin operating on Texas highways later this year, the **Washington Post** reports, raising questions in some circles about whether the technology has outpaced regulatory authorities. Already operating with safety officers aboard between **Houston** and **Dallas**, driverless vehicles - using 'smart highways' tech installed along the roadway near **Austin** - could soon be on State Highway 130. [Story. SH 130.](#)

A US District Court in Texas ruled last week that the US Department of Transportation doesn't have Congressional authority to require states and metropolitan planning organizations to monitor and set greenhouse gas reduction targets for highways. Environmental groups called the decision 'disheartening.' [Story.](#)

The shipping accident that closed **Baltimore** harbor due to a bridge collapse last week highlighted a trend toward super-large container ships transiting US ports ([here](#)), and who should pay when something goes wrong ([here](#)). Newsletter **Axios** analyzes US bridge conditions on an interactive map ([here](#)). 51% of Texas bridges are OK.

In an unrelated action, the United Nations agency that regulates international shipping last week essentially committed to creating the world's first global carbon tax, the **New York Times** reports, proposing that shipping companies pay a fee for every ton of carbon they emit by burning fuel. Potentially 'world-changing?' [Story.](#)

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT (and Other News)

The **Austin** Transit Partnership has produced its latest timetable for development and construction of the city's light rail Project Connect plan. Now a downsized 10-mile, \$7.1 billion venture, the Project Connect team estimates a construction start in 2027 and conclude by 2032 - absent any lawsuit-related delays. [Story.](#)

The **San Antonio Express-News** reports that the city **Bastrop** and Elon Musk's The Boring Company have agreed on a plan to re-direct 142,500 gallons per day of treated wastewater - originally destined for the Colorado River - to a city-supplied treatment plant. Formal approvals come next month. [Story.](#)

NASA will host its only April 8th eclipse live broadcast in Texas from **Kerrville**, a city of 25,000, where estimates of potential eclipse-tourist visitors vary widely (from 150,000-to-488,000 people). Some are predicting that statewide Texas eclipse-tourist visitors could total from 270,000-to-1 million people. [Story](#). [Kerrville Website](#).

US demand for electricity is booming, driven by data centers, artificial intelligence, electric vehicles, and more ([here](#)). And now, after whistling past the graveyard for years, the Electric Reliability Council of Texas says its failure to accurately project population growth in **San Antonio** has led to shortcomings in transmission capacity that 'could lead to cascading outages.' "We should have been able to see this in 2018," admits an official. [Story](#).

Heads Up: A new book, "*City Limits: Infrastructure, Inequality, and the Future of America's Highways*," by Megan Kimble, is out this week. Sounds like "Gone Girl" for the TXDOT crowd. [Reviews](#).

Thought of the Week

"Idealism increases in direct proportion to one's distance from the problem."

- John Galsworthy

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