



## Monday Morning Report

December 10, 2018

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### INTERNAL

The next scheduled meeting for the **Austin-San Antonio Corridor** Council Executive Committee is Wednesday, December 19 at 2pm at 304 N. CM Allen Parkway in **San Marcos**. RSVP to [council@thecorridor.org](mailto:council@thecorridor.org).

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### INFRASTRUCTURE

With both **Austin** and **San Antonio** shifting their long range transportation planning focus from rail to Autonomous Rapid Transit (self-driving buses) or so-called 'trackless trains,' you may want to check out a presentation by Peter Newman - a **Perth**, Australia academic - that examines the use of the technology in China and raises questions about route surface requirements, safety, and capacity issues. See it [here](#).

With a major Capital Metro board of directors vote looming Dec. 17 on the Project Connect transportation plan, the agency and **Austin's** city council have been holding joint meetings and organizing a series of community meetings aimed at selling the plan to the public. For an update on the process and prospective outcomes, click [here](#). For more on Project Connect and Capital Metro's planning efforts, click [here](#) for an interview with agency director Randy Clarke.

After ten years of research and testing, Waymo has officially launched the nation's first self-driving taxi service in **Phoenix**, Arizona. Initially, the service is only offered within a 100-square mile radius to riders who participated in early testing programs. Waymo-trained drivers will remain in the front seat for safety and emergency protocols, at least in the near term, officials said. [Story](#).

Ride-sharing companies Uber and Lyft have filed the paperwork for initial public offerings in 2019, making them instant front-runners among technology companies expected to go public next year. [Story](#).

Engineering and construction firms may want to follow progress on a \$32 billion coastal protection project being developed by US Army Corps of Engineers and the Texas General Land Office to help prevent coastal storm surges, erosion, and habitat loss resulting from rising sea levels. The plan is currently undergoing public review in a series of outreach meetings, most recently in **Port Isabel**. For details, click [here](#).

TxDOT is proposing a \$420 million project to expand US Highway 90 between Loop 410 and State Highway 211 on the west side of **San Antonio**. The plan would take US 90 from a four-lane divided highway to a six-lane expressway. [Details](#) (lower right column).

When TEXRail commuter passenger rail service begins this January between **Fort Worth** and **Grapevine** in North Texas, the service will be free in its early days while Trinity Metro - which operates the service - tries to build ridership up to an expected 8000 annual daily passengers. Eventually, a trip from downtown Cowtown to DFW Airport will be only about \$2.50. [Details](#).

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## ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT (and 'Other' News)

**San Antonio** mayor Ron Nirenberg is moving to update the city's plans for marketing itself as a venue for major sports franchises in 2019. The last such study of the Alamo City's potential market size and demographics related to sports metrics was done seven years ago in 2011. Mayor Nirenberg told the *Rivard Report* that he believes population growth and industry dynamics have changed enough to take a second look at opportunities for major and minor league professional sports franchises. [Story](#).

**San Antonio's** city council last week approved a new 1.25% per night hotel fee for guests staying in hotels with 100 or more rooms, expected to raise more than \$10 million annually for the next eight years. Proceeds will be used for marketing and advertising to support the tourism industry. The lone opposing vote on the measure was by a councilman who wanted some portion of the revenues pledged to fight homelessness. [Story](#).

In an effort aimed at increasing affordability and discouraging urban sprawl, **Minneapolis** has become the first major US city to end single-family home zoning. Last Friday the local city council passed Minneapolis 2040, a comprehensive plan to permit three-family homes in the city's residential neighborhoods, allow high-density buildings along transit corridors, and abolish parking slot minimums. [Story](#).

There's still time to register for this Thursday's **San Antonio** Governor's Small Business Forum (12/13) celebrating African-American small business owners and entrepreneurs. For details and registration, go [here](#).

Condolences to the family of Nadine Eckhardt, a prominent and beloved figure in Old **Austin** social and cultural circles, who died after a colorful life this weekend at 87. Her daughter Sarah Eckhardt is the current **Travis County** judge. [Details](#).

## Thought of the Week

"I not only use all the brains that I have, but all that I can borrow."

- Woodrow Wilson

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