



Monday Morning Report

January 27, 2020

INTERNAL

The next scheduled meeting of the **Austin-San Antonio** Corridor Council Executive Committee is on Wednesday, February 19, 2:00 pm at the Corridor Council offices, 304 North C.M. Allen Parkway, in **San Marcos**. To RSVP or add an item to the agenda, email council@thecorridor.org.

INFRASTRUCTURE

The transition to electric vehicles in an effort to combat air pollution and global warming is underway worldwide but a key component may be missing: enough power available from electric grids to recharge the vehicles. **Seattle**, which hopes to have a third of its fleet electrified by 2030, opened five new charging stations last month to study just how much juice may eventually be required. Average electric vehicles require 30 kilowatt hours to travel 100 miles - the amount of power an average US home requires each day. [Story](#).

A senior researcher at the Texas A&M Transportation Institute in **College Station** says Texas cannot pave its way out of highway congestion (!) but suggests that removing one car out of every ten from peak-hour traffic through travel demand management could make a significant difference. A study of **Austin** is cited as proof. [Opinion](#).

US Rep. Chip Roy of **Austin** opines that **Washington DC** is the root source of traffic problems, specifically the fact that the Lone Star State receives back in transportation funding only 95-cents of every dollar we send to the federal government. It's an age-old complaint (what's the point of a federal government if it can't effectively collect and direct resources where they're most needed?), but Roy proposes new legislation to correct the problem. [Opinion](#).

San Antonio International Airport is seeking public input on building a new terminal and runways, and they are going to some unusual places to get it: coffee shops, a senior center, and a pizzeria on karaoke night. It's all part of a \$9.5 million master planning effort that devotes \$1.6 million to public outreach. [Story](#).

The **San Antonio** resident who chairs the Texas Transportation Commission, Bruce Bugg, last week lauded Gov. Greg Abbott's 10-year plan to invest \$77 billion into highway construction including improvements to US 281 from Loop 1604 to **Comal County**, expansions to IH-10 and Loop 410, and other multi-billion projects in Alamo City. As with the governor himself the week before, there was no mention of public transit in Bugg's speech to a local Rotary Club. [Story](#).

TxDOT is proposing some traffic relief projects for US 290 in the **Fredericksburg** area, but not everyone in **Gillespie County** is happy about the plan: "It sort of feels like they're bringing MoPac to Fredericksburg," said one resident at a recent public meeting. [Story](#).

Two opposing views on **Austin's** \$10-billion Project Connect light rail plan are on display in this morning's **American-Statesman**: one from the Texas Public Policy Foundation (the plan is 'outdated') and another from liberal columnist Glenn Smith (the plan is long "overdue"). Read both [here](#).

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT (and Other News)

Storm Warnings: a report from Europe's central banks issued last week in **Basel**, Switzerland says that global climate change could be the biggest economic dislocation of all time, representing 'unprecedented challenges to human societies.' What's worse, says the report, the world's bankers lack the financial tools to deal with the threat. [Story](#). [The Report](#).

Local companies are already dealing with the impacts of climate change (see above), as indicated by **San Antonio** insurance and financial giant USAA, which has paid weather-related natural disaster claims of more than \$2 billion in each of the last three years. In a related item, the world's largest investment group, BlackRock, Inc. says it will be divesting from carbon-based companies to focus on more climate-sustainable entities. [Story](#). [BlackRock](#).

A General Motors subsidiary unveiled the **Detroit**-based automobile giant's latest entry into the potentially huge autonomous ride-hailing shuttle market last week, a box-shaped multi-passenger vehicle called Origin. The all-electric vehicle comes without provisions for a 'safety driver;' in fact, it has no steering wheel or pedals. [Story](#).

Well-known **San Antonio** political and civic activist Henry Munoz III announced that he is stepping down from the leadership role at his large architectural firm, Munoz & Co., to join the campaign of presidential contender Joe Biden. His firm has developed some of the Alamo City's most iconic projects, including Bibliotech, the Mission Branch Library, and the San Pedro Creek Culture Park (still under construction). [Story](#).

An **Austin**-based company, Texas Mutual Insurance Co., has invested \$100,000 in a SA Works program to make **San Antonio** (and regional) residents more aware of and open to manufacturing jobs. The story recounts over \$1 billion in regional manufacturing investments locally in 2019. [Story](#).

Thought of the Week

"A habit cannot be tossed out the window; it must be coaxed down the stairs a step at a time."

- Mark Twain

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