



Monday Morning Report

November 15, 2021

INTERNAL

The **Austin-San Antonio** Corridor Council Executive Committee will meet this Wednesday, November 17, at 2:00 pm by Zoom videoconference. There will be a presentation by Jason Giulietti, president of the Greater San Marcos Partnership. To add an item to the agenda or for any questions, email council@thecorridor.org. **Draft Agenda**.

COVID-19 UPDATE: Global cases are at 253,491,847 this morning, with 5,103,391 fatalities. US cases have reached 47,074,698, with 763,092 deaths (11/15/21) (**Johns Hopkins**). Texas reported 3,545,738 confirmed cases yesterday with 71,624 deaths, including in **Bexar County:** 266,233 cases with 5,222 deaths; **Guadalupe County:** 17,695 cases, with 342 deaths; **Comal County:** 11,420 cases with 461 deaths; **Hays County:** 30,006 cases with 353 deaths; **Travis County:** 120,940 cases with 1,460 deaths; and **Williamson County:** 66,206 cases with 712 deaths (11/14/21). (**TDHHS**).

INFRASTRUCTURE

Congestion at US ports, a national shortage of 80,000 truck drivers, and a logjam of shipping containers headed for China are creating a perfect supply-chain storm for American farmers - including Texas beef, milk, and grain producers - threatening foreign exports and domestic food distribution, reports the **New York Times**. "Getting exports out of the country is actually harder than getting imports into the country," say officials. **Story**.

President Biden will sign a \$1.2 trillion infrastructure bill this week that should provide, by various formulas, about \$35.4 billion for Texas roads, bridges, ports, pipes, broadband access, and other projects, according to the White House and the **Texas Tribune**. Highways receive \$26.9 billion, public transit \$3.3 billion; for details, go **here**.

Two academics from St. Edward's University Civics Lab in **Austin**, authors of a study showing that 60% of their students commute to school by automobile, are urging city-dwellers to use public transit - even if only once - for three reasons: efficiency, affordability, and sustainability. They are asking motorists who switch to public transit to post about it on social media to advance their research. **Opinion**.

Those \$1.15 billion solar energy and battery farms announced last week for **Caldwell County** sites near **Kyle** and **San Marcos** are just the first of many-more-to-come, according to California-based Chem-Energy, as they dubbed the region along IH-35 between **Austin** and **San Antonio** 'The Texas Innovation Corridor.' The company says it will create 400 new jobs next year averaging \$53,200 each annually. **Story**.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT (and Other News)

Citing 'a very attractive backdrop for more growth,' economists retained by the **Austin** Chamber of Commerce were all singing from the same hymnal at a 2022 economic forecast panel last week: "Let the

good times continue to roll." The only clouds on the horizon they foresee are housing costs and workforce shortages. [Details](#).

Will Real Estate Ever Be Normal Again? asks the headline on yesterday's **New York Times Magazine** story about post-pandemic housing prices, prominently featuring **Austin**'s affordability issues. The piece follows a **Brooklyn** couple relocating to the Texas capital - replete with failed underbids and traffic-challenged commutes - noting that US housing is experiencing 'astonishing' price increases (24.8% since 2020). [Story](#).

San Antonio's city-led economic development deals have received a lot scrutiny lately ([here](#)) along with some accolades for transparency, but the latest survey of decades worth of projects by business columnist Michael Taylor for the **Express-News** questions the statewide approach to so-called Chapter 380 incentives and their respective track records for creating jobs or generating economic returns. [Opinion](#).

Last week's announcement by dissident (and largely conservative) academics that they were creating a free speech-focused University of **Austin** prompted a worldwide flurry of social media commentary and job-applicants, but also caused some to ask if perhaps the Texas capital city is becoming a global center for free-thinking gadflies and eccentrics? [Story](#). [Announcement](#). [Opinion](#).

Elon Musk Watch: Rocket Man sold \$7 billion of stock last week in Tesla, a company now worth ten times the value of General Motors ([here](#)); gained a major competitor with Rivian's giant IPO ([here](#)) got some ink for a proposed tunnel project in Florida ([here](#)); fought Texas auto dealers over retail sale of his cars ([here](#)); received approvals to sell electricity in Texas ([here](#)); and - maybe thirsty after all of that - launched his own beer ([here](#)).

Thought of the Week

"If you are not willing to risk the usual you will have to settle for the ordinary."

- Jim Rohn

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