



Monday Morning Report

January 28, 2019

INTERNAL

The **Austin-San Antonio** Corridor Council's Executive Committee will not be meeting again until March 20, 2019 at 2:00 pm, in **San Marcos**. For questions or comments, contact council@thecorridor.org.

INFRASTRUCTURE

Transport Topics reports that bipartisan Congressional support in **Washington** for a vehicle-miles-traveled tax (VMT) is growing as elected officials grapple with how to create a long term, sustainable fund for rebuilding the nation's infrastructure. The new House Transportation committee chairman Peter DeFazio (D-Ore.) indicated that the Democrats' infrastructure proposal would likely include a pilot VMT program, which the top Republican on the committee, Sam Graves (R-Mo.), called 'fantastic'. [Story](#).

A draft climate plan released last week would have **San Antonio** weaned off carbon fuels by 2050 (only electric or carbon-free vehicles allowed on city streets) and ultimately cut the city's total greenhouse gas emissions to net zero. That would require CPS energy to eliminate coal and natural gas for energy generation. In all, the plan lays out 45 specific strategies to meet the goals of the Paris Accord, endorsed by 407 US mayors but spurned by President Trump, who has said the nation will not comply with it.

[Story](#). [Draft Plan](#).

The chairman of the Capital Area Metropolitan Planning Organization (CAMPO) in **Austin** - and former **Hays County** commissioner - Will Conley said earlier this month that he would resign from the CAMPO post as soon as a new chairman is elected. Behind-the-scenes sources say the new chairman is expected to be **Austin** mayor Steve Adler, following an election in February. [Details](#).

Things are looking up for Capital Metro ridership in **Austin**: latest reports indicate that after several years of declines, ridership is trending upward by 5.4% in year-over-year numbers from 2018. The increases were across almost all types of services and may be related to a re-mapping of service routes last year.

[Details](#).

Africa's first high-speed train opened at the end of last year in Morocco connecting **Marrakesh** to **Tangier** (roughly the distance of **New York-Washington**), and **Business Insider** ran the first account yesterday we've seen on the experience of riding it. The \$2 billion project features TGV-style technology and was backed by nearly \$1 billion in French investments. [Story](#).

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT (and 'Other' News)

Venture capital is pouring into **Austin** at a higher rate than in most years since the 'tech bust.' In just the first nine months of 2018, the city had already generated more VC funding - other than 2014 - since 2001. **Austin** projects received 60% of the state's \$2.12 billion in tech investments, according to [this report](#). One reason may be this: IBM Austin received 790 of IBM's record 9100 patents in 2018, more than any other high-tech company. [Story here](#).

San Antonio has also been making news as a high technology center, but with a different focus than its northern neighbor: cyber-security. The sector recently got a boost when Will Garrett, a former local Chamber of Commerce executive, stepped in to lead cyber-security recruiting and expansion at Port San Antonio, which already has more than 1000 cyber-focused professionals onsite at their 1900-acre campus. [Story.](#)

Speaker of the Texas House Dennis Bonnen appointed committees and committee chairs in **Austin** last week, using leadership positions in a bipartisan way to create a leadership team that offers the prospect of something like consensus governance in the House this session. **San Antonio's** Trey Martinez Fisher (D) as chair of Business and Industry was paired with Republican Drew Darby (**San Angelo**) as vice-chair, for example. Terry Canales (**Edinburg**) will chair the Transportation Committee. Full list [here](#).

More than 100 business, military and community leaders head from **San Antonio** to **Washington** next week for the 41st annual SA-to-DC trip (Feb. 4-7). The 2019 delegation will be led by officials from CPS Energy and Port San Antonio. For more information, go [here](#).

Thought of the Week

"Success usually comes to those who are too busy to be looking for it."

- Henry David Thoreau

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