



## Monday Morning Report

February 6, 2023

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### INTERNAL

The next Executive Committee meeting of the **Austin-San Antonio** Corridor Council is scheduled for Wednesday, February 15<sup>th</sup> at 2pm by Zoom. To add an item to the agenda, contact [council@thecorridor.org](mailto:council@thecorridor.org).

Heads Up: The deadline for applications to the Federal-State Partnership program for intercity passenger rail projects has been extended by the Federal Railroad Administration for non-Northeast Corridor projects has been extended to April 21, 2023. And FRA has added \$2.2 billion to the \$2.3 billion already allocated to the program for non-Northeast Corridor projects. [Details](#).

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### INFRASTRUCTURE

Last week's ice storm served as a stark reminder that much of Texas infrastructure is not built to sustain such cold weather - or the increasingly hot summers - that are now common due to climate change. The storm crippled **Austin**, the capital city of the nation's second most populous state, and thousands remain without power or water. The **Texas Tribune** looks at how we might better deal with the fire - or ice - next time. [Story](#).

Troubled Waters: California has balked at a emergency management plan for the western Colorado River, which despite last month's floods continues to suffer from the worst drought in 1200 years. Six of the seven Colorado River basin states agreed to a plan cutting 2 million acre-feet of water flowing to 40 million people, but California's resistance probably moves to issue into federal hands. 'Obviously, things are not going swimmingly.' [Story](#).

Traffic congestion is more than just frustrating. It can cause brain damage, according to a research team at the University of British Columbia (**Vancouver**). Congestion-generated air pollution can negatively affect brain function after just two hours of exposure to diesel fumes, the team found. Scary brain scans. [Story. Report](#).

Following a series of deadly accidents and breakdowns on **Mexico City's** aging transit system, Mexican president Andres Manuel Lopez Obrador has deployed over 6000 National Guard troops to protect against (unproven) "premeditated attacks." The move comes just months after 'AMLO,' as Lopez Obrador is known, also turned over construction of the nation's largest new rail project - the Mayan Express - to the military. [Story](#).

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### ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT (and Other News)

The Greater **San Marcos** Partnership - an economic development group for the country's fastest-growing city of its size plus surrounding **Hays** and **Caldwell Counties** - is touting a series of new projects that include more Amazon facilities and a film/television studio set to begin construction shortly. President

Jason Giulietti says State Highway 130 is a great regional asset, but an **Austin-to-San Antonio** train would be better. [Story](#).

An **Austin** biotechnology company just raised over \$100 million and is making international news for gene-editing projects that include bringing back from extinction such exotic species as the dodo bird, the woolly mammoth, and the Tasmanian tiger. Could a Central Texas Jurassic Park be next? [Story](#).

Look, ma, no pilot: "Autonomy is going to come to all of the airplanes eventually," Boeing CEO Dave Calhoun said last week. **Axios** reports that while no one suggests human pilots will disappear anytime soon, industry and automation trends point toward phasing out the 'two pilots' safety rule. Start-ups are circling the field. [Story](#).

**Austin**-based Tesla will spend \$3.6 billion on new electric battery and light truck manufacturing facilities in Nevada near **Reno**, the company announced ([here](#)). Tesla founder Elon Musk also won a round in a Tweet-related lawsuit alleging he had misled investors ([here](#)). And all this with a bad back and no sleep. [Story](#).

Using federal data and consumer surveys, **BankingRate** website concludes that eight Texas cities are poised for what they're calling a 'housing crisis.' **Houston, Corpus Christi, and Amarillo** are cited, but **Austin** and **San Antonio** have dodged that potential bullet thus far. [Story](#).

Allison Humphries took over as Chair of the Board of the **New Braunfels** Chamber of Commerce at the group's 104th Annual Banquet last week (1/27). Among others honored with various awards was **Comal County** commissioner (and **Alamo-Area** Metropolitan Planning Organization chairman) Kevin Webb. We noted that the new Madame Chair selected the evening's theme herself: "*It's About Time*." [Story](#).

## Thought of the Week

*"To accomplish great things, we must not only act, but also dream; not only plan, but also believe."*

- Anatole France

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