



Monday Morning Report

April 6, 2020

INTERNAL

COVID-19 UPDATE: As of 12:00 noon Sunday (4/5) *global* infections topped 1,237,420 cases, 67,260 deaths, and 252,944 cases recovered (**Johns Hopkins**). Reported Texas cases were at 6,812, 127 deaths (**TDSHS**). Local reports gave these regional totals: **Bexar County** (384 cases, 11 deaths); **Travis County** (460 cases, 6 deaths); **Comal County** (21 cases, 2 deaths); **Hays County** (50 confirmed cases, no reported deaths); **Williamson County** (77 cases, 2 deaths).

San Antonio and Bexar County COVID-19 information by zip code, along with other related information, can be viewed [here](#).

The Executive Committee of the **Austin-San Antonio** Corridor Council is tentatively scheduled to next meet BY TELECONFERENCE on Wednesday, April 15, 2:00 pm. More details to follow as needed. For information, contact council@thecorridor.org.

INFRASTRUCTURE

Anticipating revenue losses from a variety of sources related to the coronavirus pandemic, **San Antonio** suspended \$82 million in ongoing program funding last week in an attempt to balance the 2020 fiscal budget. The action cuts about 18% of funding to \$450 million in programs, including \$3 million to VIA Metropolitan Transit. Economic development incentive programs lost \$12.5 million. **Story**.

The \$2 trillion federal Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act (CARES Act), passed in **Washington** last week, contains \$25 billion additional funding for regional metropolitan transit agencies, including up to \$93 million for **San Antonio's** VIA Metropolitan Transit ([here](#)) and \$104 million for **Austin's** Capital Metro public transit system ([here](#)).

Sinking oil prices and dwindling sales tax revenues continue to pummel infrastructure planning and construction statewide. Last month, the chairs of the Texas House and Senate Transportation Committees asked TxDOT to delay full implementation of the state's 10-year Unified Transportation Plan pending more budget analysis. And, more locally, **Austin's** Capital Area Metropolitan Planning Organization may discuss postponing adoption of the agency's 2045 Regional Transportation Plan due to budget uncertainties. **Story**. CAMPO meets today at 2:00 pm and you can watch a live stream [here](#).

The advocacy group Transportation For America has posted some ideas for the **next** coronavirus spending bill - now being labeled an 'infrastructure stimulus package' by many - that includes 20 specific recommendations for programs that will advance smart transportation infrastructure and create jobs. Among them: focus on projects that create the most jobs ('that means maintenance, not construction') and provide operating support for transit, not just construction capital. **Details**.

With tents and trailers staged outside of major hospitals, and ready with hundreds of cots to convert facilities such as sports-and-concert venue Freeman Coliseum into overflow capacity for area hospitals, **San Antonio and Bexar County** seem well prepared to deal with a coronavirus epidemic peak local

officials expect to hit sometime in late May or June. The **Express-News** has an extraordinarily comprehensive look at local preparations [here](#).

Tomorrow, at 1:00 pm, the **Houston**-area Transportation Advocacy Group hosts a webinar on infrastructure program funding under the recently passed CARES Act and a guest expert reviews the potential for additional **Washington** Congressional action on new infrastructure stimulus funding. Information and registration [here](#).

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT (and Other News)

Bill Gates, the Microsoft co-founder who has spent two decades studying and using private philanthropy to fight pandemic diseases, posted an opinion editorial in the **Washington Post** over the weekend suggesting three ways to recover from the coronavirus: a nation-wide shutdown, increased testing, and a data-based search for treatments and vaccines. He didn't mention handwashing, but we will. [Opinion](#).

An analysis by Moody's Analytics for the **Wall Street Journal** shows that state coronavirus shutdowns have taken more than a quarter of the US economy offline, and that eight in 10 US counties are under lockdown orders, representing nearly 96% of the nation's economic productivity. An accompanying video says 4.4% joblessness rate underestimates full impacts of the shutdowns. [Story](#).

US retailers furloughed nearly one million workers last week, but a **Washington Post** report says that may just be the beginning and quotes analysts as saying that as many as 15,000 stores, including many well-known brand names, may never reopen. [Story](#).

Credit the folks behind **Austin**'s iconic South By Southwest Film Conference with an innovative alternative after the event was canceled due to coronavirus fears: they've moved the event online, with a streaming deal on Amazon Prime Video announced last week. Pass the popcorn. [Story](#).

From opposite ends of the **Austin-San Antonio Corridor** last week, former editors of the local newspapers offered observations on the sense of communal spirit emerging from the coronavirus pandemic. Bob Rivard stressed **San Antonio** 'coming together even as we live apart' and touted a local entrepreneur's heart emblazoned 'In This Together' tee-shirts. ([here](#)) Rich Opiel also sensed a city 'pulling together - unlike anything I've seen in my 25 years here - impressive and moving,' on [Austonia.com](#), a new **Austin**-centric newsletter.

Long-time **Travis County** District Attorney Ronnie Earle died over the weekend. Earle, a former state legislator and municipal judge, was a relentless administrative reformer and created a raft of county programs including the Public Integrity Unit, the Children's Advocacy Center, and the Family Justice Center. [Story](#). [2000 Profile](#).

Thought of the Week

"Act as if what you do makes a difference. It does."

- William James

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