



Monday Morning Report

July 12, 2021

INTERNAL

The **Austin-San Antonio** Corridor Council's Executive Committee will meet July 21 at 2pm by videoconference. If you would like to add to the agenda, contact council@thecorridor.org.

COVID-19 UPDATE: As of this morning worldwide confirmed cases had reached 186,926,792, with 4,034,092 deaths. US cases dropped slightly to 33,854,127 with 607,157 deaths (7/12). (**Johns Hopkins**) As of yesterday, Texas was reporting 2,559,734 confirmed cases with 51,486 fatalities, including in **Bexar County**: 187,120 cases with 3,638 deaths; **Guadalupe County**: 11,879 cases, still with 222 deaths; **Comal County**: 6,213 cases with 309 deaths; **Hays County**: 19,238 cases with still 226 deaths; **Travis County**: 85,199 cases with 1,042 deaths; and **Williamson County**: 40,097 cases and still 483 deaths (7/11/21). (**TDHHS**).

INFRASTRUCTURE

Pressure is building in **Washington** to deliver on a bipartisan infrastructure spending package, probably around \$600 billion, before the traditional August recess of Congress. Observers said the package could hit the Senate floor as early as July 19th, and Majority Leader Chuck Schumer says if the drafting is complete, the Senate will act on it before the summer break. **Story**.

The *Texas A&M 2021 Annual Urban Mobility Report* just came out and, for the first time in four decades, **New York** displaced **Los Angeles** as the US city where motorists waste the most time in traffic. While most metro areas saw traffic levels decline by two-thirds during the pandemic, COVID-wary bus and transit Manhattan commuters returned to their cars, resulting in the average motorist losing 56 hours per year to traffic delays. **Report**.

The authors of that Texas A&M report (above) - who have been tracking traffic issues for over 40 years - argue in today's **Dallas Morning News** that now is the time to learn from what the pandemic has taught us: "The simplest path to mitigating roadway gridlock is, and always has been, reducing the demand for limited road space." They say they've never seen such dramatic drops in traffic volumes as occurred in 2020. **Opinion**.

Opponents of Texas Central Railway's **Dallas-to-Houston** high speed rail project want the Texas Supreme Court to reconsider its earlier decision - declining to hear their case - which effectively granted the company use of eminent domain laws to procure needed rights-of-way. Pack a lunch, this is not over yet. **Details**.

Forbes columnist (and infrastructure advocate) Norman Anderson interviews three Texas CEOs in the infrastructure industry (**Dallas** and **Houston**) and finds a lot of enthusiasm for **Washington's** current debate over big spending on roads, bridges, dams, and railroads. But, there is also concern about a 'two-speed economy': private sector (fast) and public sector (slow). **Opinion**.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT (and Other News)

Tesla and related investors announced plans to develop a large-scale, sustainable and solar-powered neighborhood in **Austin** called SunHouse at Easton Park. Company officials said products and technologies emerging from the effort would guide future developments and one noted, "We are trying to change to world by creating technology-driven, energy-independent communities that make the world a better place." [Story](#).

Writing in **Volts**, Michael Eliason - a **Seattle** architect - highlights five powerful European urbanism trends that might benefit US cities: brownfield redevelopment; more diversity in housing types; rapid transformation that improves livability yet reduces environmental footprints; making cities 'production centers' for urban agriculture and food-processing; and building 'circular economies' that make sustainable products the norm. [Opinion](#).

Elon Musk Watch: Where to begin? First, there's the new solar neighborhood in **Austin** ([above](#)); then there's Space X building a **Waco** rocket engine factory ([here](#)); next there's the Boring Company ([here](#)) acquiring 73 acres of land in **Bastrop** for new facilities; back to **Austin** again for the new Space X Starlink factory ([here](#)); a Tesla-linked German manufacturing company moving to **San Antonio** (a link [here](#)); finally, a bromance in New Mexico with fellow-billionaire Richard Branson ([here](#)) in **Las Cruces**, NM. Does this guy ever sleep?

Thought of the Week

"Start by doing what's necessary; then do what's possible; and suddenly you are doing the impossible."

- Francis of Assisi

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