



Monday Morning Report

September 20, 2021

INTERNAL

The **Austin-San Antonio** Corridor Council Executive Committee met last week (9/15) by video conference for presentations on **San Antonio's** new 5-year, \$200 million workforce initiative, updates on various infrastructure projects (IH-35 and I-10 to I-10, 'Get There ATX,' Amtrak developments), a report on the **Wall Street Journal's** 'Future of Transportation' conference, a first look at 2021-2022 project initiatives and more. For information, contact council@thecorridor.org.

COVID-19 UPDATE: This morning's confirmed global case count is at 228,606,746, with 4,693,332 deaths. US cases have reached 42,088,404 with 673,768 deaths (9/20/21). (**Johns Hopkins**). Yesterday, Texas reported 3,279,440 cases with 60,784 deaths, including **Bexar County:** 250,565 cases with 4,487 deaths; **Guadalupe County:** 16,093 cases, with 283 deaths; **Comal County:** 10,141 cases with 399 deaths; **Hays County:** 27,573 cases with 295 deaths; **Travis County:** 112,089 cases with 1,261 deaths; and **Williamson County:** 59,126 cases with 600 deaths (9/19/21). (**TDHHS**).

INFRASTRUCTURE

Amtrak's president William Flynn told **International Railway Journal** earlier this month that daily service between **San Antonio** and **Chicago** (including **Austin** and **Dallas**) were among his top priorities if Congress approves \$66 billion in new funding for his agency, currently pending within the Biden administration's American Jobs Plan. **Story. More.** *Amtrak Connects US* plan available [here](#).

Official comments from **Travis County** regarding TxDOT's plans for the Capital Expressway Project on IH-35 through downtown **Austin** will be on the commissioners' court agenda for tomorrow (Tuesday, 9/21, 9:00 am). Their comments could reveal important signaling to TxDOT, given the local city government's 'no higher, no wider' approach to the rebuilding effort. Watch the live stream [here](#).

Travis County is moving forward with plans to allow 75% of their employees to continue working from home, even after the COVID-19 pandemic ends (if ever). The action comes following receipt of a Deloitte Consulting report showing that the county is saving money on utilities and dramatically cutting greenhouse gas emissions, with no loss of employee productivity. **Story.** Deloitte Consulting study [here](#).

Southwest Airlines is adding more than 20 flights per day to their operations at **Austin's** Bergstrom International Airport, offering nonstop service to 46 destinations and 105 departures each day. New added daily nonstop services include **Amarillo, Midland, Charleston, SC, Columbus, OH, and Ontario, Canada.** **Details.**

The National Flood Insurance Program undercharges for insurance in certain areas, making it cheaper for people to live in dangerous places if they're willing to take the risk. **Austin**, in the heart of 'Flash Flood Alley,' gets highlighted for Onion Creek flooding in a recent study of the trend by the nonprofit First Street Foundation. **Story.**

Autonomous (self-driving) deliveries from Walmart could soon be arriving in **Austin** as part of a partnership with Ford and Argo AI scheduled to begin later this year. The service will also debut in **Miami** and **Washington**, with initial deliveries limited to a service area near selected Walmart stores. [Story](#).

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT (and Other News)

It's not news to anyone living there, but **Hays County** grew faster between 2010 and 2020 than any other county in the nation with a population of 100,000 or more. Amazon alone has more than 5,000 employees in the county, according to the **San Antonio Express-News**, and more big companies are on the way. [Story](#).

Are San Antonio homes overpriced? Researchers at two Florida universities seem to think so, ranking the city's housing market at 48th among US metros, with homes selling for 20.99% above expected prices based upon long term pricing patterns. **Austin** ranked as the second most over-valued residential market in the nation, with homes selling at a 50.72% premium over the expected market. [Story](#). [More on Austin](#).

The Biden-run Economic Development Administration in **Washington** has issued a \$1 billion Build Back Better Regional Challenge in which 20-30 US regions will each receive between \$25 million to \$100 million to execute on economic development strategies to grow industry clusters. AND, they're putting up the funds to help 50-60 regions develop a plan. First tier deadlines are October 19, though. Read more [here](#).

Axios reported yesterday that Democrat Robert 'Beto' O'Rourke, former **El Paso** congressman and failed US Senate contender in a 2018 race with incumbent Rafael Edward 'Ted' Cruz, intends to run in 2022 against Republican Governor Greg Abbott. [Story](#).

Thought of the Week

"Infrastructure should not only be about Highways but also about Information Highways! The way ahead lies in creating optical fiber networks it."

- Narendra Modi

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