



Monday Morning Report

February 19, 2024

INTERNAL

The **Austin-San Antonio** Corridor Council Executive Committee meets *this* Wednesday, February 21, at 2:00 pm via Zoom. **Draft Agenda**. Sharlene Leurig, Chief Executive Officer of *Texas Water Trade*, will be a guest speaker; Bill McCamley, Executive Director of *Transit Forward* - a Project Connect booster-group - will also speak. RSVP to council@thecorridor.org.

The **San Antonio** Mobility Coalition is hosting a luncheon event with TxDOT commissioner Alex Meade on Wednesday, March 6 as part of their Transportation Leadership Series. **Details**.

INFRASTRUCTURE

Nearly one year after taking charge of the Union Pacific Railroad - at the time with one of the poorest records for safety, efficiency, and earnings growth among the US Class 1 railroads - new president Jim Vena tells **Progressive Railroading** that he intends to transform decision-making at the company from a 'top-down' to a 'bottom-up' process. Could that change revive long-stalled **Austin-San Antonio** passenger rail talks? **Story**.

President Biden visited the site last week in **East Palestine**, OH where a Norfolk Southern freight train derailed a year ago and caused widespread destruction and environmental damage. While touting the administration's subsequent clean-up efforts, Biden said the accident was '100-percent preventable.' **Story**.

Long-simmering frustrations with driverless automobiles (AVs) snarling traffic and endangering pedestrians boiled over in **San Francisco** earlier this month when a crowd attacked and set fire to a Waymo robotaxi. 'Backlash appears to be growing toward driverless vehicles,' SmartCitiesDive reports, 'and city leaders call for oversight of AVs in their cities.' **Austin, Phoenix, and Los Angeles** are cited. **Story. Video**.

Community Impact reports that **Austin** should hear back later this month on whether or not a \$105-million federal grant will be approved for a 5.2-acre 'cap and stitch' deck over Interstate 35 between East Cesar Chavez and Fourth Street. That decision will guide other city financial moves on funding similar efforts, they say. **Details**.

Expect more trucks on IH-35 between **Austin** and **San Antonio**, the local **Axios** newsletter says. Trade trends to and from **Laredo**, nearshoring of formerly Asian manufacturing due to supply chain issues, and a host of other developments point to a growing number of trucks through The Corridor. Already, truck traffic on the SH 130 parallel route is up 84% over 2019 numbers, they report. **Story**.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT (and Other News)

Facing pressure from **Detroit**, unions, and automobile retailers, the Biden administration is contemplating easing stricter auto emissions standards originally designed to spur the market for electric vehicles - the **Washington Post** reports. The earliest decision should come next month. Another blow to **Austin**-based Tesla? [Story](#).

Austin-based Tesla is set to begin construction this month on a 1.4-million-sq.-ft. leased facility in **Kyle** off IH-35, the **Express-News** reports, but no one is saying yet how the 'Project Tiger' facility will be used. [Story](#).

The **New Braunfels** city council has unanimously approved acquiring 131-acres of new parkland along Alligator Creek for \$8 million via the city's Economic Development Corporation. [Story](#). [Map](#).

Reader's Digest named **Fredericksburg** as the 'Most Charming Town in Texas' as part of a report on the 50 top USA small towns, citing '150 shops, boutiques, art galleries, restaurants, and wine-tasting rooms.' [Story](#).

Thought of the Week

"I hope I shall always possess virtue enough to maintain, what I consider the most enviable of all titles, the character of an honest man."

- George Washington

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