



Monday Morning Report

July 19, 2021

INTERNAL

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

Draft Agenda.

COVID-19 UPDATE: Global confirmed cases are at 190,530,802 this morning, with 4,091,719 deaths. US cases are at 34,080,890 with 609,021 deaths (7/19). (**Johns Hopkins**) Texas was reporting 2,576,284 confirmed cases with 51,651 fatalities yesterday, including in **Bexar County:** 188,514 cases with 3,654 deaths; **Guadalupe County:** 12,047 cases, still with 222 deaths; **Comal County:** 6,362 cases with 312 deaths; **Hays County:** 19,471 cases with 227 deaths; **Travis County:** 85,920 cases with 1,045 deaths; and **Williamson County:** 40,652 cases with 486 deaths (7/18/21). (**TDHHS**).

INFRASTRUCTURE

Politico reports that a big infrastructure bill passed earlier this month in **Washington** by the US House will fundamentally change transportation policy by breaking the states' decades-old fondness for building highways. Cities will get a larger voice in how federal dollars are spent locally and new funding will flow directly to regional Metropolitan Planning Organizations. Transit or road-repair is favored over new highway lanes, the report says, and the highway construction lobby and state Departments of Transportation are not happy about it. **Story.**

The liberal-leaning **Texas Observer** takes an interesting look at whether, instead of expanding highways through major urban areas, TxDOT should tear them down and replace them with boulevards as many local activists would prefer. Projects in **Dallas, Austin, St. Paul,** and **San Francisco** are highlighted, among others. **Story.**

Spooked by the rapid pace of population growth - and accompanying urban sprawl - of **New Braunfels** and **San Marcos**, conservation interests in **Hays** and **Comal** Counties are teaming up for a series of projects to preserve greenspace and wildlife in the heart of the **Austin-San Antonio** Corridor. An array of conservation tools and bond funds are being considered, but some efforts may apparently be hamstrung by state budget limitations. **Story.**

McKinsey & Company, the business consulting firm, studied public transit systems in 25 global cities and offer five important insights gleaned from the effort in an upcoming report, '*Key Elements of Success in Urban Transportation Systems.*' US cities surveyed include **New York, Chicago,** and **Los Angeles.** Summary **here.**

The US Department of Transportation released a new report entitled **Putting People First – Smart Cities and Communities.** The report covers the benefits, goals, challenges, and success factors associated with smart cities and communities and 'provides some insight into the way forward,' according to DOT. 'Smart' cities use advanced information/communications technology to manage transportation systems. **Report.**

TxDOT plans a groundbreaking ceremony for the kick-off of construction on the first segment of the Loop 1604 North Loop Expansion in **San Antonio** between IH-35 and SH 16 next week, Monday, July 26 at 11:00 am at the Valero Park Trailhead. RSVP to Loop1604@txdot.gov. Project details [here](#).

Backers of that high-speed bullet train project between **Dallas-Houston** say they've hired a big Spanish rail company, Renfe, to operate their Japanese-technology passenger service. No financial details of the agreement were released. [Story](#). For more on Renfe, go [here](#).

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT (and Other News)

New details are emerging about that massive Mayfair development project near **New Braunfels** proposed by the SouthStar real estate firm. The 1800-acre project along IH-35, north of Town Creek, will eventually have 6000 housing units, 300-acres of public parks, a 160-acre business park and 70-acres of commercial property, four schools, and 35 miles of trails. The company projects full build-out will take about 15 years. [Story](#).

Big changes are coming to **Austin's** Bergstrom International Airport including 10 new gates at a midfield concourse connected to the main terminal by a tunnel, two new taxiways, a new baggage-handling system, and a not-so-fond farewell to the South Terminal. Now, can we bring taxis back closer to the Arrivals area? [Details](#).

The Port **San Antonio** Area Regional Center planning process is nearing completion. One of 13 centers envisioned by the city's SA Tomorrow Comprehensive Plan (2016), Port **San Antonio**, a former military base, is an 8900-acre area of industry and high-tech development along Highway 90 West. Public comment on draft plan just concluded. [Details](#). [Draft Plan](#).

Wall Street suddenly loves autonomous trucking and is losing faith in robo-taxis, according to **Axios**: valuations for the top four companies in the truck sector jumped 544% from the second quarter in 2020 to the second quarter in 2021, compared to a modest 12% rise for the four largest robo-taxi companies. Interesting detail [here](#).

Thought of the Week

"I'd rather regret the things I've done than regret the things I haven't done."

- Lucille Ball

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