



Monday Morning Report

December 17, 2018

INTERNAL

Join us *this* Wednesday, Dec. 19, 2:00 pm, in **San Marcos** for the next meeting of the **Austin-San Antonio** Corridor Council Executive Committee. Our guests will be the new mayor of **San Marcos**, Jane Hughson, and **Austin** legislative consultant Chris Shields, previewing upcoming action in the Texas Legislature. Agenda [here](#). RSVP to council@thecorridor.org.

INFRASTRUCTURE

Nearly 80% of commuters surveyed said they viewed public transit as the 'backbone' of a lifestyle that includes current and future transportation and technologies, according to a self-congratulatory report issued by the **Washington**-based American Public Transportation Association. As they say, though it ain't bragging if it's a fact. [Story](#).

Opponents of the proposed **Dallas-Houston** high speed rail project - better known as the Texas Central Railroad - are turning for help to the Texas Legislature, asking the state to exercise more authority over the route and questioning the organizing company's ability to use eminent domain laws. [Story](#). Texas Central is responding with opinion editorials [here](#). From a proposed stop along the route, the **Bryan-College Station** newspaper provides an update claiming construction will begin in 2019. [Story](#).

64% of **San Antonio** residents expressed 'overall satisfaction' with their city services, a rate 19% above the national average, according to a recent survey previewed to the city council last week. The survey gauged satisfaction with dozens of services and departments including transportation, public safety, and solid waste removal. [Story](#). See the results [here](#).

Houston is eyeing a \$7.5 billion METRONext long-range plan - with more than 40 projects - that would nearly double the existing light rail system and provide a rail line to William P. Hobby Airport and a Bus Rapid Transit connection to George Bush Intercontinental Airport by 2040. [Story](#).

A key figure in transportation legislation for the last decade announced that he was resigning from the Texas House last week. Former Transportation Committee chairman Rep. Joe Pickett of **El Paso** - a colorful character whose **Austin** office decorations ranged from an ice-cream parlor to old-fashioned gas stations - said he would step down for health reasons. [Details](#).

Capital Metro in Austin takes an important vote today on whether or not to approve Project Connect's multi-year, multi-million dollar corridors planning effort. The plan could establish the direction of public transit for decades and set the stage for a large 2020 bond election. We'll post the result next week.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT (and 'Other' News)

If you've only got time to read one economic development story this week, make it **The Daily Beast's** "Texas' New Hipsters Threaten The Very Environment That Lured Them There" - a blizzard of demographic data and political observation arguing that without the 'Texas Miracle,' America would resemble France,

where wealth and power are concentrated in the big cities and the rest of the country decline. **Austin, San Antonio** - and importantly, the Corridor between them - figure prominently [here](#).

Austin won a right-sized piece of Apple's expansion plans last week when the company announced that it would add 5000 workers (with the potential for up to 15,000 total over time) and invest \$1 billion into a new campus in the Texas capital. Housing affordability and workforce availability drove the decision, *Money* magazine says [here](#).

And **Dallas-Ft. Worth** may have missed out on Amazon's HQ2 beauty contest but won a considerable consolation prize last week when the company announced it would create a regional air hub at Alliance Airport, bringing millions in investment and at least several hundred new jobs to North Texas. Local development sources said the prize was directly linked to the region's failed effort to secure the \$5 billion HQ2 project. [Story](#).

While a lot of **Washington** observers expect Congressional roadblocks to the re-written NAFTA trade deal between the US, Mexico, and Canada - signed in **Buenos Aires** last month and now known as the 'USMCA Agreement' - the president of the Texas Business Leadership Council believes the end of NAFTA will spur quick action and passage. [Details](#).

Developers broke ground last week on a 40-acre industrial park in **Kyle**, a project said to bring more than 500,000 square-foot of industrial warehouse, manufacturing and distribution space to **Hays County**. Kyle Crossing Business Park is just off Interstate 35 at Kyle Crossing, part of a 2000-acre Plum Creek planned development. [Details](#).

Austin Community College is now offering a three-month course in drone training for public safety officials at its Public Safety Training Center in **Hays County**. Details [here](#) (half-way down left column).

Thought of the Week

"You leave home to seek your fortune and, when you get it,
you go home and share it with your family."

- Anita Baker

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