



Monday Morning Report

November 30, 2020

INTERNAL

COVID-19 UPDATE: There are now about 63 million reported cases of infection worldwide, with nearly 1.5 million deaths. The US is reporting over 13 million current cases, with 266,887 deaths. ([Johns Hopkins](#)) Texas reported 1,157,273 confirmed cases yesterday (11/29) with 21,357 deaths, including in **Bexar County:** 65,017 cases with 1,496 deaths; **Guadalupe County:** 4,272 cases with 85 deaths; **Comal County:** 3,203 cases with 114 deaths; **Hays County:** 7,097 cases with 83 deaths; **Travis County:** 37,898 cases with 469 deaths; and **Williamson County:** 12,272 cases with 165 deaths. ([TDHHS](#))

COVID-19 Hospitalization Update: According to analyst Bill King, regional hospitalization patterns statewide changed significantly over the last two weeks, easing in most spots. But 60% of the reported increases occurred in **Houston, San Antonio, and Dallas-Ft. Worth**, he reports. [Details.](#)

INFRASTRUCTURE

The Urban Land Institute and the Downtown **Austin** Alliance held a virtual discussion of the IH-35 'Cap and Stitch' project two weeks ago (11/18) that highlighted the racial and cultural aspects driving the effort - reuniting East and West Austin - but also raised two important points: new managed lanes will enable high-capacity transit (buses) to speed through the heart of the city; also, the parks or real estate development envisioned by the 'cap' must be funded by **Austin**, not TxDOT. Public comments are due by December 12. [Details.](#)

Tune in *today* at 2:00-3:30 pm to the **Austin** Chamber of Commerce's virtual '*Regional Mobility 2020*' conference with TxDOT commission chairman Bruce Bugg, Jr, mayor Steve Adler, Cap Metro CEO Randy Clarke, and other featured speakers on transportation and economic development issues. [Details.](#)

Electric vehicles pose an existential threat to oil producers because each additional EV depresses demand for gasoline; but to automakers and utilities EV's represent the next big market. This conflict is playing out in a **Washington** lobbying battle ignited when the White House killed an extended tax credit for EV's to the benefit of foreign automakers and the oil companies. Game on. [Story.](#)

More autonomous 18-wheeler trucks are coming to Texas, and probably sooner than you think. TuSimple, a company with offices in **Beijing** and **San Diego** already building a nationwide freight network of driverless trucks, announced that it is opening a hub in **Fort Worth** soon. Nearby **Arlington** already has driverless transit. [Story.](#)

Detroit-based General Motors is doubling down on autonomous and electric vehicles, announcing earlier this month that they will increase planned spending by 35% - to \$27 billion through 2025 - to broaden their footprint in the connected, driverless, and electric vehicle market space. [Details.](#)

The Capital Area Rural Transportation System is bringing 'on demand' service via a mobile app to **Bastrop**, promising curb-to-curb rides for \$2 per trip Monday thru Friday anywhere inside the city limits, beginning in December. [Details.](#)

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT (and Other News)

The United Nations Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change said in 2018 that the world might need to remove 1 trillion tons of carbon from the atmosphere to avoid more than 1.5 degrees Celsius of global warming. The problem is that most carbon removal schemes create as much or more carbon than they remove. Enter a new **Silicon Valley** startup that uses a fee on Internet-based transactions to fund carbon extraction. [Story](#).

Elon Musk's Boring Company is hiring for a tunnel project in **Austin**, according to tech websites, but just what the project might be remains unclear. Trade media says Boring, already active on projects in **Los Angeles** and **Las Vegas**, is joining Tesla in the state capital for a construction effort (IH-35? Project Connect?) involving its patented tunneling technology and geologically complex Austin Chalk. [Story](#).

The University of Texas in **Austin** is teaming up with technology giant IBM to solve - or at least track - the more than half-a-million man-made objects currently floating in space above the Earth's atmosphere. Called the Space Situational Awareness Project, the effort is focused on tracking, analyzing, and updating the location of objects in orbit. Seems like a good fit with Port of **San Antonio's** pursuit ([here](#)) of the US Space Command. [Story](#).

Thought of the Week

"When people keep telling you that you can't do a thing, you kind of like to try it."

— Margaret Chase Smith

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