



Monday Morning Report

July 29, 2019

INTERNAL

The **Austin-San Antonio** Corridor Council Executive Committee is scheduled to meet on Wednesday, September 18, 2:00 pm at the Council offices in **San Marcos**, 304 N CM Allen Parkway. Please RSVP to council@thecorridor.org.

INFRASTRUCTURE

The federal government has signed off on the Alamo Area Metropolitan Planning Organization's two-year Unified Planning Work Program, a transportation planning document that reveals a lot about upcoming projects for the **San Antonio** area. Included are a rapid transit corridor study for northwest **Bexar County** that will link to IH-35 improvements between **Austin** and **San Antonio** and a high-speed rail route alternatives study between **Laredo** and **Dallas-Ft. Worth**. Other projects mentioned have **Comal**, **Guadalupe** and **Kendall Counties** impacts. [Story](#).

The General Accounting Office says the Federal Transit Agency should do a better job of estimating the costs of proposed rail transit projects. In a new study released this month, the oversight arm of the federal government examined global rail projects as well as recent US New Start rail projects in Utah, **Harris County**, and **Los Angeles** and found wide variance in early stage cost estimates. Insufficient contingencies and bias in cost estimates led the list of issues, and a series of recommendations are made in the report. [Study](#).

That \$20 billion, 15-year 'coastal barrier' plan proposed to protect the **Houston-Galveston** area from hurricanes - currently under study by the Texas General Land Office and the US Army Corps of Engineers - has a cheaper, faster competitor project being proposed by Rice University: a \$3-6 billion park-and-gate system they say could be completed by 2027. More on 'the mother of all infrastructure projects.' [Story](#).

Today's **Rivard Report** focuses a spotlight on a little-known but important side effect of the e-scooter economy developing around 'last mile' transportation solutions: a gig-economy workforce of hundreds that has evolved around finding, returning, repairing, and re-charging those ubiquitous scooters scattered on **San Antonio** streets. [Story](#).

The Atlantic has a handy 'How To' feature in the current issue designed to avoid the 'death by PowerPoint' presentations suffered through so often by transportation planning audiences. This one is called 'How Not to Run a Panel,' and features six rules for pulling off a successful panel discussion. If you're involved in organizing a panel discussion, you should take a look. [Please. Feature](#).

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT (and 'Other' News)

Travis County commissioners voted last week to explore a November ballot initiative that would levy a tax on hotel stays to build a new Travis County Exposition Center, possibly teeing up a conflict with the

city of **Austin's** plans to use that revenue source for funding expansion of the city's Convention Center. [Details](#).

Former **Caldwell County** commissioner and one-time judge Ronnie Duesterheft died last week in **San Marcos**. Known as the founder of **Maxwell's** volunteer fire department and a local water purveyor, Duesterheft served at various levels of county government for more than 20 years. [Story](#).

The **San Antonio** Chamber of Commerce has a new interim board chairman: Adam Hamilton, president of the Southwest Research Institute. Hamilton replaces CPS Energy chief executive Paula Gold-Williams, who stepped down from the Chamber's top civilian leadership post to avoid conflicts over a recently-passed city sick leave ordinance. [Details](#).

Former **San Antonio** city manager Sheryl Sculley, widely recognized as one of the finest public administrators in the US, has joined **Austin's** Strategic Partnerships Inc. as an external consultant. [Details](#) (right hand column).

Thought of the Week

"It is necessary for us to learn from others' mistakes. You will not live long enough to make them all yourself."

- Hyman George Rickover

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