



## Monday Morning Report

February 25, 2019

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### INTERNAL

The **Austin-San Antonio** Corridor Council's Executive Committee will meet on Wednesday March 20, 2019 at 2:00 pm, in **San Marcos**. For details, contact [council@thecorridor.org](mailto:council@thecorridor.org).

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### INFRASTRUCTURE

The **Wall Street Journal** published an eye-opening opinion piece last week (2/19) arguing that high-tax states actually have worse infrastructure and services than low-tax states - heresy in some circles. 'There is an almost inverse relationship between burdensome levies and infrastructure quality,' says the author - a senior editor at **City Journal** - singling out Texas as having the best infrastructure in the US but the lowest tax burden. Worth reading. [Opinion](#).

The **Austin** 'Strategic Mobility Plan' is out in draft form and it sets forth a vision of an 'accessible and interconnected' transportation strategy for the future. Sections address commuter delays, placemaking, travel choices, economic prosperity, affordability, safety, and innovation - among other topics. Details [here](#).

**San Antonio**'s city council moved last week toward tighter restrictions on the 14,000 electric scooters and e-bikes scattered across Alamo City. "Bottom line, the light touch has not worked," one councilman told the **Rivard Report**. The city is also imposing a curfew on the devices after health officials noted a sharp uptick in local injuries, 40% of which occurred between 11 pm and 6 am. [Details](#).

Legislators in Washington state are considering a carbon tax as part of a transportation package that includes a 6-cent per gallon fuel tax increase. The carbon fee would charge \$15 per ton of carbon produced and generate an estimated \$7.9 billion over the next decade. [Story](#).

Audi, the car manufacturer, has come up with a new technology that uses vehicle-to-infrastructure communication to enable drivers to avoid catching red lights. The system provides drivers with instrument panel speed recommendations that allows drivers to consistently pass through traffic signals in their green phase. [Story](#).

Pedestrian fatalities have been steadily increasing since the 1990, but contrary to most conventional wisdom a report funded by Smart Growth America says that autonomous (self-driving) vehicles will not reduce pedestrian fatalities. The coalition says planners should instead consider altering road designs to be more compatible to pedestrian safety, and includes a laundry list of recommendations [here](#).

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### ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT (and 'Other' News)

Never one to shy away from bold predictions, Elon Musk said last week that Tesla will be producing fully self-driving vehicles by the end of next year (2020) - a more optimistic timeline than most industry professionals expect. "The car will be able to find you in a parking lot, pick you up, take you all the way to your destination without an intervention," he predicted. [Story](#).

According to figures from the **New York** Federal Reserve, US millennials aged 19-29 have debts exceeding \$1 trillion, the highest debt exposure for this age group since 2007. The reason? Student debt. Worse: figures suggest that 40% of those debts will default by 2023. [Story](#).

**Georgetown** officials are facing a revolt by local ratepayers after a solar energy spending spree aimed at making the city's energy sources 100% renewable led to higher electric rates and losses estimated at over \$8 million on energy contracts from 2016-2018. In traditionally conservative **Williamson County**, the situation is also a thorny political issue. [Story](#).

After a three-month search, **Seguin** has named 25-year law enforcement veteran Terry Nichols as chief of police. Nichols had previously been police chief in **Brownwood** and served 21 years with the **San Marcos** police department. [Details](#).

**Lockhart** and **Caldwell County** are mourning the loss earlier this month of barbecue mogul and local icon Rick Schmidt, a former owner of the Kreuz Market - one of the best-loved and best-known barbecue spots in the state. [Details](#).

## Thought of the Week

*"All things are difficult before they are easy."*

- Thomas Fuller

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