



Monday Morning Report *MLK Holiday Edition*

January 19, 2021

INTERNAL

IMPORTANT: This week's potential meeting for the **Austin-San Antonio** Corridor Council's Executive Committee has been rescheduled to February 17, 2021 at 2:00 pm via Zoom video conference. Several Committee Members had asked us to move this month's meeting due to a conflict with the Presidential Inauguration. To add an agenda item or for other information, contact council@thecorridor.org.

COVID-19 UPDATE: Global confirmed cases increased by 5 million in the last week and now exceed 95 million, with 2,043,806 deaths, as of this morning (1/19/21). The US death total will surpass 400,000 today, with 24,081,790 confirmed cases. ([Johns Hopkins](#)) Texas was reporting 1,864,249 cases as of yesterday, with 32,084 deaths. **Bexar County** now has suffered more than 2,000 deaths (2,020), with 123,489 confirmed cases; **Guadalupe County**: 7,594 cases with 126 deaths; **Comal County**: 4,153 cases with 186 deaths; **Hays County**: 12,948 cases with 127 deaths; **Travis County**: 60,782 cases with 618 deaths; and **Williamson County**: 26,265 cases with 263 deaths (1//18/21). ([TDHHS](#))

INFRASTRUCTURE

Incoming President Joe Biden has been faster than his seven predecessors at naming a Cabinet, one of the most diverse in history ([here](#)), and the **Washington Post** has published a complete list of his appointees, their potential challenges, and their brief bios [here](#). For the first time in recent history there are no Texans among the top slots. And worth noting: Transportation Secretary Pete Buttigieg, former mayor of **South Bend**, Ind., has a history of favoring pedestrian-friendly 'smart streets' over roadway expansions. [Story](#).

Engineering News says to expect a massive 'Build Back Better' spending plan from the new Biden administration in February (next month!), which the President-elect said would "make historic investments in infrastructure, along with manufacturing, research and development and clean energy." Roads, rails, and ports spending are planned. [Details](#).

San Antonio city councilwoman Ana Sandoval has been named to a one-year term on the National League of Cities' influential Transportation and Infrastructure Committee, which guides the organization's federal policy and advocacy agenda. [Details](#).

Can the US Interstate Highway System be transformed into an autonomous speedway through use of 5G technologies and public-private partnerships to connect self-driving vehicles? The heavily **Austin**-influenced Autonomy Institute seems to think so, and they've produced a video showing how it could happen. Read about their work [here](#), view the [video](#).

The latest round of coronavirus relief funding from **Washington** for metropolitan transportation agencies will include \$67.23 million for **Austin** and \$61.8 million for **San Antonio**, according to reports from the Federal Transit Administration. [Details](#) (halfway down left column).

Today at 2:00 pm the **Austin** Chamber of Commerce launches a new series, 'Mobility Matters,' with the **Austin** TxDOT District Engineer Tucker Ferguson as a guest speaker. You can register for the web event [here](#).

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT (and Other News)

Big changes are coming to downtown **New Braunfels**. City-owned New Braunfels Utilities just issued a 'Request for Qualifications' notice to launch a process seeking real estate developers/investors as the agency moves to divest ownership of a 26,721 square-foot, three-building complex on the northeast corner of Main Plaza, its home since 1943. A new headquarters for NBU is planned for a site just off Loop 337. [Story](#).

Austin-based, women-centric dating web platform Bumble has filed paperwork to go public later this year ([here](#)), but it was making news last week for another quirky reason: some women on the site apparently created 'honey-trapping' profiles that sought matches with men participating in the riotous takeover of the US Capitol, then forwarding their responses to the Federal Bureau of Investigation. [Story](#).

The flood of workers and companies leaving California for Texas continues to make national news, most recently over the weekend in the **New York Times** with a study of tech workers fleeing **San Francisco** for cities like **Austin**. High rents and high taxes are the most-mentioned motivators, with the article noting one migrant who traded a tiny three-bedroom apartment for a five-bedroom home with an acre of land. [Story](#). Newsletter **Austonia** adds some local color and statistical data to the tech migration [here](#).

Just over a year ago, China locked down its \$15 trillion dollar economy in response to the coronavirus by shutting down factories and brutally enforcing quarantines. Recently, it ramped up economic activity, ordering state-owned factories to reopen and fueling a blue-collar economic boom ([here](#)). The strategy worked: In numbers out yesterday, China reported a 2.3% 2020 growth rate, with 4th quarter GDP up 6.5% year-over-year. [Story](#).

The folks at financial website **Wallethub**, who seem able to make lists about anything, have rated **Austin** as 2021's Best US State Capital to live in, based upon metrics involving safety, education, health, economic well-being, and yes, affordability. [Details](#).

Thought of the Week

"People have been known to achieve more as a result of working with others than against them."

— Dr. Allan Fromme

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