



## Monday Morning Report

January 18, 2022

*Martin Luther King Jr Day Edition*

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### INTERNAL

The **Austin-San Antonio** Corridor Council Executive Committee will meet tomorrow Wednesday, January 19, at 2:00 pm by Zoom videoconference. To add an item to the agenda, email [council@thecorridor.org](mailto:council@thecorridor.org). **Draft Agenda**.

**COVID-19 UPDATE:** As of this morning, global cases reached 331,166,002 with 5,547,903 deaths. US cases are at 66,422,386 with 851,730 deaths. (1/18/22) (**Johns Hopkins**). Yesterday, Texas reported 76,000 fatalities thus far with 4,656,551 confirmed cases, including in **Bexar County:** 365,171 cases with 5,409 deaths; **Guadalupe County:** 21,973 cases, with 349 deaths; **Comal County:** 17,213 cases, with 489 deaths; **Hays County:** 42,511 cases with 371 deaths; **Travis County:** 170,850 cases with 1,523 deaths; and **Williamson County:** 89,138 cases with 756 deaths (1/17/22). (**TDHHS**). For current regional hospitalization-rate data, go **here**.

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### INFRASTRUCTURE

A **New York** University transportation historian argues that the Biden administration's \$1.2 trillion spending bill will (and should) go mostly towards maintenance of existing infrastructure and correcting damaging investments from the past that destroyed some urban neighborhoods. But he notes that new, ambitious, and large-scale projects are still needed to address surging population - particularly high-capacity transit in dense corridors. **Opinion**.

For the first time, electric vehicles outsold diesel engines in Europe in 2021. One reason may be the example set by Norway, where only 8% of new vehicles sold were conventional gas or diesel cars. The **New York Times** says favorable tax treatment and a virtually overnight change in public attitudes made the difference. **Story**.

TxDOT presents modified design alternatives for a 'Cap and Stitch' design strategy for the Interstate 35 Central Expressway rebuild project to **Austin's** Mobility Committee *this* week (1/20), followed by a public outreach meeting Jan. 25th. **Texas Government Insider** says to expect a preferred alternative design this fall. **Story**.

Canadian Pacific Railway said (1/6) that it will cooperate with Amtrak to develop a new **Dallas/Fort Worth-to-Atlanta** long distance passenger service (**here**). And that Texas Central Railway **Dallas-to-Houston** high speed rail project's eminent domain authority faced the Texas Supreme Court last week. No decision yet. **Story. More**.

**Austin** Bergstrom International Airport will be getting another non-stop flight to **London** Heathrow beginning May 25. Virgin Atlantic, in its first new route addition in the US since 2015, will operate four times a week with planes offering 31 upper class, 35 premium, and 192 economy class seats. **Story**.

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## ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT (and Other News)

**San Antonio** has launched a major study of the city's economic development and incentives programs, hoping to 'kickstart' a strategic planning initiative to review and update the guidelines used to qualify business investments for various tax breaks and incentives. New guidelines will be considered this fall by the city council. [Story](#).

\$100 goes further in **San Antonio** than in **Austin**, according to a recent US Bureau of Economic Analysis 'price parity' study of spending power in top US metro areas. More precisely, it's worth \$102.08 compared to \$98.20 in the Texas Capital, which is still a lot better than **San Francisco's** \$82.62. [Story](#). [Data Sources](#).

In an effort to control carbon emissions, a growing number of European Union countries have proposed bans on short-haul regional airline flights between destinations where a competing train route offers an alternative service in under two-and-a half hours, reports **Conde Nast**. France's ban starts in May; Spain, Germany, Austria, and the Scandinavian countries seem poised to follow suit. [Story](#).

Elon Musk Watch: Tesla's Cybertruck production in **Austin** may be delayed ([here](#)); reducing reliance on China, Tesla signed a first-of-its-kind deal with Mozambique to source graphite for batteries ([here](#)); due to accidents, California is 'revisiting' its licensing permission for Tesla tests of auto-pilot technology ([here](#)); and, **Axios** - not us - said that because of that technology, 'Your Tesla could drive like a jerk.' Again, **Axios**, not us. [Story](#).

**New Braunfels** may lose its claim to having the nation's largest Buc-ee's filling station, ceding that title from **New Braunfels** to **Sevierville**, Tenn, but hasn't lost its sense of humor. The city posted a video lamenting the loss to social media, set to Taylor Swift lyrics ('Please don't love somebody else'). [Story](#). [Video](#).

## Thought of the Week

*"All things are difficult before they are easy."*

- Thomas Fuller

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