



Monday Morning Report

September 23, 2019

INTERNAL

The Executive Committee of the **Austin-San Antonio** Corridor Council met last week (9/18) in **San Marcos** and passed resolutions in favor of the November statewide ballot proposition providing \$3 billion for cancer prevention and research, another requesting state help for Guadalupe River dams, an initiative to create an urban tree canopy along IH-35 between **Austin** and **San Antonio**, and a new effort to find a private sector solution to the downtown **Austin** IH-35 'cut and cap' project. Members also heard status updates on a proposed legislative 'interim charge' to study commuter rail in the **Austin-San Antonio** Corridor, high-speed rail between **Laredo** and **Dallas**, and the high-speed **Houston-Dallas** Texas Central Railroad project. For further information, email council@thecorridor.org.

INFRASTRUCTURE

TxDOT is hosting two open houses in **San Antonio** this week to reveal their plans for an expansion of Loop 1604 to ten lanes from Bandera Road (Texas 16) to Interstate 35. [Details](#).

The **Austin** Chamber of Commerce will provide a forum for mayor Steve Adler, State Senator Kirk Watson, Capital Metro president Randy Clarke, and other area transportation leaders to roll out a long-term vision and build consensus for high capacity transit solutions in the **Austin** area. It's Monday, October 7, at the JW Marriott in Austin. It starts at 3:00 pm with reception to follow at 5:30. They're calling it 'Improving Regional Mobility Together,' and you can register and read more [here](#).

There will be a welcoming reception for new **Austin**-area TxDOT District Engineer Tucker Ferguson on October 2, 5:30-7:00 pm at Fleming's Steak House, 320 E. 2nd. Ferguson most recently served as District Engineer in **Beaumont**, where he earned high marks for his efforts during recovery from Hurricane Harvey. [Details](#).

A California Debt Limit Allocation Committee approved \$300 million in tax-exempt bonds for Virgin Trains USA to build a high-speed rail line from **Southern California** to **Las Vegas**. The bonds would apply this year with a similar amount for 2020, allowing Virgin to issue a total of \$2.4 billion in debt, about half the total needed. [Story](#).

The **Travis County** Tax Appraisal office computer systems are back up and running after a cyber-ransom attack last week temporarily disrupted their operations. No ransom was paid, officials said, nor were key data or personal information lost. The Texas Department of Information Resources said 22 similar attacks occurred last month, but that all local government functions had returned to normal. [Details](#).

If you missed last week's 'State of the District' luncheon in **San Antonio** with local District Engineer Mario Jorge and TxDOT chairman Bruce Bugg, you can still review the slide presentation for the program [here](#). For a report on the luncheon address, there's [more](#).

Texas Central Railroad's **Dallas-Houston** high speed rail line is getting special rules and oversight from the Federal Railroad Administration, according to the company's spokesperson. The company applied for a

Rule of Particular Applicability in 2016, which would give its equipment and operations safety oversight under new rules because of the project's unusual (in the US, at least) technology. [Details](#).

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT (and 'Other' News)

In an effort to keep interest rates from climbing, the New York Federal Reserve pumped \$203 billion into financial markets last week, the first time the central bank has taken such steps since the global financial crisis ten years ago. Bank balances for short-term funding needs dried up as businesses had to pay quarterly tax bills at the same time the US Treasury issued billions in new bonds, *Business Insider* reports [here](#).

San Antonio will be bidding farewell this morning to local legend Houston Harriman Harte, a media executive who ran a company that once owned the **San Antonio Express-News** and local station **KENS TV**. Harte, 92, was described as a 'quiet leader,' active in civic affairs and philanthropy. [Details](#).

There were two big wins for **San Antonio's** automotive cluster last week when Toyota announced a nearly \$400 million technology investment for its local plant and another global manufacturer of commercial vehicles, Illinois-based Navistar, said they would build a new \$250 million facility and bring 600 new jobs to Southside. [Commentary](#).

Thought of the Week

"I'm a great believer in luck, and I find the harder I work the more I have of it."

- Thomas Jefferson

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